

**GENEALOGY OF THE BLISS
FAMILY IN
AMERICA, FROM ABOUT
THE YEAR 1550 TO 1880**

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Genealogy of the Bliss family in America, from about the year 1550 to 1880 by John Homer Bliss & Sylvester Bliss & Oliver Bliss Morris

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JOHN HOMER BLISS & SYLVESTER BLISS & OLIVER BLISS MORRIS

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He who is not proud of his ancestors shows, either that he had no ancestors to be proud of, or else that he is a degenerate son.—GROVESNOR.

GENEALOGY
OF THE
BLISS FAMILY
IN
AMERICA,

FROM ABOUT THE YEAR 1550 TO 1880.



Compiled by JOHN HOMER BLISS, Norwich, Conn.

INCLUDING THE COMPILATIONS OF JUDGE OLIVER BLISS MORRIS, OF SPRINGFIELD,
MASS., AND SYLVESTER BLISS, ESQ., OF BOSTON, MASS.

Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground;
Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise;
So generations in their course decay,—
So flourish these, when those have passed away.

—*Pope's Homer, Book vi.*

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TO MY ESTEEMED FRIEND,
COL. JOHN H. BLISS,
OF KRIZ, PENN.,
THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
AS A SLIGHT ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF
HIS GENEROUS AND UNTIRING INTEREST
IN
ITS PROLONGED AND DIFFICULT
COMPILATION.

—JOHN HOMER BLISS.

“ One generation comes,
Another goes and mingles with the dust ;
And thus we come and go,
Each for a brief moment filling up
Some little space ; and thus we disappear
In quick succession. And it shall be so
Till time in one vast perpetuity
Be swallowed up.”



INTRODUCTION.

As the sacred writings have preserved the genealogy of our race during a period of nearly two thousand years from creation, and of the Jewish nation for an additional two thousand, it follows that a desire to know one's origin or lineage is a laudable curiosity; for that which was worthy of Divine record respecting the distant past, is worthy of consideration respecting the present.

In the following compilation there has been little attempted beyond a collection of names and dates—an occasional reminiscence being added—and the compiler makes no apology for any errors, either of omission or commission, that may appear. In regard to the former he would simply say that he could not make records for those whose apathy or indifference prevented the furnishing of their family statistics. Many letters have been written soliciting information of people in regard to their families and lineage, which to-day remain unanswered; and those guilty of this neglect have only themselves to thank for the omission of their records from this work, which was designed to be the compendium of all the family information it might be possible to collect. In regard to typographical errors, he would only ask the title of any infallible work—any book free from mechanical error. In many instances different dates have been furnished by different branches of the same family, in connection with the same events, which alone will account for most of the supposed errors.

Another source of apparent discrepancy is found in the change from Old to New Style. Before 1752 the year began March 25th (called Lady Day); although in Catholic countries, after 1582, it commenced January 1st. Hence, between January and March it was common to double date. The difference between the Julian and Gregorian year in the eighteenth century was eleven days; after 1800 it was twelve,—which is to be added to any date in the Old Style to reduce it to the New.

Another fruitful source of confusion in this compilation has been the transposition of the names Bliss and Blish, many families of the latter name evidently preferring the former as perhaps easier of pro-

nunciation, while a few have considered the name Blish as a corruption of Bliss, and have accordingly adopted what they suppose to be the original name of their line and family. We have traced the name Blish back to Abraham Blish of Barnstable, Mass., 1640, who removed to that place from Duxbury, where he was known as Abraham Blush. Possibly he may have been a distant relative of the Bliss emigrants of 1635-6, but nothing of the kind is certainly known.

We do not guarantee the entire accuracy of the records in the following pages, but simply give them to the public as they were received from the various branches of the family and from numberless public records in many different localities. They embody the information obtained through many years of research and patient toil and perseverance, and the compilation is as nearly complete as practicable. It is hoped that all who notice omissions or errors will immediately inform the compiler, so that any subsequent edition may have the benefit of such correction.

Our investigations among English records are too limited to enable us to trace any lengthened pedigree of the family previous to the arrival in this country of the emigrant ancestors; and it would be useless to speculate upon the origin of the name. It is supposed the family was of Norman descent, and that the name was originally Blois (gradually modified to Bloys, Blyse, Blysse, Blisse, and in America to Bliss), and that its introduction into England occurred at the time of the Norman Conquest (1066), previous to which time hereditary surnames were not assumed in England, and then only gradually and by families of rank,—so that the pedigree of any family can hardly be traced beyond the thirteenth century. Another difficulty arises from the loose orthography which obtained up to the time of Elizabeth, and even later. At the commencement of the fifteenth century there was much confusion in family names, and surnames were not permanently settled before the era of the Reformation, 1534, during the reign of Henry VIII.

The name of Bliss is not of frequent occurrence in English history. In Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses," edited by Rev. Philip Bliss, Registrar of Oxford University, England, vol. 1, pp. 57, occurs the earliest notice the compiler has been able to find of the name. It is as follows:

"John Blysse, a learned physician of his time, was born in the diocese of Bath and Wells, elected prob. fellow of Merton Coll. 1509, being then esteemed an excellent disputant in philosophy. Afterwards he proceeded in the Arts, entered on the physick line, went to

London, and practiced that faculty, and accumulated the degrees in phys. an. 1525, and afterwards became one of the Coll. of Physicians. He hath written something of his faculty, and hath made certain astronomical tables, as it appears from some of the records of Mert. Coll., but they have long since been lost among many of the lucubrations of some of the fellows of that house that had been much conversant in Astronomy. He died in the Blackfryers, in London, in the month of April, in 1530, and was buried in the church belonging to the said fryers there, leaving this character behind him among the society of Mert. Coll., where it doth yet stand upon record that he was Medicus and Astronomus quam doctus."

In Hasted's History of Kent, England, vol. 4, pp. 316, one "Thomas Bliss, Esq.," is spoken of as having been several times a member of Parliament; and it is stated that in 1720 he built a work house for the benefit of the poor of his parish.

In vol. 1, pp. 401, of the same work we read that the East Greenwich Manor and palace built by Charles II, "is at present in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Nevil Maskeline, F. R. S., and late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who was appointed Astronomer Royal to His Majesty in 1765, on the death of Dr. Nathaniel Bliss."

A hymn written by the Rev. Philip Doddridge, D. D., beginning with "My God, thy service well demands," has, in the original manuscript, this note: "Particularly intended for the use of a friend, Miss Nancy Bliss, who had been in the extremest danger by the bursting of an artery in her stomach, November 14, 1737."

The opinion hereinbefore given as to the original name of the family, Blois, seems confirmed by a quotation in a folio work by John Guillim, printed in London in 1724, entitled "A Display of Heraldry," in which, on page 127, we find the following:

"He beareth sable, a bend vair, between two fleurs-de-lis or, by name of Bloys. This coat was granted or confirmed to
"Bloys of Ipswich, in the County of Suffolk, by Sir William Segar.—
"INT. M. S., PETER LE NEVE, NORROY."

This shield is identical (except in color) with that now claimed and used by the American family, and would seem to indicate a residence at Ipswich of at least one branch of the family during the reign of James I, of England, 1603-25, when Segar, Garter King of Arms, compiled a collection of the arms of the kings of England long prior to the twelfth century. The facts that two families so widely separated are using the same shield, and the Norman name of Blois in its various