

Stephen French

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his life he was almost invisible in the public records. Perhaps he was involved in scandal; perhaps he did not represent his town well. No evidence survives to explain this truncated career; but his son did reverse the family fortunes with a vengeance, and amassed both land and titles beyond most of his contemporaries.

THOMAS FRENCH

ORIGIN: Assington, Suffolk

MIGRATION: 1632

FIRST RESIDENCE: Boston

REMOVES: Ipswich 1635

OCCUPATION: Tailor. John Stratton writes from Boston under date of 17 March 1633/4: "I have put my sister a suit of mohair to making at Goodman French's. She were best get the tailor to take her measure and send per Jno. Gallop" [WP 3:157]. Thomas French's inventory included eleven yards of homemade cloth.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: Admitted to Boston church as member #128, which would be no later than mid-1632 [BChR 14]; on 27 January 1638/9 "our brother Thomas French was with the consent of the congregation dismissed to the church of Ipswich" [BChR 22].

FREEMAN: 6 November 1632 [MBCR 1:367].

EDUCATION: He signed his will.

OFFICES: Essex grand jury, 28 September 1652 [EQC 1:260]. Petit jury, 30 September 1651, 31 March 1657, 28 September 1658, 29 March 1659, 27 March 1660, 25 March 1662, 27 September 1664, 26 September 1665, 28 September 1669, 24 September 1672, 31 March 1674, 30 March 1675, 24 September 1678 [EQC 1:232, 2:11, 111, 138, 195, 347, 3:182, 270, 4:175, 5:79, 269, 6:1, 7:82]. Coroner's jury on the body of Samuel Adams, Jr., 30 September 1676 [EQC 6:234].

Had service in the Pequod War. Proposed for Lieutenant, 25 March 1639 (but apparently not confirmed; in a letter of that date Daniel Denison writes to John Winthrop "Our company wanting some officers, have according to their liberty, made choice of some, whom they desired me to propound to the Court or Council. They were willing to express their love and liking to Sergeant French and Sergeant Howlett proposing the former for Lieutenant, the other for Ensign" [WP 4:106]). On 18 May 1664 "Sergt. Thomas French deposed that being ordered by Major Genll. Denison to carry two soldiers who were stubborn off the field to prison, he went to them and persuaded them to submit themselves, promising to mediate for them" [EQC 3:140]. Appointed ensign at Ipswich 18 May 1664 [MBCR 4:2:106].

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ESTATE: At a selectman's meeting 31 January 1660[1] eight men, including Thomas French, were granted liberty to "clear and break up a parcel of land at Scott's hill to have two acres each for six years upon condition that they sow four bushels of good hay seed on every acre, to keep up the fence a year so that the English grass should get head, the hay seed to be sown with the last crop" [EQC 3:271].

In his will, dated 3 August 1680 and proved 28 September 1680, "Thomas French Senior of Ipswich ... being weak of body" bequeathed to "Mary my beloved wife the bed whereon I used to lie, with all the appurtenances and furniture belonging thereto"; to "my son Thomas French" clothing; to "my son John French" one cow "to make up the full sum of £30 which I formerly promised him for his portion"; to "my daughter Mary Smith" one cow; to "my son Samuel French" a bed and bedding; "my sons Thomas and Samuel French" in consideration of £20 paid to "my son Ephraim French" as the remaining part of his portion, "my two sons Thomas and Samuel" shall receive the Pequod lands and division lot of marsh to be equally divided betwixt them; to "my son Thomas French" my dwelling house and homestead, also my lot in Labour-in-vain fields of twelve acres, also the rest of my cattle, stock, and moveable goods; to "my son Samuel" two acres of upland and two acres of meadow at Reedy marsh; "my son Thomas French" to give free liberty to "Mary my wife his mother" to dwell in the said house and to make use of any room or rooms thereof for her convenient accommodation ... likewise ... any such moveables as I do now leave in the hands of my son Thomas"; after her [Mary's] decease, "my son Thomas" shall deliver to "my three children John, Samuel and Mary" three of the biggest pewter dishes; "my two sons Thomas and Samuel" to provide for "their mother's" comfortable maintenance, and if she is not satisfied, they to allow her £9 paid by Thomas and 20s. paid by Samuel annually; and if she suffers sickness and the aforesaid £10 does not suffice, "my two sons Thomas and Samuel" shall supply her with necessaries and my lot in Labour-in-vain fields and two acres of meadow at Reedy Marsh shall stand bound respectively to my said wife during her natural life as security for the true performance of this my will as respecting her maintenance by my two sons; "my son Thomas French" sole executor [EPR 3:379-81].

The inventory of Ensign Thomas French was taken 25 August 1680 and totalled £217 15s. 6d. including £150 in real estate: "his dwelling house & barn & homestead with the privilege belonging," £70; "twelve acres of land at Labor in vain," £60; "two acres of land by Scotcs Lane," £10; and "two acres of marsh in the common field," £10 [EPR 3:380-81].

BIRTH: Baptized Assington, Suffolk, 27 November 1608, son of Thomas and Susan (Riddlesdale) French [Dudley Wildes Anc 64].

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DEATH: Ipswich 8 August 1680.

MARRIAGE: By 1632 Mary ____; she died at Ipswich 6 May 1681.

CHILDREN:

- i MARY, bp. Boston 23 September 1632 [BChR 278 (corrected from 1631)]; d. soon.
- ii MARY, bp. Boston 2 March 1633/4 [BChR 278]; m. by 1657 Robert Smith (called Mary Smith in father's will) [Amos Towne Anc 25-27].
- iii JOHN, b. about 1635 (deposed aged "about forty-eight" about March 1682 [EQC 8:329] unless this is someone else); m. by 1657 Phebe Keyes (son Thomas born Ipswich 25 May 1657), daughter of ROBERT KEYES.
- iv THOMAS, b. about 1636 (deposed aged 22 in 1656 [EQC 2:140], deposed aged "about forty-seven" in March 1683 [EQC 9:16], deposed aged "about forty-eight" about March 1684 [EQC 9:191]); m. Ipswich 29 February 1659/60 Mary Adams.
- v SARAH, b. say 1638; on 30 September 1656 "Hackaliah Bridges, accused by Sarah French of his getting her with child, and bound over, being brought by Sergeant French, was discharged" [EQC 2:2]; if she was a daughter of Thomas French, she had apparently died without issue prior to 1680, as she is not named in his will.
- vi SAMUEL, b. say 1641; convicted for fornication, 26 March 1667 [EQC 3:398]; d. Ipswich in 1688 (day and month not stated in town vital records), apparently unmarried.
- vii EPHRAIM, b. about 1643 (deposed in 1658 aged 15 [EQC 2:139]); d. Enfield, Connecticut, in September 1716, unmarried [Amos Towne Anc 50].

ASSOCIATIONS: Thomas French and his sister Alice had arrived in New England by 1632, and their two next younger sisters, Dorcas and Susan, came in 1633. Their parents and younger siblings sailed for New England after 1633, and are not included in this phase of the study. [See Parker-Ruggles 412-29, Dudley Wildes Anc 63-64 and NEHGR 142:250-52, 143:213-20, 363-64 for the ancestry of this group of French siblings.] Alice married THOMAS HOWLETT and Dorcas married first CHRISTOPHER PEAKE and then GRIFFIN CRAFTS (sketches for these families will be found elsewhere in this work). Susan may have been a servant in the household of John Winthrop Jr. for a time, but otherwise left no record in New England.

In a letter dated Groton 14 March 1632/3 John Bluett asked John Winthrop Jr. to remember him to "my schollers Thomas French and John Clarke" [WP 3:108].

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COMMENTS: With most of the adult male population of Ipswich, Thomas French signed the petition to keep Mr. John Winthrop Jr. in town, 21 June 1637 [WP 3:433].

Ensign Thomas French and Thomas French Jr. were sureties on the bond of Samuel French when young Samuel was charged with a misdemeanor with Lydia Browne, at court 26 March 1667 [EQC 3:398].

NICHOLAS FROST

ORIGIN: Unknown

MIGRATION: 1632

FIRST RESIDENCE: Damariscove

REMOVES: Kittery by 1634

OFFICES: At Saco Court 25 June 1640, sworn as constable of Piscataqua [MPCR 1:42], and fined 8 September 1640 for non-appearance [MPCR 1:79]. Kittery constable, 3 July 1660 [MPCR 2:95]. Petit jury, 2 July 1647, 2 July 1650, 17 October 1650, 25 October 1650, 28 June 1655 [MPCR 1:108, 143, 145, 155, 2:33] Grand jury, 16 October 1649, 11 March 1650/1, 28 June 1655, 4 July 1659, 7 July 1663 [MPCR 1:135, 159, 2:40, 75, 137-40, 144]. Timber warden from the mouth of the Piscataqua to the upper part of the river, 27 June 1648 [MPCR 1:127].

ESTATE: Philip Swaddon deposed on 27 August 1673 that thirty-eight or thirty-nine years earlier (i.e., 1634 or 1635) Thomas Wannerton granted to Nicholas Frost "a parcel of land up in Piscataqua River, now known by the name of Kittery ... which tract of land Mr. Thomas Wannerton gave to the said Nicholas Frost to come to be his neighbor" [YLR 3:13].

On 30 March 1649 Nicholas Frost gave a seven-year lease to Jeremy Sheires on "his new house and ground at Kittery" [MPCR 1:130-31].

At a court at Wells on 29 September 1663 "Lt. Charles Frost of Kittery, the eldest son & heir unto Nicho[las] Frost lately deceased, hath presented a certain instrument in the nature of a deed of gift made in September 1650 ... conceiving the said instrument ... to be the last will & testament of the said Nicholas his father." The court considered this and other documents, declared this not to be a valid will, appointed Charles Frost administrator of the estate, and ordered distribution of the estate as follows: eldest son Charles Frost to have a double portion (including the homestall) and £30 more; the residue of the estate to be equally divided among the other four children (each share to come to £105 12s. 7d.), and specifically William Leighton is to "have liberty to cut 3 loads of hay against the next winter out of Sturgeon Creek Marsh which was formerly his father-in-law's, John Frost is to have "the long marsh with

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