

HOLT MYSTERY

Among the earliest definite records of the name Holt in England are those of John Holt of Warwickshire, before 1272; those of Henry de la Holte of Worchestershire, 1273; those of William del Holt of Yorkshire. While it is not definitely known from which of the many lines of the family in England the first emigrants of the name to come to America were descended, it is recorded that the Holts were among the earliest settlers in this country. The first of the name in America was Randall or Randolph Holt who came over in The George in 1620. He married Mary Baily of Hog Island, North Carolina in 1626. He was 13 when he came over. They had two sons, John and Captain Michael Holt. (Descendants of John and Isabel Holt) Hog Island is off old Jamestown, Virginia and supposedly got its name because hogs were kept on the Island. Randall Holt appears in the 1624 Jamestown census indicating survivors of the 1922 Indian massacre of inhabitants of Jamestown. (Edward Hudson is also listed in that census.) That county later became James City County and Surry County is adjacent to it.

There is a record of a Robert Holt being born in 1605 in Rochdale, but after reviewing all Rochdale records from 1582 to 1641, there are nearly 40 Robert Holts who were baptised. Although there are reports of Robert marrying Dorothy Heywood in 1625, records could not be found for such. Supposedly, a Robert Holt married Martha HEYWOOD 29 Aug 1621 at Rochdale. Dorothe HEAWOOD married a Robert HOULTE 19 Dec 1625 at Manchester. From: Bruce Jackson, County Archivist, Lancashire England. Ref:-A1/A-S.B.

I believe that "our" Robert Holt and Dorothy Heywood were born about 1620. That is the only way to make sense of the following immigration information and that Dorothy was still having children in the 1650s (by Edward Hudson).

It is possible that Robert was living in Virginia much earlier, moving to Maryland in 1646. When Maryland and St. Mary's city were established in 1631, settlers who moved there from Virginia were also considered immigrants. One hundred acres were to allowed for each person transported to Maryland. For example, Thomas Cornwallis secured 4000 acres by bringing in immigrants. He "brought in 12 'servants' in the Ark, 5 more from the death of his partner. In 1634, he brought in 4 from Virginia, one of whom was Cuthbert Fenwick (listed in some of Robert Holt's court records); in 1635, he brought in 9; five more in 1640, 12 in 1641, one in 1646 and seven in 1651.

In Gustav Skordas' "Early Immigrants to Maryland", 1912, "Robert Holt, immigrated 1646 with wife and 4 children" (2, fol, 229, 550) Copied from Land Office records in Annapolis, Libers F, A, and B. Much contained in no. 8510, Skordas. A few records beyond the year 1655.

1998 The New Early Settlers of Maryland comprises 34,326 entries from Gust Skordas' Early Settlers of Maryland and Carson Gibb's Supplement to the Early Settlers of Maryland.

Holt, Robert AB&H:3,32 Film No.:

"In 1646 transported himself, Dorothy, his wife, and four children; 28 years old in 1648 Transcript. 1:232-5; 2:229,403,550; 5:74"

If Robert was 28 in 1648, (actual citation verified later says "28 years or thereabouts"), he could

have been born between 1618 and 1621. Assuming he was from Rochdale Parish of Lancashire England we researched those births. We found no Robert born in 1618, 1619 or 1620. In 1621 we found ROBERT, b. February 11, filius (son) of Adami Holte and Marie Haworth.

Where, exactly, did Robert and Dorothy Holt live? Some court records are of Virginia and some are of Maryland. The Isle of Kent is mentioned in one property transaction. It was the first settlement in Maryland. On 20 Jun 1632 the Isle of Kent was included in the boundaries described in the charter for the new province of Maryland granted by Charles I to Lord Baltimore (Calvert). When William Clayborne resisted Lord Baltimore's claim to the island, the proprietor ordered his brother, Leonard Calvert, first Governor of Maryland, to seize the settlement, and it was following this dispute that new Virginia Governor John Harvey deposed Clayborne as Secretary of State. The Isle of Kent nevertheless remained a Protestant bastion and a thorn in the side of Maryland for many years to come. Lord Baltimore established a Catholic colony although Protestants were permitted to worship. On April 5, 1652, a group of men signed an oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth of England, a Henry Clay among them. He is mentioned in one of Robert Holt's transactions. St. Mary's court heard Robert's bigamy charges. Subsequently, he asked for the case to be heard in a Protestant court. It seems certain that our descendants are of this Robert. The Robert Holt and Edward Hudson shown in James City records may or may not be this same family. James City and St. Mary's County are probably 30-40 miles apart and could have been reached by river or by Chesapeake Bay. Some think Edward Hudson was a 3rd generation descendant of explorer Henry Hudson.

If he immigrated in 1646, the following two records are curious, occurring in 1638-43:
From Virginia Land Records, James City County, Patents Issued During the Regal Government, Page 215-216

"624: ROBERT HOLT and Richard BELL, March 2, 1638. 500 acres on Chickaominy river, up towards the head of Checqueroes Creek. Note--- "This pat. renewed in the name of Robert Holt the 23rd July 1640"

Was this a different Robert Holt, or was he here earlier? A transaction in 1647 in Maryland is between Robert and a John BELL.

**From Valentine Papers, Vol. III, Waddy Family, Brunswick County Records, Page 1589
YORK COUNTY (VA) RECORDS**

Anthony Wady (Wadye) Deed from, to ROBERT HOLT, the land and housing said Wady bought of Capt. John West, Jan. 6, 1643. D.O.W. 2, p. 116. (D.O.W.= Deeds, Orders, Wills)

Virginia became a royal colony in 1624. In 1627 Sir George Yeardley determined that, as governor, he had the power to issue patents for settlers who met the old company definition of a planter. In 1654 the Privy Council finally agreed, and millions of acres were granted to individuals claiming headrights during the seventeenth century. An immigrant had 3 years to build a house or plant one acre.

From "Abstracts of the Proprietary Records of the Provincial Court of Maryland 1637-1658"
V.L. Skinner;
Patent Record F. 206 1647 June 20: ROBERT HOLT demanded of John BELL.

F. 209 1647 June 23: EDWARD HUDSON demanded a warrant to bring Thomas Munday to court. Edmund Hudson demanded of Thomas Munday.

F 229 1647. August 30 ROBERT HOLT demanded 400 a. for transporting self, wife and 4 children in 1646. Warrant for 200 a. on north side of Pato. River near Her. Creek and next to Will. Smoote. [Potomac River?]

Francis Posey is bound to ROBERT HOLT. Date: 18 March 1646. Signed Fra. Posey.

Witnesses: Edmond Smyth, John Bell.

F 242 1647 October 4 ROBERT HOLT vs. Cuthbert Phenick.

F 550 1649 March 23 ROBERT HOLT by EDWARD HUDSON demanded 400 a. for transporting self, his wife and 4 children 3 years ago. Warrant to south of Putuxent River. [By the mid and late 1600s respectively, colonists spread upriver to Mt. Calvert and Billingsley Point, two colonial mansions 44 miles (71 km) upriver from the Chesapeake that are today part of Patuxent River Park.]

"Court and Testamentary Business, Proceedings of the Council of Maryland", Volume 3, p. 325. (1647) (Note: spellings, for the most part, are copied from original papers.)

August 30th. This bill byndeth me Francis Posey hy heirs or assignes to pay or cause to be payed, unto Robert Holt or his assignes one thousand and thirty pounds of sound merchantable tobbaço in caske, and five barrells of good sound Indian corn, to be payed the tenth day of November next, ensuing the date hereof, likewise, I Francis Posey do bind my crop for his security, and am not to dispose of it untill the sayd Holt be satisfied. Witness my hand this eighteenth of March, one thousand six hundred and fowerty six. X Francis Posey.

p. 330, 1647:

Robert Holt complaineth against *Cuthbert Phenick* gent in an action of damage to the value of 1030 pounds of tobbaço and caske by wrongfully attaching a crop of Francis Posy made over to him.

[In April, 1650 Cuthbert Phenick, a Protestant, was elected as a burgess to an Assembly at St. Mary's. This Lower house of the Assembly was composed of fourteen burgesses, and bills had to be passed by the major part of both the Upper and Lower houses before the Governor signed them.]

p. 450, 1648:

The deposition of Robert Holt AGED 28 YEARS OR THEREABOUTS taken 23rd of October 1648 this depositioner sayth that George Manners did desire Henry Clay to speak to Edward Commins to send him his pestle that he stole. Whereupon this depositioner told him that it was a hard matter to tax a man with such a thing. But the said Manners made answer again, that he did tax him and would tax him. These words being spoke in this deposition hearing sometime in May last. And further he sayth not. Robert Holt "R"

p. 516, 1649:

July 20th, 1649. This bill bindeth me ROBERT HOLT of Maryland, planter, my heirs, executors and assignes to pay or cause to be pain unto Paul Simpson of St. Inegoës Marriner the full and just sum of 2300 pounds of merchantable leaf tobacco and cask his heirs executors and assignes

by or before the tenth day of November next. And for true payment thereof, I do by these presents bind over my cattell at Kent viz: two milch Cows, one 2 year old heifer, 2 calves viz: one cow calf and one bull calf and one *shallopp* sometime belonging unto the said Paul with all her rigging compleat, likewise all my crop at the Isle of Kent now in the ground. Witnes my hand the day and year above written. Sign. Robert Holt

[A shallop is a flat-bottomed boat propelled by oars or sail, usually in shallow water. Not usually used for freight, but pleasure.]

From "Abstracts of the Proprietary Records of the Provincial Court of **Maryland** 1637-1658"

V.L. Skinner;

Patent Record F, 171 ROBERT HOLT assigned his right to 400 a. to George Manners. Date: 19 December 1650. Witness: William Eltonhead.

Edward Hudson defaulted on a bond in 1650 and the court allowed ROBERT HOLT to "attach his estate" for the cost. (p. 135)

Patent Record F, 232 November 3, 1651

Robert Holt deposed on 3 November 1651 that Dorothy his wife threatened and Edward Hudson compacted with said Dorothy. Andrew Watson deposed that July/August 1650 he was at house of Edward Hudson and saw said Edward and Dorothy wife of Robert Holt go to bed together. F 233: Dorothy and Edward told deponent that Robert Holt was dead. Date: 3 November 1651 Rose Smith, age 42 deposed that September last that wife of Robert Holt indicated that she would kill him. Date: 4 November 1651

Depositions taken by Lt. Nicholas Gwyther: George Dolty, age 24, deposed that he came to house where Edward Hudson and wife of Robert Holt lived. Date: 6 November 1651.

Humphrey Howell, age 57, deposed that in June 1650 he went to house of Edward Hudson and Dorothy wife of Robert Holt lay in the bed.

The Deposition of Humphry Howell aged 57 years or thereabouts

This Deponent Saith that Some time in June in the year 1650 he was going to the well for water, he the Said Depont called at the Said Edward Hudson's house, and the Said Edward rising in his Shirt opened the door and the Said Depont going to the fire did See the place where the Said Edward had lain in the Same bed where the Said Dorothy the wife of Robert Holt lay at that time which was laid by the fire And further this Depont Saith not

The mark of Humphry Howell

Jurat 6 Novembr 1651. coram me Nicho Gwyther

F 234: Date 6 November 1651. John Medcalf (gentleman) deposed that he heard Dorothy Holt curse her husband and her son Richard. He knew nothing between Edward Hudson and said Dorothy. Date 6 November 1651. Henry Cox deposed on 6 November 1651 that he lived in house with Robert Holt and Edward Hudson from August to mid-October and knew of no grievances. Nor did Edward Hudson and Dorothy wife of Robert Holt go to bed together. Edward Hudson and Dorothy wife of Robert Holt were arrested and brought to court.

Depositions by Andrew Watson, Rose Smith, George Dolty, Humphry Howell, Mr. John Metcalf, and said Robert Holt. Edward Hudson to be punished.

F. 235 Dorothy Holt to be punished.

The following is a more complete description of the adultery proceedings:

In the Maryland Archives continued (10-109/112): November 6, 1651: The St. Marys court heard depositions concerning domestic problems between Robert Holt and his wife, Dorothy Heywood Holt. Robert reported that Dorothy threatened to murder Him. A witness reported that he saw Dorothy and Edward Hudson "goe to bed together as if they were man and wife", with other witnesses stating the same thing. One witness stated that Dorothy "hoped her husband might rott limb from limbe" and that her "heart was soe hardened against him she would never darken his door again." She held resentment toward her son, Richard, stating that she hoped he would end his days on the gallows. As punishment, Edward Hudson was to be whipped and to live a least 30 miles from the Holts. Dorothy was to be whipped and live at least five miles from Robert, not with Edward Hudson.

In "Crime and Punishment in Early Maryland", by R. Semmes, p. 184. This book recounts the above. It states further: "After hearing all the evidence, the court found Dorothy and Edward Hudson guilty of adultery. Hudson was sentenced to receive thirty lashes, while Dorothy was to be given fifty stripes. In order to prevent Edward from having further adultery with Dorothy, he was to leave St. Marys. If he returned without the permission of the Governor, he would receive another whipping. Dorothy was told that she must live at least five miles away from her husband's house, and if in the future she soiled his reputation by loose living, she would be severely whipped. After this sentence was pronounced, the court reversed itself. The judge told them if they made a humble submission, acknowledged their offense, asked for pardon and promised amendment, then the Governor might be willing to remit the punishment which the court had ordered. Dorothy and Robert would be allowed to live together as man and wife if they came to an agreement.

From "Abstracts of the Proprietary Records of the Provincial Court of Maryland 1637-1658" V.L. Skinner;

F 267 (1651) Henry Pountney vs. Robert Holt. Cites defendant, Richard Ware and Edward Hudson.

F. 392 Thomas Connery by his attorney Friendship Toung vs. Edward Claxton by his attorney Mark Phepo. Cites bill of Edward Claxton to EDWARD HUDSON attorney of ROBERT HOLT and assigned by Holt to Connery. Satisfaction on 28 February 1652.

F 505 ROBERT HOLT (planter in St. George's Hundred) bound himself to Mr. Nicholas Cawseen. Date: 28 January 1653. Witnesses: Ralphe Crouche, Zachay Zacharis.

F 117: 1651 March 20 Richard Ware, ROBERT HOLT, and EDWARD HUDSON (plantars, all of St. Michael's Hundred) were bound to Henry Pountnell. Date: 24 February 1650. Witness: John Metcalf, Thomas Leech.

1654: From **Virginia** Land Records, [James City County] Patents issued During the Regal Government, Page 231: a Robert Holt, Apl. 6, 1654. 1550 acres. **In James City Island, near Black Point.**

Source Bibliography: "LAND NOTES, 1634-1655." In **Maryland** Historical Magazine, Vol. 6:1 (Mar. 1911), pp. 60-70; vol. 6:2 (June 1911), pp. 195-203; vol. 6:3 (Sept. 1911), pp. 262-270; vol. 6:4 (Dec. 1911), pp. 365-373.

Page: 369 (Date?)

Robert Holt was issued a land warrant to lay out 400 acres "in any place within this province **southward of Patuxent River**". (Patents ABH.32) Edward (Edmund) Hudson was associated with Robert Holt and was living in the same household.

From Maryland and Virginia Colonials, Vol. I, Ellyson, Page 238

March 19, 1655: Robert Ellyson appointed a member of the Committee for the Leavie headed by Major ROBERT HOLT of James City. [Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1619-1658/9. p. 95] (Could this be our Robert, or a descendant of Randolph Holt?)

Note: James City (or cittie [sic] as it was then called) was one of four incorporations established in the Virginia Colony in 1619 by the proprietor, the Virginia Company. The plantations and developments were divided into four "incorporations" or "cities", as they were called. These were Charles City, Elizabeth City, Henrico City, and James City, which included the seat of government for the colony at Jamestown. Each of the four "citties" (sic) extended across the James River, the main conduit of transportation of the era. In 1634, under Royal authority, a portion became James City Shire, later the County of James City (aka James City County).

There is also EDWARD HUDSON in James City in 1624 in a census taken in Jamestown after the massacre of 1622. Randall Howlett (Holt) is also listed in that census. Researchers of Randall Holt state that Randall was age 18 in 1625.

In "Crime and Punishment in Early Maryland", by R. Semmes

On December 4, 1654, Robert and Dorothy divorced by clerk William Wilkinson, the clerk later denying that the divorce was granted.

On January 28, 1657, Robert was married to Christian Bonnefield by William Wilkinson, clerk.

On October 6, 1658, a jury heard charges of bigamy against ROBERT HOLT, hearing that he married CHRISTIAN BONNEFIELD "his owne wife DOROTHY being then & yett living".

Clerk Wilkinson testified as to the marriage but denied granting a divorce from his wife,

DOROTHY. The jury convicted him of bigamy, but HOLT appealed and asked for a **Protestant** jury. (MD Archives 41-149/151, 228/230, 243/244.)

On December 10, 1657 (Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 1656-1664, Part I, p. 29) was assigned by Vincent Staford to EDWARD HUDSON a land patent. Said assignment is recorded in **Lancaster County**. In the same source, p. 116, RICHARD HOLT sold one hundred acres of land to EDWARD HUDSON in 1664. In November 1662 EDWARD HUDSON sold 300 acres "with all houses and buildings belonging and now occupied" to Vincent Stanford. (Old Rappahannock Deed Book, Part II, 1656-1664, p. 7)

Provincial Court Proceedings, 1658 p228-229

Maryland Archives Volume 41

Was called afore the Board ROBERT HOLT, & Mr William Wilkinson Clerk, The sd HOLT being charged by Mr Attorney wth bigamy & Mr Willm Wilkinson as Accessary in Contryuing the same & prefers this Inditmt, Vid Inditemt fol. 108.

The Examination of William Wilkinson Clerk taken the 9th of Septembr 1658 who Sayth That hee did joyne in marriage ROBERT HOLT & CHRISTIAN BONNEFALD, But denyeth tht hee did any thing by way of diuorce betweene ROBERT HOLT & his former Wife DOROTHY, Notwithstanding confesseth, tht he drue & signed as a wittnes tht paper peoduced by ROBT HOLT, bearing date 4th of December wch conteyned a release of all claime of marriage from the sd DOROTHY to the sd ROBERT, Wch paper hee sayth hee did draw att their request upon her Confession tht shee had Two Bastards by EDWARD HUDSON, & refusall to bee reconciled to ROBERT HOLT, by me *Philip Calvert*. Willm Wilkinson.

[Philip Calvert was the son of George Calvert's (Lord Baltimore) second wife, Anne, b. in 1628]

The Examinaon of Willm Haynes taken uppon oath by me *Philip Calvert*. The Depont sayth tht hee was present when Willm Wilkinson did ioyne ROBT HOLT & CHRISTIAN BONNAFEILD in marriage sometime in January last & further sayth not.

Septembr 24th 1658. Willm Heynes

To bee Remembred tht on the 24th day of Septembr came **Willm Haynes** before me **Philip Calvert** Esqr & acknowledgeth himselfe to owe & stand indebted unto the Ld Propr in the full summe of one Thowsand pownds of Tob & Cask. If hee shall not come to the next Prouinciall Court to bee holden for this prouince att St Leonards the 5th day of Octobr next, then & there to giue euidence agst ROBT HOLT, CHRISTIAN BONNEFEILD, Willm Wilkinson or eyther of them tht shall be there indicted for ffelony against the Statute 7o Jacobi Regis agst Poligamy Septembr ut Supra. Philip Calvert.

The Examinaon of James Hall taken uppon oath before Josias ffendall Esqr Leiutenant of this prouince, The Depont sayth tht hee was psnt when **Willm Wilkinson** did joyne ROBERT HOLT & CHRISTIAN BONNEFEILD in marriage & further sayth not.

Octobr 2d James H 1 Hall

The same Recogniz as **Willm Haynes** hath entred, **James Hall** entreth into allso for himselfe Philip Calvert

The Examinaon of ROBT HOLT taken this 17th Septembr 1658 Who Sayth tht hee was marriedy sometime in January last to CHRISTIAN BONNEFEILD by Willm Wilkinson parson, who tould him the sd HOLT, tht hee was free to marry any Body, by reason of mutuall discharges from the Bond of Matrimony (as they conceiued) Guyen betweene him the sd ROBT HOLT & DOROTHY his former Wife dated 4th of Decembr 1654. That there was pent att their marriage **Willm Haynes, James Hall & his Wife, Benjamin Hamond & his Wife**

230 Provincial Court Proceedings, 1658.

The Examinaon of Christian BONNEFIELD taken this 17th of Septembr 1658 Who sayth as shee best remembreth shee was marriedy to ROBT HOLT the Thursday before Candlemas day Jast by

Willm Wilkinson Parson, That shee had neuer married to ROBERT HOLT, but tht the sd Wilkinson sayd, shee & the sd Holt might lawfully marry, & tht diuers times coming to him to know his Opinion in itt, telling him of her former husband & ROBERTS HOLTS former Wife. Hee still told her shee might mary to any Body by me Philip Calvert.

Other Euidences were also made appeare out of the Records by Mr Attorney. And after some time spent The Jury agreeing, bring in their Verdict Endorsed on the Writt Bill a Vera for the whole.

1662 Court and Testamentary Business, Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1661-1675" Volume 3, p. 463. (1661)

To the Right Honorable *Charles Calvert*, Esq., Lt. Generall of Maryland

[*Charles Calvert was the 3rd Lord Baltimore, born 1637*]

The Humble Peticion of CHRISTIAN HOLT, als BONNFIELD, sheweth that whereas your Peticioner to all the Inhabitants adjacent is well knowne to have brought a considerable estate into your Lordships Province and hath lived in a full and plentifull manner till such time as her unfortunate marriage hapened with ROBERT HOLT. She then having a considrable estate in her possession. And whereas since it hath pleased God to take away the said ROBERT HOLT, he having in his life time confirmed all his worldly good to your Peticioner being inconsiderable to the value of what she had when she was first married to him wince with decease of the said Holt your Peticioner being thus virtually possess by deed of guild is nevertheless molested and threatened to be turned out of doors into the woods by one DAVID HOLT, his said sonne. The premises considered your petitioner humbly begs your Honors Just and pious consideration to redresse her injuries she being always ready to give such just accounts as shall in law be required of the same and she as in duty bound shall pray. Ordered that the Petition is granted and that the petitioner CHRISTIAN BONIEFIELD als HOLTE does give the Secretary sufficient security that no part of the estate mentioned either in the deed of guild dated March 2nd 1661 or peticon, be imbezzeled before such time as the Court have determined to whome the said estate belongeth. Att a Councell held at **St. Marys** the 28th of November 1662, present the Lt. General Chancellour and Secretary

March 13, 1672: Deeds and Wills No. 1 Old Rappahannock County 1665-1677, p. 45 (original pp. 127-128)

"In the name of God Amen. EDWARD HUTSON his Last Will and Testament lyeing very sick and weake but perfect in Sence and memory committing of my body to the ground and my Soul to Almighty God, Amen. I EDWARD HUTSON do give unto my **Son John Barton** two cows the one called by the name of Young Coale and the other called by the name of Crompell with all the increase for the future more I give unto him three Bills contening fower thousand pounds of tobacco and cask. Furthermore I EDWARD HUTSON doe make DOROTHY HUTSON my true and lawfull Wife my whole Executor and all moveables and unmoveables during her lifetime. Furthermore I do give unto ELIZABETH HOLT one cow calfe the first calfe that falls with all the future increase. So haveing no more to say but committing of my body to the ground and my soule to the Almighty Amen in the year of our Lord 1672 being the 13th day of March Witnessed by us and signed and sealed in the presence of us, **Arthur Hodges, Peter Hopgood, Edward Hutson.** Arthur Hodges, aged thirty-three years or thereabouts doth depose and swear that this is the last Will and Testament of EDWARD HUTSON and that he was in pfect memory when he

signed it.