

## George BUNKER of Nantucket

George BUNKER (460).

American records clearly prove his widow's name was Jane. English records show marriage to Elizabeth Godfree. First child named Elizabeth, son Wm baptized in Bedfordshire as son of Geo. There was no mother's name in the record as was the custom then. There is no known record of any marriage between George and Jane of any last name. The first mention of Jane as Jane Godfrey is in the Nantucket records compiled 200 years after her death and it is noted that the records are only conjecture. Elizabeth could have been named Elizabeth Jane and used the name Jane but there is no evidence of that either. I believe a researcher saw the name Jane on George's will and saw the marriage record of George and Elizabeth Godfrey and just assumed that they were the same person. No Jane Godfrey has been found in America that could have married George. No English record has been found of a Jane Godfrey marrying George Bunker. The first two children, William and Elizabeth could have been the children of Elizabeth Godfrey and she could have died. George then could have married another woman named Jane and their children born in America, Mary, Ann and Martha, could have been the children of Jane. No records have been found to support any of these theories. All we have is the marriage of George and Elizabeth Godfree in Maulden, the baptism of William, son of Geo. Bunker in Tingrith and George's probate naming his wife as Jane and his children as Elizabeth, William, Mary, Ann and Martha.

BFA believes George's parents were Timothy and Elizabeth (BFA Banner p 1056).

This George Bunker has been referred to for years as George of Nantucket. However, we have no evidence that George was ever on Nantucket. The early proprietors of Nantucket included Richard Swain who was from Salisbury as were most of the first proprietors of Nantucket. Their first meeting after purchasing the property from Mayhew was held in Salisbury on 2 February 1659 after George Bunker died. The first ten purchasers decided to take in partners and added 10 more men. Then they took in partners who were granted a 1/2 share in the company. None of these were Bunkers. George Bunker died 26 May 1658 and Richard Swain married George's widow, Jane Bunker, on 15 July 1658. Shortly thereafter, the Swains moved to Nantucket. Jane gave birth to a son, Richard Swain, Jr. in 1660 and she died in 1662. At that time Elizabeth Bunker was 16, William 14, Mary 10, Ann 8 and Martha only 6 years old. Richard Swain survived until 1682 and raised these Bunker children. When they grew up, Richard Swain deeded all but Elizabeth sufficient land on Nantucket so that the aggregate totaled a full share in the company. Elizabeth had married Thomas Look, Jr. by that time and he already owned a full share. When the original 10 proprietors took in partners, Thomas Look, Sr. was taken as a partner by Richard Swain. We do not know if Richard Swain and George Bunker even knew each other. We do not know if they were partners in business. If they were, this was not reflected in George's property transactions. The marriage of Jane and Richard less than 2 months after George's death was not unusual. Widows had no control over their property. The court would have named guardians for George's children. It was not the least bit unusual for guardians to squander away all the property of their charges. Many widows married immediately after the death of their husband to avoid these kinds of problems. Richard Swain had also been married previously and was widowed. He must have been a good man as he took care of the Bunker children after Jane died and he gave them Nantucket land when they became adults. It seems like he purchased the share of Robert Pike and this was the share that was given to the Bunker children. If Jane and Elizabeth Godfrey were not the same person, at least Elizabeth and William Bunker were twice orphaned. An MtDNA test of a direct female descendant of Elizabeth Bunker Look compared to an MtDNA test of a direct female descendant of Mary, Ann or Martha may be the only way we will ever determine if Elizabeth Godfrey and Jane Bunker were the same person or even related.

George was baptized on 25 Apr 1621 at Tingrith, Bedfordshire, England.

George BUNKER (460) married Elizabeth GODFREY (Godfree) (3901) on 5 May 1644 at Bedfordshire, England, Malden Parish.

George moved to Ipswich, MA about 1650 after he was supposed to have married Jane in England ca 1645/50, then to Topsfield MA by 1652 (p. 25, BFA Gen 1965). There is no source for this conjecture.

In 1655 sworn as a freeman at the Salem Quarterly Court, George Bunker of Topsfield. He died on 26 May 1658 at Topsfield, Essex Co, Massachusetts, at age 37. He died of drowning when his wagon tipped over while crossing a stream. His son, William was with him and survived. On 26 Jun 1658 inventory of estate at £300, 26 June 1658. The estate consisted of cows, heifers and calves, one ewe and two lambs, a cart, plows and tackle, swine, guns and sword, brass and pewter, table, chairs, trays, tubs and barrels, cow pelt skins and "wheeles", rope and bandaliers, bedding, linen and woolen and thirteen pound cotton wool, wearing clothing, crop of corn in the ground, house and land, namely meadow and upland consisting of 312 acres. The administration of the estate was granted to George's widow, Jane Bunker. Inventory was taken by Thomas Howlett, Francis Peabody, Richard Huton and Abraham Redington.

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