

GENERATION TWO (B)

JOSEPH ISHAM (B)

1704-1798

Joseph, the eighth of John and Jane Parker Isham's nine children, was not yet 10 years old when his father died, and only 15 when his mother passed away. (Although not enumerated among her bequests in her will, Joseph's mother left him a cow, and as the saying goes, "he milked it for all it was worth.") John Isham had made provisions in his will for Joseph to be taken in by Ebenezer Goodspeed. Joseph remained in the Goodspeed household until he was 14, at which time he had to fend for himself.

An Isham family history claims that Joseph went to work for a man in Sandwich.

The man is believed to be **Jireh Swift (B 2)**, the father of **Susannah (B 1)** the woman Joseph would marry in 1730.

A year after his marriage, Joseph bought 44+acres of land in Colchester, where the Isham family would establish Isham roots for a number of decades.

Perspective:

While there was a *Mayflower* in the Isham family history (the kind that sailed the Atlantic), there was no *Mayflower* of the moving van kind in the early chapters of the Isham story. Reading that one branch of the family moved from Hingham to Barnstable or from Colchester to Hartford might not appear to be an arduous task, but that's because 21st century descendants of John Isham think of a New England landscape covered with asphalt highways running from north to south and from east to west.

It is hard for anyone born in the last 100 years to imagine New England being a vast wilderness.

But for the Isham ancestors of the 17th century, the land they called home was primeval.

There were no 17th Century Real Estate agents waiting for them to show them colonial style homes. There was no Home Depot to buy tools. No Gristedes or ShopRite to load a shopping cart with produce, meats and baked goods. There was, in a word: nothing.

The New England that greeted the Isham ancestors was a blank canvas, save for the huts inhabited by the native population. Joseph Isham was a pioneer in every sense of the word. It took more than courage to leave the comfort of Barnstable and Sandwich where his predecessors had notched out the beginnings of homesteads that would grow into towns, villages and cities.

In *A Survey of the Ishams in England and America : eight hundred and fifty years of history and genealogy* an Isham family historian wrote in regard to Joseph Isham: "We may think of him as living in a loghouse or even in a dugout, as many early Connecticut settlers did. Joseph must have worked hard here, clearing the land of trees and rocks, building stone walls and bringing a farm under cultivation. Possibly he built a better dwelling from the first. We would like to think that, leaving Susannah at her father's house in Sandwich, he traveled to then far off Connecticut, selected his land, erected a shelter upon it, brought Susannah to it and commenced home life. If so, he probably went by boat to New London or up the Connecticut River to Middletown, whither many from the Cape were arriving to make new homes about this time, going from there to his destination on foot or by an ox team. While we don't know for certain why Joseph moved to Colchester, there are some land records that show a land deal between Joseph and Daniel and Nathaniel Loomis. The Loomis family was to play an integral role in the Isham family. Many of Joseph's descendants married into the Loomis family." Colchester had been settled some twenty-five years before by an excellent class of people. Its west parish (Westchester), at this time largely uncleared, was filling up rather rapidly by sons of the original pioneers, reinforced by many worthy young men from eastern Massachusetts, with some from Hadley and Hatfield and older towns in the Connecticut Valley." Susannah Swift Isham passed away in 1745 at age 46, leaving Joseph a widower with six children ages two through 12. They laid her body to rest in the Center Cemetery of the West Parish. Sadly, son Jirah died two years later having just celebrated his seventh birthday.

About 1770, when about 65 years old, Joseph deeded the property over to sons, Joseph, Jr and Capt John Isham.

He probably continued to live with them even after being a widower for nearly three decades,

Joseph married Temperance Calkin in Norwich on May 27, 1773 at New Concord parish.

Temperance Isham died at the age of 92 on Nov 22. 1801 and was buried next to her husband and his first wife.

Children of Joseph and Susannah Swift Isham:

(all of them born in Colchester)

Abigail b: 21 May 1732 m. Hubbard

Jane b: 2 Feb 1734 m. Abner Dean

Joseph, Jr. b: 15 Oct 1735 d. 1810 m. 1st. Sarah Bulkeley m. 2nd. Esther Taintor

Susannah b. 14 Feb 1737/1738 m. Nehemiah Jr. Waterman;

Jirah b. 0 Sep. 1740, d. 1747;

John b. 17 May 1742, m. Eunice Baldwin