

# THE GORHAM FAMILY

The Gorham family were originally French. The French spelling was DeGorran and they came from La Tanniere near the Brittany border. Several of the family went to England in the Eleventh Century following William the Conqueror and the Norman Invasion of the British Isles.

Our Gorham line comes from Northamptonshire where they lived for several generations. Before that I have no records.

Ralph Gorham and his son John came to Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1635. John's son, Shubael Gorham, married Puella Hussey. Their daughter, Deborah Gorham, married Beriah Fitch and their daughter, Eunice Fitch, married Benjamin Barnard. Benjamin and Eunice's daughter, Matilda Barnard, married Henry Canaday and thus these lines all became a part of our Canaday heritage.

The bulk of the following information comes from the 1888 book, GENEALOGICAL NOTES OF BARNSTABLE FAMILIES, by C. F. Swift from the Amos Otis Papers.

I will begin back in England.

## JAMES GORHAM

James was born in Benefield, Northampton, England in about 1550. In 1572 he married Agnes Bernington in Benefield. They had one son, Ralph, born in 1575 and then James died in 1576. I know naught else.

## RALPH GORHAM

Ralph was born in Benefield, Northamptonshire in 1575. He obviously married, but I have no name for his wife or anything about her.

Ralph Gorham came to America in 1635. The ship's list for the *Phillip*, show a Thomas Gorham age 19 and John Gorham age 18. Whether or not these were his son's I do not know. His son John Gorham was baptized in 1620 so they most likely were his children. I assume he was on the same boat. There is never a mention of a wife in America. So again, I assume she died in England probably in the late 1620s or early 1630s.

Ralph Gorman was in Plymouth (or the Plymouth Colony at least) in 1637 when he was granted land on which to build a house on October 2, 1637. In 1638 he was referred to as '*Ralph the elder*' indicating he had a son named Ralph as well. However, only his son, John Gorman, had his birth recorded and John was the only one mentioned in the records of the Plymouth Colony.

Ralph Gorham is mentioned in 1642 but he was not on any later records. As he was sixty seven years old he probably died in about 1643. His son John inherited his plantation.

## **JOHN GORMAN**

John and his descendants are the only ones listed in the Plymouth colony throughout the Seventeenth century, so even if there were other sons, only he survived.

John was baptized in Benefield, Northamptonshire in England on January 28, 1620/21. He was probably born about 1618. He was raised in the Puritan faith and was a leather tanner by trade.

On January 8, 1643/44 he married Desire Howland in Plymouth. Desire was a daughter of John Howland and Elizabeth Tilley. She was born in Plymouth on April 24, 1627.

It is through Desire Howland that we have two '*Mayflower Lines*'. Her father, her mother and her mother's parents all came over on the *Mayflower* and landed at Provincetown and finally landed in Plymouth in 1620. For more on these families, see the upcoming section on THE MAYFLOWER FAMILIES.

In 1646, John and Desire moved north along the coast to the new town of Marshfield. He was chosen Constable there in 1648. He became a freeman there in 1650 and in 1651 was a member of the Grand Inquest of the Colony.

In 1652, he moved to Cape Cod and settled in Yarmouth and purchased part of the Hallett farm. He had some 100 acres, most of which lay in the town of Barnstable. He operated both a grist mill and a tannery in Yarmouth. He was a deputy to the Plymouth Colony Court in 1653.

In 1669 he was granted a large portion of land in Swansea, Massachusetts. He didn't seem to go there immediately as in 1673 and 1674 he was a selectman in the town of Barnstable.

In 1675, John was made a Captain of the militia from Yarmouth in the war with King Phillip, an Indian chief who vowed to run the white men out of his land. He led his troops in the decisive battle of December 19, 1675 that broke the will of the Indians.

John Gorham developed flu from the cold and died in Swansea and was buried on the lands he owned by never occupied. He died February 5, 1675/76.

As a reward for service in the war with King Phillip, soldiers were given lands in Maine and the town was named Gorham, Maine in John's honor.

John was a resident of Yarmouth at the time of his death, but soon his widow moved to live with her son in Barnstable. She, Desire Gorham, died there December 13, 1683.

The following is what I know about the twelve children of John and Desire Gorham.

### **Desire Gorham**

Desire was the only child born in Plymouth. She was born April 2, 1644. She married Captain John Hawes of Yarmouth on October 7, 1661. He was born in Duxbury, a son of Edmond

Hawes. They lived in Yarmouth all their lives. She died there on June 30, 1700 at the age of fifty-six.

Their children were: **ELIZABETH, MARY, EDMUND, JOHN, JOSEPH, JABEZ, EBENEZER, ISAAC, DESIRE, BENJAMIN** and **EXPERIENCE**.

All people named Hawes on Cape cod descend from John and Desire Hawes.

## **Temperance Gorham**

Temperance was born in Marshfield on May 5, 1646. She married Edward Sturgis of Yarmouth in 1663, and they had **JOSEPH, SAMUEL, JAMES, DESIRE** and **EDWARD STURGIS**. Edward Sturgis died December 8, 1678.

On January 16, 1679/10, she married Thomas Baxter of Yarmouth. They had **JOHN, THOMAS** and **SHUBAEL BAXTER**.

Edward Sturgis left a large estate that was divided among his children. Thomas Baxter was a bricklayer and a soldier in Capt. John Gorman's Company. He lost the use of one hand in the battles and returned to operate Baxter's Grist Mill. They lived in West Yarmouth.

Temperance died on March 12, 1714/15. All the Baxters on Cape Cod descend from her and Thomas.

## **Elizabeth Gorham**

Elizabeth was born in Marshfield on April 2, 1648. She married Joseph Hallett, but I have no date for that. Joseph was a shoemaker in Barnstable, but they later moved to Middleborough. They had three daughters: **MARY, LOIS** and **ELIZABETH**. Elizabeth died by 1683

## **James Gorham**

James was born in Marshfield on April 28, 1650. As eldest son, he received a large piece of his father's land in Barnstable and built a large home there. At the time he was the wealthiest man in Barnstable.

He married Hannah Huckins, daughter of Thomas Huckins of Barnstable, on February 24, 1673. James was a farmer all his life.

He died in 1707 at age fifty-seven. Hannah died February 13, 1727/28 at the age of seventy-four.

Their children, all born in Barnstable, were: **DESIRE, JAMES, EXPERIENCE, JOHN, MEHITABLE, THOMAS, MERCEY, JOSEPH, JABEZ, SYLVANUS** and **EBENEZER GORHAM**.

## **John Gorham Jr.**

John Gorham was born in Marshfield on February 20, 1651/52. He took over his father's tanning business. He inherited his father's house and was the second wealthiest man in town.

On February 16, 1674/75 he married Mercey or Mary Otis, daughter of John Otis.

He served with his father in King Phillip's War. In 1690 he was made Lieut. Colonel in the militia that went to fight in Canada.

He died December 9, 1716 at age sixty-five. He is buried at the Unitarian Meeting House in Barnstable. Mercey died April 1, 1733

Their children, all born in Barnstable, were: **JOHN, TEMPERANCE, MARY, STEPHEN, SHUBAEL, JOHN, THANKFUL, JOB** and **MERCEY GORHAM**.

## **Joseph Gorham**

Joseph was born in Yarmouth on February 16, 1653/54. He was a shoemaker by trade. He died at age seventy-two on July 9, 1726.

He was married in 1678, his wife was Sarah Sturgis. She died in 1738.

Their children, all born in Yarmouth, were: **SARAH, JOSEPH, SAMUEL, JOHN, DESIRE, ISAAC, HEZEKIAH** and **JOSIAH GORHAM**.

## **Jabez Gorham**

Jabez was born in Barnstable on August 3, 1656. He is the predecessor of all the Gorhams in Rhode Island. He moved to Rhode Island as a young man, probably living on the lands in Swansea that were granted his father. He lived there during the King Phillip War and was wounded in the fighting.

He returned home to live with his mother in Yarmouth. He remained in Yarmouth until the early 1680s. He then moved to Bristol, Rhode Island. The land here was originally owned by his father and then by his brother, Shubael.

He married Hannah Sturgis, widow of John Gray, in 1676 in Yarmouth and all ten children were by her. The first three were born in Yarmouth and the rest in Bristol, Rhode Island.

He died in Bristol in April 1725. Hannah returned to Yarmouth, where she died.

His children were: **HANNAH, SAMUEL, JABEZ, SHUBAEL, ISAAC, JOHN, JOSEPH, HANNAH, BENJAMIN** and **THOMAS GORHAM**.

## Mercy Gorham

Mercy was born in Barnstable on January 20, 1658. About 1677, she married George Dennison. George was from New London, Connecticut and the family moved to Stonington, Connecticut. Mercy died there September 24, 1725. The family had briefly moved to Westerly, Rhode Island a few miles away, and George had died there on December 27, 1711.

The children, all born in Stonington were: **EDWARD, JOSEPH, MERCY, SAMUEL, DESIRE, ELIZABETH, THANKFUL** and **GEORGE DENNISON**.

## Lydia Gorham

Lydia was born in Barnstable on November 16, 1661. She married Col. John Thacher of Yarmouth on January 1, 1683/84. John had previously married Rebecca Winslow in 1661. She was a niece of Gov. Winslow. Rebecca died on July 15, 1683. He married Lydia six months later. There was a funny story about how John and Rebecca were at the Gorham house right after Lydia was born. John picked up the infant and told his wife that this little girl was going to be his second wife. Twenty-two years later, it happened.

Lydia died August 2, 1744 at age eighty-two. John died in Yarmouth on May 8, 1713 at age seventy-five.

Their children were: **LYDIA, MARY, DESIRE, HANNAH, MERCY, ANN, JOSEPH, BENJAMIN** and **THOMAS THATCHER**. Children by Thomas's first wife were: **Peter, Josiah, Rebecca, Bethia, John, Elizabeth, Hannah** and **Mary**.

## Hannah Gorham

Hannah was born in Barnstable on November 28, 1663. She married Joseph Weldon in about 1682. He was a sea captain and they soon moved to Cape May in New Jersey. She died there in 1728, he in 1727.

They had five children, the first two were born in Yarmouth, the rest in Cape May: **HANNAH, JOSEPH, MARY, EXPERIENCE** and **ISAAC WELDON (WHILLDIN)**.

## Shubael Gorham

Shubael was born in Barnstable on October 21, 1667. This is our line, and he is covered in the next section.

## SHUBAEL GORHAM

He was born October 21, 1667, and was the youngest child of Capt. John Gorham. It was intended that he go on to college, but the death of his father and his lack of drive put that thought aside. He became a carpenter in Barnstable.

He met and married Puella Hussey of Nantucket in 1696. Her family is covered in the preceding HUSSEY FAMILY HISTORY. He moved to the ocean side of Barnstable and built a home on the water in Hyannis Port. He ran a tavern and a fulling mill as well as following his trade as a carpenter.

Shubael died in 1750 at age eighty-two. Puella died a few years earlier. She was not mentioned in his will of 1748. He left his estate to his son George and his personal estate to his daughters.

While Shubael had never to my knowledge lived on Nantucket, he was a Quaker and the Nantucket Quakers all attended the Sandwich Monthly Meeting on Cape Cod. It would have been here that he met his wife and also where his children met the Nantucket people that they married.

Shubael and Puella had ten children all born in Barnstable.

## **George Gorham**

George was born January 29, 1696/97. He was a merchant and sea captain. He was married to Hannah Banks on July 20, 1726 in New Rochelle, New York. They lived in Greenwich and then Stamford, Connecticut. Both died in Stamford, he in April 1772 and she in about 1790. His sloop *HANNAH* was named for his wife.

In addition to sailing, George owned several grist mills in Stamford and Darien, Connecticut.

Their children were: **SHUBAEL, HANNAH, PUELLA, ABIGAIL, MARY, PHEBE, DANIEL, ANNE, JONATHAN, SARAH, GEORGE, JOSEPH** and **DEBORAH GORHAM**. The first was born in Greenwich, the next seven in Rye, New York and the rest in Stamford.

## **Abigail Gorham**

Abigail was born on March 31, 1699. She married James Lovell, Junior on October 25, 1716. They lived in Hyannis Port. She died June 28, 1778 at age seventy-nine. James died there May 25, 1761.

Their children were: **RUTH, ABIGAIL, DANIEL, DESIRE, SUSANNAH, DEBORAH, JAMES, LYDIA, PUELLA, SHUBAEL** and **ANNA LOVELL**.

## **Lydia Gorham**

Lydia was born May 14, 1701. She married on September 8, 1720 to Joseph Worth. Joseph was born in 1696 and was a son of John Worth and Miriam Gardner. They were married on Nantucket Island.

She moved to Nantucket and raised twelve children. She died March 1, 1768 and Joseph died July 14, 1790 at age ninety-four.

Their children were: **ANNA, ABIGAIL, NATHANIEL, REUBEN, SILVANUS, JOSEPH, LYDIA, MIRIAM, THOMAS, DANIEL, WILLIAM** and **SHUBAEL WORTH**.

## **Hannah Gorham**

Hannah was born July 28, 1703. She married William Manning on October 24, 1726. They moved to Nantucket. After William died (May 20, 1730), she married again on December 21, 1732 to William Stubbs of Nantucket. He was her brother-in-law, being the widower of Dinah Manning.

She died on Nantucket on October 16, 1751. William died in 1786 in Boston.

Their children were: **DAVID** and **PHEBE** by William Manning, and **REBECCA** and **ANN** by William Stubbs.

## **Theodate Gorham**

Theodate was born on July 18, 1705. She married Francis Coffin on November 2, 1729. Francis was a son of John Coffin and Hope Gardner. He was born November 13, 1706.

Francis and Theodate three children: **PELEG, WILLIAM** and **JUDITH COFFIN**.

Francis died and Theodate married Reuben Gardner, son of Solomon Gardner and Anna Coffin. They were married December 4, 1735. Reuben died in 1784 and she died on April 7, 1787.

Reuben and Theodate had four more children: **REUBEN, THADDEUS, SHUBAEL**, and **NAOMI GARDNER**.

## **Daniel Gorham**

Daniel was born on September 24, 1708. He was a mariner and seemingly never married. He died of small pox in London, England in 1745.

## **Desire Gorham**

Desire was born September 26, 1710. She was married on September 2, 1728 to Zachariah Bunker of Nantucket. Zachariah was a son of Jonathan Bunker and Elizabeth Coffin.

Zachariah died sometime in the summer of 1750, as his will was proven on August 7, 1750.  
Desire died on Nantucket at age ninety-one on November 5, 1801.

Their children were: **JONATHAN, SHUBAEL, JAMES, SIMEON, ELIZABETH, DESIRE, ZACHARIAH JR., FRANCIS** and **ANDREW BUNKER**.

## **Ruth Gorham**

Ruth was born May 7, 1713. She was married on January 12, 1731/32 to Cornelius Bennet from Middleboro, Massachusetts.

They lived in Barnstable and then moved to Middleboro, Massachusetts. Cornelius was a school teacher and a doctor. Before the marriage he taught in York, Maine and then moved to Barnstable where they were married.

Cornelius died in the spring of 1766. She died on September 2, 1792. Both are buried in Middleboro.

Their children were: **CORNELIUS, EBENEZER LIVY, BATCHELOR, PHILLIP, SALLY, THEODATE, CHRISTINA, WILLIAM, THOMAS** and **SILVANUS**.

## **Deborah Gorham**

Deborah was born about 1715. She married Beriah Fitch of Nantucket on December 11, 1735. This is our lineage. Their daughter, Eunice Fitch married Benjamin Barnard and their daughter, Matilda Barnard, married Henry Canaday in North Carolina.

Beriah and Deborah lived on Nantucket and remained on Nantucket while some of their children moved to the new Quaker Community at New Garden in Rowan (now Guilford) County in central North Carolina.

He died on May 4, 1785 and she died April 21, 1787, both on Nantucket.

Their children were: **EUNICE, LYDIA, JONATHAN GORHAM, PERNAL, PHEBE, LUCINDA, BERIAH, REUBEN, SHUBAEL, PUELLA, DEBORAH** and **JEDEDIAH**.

The more complete story of their lives is contained in the FITCH FAMILY HISTORY, which follows.