

THE PHILADELPHIA PAP SPOON MYSTERY

From the Files of the Woodbury Historical Society

In 1684, the second child of George and Mary Masters was born. According to the Masters' family legend, this baby was the first white girl child to be born in the newly founded and named city of Philadelphia. In honor of this occasion and being friends of William Penn, they named the baby girl, "Philadelphia." As the story goes, William Penn gifted the baby girl with a silver "PAP" spoon that was handed down to the succeeding generations of this family line, to a baby girl named Philadelphia. But let us start at the beginning.

Henry Willis of Wilshire England, and his wife, Mary Pease, were Quakers in England. About the year 1675, Henry and his family emigrated to America and took up residence in the town of Oyster Bay, Long Island. One of Henry and Mary's children was a daughter, named Mary, who married George Masters on November 27, 1678. George and Mary Masters settled in New York City where George appeared to be a very successful tailor—enough to be able to take his family back to England for a visit with relatives. Upon their return to the Americas, they first returned to the town of Philadelphia in Penn's Land where they had friends and relatives. During their stay in Philadelphia, a second child was born to George and Mary, a daughter, that they named Philadelphia, as this is the little girl of the above family story.

Philadelphia became an honored name in the Masters family and the silver spoon allegedly was handed down through successive generations, to the first girl named Philadelphia. Philadelphia Masters married into a family by the last name of Williams. Her daughter was named Hannah Williams, not Philadelphia, but Hannah had a daughter that she name Philadelphia and the spoon went to her. The spoon genealogy goes as follows:

Philadelphia Masters Williams
Hannah William Doughty
Philadelphia Doughty Townsend
Philadelphia Townsend Cock
Phebe Cock
Mary Ann Titus Shuit
Philadelphia Masters Shuit Sharp
Philadelphia Masters Sharp Carpenter
Philadelphia Masters Carpenter Andrews
Philadelphia Masters Andrews Broughton

Many of the names listed above are of local families and the spoon resided in Woodbury for many generations. When Philadelphia Masters Carpenter Andrews passed away, the spoon came to her daughter who wanted to honor her mother's wish to have the spoon brought back to Woodbury. Philadelphia Broughton had only a son and no daughters so she gave the spoon to The Woodbury Historical Society. The spoon that was given to WHS has the initials "W" at the top of the back of the spoon, and under it, the initials "P" what looks like an "I." The silver smith marks are "BR" in a circle, two of them. What has been found, to date, in our investigation, is that this spoon is probably a piece of wedding silver of Philadelphia Masters Williams and her husband, Jeremiah Williams. The "W" at the top of the spoon would be for Williams, the initials under the "W" would be "P" for Philadelphia and what people had thought was an "I" is actually a colonial initial for a "J," of course, being for Jeremiah.

This would also fit in with the age of the spoon as the silver smith was Bartholomew LeRoux, or his grandson. LeRoux was born in 1663, a French Huguenot who came to America through London, as an indentured silver apprentice. He was not a free agent until 1687, and he set up

his own silver smith shop and mark in 1688. As the PAP spoon was supposedly given to Philadelphia Masters upon her birth, in 1684, this could not be that PAP spoon. Also, Bartholomew LeRoux was in New York and not in Philadelphia. The time frame does fit very well for it being wedding silver, as Philadelphia Masters was married to Jeremiah Williams in 1708.

The mystery of the PAP spoon may never be solved, but what we do have is a lovely and valuable piece of colonial and Woodbury history—be it the PAP spoon or a piece of Philadelphia's wedding silver.