



St. Andrew's Church
Hingham, Norfolk, England – Peck hometown in England

Inside St. Andrew's Church, on one of the aisles there is a bust of Abraham Lincoln – they consider him one of their own. The Lincoln family is one of the many families that left Hingham for America in what is called "The Great Migration," from 1620 to 1640. Samuel Lincoln sailed to America on board the same ship as the Pecks.

Polly Peck's Colonial Ancestors

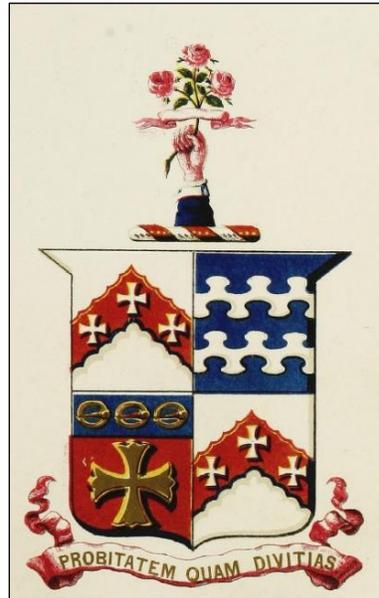
by Jordan Knight Mangum
Class at Knight Family Reunion, 2016

Polly Peck, was born in 1774 in Windham, Vermont, as a 5th generation American, in a line that begins with Joseph Peck who left Hingham, England in 1638.

- Joseph Peck and Rebecca Clark (Joseph emigrated from Hingham, Norfolk, England)
 - Nicholas Peck and Rebecca Bosworth (Nicholas came from England as a child.)
 - Hezekiah Peck and Deborah Clark (Hezekiah born in Seekonk, Mass.)
 - Hezekiah Peck, Jr. and Elizabeth Carder (Hezekiah, Jr. born in Rehoboth, Mass.)
 - Joseph Peck and Elizabeth Read (Joseph born in Attleboro.)
 - Polly Peck and Joseph Knight

Joseph Peck was born in Beccles, Suffolk, England in 1587, and he and his brother Robert Peck, settled as adults about 35 miles east of Beccles in Hingham, Norfolk England. It appears likely that Joseph and his family were part of the gentry class, meaning his family had social standing

in the community and probably owned enough land to live off the rent from their property.ⁱ Joseph was a devout Puritan and member of the congregation presided over by his brother, the Reverend Robert Peck. The motto on the Peck family crest in England was “Probitatem Quam Divitas” which means “Worth more than riches.” It almost certainly was religion that was “worth more than riches” in the Peck family.ⁱⁱ



Peck Family Crest

Joseph Peck was almost 30 years old when he married Rebecca Clark. They became the parents of six children, Anna, Rebecca, Joseph, Jr., John, Nicholas, and Simon.

Joseph’s brother, the Reverend Robert Peck was a significant figure in the Hingham community in a time when religious matters carried large social and political consequences. Theoretically all citizens in England had been followers of the Church of England for almost a hundred years by the 1630s, ever since King Henry VIII split with the Roman Catholic church. But, in fact, many in England were not happy with the practices and beliefs of the Church of England as it was being practiced, and were secretly worshipping on their own. Those people were known as separatists and frequently faced government punishment. Some separatists became the “pilgrims” who left England so they could create a new religious community in America, although the word Pilgrim was not used at the time.

Others, like Reverend Peck in Hingham, disagreed with the Church of England but tried to reform the church and “purify” it from what were viewed as the excesses in ritual and vestiges of the Roman Catholic Church. For instance, Reverend Peck was persecuted, “for having catechized his family, and singing a song in his own home on the Lord’s day evening when some neighbors attended.”ⁱⁱⁱ

According to Ira Peck who wrote the book, *The Descendants of Joseph Peck*, the Reverend Peck “was an influential clergyman, a zealous preacher and a non-conformist to the superstitious ceremonies and corruptions of the church, for which he was persecuted and driven from the country.”^{iv} However, an English historian and Reverend himself, Francis Blomefield, wrote that Robert Peck had a violent schematical spirit.”^v

As a Puritan, Reverend Peck wanted a more congregational church. Blomefield reported to achieve that end, inside the church Reverend Peck “pulled down the rails, and levelled the altar and the whole chancel a foot below the church.”^{vi} When Reverend Peck and his Puritan congregation realized they were about to be prosecuted, they left for Massachusetts. Blomefield recorded that many who left had to sell their property for half its value because so many left at once.

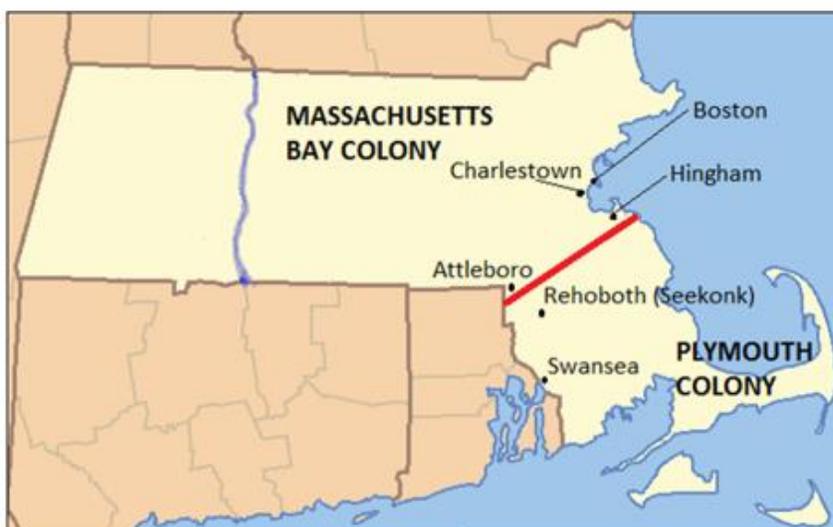
About a year before leaving England, in 1637, Joseph Peck had buried his wife of 20 years, Rebecca, and remarried a woman named Deliverance. Joseph’s oldest daughter Anna had also died, two years earlier as a teen. There were 133 Puritan men, women and children from Hingham, England, who boarded the ship, *The Diligent of Ipswitch* in 1638.

Between the years of 1620 and 1640, more than 20,000 left England for New England in what has been called “The Great Migration.” About 60,000 others left for Ireland, the Netherlands and the West Indies in that same time period.

Joseph Peck in Massachusetts, first Peck immigrant

On the same ship with the Peck family was Samuel Lincoln, an ancestor of Abraham Lincoln. The *Diligent* arrived in Boston Harbor, Massachusetts Bay Colony on August 10, 1638, and the group made their way to Hingham, Massachusetts where other Puritans had settled five years before. It was recorded that Mr. Joseph Peck, his 2nd wife Deliverance, three sons, a daughter and two man servants and three maid servants arrived in New England. Family Historian Ira Peck notes that there was significance in being called “Mr. Peck.” At that time, it denoted a higher class of

social standing than an average working citizen.^{vii}



Joseph and Robert Peck made their first homes in Hingham, Massachusetts Bay Colony, a community that had been settled about five years earlier. With the new arrivals, the town had about 175 settlers.

Joseph Peck and his brother each received a land grant for a home building lot of seven acres, as well as a few other lands.^{viii} Joseph Peck did well in the new land. He served as a deputy to the general court of Massachusetts for Hingham, a selectman, a justice of the peace and an assessor.

Ira Peck reports that just three years after arrival in Massachusetts, Joseph Peck was one of the principle purchasers of eight square miles of the land called Seekonk, that had been a Native American planting ground. Joseph Peck didn't actually move to Seekonk, which became Rehoboth, until 1645, four years later.^{ix} When he moved to Seekonk, he became a resident in the Plymouth Colony. During those years, Joseph Peck and his wife Deliverance became parents to three more sons.

About that same time, Joseph's brother, the Reverend Robert Peck, got word from his old congregation in England that political leaders had changed, and now Puritans were in power. His old congregation asked him to return. He and his wife set sail for England in October of 1641, and never again returned to New England.

In Rehoboth, Joseph was appointed to assist in 'matters of controversy at court'. In 1650, the court appointed him to administer marriage. In 1651 he was appointed to 'determine all controversies, not exceeding a certain amount'. Joseph was also appointed to administer oaths and issue warrants. His extensive land holdings make him one of the wealthiest persons in Massachusetts at that time.^x

Joseph Peck died at the age of 87, and in his will all of his sons received an inheritance of substantial amounts of land. Joseph gave his son Nicholas, Polly Peck's 2nd great-grandfather, "all the meadow at the hundred acres, and the meadow called bushey acres, and all my meadows on the north side of town, to last to him and his heirs forever." Joseph Peck left his sole daughter, Rebecca no land at all, but she did get "30 pounds (British money,) his wife's best cloak, one fine pillowbeer (a pillowcase,) and his damask napkin."^{xi}

Son, Nicholas Peck, born 1620

Nicholas Peck was only 8 years old when he left England for America, and moved to Seekonk when he was about 15 years-old. Nicholas married 19-year-old Mary Winchester about 1656 when he was about 36 years old. Mary gave birth to one son, Joseph Cooper Peck in November of 1657, and she died a week later. Her son survived and Nicholas later remarried to Rebecca Bosworth, a young woman who had been born in Hingham, Massachusetts Bay Colony and was about 10 years younger than he was. They were the parents of six children: John, who died as an infant, Hezekiah, Mary, Johnathan, Nicholas and Elisha.^{xii}

From the records of Seekonk, it appears that Nicholas Peck, like his father, took an active part in public affairs. He was frequently one of the raters (assessors) and selectmen of the town. He was elected Deputy to the Court at Plymouth, in 1669, and was also elected Deputy for each

successive year, from 1677 to 1690, except for two years when the town elected no deputies. At the age of 47, Nicholas Peck was also a member of the Massachusetts militia.

Each town was required to furnish a Company of militia to form a regiment, to consist of at least 64 men, but the ideal company was 100 men. The leadership of each company included a Captain, a Lieutenant and an Ensign, that were elected by the company as a while. Each company was also to have their own colors and musicians. The musical instruments were drums and bugles. ^{xiii} Boys ages 10-16 could receive military training with the militia with permission from their parents. The militias were primarily concerned about attacks and battles with Native Americans in the area.

Ensign Nicholas Peck served in the militia from 1677 to 1684, following that he was chosen as Lieutenant, and then Captain. He died May 27, 1710 at the age of 80. In his will Capt. Nicholas Peck divided his land between his five surviving sons, including, Hezekiah, Polly Peck Knight's great grandfather.

Nicholas Peck's oldest grandchild, the daughter of his son by his first wife, was Mary Peck Bosworth, who became one of the most notorious and successful counterfeiters in the colonies. By day she was the mother of seven children, and by night she developed an ingenious way to print money that never left evidence behind. Listen to the story of Mary Peck Bosworth on the family YouTube channel.

Generation 2, Hezekiah Peck, born 1662

Nicholas Peck and Rebecca's son Hezekiah, was Polly Peck's great-grandfather. He was born in Seekonk (Rehoboth), Massachusetts in 1662. He married Deborah Cooper when he was about 24, and she was two years younger.

Hezekiah and Deborah had several children, including Hezekiah, Jr. in 1695, and decided to move. The land owned in Seekonk was sold and they moved to Swansey, and then to Attleboro in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Hezekiah and Deborah had a large family including, Deborah, Judith, Hannah, Hezekiah, Jr. (the grandfather of Polly Peck Knight,) Rachel, John, and daughters Petronella and Pertheniah. When Hezekiah, Sr., died at the age of 58, he was the first to be buried in his community, and a small cemetery still retains the name of "Old Peck Family Yard" in Attleboro. Upon the death





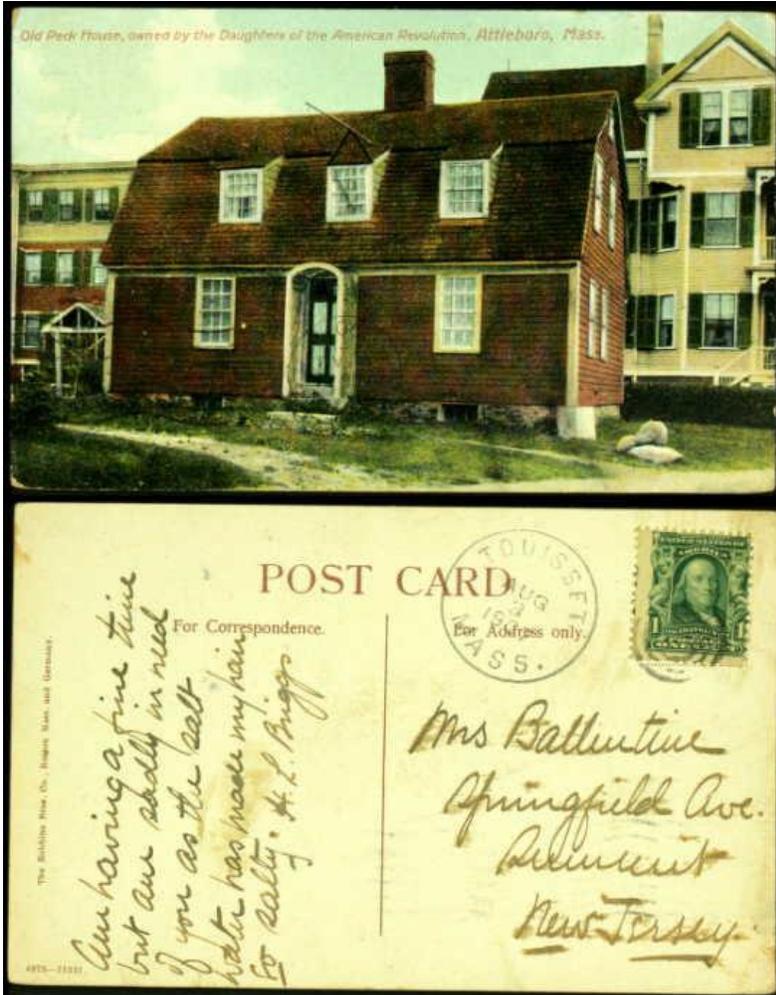
of his father, Hezekiah, Jr., was made the guardian of his younger sisters Petronella and Pertheniah until they married in 1729 and 1734, respectively.

The Old Peck Family Yard is near what is called the Old Peck home in Attleboro. The home still exists and is a museum operated by the Daughter of the American Revolution Organization.^{xiv}

Generation 3, Hezekiah, Jr., born 1696

The Pecks remained in Attleboro for many more decades. Historian Ira Peck wrote that Hezekiah Peck's son, grandson and great grandson all remained on the Peck family land.^{xv} Hezekiah, Jr. grew up in Attleboro. In 1726, at the age of 30, he married Elizabeth Carder, and they had a large family, all born in Attleboro. Their son Joseph Peck was born in 1741, 103 years after the Peck family first arrived in Massachusetts. A large group of Pecks stayed in the

Attleboro and Rehoboth area for generations. Joseph Peck was not among them. He and his wife decided to join the wave of people who moved to the Vermont area.



This "old Peck Home" is thought to be the home of Hezekiah Peck, who was buried nearby in the Peck Family Grave Yard.

The home is now owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution and they give history tours to school children and others.

Generation 4, Joseph Peck, father of Polly

Joseph Peck the father of Polly Peck Knight, grew up in Attleboro, surrounded by siblings, he was the 7th of ten children, as well as large extended Peck family in Attleboro. In 1766, at the age of 25 he married Elizabeth Read, the daughter of Noah Read, a church deacon in Attleboro. Joseph and Elizabeth's first daughter Esther was also born in Attleboro, but soon after the young family decided to move to Vermont where new land was being broken. They settled in Guildford, Vermont, about 1767.

Joseph and Elizabeth found themselves raising children during a Revolution, and then a new nation struggling to determine its future. Polly Peck, the sixth of the 13 children of Joseph and Elizabeth, was born in 1774, two years before the Declaration of Independence. The

constitution of the United States was signed in 1787 and ratified in 1789 when Polly was 15 years old.

In the midst of the Revolution, Guildford had its own unique battle. Vermont declared itself to be an independent republic, but New York continued to claim the area including Guildford as part of their colony. Joseph Peck, and many others in Guildford were in favor of the Yorkers, unlike most of the surrounding towns.

The battle was significant enough that “Yorkers” felt they needed military protection against the Vermonters, and asked George Washington to send soldiers to help, but none came. In July of 1782, the New York governor granted military aid and authorized the town of Guildford to create six militia companies.

Joseph Peck was named Captain of the 1st Guildford Company of the Cumberland County, New York Militia. In response, Vermont sent in the Green Mountain Boys under Ethan Allen to subdue the Yorkers. In January of 1784 Ethan Allen’s men raided the Peck home. When five men came to the door, Elizabeth Peck told them her husband was not home. When she refused to say where he was, the men plundered her home and took Captain Peck’s sword and weapons.^{xvi}

Both the Vermonters and Yorkers were serving in the Revolutionary Army, but the Vermonters were demanding that the pro-New York men needed to join their regiments, and the Yorkers refused. They were told they would be fined, and their property seized and sold off with the town taking the proceeds.

The pro-New York militia were exhausted and on Feb. 24, 1786 they petitioned New York Governor Clinton and told him they couldn’t live in Vermont any longer because of the harassment they received from the Vermonters. They petitioned for land in western New York.^{xvii}

The state of New York, granted the “Vermont Sufferers” undeveloped land along the Unadilla and Susquehanna Rivers in south central New York. The New York towns of Bainbridge and Afton were settled primarily by the Vermont Sufferers who were given land grants in the area, in recompense for the losses and “punishment they received from the Green Mountain State [Vermont.]^{xviii} Captain Peck was given 640 acres, and he moved his family to Bainbridge. Family records show that Benjamin Peck, the youngest child of Joseph and Elizabeth was born in 1787 in Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York.^{xix}

When Joseph and Elizabeth Peck moved their family to New York, Polly, who was 14 at the time did not go with them. Polly’s mother died just two years later in 1790 when Polly was about 16 years old.

Generation 5, Polly Peck Knight, born 1774

There is no record of why Polly stayed in Vermont when her family moved to New York. At that time, the job of young woman was to learn homemaking skills, often at her mother’s side, but sometimes young women lived full-time in the home of another family as a mother’s helper, an apprentice of sorts in homemaking. Fourteen was a common age for boys and girls to take on

work outside the home. Girls often had the tasks of being a nanny to the children, washing, spinning, mending, helping to make candles or soap, or any of the myriad things necessary to keep a home running. Polly had two older sisters who would be helping their own mother. It's possible Polly was working in the home of another family, perhaps in Guildford or another town nearby, where she would have room and board and perhaps earn a very tiny stipend; she may have also made a commitment for a specific period of time to stay with a family.

Nothing was ever recorded about how Polly Peck met Joseph Knight, but Polly and Joseph were married on the 18th of January 1796, in Vermont, almost ten years after her parents had moved to New York. They became the parents of seven children. In 1808 Joseph and Polly Knight left Vermont and moved to Bainbridge, New York, near the area where several of Polly's siblings and father still lived. In a few years Joseph and Polly moved to Colesville Township, New York, where they built a home, farm and two grist mills. They remained in that area until 1831 when they moved to Kirtland, Ohio to gather with the other Latter-day Saints at the request of their prophet.

ⁱ Peck, Ira B., *A genealogical history of the descendants of Joseph Peck who emigrated with his family to this country in 1638*, Boston, 1868, 1.

ⁱⁱ Ibid. 4.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid., 25.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Francis Blomefield, 'Hundred of Forehoe: Hingham', in *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Volume 2* (London, 1805), pp. 422-445. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol2/pp422-445> [accessed 3 December 2020].

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Ibid., 14.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Ibid., 15.

^x Ibid., 16.

^{xi} Ibid., 17.

^{xii} Ibid., 133.

^{xiii} Captain Robert K. Wright, Jr., *116th Military History Detachment Virginia Army National Guard*, 1986, "Massachusetts Militia Root, A Bibliographic Study." <https://history.army.mil/Reference/mamil/Mamil.htm>, 6.

^{xiv} Attleboro Community Corner, "Patriotism is at the heart of preserving 300-year-old home" <https://patch.com/massachusetts/attleboro/patriotism-at-the-heart-of-preserving-300-year-old-house>

^{xv} Ibid., 134.

^{xvi} ^{xvi} Hartley, William G. *They Are My Friends, A History of the Joseph Knight Family 1825-1850*, Grandin Press, Provo, 1986, 7.

^{xvii} History of Bainbridge, <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~nychenan/bnb1784h.htm>

^{xviii} Ibid.

^{xix} Hartley, *They Are My Friends*, 7.