

Facts and Events

Name[1]

Peter Folger

Gender

Male

Birth[1][2]

1617

[Norwich, Norfolk, England](#)

Marriage

c. 1642

to [Mary Morrill](#)

Death[1][3]

1690

[Nantucket, Nantucket, Massachusetts, United States](#)

Reference Number?

[Q7174025?](#)

Peter FOLGER – b. 1618, Norwich, Norfolk, England; d. 1690, Nantucket, Nantucket Co., MA. Son of John FOLGER and Meribah GIBBS. A teacher, surveyor, missionary, and interpreter, Peter moved to Martha's Vineyard about 1642 and to Nantucket about 1657. He was chosen Clerk of Courts at Nantucket on Jul. 21, 1673, serving for a number of years. From his activity as missionary and Baptist preacher, Peter is recognized as a qualifying ancestor by the Society of the Descendants of the Colonial Clergy. His poem "A Looking Glass for the Time" was published Apr. 23, 1676, showing him as an advocate of religious liberty. From *The Nantucket Way*, by Mooney and Sigourney: "Peter Folger was called 'white chief's old-young man' by the Nantucket Indians, meaning he was wise for his age. Peter was a surveyor, Town clerk, Clerk for the General Court. He ground his own eyeglasses and made the frames. He was a public servant, miller, machinist, blacksmith, schoolmaster, author, poet, and preacher all rolled into one." Married about 1642, Nantucket, Nantucket Co., MA. *The Colonial Clergy and the Colonial Churches of New England* by Frederick Lewis Weis (1936, Lancaster, MA), page 86.

Peter Folger, b. England 1617/8, son of John Folger of Martha's Vineyard; came to New England with his father from Norwich, Eng., 1635; was in the service of the missionary corporation as assistant to Rev. Thomas Mayhew, Jr., and was left in charge of Mayhew's mission when the latter sailed for England in 1657; missionary to the Indians at Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, 1656–1661; sett. Nantucket, 1663; grandfather of Benjamin Franklin; was learned in the Indian tongue and served as an interpreter; author of "A Looking Glass for the Times," 1675; d. Nantucket Island 1690.

Lines from "A Looking-Glass for the Times;

or, The former spirit of New England revived in this generation"

by Peter Folger (1675)

Sure, 'tis not chiefly for those sins

That magistrates do name,

And make good laws for to suppress

And execute the same.

But 'tis for that same crying sin
That rulers will not own,
And that whereby much cruelty
To brethren hath been shown.
The sin of persecution
Such laws established;
By which laws they have gone so far
As blood hath touched blood.
The cause of this their suffering
Was not for any sin,
But for the witness that they bare
Against babes sprinkling.
The church may now go stay at home,
There's nothing for to do;
Their work is all cut out by law,
And almost made up too.
If that the peace of God did rule
With power in our hearts,
Then outward war would fall away
And rest would be our part.
If we could love our brethren
And do to them, I say,
As we would they should do to us,
We should be quits straightway;
But if that we do smiting go
Of fellow servants so,
No marvel if our wars increase
And things so heavy go.
'Tis like that some may think and say,
Our war would not remain,
If so be that a thousand more
Of natives were but slain.
Alas! these are but foolish thoughts;
God can make more arise,
And if that there were none at all,
He can make war with flies.

It is the presence of the Lord,
must make our foes to shake,
Or else it's like he well ere long
know how to make us quake.
Let us lie low before the Lord
in all humility,
And then we shall with Asa see
our enemies to fly.
But if that we do leave the Lord,
and trust in fleshly arm,
Then 'tis no wonder if that we
do hear more news of harm.

Let's have our faith and hope in God,
and trust in him alone,
And then no doubt this storm of war
it quickly will be gone.
Thus, reader, I, in love to all,
leave these few lines with thee,
Hoping that in the substance we
shall very well agree.
If that you do mistake the verse
for its uncomely dress,
I tell thee true, I never thought
that it would pass the press.
If any at the matter kick,
it's like he's galled at heart,
And that's the reason why he kicks,
because he finds it smart.
I am for peace, and not for war,
And that's the reason why,
I write more plain than some men do,
That use to daub and lie.
But I shall cease, and set my name
To what I here insert;
Because, to be a libeller,
I hate it with my heart.
From Sherbon town, where now I dwell,
My name I do put here;
Without offence, your real friend,
It is Peter Folger.

[\[edit\]](#)

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[Early Settlers of Nantucket – Google Books](#)

[Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin](#)

▼ [References](#)

1 ↑ [1.0 1.1 1.2 Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 1706–1790](#), liii.

2 ↑ [Peter Foulger](#), in [Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia](#).

the text in this section is copied from an article in [Wikipedia](#)

Peter Foulger (His surname is often spelled "Folger," which was the form used by his descendants; 1617–1690) was a poet and an [interpreter](#) of the [American Indian](#) language for the first settlers of [Nantucket](#). He was instrumental in the colonization of [Nantucket Island](#) in the [Massachusetts](#) colony. He was the grandfather of [Benjamin Franklin](#).

Peter Folger was born in [Norfolk, England](#), son of John Folger, in 1617. He came to America in 1635 with his father, settling initially in [Watertown, Massachusetts](#), and later moving to [Martha's Vineyard](#), where he worked as a teacher and surveyor. In 1644 he married Mary Morrill, whom he met on the voyage from England. At the Vineyard Folger supported himself by teaching school and surveying land. He also worked with

[Thomas Mayhew](#) to convert the native American population to Christianity, during which time he learned to speak the native language. He was a Baptist in faith, and as such was told not to visit with the Puritans on the mainland.

From time to time between 1659 and 1662, Folger journeyed to Nantucket in order to survey it for the proprietors. In 1663 Folger moved to Nantucket full-time, having been granted a half a share of land by the proprietors, where he was a surveyor, an Indian interpreter, and clerk in the courts. Shortly thereafter, Folger's daughter, Abiah, was born, later to become the mother of [Benjamin Franklin](#).

A Baptist missionary, teacher, and surveyor, his dealings with the native population promoted harmony between the Native Americans and European settlers. His grandson, [Founding Father](#) Benjamin Franklin, son of Peter's daughter Abiah, referred to him fondly in his autobiography.

Folger died at [Nantucket](#), Massachusetts, in 1690. His wife Mary lived until 1704.

A likely descendant, [J. A. Folger](#) (b 1835) of Nantucket, founded [Folgers Coffee](#).

3 ↑ [Nantucket, Nantucket, Massachusetts, United States. Vital records of Nantucket, Massachusetts to the year 1850](#). (Boston, Massachusetts: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1925–1928), 5:273. FOLGER: Peter, Came to Nant. in 1663, h. Mary Morrell, s. John (came from the city of Norwich in England in 1638), —, 1690, P.R.38.