

Taken from Southold Connections: Historical and Biographical Sketches of Northeast Long Island.

John Folger was born in Diss, Norfolk, England in 1594. Diss is a market town on the Waveney River, 19 miles northwest of Norwich.

It is thought that John was the son of Flemish refugees who migrated to England at the time of Elizabeth I. The timing is right for this to be true. After Phillip II, King of Spain, succeeded Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, the Council of Blood was established in 1567 to end all Protestant opposition to the Roman Church. Many Flemish fled Holland to Protestant England. Even before this time many Flemish settled in the Norwich area because King Edward III had married Philippa, daughter of William, Count of Holland and Flanders. Over 4700 Netherlanders were living in Norwich, totaling over 1/4 of the cities populaton.

In 1615 John Folger and Merebah Gibbs were married in Frenze Hall, two miles from Diss.

When Queen Elizabeth died, she was succeeded by James I who denounced the non-conforming Protestants, when he met with his first parliament in 1603. With the succession of Charles I the problem was enhanced. Civil War was closer to a reality and many Flemish Protestants fled, some back to Holland, more to the New World. Among them were John Folger and his family. He left Norwich because he refused to "put up with the repression" as his father before had refused to do in Flanders. In 1635 John Flger was listed as a passenger on the "Abigail" and landed in Boston on October sixth.

In 1638, John Folgaer was proposed for property at Dedham, "a rude frontier community concentrated in a row of tiny cottages." The Flogers soon left and moved to the prosperous town of Watertown, three miles from Boston. In 1642 John left a large house on six acres in Watertown to help settle Martha's Vineyard.

John died in 1662 and Merebah died in 1664 and they were buried beside each other on Tower Hill, Great Harbor in Martha's Vineyard.