

**Steve Muncy**  
[steve@stevemuncy.net](mailto:steve@stevemuncy.net)  
**November 26, 2015**  
Version 2.0

# Francis Muncy

American Immigrant  
ca 1631/34 - 1674



**A Narrative History**

# Preface

I started to get interested in genealogy when I was a young adult and began to research my ancestors in my twenties. By 1975 I had discovered that my immigrant ancestor was Francis Muncy, and his descendants had more or less been researched. One book had been published in 1956 (“Descendants of Francis Muncy I With Genealogy of Allied Families” by Mary Edith Shaw) and extensions, refinements and corrections were about to appear in the genealogy included in “Early Settlers of Lee County, Virginia” by Hattie Byrd Muncy Bales that was published in 1977.

I learned of Mrs. Bales’ Lee County book in a strange way. On a trip to visit my wife’s relatives in Tennessee, we took a detour into Lee County, Virginia. I wanted to find an ancient “Muncy-Jayne” private cemetery. (My wife Karen describes these adventures as “looking for old dead Muncys.”) Karen and I got completely lost in the winding mountain roads of Lee County and finding the cemetery appeared hopeless. I saw four or five people sitting on the front porch of a remote house and decided to ask if they knew anything about the cemetery. “Why do you want to know?” one elderly woman asked me. “My name is Steve Muncy. I’m from Texas, and I’ve read that some of my ancestors are buried there” I said. She replied, “My maiden name is Muncy and my sister is writing a book about Lee County and the family. I would be happy to take you to the cemetery.” After a long hike, crossing several streams, we came to the cemetery and the foundations of homes where my ancestors had lived long ago.

I’ve yet to find a genealogy that doesn’t contain errors, and the Shaw and Bales books are not immune. They do a very good job in providing the genealogy of the Francis Muncy family, with the understanding that facts will be improved and corrected over time. But ever since I learned that my immigrant ancestor was Francis Muncy I have wondered about his ancestry. When was he born? Where did he come from? When and why did he come to America? None of these questions have definite answers. But after extensive research into early colonial history and searching parish record transcripts from England, I’ve developed some theories that may provide insight. I am appalled at much of the “genealogical information” that has been distributed about

the early Francis Muncy and William Adams families. So much is based on errors of earlier researchers or simply guesses. I have done my best to keep to the **proven** facts in this narrative but errors will creep in and will be corrected as I become aware of them. *Please note: When I have written something in this narrative that is based on my personal theories or educated guesses, I have put those sections in italics. These are my beliefs based on personal research, but have not been proven and could be proven incorrect in the future.*

Frankly, most genealogy is boring. It is presented as X marries Y and children are born, and those children have children. What is too often missing in a genealogy is the historical connection. I've loved history since I was a child, and I've always been interested in putting my family history into a historical context. In this brief narrative of Francis Muncy and his short life, I've tried to add historical context to give a better understanding of his place in history.

A word about names, and spelling. I am sometimes asked "How was the Muncy name originally spelled?" There was NO original spelling. In the 1300-1700's, names were written down as they sounded, and there was little consistency. This wasn't a problem for a clerk in the 1500's because they based the spelling on sound and a clerk 100 years later could identify with the sound. But spelling IS an issue with us today. We want to "look up" people in books and on the Internet. This invariably leads to problems when we try to limit our searches to what we think are legitimate spellings. I've learned to ignore spelling and concentrate on sound, so it has led to a lot of additional work trying to locate different spellings of names. So, for the record, here is a list of spellings that I have encountered. (None is the "right" spelling, but I've standardized on "Muncy" in this narrative to simplify.) Muncy, Muncey, Muncye, Munsey, Munsy, Munsye, Munse, Munsee, Monsy, Monsye, Muncie, Mauncey, Moncey, Monncy,, Monnsey, Monsey,, Monsie, Mouncee, Mouncie, Mounsey, Mounsy — and probably a few others that I don't remember. In addition, one must recognize that "Francis" and "Frances" were sometimes interchanged and in that time as is true today, "Frank" is the nickname for Francis. In the only example of his signature I have been able to view (shown later in the notes of this narrative), it is pretty clear to me that Francis Muncy spelled his last name as "M U N C Y." It is **very** difficult to read, but the other variations don't fit that signature.

I have conducted a search of the various spellings of the Muncy name in all counties of England, Scotland and Wales during the period of 1625 to 1645 which includes the years in

which Francis Muncy was likely born, along with the birth of siblings and possible marriages. Spellings tend to be regionalized. The M-U-N or M-O-N (including Muncy, Munsey, Munse, and Monsy) variations are concentrated in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk with a very few scattered throughout several other counties. The M-O-U-N variations (Mounsey, Mounsy, Mounsea, etc.) are overwhelmingly concentrated in Westmorland and Yorkshire Counties. Because spellings tended to be standardized by region by the period studied, we can probably assume that Francis Muncy's name was normally spelled with a MUN variation. Of the MUN variations 78 percent are concentrated in Cambridgeshire and 14 percent are in Norfolk County. While this survey is not definitive, there is an extremely strong probability that Francis Muncy was born in Cambridgeshire — and if not then Norfolk County is the next most likely.

Finally, a note on dates. During the years covered in this narrative the Julian calendar was used and a new year actually started on March 25th. For example, the day after December 31, 1660 would be January 1, 1660 and the following March 25th would be March 25, 1660 — but the next day would be March 26, 1661. This is confusing to us in the 21st century. I have chosen to convert dates to the Gregorian Calendar we use today. What would have been February 1, 1670 is now converted to February 1, 1671, the system we use today.

# Introduction

On October 10, 1627 John Muncy married Martha Chockle (also spelled Chauckley and Cockley) in their parish church, Saint Andrews Church in Chesterton, Cambridgeshire, England.



The church was over four hundred years old at that time and had been built-up and modified from the original structure — just as the church today has seen continual improvements since 1627.

In 1627 Chesterton was a village about two miles north of Cambridge. Today Chesterton is a suburb surrounded by Cambridge. Martha was almost certainly the daughter of Andrew Chockle, who was listed as the father in at least four Chesterton baptisms of sons between 1590 and 1598 although her baptism is not recorded in Chesterton. It is possible she is the “Martha Chauckley” who is recorded at baptism in 1606 in Littleport, twenty miles to the north, but the name of the father is not recorded in that baptism. If that is the case and the family

was living in Littleport at the time, they certainly returned to Chesterton prior to 1627 since Martha is listed as a resident of Chesterton at her marriage.

John and Martha Muncy did not remain long in Chesterton. Soon after their marriage they moved a short distance to the village of Waterbeach, about four miles to the northeast of Chesterton. They settled into the area and began to raise a family. They had at least seven children, probably more, and as was common during that period some children did not survive infancy. Andrew Muncy, most likely named after Martha’s father, was born in 1628 but died in 1630. Mary was baptized in 1630; Ann in 1636; John Jr. in 1639; Elizabeth in 1642 and died 1643; William in 1644; and Thomas in 1647. (Children were usually baptized shortly after birth, but this was not always the case.) Martha Muncy may have died in childbirth in 1647 or shortly afterward. John probably remarried a woman named Rosamond (or Rose) about 1651. Rosamond died in 1657. John Sr. may have married a third time in Landbeach (1.5 miles from Waterbeach) on March 25, 1658 to Mary Angwood. There is no clear record of the death of John Sr. but it may have possibly been 1669.

These were turbulent years to raise a family in Cambridgeshire. The English Civil War was dividing the country. The local representative in Parliament, a man by the name of Oliver Cromwell, was an active leader of the Parliamentarians against the Royalists and began his military involvement in 1642 commanding troops from Cambridgeshire. After the execution of Charles I, Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector of England in 1653 until his death in 1658.

Large families were common in that period and having children every two or three years was the norm, not the exception. However, in the case of John and Martha there is a gap of six years (1630-1636) between the births of Mary and Ann. What should we make of this gap?

Record-keeping in the parish registers was frequently sloppy and sometimes baptisms, marriages and deaths were recorded some time later. Sometimes they weren't recorded at all. (The parish register is lost during part of this period so we must rely on the second-source Bishop's transcript.) Sometimes pages were lost or damaged. (During the 1628-1633 period between 20-30 children were baptized each year in Waterbeach — except for 1631 in which only **NINE** baptisms are recorded. This is almost certainly the result of lost pages in the transcripts, the absence of a parish priest to perform baptisms in a timely manner, or some other reason that baptisms were not recorded.)

*In my opinion, this six-year gap is very significant. I believe John and Martha Muncy had a son born about 1631-1634 and named him Francis after his grandfather Francis Muncy. This can't yet be proven, but there is circumstantial evidence beyond this six year gap.*

In England, the Muncy surname is mostly concentrated in the county of Cambridgeshire - nearly 75% of the references I've found are in Cambridgeshire. In my research of parish registers in Cambridgeshire up to 1700, I've identified almost six hundred references to family events (baptisms, marriages, burials) with the surname of Muncy. Out of those six hundred instances, I have located only ONE instance of a male with the name of Francis Muncy. That single reference to Francis Muncy was his baptism at ST. ANDREW CHURCH IN CHESTERTON on 8 August 1585, the same church in which John and Martha Muncy were married. Obviously this is much too early to be the Francis Muncy who came to America, *but this date could well mean he was the grandfather of the later Francis Muncy.* (click the link above for photos and history of St. Andrew Church)

During the years around 1585 three Muncy families in Chesterton were starting families with children — Roger Muncy, Thomas Muncy, and John Muncy. They were probably closely

related, perhaps brothers. Given the fact that families frequently named children after grandparents, parents or uncles/aunts, it does not seem unlikely that Francis Muncy of 1585 was the son or nephew of John Muncy — and that Francis Muncy of 1585 named a son John, who in turn named a son Francis. Adding to the circumstantial evidence is the fact that Francis Muncy who came to America named his first son “John”. William Muncy, the son of John and Martha Muncy who was born in 1644 *could be the brother of Francis Muncy and may have followed him to America appearing near his brother in Long Island before moving on to Maine and New Hampshire.* Oh, and this William Muncy also named a son “John.”

Although I believe the circumstantial evidence is compelling, it is still circumstantial. Unfortunately there are no other records of Francis Muncy in Chesterton after his 1585 baptism. We don't have records of marriage or death for this Francis. (It will be 142 years before the parish transcripts show another record for a male “Francis” Muncy anywhere in Cambridgeshire.) We come to a complete dead-end on the possible ancestors of Francis Muncy the American immigrant. There is no proof, and there may be no proof to be found. All we have is circumstantial.

Without more definitive proof, I will continue to list these relationships as unproven — but with strong circumstantial evidence.



## Ipswich, Massachusetts

We don't know with certainty where or when Francis Muncy was born. We don't know the circumstances of his birth. We can, however, make informed guesses and assumptions based on the history and prevailing practices of the age in which he lived.

The first we hear of Francis Muncy in America is a record of his marriage to Hannah Adams in Ipswich, Massachusetts in December 1659. We don't know when Francis arrived from England, or the port at which he arrived. *It is my belief that Francis Muncy arrived in America, and subsequently in Ipswich, as an indentured servant, probably in the summer months between 1650 and 1655. He was probably in his early twenties at this time.* Prior to the 1800's, most ships coming to America did not keep good documentation of who was on board. Many individuals traveled to their destination on uncomfortable, rat-infested cargo ships -- usually only five, ten, maybe thirty passengers suffered through the trip together.



Very little information exists today that could help nail down when and how Francis Muncy came to America. We can only speculate. But the reasons WHY he came to America may be easier to understand. By 1652 and 1653 the English Civil Wars had been concluded. The monarchy had been overthrown and Charles I beheaded years before. Wars with Ireland and Scotland had been decisively won by the English (lead by Oliver Cromwell). Society was in chaos as the Puritan Parliament forced through restrictive social laws and Royalists lost their lands through confiscation. Tenant farmers became unemployed and homeless. Under such conditions of chaos and unemployment, it is not hard to believe that a young Francis Muncy wanted to find a better life — a way to break free of the political and economic chaos in England. Although difficult, emigration offered a chance for a new life.

*As a major port for emigration and given its proximity to Cambridgeshire (the most likely residence), Ipswich (Suffolk Co.) in England was the most likely port of departure to America. The most likely port of arrival is either Salem or Boston. (Salem was a major port and only about fifteen miles from Ipswich.) If he did arrive as an indentured servant, Francis' contract of indenture would have been fulfilled before 1659, and he began working as a laborer with the few possessions he had been given when his service ended. After a few years of subsistence living, Francis may have accumulated enough possessions to finally marry.*

Francis Muncy and Hannah Adams were married in Ipswich on Saturday, 6 December 1659. The marriage would have been performed by a Justice or Magistrate since Ministers were not allowed to marry couples until 1692. During this period the average age of marriage for men was about twenty-five years so we can establish a *guess for his birth year as between 1630 to 1635*. Ipswich is the name of both a township and a village within that township. Many residents of Ipswich Township lived several miles outside the village, but still near enough to attend religious services in the village. Ipswich grew outward from the village.

When founded, residents lived within the village boundaries, but as time passed residents occupied farms outside the village. Rules were strict and it required approval of the Ipswich Puritan government to build a house. Attendance at the Meeting House religious services was mandatory. Failure to attend could lead to financial fines, so most homes outside the village were probably located within two or three miles of the village center.

Hannah Adams was the daughter of William Adams who had moved to Ipswich prior to 1642 after living in Cambridge, Massachusetts where he had settled sometime between 1628 and 1635. William Adams is often cited in early Ipswich history. He was a prominent resident, a

freeman, which meant he could vote in the affairs of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and a commoner of Ipswich which meant he owned shares in common lands of Ipswich. He was a town Selectman in 1646, and served as a jurymen almost continuously until 1659. William Adams settled on a tract of land several miles south of Ipswich on the Ipswich River (near what is today Hamilton, Massachusetts). However, most who had farms also had house lots in town, as required by a May 1635 regulation specifying “No dwelling-house shall be built above a half-mile from the meeting-house in any new plantation, without leave from the Court, except mills and farm-houses of such as have their dwellings in town.” *Therefore it is likely that William Adams had a house-lot in the town, and a farm house on his farm property.*

Francis Muncy, however, appears in **no other records** of Ipswich other than as the father of his son John born 24 October 1660.

What should we infer from the fact that Francis’ life in Ipswich is silent in the records? While the early records are incomplete and perhaps records of his activities were lost, it is most likely that Francis had little standing in Ipswich. He likely was a laborer holding no property in Ipswich. But why did he have no property in Ipswich if he was a fairly early settler? The freemen in Ipswich voted very few lots of land to persons who came to reside in Ipswich after 1650.

But would not William Adams, a freeman and commoner, a man who was not rich but had substantial assets, object to the marriage of his daughter to a recently released indentured servant? Probably not. One must look to the nature of the indenture contract as it was applied during this period. While we in the 21st century may look at indentured servitude as a legal form of slavery, we must try to view it from a seventeenth century perspective. Look at this way. “I will provide you with food, drink, housing and training for the next five years in exchange for your labor. At the end of five years, I will supply you with resources to assist you in establishing your independent existence.” For a young person with limited resources, that may not be such a bad deal! Estimates vary widely but at least one-third to one-half of white immigrants to the northern colonies were indentured, and there was no shame in it. It was designed as a business relationship.

During the Great Migration period (1630-40) of immigration to New England, religion was a very important factor in emigration. However, from 1640 to 1660 religious and political issues were more favorable to Puritans as Oliver Cromwell and the Puritan allies took control of the English government. Immigration to the colonies dropped drastically. Reasons for emigration as



**Typical clothing worn in the early years of Francis Muncy's life in America.  
Photos (c) 2014 by Plimouth Plantation.**

an indentured servant during this period probably focused more on economic issues than religious convictions although there was still political and religious turmoil in England. There was a well-organized servant trade in English ports. Frequently fathers would execute the legal indenture document for a son or daughter with the captain of a ship bound for North America. When the ship arrived in America, the indenture contract found ready buyers from those who needed workers for their farms or enterprises. Indentured servants usually fell in the age range of sixteen to twenty-seven years of age. Three quarters were male, single and young, and most were agricultural workers.

Indentured servitude did not always reflect a low rung on the social ladder in England, but it did reflect lack of funds necessary to come to America. A few people of high birth in England came to America as indentured servants. Moving from England to the Massachusetts Bay Colony was not an inexpensive adventure. A son of an established tenant farmer in Cambridgeshire, England, almost certainly did not have the resources to come to America. To do so, he sold his services as an indentured servant for a period of years, usually four to seven years, to fund his relocation. Indentured servants were generally treated as family living in the same household and eating at the same table. Unfortunately, the indenture contract could be sold and the new master

could be harsh and unaccommodating. If Francis Muncy was an indentured servant, we have no way of knowing the relationship he had with his master. *It is possible that Francis Muncy was an indentured servant to William Adams, his future father-in-law.*

William Adams certainly knew the character of Francis Muncy, and as Hannah's father he would have required that he bring into marriage some assets to support a wife. If Adams approved of his character, he would allow the marriage and offer an appropriate dowry to help get the married couple started in life.

As a laborer in Ipswich Francis probably lived in housing provided by his employer. *In fact, given that the farm properties of William Adams was large enough to require the employment of non-family laborers, Francis Muncy may well have met his future wife as the daughter of his employer.* Prior to 1660, houses built in Ipswich required the approval of the town, and each house built came with the right of commonage, or sharing the common grounds of the community. However, by 1660 the growth of the town reach a breaking point. The population of Ipswich in 1660 was probably around 1000 persons. In March 1660, the "Seven Men" (Selectmen) adopted the following:

*"For as much as it is found by experience, thither common lands of this town are overburdened by the multiplying of dwelling-houses, contrary to the interest and meaning of the first inhabitants in their granting of house-lots and other lands to such as came among them : to the end such inconveniences may be prevented for the future, it is ordered that no house, henceforth erected, shall have any right to the common lands of this town, nor any person, inhabiting such house, make use of any pasture, timber, or wood, growing upon any of said common lands, on pretext of any right or title belonging to any such house hereafter built, without express leave of the town...."*

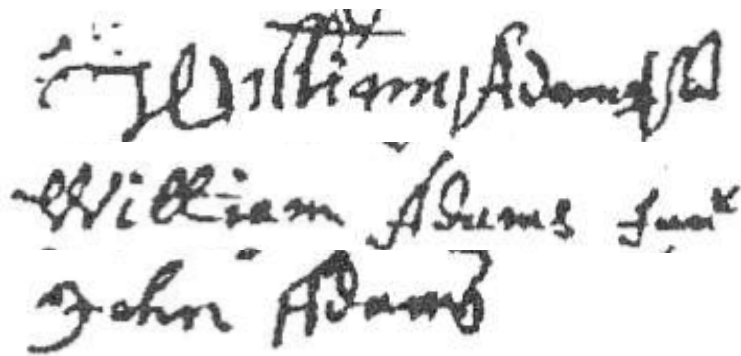
Housing in Ipswich was very rudimentary for all residents. The homes of commoners and freemen were simple and small, usually homes of one or two rooms with a total living area of less than four hundred square feet. Homes were made of wood with clapboard or plaster exterior. Attics and second floor were accessed by ladders, not stairs. Roofs were thatched, not shingled. Chairs were rare and people usually sat on benches and ate from wooden bowls or pewter plates placed on a simple board between two trestles. Despite the fact that most homes were small, they frequently provided shelter for extended families.

It is probable that Francis and Hannah lived in the William Adams home for at least a short time after marriage, or if not in the home then another home nearby on the Adams farm property. This was a trying period for the Adams family. William Adams' first-born son, William Adams Jr., died in January 1660, leaving three small children as orphans since their mother had died four years before. William III, Simon, and John may have been living in their grandfather's household. Grandson William (III) grew up, was educated at Harvard and became a prominent minister in Dedham, Massachusetts. Nathaniel and Samuel (brothers of Hannah) evidently became guardians for the younger William and the other children after his father's death. In his diary, Rev. William Adams III indicated he could not afford the cost to attend Harvard but was able to attend with the assistance of his Uncles Nathaniel and Samuel.



**The John Whipple House in Ipswich, Massachusetts is owned and maintained by the Ipswich Historical Society. Built before 1650, Francis Muncy would have seen this house frequently, but it would not appear as it is today. Over the years the house was greatly expanded and more than doubled in size in 1670. Wooden shingles replaced the thatched roof.**

Work in Ipswich during this period was done from sunup to sundown, except on Saturdays and Sundays. Conforming to the rules of the colony, Francis would have stopped working at 3:00 PM on Saturday afternoon to prepare for worship on Sunday - and generally there were two consecutive services, morning and afternoon, on Sunday. Baptisms were always performed on Sunday afternoon - usually the first Sunday after birth. Starting in 1659 it was ordered that the town bell shall be rung each day at 9:00 PM as a curfew. Life in Puritan Ipswich was not conducive to late-night parties.



The image shows three handwritten signatures in cursive script, stacked vertically. The top signature is 'William Adams Sr.', the middle one is 'William Adams Jr.', and the bottom one is 'John Adams'. The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and characteristic of the 17th century.

**Signatures of William Adams Sr., William Adams Jr., and John Adams of Ipswich (among others) on a petition presented to the Salem Court on June 4, 1658, seeking non-renewal of the license of the White Horse Inn because it kept open doors and an open bar past 9 PM.**

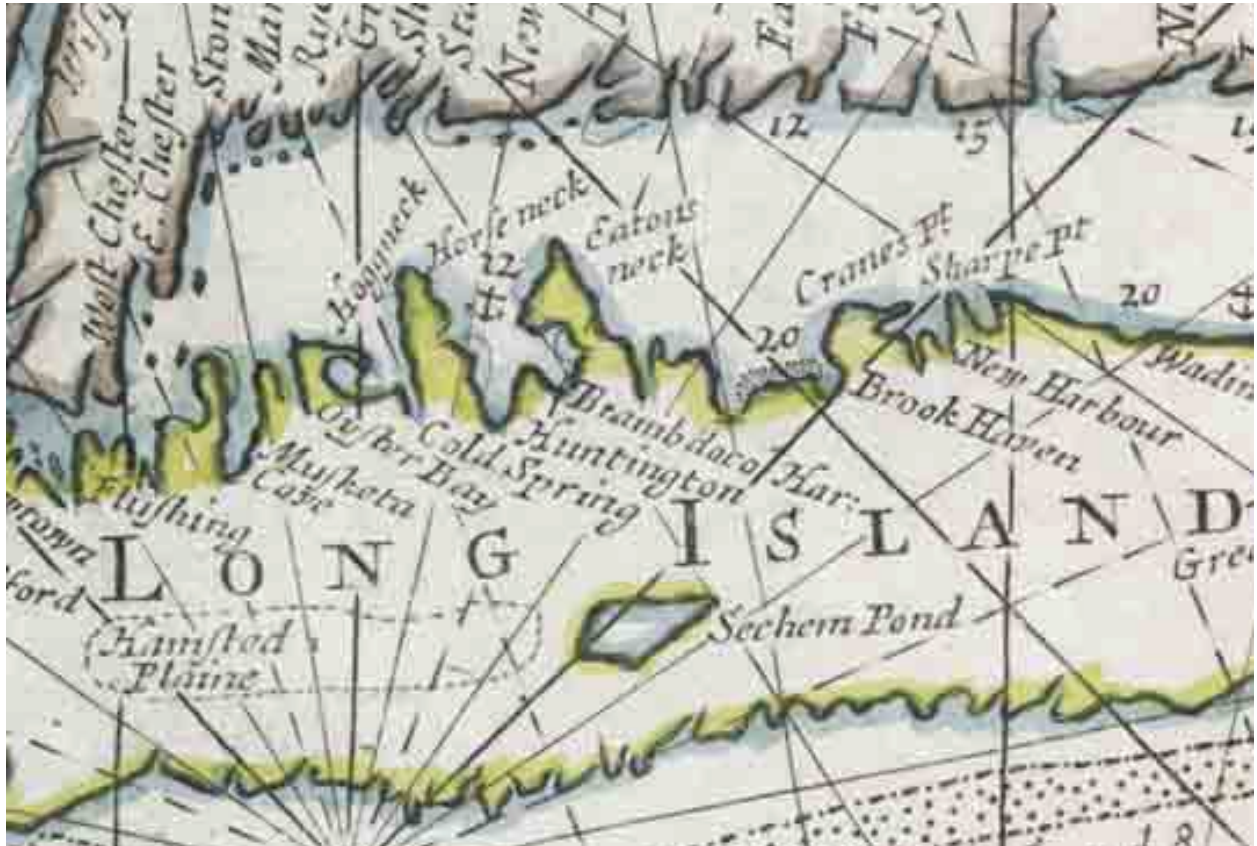
It was recorded in the town records that John Muncy, son of Francis and Hannah Muncy, was christened on October 24, 1660, a Sunday. If tradition was kept for John, he would have been born between October 18 - 23. At this time the Ipswich church had two very prominent ministers, Mr. Thomas Cobbet and Mr. William Hubbard. It is unknown which minister performed the baptism. We can assume that his grandfather William Adams, Uncles John, Nathaniel and Samuel Adams and their families were present. John Muncy was christened in a meeting house that was built in 1651, the original building having been torn down because it was now too small for the services. The new Meeting House was square with a bell tower in the center. It had been expanded to add galleries and extra seating in the year of his birth, but there were still no pews - only hard wooden benches. An aisle down the center separated benches on

two sides, females sitting on one side and males occupying the other. On the day their son John was christened, Francis and Hannah Muncy did not sit together on the bench waiting to be called forward. They would not have heard an organ or piano in the Meeting House. Instead they may have heard the clank and rattle of muskets and scabbards. In fear of Indian attack, by order of the General Court in 1643 every man older than eighteen years of age, magistrates and ministers excepted, was required to attend with his musket or other firearm.

The years of the early 1660's may have been trying times in Ipswich. Charles II was restored to the English throne in 1660, and Puritans in England and the Colonies suffered a loss of influence. Charles II called into question the validity of provisions of the patent granted that created the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and Puritan restrictions on who could vote were challenged by the Crown. There was a severe drought in New England in 1662 — one which caused great hardship and economic disruption to the region. In addition, Hannah's father William Adams was in failing health during this time. William Adams Sr. died in early 1662, about two years after his son William Jr. died (January, 1660).

Not long after the birth of John, probably in 1662 or early 1663, Francis and Hannah Muncy left Ipswich, Massachusetts and settled in Setauket, Long Island, New York. It is probable that a combination of circumstances necessitated the move — drought, death of William Adams with certainty his sons would inherit his assets, but most of all the need to acquire land and possessions of their own. Because of the overcrowding of Ipswich, the acquisition of land and commonage was becoming impossible. To advance the prospects of his new family, Francis Muncy had to move on.





## Setauket, Brookhaven, New York

### Getting Settled - 1662 - 1664

There doesn't appear to be any record of property transfer in Ipswich during this time, so it is almost certain that Francis owned no property in Ipswich. During this period, central and eastern Long Island was being settled by people moving there from Massachusetts and Connecticut, and this area felt a strong affinity for Massachusetts and New England. The township of Brookhaven extended from the north shores of Long Island to the southern shore of Long Island on the Atlantic. It was formed as a result of two purchases from the local Indian tribes by a group of investors. The first purchase was in 1655 and the second in 1659. Those involved in the purchases included both speculators and settlers. Combining both purchases, the township comprised over 320 square miles including twenty miles of shoreline on Long Island Sound and thirty miles of shoreline on the Atlantic Ocean on the south side. There was an abundance of fresh water from streams and ponds. In 1659 the first settlers petitioned the Colony



of Hartford to be a part of that colony, and their petition was eventually granted. Later Long Island came under the jurisdiction of the Colony of Connecticut.

The village of Setauket was on the northern shore of the township of Brookhaven, and for some time the name Setauket and Brookhaven were used interchangeably. Although in governance it was formed as a traditional Puritan village in the manner of those formed in Massachusetts Bay Colony, it was unusual in several ways. The village was decidedly more tolerant than many other New England villages. Where some towns were formed by following a particular minister and gave the minister great influence in the governance of town affairs, Setauket followed a different path. In the first few years Setauket settlers showed great religious tolerance by allowing two or three Quakers among the list of the initial settlers. At this time, Quakers could generally not own property and prior to 1660 could be executed for heresy by Puritan laws. (It became illegal to execute Quakers after King Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660). One Quaker who applied for permission to move to the village was granted permission under the provision that it would not impact the decision of a sawyer who had been asked to join the community. Clearly Setauket was putting the economic needs of the community first. Although they made efforts to bring a minister to Setauket, the community did not seem to place this higher in importance than getting other important trades like a sawyer, blacksmith, miller and weaver to move to town. The village made bringing in a minister a very high priority only when they were required to by government regulation.

How the young Muncy family traveled to Setauket is not recorded, but almost certainly they traveled by ship. Setauket is located on the north central coast of Long Island. Because Ipswich is also located on the coast, it is possible that they left Ipswich by ship or traveled to Salem or Boston to take a ship to southern Connecticut. From that point a smaller boat would have been used to transfer them to Setauket across Long Island Sound.

While the records of Francis Muncy are almost non-existent in Ipswich, he is frequently referenced in Brookhaven. He was one of the very early settlers in the Setauket community and hit the ground running, acquiring property and being involved in town affairs. It appears his most active years were 1665, 1666 and 1667 but references in town records continued until his death. In town records he is frequently referred to as “Frank” or “Franck” Muncy, so we can be confident that his nickname was used frequently.

Francis Muncy was not included on town lists in 1660 or 1662. He first appears in the town records in March, 1663 when he is listed as a party in a dispute over the ownership of an “accommodation” (a lot). The dispute was resolved by splitting the land between the two parties.

As one of the early founders of Brookhaven, Francis had a home lot and a right of commonage, all of which he paid for. The purchase price for his “accommodation” or share in the community was approximately \$2,500 in 2014 dollars. It is likely that property purchased at Setauket was from the dowry or money provided by his father-in-law William Adams. No one could sell land to a stranger and no outsider could become a resident of the town until admitted by popular vote.

As a new settler one of the first things he would do is build his house - a simple wooden structure like those in Ipswich with one or two rooms with a clapboard or plaster exterior and a thatched roof. The basic structure would require only a few days to build, so while the structure was being built Francis, Hannah and John would have lived with a neighbor. After the basic structure was finished they could live inside while the interior was being finished out. Of course, as in Ipswich there would be a simple table or board and trestles, wooden plates, a few utensils and a large fireplace for cooking and warmth. It was a very small space, but the family was small with only two adults and one child —and another soon to arrive. Each house lot had a kitchen garden to provide herbs and salads. Francis and Hannah would have quickly planted fruit trees - apples, plums, cherries - around the new house. Apples were a staple in their diet, and cider was their daily drink, perhaps supplemented with beer. (They rarely drank water, and coffee and tea were unheard of at this time.) Although they seldom drank water, it was a necessity so a well was dug to avoid lugging water from the creek or town well several times a day.

In their farming, men worked communally for both their own land and the common lands. If Francis arrived before he could plant his own crops, he still assisted others in harvesting theirs, just as they would help him in harvesting his. Tools were commonly shared. What Francis lacked could be borrowed, just as he would loan his tools to new arrivals.

Tradesmen were very important to the developing village. In the early days, tradesmen were lacking. A blacksmith, weaver, miller, and carpenter were highly valued and the town attempted to entice these trades to the town. Without a blacksmith, residents of Setauket would need to travel a great distance to obtain metal tools, farm implements and nails. Without a weaver, his would need to be done at home by an already over-worked wife. Without a miller,

grain and corn would need to be transported great distance for milling. Without a carpenter, time that could be devoted to farming and raising livestock was spent using a hammer and nails.

Shortly before or shortly after Francis Muncy and family arrived in Setauket, the first public house (bar) and inn was established. Called an “ordinary” at that time it was allowed to sell strong liquors. It was first authorized on 23 July 1662 that George Wood “could keep the ordinary of this town of Setauket without any just occasion be given to the contrary”. It was to be owned by the town and was to be constructed on town common property, and would revert back to the town’s control if Wood left. Drinking was allowed until 9:00 PM for local people, and no more than thirty minutes at a time. (Isn’t it ironic that the first bar was approved four years before the first permanent minister arrived?)

In 1663 there was great turmoil and suspense on Long Island thanks to the activities of Capt. John Scott. Scott was charming, intelligent, persuasive, ambitious and had friends at the Court of Charles II. He was also duplicitous, arrogant, conniving and a con man who separated people from their money with false claims and promises. Capt. John Scott’s goal was to take control of Long Island by getting the King to vacate the pre-existing patents and make him Governor - or absent an actual order by the King to get the villages of Long Island to recognize his claim to governance. After returning to Long Island in November, 1663 from a trip to England, Scott began to implement his scam by signing up villages on Long Island to recognize his authority and control. Showing a map and realistic looking document with the seal of King Charles II granting ownership in perpetuity convinced most settlers of his legitimacy and very few villages balked. At this time Francis Muncy probably questioned his decision to move to Setauket. This is not what he had anticipated when moving here.

Scott renamed Setauket as “Ashford” after the village of his family in England. For late 1663 and 1664, records of the community were recorded as the village of Ashford.

Scott decided to remove the original settlers of Ashford (Setauket) by offering a twenty square mile area in a nearby area of Long Island. Many signed the agreement to move and for those who refused, he forged their names on the document. Scott had stolen Setauket from the original owners. But it did not last.

John Winthrop, leader of the Connecticut Colony that now had jurisdiction over Long Island was furious that Capt. John Scott was attempting to take control over Long Island. He issued a warrant for his arrest. Scott was captured and arrested in Ashford (Setauket) in April

1664 and brought to trial in Hartford for “sundry heinous crimes.” Convicted, Scott was sent to prison but escaped by July 1664. But he’s not done yet.

During this period King Charles II resolved to conquer New Netherlands. In August 1664 the fleet of Col. Richard Nicolls sailed through Long Island Sound into New Amsterdam harbor and successfully demanded the surrender to the English crown. Given the location of Setauket, it is highly likely that Francis Muncy and others in Setauket watched the fleet moving towards New Amsterdam. Nicolls became deputy governor (later Governor) of New Netherlands, now New York.

During the latter part of 1664 the village of Setauket had to address issues related to John Scott including legal action in behalf of money owed to local residents and restitution for property taken by John Scott.

In October 1664 a contract was signed between the men in Setauket and Mr. Daniel Lane to build a mill for the town. Eighteen men signed the agreement to provide a dam on the village run and to pay twenty shillings each for material costs. This agreement was very significant for several reasons. First and foremost a mill was important to the small village because it would relieve the families from the laborious task of grinding their own grain. Secondly, the list shows the list of men still residing in Setauket after the John Scott affair. Francis Muncy was signatory to that document. (It was quite a few more years before a mill was finally established in Setauket, much to the frustration of everyone there. The problem was that the dam would not hold together, and without the dam the mill would not work. For a number of years, Francis and his fellow citizens had to grind their own meal, or send the grain or corn miles away — sometimes across Long Island Sound—to have it ground. This was a very expensive and time-consuming.)

About this time — probably sometime in 1664 — a second son Samuel was born to Francis and Hannah Muncy. He was almost certainly named for Hannah’s older brother Samuel. *(Some family researchers have surmised that Samuel was named for an ancestor of Francis but I do not believe this is the case. My research of the Muncy family in England shows that “Samuel” is a very, very rare name in the Muncy family — even less common than “Francis.” Yes, Samuel is a very common name in the Muncy family in America, but it becomes common AFTER the birth of Francis’ son.)* There was no active church or minister in Setauket at this time and there is no specific record of Samuel’s birth. Some researchers have guessed at an earlier or later birthdate. However, it seems a birth around 1664 in Setauket is most likely.

## **Setauket Townsman - 1665**

On December 29, 1664 Francis was chosen to act as one of the Townsmen to regulate town affairs for one year: “Mr. Lane, Frances Muncy, Thomas Biggs, John Genners, Roger Barton are Chosen Town’s men for the present year December 29 1664 to act as townsmen in town affairs except in giving land and change officers.” Normally the year served in this capacity would be spent in humdrum administrative chores. However, thanks to the John Scott efforts, a change in colonial jurisdictions and a witch trial Francis Muncy’s term was anything but boring. It was one of the most significant years in Setauket’s history to-date.

Note that the “Mr. Lane” in the above list is Daniel Lane. In that era, the title “Mr.” denoted an educated gentleman with financial resources. Ministers were usually called “Mr.” rather than the later term, “Reverend.” One step down in the social hierarchy was “Goodman” (and “Goodwife” or “Goody” for wives) that implied a status as a yeoman or commoner who farms his own land.

## **The Hempstead Convention - 1665**

In March 1665 New York Governor Nicolls, acting with the authority of the Duke of York and the approval of King Charles II, declared that Long Island would henceforth be within the jurisdiction of the newly created Province of New York, removing it from the jurisdiction of Connecticut. Nicolls called for a convention in Hempstead, Long Island (about forty miles southwest of Setauket) to establish laws, register boundaries between Long Island towns, and resolve property disputes. Each township was required to send two delegates to the convention. Setauket sent Daniel Lane and Roger Barton (two of Setauket’s Townsmen) as their delegates.

Included in the property disputes to be resolved was the dispute between John Scott and Setauket. This was very serious business. By April and May 1664 (while Scott was incarcerated), the Setauket leaders began work to unravel the confusion of John Scott’s land claims and try to confirm original land grants and purchases of 1655 and 1659. After Scott’s trial, the name Ashford was dropped, and the name Setauket was resumed. It was a difficult time in Setauket with great uncertainty. Was Scott really the owner of the lands they now farmed? Many Setauket

settlers had signed letters affirming Scott's claim to Setauket based on false documents presented by Scott. Would these be upheld? Would the King intervene? Did Connecticut act against the authority of the English crown? Scott had created some very realistic claims that were being taken seriously. Scott was not without friends and supporters on Long Island, many of whom would financially benefit if Scott's claims were affirmed. After his escape from jail, Scott returned to the western part of Long Island and was living in Hempstead. Although still a wanted man, he was a popular man in some circles and he was not actively pursued by the authorities. He attempted to reclaim land ownership and leases. Even though he had been convicted in Connecticut and escaped, political differences between New York and Connecticut could work against them. The threat to the Setauket community cannot be overstated. A victory by Scott in the hearings and arbitration would mean the end of Setauket. It would mean the end of the community that they had worked so hard to build.

Setauket took this very seriously. They appointed for their part three respected arbitrators from other communities to hear the case — Capt. John Underhill, Capt. Thomas Topping, and Mr. John Richbell. Capt. John Scott would plead his own case for his land ownership. To plead for Setauket, six respected Townsmen were selected, including Francis Muncy.

*Setauket January 23, 1664/65:*

*at Town meeting it was conceded that the major part should have the preeminence in choosing arbitrators to decide all differences about right our our boundaries with our lands now in differences with Capt. John Scott, Esquire.*

*Now know all men by these present that we the Inhabitants of Setauket according to what is above recited have Chosen Capt. John Underhill, Capt. Thomas Topping, and Mr. John Richbell for our own party to make and end all differences about rights of lands, meadows, woods or anything relating to lands as above recited as witness our hands the day and year above written.*

*Likewise it is Concluded that Mr. Richard Wodhull Mr. Daniel Lane, Thomas Biggs, John Genners, **Frances Muncy**, and Roger Barton shall state the case to the arbitrators and have power to make a final issue as in relations to our lands and other premises as to our mutual agreement on all Causes or Cases as to which our mutual agreement that we may live in peace and unity; likewise as in reference to the time and place we refer it to the Six townsmen above names to agree with Mr. John Scott; to which we bind ourselves one thousand pounds Sterling to stand to the determination and award of the arbitrators with Mr. Scott's arbitrators legally Chosen. To all which promises above recited, we set our hands the day and year above written.*

**Signed by 19 residents of Setauket, including Francis Muncy.**

The pledge of one thousand pounds Sterling was an enormous sum at the time, equal to about \$205,000 in 2014 dollars. That cost had to be divided between twenty to twenty-five rate payers in Setauket — people who had already paid for their accommodation and their yearly fees. But it was a small price to save their village. What was on Francis' mind as he rode the forty miles to Hempstead?

We can be sure the debate was a fierce one - John Scott making his case that his claims were legitimate and Francis Muncy and the other Townsmen making their claims that the original purchases were legitimate and that Scott was seeking to swindle their land out from under them. After all the debate and consideration was concluded, the Governor and deputies ruled that Setauket's original purchases were valid and that Scott's claims were not. The Town of Setauket was the legitimate owner of the land. Any agreements between Scott and Setauket were "void and disannulled." Scott was allowed to sell his property and possessions in Setauket, but the village was no longer under the threat of John Scott.

(One of the names on this list, Roger Barton, was in disgrace in 1666 when he was tried in absentia in May 1666 by the Court of Assizes in New York for "heinous crime and misdemeanors." Barton did not appear for the trial and was declared an outlaw and punishment was set at 30 lashes in New York, 30 lashes in Setauket and prison for one year. Barton's accommodation in Setauket had previously been sold to Francis Muncy and William Satterly.)

Under rules adopted at the Hempstead Convention, each town was required to register with the new government within a year under its newly chosen name, showing its bounds and neighbors bounds. The people of Setauket voted to change the name to "Brookhaven" but the original name was retained to differentiate between the older settled village area and the newer settled area to the south. Setauket was now referred to generally as "Setauket, alias Brookhaven."

Other new laws resulting from the Hempstead Convention included a reformation of government to move away from the Dutch system and incorporate an English system. Long Island, Staten Island and Westchester were all organized as one shire—Yorkshire. The shire was divided into three court districts, or "ridings." The East Riding district included all of eastern Long Island. Towns were now to have eight overseers, including two church wardens, and a minister. Each town was now required to have a church and collect taxes to support a minister.

## The Witchcraft Trial - 1665

Another important event occurred during Francis Muncy's term as an Overseer (formerly "Townsmen"). Ralph and Mary Hall had arrived in Setauket in late 1664. Within a year they had developed a relationship with George Wood, Sr. and his family. George Wood died under mysterious circumstances from a "strange illness" and the town believed that Wood was killed by witchcraft. Ralph and Mary Hall were named as suspects. Because of their relationship with Wood "he most dangerously and mortally sickened and languished, and not long after by the aforesaid wicked and detestable Art." Shortly after this, George Wood's child also became ill in the same manner and died. Representing Setauket the elected Townsmen referred this charge to the Constable and the New York Court of Azzizes where a trial was held in October 2, 1665 in New York. The following was recorded in the Court records:

The prisoners were Ralph Hall and Mary, his wife, the prisoner being brought to the bar by the sheriff of New York the Indictment was read, viz:

The Constable and overseers of the Town of Seatalcott (Setauket), in the East Riding of Yorkshire upon Long Island do present for our Sovereign Lord the King that Ralph Hall of Seatalcott aforesaid upon the 25 Dec. being Christmas Day last past and several other dayes and times since that day by some detestable and wicked Arts commonly called Witchcraft and Sorcery, did (as is suspected) maliciously and feloniously practice and exercise at the said town etc. on the person of George Wood by which wicked and detestable Arts the said George Wood (as is suspected) Most dangerously and Most Mortally sickened and languished and not long after etc. dyed.

[followed a similar indictment regarding the infant child]

[the same indictment as above was read agains Mary, the wife of Ralph Hall]

Whereupon depositions of witnesses accusing the Prisoners of the fact were read, but no witsesse appeared to give Testimony vive voce.

Ralph and Mary Hall pleaded "not guilty" and submitted to trial by God and the country.

A jury of twelve considered the case and found that "there are some suspicions by the Evidence of what the woman is charged with, but nothing considerable of value to take away her life, but in reference to the man we find nothing considerable to charge him with..." In a seventeenth century form of probation, Ralph Hall was required to post a bond for his wife's



good behavior and they were required to attend annual sessions of the court. The Halls moved to the Bronx area of New York until they were released from annual court appearances in 1668.

### **The Rev. Nathaniel Brewster - 1665/1666**

Since it's formation, Setauket residents had been slow in getting a minister. Although they tried to solicit several ministers to come to Setauket, the wages offered were low. They built a house for a minister and collected taxes for supporting a minister - but the house was eventually sold and the money raised for the minister was kept in "escrow." Obtaining a minister was definitely **not** a high priority for Setauket. We can't know for certain, but perhaps they didn't want to be constrained by the rigidity they had experienced in New England. This would make sense in a way. Massachusetts Bay had been formed with a religious mission, as well as an economic one, and ministers from England flocked to that colony. Setauket had been formed more as a commercial enterprise that would allow land to go to settlers. The Puritan religious fervor may not have been present in Setauket. As noted earlier, some of the early settlers allowed to purchase accommodations were Quakers, something that definitely would not have been allowed in Massachusetts Bay. But now things were different. The town was being ordered to build a church and call a minister and they could no longer drag their feet. Failing to have a church and minister, and failing to attend church would result in a fine. The most prominent citizen of Setauket, Mr. Richard Woodhull, chaffed at the new laws and expressed his opinion by criticizing these new requirements, resulting in a large fine. But eventually even he saw the handwriting on the wall.

It took them a long time to hire a minister, but they got a good one.

The first minister in Setauket was Rev. Nathaniel Brewster, a graduate of the first graduating class of Harvard in 1642, and he subsequently received a Divinity Degree in Dublin, Ireland. He was a friend of the son of Oliver Cromwell and was recommended to others in England by Oliver Cromwell. He was called to the Setauket church and accepted in 1665.

As a town Overseer (formerly called "Townsmen"), Francis Muncy participated in the actions to bring Brewster to Setauket, alias Brookhaven. On October 24, 1665 it is recorded that the town had reached an agreement with Matthew Prior to purchase his home lot "with housing, Glass windows, doors and partitions, with all the fencing, young apple trees and other fruit trees,



**1845 painting of the Brewster House by William Sidney Mount.**

to the Constable and the rest of the overseers, for the minister's accommodation, namely Mr. Brewster." Prior was to vacate the property by the following 16 March 1666. In further action on the same day, the Overseers agreed "that the minister's salary be paid quarterly and that it be rated by an equal rate according to lands and estates."

Nathaniel Brewster arrived in 1666. His arrival is significant to the descendants of Francis Muncy because his daughter, Hannah, was born in Setauket and married John Muncy, son of Francis and Hannah. Rev. Nathaniel Brewster spent the rest of his ministerial career in Setauket, alias Brookhaven and is buried there.

Brewster's arrival and a new meeting house for religious services on the Sabbath introduced an important new element to life in Setauket. The Sabbath became not only a day of rest, but a day of socializing, gossip and discussion.



**The home of Rev. Nathaniel Brewster ( brother-in-law to Francis Muncy) dates to 1665. It was expanded in the early 18th century and restored in 1968 to match the 1845 painting of "Long Island Farmhouses" by William Sidney Mount. Hannah Brewster Muncy was likely born in this house.**

### **Constable / Surveyor Francis Muncy - 1666**

Setauket, alias Brookhaven, town court records list Francis Muncy as Constable on 4 February 1666 in a lawsuit between Zachary Hawkins (Plaintiff) and Evan Salisbury (Defendant). In addition, April 1666 Francis Muncy (misspelled as "Mancy") was listed as Constable along with Overseer Daniel Lane as representing the town before the Governor Richard Nicolls in an action against Richard Smith. Town records indicating the date of election of Francis as constable have not been found, but it would certainly have been after his service as Overseer was concluded at the end of 1665. In November 1666 John Genner was elected constable.

Constables were typically elected annually and served for only one year. They performed a variety of roles. The constable was responsible for collecting the taxes that may have been in a measure of grain or corn and had the power to confiscate property for payment if necessary. Constables announced actions of the town by posting notices, and enforced the curfew and village rules and laws. Constables appeared before courts representing the town and presenting

documents. While an important position signifying the trust of the community, it was a job that many tried to avoid because of the potential for controversy in collecting taxes. The term was for one year, and no one sought a second term. Many communities required that those elected constable **must serve** or be fined for failure to serve.

The Hempstead Convention laws required that boundaries be set between towns to avoid conflict and by early 1666 time was running out to mark the boundaries between Setauket and Smithtown. On 5 February 1666 it was ordered that that Mr. Richard Wodhull, Mr. Daniel Lane, Francis Muncy, Henry Perring, William Cramer and Zachary Hawkins and Henry Rogers “are appointed to run the bounds of the Town between Smith and Brookhaven alias Setauket.” Winter was an ideal time to do this task because because of the lack of leaves on the trees and dormant underbrush. The task was noted as completed on 8 March 1666.

### **Cow Keeper - 1667**

At a town meeting on 25 April 1667 Francis Muncy was appointed as one of two Cow Keepers. As noted in the records, “William Poole and Francis Muncy have taken the town’s cows to keep them sufficiently as cow keepers ought to do. To begin on May Day and to end when the fields are cleared and opened. And in consideration of the same, the town is to pay two shillings a day and have one cow each of them to be kept without pay to to be paid two thirds Indian [corn] and one third wheat and peas and to have a pound of butter a cow.” William Poole continued in this position beyond one year, but Francis Muncy did not. He served only one year.

While Cow Keepers may not sound like much of a job today, it was critical to small villages in the seventeenth century. Typically the cows were kept in a penned area near the village during the nighttime to protect against wolves, and shortly after sunup the cows were herded to commonly-owned grassy pastures away from the village to graze. Before sundown they were again herded into the village area. Residents of Setauket owned their own cows that were kept in the common areas. To milk a cow, residents would find their cow(s) in the commons just after sunup before they were herded to the grazing areas. As a village cow keeper, Francis would have been very busy near sunup and sundown.

In addition to herding the cattle to and from pasture, the cow keepers were responsible for keeping the cows away from the farm area to prevent destruction of the crops. It was time consuming and therefore the fee paid to cow keepers was an incentive. Francis Muncy’s son John

was about 16 years old during his time and may have helped his father, but more likely he helped with the farm work while his father was not available.

While some Setauket residents were frequently involved in court actions and arbitrations, Francis Muncy was not. However, a dispute with Philip Reade, Physician of Norwalk, Connecticut and Francis Muncy was recorded 6 October 1667: "...Philip Reade of Norwalk, Physician and Francis Muncy of Setauket on Long Island do bind ourselves to each other in the full sum of ten pounds sterling to stand to the arbitration of Henry Perry, Thomas Biggs, Thomas Mapes and Satterly...who shall end it."

Two days later, the arbitrators rendered their verdict: "they have ordered by their moderation that Goodman Muncy shall pay the said Mr. Reed thirty-five shillings, besides the court charges which is eleven shillings & 9 pence, & Mr. Reed to pay the arbitrators one gallon of cider." One must be curious about the cause of this spat with a physician located in Norwalk, Connecticut immediately across Long Island Sound (about seven miles by water.) *This was almost certainly the infamous physician Philip Reade* (who later practiced medicine in Concord, Massachusetts) and whose fame was due to frequent court actions because of his accusations of witchcraft. A significant item included in the verdict is that Francis Muncy was called "Goodman Muncy." "Goodman" was a title of respect for those of humble origins, while "Mister" was a title denoting a gentleman of a higher class.

## **1668 - 1672**

The town records are silent on civic involvement by Francis Muncy from 1668 through 1672 period. Although frequent notations are recorded about land transfers and assignment of property, there is nothing to indicate that Francis was called upon to serve in any civic activities or leadership roles. Was this simply a period in which other, younger residents stepped up to take responsibility for Setauket's local government? I don't believe so. Others who were active with Francis in the 1665-1666-1667 activities continued to be active in civic affairs. Francis was not. Are the disagreement requiring arbitration with a Norwalk physician and a single term as cow keeper clues that Francis was ill during his period? Or did he simply feel the need to focus on his farms?

A curious action took place in the town meeting on 17 November 1671. It was voted to establish a village at Wading River, about fifteen miles to the east of Setauket on the shore of Long Island Sound but still within the bounds of the Township of Brookhaven. "...eight families or eight men to have accommodations as the place will afford..." The names of John Tooker, Thomas Genners, Elias Bayles, Joseph Longbotham and Thomas Smith "each of them granted allotments there at, or near the Wading River where it is most convenient. **Francis Muncy has also a lot granted there with the rest upon condition he lives there himself.**" The requirement to "live there himself" was not a condition of the other families. There is no evidence that Francis actually DID relocate to Wading River, and clearly the family was in the Setauket area a few years later. *My opinion is that Francis was considering moving to the area and made this known, but was undecided at the time. Another intriguing possibility is that Francis may have been seeking an additional grant of land as a commoner, but had thoughts of locating a near relative on that land (Brother William?) The town action demonstrated that he could have a grant of land, but if he decided against relocating the grant would be void and he could not rent out this property.*

## **Fence Viewer, Heward and Whaling Squadron - 1673**

In 1673 Francis Muncy is again recorded in Setauket records in a civic role. At a town meeting on 30 January 1673 Francis Muncy and Henry Perring are chosen as "viewers of fences and heward's of the fields for this year." Again, what appears an insignificant job in our age was very important at that time. Early town records point to the importance of fences to keep cattle and hogs away from the planting fields. The town set an official standard of four rails and a height of 4'5" from the bottom. There were miles of fencing, and fences were constantly falling into disrepair. A collapsed fence could lead to intrusion by livestock into the planting fields and just a few cattle or hogs going through a collapsed fence could wipe out a significant part of a years harvest. To address this, the community established the important job of "fence viewer." When the fence viewer discovered that a fence was not being maintained, the owner could be fined.

The job of the heward was to supervise the removal and cutting up of fallen trees across the roads and paths of the town as well as insure that undergrowth in the fence rows was maintained.

Setauket had participated in the whaling trade since the early 1660's. Usually in the months from November through April, whales began to move northward in the Atlantic following their food sources. Not infrequently whales would become beached on the south shore of Brookhaven Township, about 22 miles from Setauket. In agreement with the local Indians, Setauket would be notified when a whale was beached, or in the area and could be forced to the beach. Setauket formed "squadrons" of men who would then travel the 22 miles to the beached whale or assist the Indians in beaching the whale using boats and harpoons. On 8 July 1673 "it was voted and agreed upon that there shall be 4 squadrons at the south and to be divided for this year according as it set down an a paper being divided by Samuel Dayton. This being voted, and the head of the squadrons are **Francis Muncy**, Samuel Dayton, Andrew Miller and Obed Seward."

After the whale was secured, Francis would have participated in cutting it up, extracting usable bone and whale oil. The blubber was probably processed in the south although earlier in Setauket's history it had been moved to the town for processing. Normally the squadron(s) would receive 1/3 of the whale while the remainder would be distributed to the Indians and town proprietors.

## **The Last Year - 1674**

There are only four references to Francis Muncy in Setauket records in 1674. On 22 April 1674 Francis was witness to a deed transfer. On 6 June Francis Muncy was listed as one of thirteen men engaged to lay out property lines for the meadows land in the south. On 20 June 1674 Francis was listed as having lots 22 and 35 in "the old purchase of meadow in the south." This is the last mention of Francis Muncy as a living resident of Setauket.

The first we hear of Francis' death is in the Setauket town records is on 30 March 1675: "Frances Muncy before he died exchanged his meadow at the fireplace in the old purchase with Samuel Dayton, for his lot of meadow at Seabamuck in the new purchase, and at this time the widow Muncy is willing to do the same and gives her assent." However, a recently examined 1929 abstract of the early Suffolk General Court sessions indicates the the following:

(page 48) At Court Sessions in Southhold 1.2.3 days June 1675 the Inventory of estate of Francis Munsey of Seatauket alias Brookhaven who dyed Intestate, formerly given to Court Sessions in Southhampton in March last, **taken first Sept 1674 by John Sattarly and John Thompson** total 201:00:00. On estate Francis Munsy dec'd Granted to Hannah Munsy the widow or relict of sd Francis Munsy.

(emphasis added)

Although the inventory was originally presented to the court in March 1775, the inventory was first taken on September 1, 1674. *This would almost certainly indicate that Francis Muncy died in August 1674.* We do not know the exact date of Francis Muncy's death. Records of births, deaths, and marriages are not available for the early years. Typically these records were maintained with church records or were not maintained at all during this time period. If they were maintained in the church, the records were certainly lost in a fire in the 1680's. Francis Muncy was probably in his early forties at death. He left an estate valued at 201 pounds, or about \$40,000 in 2014 dollars. (As was common during that period the inventory and value of the estate may not have include housed and property, but only personal possessions. Without seeing the inventory we don't know.)

Before he died Francis may well have heard the allegations against his friend Daniel Lane in 1674, but he would not live to learn the outcome. Daniel Lane had been a neighbor. Francis had served as an Overseer/Townsmen with him. Together they had defended the property rights of Setauket against the claims of John Scott at the Hempstead Convention. He knew Mr. Daniel Lane as a gentleman of breeding and means. But in 1675 Daniel Lane was formally accused of incest (rape) with his daughter and allegedly confessed to Mr. Richard Wodhull. He was convicted in October of 1675, escaped from prison and disappeared. His wife divorced him, and the court took his property, splitting the assets with his divorced wife.

## **Summary of His Life**

We don't have pictures of Francis Muncy. We don't have a written diary or observations made by his contemporaries, but there are some generalizations we can draw from the facts we have available. Francis Muncy came from England as a young man of humble background,



probably from Cambridgeshire and emigrating through Ipswich, England. His immigration to America gave him a fresh start. Either as an indentured servant or common laborer, he showed ambition and a desire to improve himself. He married. He had children. He relocated to a newly developing community in search of land that he could acquire for his growing family. He became a part of a small group of families (probably around 35) that sought to build a society in Setauket on Long Island, making their rules and establishing their customs. His hard work and commitment caught the eyes of his neighbors and he was asked to serve the community in a variety of roles, including Townsman/Overseer and Constable, and he helped defend his community against the false claims of a swindler. He apparently did all of these things responsibly and honorably. He lived in Setauket for less than twelve years, but his life had an impact there. He died young, probably in his early forties. He did not die a hero or a rich or famous man, but he died having done what was asked of him by his community and he provided for his family.

## Afterward

Under the rules at the time for those deceased without a will, the widow was to receive one-third of the estate and the children of the deceased would divide the remaining two thirds, with the eldest son (John Muncy) to receive a double share. Although we don't know how much land Francis owned at death, let's assume for illustrative purposes that he owned 120 acres. Under this scenario, Hannah would have inherited 40 acres. Eldest son John would receive 53 acres and the younger son Samuel would get 26 acres. Hannah Muncy was appointed as Executor of the estate.

Hannah Muncy married John Ramsden from Newtown (Middleborough) Queens, Long Island on 11 June 1675. Hannah, John and Samuel moved into the Ramsden home located in what is now in Queens, New York, approximately fifty miles west of Setauket. How Ramsden and the Widow Muncy became acquainted is unknown. There is no evidence that Ramsden ever lived in the Setauket area. During the next few years Ramsden administered the Setauket property owned by Francis Muncy, renting the land to several men. In December, 1679 a

document was executed to give John Muncy two new guardians, Mr. Samuel Edsell and John Thompson, to manage his estate:

*December 17, 1679 (badly torn original and part missing)*

*These may certify all whom it may concern, that I, John Muncy, son of Frances Muncy, formerly of Brookhaven in the East Riding of Yorkshire upon Long Island, deceased, do with the approbation and consent of my mother, Hannah Ramsden, relict and executrix to the before said Frances, choose and appoint my trusty and loving friends Samuel Edsell and John Thompson of Brookhaven before said, to be my guardians. To manage for me and for my use all and every [part] of the estate that my said father, Frances Muncy, left at his death. Also by these [presented], we give order that this instrument shall be recorded as witness our hands this 17th day of December, Ano 1679.*

*Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of us;*

*John Adams*

*John Muncy*

*Andrew Gibbs*

*Hannah Ramsden*

John Muncy was about 19 years old at this time, and was probably homesick. Since he was about 15 years old when his father Francis died, it is also possible that he had some difficulty adjusting to a new step-father. In “Setauket, Alias Brookhaven” by Belle Barstow, she speculates: “Perhaps he was still too young to manage the property on his own, but by taking up residence in Setauket he was establishing his independence and could work under the guidance of his two friends.”.

Who were these two friends, John Thompson and Mr. Samuel Edsell, who served as guardians?

Mr. Samuel Edsell was a relative late-come to Setauket, although he may have lived in an adjacent town prior to coming to Setauket. He is recognized in all documents as “Mr.” Samuel Edsell signifying education and standing as a gentleman.

John Thompson was a gunsmith and blacksmith and arrived in Setauket in 1672. He was evidently a good friend of the Francis Muncy family. According to the Brookhaven Town Records he prospered here as a blacksmith for on June 6th, 1674, "the towne doth ingaege to pay Mr Tomson duely and truly and every yere for what work he doth for them in wheet pork Ingen (Indian I.e. wampum) or other pay that doth Satisfie him." He acquired real estate, both by allotments and by purchase, as the records refer to many of his transactions. He was constable in

1684, and a Townsman in 1686. Based on Brookhaven town records he was evidently a tenacious businessman not to be taken advantage of. In 1691 he conveyed to his son Samuel a 50 acre lot on Mount Misery, along with use of the shop. He died before 1699. His son Samuel Thompson became the second husband of Hannah Brewster Muncy (married first to John Muncy) who lived in, and probably died in the Setauket Thompson House that still stands. She was the second wife of Samuel Thompson whose first wife had died between 1695-1699, leaving a fourteen year old son and five daughters, the last of whom was born in 1695. Hannah married into quite a large family, adding to her three sons by John Muncy.

Recorded on 1 June 1682 John Ramsden executed an agreement to give John and Samuel Muncy livestock and twenty bushels of corn in October 1683 for living and working with their step-father John Ramsden for a year. (Note the terminology has changed over the years and during that time period “son in law” means “step-son” in today’s meaning.)

*1 June 1682 -*

*Be it known unto all men by these presents whome it may any ways concern that I John Ramsden of new towne in the west Rieding of yourksheere upon long Island doe give unto John Muncy and samuell muncy being his sons in law doe give a paire of 3 yeare old steeres now this grase two cows faire with calue or calues by there siedes good well groene cowes to be delivered to the aboue said sonns in ocktober next come twelf month in the yeare 83 and also I have given to John muncy as sucking calue a cow calue and to be delivered at the term as the haboue saide the said John and samuell muncy doth ingaege to live with there father in law and to help him what thay can whiellest ocktober com twelfmonth and the said Joh Ramsden doth ingaege to lett them havu twenty bushells of corn to be ground for them into meale at this time as abous menchonend as witness my hand this the 23 of majj 1682.*

*wittnes John Smith John TomSon*

*John Ramsdon*

*is is to be understood before saiging that I John Ramsdon doth give samuell muncy a yearling haiffer now at this may 1682."*

**Records of the Town of Brookhaven, Book A., p. 80**

At this time John would be aged 22 years and Samuel about 18. John had moved back to Setauket three years before his document was executed. It is difficult to understand the intent of the document. Perhaps Samuel had moved to Setauket to be with his brother, or was planning to do so. Perhaps Ramsden needed the assistance of both step-sons and provided this as payment for a years labor in Newtown.

John Ramsden is mentioned frequently in the Newtown records - frequently as a party in legal disputes. He died in 1686. Hannah Muncy Ramsden then married Thomas Wickingham, also in Newtown, in 1687. The date and location of Hannah's death is unknown.

Both of Francis Muncy's sons, John and Samuel, lived the rest of their lives in Brookhaven. John died young in 1691, aged 31, and had three sons (John, Francis and Nathaniel). Samuel died before 1704 and had at least one son (unproven), Samuel.

Despite their involvement in the early settlement of Setauket, you will find no gravestones bearing the Muncy name there. Undoubtedly Francis and sons John and Samuel were buried in Setauket, probably in the church cemetery grounds. During the Revolutionary War, English troops tore down and broke up most of the gravestones in the cemetery to use in fortifications. Even those that survived that event are ravaged by time and mostly unreadable. The children of John and Samuel Muncy moved on to other communities on Long Island, and eventually their descendants moved into Delaware and Virginia.



**The Thompson House in Setauket. Built in 1709 by Samuel Thompson, 2nd husband of Hannah Brewster Muncy, about 35 years after Francis Muncy's death. John Muncy's three sons probably visited their mother often in this house and Hannah Brewster Muncy Thompson likely died here 1755.**

## **Tidbits:**

Those who are descended from Willoughby Randolph Muncy and Mary Catherine Jayne share an even closer kinship with Setauket and Long Island. Through the Jayne family they are directly descended from Richard Wodhull (Woodhull), one of the primary founders of Setauket and a large influence on Long Island. They are also descended from Captain John Topping, another important figure in Long Island history. Both are mentioned in this narrative. In addition, William Jayne (ancestor of Mary Catherine Jayne) arrived in Brookhaven in the late 1680's and the family became prominent in community in subsequent years. It is indeed a very small world.

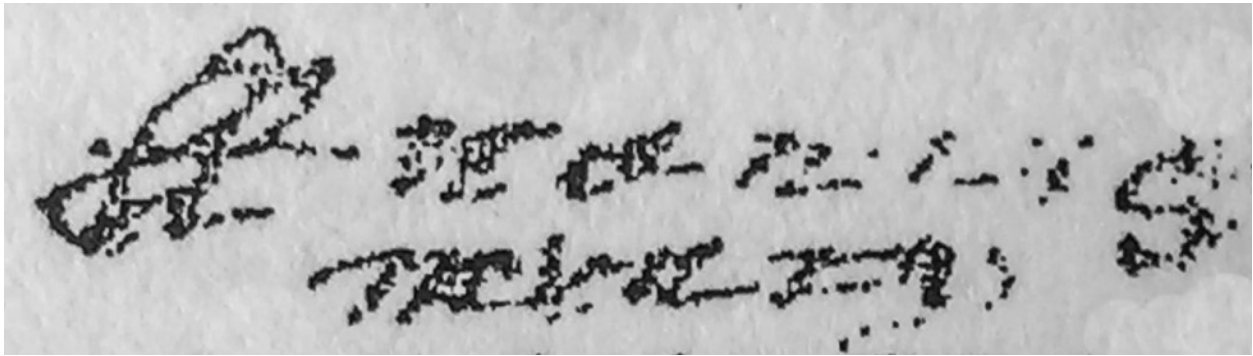
## **Unanswered Questions:**

### **Was Francis Muncy literate?**

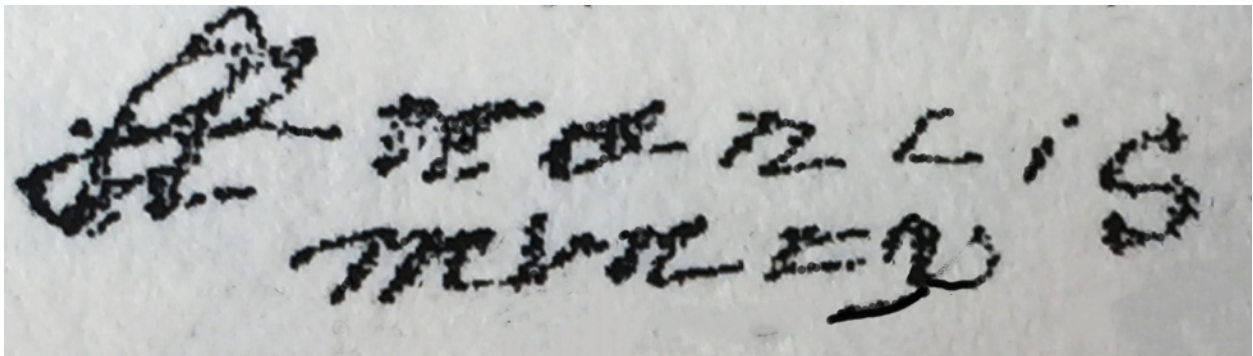
Our 21st century reaction will be “Of course he was! How could he possibly be a Townsman/Overseer and Constable if he wasn't literate?” But “literacy” was not a requirement for these positions. Many people could not read or write during this period. The Setauket records contain many, many examples of individuals in leadership positions who signed with their mark, not their written signature.

The first few entries in printed copies (not the originals) of the Setauket records (10/1664 & 01/1665) indicated Francis Muncy signed with “his mark”, in addition to a signature. However, starting in October 1665 and every entry thereafter, Francis Muncy is indicated as signing a document with his signature but not with a mark. The only known examples of his writing are his signature, and that isn't a good indicator of ability to write. I know highly literate people whose signatures are practically illegible, and I'm sure you do too! Can we gain any insight by viewing the signature of Francis Muncy?

I have not seen the original records on microfiche or microfilm so I am not in the position to analyze the records. The book “Setauket, alias Brookhaven” by Belle Barstow, contains a copy of a photocopy of the October, 1664 document gristmill/dam document—a copy of a copy.



**Francis Muncy signature, 1664**



**Francis Muncy Signature Reconstructed in Photoshop**

I have scanned this document, enlarged it and attempted to enhance the section on Francis' signature. I have attempted to reconstruct the signature in Photoshop using examples of other writing during that period, and filling in where ink may have faded and removed what may have been excess ink caused by slow writing. While the reconstructed version is more legible, it is still difficult to make out. It is important to remember that letters were sometimes written very differently than they are today. For example, a "u" and a "v" were usually written the same way and used interchangeably. What is clear from this example are several notable features. (1) the first letter "F" was actually a double lowercase "f" or "ff", a common substitution for a single capital letter. From this example, it would appear as "ffrancis." (2) The signature was wide and crude taking one line for his first name and the "Muncy" on the second line. The signature was wide because he essentially printed each letter without connecting to the previous letter and

added extra space between letters, as in “ff r a n c i s.” (3) the last letter in his first name - “S” was highly distinctive, oversized and dropped down below the first line - as in

“ff r a n c i **S**”.

The final “S” may also have served as his “mark.” The last name of “Muncy” (note the spelling) was almost illegible in the sample but can be deciphered in the reconstructed version remembering that a “u” and “v” were made the same way. Also note that some versions of the letter “a” contained upper and lower trailing “tails” like the lower case “a” in Francis’ signature.

To answer the literacy question, we must define “literacy.” Historical studies on literacy have shown that the level of literacy greatly varied according to class. Upper classes had a high level of literacy and lower classes much lower or no literacy. What was “literate” in 1650 could easily be considered illiterate today. However, even in the lower classes in England during that period, many children were taught to read but learning to write was not a priority and may have been delayed. Learning to read may have been focused in the need to read the Bible as an essential part of the culture, but writing was a separate exercise. Cursive writing was not simply reproducing what was in a printed book (the Bible). In her book “The Witches” by Stacy Schiff (copyright 2015) Schiff discusses a prominent medical doctor in Salem who had a good library of nine medical texts and who could read — but he could not write. She also noted that the majority of adolescent girls in Salem could read but could not sign their name. If we define literacy as the ability to read AND write, we get a different perspective than if we define literacy as the ability to read.

*I believe that Francis Muncy had the ability to read but I believe his ability to write was very limited, if he could write at all.*

### **Who was the William Muncy in Patchogue, Brookhaven, New York in 1678?**

Patchogue is a village in the township of Brookhaven, and is located about 14 miles from Setauket on the south shore of Long Island. In the clerk’s records at Patchogue there is mention of a William Munsey in the records of a drawing for town lots in 1678. Respected genealogist D.O.S. Lowell, in his book “A Munsey-Hopkins Genealogy” (1920) described the circumstances under which William Muncy’s name appears:



In the record of a drawing for 50 town "lots" we find the following list:

not william muncy	ould John
Mr. Woodhull	1 blank
Zachary Hawkins	1 blank
William Sallier	1 blank
Andrew Miller	2 blanks
Thomas Smith	1 blank
etc. etc.	

Evidently after "william muncy" had been written, the word "not" was inserted before "william"; then both words ("not william") were lined through rather clumsily with a pen, and "ould John" was written after "muncy."

What should we infer from this?

First of all, that there was a William Munsey in the mind of the scribe, and probably in the vicinity; second, that he was not the man who drew for the lot; and third, that "ould John" Somebody drew (a blank, doubtless), and "not william muncy."

Lowell goes on to explain that "ould John" should **not** be attributed to an "ould John Muncy" but rather to "ould John" Thompson who is frequently referred to in Patchogue town records.

Mr. Lowell is incorrect in attributing "ould John" to John Thompson. Brookhaven records have frequent references in drawing for lots attributed to "Francis Muncy & Old John Thomas." Evidently at some time both John Thomas and Francis Muncy received a one-half share as proprietors, and in future lot drawings they combined Muncy and Thomas as a unit for drawing, assuming that each would get one-half of the share drawn. There are references in the records where it is listed as "Muncy & Old John Thomas." (He was referred to as "ould John" to distinguish him from his son John Thomas, not because he was ancient. Referring to a father as "old John" in lieu of John Senior was common at the time. )

There is no further mention of William Muncy in the Brookhaven records. Interestingly of the list drawing for lots cited above, ALL of the others were residents (proprietors) of Setauket. They may have been drawing for lots to relocate, to add to their personal property, to provide a better location for the whale oil trade, or for resale.

Who was this William Munsey? He disappears from the Brookhaven records but he almost certainly is the William Munsey who appears as a witness on a deed in 1686 in Oyster River (now Durham) New Hampshire. At that time he lived in Kittery, Maine, but later moved to Dover, New Hampshire and was a cooper by trade. He accidentally drowned in 1698. William Munsey



married Margaret (Clement?) about 1675, three years before the drawing for lots in Patchogue. He had three children: William, Margaret and John. The genealogy of William Munsey is covered in “A Munsey-Hopkins Genealogy” by Daniel Ozro Smith Lowell, privately printed in Boston 1920. Reproductions of the book can be ordered through Amazon. Online resources such as [ANCESTRY.COM](http://ANCESTRY.COM) have numerous family trees that link to this William Muncy—unfortunately almost all of them wrong! A sad fact of such online resources is that once a mistake is made, it is repeated and compounded by subsequent links. Many of these errors are based on a misreading of the information contained in “New England Marriages Prior to 1700” (pub. 1985/revised 1992 — see below)

*I believe that William Munsey was the younger brother of Francis Muncy. I base this on circumstantial evidence only and there is no proof. Much is based on “naming patterns” during the time period. It was extremely common to name a male (frequently the first male) child after the father of his father. Francis Muncy’s father may have been named John. Francis Muncy named his first son John. William Munsey named his first son after himself, but he named his second son John. William Munsey married Margaret Clement about 1675. In “New England Marriages Prior to 1700” (pub. 1985/revised 1992) William Munsey is listed and noted as having lived in Dover, NH, Kittery, ME and **Brookhaven, Long Island**.*

*As noted in the introduction to this narrative, a William Muncy was born to John and Martha Muncy in Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, England in 1644 and could have been a brother to Francis Muncy. After his birth record in 1644, he disappears from the Waterbeach records. There is no record of a marriage or burial in Waterbeach or in any other village in Cambridgeshire. Given the fact he isn’t listed in any more Waterbeach or Cambridgeshire records it is certainly possible that he moved away. It is interesting that someone with a surname as rare as Muncy would appear in the records of the same township on Long Island just a few years after Francis’ death.*

*If William Munsey was the younger brother of Francis, he probably came to America in the mid-to-late 1660’s or early 1670’s, and probably came under the same circumstances as Francis—as an indentured servant. After his indenture ended, he may have moved to Long Island seeking to establish his family in a growing community in which his older brother lived— perhaps even working for his brother Francis.*

*(You will recall earlier in this narrative that in 1671 Francis Muncy was given a lot in the new community of Wading River with the condition that he “live there himself”, a very unusual requirement that was not imposed*

*on the seven other Setauket proprietors. It is possible that Francis Muncy had considered allowing his brother William to occupy this lot, but that this was not acceptable to the other seven settlers who were established property owners in Setauket. — this is speculative and would imply that William was in Setauket as early as 1671 — before his marriage, and eight years before the drawing in Patchogue.)*

*After his brother's death, he may have attended the drawing for lots in Patchogue. After the death of his brother and finding that land acquisition was more difficult, he relocated to Maine and New Hampshire near his wife's family who was establishing a new community in that area.*

*As I have indicated, this is circumstantial evidence — but there appears too much coincidence in two Muncys being in Brookhaven to be unrelated.*

### Note - Methodology in Guessing English Origins of Francis Muncy

To date, no recorded baptismal record for Francis Muncy has been found in England. As mentioned in the beginning of this narrative, the baptism may not have been recorded, or the register may have been lost or damaged.

Using currently available (November 2015) parish register information for all counties in England, I have attempted to identify counties that recorded baptisms of the Muncy surname (and variants) between 1625 - 1645. If we assume that Francis Muncy was of normal age at marriage (24-30), he would have been born around 1629-1635. By searching for births between 1625 and 1645 I have tried to identify counties that had family activity and siblings born during that period. Gaps in recorded baptisms could mean a damaged register, failure to record, or other problems.

Using this data, only three counties had multiple christenings of the MUNCY surname (and variants) during this period:

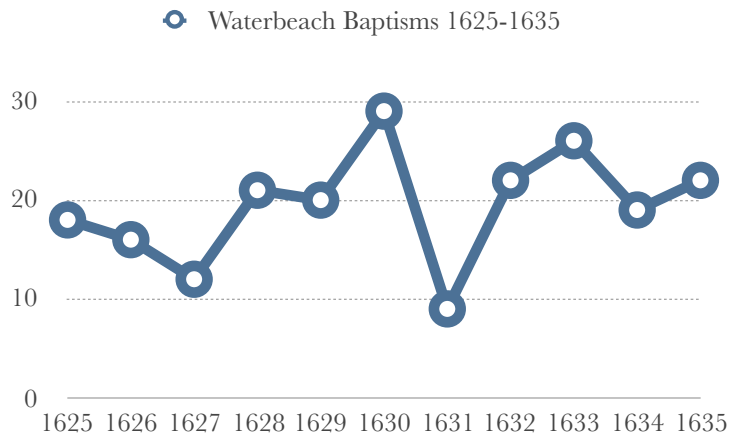
Cambridgeshire	47
Norfolk	9
Westmorland	10

In Westmorland, the name is invariably spelled MOUNCEY, MOUNSEY , and this County is **not** in East Anglia -- the area from which most immigrants to New England originated. This is an unlikely match.

Norfolk is in East Anglia and the name is most commonly spelled MONSY, MONSEY, MUNSEY, etc. so this county is a better match. Norfolk adjoins Cambridgeshire. Almost all of the christenings occur in Hackford, Norfolk and are the children of Robert MONSEY. There appear to be no gaps in the parish register baptismal record.

Due to the larger number of baptisms, Cambridgeshire is appears to be the most likely county. Nine towns have multiple baptisms in this period with Waterbeach leading the rest with eight baptisms in this period. Only two towns show irregular recordings of baptisms that could indicate gaps in the register - Waterbeach and Meldreth. Meldreth only showed 3 Muncy baptisms over an eighteen year period.

Waterbeach is the most interesting and in my opinion the most likely home of Francis Muncy. There are eight Muncy baptisms in the period but there is a gap in the period from 1630-1636. In 1631 there was a significant deviation from the normal baptism rate in the village of Waterbeach. Starting in 1628 the number of baptisms ranged between 20 and 30, but plunged to 9 in 1631 — an almost certain indicator that a number of baptisms were not recorded or submitted to the Bishop. The wide variations in baptisms might indicate that record-keeping in Waterbeach was not consistent. Most of the Muncy baptisms recorded in Waterbeach were children of John and Martha Munsey. (Francis' named his first son John).



Note that not all county parish registers will be complete, and some may not be available online but this analysis was done with the printed and online information available.

## References

Everyday Life In Early America, David Freeman Hawke; (c) 1988 by Judith Hawke.

New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century, by Virginia DeJohn Anderson, (c) 1991 by Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

History of Ipswich, Essex and Hamilton, by Joseph B. Felt, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1834.

Ipswich in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, by Thomas Franklin Waters, Ipswich Historical Society, 1905.

The Descendants of Francis Muncy I with Genealogy of Allied Families, by Mary Edith Shaw, 1956

Early Settlers of Lee County Virginia and Adjacent Counties, Vol II, Hattie Byrd Muncy Bales. (c) 1977, Media Inc., Printers and Publishers, Greensboro, North Carolina

Setauket, Alias Brookhaven: The Birth of a Long Island Town with The Chronological Records 1655-1679, by Belle Barstow (c) 20014.

A Munsey-Hopkins Genealogy, by Daniel Ozro Smith Lowell; privately printed Boston, 1920. (reprints available through Amazon.)

## Updates

1.1 - correction of typographical errors;

1.2 - added information related to constable term and information on estate inventory and death date of Francis Muncy; possibility the Ipswich, England was location of emigration from England.

2.0 - added introduction containing information on possible links to parents in England; extensive re-writing and organization. Added notes on methodology in determining likely locations of Francis' birth, and information on literacy of Francis Muncy, including facsimile of his signature.