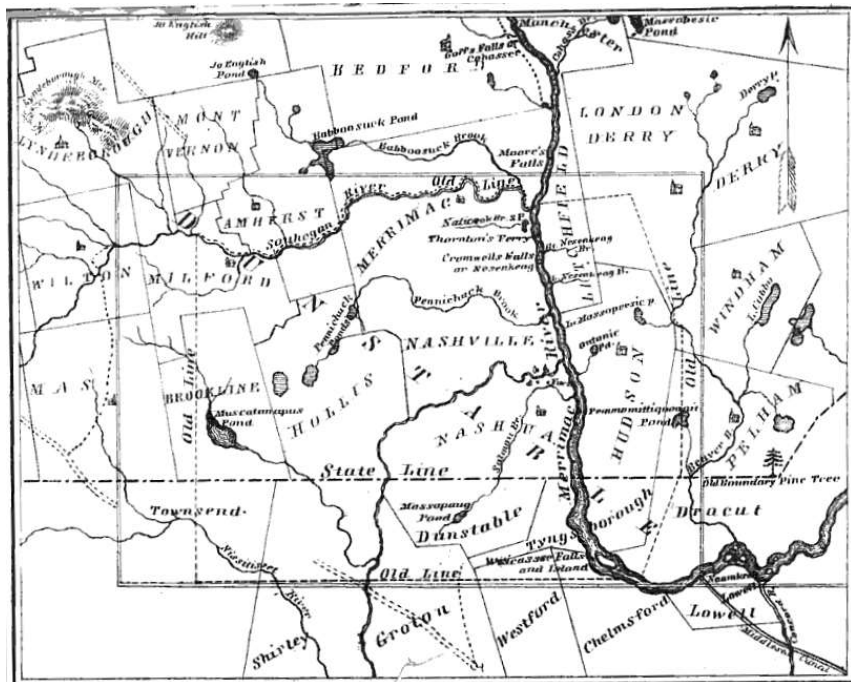


## Ebenezer Bancroft by Deborah A. Carl

There is no marker for the grave of Ebenezer Bancroft the Fourth, but the Woodlawn Cemetery records say he is buried in Range 18 Lot 56. This is the grassy area between the Cady Family Stone at Lot 52 and the rough-hewn Holt Family Stone and the large Barnes Family Stone at Lots 59 and 60.

Ebenezer the Fourth was the only son of Ebenezer Bancroft the Third and Jane Redfield. He and his twin sister were born in 1846 in Tyngsboro, Massachusetts. The Bancrofts were one of the early settlers of Dunstable, Massachusetts which was incorporated in 1673, and was comprised of 200 square miles reaching from present-day Londonderry, New Hampshire to Chelmsford, Massachusetts. In the 1700s the town was broken into 15 communities.

Ebenezer the Third was probably named after his grandfather, Ebenezer Bancroft who served in the War of Independence and attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Ebenezer Senior was living in that part of Dunstable which became Tyngsboro in 1809. He had been involved in his community and had served as a selectman in 1768 until there was a motion in March 1871 to dismiss him as a selectman and assessor for the town. In 1872, he was serving as a warden and highway surveyor for the town. And then he served as a selectman and assessor again from 1773 to 1774. In 1775, Ebenezer was the town clerk, serving on a committee to examine the state of the town treasury, and serving on a committee to divide the town into school districts.





On April 12th, 1775, the town voted to assess 20 pounds for the encouragement and use of the minute men and to hold themselves ready to march at the first notice. That notice wasn't long in coming. On April 19th, news arrived that there had been fighting in Lexington and Concord. The battles were done before the men from Dunstable could respond. But they were present for the Battle of Bunker Hill. Ebenezer Bancroft served as a Captain under Col. Ebenezer Bridge.

Ebenezer Sr. was a veteran of the French and Indian War, and upon finding himself surrounded by British soldiers during the battle, he used his musket as a club and knocked down several British soldiers. He lost his musket in the fight and the forefinger of his right hand was shot off, but he continued to serve in the War of Independence.

His son Ebenezer Jr. was born in 1778 and spent his



life farming the land in Tyngsborough. He married Hannah Town in 1804 in Washington, New Hampshire, and their son, Ebenezer the Third was born in 1807 in Tyngsborough, Massachusetts. Ebenezer the Third married Jane Keyser in 1835 in Portland, Maine and they occupied the house Ebenezer Senior had purchased from Henry Farwell in Tyngsboro. In 1870 the farm was worth \$5,500 with about \$2,000 worth of personal items. He was wealthier than most of his neighbors.

54	60	Bancroft, Ebenezer	M	70	72		1	Farmer	✓	-	Mass.	Mass.	N. H.
		— Jane R	F	74	71	Wife	1	Keeping house			Maine	Mass.	Conn.
		— Ebenezer Jr.	M	70	33	Son	1	Laborer	4	✓	Mass.	Mass.	Maine
		Bills, Otis	M	70	48	Dev. indus.	1	Painter	11	✓	Mass.	N. H.	N. H.
		— Hannah P.	F	74	52	Daughter	1				Mass.	Mass.	Maine
		— Hannah A.	F	74	7	Grand daughter	1				N. H.	Mass.	Mass.
		— Walter C.	M	70	2	Grand son	1				Mass.	Mass.	Mass.
		— George B.	M	70	1/2	Dec. Grand son	1				N. H.	Mass.	Mass.
		Holmes, Ellen A.	F	74	15	Grand daughter	1	Apprentice to dress			Mass.	N. H.	Mass.
		Drake, Charles E.	M	70	18	Grand son	1	Farm laborer	✓		Mass.	Mass.	Mass.
55	64	Bancroft, Amos	M	70	68		1	Farmer	✓	-	N. H.	Mass.	Mass.

Ebenezer the Fourth, was 24 years old when he married the 18-year-old Carolyne Nichols in 1871 in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. Their first known child was born in Tyngsboro in 1873, but Minnie Bancroft died as a child, and their second daughter, Lillie Bancroft was born in 1878 in Tyngsborough and died in February of 1880 of congestion of the brain in Nashua, New Hampshire. Perhaps this was what caused the family to separate. In the 1880 census, Ebenezer was living with his parents without Carolyne. But whatever the reason for the separation, they got back together and their third and last child, Ebenezer Luther Bancroft, was born on January 1st, 1882 in Nashua.

Ebenezer the Fourth had been working for the railroad for about four years when on February 10th, 1891, he was working with a crew of six men and riding on the front foot-board of the engine as it pulled off of Hollis Street and onto the Walnut Street siding. A baker driving a sleigh attempted to cross in front of the train and one of the crewmen called "Whoa." The engineer immediately worked to stop the train, but it took 60 feet. The engineer said, "I saw a horse and front part of a baker's sleigh." The sleigh was broken in half and the baker was lying in the road. Bancroft was asked to help move the engine back so that the wreck of the sleigh could be moved away. The engineer noticed he hesitated and saw he was looking pale, asked him if he



was hurt, and Ebenezer said 'Not Much.' The engineer reported, "He was a man of very few words and said he was squeezed, but thought he was not badly hurt." The accident had happened in the afternoon and Ebenezer the Fourth died the following morning at about 9 am. An autopsy showed that the lining of the bowels was torn, and the walls of the stomach were badly injured. The doctor concluded that the injuries were undoubtedly the cause of his death.

Ebenezer's family filed a case against the Boston & Maine Railroad for causing his death, but the court ruled Ebenezer was entirely familiar with all the dangers and needed no warning. He assumed his own risk and was responsible for the loss of his life.



On June 22nd, 1891, Ebenezer the Third, wrote his will. His son had died in February of that year and the will stated that his grandson, Ebenezer Luther Bancroft, was to receive the heirloom Bancroft Cane. After leaving a gold watch to his daughter Sarah E. Brown and a dollar to his daughter Hannah Jane Bills, his grandson, Frederick A. Brown was to hold the remainder of the estate in trust for the use of Ebenezer's widow, Jane Redfield Bancroft, until her death or remarriage, and then the estate was to be divided 1/8th to grandson Charles Edwin Drake, 1/8th to grandson Ebenezer Luther Bancroft, and the remaining three-quarters to daughter Sarah E. Brown. Looks like Ebenezer the Third was not happy with his daughter Hannah Jane Bills.

Ebenezer the Fourth's 38-year-old widow, Carolyne, moved to Wilmington, Massachusetts where she was keeping house. She met George Eames, a 54-year-old farmer living in Wilmington and she did what most widows with young children did – she married again. George and Carolyn were married on January 28th, 1892 in Wilmington, Massachusetts providing Ebenezer the Fourth's 10-year-old son with a step-father to help raise and care for him.

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### **Notes:**

According to FamilySearch, Ebenezer Bancroft the Fourth is my 6th cousin 4x removed through his mother. This might not be correct and needs to be verified. Contributors to FamilySearch range from 12-year-olds to professionals with varying skill levels.