

Bottskill Baptist Church History Minute

Church Historian Ken Perry

May 2026- Obadiah Holmes, the Sufferer



One of our early Baptists was Obadiah Holmes who was born about 1609, near Reddish, in Lancashire, England, which is just north of the cities of Manchester and Liverpool, on the Irish Sea. In 1630, he married Katherine Hyde, and their family left for the New World in 1638, settling in Salem, Mass. Among the glassmakers of Salem, with two others, they founded the first glassmaking factory in the colonies.

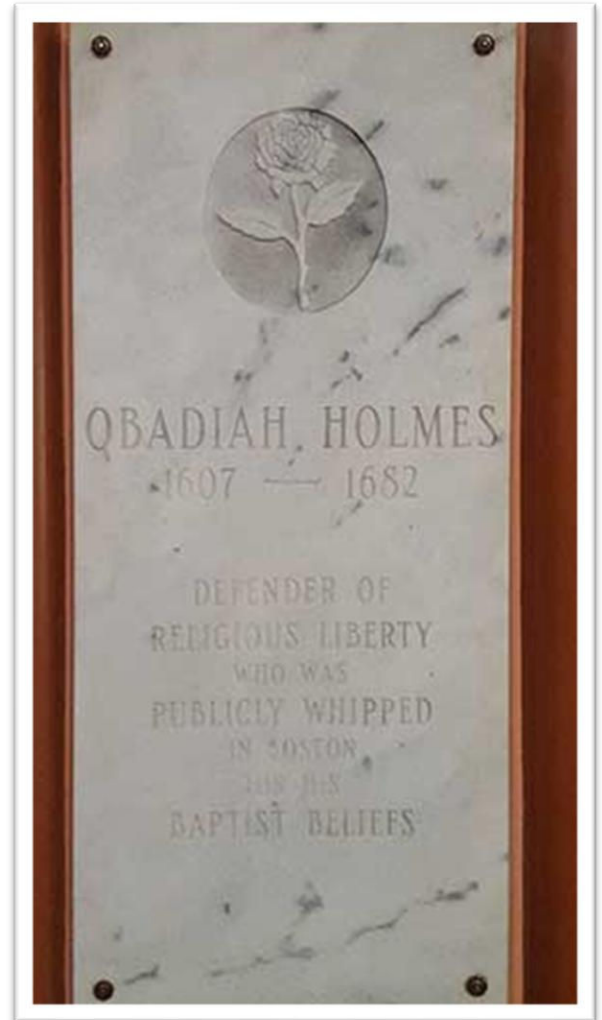
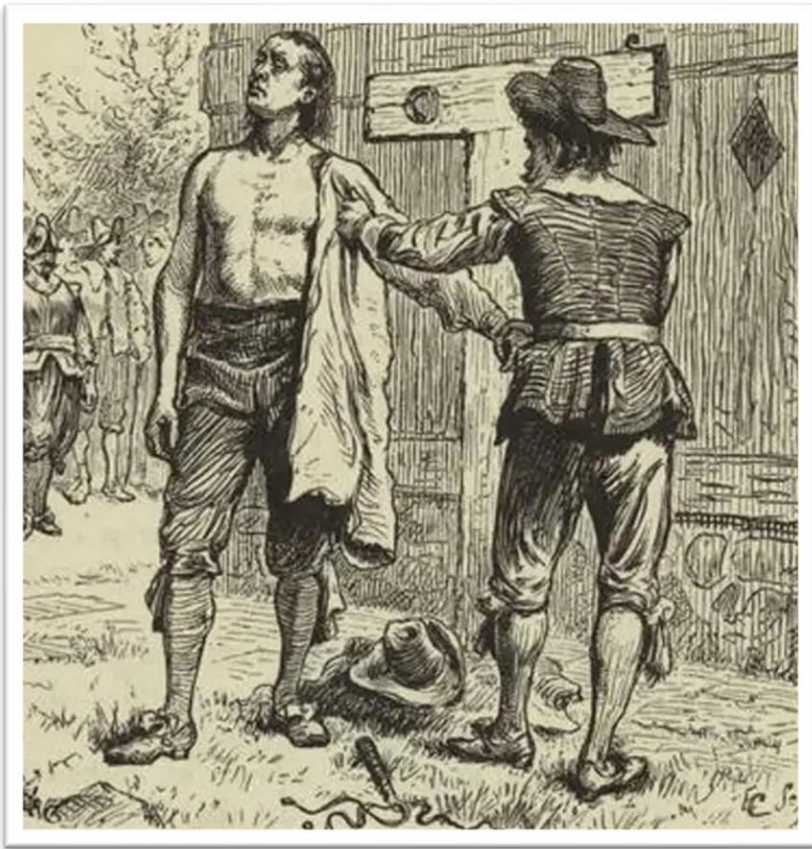
He next moved to Rehoboth, Mass., which is just east of Providence, R. I., and became associated with two other Baptists, John Clarke and John Crandall. In July 1651, the three of them visited an elderly member of the Newport church, William Witter, who was then living in Lynn, Mass., and preached to him in his home. Two Constables then arrested the threesome, and they were jailed and put on trial for preaching outside of the proscribed manner.

Clarke and Crandall were fined £5 and £25, respectively, which other friends of them paid. Obadiah received £30 for his heresy, but considering that the Lord Jesus Christ had counted him worthy to suffer for the sake of truth, he refused to pay his fine. As a consequence, like Daniel Gould, who was mentioned last month, he was sentenced to receive 30 lashes, which was carried out on Sept. 5, 1651. When this was over, he said to his oppressors, "You have struck me as with roses," a phrase alluded to in this memorial to him in the First Baptist Church of Boston. Obadiah had felt that enduring these blows, he was participating in the sufferings of Christ.



Obadiah Holmes would later go on to be the pastor of the Newport Baptist Church for 30 years.

Chad Brown, one of the co-founders of Rhode Island, and the second pastor of the first Baptist Church in America, at Providence, following Roger Williams, had a son named John Brown, who married Obadiah and Katherine's daughter, Mary Holmes. They had a daughter, Martha Brown, who married Joseph Jencks. Joseph



Jenckes was Deputy, and then Governor of the colony of Rhode Island, 1727- 1732, and said of Obadiah: "Those who have seen the scars on Mr. Holmes back (which the old man was wont to call the marks of the Lord Jesus) have expressed a wonder that he should live."

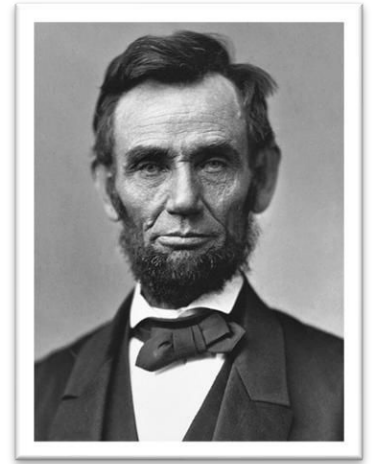
(Joseph Jencks, by the way, was then the tallest person in R. I., standing at 7' 1." Unfortunately, it would be over a century before basketball would be invented, as he would have made a great center for the Providence Friars in the Big East.)

In 1665, Obadiah Holmes was one of twelve who obtained a patent for Monmouth, East Jersey, which include all or parts of Monmouth, Middlesex and Ocean counties, New Jersey. Although he did not settle there, the area became a Baptist center, some of whom migrated north to the town of Jackson and later formed the

Shushan Baptist church. One of Obadiah and Katherine's daughters, Lydia Holmes, married Capt. John Bowne, one of Obadiah's fellow patentees.

Obadiah Holmes died in 1682, and was buried in Middletown, near Newport, R. I. A memorial set there reveals the rest of this story- that Lydia Holmes Bowne had a granddaughter, Hannah Salter, who married Mordechai Lincoln, the great- great grandfather of a young man who became Abraham Lincoln, our 16 th U. S. President.

For his sacrifice for conscience's sake, his Baptist ministry, and the legacy he left to our nation, we remember Obadiah Holmes, one of our first major American Baptists.



Ancestry of Obadiah Holmes to Abraham Lincoln

Obadiah Holmes- Katherine Hyde

dau. Lydia, m. Capt. John Bowne,

dau. Sarah, m. Richard Salter,

dau. Hannah, m. Mordechai Lincoln,

son John, m. Rebecca Flowers,

son Capt. Abraham, m. Bathsheba Herring,

son Thomas, m. Nancy Hanks,

son Abraham Lincoln, 1809- 1865, 16 th U. S. President