

After his arrival in Pennsylvania, Thomas Holme initially lived and worked primarily in the city. However, there are indications from letters that he was occasionally at his Well Spring residence as early as 1685. Its exact location is unknown. A good guess (unconfirmed) would put it near the intersection of the planned Susquehanna Street and the King's Highway (today's Frankford Avenue) and, as was a common necessity, by a well spring. Such a location exists today near the Pennypack Woods Community Center at Crispin and Pennypack Streets. Holme's grave is located about a half mile northwest at a high point on the projected Susquehanna Street.

Within two weeks of Holme's death, in April 1695, Silas Crispin, executor of Holme's Will, sold all the Well Spring tract on the southwest side of Pennypack Creek to Charles Saunders who contracted Peter Dale to build a grist mill on the creek. When Dale died in 1703, John Holme married his widow, Martha. Holmesburg is named for this Holme family, no relation to the Surveyor General. The remaining approximately 1200 acres on the northeast side of the Pennypack, including the burial ground, was eventually divided between the children of Hester and Silas (Thomas Crispin and his sisters) with the one acre set aside for the cemetery. The first burial in the cemetery is thought to have been an assistant surveyor who sailed with Holme in 1682. Hester died in 1696 and Silas in 1711. They are buried next to the Surveyor-General on the Holme Ave side of the monument. Holme's grandson Thomas and Jane Ashton Crispin and their children and some of their descendants, including Creightons and Engles, are buried here. The families of Thomas Crispin's sisters (Harts, Colletts, Rushes, and Finneys) apparently took no interest in the cemetery.

In 1831, Crispin descendants met at the home of Benjamin Crispin (4th generation removed from the Surveyor). With George Henry Walker, then owner of the land surrounding the cemetery, they formed the Crispin Burial Ground Community. Walker, buried in 1838, has a large marble grave marker as does Rachel Polk, Benjamin Crispin's aunt, whose burial in 1863 was the last in the cemetery. It was also in 1863 that the Trustees of Lower Dublin Academy moved to erect an 8 ft monument to replace the "large pebble stone of a yellow color", as recalled by Benjamin Crispin, that had marked Thomas Holme's grave for 168 years. LDA Trustee Samuel Willits reported that, while digging to prepare for the foundation of the monument, "At about four-and-a-half feet down from the surface....to our great surprise an almost perfect skeleton of a man at least six foot in length was found – the skull and head bones with jaws so perfect that you could tell how many teeth he had lost while living and how many partially decayed ones he had at the time of his death. There were no remains of a coffin except for a few rusty nails."

The Holme Circle Civic Association
In conjunction with
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation
Trustees of Lower Dublin Academy
&
Friends of Northeast Philadelphia History

Presents the

Thomas Holme 400th Birthday Celebration

Sunday, November 17 at 1:00 PM
at the
Holme-Crispin Cemetery



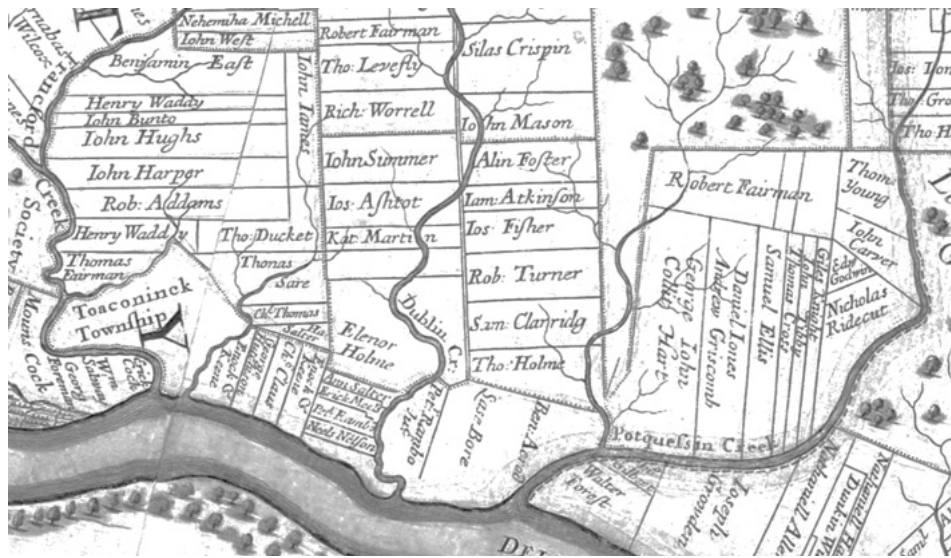
Holme Crispin Park
Convent Ave & Holme Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19136



Holme-Crispin Cemetery

Thomas Holme's 1687 *Map of the Improved Part of the Province of Pennsylvania in America* (section below) shows Pennypack Creek as Dublin Creek. The name never came into general use, but it did result in the naming of Lower Dublin Township, through which the creek flows. The double-line running the length of the township was to be Susquehanna Street, aligned NW-SE (about parallel to current Willits Rd). The names on either side were the original owners of those parcels by grants from William Penn. Holme's 1646 acre Well Spring Plantation was divided by the planned street with the larger southeast section in his daughter Elenor's name. Holme later purchased Samuel Claridge's 500-acre tract giving him a total of 2146 acres. He laid out his graveyard on the planned Susquehanna Street about halfway up the Claridge parcel. The border line of the Turner (later sold to Joseph Ashton) and Claridge parcels is present Ashton Road. The dotted line bordering the rectangular parcels on the southwest side of Susquehanna Street is the old Township Line (present Cottman Ave), between Oxford and Lower Dublin Townships. Moreland and Byberry Townships are northeast (to the right) of Lower Dublin Township.

Silas Crispin and his wife Hester, Holme's daughter, are the progenitors of the Crispin descendants buried in the cemetery. Silas is seen on the 1687 map with a 1000-acre parcel at the top of Lower Dublin Township. He and Hester lived in the vicinity of today's Pine Road and Bloomfield Avenue.



A detail of Holme's 1687 *Map of the Improved Parts of the Province of Pennsylvania* showing what is now Northeast Philadelphia, bounded by Frankford and Poquessing Creeks. Pennypack Creek is seen as Dublin Creek. The Holme-Crispin cemetery is about halfway up the double-line on the Samuel Claridge parcel, later purchased by Holme.

William Penn (1644-1718) received the charter for Pennsylvania from King Charles II in March 1681. In September, Penn appointed William Crispin (1627-1681) as a Commissioner and Chief Justice of the new colony. Crispin was married to Rebecca Bradshaw, Penn's first cousin on his mother's side. He had been a close confidant of Penn's father, Admiral William Penn (1621-1670), in the British Navy during and following the English Civil War in the 1640s and 1650s and after the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II, in 1660. For a time, the Penn and Crispin families lived in close proximity near Kinsale, County Cork, Ireland, where Sir William was Governor-General in the 1660s.

William Crispin and his son, Silas (1655-1711), sailed for Pennsylvania aboard the *John & Sarah* in October 1681. The voyage met with severe weather and sickness, finally arriving at Upland (at that time the only town in the colony, near present day Chester) in March 1682. William Crispin did not survive the journey. Silas did and is listed among the jurors at the June 13, 1682, session of the Upland Court. His signature also appears as a witness to the first land transaction between the Lenape and William Penn in July-August 1682, for all the land between the Delaware River and Neshaminy Creek up to about current Wrightstown.

Meanwhile, back in England, in April 1682, merchant Thomas Holme, a charter member of the Society of Free Traders and a purchaser of 5000 acres, was preparing to sail aboard the *Amity* when he was notified that Penn had chosen him to replace William Crispin and had also appointed him Surveyor General of the Province of Pennsylvania. Holme arrived in August 1682 along with family members including his daughter Hester who would marry Silas Crispin in 1683. They may have been acquainted in Ireland. Holme immediately got to work negotiating for land with the indigenous Lenape and Swedish settlers and surveying and laying out the City of Philadelphia between the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers.

Like Admiral Penn and William Crispin, Thomas Holme had been an active participant in the English Civil War and its aftermath, having attained the rank of captain in Oliver Cromwell's army. Following the conquest of Ireland in 1652, Holme (like Penn and Crispin) was awarded land in Ireland. In the 1650s he was involved in surveying sections of the country. He also began making visits to Society of Friends meetings in southern Ireland. He may have been among a group of Quakers invited as a curiosity to the home of Admiral Penn at Macroom Castle, County Cork, in 1657. The Admiral's son, William, then 13 years-old, later recalled that this occasion of experiencing the discourse of the Quakers initiated his "pursuit of religion". Holme and Penn would both become major proponents of the Society of Friends in Ireland over the next 20 years, 1660-1680.



Elizabeth Crispin, et al, at the 300th Thomas Holme Celebration - November 11, 1924



The Holme-Crispin Cemetery seen circa 1928. The JC and TC headstones, for Jane (Ashton) Crispin and Thomas Crispin (both died 1749), are no longer found having presumably been removed during the April 1950 vandalism that also toppled the Holme monument. When the monument was up righted and returned to its base, it was rotated 180 degrees. The text on the east side now faces west. Below is a wide angle view from the same vantage point showing more gravestones. The fence appears to have been installed about 1925.

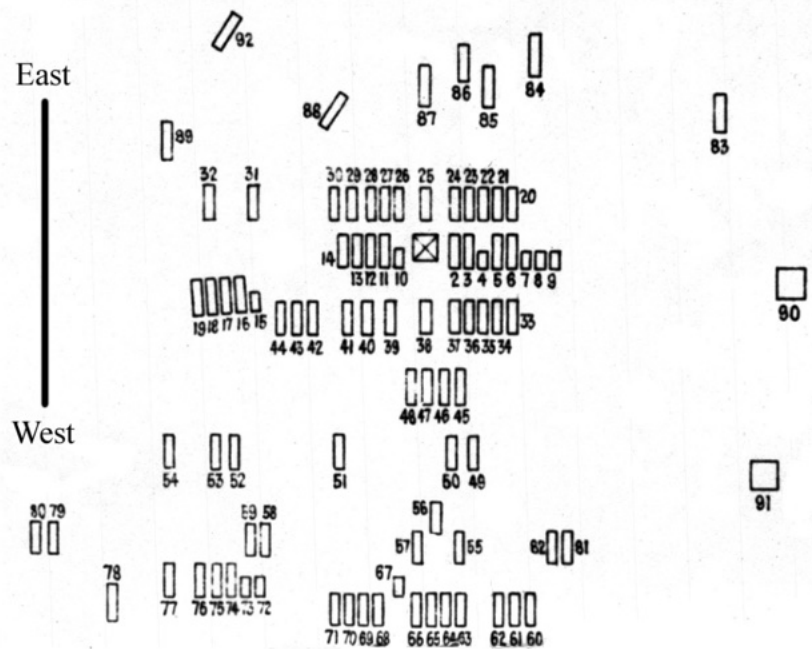


Holme-Crispin Cemetery Grave Locations

Location of the graves by numbers on a chart prepared in October 1926

	Inscription	Headstone	Footstone
THOMAS HOLME MONUMENT ROW runs North to South.			
1—Thomas Holme	Full Name	Monument	
SOUTH SIDE OF MONUMENT			
2—Hester Holme Crispin	H. C.	Yes	Yes
3—Silas Crispin, I	S. C.	Yes	Yes
4—Probably Susanna Crispin	None	Yes	Yes
5—Thomas Crispin	T. C.	Yes	Yes
6—Jane Ashton Crispin	J. C.	Yes	Yes
7 to 9 incl.—Probably children	None	Yes	Yes
NORTH SIDE OF MONUMENT			
10—Margaret Bowen (child)	Full Name	Yes	No
11 to 14 incl.—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
CREIGHTON PLOT out of line North Side of Monument			
15—Rebecca Ann Creighton (child)	(marble) Full Name	Yes	Yes
16—James and Rebecca Creighton	(marble) Full Name	Yes	Yes
17-18—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
19—Frances Elliott Creighton	(marble) Full Name	Yes	Yes
ROW EAST SIDE of and parallel to Thomas Holme Monument Row			
20 to 32 incl.—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
FIRST ROW West Side of and parallel to Thomas Holme Monument Row			
33 to 40 incl.—Unknown	None	No	Yes
41—Unknown	None	Yes	No
42-43—Unknown	None	No	Yes
44—Unknown	None	Yes	No
SECOND ROW West Side of Monument			
45 to 48 incl.—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
THIRD ROW West Side of Monument			
49 to 54 incl.—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
FOURTH ROW West Side of Monument			
55 to 59 incl.—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
FIFTH ROW West Side of Monument			
60—Probably J. Bowen	J. B. 1776	Yes	Yes
61-62—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
63—Unknown — May be Elizabeth Engle, wife of William	None	Yes	Yes
64—William Engle's grave	W. E.	Yes	1809
65—Unknown — May be Elizabeth Engle, wife of William	None	Yes	Yes
66—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
67—Unknown—(probably child)	None	Yes	Yes
68—Unknown—May be Martha Miles Crispin, wife of Silas	None	Yes	Yes
69—Silas Crispin, II	S. C.	Yes	Yes
70—Unknown—May be Martha Miles Crispin, wife of Silas	None	Yes	Yes
71—Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Inscription	Headstone	Footstone
ENGLE PLOT Slightly out of line with Fifth Row			
72—Joseph Engle (child)	(marble) Full Name	Yes	Yes
73—Elizabeth Engle (child)	(marble) Full Name	Yes	Yes
74 to 76 incl.—Unknown		Yes	Yes
77—Paul Engle	(marble) Full Name	Yes	No
78—Unknown—In line with Fifth Row		Yes	No
SCATTERED GRAVES			
79 to 81 incl.—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
) These may be part of			
82—Unknown	None	Yes	No
83 to 89 incl.—Unknown	None	Yes	Yes
90—George Henry Walker	Full Name		Monument
91—Rachel Polk	Full Name		Monument
92—Unknown—	None	Yes	No



Identified Burials

The vast majority of burials listed in 1926 were unknown. Of the 92 headstones found and tabulated at that time, only 18 were identified with names. As a result of neglect and vandalism, particularly in April 1950 when the Holme monument was toppled and many gravestones dug up and scattered, currently only 8 or 9 burials are identified.

- 1) Thomas Holme; 2) Hester Holme Crispin - unmarked; 3) Silas Crispin I—S.C.;
- 4) Susanna Crispin? - unmarked; 60) J. Bowen—J.B. 1776 found at the south fence;
- 64) William Engle—W.E with 1809 footstone; 69) Silas Crispin II—S.C.;
- 90) George Henry Walker; and 91) Rachel Polk