

History of Edmund Rice

Edmund Rice was born about 1594 of Sudbury, Buckinghamshire, England. He was married in St. Mary's Bury, St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England on 15 October 1618 to Thomasine Frost, daughter of Edmund Frost and Thomasine Belgrave. Thomasine Frost was Baptized 11 August 1600 at Saint James, Stamstead Suffolk, England. They were blessed with eleven children. Edmund married second Mercy (Hurd) Brigham, 1 March 1655. She was born in England about 1618, died 22 December 1693 in Marlborough, Middlesex, Massachusetts. They had two children.

Edmund Rice known in later years as "Goodman Rice" Goodman meaning (a person of excellent character). Lived in Stamstead, Suffolk, England, until about 1626 or 1627 when he moved to Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, England. He left England with his wife Thomasine and eight children and came to Massachusetts in America along with the many other Puritans who left England during the year of 1637 or 1638, as the last record we have of them being in England was when his son Joseph was christened on 13 March 1637-38 in Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, England. The next record shows them in Sudbury, Middlesex, Massachusetts, which was settled in 1638 and incorporated in 1639. At this time Edmund Rice is shown as one of the first settlers here. "The settlement of the town began on the east side of the river. The first road of street, beginning at Watertown (now Weston), extended along a course of about two miles, and by this the house-lots of the settlers were laid out and their humble dwellings stood. The plan of the

settlement can, to an extent, be made out by tradition and the data of house-lots which are preserved on the Sudbury records, and which we here give in abbreviated form, the figures in parenthesis denoting the acres allowed:

Edmund Rice (4), between John Howe and Henry Rice.

Henry Rice (4), between Edmund Rice and John Maynard.

John Maynard (4), between Henry Rice and highway."

Edmund Rice was no doubt not only a farmer but a carpenter by trade. He was probably plenty busy building (with the help of his sons) a house on his house lot allotted to him in Sudbury and helping others with their building, too. His first house was probably small. We know not the dimensions, but here are the dimensions of a house he built in 1655.

Taken from History of Sudbury, Chapter five.

"We have found no record of the dimensions of any of the first dwelling-places, but we may judge something of their size by that of the first house of worship, and by the specifications in a lease of a house to be built by Edmund Rice prior to the year 1655. This house was to be very small, - "30 foot long 10 foot high, 1 foot sill from the ground, 16 foot wide, with two rooms, both below or one above the other, all the doors, walls and staires with convenient fixtures, and well planked under foot and bored sufficiently to lay corn in the story above head." But it is doubtful if this small, low structure fitly represents the settlers' first forest home; very likely that it was a still more simple building, that would serve as a mere shelter for a few

months or years, till a more serviceable one could be built. Houses of ordinary capacity would hardly be necessary when the settlement commenced. The furniture of the dwelling would for a time, probably, be simple and scant, and consist mainly of a few household utensils, their firearms, and tools.

"The way from Watertown being at first only a forest trail, it was a difficult task to transport many goods, even if they were brought to this country. That carts were made use of the first year for transportation to Watertown is doubtful, although they were used a few years later. In 1641 it was ordered, "That every cart with four sufficient oxen and a man shall have for a day's work five shillings;" and that "none shall take above six pence a bushel for the bringing up of corn from Watertown to Sudbury and twenty shillings a day for any other goods." The transportation of corn may have been on horseback.

"What the settlers experienced in the rough cabins of logs, the first years, we can only conjecture. The deep snow-fall of winter, as it covered their lonely forest path, presented a strong contrast to the mild climate from which they came. But they had enough to employ their time. There were cattle to care for, and lands to clear and make ready for the coming spring; and it was no small task to keep the household supplied with wood. The wide-mouthed fireplace, with hearth broadening to almost midway of the cabin itself, with its huge and-irons, beyond which was the stout back-log, had the capacity of a dozen stoves; and to supply this was a matter of work."

Edmund Rice became one of the prominent men of the settlement. It wasn't long after they received their lots until on 4 July 1639 he was one of the committee appointed by the Colonial Court to apportion land to the inhabitants.

History of Sudbury Chapter 7 gives the following.

"The settlers had little more than got fairly located at the plantation, when they begin dividing their territory, and apportioning it in parcels to the inhabitants. Before these divisions were made there were no private estates, except such houselots and a few acres as were assigned at the outset for the settler's encouragement or help, or such land tracts as were obtained by special grant from the Colonial Court. But divisions soon came. Piece after piece was apportioned, and passed into private possession. Soon but little of the public domain was left, save small patches at the junction of roads, or some reservation for a school-house, meeting house or pound, or plot for the village-green.

"From common land, which the undivided territory was called, has come the word "common" as applied to a town common, park or public square. And from the division of land by lot, the term "lot" has come to use, as "meadow-lot," "wood-lot," and "house-lot." The early land divisions were made, on permission of the Colonial Court, by such commissions as the town or court might appoint. As a specimen of these permits, we give the following:

"A Generall Court, holden at Boston the 4th Day of the 7th month 1639.

The order of the Court, upon the petition of the inhabitants of Sudbury, is that Peter Noyes, Bryan Pendleton, J (John) Parnum (Parmnter), Edmund B (Brown), Walter Hayne, George Monong, & Edmund Rise have commissioned to lay out lands to the p'sent inhabitants, according to their estates & persons."

Edmund Rice and Thomas Goodenow were assigned to tend to all the fences of cornfield from New Bridge southward to within the town bounds.

Edmund Rice was one of the substantial men of Sudbury plantation. He was a Freeman 13 May 1640 and a Deacon in the church in 1648. He was very religious and taught his children to obey God's Commandments.

Besides serving on the committee to apportion land to the inhabitants, Edmund Rice was also a Selectman from 1639 to 1644, and was deputy to the General Court for several successive years.

Commercial relations were not always carried on by payment in money, but sometimes wholly or in part in produce. Edmund Rice, in 1654, "for service as deputy," was to have "six pounds to be paid in wheat as John Parmenters Sr., and so much more as shall pay seven pence a bushell for the carriage of it, to be paid within one week after next Michelmas." For work on the meeting-house, about the year 1688, "he was to have country pay, at country price." The country pay was to be "in good sound merchantable Indian corn, or rye, or wheat, or barley, or malt, or peas, or beef, or pork, or work."

On 1 September 1642 Edmund Rice sold to John Moore his first dwelling place at Sudbury.

On 13 September 1642 he leased the Dunster farm, sometimes called the "Pond Farm." This was a tract of six hundred acres, granted in 1640, to Henry Dunster, first president of Harvard College. This farm was situated southeasterly of the "Glover Farm," and had Cochituate Lake for its western boundary.

He was made a selectman in 1644 and for years thereafter and he was made a Deacon in the Church in 1648.

On 24 June 1659 he and his sons purchased this farm.

From the History of Sudbury: "Before the Plantation of Sudbury was commenced, there passed through the southeasterly corner of its territory a memorable trail. This was part of the "Old Connecticut Path," This highway extended from the sea-board settlements far into the interior. From Watertown it passed through what is now Waltham and Weston to that section of Sudbury now Wayland; from thence southwesterly to the north side of Cochituate Pond, and on through the wilderness toward Connecticut. It is, we believe, the road now traveled from Weston Corner, by the "Five Paths," Wayland, to Framingham. Mention is made of this way in the town records as early as 1643, and again in 1648. Where it passes through the town it was called "the road from Watertown to the Dunster Farm," a tract of six hundred acres granted in 1640 to President Dunster of Harvard College, bounded on the west by Cochituate Pond, and early leased by Edmund Rice of Sudbury. This trail was first made known to the English by some Nipnet Indians, who came to Boston bringing

corn at a time when there was a scarcity of it in the colony. From this time for years it was the way travelled by the English in their journeyings to the Connecticut valley."

Edmund was appointed to help lay out roads. An important road laid out in 1648 was that from Watertown to the Dunster Farm, or the "Old Connecticut Path." The record states, "Edmund Rice and Edmd Goodenow, John Bent and John Grout are appointed to lay out a way from Watertown bound to the Dunster Farm."

The location of Edmund Rice's Meadow was mentioned in the records as follows: "It was ordered from the beginning of the plantation, that there should be two rods wide left in the meadow from the bridge at Munning's Point to the hard upland at the head of Edmund Rice's meadow."

On 26 September 1647 Edmund Rice leased the "Glover Farm" for ten years. This tract was largely in the territory of Farmingham. It consisted of six hundred acres. It lay westerly and northerly of Cochituate Pond, extending to the northeast corner of Dudley Pond, thence to the Sudbury old town bound; being bounded on the west by the river, and on the south by Cochituate Brook. Beyond this farm easterly was a tract of two hundred acres, extending towards the Western townline, and called the "Jennison Farm."

On 8 April 1647 Edmund Rice purchased this "Jennison Farm" which was situated next to the "Dunster Farm."

He also bought of Widow Mary Axdell, six acres of land and her dwelling house. Some years later he bought of Philemon Whale his house and nine acres of land near the spring and adjacent to

Axdell's place.

Edmund must have been a very busy man trying to get his land under cultivation and doing all the other work he accomplished. He surely set a good example for his descendants to follow.

Deacon Edmund Rice not only owned property in Sudbury but also owned property in Marlborough. He was in 1656, one of thirteen petitions belonging to Sudbury, who besought the General Court for a new plantation, saying, "Whereas your petitioners have lived divers years in Sudbury, and God hath been pleased to increase our children, which are now, divers of them, grown to man's estate, and wee, many of us grown into years, so as that wee should bee glad to see them settled before the Lord take us away from hence; as also God having given us some considerable quantity of cattle, so that wee are so straighted, that wee cannot so comfortably subsist as could be desired; and some of us having taken some pains to view the country, wee have found a place, which lieth Westward about eight miles from Sudbury, which we conceive might bee comfortable for our subsistence."

Sudbury, at that time, contained less than seventy-five families. Their petition was granted, and the plantation laid to them was incorporated by the name of Marlborough in 1660; whereto he removed and had a houselot of fifty acres granted to him by proprietors of that town, with the rights appertaining thereto in after divisions.

His wife was "Mercie," widow of Thomas Brighton of Cambridge; whom he married, 1 March 1655. His house lot in Marlborough, on

which he built and resided, was in the westerly part of the town, on the old county road leading from Marlborough to Northborough, and in the bend as it passes round the northerly side of the pond, a short distance northerly of the ancient "Williams tavern," afterwards kept by Gates and since by Wetherby. He was intrusted with various important duties by the General Court, which he discharged with a fidelity that occasioned repeated calls for his services, while the records of Sudbury and Marlborough contain ample evidence of his vigilant and fatherly care in promoting the welfare of those infant settlements; the destruction of which by the Indians, occurring a few years after, he was not permitted to see by reason of death.

He died at Marlborough, 3 May 1663, and was buried at Sudbury, now Wayland. A deposition of his on the court files at Cambridge states his age, 3 April 1656, to be "about 62 years" - hence he was born about 1594, and about 69 years old when he died.

Inventory of Edmund Rice of Marlborough, taken 15 May 1663, by Thomas King, John Woods and John Stone. 566 Pounds. House etc., 170 pounds.

History of Thomas Rice

(Deacon) Thomas Rice, son of Edmund Rice and Thomasine Frost was christened 26 January 1626 in Stamstead, Suffolk, England. He married Mary King, daughter of Thomas King, Jr. and Anne Collins, about 1651. The birth of their first six children were recorded at Sudbury, (Wayland) Middlesex, Massachusetts. The seven younger children were born in Marlborough, Middlesex, Massachusetts.

Here is a sad incident that brought sorrow in their life.

Thomas Rice and Edmund Rice were cousins, and, with their families, resided in what is now the westerly part of the village of Westboro, and on the road towards Grafton. "On the 8th of August 1704, as related by Whitney, while some people were engaged in spreading flax a short distance from the house of Thomas Rice, sons of both families being with them, seven or more Indians suddenly rushed from the woods, where they had concealed themselves, and killed 4 year old Nahor, knocking him on the head. At the same time they seized his two brothers, Silas, 9 years old and Timothy, 6 years almost 7 years old, sons of Edmund Rice; also Ashur, 10 years old and Adonijah, almost 8 years old, sons of Thomas Rice, - and carried them away to Canada."

Picture to yourself the anguish they must have felt at the sight of Nahor having been murdered and two sons from each family missing, they, too, might have been killed or still be in the hands of ruthless savages, and perhaps suffering tortures worse than death, - at length to be followed by death itself. The remaining inmates in momentary expectation of being themselves taken captive, or of falling under the tomahawk of the infuriated

foe, stimulated to further butchery by previous success; no human aid at hand to relieve and protect them. What terror pervades that dwelling! No sleep there; aching hearts and weeping eyes forbid it.

After a few days have past, look in upon the family. Behold the parents, as they sit at the fireside, or at the table, viewing, in silent grief, the vacant seats in their family circle. Beloved children are missing. See them look into their sleeping room, whence their innocent prattle, at early morn, was wont to be heard. They find no relief there. Their beds are empty and undisturbed. They see them not, nor do they hear their voices more.

It must have been a great shock to Thomas, Sr. and Mary Rice to hear the sad fate of their grandchildren. But the years rolled on and 36 years later in September 1740 after the death of Thomas, Sr. and Mary Rice, Timothy Rice visited Westborough with an interpreter - himself having lost his mother tongue - and viewed the place, etc. where he was captured; of which he had a clear remembrance, together with the circumstances under which he was taken; as he also had of several persons then living.

After his visit he returned to his Indian wife, or squaw and children in Canada. The Indians had named him Oughtsorangoughton and he had become the third of six chiefs of Cognawaga tribe.

Rice Family Line

To King Henry VII., on his landing with a military force at Milford Haven, Sir Rhys repaired with a considerable accession of choice soldiers, marching with them to Bosworth field, where he right valiantly behaved himself. That thrifty King, afterwards made him a Knight of the order and well might he have given him a garter, by whose effectual help he had received a crown.

At the Battle of Bosworth, however, Henry made him a Knight Banneret, and in the 21st year of that King's reign he was elected a Knight Companion of the most noble order of the Garter. In the next reign he was Captain of the Light Horse at the battle of Therouenne, and at the siege of Tourey, in 1513. Sir Rhys was the son of Thomas Ap-Griffith and his first wife, the daughter and heir of Sir John Griffith, of Abermariais. (The second wife, and mother of the brothers of Sir Rhys, was Elizabeth, daughter of Philip Duke of Burgundy.)

Sir Griffith Rice, son and heir of Sir Rhys Ap-Thomas, was made a Knight of the Bath at the marriage of Arthur, Prince of Wales, in 1501. To William Rice, of Bohmer, in Buckinghamshire, a Grandson of Sir Griffith a coat of arms was granted in the 2nd year of Philip & Mary, May 1555. This William Rice was in the 22nd generation from Goriois, Duke of Cornwall and 21st in the male line from Vryan Reged, Lord of Kidwelly.