

History of William Ward

William was born in England about 1603. He married his first wife in England about 1625. They had five children born in England. William's wife died about 1637 in England. He married second, about 1638 in England, Elizabeth. She was born 9 December 1613, in England.

William brought his family to America. After arriving in New England they had to decide where to settle.

This is what Charles Martyn tells us in his book "The William Ward Genealogy and the History of the Descendants of William Ward of Sudbury, Massachusetts."

Numerous choices presented themselves, for the line of civilization was spreading over the eastern part of Massachusetts by successive "swarming" from the points first settled, as ship after ship discharged its passengers and spread the rising tide of population. Before 1638 eighteen "towns," or organized groups of settlers, had achieved existence in Massachusetts Bay.

The sites most sought were those which contained a good water supply, sufficient pasture, and open land which could with the smallest amount of labor be used for the planting of grain. Timber also was an essential, but that was discussed little as it was found in nearly every part of the colony outside of Boston.

Among the most promising was the tract, named "Sudbury" in 1639, whose settlement had been projected by a number of the inhabitants of Watertown and had been approved by the colony legislature, the "General Court." It was part of the Concord River

region known among the Indians as "Musketahquid," signifying "grassy ground" or "grassy brook." It adjoined Watertown (the part now Weston) on the east and the New Concord "plantation" on the north. Its attractions included the river (Sudbury River) and smaller streams traversing it, a rich acreage of pasture (or "meadow") alongside them, and open woods. Crossing the southeasterly section was the "Old Bay Path," an Indian trail which ran for hundreds of miles inland from the sea and which had already become an accepted route for settlers journeying to the Connecticut River.

Ward decided to join the Sudbury "plantation." Of like mind were others among the newcomers. Fresh immigrants, indeed, constituted a majority of the first settlers, from forty to fifty in number, who thus placed themselves and their families on the outskirts of civilization.

The General Court grant was intended to enclose about five miles square. As laid out, the tract fell short of this dimension, but the deficiency was made good by a second grant in 1640. The native title was obtained by purchase from the Indian "Cato" (known also as "Karte" and "Goodman").

As already noted, its territory touched that of Weston and Concord on the east and north. West and south stretched the wilderness, broken only by Indian villages.

A few wigwams stood within its boundaries. Cato dwelt with his family and retainers on "Goodman's Hill"; Tantamous, a "powwow," or medicine man, on Nobscot Hill; Nataous, or "Indian

William," near Lake Cochituate. And the well-worn trails told of red men traversing the section to hunt and fish - for deer roamed and turkeys strutted through the woods; bears were at home in the highlands; and salmon, shad, pickerel, and alewives filled the rivers and streams. This wild food was as acceptable and nearly as important to the new white settlers as for centuries it had been to the Indians.

The streams were also a favorite habitat of muskrats and beavers, the pelts of the latter being early rated as valuable merchandise. And grouse and other game birds were plentiful in their seasons. Pigeons were so prolifically numerous that settlers could not consume all they caught. After stripping off the feathers to make mattresses they fed them to the hogs.

Permission by the General Court "to go on in their plantation" was given 6 September 1638. Many of the settlers (Ward among them?) anticipated this formal authorization and were at work with their ox-teams early in the summer, felling trees for their cabins, making rough roadways, mowing the meadows, and clearing logs, and brush from patches selected for the planting of the first "common," or community, fields.

Of great moments were the first town meetings which decided of the division of lands, on the roads to be laid out, on planting questions, on fences and on all the other problems of community life, especially pioneer community like.

Four acres was the average size of the "house-lots," or home plots, agreed upon.

The cabins of these pioneers families were small and of simple construction. A single story of whole and split logs, with two rooms at most in the beginning, with a wide log chimney covered and filled between with clay (the interstices of the walls being similarly closed), the roof of thatch, the windows of oiled paper, and the hearth of field stones.

Some of the cabins were in all probability built chiefly of clay, timber being used only for frames; or consisted of a timber (or timber and clay) front on a home cut into a hillside. They were mostly grouped for mutual companionship and protection, and were laid out east of the river, in the vicinity of the present Wayland Village, chiefly to its northwest and north. Twenty or more were situated in a row along the westerly side of the "Old Sudbury Road," northwesterly of its junction with Bow Road. This site was favored because of its fine stretch of level arable ground. They were not on the easterly side of Old Sudbury Road as generally stated.

Ward's house-lot was on a road long discontinued - a fork of Glezen Lane which formerly ran northerly, from about the same point that Training Field Road forks easterly, into the first easterly turn of Moore Road and thus into the road to Concord.

After the cabins were roofed came the transportation from Boston and Watertown by slow two-wheel ox-drawn carts, and on horseback, or the store of food brought across the ocean, and corn and other produce purchased since arrival; and clothing, bedding, and a few pieces of furniture. With them or following them came

the women and children.

For travel on later occasions when there was nothing bulky to carry, the settlers quickly adopted the Indian use of canoes and took to the rivers and streams as highways, finding this the easiest method of getting to various near-by points and, on occasion, to Boston.

Several of the settlers brought families of fair size - from five to nine children of all ages. Ward had five children.

As became pioneers, the heads of families were of active years. Only one of the newcomers from England had passed 50. Perhaps three or four were between 40 and 50. All the others were under 40. Ward was about 35.

Then came the winter. Those who have experienced the severity of a Massachusetts winter, even amidst modern conditions, may imagine how rigorous it must have seemed to those immigrants from milder England. It was no small labor even to cut the wood to feed the big open fireplaces. There were also the cattle to care for, roads to be broken out after a heavy snowfall (by ox-sleds and plows drawn by all available ox-teams), and (when weather permitted) the clearing of ground for cultivation in the spring, the building of wall fences, etc.

But they fought it though and by the spring of 1639 the township had been successfully founded.

It is probable that early in 1639 the Sudbury settlers arranged a first division of meadow (as much as shall be thought meet) on the following plan:

"to every Mr. of a ffamilie	06 akers
to every Wiffe	06 akers & 1/2
to every childe	01 akers & 1/2
to every Mare, Cow, ox or anny other Cattle that may amount to 20 pound, or soe much monneye	3 akers"

Only the resolution has been preserved. There is no record of such a distribution. If made, Ward was entitled to twenty acres for his family alone.

About the same time commenced allotments based upon "man's estates and abilities to improve their lands" - conditions improved by the General Court.

Estate was a term frequently employed to signify a committee's composite estimate of an inhabitant's resources, social position, etc. The result was variously arrived at, but the significance and intent are clear. Recognition of a settler's estate served as recognition both of the social precedence inbred among the colonists and of the desirability of giving the utmost opportunity for a man of means to aid in the development of a township - and such opportunity could be given only, or could best be given, by land grants.

The conjoined requirement to weigh the respective abilities of men to improve their lands is self explanatory. The consideration was one of prime importance in pioneer days. Disregard of it was responsible for the failure of numerous early attempts at colonization.

Every original Sudbury settler received a share in each land

division but the size of the shares on the estate basis varied greatly. The first lands thus allotted were of meadow, and these meadow divisions were taken as a measure for future divisions of the common land of the original grant, and for the use of common land until divided.

They served also as a basis for taxation, the rates being levied in the same proportion.

Ward's allotments in the first three estate distributions of meadow were 4 1/2, 11, 7 3/4 acres, a total of 23 1/4 acres. Several of the founders received considerably more, the maximum being 75 acres. A large number received less than Ward. Several were given similar allowances.

The land being parcelled out at various times (its location within certain limits being generally decided by lot) a man's real property came to consist of a number of scattered pieces - much after the fashion of the acre and half-acre strips of early English villages. This gave every one representation in each section opened, but it increased the difficulties of ownership and led to numerous sales and exchanges.

Important too was the election of town officials, particularly of selected men to serve as executives of the township and as its informal judiciary. Selectmen under pioneer conditions held widely diversified authority, both delegated and assumed. They were necessarily of character and standing among their associates, and generally freemen i.e., those who had taken the freeman's oath.

The term freeman signified in Massachusetts at that date a

fully qualified voter. The chief requirement was membership in a duly recognized church. Membership signified admission to the church corporation. It did not refer to attendance at worship. Everyone physically able attended church whether a member or not.

The spring and summer of 1639 saw a good many acres under cultivation and every spare moment occupied in building fences and breaking more land, both in the common planting fields and in men's particular fields.

There was "store of plowland" but it was difficult to break up by reason of the oaken roots . . . this kinde of land require great strength to break up, yet brings very good crops, and last long without mending.

A grist-mill was built by a miller with appropriate name Cakebread. The community gave him 130 acres by way of encouragement. Mills did not then convert grain into the finished flour we know. Their work ended with grinding it into meal. Bolting the meal was a domestic duty accomplished by means of hair or cloth sleeves.

There was a vast amount of labor to be preformed.

Those who are related to families who have taken up government claims, or "quarter-sections," during this generation, know how hard has often been the struggle to establish a living competence, even though shielded from all hostiles, both red and white; though spared the loss of time and population incidental to war, and aided in many ways by improved means and conditions in agriculture. There were no government bureaus of experimental stations to serve

the farmers of those days. The settlers must of their own strength and courage meet all the difficulties of opening a new country, and in addition be ever ready to insure their titles in a rain of blood. It was only the simplicity of their lives that rendered possible the comfortable prosperity which followed their efforts.

There was the important mitigation that much of their toil was in neighborly companionship. There was little of the lonely isolation that weighed on the later pioneers of the western states. Rich or poor, they labored at similar tasks and often side by side, and they all owned a share in the constructive pride of seeing a new township take form as the result of their toil.

Community obligations, too, were equitably divided. The richer the man's stake in the district - not only the higher the rates he paid, but also the more community labor expected of him. An early order required all inhabitants to come forth to the mending of the great road upon a summons by the surveyor: the poorest men to work one day; the others to work a day for every six acres of meadow owned.

A church was organized in 1640 (with, of course, Congregational form and Calvinistic creed), the Reverend Edmund Brown being engaged as pastor. His salary for his initial year was 40 pound, half in cash and half in produce.

He must have held services in the cabins during his first winters, for work on the meeting house was not commenced until 1643.

This first meeting house stood on the Old Burying ground which

abuts on the Old Sudbury Road near Wayland Village. It was perhaps set a little back of the supposed site which is marked by a slight embankment and a granite-imbedded bronze marker.

Opposite is a reduced facsimile of the contract for its construction. William Ward being one of the six men who signed for the township.

The document is of the highest interest to his descendants, for with it he steps out of the haze which obscures his prior life, and assumes definite form visioned in the mirror of his associates, and of his and their acts.

What type of man was he? Of what character and what circumstances?

Apparently he was not one of the few (comparatively) well-to-do among the Sudbury founders. It has already been noted that the meadow divisions by men's estates gave a number of settlers land considerably in excess of his allotment. In the table of the third additions of 1640, twenty-two of the forty-nine inhabitants named were given substantially more than Ward - some of them very much more - and only five received appreciable less. His worldly possessions were evidently not such as to accord him special preference.

But he was just as evidently a man whose character and personality impressed the community, or he would not appear as one of the six chosen to represent it in the meeting-house contract. The five others were all freemen, and three of them were of those of especially high rating by estates. Ward was the only one of the

six neither well-to-do nor a freeman.

The erection of the meeting-house frame took place in May 1643. Every man in the settlement was on hand to help, for raising time was a jolly occasion in Old New England, with plenty of substantial food and inspiriting beverages to stimulate and reward the workers.

The completed meeting-house was only a rough, raftered building, 20 x 30 feet in size, with plain wooden benches and sanded floor, but it served as a veritable social and political center. It was in many respects a replica of the English parish church as it had been prior to the time of Laud.

At the drum-beat signal, the inhabitants gathered to it every Sunday morning, to profit by the minister's long sermon and fervid exhortations, and to take part in the singing of psalms from the Bay Psalm Book, now known as the Old Bay Psalm Book but then a very new volume, published only three years before and the first book (save an almanac, if that be a book) printed in English America.

Long, long services. In winter, a severe test of the physical endurance of both minister and congregation, for no fire was allowed to temper the freezing atmosphere. Not much less a trial on torrid summer days. But in contrast the more enjoyable was the noon intermission in one or other of the near by houses, there to refresh both with food and drink.

The community life revolving around the meeting-house was much fuller and much brighter than has generally been depicted. Banish the idea so somberness. It does not fit a crowd of men and women

with kindred interests, chatting with one another. A community furthermore which knew its neighbors most intimately - so well that every happening found its reflection in another's or many others', experience. They probably derived at least as much pleasure from their broad jokes and neighborly converse as the modern family does from its afternoon at the movies, unless the show is very good indeed!

The Boston artisan and shop-clerk felt sadly cramped, and frequently and variously rebelled at Sabbath restrictions - and children and youths of communities of all sizes were restless under the repression of the inherent activity - but strict "Lord's Day" observance was not considered irksome by the adults of farming lands. If (being a man) you work hard all week in the open air, or if (being a woman) you are continuously busy during six days at the spinning-wheel and with cooking, washing, and cleaning, it is not much of a punishment to sit restfully down in the company of your neighbors and listen to, or doze through, even the longest sermon, except the weather be extreme. Gold was not for the men of those families. After following the plow, or building stone fences for six days a week, they would have found no zest in pursuing a little ball over their pasture on the Seventh. And motoring in its colonial forms of driving and lacked both novelty and pleasurable roads.

Even their costumes! Whence came the tradition of a drab Puritan?

The meeting house was, furthermore, made to pay its way by

various other general uses. It served as a proud new place for the town meetings which ruled the miniature republic, the meetings now opened with a prayer by Pastor Brown. Presently, too, it drew the inhabitants for the Thursday lecture. Also within its walls was stored the community's reserve supply of gunpowder - a dire essential, for William Ward's Sudbury was not the sheltered village of later generations. Over its 50 to 60 families with about 80 souls in Church fellowship, always hung the possibility of a life and death struggle with the aborigines. No Indian trouble of any magnitude had disturbed the immigrants who arrived after the Pequot War, but the red danger was no imaginary fear as everyone was to learn in after years.

The need of constant vigilance was fully recognized by the provincial deputies. Every township was required to organize and drill its train band, or militia company, to keep a stated reserve of gunpowder, to agree upon alarm signals, and to arrange a safe retreat for women and children.

Also at various times the General Court ordered the sending out of "careful and dayly skouts for the ranginge of the woods upon the borders" of the towns and in 1645 (just two years after Sudbury raised its meeting-house) came instructions "by reason of the psent warre with the Indians," to have part of their "souldiers" ready to march at "halfe an houres warning." Thus early we find the idea that a hundred and thirty years later produced the Minute-Men of the Revolution!

It was not sufficient that every able-bodied man belong to his

town-ship train-band. On May 14, 1645, the General Court advised the training of boys in the use of both bow and arrow and firearms:

"Whereas it is conceived yt ye training up of youth to ye art & practice of armes wilbe of great use of bowes & arrows may be of good concernmt, in defect of powder, upon any occasion it is therefore ordered, yt all youth with this jurisdiction, from ten years ould to ye age of sixteen years, shalbe instructed, by some one of ye officrs of ye band, or some othr experienced souldier whom ye chiefe officer shall appoint, upon ye usuall training dayes, in ye exercise of armes, as small guns, halfe pikes, bowes & arrows, &c, according to ye discretion of ye said officer or souldier, pvided yt no child shalbe taken to ys exercise against yir parents minds; ys ordr to be of force within one month after ye publication hereof."

So we must picture young Obadiah, then thirteen, and Richard, ten, practicing on the Common, supplementing the martial preparations of father William and big brother John.

This, too, was an echo of old-country memories, for it had been the custom in Southhampton and other exposed English coast-towns to require all children, commencing with the age of seven, to practice archery as a measure of public protection.

Sudbury's position was considered so precarious that the same General forbade any emigration from the township save by special permit:

"In regard of the great danger that Concord, Sudberry, and Dedham wilbe exposed unto, being inland townes & but thinly

peopled, it is ordered, that no man now inhabiting & settled in any of the said townes (whither married or single) shall remove to any other towne without the allowance of a magistrate, or other select men of that towne."

On May 10, 1643, Ward became a freeman and thus secured the right of full suffrage and eligibility to all political positions.

The following spring, he was elected the township deputy, or representative, to the General Court.

The term in which he took part was the first in which the Deputies and Assistants (Magistrates) had sat as separate bodies, a result generally credited to the famous fight between a rich man and the poor widow Sherman over a stray sow.

Ward's first legislative duty was on a committee appointed June 7 to examine a revision of the colonial laws submitted by ex-Governor Bellingham and returne theire objections & thaughts thereof to this howse in wrighteinge."

The next year (1645) he was, together with Peter Noyes and Walter Haynes, appointed a commissioner to end small causes in Sudbury. Which appointment was repeated in 1646, with William Pelham and Edmund Rice as associates.

He served also for several years as chairman of Sudbury's selectmen and represented his community on the grand jury of the county court at Charlestown and Cambridge.

His holdings, too, increased by division of the township lands, by occasional purchase, and by "gratulation," i.e. by grants from the township for special service rendered. A particularly

large dividend came at the division in 1651 of a new colony grant, two miles wide, the length of the western boundary of the township. This time every proprietor shared alike, 130 acres each, the locations being decided by lot. Ward's total holdings thus rise to between two and three hundred acres. The change of hemisphere had been well rewarded.

The colony likewise had proved its strength and vitality, standing firmly now on its own feet. The tide of immigration had stopped. The development of the Massachusetts which was later to challenge the mother country was left to the descendants of the original settlers who had carved out of it wilderness.

The change had brought a commercial crisis to Massachusetts but she had weathered it and worked out her salvation in her own way, greatly increasing as a substitute her ship-carried barter and trade, especially with the West Indies. She fought her own fight through the crisis, entirely unaided by the mother country, but also undisturbed by it, for King Charles was too busily engaged to interfere, too thoroughly occupied with efforts to retain the crown slipped from his head.

The flight of time has dealt kindly with the Sudbury settlement. Herds have multiplied until the neat cattle alone total several hundred, and households have added comforts impossible during the first few years.

William and Elizabeth's family had increased. They now had Hannah, Samuel, Elizabeth, Increase, Hopesill, William and Eleazer, plus William's five children by his first wife John, Joanna,

Obadiah, Richard and Deborah.

But the knowledge that every year added to the number of their children attaining marriagable age and ready to establish their own homes, raised a new problem in the minds of the Sudbury proprietors.

The township which had at first appeared so spacious, now seemed too small.

On June 12, 1660 (May 31, Old Style) the General Court confirmed the plantation grant and named it "Marlborow."

This was followed by the town's confirmation and record of the house-lots laid out by its first division of meadow. The number of proprietors had by this increased to thirty eight.

The settlers avoided to some extent Sudbury's ownership of scattered outlying pieces of pasture and arable land by so ordering the first division of meadow and the second division of upland that each man's shares lay most convenient to his Habitation.

Some of the Wards were early in Marlborough. William Ward himself moved there for good in early spring of 1661.

The family constituted quite a colony in itself. There were father William of Sudbury and mother Elizabeth; their four big sons - Obadiah, 29 years old, Richard, 26, Samuel, 19, and Increase, 16; Elizabeth, a girl of 18, and Hopestill, 14 and three children - William, 12; Eleazer, 11; and Bethia, two. With them came one of the three married daughters Deborah Johnston. Hannah How joined them soon after. The records are incomplete so we cannot tell how many children the married daughter brought with them, but Hannah

had three at all events.

Only John and Joanna were missing. Joanna had married Abraham Williams and lived in Cambridge. One other defection come in the fall Richard married Mary Moores of Sudbury and returned there, his Marlborough grant reverting to Samuel. The loss was balanced later by Joanna and her husband and a child or two joining the plantation.

The total number of residents, including children, was about a hundred.

William Ward was prominent in Marlborough affairs. He was continuously a selectman, and a deacon of the church from the time of its organization. He probably held other township offices, but the records from 1665 to 1739 disappeared many years ago.

He was also frequently elected to represent Marlborough on the county grand jury, and in 1666 was again in Boston as a deputy.

As the years went by William and Elizabeth saw their children get married and move out of the house. William began to feel the weight of his years, and he entered into a contract with his son Samuel to assume the management of his herd and his lands and to furnish him and his wife with all the household supplies and fuel that they should need for the remainder of their lives, taking his reward in the succession to the William Ward home and the land it stood on, the remaining half of the original house-lot, and various other tract.

William Ward passed away and was laid to rest in Spring Hill Cemetery, to be loved and revered by succeeding generations as

the patriarch of the family.

For nearly a century he had lived and labored in the New World of his adoption, playing an important role in the founding of two successful townships, seeing thirteen children develop into ripe manhood and womanhood; and for himself achieving the age of 84 years.

He had made his last will a few months earlier "enjoying the entireness of my understanding, but by reason of my great age, and the infirmities thereof being sensible of my approaching death."

He appointed his wife Elizabeth his executrix, and made her heir for life to all his cattle na other "removable goods of every sort, both within doors and without." Whatever she did not use during her lifetime was to go in equal shares "unto al my children, viz., those which I have by her, and those which I have by my former wife."

He divided his real estate among his sons Samuel, John, and Increase, and his grandson (son of Obadiah). Samuel was, conditionally, the chief beneficiary, in virtue of the agreement to care for Elizabeth Ward for the remainder of her life. William Jr. received no land, his share having been already deeded to him.

He gave small money bequests to all his children and to the widows and children of his two deceased sons Richard and Eleazer.

His sons John and Increase and his son-in-law Abraham Williams were named "overseers" of the will, "to be helpful unto my wife as occasion shall serve."

His worthy helpmate - who had in her wifely, motherly sphere participated to the full in his struggles and successes - survived him by 13 years and then joined him on Spring Hill; "Here lyes the body of Elizabeth Ward, the servant of the Lord, deceased in the 87th year of her age, December the 9th, in the year of our Lord, 1700."