

JOHN FRARY 1600-1675

I. Introduction About the Project

- A. The Project Began with a discussion about which ship they came on and could we research the ships manifests for 1637.
- B. Quickly, the Project became more of **why did they choose to come**, at what cost, and what risk to John and to his family.
- C. Did He come alone, or did he come first with just John and establish a homestead?

II. John's Work as a Cordwainer

- A. John was a Cordwainer in the City of Norwich, England. He had apprenticed as a Cordwainer as a boy, and he had worked himself up to a Journeyman and finally to a Master Cordwainer.
- B. Once he became a Master Cordwainer, he was able to join the Guild.
- C. The Guild had the power to control the cost of goods, to inspect the quality of the goods, and to prevent non-Guild members from practicing their trade within the City limits.
- D. A Cordwainer was different from a Cobbler. A Cobbler was only allowed to repair shoes, not make new shoes.

III. John Was a Puritan not a Pilgram

- A. John was a Puritan, which was a religious sect in England that wanted to reform the Church of England. Pilgrams were separatists, who believed that the Church of England was corrupt and they wanted to break away from it entirely.
- B. The Puritans suffered greatly under King Charles I. King Charles and the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, made life for the

Puritans extremely difficult. Puritans faced imprisonment and the loss of their livelihoods. Roughly 20,000 Puritans fled to New England between 1629 and 1643.

- C. Puritan ministers who refused to wear the traditional vestments or to follow the Church of England's doctrines were suspended and removed from their pulpits.
- D. Prominent Puritan writers faced fines, imprisonment, and physical mutilation—such as having their ears cropped, or branded on the forehead with “S.S.”—Sowers of Sedition.
- E. Furthermore, the Test Act of 1673 stated that only those persons who conformed to the Church of England could hold public office or government positions. This was in part, because the King was the head of the Church of England, and any deviation from the Church was considered a threat to the King.
- F. The Massachusetts Bay Company acquired a royal charter in 1629, and John Winthrop, a Puritan leader, was elected Governor by the Company that same year, which allowed the Puritans to govern themselves.

IV. The Economic Conditions in England in 1637

- A. Between 1540 and 1640, England experienced a major shift in wealth that occurred away from both the richest nobility and the poorest peasants.
- B. Wealth was distributed to a new “middle class” of tradesmen and yeoman farmers who were able to increase their standard of living and to save capital, creating—for the first time--disposable income and personal wealth.
- C. In 16th Century England, prosperous tradesman and craftsmen formed the core of a rising middle group often called the “middling sort.” These successful tradesmen achieved financial independence, guild authority, and local political influence.

- D. Successful tradesmen often owned the building that their shop was located in, often living above the shop. In addition, this accumulation of wealth allowed successful tradesmen to purchase farmland outside of town that could be worked for additional profit.

V. Why Did John and His Family Leave England?

- A. John was not a young man, when he decided to leave England. John was 38 years old, at a time when the average life expectancy was between 50 and 60. Therefore, at 38, he reasonably was only expected to live another 12 years.
- B. John was wealthy. He was a master tradesman in the Cordwainer's Guild of Norwich, he was also a civic leader, and leader of his local Puritan congregation.
- C. John likely owned the building where his shop was located, and he also likely owned the house that he was living in. Given the fact that John and his sons all became successful farmers in New England, it is likely that they also owned and farmed some land that they owned outside of Norwich.
- D. Most people in 1637 lived their entire lives within the same town where they were born. People in Norwich did not typically travel to other cities—such as London—which was 117 miles away and a 4 to 6 day journey by horse or wagon.

VI. What did it Cost to Sail to New England?

- A. In 1637, it cost more than a year's wages to sail to New England. This was about 50 to 60 pounds sterling, or today's equivalent of approximately \$60,000 per person.
- B. John and his family consisted of John, Prudence, Theophilus and John, Jr. Sampson was born in 1637, so he was either born on the ship coming over or shortly after they landed in New England. The cost to

bring his family to New England would have been between 200 and 250 pounds [or approximately \$250,000 in modern terms].

- C. In 1637, a typical craftsman's home or town home with space for a shop or a workshop generally ranged from 10 pounds sterling to 30 pounds sterling. A successful merchant's home, or a larger substantial elite property ranged from upwards of 30 pounds sterling to 100 pounds sterling.
- D. John and his family likely traveled with the tools of a Cordwainer, as well as other heavy farming and construction instruments, so that they could continue to make a living in New England. The cost to ship the tools, farming, and construction instruments, and , household furnishings was about 50 pounds per ton. This would have added to the cost of the move.
- E. John likely had to sell his shop, his house, and any farmland that he owned outside of the City of Norwich in order to pay for the passage to New England. This would have made his decision to come to New England a "one-way ticket."

VII. The Journey to New England:

A. In 1637, there were only three ships that left England for New England. These three ships were the "*Bevis*", the "*John and Dorothy*," and the "*Rose*." None of these three ships were very large. The "*John and Dorothy*" was a relatively small ship of about 80 to 100 tons burthen. By comparison, the Mayflower that brought the Pilgrims to Plymouth Colony in 1620 was much larger, at approximately 180 tons burthen.

B. "The Rose" was the same size as the "John and Dorothy." These vessels only had a top deck of about 65 to 85 feet in length, and a beam of 18 to 22 feet. The "Bevis of Hampton" was slightly larger at 150 tons burthen. However, even the Bevis was not as big as Mayflower—which was described as an extremely small ship by her passengers.

C. In order to sail to New England, ships from England sailed all the way down to the coast of Africa, in order to catch the Atlantic Current and the Trade Winds that blew constantly towards the Caribbean. These ships often stopped in the Canary Islands to take on fresh water, food and other supplies.

D. The trip from England to New England typically took two to three months. During the time at sea, the passengers were not allowed up on the top deck, so as to prevent them from getting in the way of the sailors and to prevent them from falling overboard. Therefore, they typically spent the entire three-month period below decks in very poor and unsanitary conditions. Passengers often died aboard the ship before reaching their destination.

E. There was no modern sanitation on board these vessels, no way to bathe, and any fresh food spoiled after about a week without refrigeration, leaving only ale, salted beef and hard-tack for food for the passengers and crew.

VIII. Arrival in New England:

- A. When John and his family arrived in New England in 1637, there were no inns or hotels for them to stay at. Since they had not yet had time to build a shelter or cabin, they would have initially relied on the other Puritan families to give them shelter.
- B. The FFA history states that John and his family first went to Watertown, Massachusetts looking to acquire some land for their home and a farm.
- C. Since there were no lots left in Watertown, John learned that there were still lots available in the town of Dedham, Massachusetts.
- D. The “Early Records of the Town of Dedham, Massachusetts 1636-1659” list John Frary 48 times. He is first described as appearing in person at a meeting in November of 1637.

- E.** On September 28, 1637, the Dedham Town records state that a John Dwite stated that “Provided that he may have one other Lot laid out elsewhere, when he shall present a friend at the Towne, [he] shall accept for the same. John Frary and Robert Williams are propounded concerning said Lot but not present.”
- F.** Also listed in the Dedham records was John’s friend Michael Metcaf, who had been part of the Puritan church leadership in Norwich and who had also traveled on the “*John and Dorothy*” with John and his family.
- G.** In this passage, John Dwite is reserving lots in the town of Dedham for his friend John Frary and Robert Williams. It is not clear why John Frary and Robert Williams were not at the meeting, but it is likely that they were already in New England, perhaps staying at Watertown.
- H.** After this meeting, on December 20, 1637, John Frary appears in person with his friend Robert Williams at the Dedham Towne Counsel meeting. Robert Williams was also a Cordwainer from Norwich, England, and he traveled to New England on the “*John and Dorothy’s*” sister ship, the “*Rose*” as reported in his own biography.
- I.** The Dedham Towne Records state stated, “That which was agreed upon at the last meeting was read and confirmed. John Frary and Robert Williams entertained to have a Lot which John Dwite laid down unto the Towne with all the benefits unto the same belonging [to divide betwixt them surely as they agree, we promising at all times to give them further accommodations according to it that they shall surely need in their employments and as the Towne can well afford unto them.”
- J.** In this passage, the land reserved for John Frary and Robert Williams by John Dwite was officially assigned to them by the town of Dedham. As John does not appear in person in any other records of the Towne of Dedham, it is clear that by December of 1637 he and his family were in New England.

K. John Frary was also a signer of the Dedham Covenant, which governed the early settlement of Dedham, Massachusetts. It mandated that only those with similar, Puritan, community values could live in the town. It also set a method for mediating disputes and it required each resident to pay their fair share of taxes for the common good. John's signature on the Covenant is listed as number 49. His friend Michael Metcaff is number 33.

IX. So Which Ship Did They Come to New England On?

- A. So, I stated earlier that there were only three ships that arrived in New England from England in 1637. Those were the "Bevis", the "John and Dorothy" and the "Rose." However, my later research indicates that the Bevis was laid up for repairs in England in 1637, and actually did not set sail until May of 1638. Since John Frary was present at the Dedham Towne Council in December of 1637, he and his family could not have been on the "*Bevis*."
- B. Furthermore, the "*Bevis*" sailed from Southhampton, at the far Southwestern corner of England. Southhampton would have not been reachable by land, as in 1637 most people traveled by horse or oxen drawn carts at about 3-5 miles per hour. By land, the distance between Norwich and Southhampton is 198 miles. At 3-5 miles per hour, it would have taken 5 to 7 days to reach Southhampton.
- C. There is no evidence that John and his family first took a ship from Norwich, only to then transfer to the "*Bevis*" at Southhampton. However, the "*Bevis*" does list a John FFrey and his wife on the passenger list. It states, "Ffrey John of Basing, Wheelwright, wife and 3 children." Since John Frary was a Cordwainer and not a Wheelwright, and since John Frary was already in New England before the "*Bevis*" sailed in May of 1638—I think that we can rule out the "*Bevis*."
- D. This leaves only the "*John and Dorothy*" and her sister ship the "*Rose*." These ships both left England from Great Yarmouth, which is the port located 21 miles from the City of Norwich, or approximately 4 hours by horse or ox drawn cart. This is more likely the port that John and his family left from.

E. The ship's manifest for the "*John & Dorothy*" is damaged. What remains of the ship's manifest is as follows:

"page torn Norwich in Norff. Cordwaynar 28 page torn—England to inhabit."

"page torn Samuel child page torn—England to inhabit."

"page torn John child page torn—England to inhabit."

"page torn Elizabeth child page torn—England to inhabit."

"page torn Debra child page torn—England to inhabit."

F. We believe that at the time that John and his family came to New England, he had 3 sons: Theophilus, John S, and Sampson.

G. Also listed in the Dedham records was John's friend Michael Metcaf, who had been part of the Puritan church leadership in Norwich and who had also traveled on the "*John and Dorothy*" with John and his family.

H. The "Rose" and the "*John and Dorothy*" transported a total of 115 passengers, but only part of the ships' manifests have survived. Therefore, it is possible that the portion of the ships' manifests listing John and his family did not survive.

IX. CONCLUSION:

A. Since we know that there were only 3 ships that came to New England in 1637, and since we now know that the Bevis did not actually leave England until the spring of 1638, John and his family came on the "*John and Dorothy*" and/or the "Rose", which sailed together from Great Yarmouth on April 12, 1637 and arrived in Boston on June 8, 1637.