

A Genealogical Profile of Thomas Prence

Birth: Thomas Prence was born in England in 1600 (based on his age at death).

Death: He died in Plymouth on March 29, 1673, “in the 73rd year of his age.”

Ship: *Fortune* 1621

Life in England: Thomas Prence was born in the area of Lechlade, Gloucestershire about 1600 to Thomas and Elizabeth (Todlerby) Prence. At some point his father, Thomas, moved to All Hallows, Barking, a London parish near Tower Hill. There he worked as a carriage maker.

Life in New England: Thomas Prence came to Plymouth Colony as a single man. He moved from Plymouth to Duxbury in 1632, from Duxbury to Eastham in 1644, and eventually back to Plymouth about 1663. He was very active in government affairs, serving as assistant governor in 1632–33, 1635–37, and 1639–1656; and as governor in 1634 and 1638, from 1632 to 1656 and, after Governor Bradford’s death, as governor from 1657 until his death. He was also a Commissioner for the United Colonies for a number of years.

Family: Thomas Prence married (1) Patience, daughter of Elder William Brewster on August 5, 1624. Patience died in an outbreak of “pestilent fever” in 1634. He married (2) Mary Collier on April 1, 1635. He married (3) Apphia (Quick) Freeman sometime between 1644 and 1662. He married (4) Mary, widow of Thomas Howes, before August 1668. They had no children and she died in December 1695.

Children of Thomas and Patience Prence:

- Rebecca was born about 1625. She married Edmund Freeman on April 22, 1646, and had two daughters. She was buried on March 23, 1648.
- Thomas was born about 1627. He moved back to England where he married and had a daughter. He died sometime before 1672.
- Hannah was born about 1629. She married (1) Nathaniel Mayo on February 13, 1649/50, and had six children. She married (2) Jonathan Sparrow by 1671 and had two children. She died in Eastham before November 23, 1698.
- Mercy was born about 1631. She married John Freeman on February 13, 1649/50, and had eleven children. She died on September 28, 1711, in Eastham.

Children of Thomas and Mary Prence:

- Jane was born on November 1, 1637, in Duxbury. She married Mark Snow on January 9, 1660/1, and had eight children. She died in 1712.
- Mary was born about 1639. She married John Tracy about 1661. Mary died perhaps as early as 1644.

Children of Thomas and Apphia Prence (Note: Children may be by second wife):

- Judith was born around 1645. She married (1) Isaac Barker on December 28, 1665, and (2) William Tubbs after 1693.
- Elizabeth was born around 1647. She married Arthur Howland on December 9, 1667.
- Sarah, was born around 1648. She married her step-brother Jeremiah Howes by about 1669. She died on March 3, 1706.

For Further Information:

Robert C. Anderson. *The Great Migration Begins*. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1995.

Robert C. Anderson. *The Pilgrim Migration*. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2004.

Mary Walton Ferris. *Dawes-Gates Ancestral Lines*, Vol. 2. Privately printed by the author, 1931.

Mayflower Families in Progress: William Brewster of the Mayflower and His Descendants for Four Generations Revised 3rd Edition. Barbara L. Merrick, compiler. Plymouth: General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1996.

Eugene A. Stratton. *Plymouth Colony: Its History and People, 1620–1691*. Salt Lake City: Ancestry Publishing, 1986.



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Where do I go from here?

Researching your family's history can be a fun, rewarding, and occasionally frustrating project. Start with what you know by collecting information on your immediate family. Then, trace back through parents, grandparents, and beyond. This is a great opportunity to speak to relatives, gather family stories, arrange and identify old family photographs, and document family possessions that have been passed down from earlier generations.

Once you have learned all you can from family members, you will begin to discover other sources. A wide variety of records can help you learn more about the lives of your ancestors. These include birth, marriage, and death records; immigration and naturalization records; land records; census records; probate records and wills; church and cemetery records; newspapers; passenger lists; military records; and much more.

When you use information from any source — an original record, a printed book, or a website — always be careful to document it. If you use a book, you should cite the author or compiler, the full title, publication information and pages used. Also be sure to record the author's sources for the information. If the author's sources aren't provided, you will have to try to find the original source. Many genealogical works contain faulty information, and the Internet also contains many inaccuracies. In order for your work to be accepted — by lineage societies and other genealogists — it must be properly documented.

IMPORTANT GENEALOGICAL RESOURCES

New England Historic Genealogical Society

Founded in 1845, NEHGS is the country's oldest and largest genealogical society. The library contains over 200,000 books, plus significant manuscript and microfilm collections, and a circulating library by mail. NEHGS members receive two periodicals, the *Register* and *New England Ancestors*, and can access valuable genealogical data online.

NEHGS, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116;
888-296-3447; www.NewEnglandAncestors.org.

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RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

- www.PlymouthAncestors.org
- www.CyndisList.com
- www.FamilySearch.org
- www.USGenWeb.org



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GENEALOGICAL LIBRARIES IN PLYMOUTH

General Society of Mayflower Descendants Library

A collection focused principally on the genealogies of the descendants of the *Mayflower* passengers.

4 Winslow St., Plymouth; 508-746-3188; www.mayflower.org

Plymouth Collection, Plymouth Public Library

Over 1200 items relating to the descendants of the Pilgrims, as well as the many other immigrants who settled in the area.

132 South St., Plymouth; 508-830-4250;
www.plymouthpubliclibrary.org

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Genealogy by Christine Rose and Kay Germain Ingalls, Alpha Books, 1997.

Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research by Marcia Melnyk, NEHGS, 1999.

Shaking Your Family Tree: A Basic Guide to Tracing Your Family History by Ralph J. Crandall, NEHGS, 2001.

Unpuzzling Your Past by Emily Croom, Betterway Books, 2003.

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