

**EARLY RECORDERS AND
REGISTERS OF DEEDS FOR
THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK,
MASSACHUSETTS, 1639-1735**

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Early Recorders and Registers of Deeds for the County of Suffolk, Massachusetts, 1639-1735 by
John T. Hassam

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1639-1735.

BY
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H. A. Sawyer

"On Wensdaye the 24th of Marche 1618, Marg^t my wife was delivered of a sonne, whereof I desire to leave this testimonye of my thankfullnesse unto God, that she beeing above 40 houres in sore travayle, so it beganne to be doubted of hir life, yet the Lord sent hir a safe deliverance."¹

He came with his father in 1630 in the "Arbella" to New England, being then twelve years of age.² He was made a member of the First Church in Boston, 16 : 1 : 1634,³ and was admitted freeman December 7, 1636.⁴

His brother, John Winthrop, Jr., had made in 1635, for Lord Say and Seal and his associates, a new plantation at the mouth of the Connecticut River; and Stephen shortly after joined him, for Governor Winthrop, in a letter to John Winthrop, Jr., under date of 26th 2^{mo} 1636, says:—

"Your brother Stephen was desirous to come to you. If you have any employment for him, you may keep him, otherwise you may return him back."⁵

And again, under date of 23 4^{mo} 1636, —

"I must end, with remembrance of mine own and your mother's love & blessing to you & to Stephen."⁶

Lieutenant Lion Gardener, who was sent over in November, 1635, by Lord Say and Seal and Lord Brook to construct a fort at the mouth of the Connecticut River, in his "Relation of the Pequot Warres,"⁷ says:—

"In the year 1635, I, Lion Gardener, Engineer and Master of works of Fortification in the legers of the Prince of Orange, in the Low Countries, through the persuasion of Mr. John Davenport, Mr. Hugh Peters with some other well-affected Englishmen of Rotterdam, I made an agreement with the forenamed Mr. Peters for £100 per annum, for four years, to serve the company of patentees, namely, the Lord Say, the Lord Brooks [Brook], Sir Arthur Hazilrig, Sir Mathew Bonnington [Bonighton?], Sir Richard Saltingstone [Salton-stall], Esquire Fenwick, and the rest of their company, [I say] I was to serve them only in the drawing, ordering and making of a city, towns or forts of defence. And so I came from Holland to London, and from thence to New England, where I was appointed

¹ Life and Letters of John Winthrop, I. 145.

² *Ibid.*, II. 6.

³ Gov. John Winthrop's Journal, I. 126; Memorial History of Boston, I. 568.

⁴ Mass. Col. Records, I. 372.

⁵ Gov. John Winthrop's Journal, I. 389.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 592.

⁷ Gardener's Pequot Warres; 3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., III. 131-160.

to attend such orders as Mr. John Winthrop, Esquire, the present Governor of Conectecott, was to appoint, whether at Pequit [Pequot] river, or Conectecott, and that we should choose a place both for the convenience of a good harbour, and also for capableness and fitness for fortification. . . . Mr. Winthrop, Mr. Fenwick, and Mr. Peters promised me that they would do their utmost endeavour to persuade the Bay-men to desist from war a year or two, till we could be better provided for it; and then the Pequit Sachem was sent for, and the present returned, but full sore against my will. So they three returned to Boston, and two or three days after came an Indian from Pequit, whose name was Cocommithus, who had lived at Plimoth, and could speak good English; he desired that Mr. Steven [Stephen] Winthrop would go to Pequit with an £100 worth of trucking cloth and all other trading ware for they knew that we had a great cargo of goods of Mr. Pincheon's, and Mr. Steven Winthrop had the disposing of it. And he said that if he would come he might put off all his goods, and the Pequit Sachem would give him two horses that had been there a great while. So I sent the Shallop, with Mr. Steven Winthrop, Sergeant Tille [Tilly], (whom we called afterward Sergeant Kettle, because he put the kettle on his head,) and Thomas Hurlbut and three men more, charging them that they should ride in the middle of the river, and not go ashore until they had done all their trade, and that Mr. Steven Winthrop should stand in the hold of the boat, having their guns by them, and swords by their sides, the other four to be, two in the fore cuddie, and two in aft, being armed in like manner, that so they out of the loop-holes might clear the boat, if they were by the Pequits assaulted; and that they should let but one canoe come aboard at once, with no more but four Indians in her, and when she had traded then another, and that they should lie no longer there than one day, and at night to go out of the river; and if they brought the two horses, to take them in at a clear piece of land at the mouth of the River, two of them go ashore to help the horses in, and the rest stand ready with their guns in their hands, if need were, to defend them from the Pequits, for I durst not trust them. So they went and found but little trade, and they having forgotten what I charged them, Thomas Hurlbut and one more went ashore to boil the kettle, and Thomas Hurlbut stepping into the Sachem's wigwam, not far from the shore, enquiring for the horses, the Indians went out of the wigwam, and Wincumbone, his mother's sister, was then the great Pequit Sachem's wife, who made signs to him that he should be gone, for they would cut off his head; which, when he perceived, he drew his sword and ran to the others, and got aboard, and immediately came abundance of Indians to the waterside and called them to come ashore, but they immediately set sail and came home, and this caused me to keep watch and ward,

for I saw they plotted our destruction. And suddenly after came Capt. Endecott, Capt. Turner, and Capt. Undrill [Underhill], with a company of soldiers, well fitted, to Seabrook, and made that place their rendezvous or seat of war, and that to my great grief, for, said I, you come hither to raise these wasps about my ears, and then you will take wing and flee away; but when I had seen their commission I wondered, and made many allegations against the manner of it, but go they did to Pequit, and as they came without acquainting any of us in the River with it, so they went against our will; for I knew that I should lose our cornfield."

Stephen Winthrop was in England in 1638, as is shown by a letter from him to his mother¹ dated March 20, 1637-[8]; but his absence could not have been of long duration, and he again returned to Boston, for John Winthrop, Jr., in a letter² written from "Riall Side," then part of Salem, now of Beverly, probably in May, 1639, and addressed "to my dear Wife Mrs. Elizabeth Winthrop, at Boston," says:—

"When my brother went hence I was not up; nor well, so that I could not write to thee. . . . Put my brother Stephen in mind to send me my carbine, as he promised me. . . . My brother Stephen hath promised to bring thee home when thou comest."

By order of the General Court held in Boston, September 9, 1639,³

"Mr. Steven Winthrop was chosen to record things."

Lechford, in his "Plain Dealing," London, 1642, says:—

"Master *Stephen Winthrop* is Recorder, whose office is to record all Judgments, Mariages, Births, Deaths, Wills and Testaments, Bargaines and Sales, Gifts, Grants, and Mortgages."⁴

The General Court, October 7, 1640, provided for the keeping of records at Ipswich and Salem, "all the rest to bee entered by M^r Stephen Winthrope, the recorder at Boston."⁵

He joined the Artillery Company in 1641.⁶

September 27, 1642, the General Court ordered that "M^r Stephen Winthrop hath liberty to go for England."⁷ He did

¹ 5 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., VIII. 199.

² Gov. John Winthrop's Journal, I. 394.

³ Mass. Col. Records, I. 276.

⁴ Lechford's Plain Dealing or Newes from New England, p. 38.

⁵ Mass. Col. Records, I. 306, 307.

⁶ Roberts' History of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, pp. 112, 118.

⁷ Mass. Col. Records, II. 28.

not go immediately, however, as he still continued to act as Recorder in 1643 and 1644. In the latter year he was deputy from Strawberry Bank to the General Court.¹ The next year he sailed for England, then in the midst of the Civil War. He was Captain of a troop of horse, then Major and afterwards Colonel in Cromwell's Army, and it was at one time thought that he was to succeed Major-General Harrison.² He sat in Parliament in 1656 as member for Banff and Aberdeen, Scotland.³ The few letters⁴ which he wrote from England during this part of his life are of much interest, but only brief extracts can be printed here.

In a letter to his brother, John Winthrop, Jr., dated London, March 27, 1646, he writes:—

"God hath been pleased to give me a safe arrivall to London, were we find all o' freinds in health & y^e kingdome eased of many of theire feares in respect of y^e Kings ptie."

In another, dated Worcester, August 23, 1646, he says:—

"This kingdome is yet much vnsetled, although heere be noe enemy appearinge, y^e king will not signe y^e ppositions nor yeild to y^e Parla^t, w^{ch} causes many jelousies."

¹ Mass. Col. Records, III. 2.

² "Your brother Stephen succeedes Major Gen^l Harrison." Letter from Roger Williams to John Winthrop, Jr., dated Providence 21: 12, 1656-6 (3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., X. 18; Publications of the Narragansett Club, VI. 297).

³ In Thurloe's State Papers (V. 306) is the following letter from General Monck to Secretary Thurloe:—

"HONOURED SIR, — This inclosed letter coming to my hands, I thought fit to send it to you, and I shall write to the governor of Orkney, to take the informations upon oath, concerning this busines, which when it comes from thence, I shall send to you. All our parliament men are chosen here, but you will know few of them but such as are English. The Englishmen that are chosen are, the lord Broghill, sir Edward Rhodes, Mr. Disborow, col. Whetham, judge Swinton, col. Winthrop, col. Fitch, judge Smyth, col. Salmon, Dr. Clarges, Mr. Godfrey Rhodes, Mr. Thomas Stuart, col. Henry Markhom, judge advocate Whally and scout master general Downing; and the rest are honest and peaceable Scotchmen, and I believe will be all right for my lord protector, which I thought fit to nominate, because they are not known to you. I remain

Your very loving friend and humble servant,

GEORGE MONCK.

DALKEITH 30 August, 1656."

In the Diary of Thomas Burton (IV. 499) Colonel Winthrop is on the list of speakers in Parliament in 1656.

He served on the Committee of Privileges, Committee for the Affairs of Scotland and other Committees. (Journal of the House of Commons, VII. pp. 424, 428, 433, 457.)

⁴ Winthrop Papers, 5 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., VIII. 199-218.