

# The 17th-Century Great Migration to New England and Beyond

Conventicles, Companies, Congregations, Dispersal

## *Class 4: Congregations*

Robert Charles Anderson, FASG

THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER



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# Meet today's presenter



Robert Charles Anderson, FASG  
Director of the Great Migration Study Project

# OVERVIEW

- **Presentation (60 mins.)**
  - Expansion of New England
  - Town examples
- **Q&A (30 mins.)**

# Chronology of New England Towns

- Piscataqua
- Massachusetts Bay
- Plymouth Colony
- Connecticut River Valley
- Long Island Sound
- Narragansett Bay

# Church and State

- Congregational Church
- “Presbyterian” Church
- Town Meeting
- Freemanship
- Landholding

# Motivators of Migration

- Population pressure
- Better land
- Social network
- Ideological “sorting out”

# Scrooby-Leiden-Plymouth

- Combination Clerical Company and Merchants Company
- Scrooby 1606
- Amsterdam 1608
- Leiden 1609
- Plymouth 1620
- Only six from Scrooby: William Brewster, wife and two sons; William Bradford; Susanna (Jackson) White

# Winthrop Fleet Towns

- Charlestown [1629]
- Dorchester [1630]
- Boston [1630]
- Watertown [1630]
- Roxbury [1630]
- Cambridge [1631]
- Lynn [1631]

# Ipswich 1633

- On 1 April 1633, Massachusetts Bay General Court ordered that “no person whatsoever shall go to plant or inhabit at Aggawam, without leave from this Court, except those that are already gone, viz: Mr. John Winthrop Jr., Mr. Clerke, Roberte Coles, Thomas Howlett, John Biggs, John Gage, Thomas Hardy, William [*sic* – *recte* John] Perkins, Mr. Thornedicke, William Sarieant” [MBCR 1:103].
- Probably led by Winthrop Jr., but apparently not an organized company.

# Ipswich 1634

- In 1634 the *Mary & John* arrived with many passengers from Wiltshire and vicinity.
- Many of them settled first at Ipswich, outnumbering those who settled there in 1633.
- Church established in June 1634, with all founders being passengers on the *Mary & John* from Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Berkshire.

# Ipswich 1635

- In spring 1635 most of these *Mary & John* passengers moved a few miles north to found the new town of Newbury.
- On 4 March 1634/5, nine more Ipswich men who had arrived by 1634 were made freemen. They were from London, Suffolk, Kent, and Leicestershire.
- On 6 May 1635, four more *Mary & John* passengers were made freemen from Ipswich, at about the time others were moving to Newbury. Two of these (Christopher Osgood and Richard Jacob) remained in Ipswich.

# Newbury 1635

- Newbury church was founded in 1635, with Thomas Parker as pastor and James Noyes teacher.
- They established a presbyterian government which lasted for several decades.

# QUESTIONS?

# Massachusetts to Connecticut: 1635-6

- Cambridge => Hartford
- Dorchester => Windsor
- Watertown => Wethersfield
- Roxbury => Springfield

# Town versus Church

- Watertown and Roxbury
- Cambridge and Dorchester

# Dedham 1636

- Overflow from Watertown
- Mostly East Anglian
- Drafted and signed town covenant

# Dedham 1638

- Heavy Immigration from Norfolk/Suffolk border in 1637 and 1638
- Reverend John Allin
- Church formed and church covenant signed in 1638
- Departure of many of 1636 settlers
- Lockridge: “closed corporate utopian community”

# Hingham 1635

- Six Hingham, Norfolk, families migrated in 1633.
  - Edmund Hobart [Charlestown]
  - Theophilus Cushing [Charlestown]
  - Henry Gibbs [Charlestown]
  - Ralph Smith [Charlestown]
  - Nicholas Jacob [Watertown]
  - Thomas Lincoln [Watertown]
- Half a dozen more families came in 1634 and 1635.
- All settled at Bare Cove in 1635, renamed Hingham.

# Hingham 1638

- Rev. Peter Hobart had arrived in 1635, at which time Hingham church was established, with Hobart as pastor.
- *Diligent* arrived in 1638 with 133 immigrants in 22 families from Hingham and neighboring parishes.
- Rev. Robert Peck arrived in 1638 and was made teacher. He returned to England in 1641.

# QUESTIONS?

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# The 17th-Century Great Migration to New England and Beyond 2024

**Thank you for registering for the online seminar, *The 17th-Century Great Migration to New England and Beyond: Conventicles, Companies, Congregations, Dispersal!***

The participants in the 17th-century Great Migration to New England were drawn from the most committed English protestant reformers, those who most wanted the Church of England to make a full break with the Church of Rome. In this five-week course, Director of the Great Migration Study Project Robert Charles Anderson will explain the who, what, and why of the mass movement of people to New England from Old England in the 1620s and 1630s and the subsequent migrations in the generations to follow.

The colonists to New England in the early 17th century were largely men and women who began to form networks across England as early as the 1530s, meeting together in conventicles and godly households. As the decades passed, many of these reformers became more and more frustrated as one monarch after another refused to make the desired reforms. A breaking point was reached in the 1620s and a small stream of English men, women and children began to move to the New World. The pace of migration increased in the later 1630s, when thousands of migrants crossed the Atlantic each year. They were organized in companies, led by a minister or an affluent layman, based on the existing conventicles. Initially, many of the members of these migrating companies settled together in one New England town, but they soon began a process of sorting themselves out in different ways. Traces of the old English connections may still be seen decades later, even so late as the settlement of the American West two centuries on. Don't miss this opportunity to explore the 300-year sweep of history and the context surrounding your early immigrant ancestors' movements!

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