GREAT MIGRATION TOUR TO ENGLAND
4 TO 11 SEPTEMBER 2015 BY SEA
11 TO 16 SEPTEMBER 2015 BY LAND
MID AND UPPER WESSEX
TOUR TALK

At the end of the By Sea portion of this tour, we will be landing at Southampton, England’s major port on the English Channel. During the Great Migration, most passenger vessels sailed from London, but a small but important fraction of the ships carrying passengers left from various outports, including Southampton.

Through the vagaries of documentary survival over the course of four centuries, passenger lists survive for four vessels which carried immigrants from Southampton to New England: Mary & John in 1634; James in 1635; and Confidence and Bevis in 1638.

The passengers who intended to sail for New England on the Mary & John were enrolled on two different dates: 24 March 1633/4 (thirty-four men) and 26 March 1634 (twenty-two men) [Drake’s Founders 70-71]. This list presents only the names of adult males, although many of them were certainly accompanied by wives and children.

The next list is for “the James of London of 300 tons, William Cooper, Master, for New England, in and about the 5th of April 1635” [Drake’s Founders 55-57]. Like the list for the Mary & John, this schedule contained only the names of men, but in this case with information on place of origin in England and occupation. For example, the first person on the list is “Augustine Clement, sometime of Reading, painter.” At the end, this list is annotated “The total number of these men, youths, and boys are 53 persons, besides the wives and children of diverse of these”; this number corresponds with the actual number of names in the list.
A peculiarity of this document is that one grouping of five names is labelled “late of New England.” The accumulation of research on these individuals shows that they were all from Salisbury, Wiltshire, so the label should actually have been “late of New Sarum,” an interesting error.

The third list is dated 24 April 1638, being “The List of the Names of the Passengers Intended for New England in the good ship the Confidence of London of 200 tons, John Jobson, Master” [Drake’s Founders 57-59]. This record provides much more information than the two discussed above. Like the list for the James, this one includes the names of the heads of families, their previous residences and occupations. What is new here is the inclusion of the names and ages of all family members, including wives, children and servants. At the end of the list is the annotation “The number of passengers aforementioned, great and little, are 110 souls.”

Finally, we have the “list of the names of passengers intended to ship themselves, in the Bevis of Hampton of 150 tons, Robert Batten, Master, for New England” in May 1638 [Drake’s Founders 60-61]. The information included here is the same as for the Confidence, although arranged somewhat differently. At the end we are told that “The number of the passengers abovementioned are sixty and one souls.”

In all four of these ships, most of the passengers were from various cities and towns in Hampshire and Wiltshire. In the first two ships, many of the passengers, upon arrival in New England, settled in the new town of Newbury. In the 1638 ships, many also settled at Newbury, while some went on to the newly established village of Sudbury.

In future issues of Tour Talk we will look more closely at the passengers on these four vessels, and will attempt to compile a complete list of immigrants to New England from Hampshire and Wiltshire, whether on these ships or on others.

LITTLECOTE HOUSE

On Saturday, 12 September, we will spend the middle of the day at Littlecote House, a magnificent medieval house with many points of interest. This estate is in the parish of Chilton Foliat in the northeast of Wiltshire, on the Berkshire border. In addition to the medieval buildings, the ruins of a Roman villa have been found about a quarter mile from the main house. While at Littlecote House, we will have a tour of the Roman ruins, a tour of the main house, and lunch.
This site is of broad historical interest. Littlecote House and Wolf Hall, the residence of the Seymour family, are only about ten miles apart, and Henry VIII conducted part of his courtship of Jane Seymour at Littlecote. The estate was acquired in 1589 by Sir John Popham, Lord Chief Justice of England in the closing years of Elizabeth’s reign. Sir John supported his nephew George Popham in 1607 when the latter attempted, but failed, to establish a colony in what is now Maine. Within the main house is a chapel built during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, reminiscent of an early New England meeting house. During World War II, the estate was requisitioned by the United States Army’s 101st Airborne Division during the planning for the 1944 landings in Normandy.

ROBERT PARKER

The last issue of Tour Talk briefly introduced Robert Parker, a figure central to the themes of this Great Migration Tour. Let’s now examine him in more detail. (The outline for the account below is taken from Parker’s entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, supplemented by research in other sources.)

Robert Parker was born in the early 1560s, perhaps in Wilton, Wiltshire, just to the west of Salisbury. He entered Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1575, taking his BA in 1582 and his MA in 1587, having been made a fellow of Magdalen in 1585. Already at Oxford he began to show nonconformist tendencies, among other things refusing to wear the required vestments.

Parker’s first living was at the tiny parish of Patney in Wiltshire, on the northern edge of Salisbury Plain. Parker was rector here for only two years, from 1591 to 1593. Toward the end of Parker’s time at Patney, his daughter Sarah was baptized, on 15 April 1593. Sarah eventually married John Woodbridge, and her son of the same name migrated to New England and settled at Newbury [GM 2:7:500-10]. My original plan for the tour was to visit as many as possible of the residences of Robert Parker, but the Patney church is now a private residence, so this portion of the plan had to be scrapped.

Parker’s next position was as prebendary of Stanton St. Bernard, Wiltshire, just a few miles north of Patney. As prebendary, he had no parochial duties at Stanton St. Bernard, but instead hired a vicar. The Victoria County History of Wiltshire states that “The prebendaries of Stanton were originally appointed to serve the nuns at Wilton and their duties to the parish were probably confined to the provision of parish priests.” In 1604, for example, Parker presented his brother-in-law Richard Stephens as vicar.

His position as prebendary, largely a sinecure, provided Parker the time to pursue his theological interests. In 1607 he published (in the Netherlands) a pamphlet titled Scholasticall discourse against symbolizing with Antichrist in ceremonies, especially in the sign of the crosse, thus going public once again with his nonconformity. As a consequence, Parker was suspended and fled to the Continent.

In 1610 Parker resided briefly at Leiden, where he associated with other expatriate nonconformists such as William Ames and Henry Jacob. While in Leiden, he interacted with members of John Robinson’s church and certainly was acquainted with William Bradford and presumably with other members of that congregation, but he did not become a member of the Leiden Pilgrim church.
Robert Parker died in exile in 1614. His widow, Dorothy, returned to England, where she resided at Mildenhall until her death in the winter of 1649-50. We will visit Mildenhall as our last stop on Saturday, 12 September, after we leave Littlecote.

Parker’s son Thomas attended university first at Leiden and then at Franeker, where he received his MA in 1617. Thomas sailed for New England on the Mary & John in 1634 and in 1635 was one of the founders of Newbury, where he was pastor until his death in 1677 [GM 2:5:367-70].

Robert Parker’s sister married Reverend William Noyes of Cholderton, Wiltshire. Two of their sons, James and Nicholas, were also passengers on the Mary & John and also settled at Newbury. James Noyes served as teacher of the Newbury church until his death in 1656 [GM 2:5:282-93]. We will visit Cholderton on Monday, 14 September, and have lunch at a pub there. The church at Cholderton is, unfortunately, not the building in which the Noyes brothers would have been baptized, but a construction of the 1840s.

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