

Farnham, Ralph - Biography

Ralph Farnham arrived in Boston with his family on the ship *James* in late September 1635 and settled in Ipswich. His birth in Rochester, Kent, was first proven by Mr. Frank Horace Farnham in an article published in the January 1994 issue of "The American Genealogist", refuting the long-held belief that Ralph was a merchant tailor from London.

Ralph Farnham was a barber-surgeon who lectured people on theology while shaving them in his chair. In 1639 he was appointed "town crier" for "ringing the bell, keeping clean the meeting house and publishing such things as the town shall appoint..." He died in the snow in Roxbury, Massachusetts, c.1647, while journeying to visit a patient.

Farnham Families in England, Incorporating the research of Frank Horace Farnham, by Antoinette Farnham Stepanek (Heritage Books, Inc., Bowie, MD, 1995), states, "For the Ralph/Alice Family we have provided **conclusive evidence** that...the father of Ralph [immigrant to Boston on the *James* in 1635] was **Boatswain Henry Farnum** whose will of 1618 was probated at Rochester, Kent, in 1619" (page 354).

A contemporary Robert Farnham IV, born also in Rochester, Kent, in 1577, married Elizabeth Monck, who is descended from King Edward III Plantagenet. Robert of 1577 had a son named Ralph born in 1604, and numerous accounts confuse his other children with those of Henry the Boatswain. However, Ralph Farnham of 1604, the son of Robert, does not appear to be the Ralph Farnham of 1603 who emigrated to Massachusetts in 1635. His daughter Mary Farnham, the wife of Daniel Poor, does not descend from King Edward III