

The home and property of Mrs. Ruth Sherburne Eldridge is located in Portsmouth, New Hampshire at 1821 Islington Street. It has been in the Sherbourne family since it was first purchased by Henry Sherburne, on 20 February 1657 and was subsequently transferred to his brother John Sherburne. John Sherburne was the progenitor of the family which still bears that surname name and resides on the property. Located adjacent to this house is the family graveyard which contains the John Sherburne's remains and those of those family members who have lived in the area of the Portsmouth Plains. Upon the death of Mrs. Eldridge, the property will go to her son, Andrew H. Sherburne, according to the terms of her first husband's will (Atch 14).

John Sherburne's name appears on the petition sent to Boston's General Court in May 1658 to change the name of the settlement on the Piscataqua River from Strabery Banke (sic) to Portsmouth and to expand the size of the "plantation" into a definite township, due to the growth in number of the families which resided there. The presence of the name of John Sherebourn, as his surname was spelled in the original document, indicates his level of leadership in the community. (Atch 15)

The earliest deed to this property mentions a house and other buildings. Whether or not they were used by John Sherburne [1], is not known, but it can be assumed they were, and are, the same structures which were destroyed by fire on June 26, 1696 during an indian raid at the Portsmouth Plains, as recorded in the book Rambles About Portsmouth by Charles W. Brewster, in 1859, on pages 69-71 (Atch 15). The raid on that portion of the present city of Portsmouth is also recorded on a historic marker located close to the Sherburne home. Following this disaster, in which, according to Brewster, Captain John Sherburne's loss exceeded that of others in that he lost "two barns, stocked with cattle, hogs, and one horse, together with grain and hay" but, did not result in the loss of life to the owner, John Sherburne [2]. Another home and other buildings were constructed, followed about 95 years later by the present house which has been dated by Architectural Historian, Richard Candee, as dating from the 1790 time frame (Atch 16). Discussion with Mrs. Eldridge, has revealed that the structure erected in 1696, had been used until the relatively recent past, as a summer kitchen, and was attached the the present house, until it was no considered safe and was torn down.

Book 2, page 43B of Rockingham County Deeds, clearly indicates that Robert Puddington Sr. sold to Robert and jno (sic) Puddington, his house and lands on the Piscataqua River in New England, lying on the plains southward from the meeting house in Portsmouth, on eleventh day of february 1655. Recorded 17 July 1660. (See Atch 1)

Book 2, page 43B further indicates that Robert Puddington of Portsmouth sold "farms, house and lands in Portsmouth on the west side of the River Piscataqua in New England...on the common and lying in the highway that leads to Greenland" to Brian Pendleton on the 4th day of the tenth month, 1656. Recorded 17 July 1660. (Note: this transaction indicates that Robert Puddington had purchased the property from his brother John, prior to the sale of this date, but there is no apparent record for the transaction.) (See Atch 1)

Book 2, page 44A continues with the sale of this property by Brian Pendleton to Mr. Henry Sherburne of Portsmouth on 20 February (sic) 1657. Recorded 17 July 1660. (See Atch 2)

Book 2, page 44A continues with the sale of this property by Henry Sherburne to Jno Sherburne, including the house and lands on "15 Aprill (sic) 1658". Recorded 17 July 1660. (See Atch 2)

In this manner John Sherburne [1] recieved the property in Portsmouth, on the Greenland road, from his brother Henry Sherburne. It further indicates that there

existed on this property a house in which these folks dwelt for various periods of time, at least as early as 11 February 1655. It also demonstrates that all these land transactions were recorded on the same date by John Sherburne.

Additionally, in the family history of John Sherburne, which appeared in the *New England Historic and Genealogical Register*, the sale of the property by Henry Sherburne to his brother, John Sherburne is also recorded. This history further records that as of the date of the article, the property was still in the hands of of John's male descendants. (See Atch 3)

However, to carry on the chain of ownership of this property to the present day (1991) the property was transferred by John Sherburne [1] to his son John Sherburne [2] on -- November 1687 (Rockingham County Deeds Book 5, page 95). His will proved 27 November 1693 lists the names of his wife and names his children including his son John Sherburne [2]. (See Atch 4)

John Sherburne [2] was a taxpayer of the "plains" in 1671 and he was then married and at least of the age of 21 years. In 1726, John Sherburne [2] "of the plains" sold his homestead to his son Samuel Sherburne [3] (Rockingham County Deeds Book 15, pages 301, 323, and 403). At the time of John's death in 1730 he was upwards of 80 years of age. (See Atch 5)

Deacon Samuel Sherburne [3] of "the plains", Portsmouth, who received the homestead of his father in 1726, was a deacon of Portsmouth's North Church and a surveyor and selectman in Portsmouth. At the time Samuel Sherburne [3] died intestate 14 November 1760, his estate was valued at 7404 pounds and was left to his widow and children. His son Samuel Sherburne [4] was at that time just shy of reaching his thirtieth anniversary of his birth, and he was the eldest son of his parents.

At the time of his untimely death in 1760, Samuel [3] Sherburne's property was equally divided between his children and the acquisition of the homestead by his eldest son Samuel [4] is only partly indicated through his purchases of the interests of his brother Andrew and his sister Martha (Sherburne) Furber. How he obtained the interests of his other siblings and his mother is not recorded, but evidently did occur, as subsequent land transfers indicate he had clear title to the property. Samuel Sherburne [4] of "the plains" was a veteran of the Revolutionary War, having served at the Battle of Bunker Hill and elsewhere later in the war. He and his wife Mary (Burleigh) had as their third son, Joseph [5], born 1780. At Samuel's death, in 1807, his will (Atch 8) divided his property between his children who subsequently deeded their rights in their father's homestead (Atch 9) to Joseph [5] who continued to live at the Portsmouth Plains on the property John Sherburne [1] purchased.

Joseph [5] Sherburne was married to Hepzibah Badger and he died on 24 Sep 1835. Joseph died intestate (?) and the property was left to his wife and children; William Badger, Samuel, Joseph Jr., Andrew, and Emerson Sherburne. The elder brothers William and Samuel died in 1845 and 1848, having transferred to their brother Andrew, their shares in their father's estate (Atch 10 & 10a). Andrew [6] married Hannah R. George in 1843, and they raised five children.

In his will, dated October 8, 1900, Andrew [6] divided his property amongst his children and left the homestead to his son Frank [7] G. to live in until his death at which time it was to pass to to Andrew's grandson, Andrew [8] E. Sherburne, son of Andrew's eldest son Edward [7] P. Sherburne. Andrew's daughters Emma F. Sherburne was appointed the executrix of his will. While the will was made in 1900, Andrew continued to live for another nine years. Andrew's son Frank died in 1902, before his death.

In this manner the ownership of the property passed ultimately from Andrew [6]

Sherburne to his grandson Andrew [8] E. Sherburne who had married Clara Louise West on 4 June 1903 and subsequently died 24 January 1949. Andrew E. [8] Sherburne had two children, Andrew Badger and Edward West Sherburne. Andrew's will dated December 1, 1932, provided that his spouse would acquire the homestead and after her death it would go to his sons, with the proviso that if either died before thirty days from his death, it would go to the remaining son if his wife had also died.

Following the death of his father, Edward [9] West Sherburne who had married Ruth Harder March 13, 1932 came into ownership of the Sherburne Place at the Portsmouth Plains. He and Ruth had four children. In his will, dated June 12, 1964, Edward provided that his widow would have the right to live in the homestead for the remainder of his life and then the place would pass in equal shares to his two sons, Edward [10] West and Andrew [10] Harder Sherburne. This is the situation at this date even though Ruth has since remarried.

For three hundred thirty-three years, members of the Sherburne family have lived out their lives at the Portsmouth Plains where they have been buried in the family graveyard located sixty or so yards behind the house located at 1821 Islington Street in Portsmouth. While the current house dates only from about the last decade of the Eighteenth Century, the family has maintained their residence on the property for all this time.

