



1096

The Great Migration Begins

Davy Johnson appears on some lists of passengers on the *Mary & John*. This is possible, since he first appears in New England in 1630, and his first residence is Dorchester. But we do not know whether he derived from the West Country, so he must remain as a possible passenger on that ship.

EDWARD JOHNSON**ORIGIN:** Unknown**MIGRATION:** 1622**FIRST RESIDENCE:** Wessagusset**REMOVES:** York by 1634**OCCUPATION:** Agent [MPCR 4:27].

FREEMAN: Requested 19 October 1630 (as "Mr. Ed. Johnson") and admitted 18 May 1631 (as "Mr. Edw. Johnson") [MBCR 1:79, 366]. Took the oath of allegiance at York on 22 March 1680 [MPCR 3:5].

EDUCATION: He signed his deeds.

OFFICES: Deputy (Agamenticus), 25 June 1640 [MPCR 1:55]. Associate (York), 9 July 1657 [MPCR 2:58]. Commissioner (York) 4 July 1659, 3 July 1660, 1 July 1661, 7 July 1663, 5 July 1664, 5 July 1670, 2 July 1672, 7 July 1674, 6 July 1675, 4 July 1676, 1 July 1679 [MPCR 2:75, 95, 108, 133, 156, 194, 238, 291, 310, 317, 352]. Justice of the Peace, 23 June 1665-18 December 1667 [MPCR 1:214, 306]. Mr. Edward Johnson was presented for marrying contrary to law at the York court 1 July 1673. He owned the presentment and promised amendment and the subject was dropped [MPCR 2:265].

ESTATE: On 11 November 1660 Edward Johnson of York sold to John Pearse of the same place "a tract of upland which for several years myself have possessed, wherein my old field which I lived upon, & house, with that field Mathew Austine had of me, are both included" and "three acres of salt marsh lying on the northwest branch of the river of Yorke"; Benjamin Johnson was one of the witnesses to this deed, signing by mark [YLR 1:1:125].

On 24 August 1669 "Edw[ard] Johnson living & being in the town of Yorke, gentleman, with the full & free consent of my wife Praecilla Johnson, & of my son Benjmen Johnson," sold to John Carde of York, cooper, one acre of fresh meadow [YLR 2:88-89].

On 18 August 1680 "Edw[ard] Johnson of the town of Yorke, & Praecilla my wife," for "the natural affection which we have & do bear unto our beloved daughter Deborah, whom our loving son-in-law John Harmon hath married, & from that love & affection which for her sake & for other considerations of said John Harmon's manifestations of his

The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633, Volumes I-III. (Online database: *AmericanAncestors.org*, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2010), (Originally Published as: New England Historic Genealogical Society. Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633, Volumes I-III*, 3 vols., 1995).

Edward Johnson

1097

unfeigned love towards us, by his great care & industry, in his frugal management of our estate to best advantage for our comfortable subsistence since he married our daughter," granted him ten acres purchased from Henry Symson Junior on 7 April 1680 "on which ten acres of land since my purchase thereof I have built a dwelling house wherein I do now live," also four or five acres of woodland at Bass Cove, and three acres of marsh and sixty acres of upland, for his development, in exchange for life support for both Edward and Priscilla. Lands of Mr. Edward Godfrey's in Edward Johnson's hands were to be used by Harmon until Mr. Godfrey or his heirs "legally take them out of his [Johnson's] hands" [YLR 3:83].

BIRTH: About 1593 (deposed 13 August 1675 "aged about eighty-two" [MPCR 4:27]; deposed 9 June 1682 "Mr. Edw: Johnson aged about eighty-nine years" [YLR 3:116]).

DEATH: After 9 January 1687/[8] [MPCR 4:27].

MARRIAGE: By about 1646 Priscilla _____, born about 1618 (deposed aged sixty-five years on 29 June 1682 [YLR 3:116]; deposed aged eighty 12 August 1699 [YLR 8:262]). She died between 2 October 1706 (when the inventory of John Harmon of York, deceased, was taken and included land deeded for Edward and Priscilla's life maintenance [Maine PR 1:146]) and 4 July 1716 (when grandson Johnson Harmon received his share of John Harmon's estate, augmented "in consideration of his ... keeping & burying his grandmother Priscilla Johnson" [Maine PR 1:71-72]).

CHILDREN:

- i BENJAMIN, b. by 1646 (witnessed his fathers's deed on 11 November 1660 [YLR 1:1:125]); d. by 11 September 1677, when administration on his estate was granted [MPCR 2:334, 339, 515]; apparently unmarried.
- ii DEBORAH, b. say 1653; m. (1) by about 1673 John Foxwell (approximate birth of son Philip [GDMNH 243]), son of RICHARD FOXWELL [MPCR 3:55]; m. (2) by 21 June 1680 John Harmon (who on that date was with Mr. Francis Hooke granted administration on the estate of John Foxwell [YLR 5:1:2; Lydia Harmon Anc 9-12]).

COMMENTS: Edward Johnson arrived in New England in 1622 as part of the advance party sent out by THOMAS WESTON and immediately became involved in two important incidents at Wessagusset. He sat as judge on the Englishman who had stolen corn from an Indian [New English Canaan 250] and, at about the same time, he discovered a plot by the Indians against Plymouth and informed Plymouth authorities of the threat [NEHGR 7:209-10].

The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633, Volumes I-III. (Online database: *AmericanAncestors.org*, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2010), (Originally Published as: New England Historic Genealogical Society. Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633, Volumes I-III*, 3 vols., 1995).

On 3 August 1632 Deputy Governor Thomas Dudley challenged a number of the executive actions of Governor John Winthrop, including by "what authority he had licensed Edward Johnson to sit down at Merrimack," to which Winthrop replied that "he had licensed him only to go forth on trading (as he had done diverse others) as belonging to his place" [WJ 1:100-01]. On 1 July 1634 "Will[ia]m Almy is fined 10s. for not appearing at the last Court, being summoned, & is enjoined to bring to the next Court an inventory of the goods he received of Edw[ard] Johnson's, duly prized by indifferent men" [MBCR 1:122].

These two records have been subjected to a number of misinterpretations. Savage thought that the argument of August 1632 referred to the same Edward Johnson who resided at Charlestown and Woburn, and was the author of the *Wonder-Working Providence*, and many later authorities have followed him in this. But this latter Edward Johnson did not arrive until 1637 [Planters 188], and so these earlier events all pertain to Edward Johnson of York. The court action of 1634 was interpreted to be a probate of the estate [MBCR 1:439], but the record does not call Johnson deceased, and this is the standard form in early Massachusetts Bay for handling the debts of a person who had left the jurisdiction, thus establishing a *terminus ante quem* for Johnson's removal to York.

Henry Simpson asked that "my beloved friend" Edward Johnson be one of the overseers of his 18 March 1646/7 will [MPCR 1:127]. He was a "most faithful and loyal subject" 18 July 1665 in the petition to the King [MPCR 1:209]. He was surety for Jeremiah Sheers who administered the estate of Nicholas Greene 18 July 1665 [MPCR 1:221].

On 11 June 1657 "Mr. Edw: Johnson of Yorke" deposed that "little before Thomas Gorges Esqr. went out of New England which was about thirteen or fourteen years ago ... he was present in the marshes of York" and gave Peter Weare possession of a parcel of marsh [YLR 2:179].

On 16 August 1662 "Mr. Edw: Johnson and Robert Knightts, aged about sixty odd years," deposed regarding land given by Mr. Richard Vines "near twenty years past ... unto Mr. Hene[ry] Norton" [YLR 1:1:125].

Both Edward Johnson and his wife fell under suspicion of involvement in extramarital affairs. In 1644 the wife of "one Cornish ... confessed to have lived in adultery with diverse. She charged two specially, the said Garde, the mayor, and one Edward Johnson, who confessed it openly at the time of her execution" [WJ 2:257-58]. On 5 July 1658 "Praecilla Johnson the wife of Mr. Edw: Johnson of York" was presented for suspicion of adultery with the gunner of Mr. Garrett's ship [MPCR 2:63]. She was ordered to be taken to Boston [MPCR 2:67].

"Precilla the wife of Mr. Edw: Johnson of York" was presented at York court 9 July 1667 for failing to attend public meeting on the Lord's day,

The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633, Volumes I-III. (Online database: *AmericanAncestors.org*, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2010), (Originally Published as: New England Historic Genealogical Society. Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633, Volumes I-III*, 3 vols., 1995).

Edward Johnson

1099

to which she replied that she had been at Saco about three months, on which grounds the court acquitted her [MPCR 1:288]. She was presented again on 6 July 1675 [MPCR 2:307]. She was evidently found guilty of "abusing the church and some members thereof" and failing to come to court to answer the charges 6 October 1674. The fragments of the page remaining indicate that her sentence was ten lashes, which were surely pardoned with the paying of a fine [MPCR 2:495].

On 29 June 1682 "Mr. Edw: Johnson aged about eighty-nine years" deposed that "about forty-two or forty-three years ago, he remembered that at that time Mrs. Ann Messant, alias Godfrey, lived with Mr. Geo: Burdett, then minister of Agamenticus, now called Yorke ... & at that time kept said Burdett's house, who had occasion to borrow of said Ann Godfrey a certain parcel of money [YLR 3:116] (see EDWARD GODFREY sketch). On the same day "Mrs. Praecilla Johnson aged sixty-five years" said that "she remembreth that Mr. George Burdett sent for her husband & she heard him s[ai]d Burdet say that he would deliver his farm & cattle into his custody & possession for the use of Ann Messant, in lieu of satisfaction for that debt which the sd Burdet owed unto her & further saith not" (29 June 1682 [YLR 3:116]).

On 12 August 1699 "Priscilla Johnson of York, aged about eighty years" deposed that "Mr. William Hook deceased had servants which dwelt upon & managed the farm now in controversie between Collo Elisha Hutchinson & Mr. William Hook ... and that the said Mr. Hook did at the same time live in York and had two sons born there Humphrey Hook & Wm Hook and it is about sixty years ago more or less [YLR 8:262].

On 13 August 1675 "Mr. Edward Johnson aged about 82 years" deposed "that about forty years ago or thereabouts the deponent being then agent for John Treworgy did in his behalf purchase a certain tract of land now called the Point lying on the northeast side of Piscataqua River..."; he acknowledged this deposition on 9 January 1687/[8] [MPCR 4:27].

It has been suggested that William of York, carpenter, could have been the eldest son of this couple, and William's son Samuel's connection to John Foxwell strengthens the possibility, but firm evidence remains to be found [GDMNH 384]. Charles Edward Banks attempted to add to the family a daughter "Priscilla Johnson, living in York in 1717, aged 80 years" [NEHGR 47:154, citing YLR 8:261], but the deposition in question, although recorded on 8 January 1717/8, was taken on 12 August 1699, and so this is a late appearance of the widow of the immigrant.

The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633, Volumes I-III. (Online database: *AmericanAncestors.org*, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2010), (Originally Published as: New England Historic Genealogical Society. Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633, Volumes I-III*, 3 vols., 1995).