

William Baulston

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William Baulston held all the important offices in Portsmouth, being reelected and reappointed year after year, until 1673. For the last four years of his life he did not hold office, indicating perhaps that he was no longer able to do so. On 3 June 1672 he was chosen overseer of the poor, but "whereas Mr. William Baulston the eldest assistant in this town is absent from this meeting," a messenger was sent to fetch Baulston so that he could be properly engaged [PoTR 170]. This may already hint at infirmity, and Baulston was offered only one more post, that of moderator for the meeting of 2 March 1672/3 [PoTR 175]. On 6 and 7 May 1673 he attended the meeting of the General Court, but was not reelected to the office of Assistant, and on 2 June 1673 the town meeting noted that "Mr. William Baulston hath in his custody several copies of General Court and Assembly's acts which the town do conceive belong to them" and appointed a committee to retrieve them from Baulston, indicating that his public career was over [PoTR 176]. On 4 June 1677, however, just a few months before writing his will, William Baulston was honored when the Portsmouth town meeting was held at his home [PoTR 192].

GREGORY BAXTER

ORIGIN: Unknown

MIGRATION: 1631

FIRST RESIDENCE: Roxbury

REMOVES: Braintree 1640

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: Apparently joined Dorchester church in late 1631 or early 1632, since he was made freeman before Roxbury church was organized, and after date when church membership was necessary for freemanship. Joined Roxbury church 1632 [RChR 74].

FREEMAN: 6 March 1631/2 [MBCR 1:367].

EDUCATION: Made his mark ("A") on will.

OFFICES: One of seven arbitrators in an extra-judicial master-servant dispute, 26 November 1640 [WP 4:299].

ESTATE: Presumably received the usual sequence of land grants from Roxbury and sold them on his move to Braintree, although this would have been before the Roxbury land inventory was compiled.

In his will, dated 2 June 1659 (with codicil of 19 June 1659), "Gregory Baxter of Braintree" bequeathed to "my son Dearing my little piece of salt meadow, that is adjoining to his own house, being in quantity about an acre of ground"; to "his daughter Bethia" £10 and some livestock; to

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"my son Joseph Adams & my daughter his wife six acres of land lying in the Great Field ... as also my little island of salt marsh which lyeth at the head of the salt creek ... & also half my lands at the Captain's Plain I give to his son Joseph the child of my daughter" with further provisions if this child die; to "my son Joseph Adams my old mare"; and "my wife & my son John" to be residuary legatees and executors. On 19 June 1659 the testator voided the bequest to "my son Dearing" and gave that piece of land to his son John. Will witnessed by John Gurney, Moses Payne and Richard Brackett, the latter two witnessing codicil also. Sworn 14 [sic] June 1659 [this should probably be 24 June] [SPR 1:323]. The inventory was taken 7 July 1659 by John Gurney, Moses Paine and Edmund Quinsey and totalled £417 19s., of which £315 was real estate: dwelling house, barn, orchard and 2½ acres of pasture ground, £70; twenty acres of marsh, £120; twenty-four acres of upland, £40; six acres of plowland, £25; and eighty acres of woodland, £60. Sworn by "Margaret Baxter the relict of Gregory Baxter and John their son" [SPR 3:146].

BIRTH: By about 1607 based on estimated date of marriage.

DEATH: Braintree 21 June 1659 [BrVR 638].

MARRIAGE: Before June 1632, birth of first child. On 7 July 1659 Margaret Baxter is widow of Gregory [inventory], and she died at Braintree 13 February 1661/2 [BrVR 638].

In his will of 20 August 1658 William Paddy of Boston bequeathed 50s. to "my sister Margaret Baxter" [NEHGR 8:355], and Savage says that this was the wife of Gregory Baxter. But Nicholas Baxter of Boston, mariner, also had a wife Margaret, as may be seen from deeds of 25 December 1661 and 12 December 1668 [SLR 7:26; 8:66]. In the latter deed we learn that she had had an earlier husband, with whom she had had a daughter Mary who married John Bull. Since William Paddy and Nicholas Baxter were both mariners, and were in these years both of Boston, it seems more likely that William's sister or sister-in-law was the wife of Nicholas and not Gregory.

CHILDREN:

- i BETHULIA/BETHIA, b. Roxbury June 1632 [RVR 1:23]; married Samuel Deering [BrVR 629]. The marriage date is given simply as the year 1647. They had daughter Bethia born 6 August 1649 [BrVR 641], and the mother died on 3 January 1649/50 [BrVR 636].
- ii ABIGAIL, b. Roxbury September 1634 [RVR 1:23]; married 29 November 1650 Joseph Adams [BrVR 629].
- iii JOHN, b. Roxbury 1 December 1639 [NEHGR 5:334]; m. Braintree 24 November 1659 Anna White [BrVR 717].

COMMENTS: Savage states that Baxter moved to Braintree in 1640, and this is apparently based on the inclusion of Baxter's name in a group

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of men who were authorized to act for the town of Braintree in 1640 [BrTR 1]. But this fragmentary record is given only a year date, and no month or day, and may be retroactive and therefore of dubious value. The fact that the birth of Gregory's son John appears in the vital records submitted by Roxbury to the county in early 1644 should indicate that Gregory Baxter was still a Roxbury resident at that time; but if that was the case, why were the two daughters born earlier not included in the county copy? Barring the discovery of further evidence, the date of Gregory Baxter's removal to Braintree must remain in doubt.

WILLIAM BEALE

In the 1623 Plymouth land division William Beale was granted one acre as a passenger on the *Fortune* in 1621; he was paired with Thomas Cushman [PCR 12:5]. As he does not appear in the 1627 cattle division, he must have died or departed soon.

WILLIAM BEAMSLEY

ORIGIN: Unknown

MIGRATION: 1632

FIRST RESIDENCE: Boston

OCCUPATION: Laborer, yeoman.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: "William Beamsley labourer" admitted to Boston church 5 April 1635 [BChR 20].

FREEMAN: "Will: Benseley" admitted 25 May 1636 (ninth in a group of twenty Boston men) [MBCR 1:372].

EDUCATION: Signed his will and several deeds. Inventory included books valued at £1 8s. William Beamsley's second wife, Martha, made her mark to several of his deeds.

OFFICES: Constable for Boston, 13 March 1647/8 [BTR 1:92]. Committee to lay out highways, 11 March 1649/50, 12 April 1650 [BTR 1:99, 100]. Fenceviewer, 23 February 1651/2, 26 April 1652 [BTR 1:108, 110]. Water bailey, 10 March 1655/6 [BTR 1:129]. Highway surveyor, 9 March 1656/7, 29 June 1657 [BTR 1:134, 138]. Admitted to the Artillery Company in 1656/7 [HAHAC 1:179-80], and attained the rank of ensign [SPR 3:224].

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