



Sarah Clark (1620 – 1698) is my 10th Great Grandmother.

This story is on my father's side, so it will be of most interest to the Lindsey / Rawson side of our family.

Sarah Clark was born in 1620 in England. Her father emigrated to "Virginia" in 1624 and I presume Sarah came along with him. She seems to have led a normal life until at 72 years of age we find her up to her neck in the Salem Witchcraft trials.

Sarah married George Davis when she was 22 and had 10 children with him, one of whom was named Joseph. George died in 1667 when Sarah was 57 years old. 4 or 5 years later she married Nicholas Rist. They appear to have had one son, also named Joseph, born in 1680, when she would have been 60 years old. . . Having a child at 60 years old also named Joseph all seems a bit unlikely . . . So while it's not completely clear, she seems to have had at least 10 children and two marriages.

And then, if 10 children wasn't enough, in 1692, at the age of 72, she got into real trouble. She was charged with witchcraft and arrested on May 26 and spent 5 months in jail waiting for trial.

The Salem witchcraft trials concluded with the final hanging of accused witches on September 22, 1692. She was, thankfully, not either tried or hanged and her husband Nicholas bailed her out of jail in late October. She died about 5 years later and left a will. We have some small details of that will.

The story about Sarah's involvement in the Salem witchcraft trials, taken from original documents, follows:

#### **Sarah (nee Clark) Rist Accused of Witchcraft**

Sarah married Nicholas Rist after the death of her husband, George Davis. On May 26, 1692, Sarah was accused of witchcraft by Mary Marshall, Mary Wolcott, and Ann Putnam. Mary Marshall was her step-niece. On May 28th, an arrest warrant was issued for Sarah, and she was arrested on May 31, 1692.

On October 19, 1692 her then husband, Nicholas Rist made a petition to the court for her release. In the petition, he indicates that she has been held at Boston "goal" since her arrest for witchcraft and that in



Jonathan Curwin, }

Captain John Alden, Jr., was the son of John Alden of the Mayflower. He escaped after having been imprisoned for fifteen weeks, and then was returned and cleared by proclamation in the Superior Court of Boston on the last Tuesday in April 1693.

The final hanging of accused witches took place on 22 Sep 1692. After accusation against his wife, Gov. Phips forbade further commitments on the grounds of witchcraft. By 12 Oct 1692 petitions were being received for the release of those who had been accused but not tried [Devil]. Sarah's husband, Nicholas Rist (or Rice), submitted the following petition to the General Court for her release [Eat]:

The humble petition of of Nicholas Rist of Reading she weth, that whereas Sarah Rist, wife of the petitioner, was taken into custody, the first day of June last, and hath since lain in Boston Jail for witchcraft, though in all that time nothing has been made to appear, for which she deserved imprisonment or death. The petitioner has been a husband to the said woman above twenty years, in all which time, he had never reason to accuse her of any impietie or witchcraft; but the contrary, she lived with him as a good, faithful, dutiful wife, and always had respect to the ordinances of God, while her strength remained; and the petitioner on that consideration, is obliged in conscience and justice to use all lawful means for the support and preservation of her life; and it is deplorable, that in old age, the poor decrepid woman should lye under confinement in a stinking jail, when her circumstances rather require a Nurse to attend her. May it therefore please your Honors to take this matter into your present consideration, and direct some speedy method, whereby this ancient and decrepid person may not forever lye in such misery, wherein her life is made more afflictive to her than death. And the petitioner shall, as in duty bound, ever pray.

**Nicholas Rice**

Reading, Oct. 19, 1692

Soon after, Sarah was discharged from prison. Probably she was charged for the costs of her imprisonment, since this was the practice at the time even for those found to be innocent or or pardoned. She died at Reading on 3 May 1698. In her will, dated 20 Sep 1697 and proved in the court at Charlestown on 16 May 1698, Sarah Rist of Reading mentioned husband Nicholas Rist and referred to bequests given to her by former husband George Davis and son Benjamin Davis. She left five shillings to daughter Hannah Boutell [Clark; Middlesex County Probate Vol. 9, pp 398-399]."

[Boston](#) [John Alden](#) [Jonathan Corwin](#) [Mary Walcott](#) [Salem](#) [SalemMassachusetts](#) [Salem](#)  
[witch trials](#) [Sarah Clark](#)



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John, b. 20 July 1660, Reading; d. - 4 Nov. 1660.  
Susannah, b. 11 May 1662, Reading; M- (1) 22 Oct. 1680, John Richardson; (2) Peter Hay.  
George, b. abt 1664, Reading; (no further record)

Sarah's 2nd husband  
was Nicholas Rist

SOURCE: Grover Ancestry

He was married to Sarah CLARK about 1644 in prob Lynn, Essex, Massachusetts. (1722)

547. Sarah CLARK was born about 1620.(1723) She was accused of witchcraft on 1 Jun 1692 in Salem, Essex, Massachusetts. (1724)(1725)

June 1, 1692, Sarah Rist was accused of witchcraft, with Lydia and Sarah Dustin, and imprisoned for five months. In October her husband petitioned court for her release, calling her "aged and decrepit" and saying he had been her husband for the past twenty years. They were later released and not brought to trial.

SOURCE: Bassett-Preston Ancestors

=====  
Sarah Rice  
(See also: Martha Carrier -- Complaint; John Alden -- Mittimus .)

(Warrant for Arrest of Sarah Rice)  
To: To the Constables in Reding

You are in their Majesties names hereby required to apprehend and bring before us Sarah Rice the wife of Nicholas Rice of Reding on Tuesday next being the 31't day of this Instant moneth. at the house of Lt Nathan'l Inger salls at Salem Village aboute ten of the Clock in the forenoon, who stand charged with haveing Committed. sundry acts of Witchcraft on the Bodys of Mary Walcot and Abigail Williams & others, to their great hurt: &c in order to her Examination Relateing to the premises aboves'd faile not Dated Salem May 28'th 1692

P us \*John Hathorne Assis'ts

\*Jonathan. Corwin

(Reverse) In obedience to this warant I have brought the Body of Sarah Rice the wife of Nicolas Rice of Redding to the house of Leut nathanal Inger sons in Salem Viledg the: 31 of this Instant May: 1692

Atest \*John Parker Constable of Redding

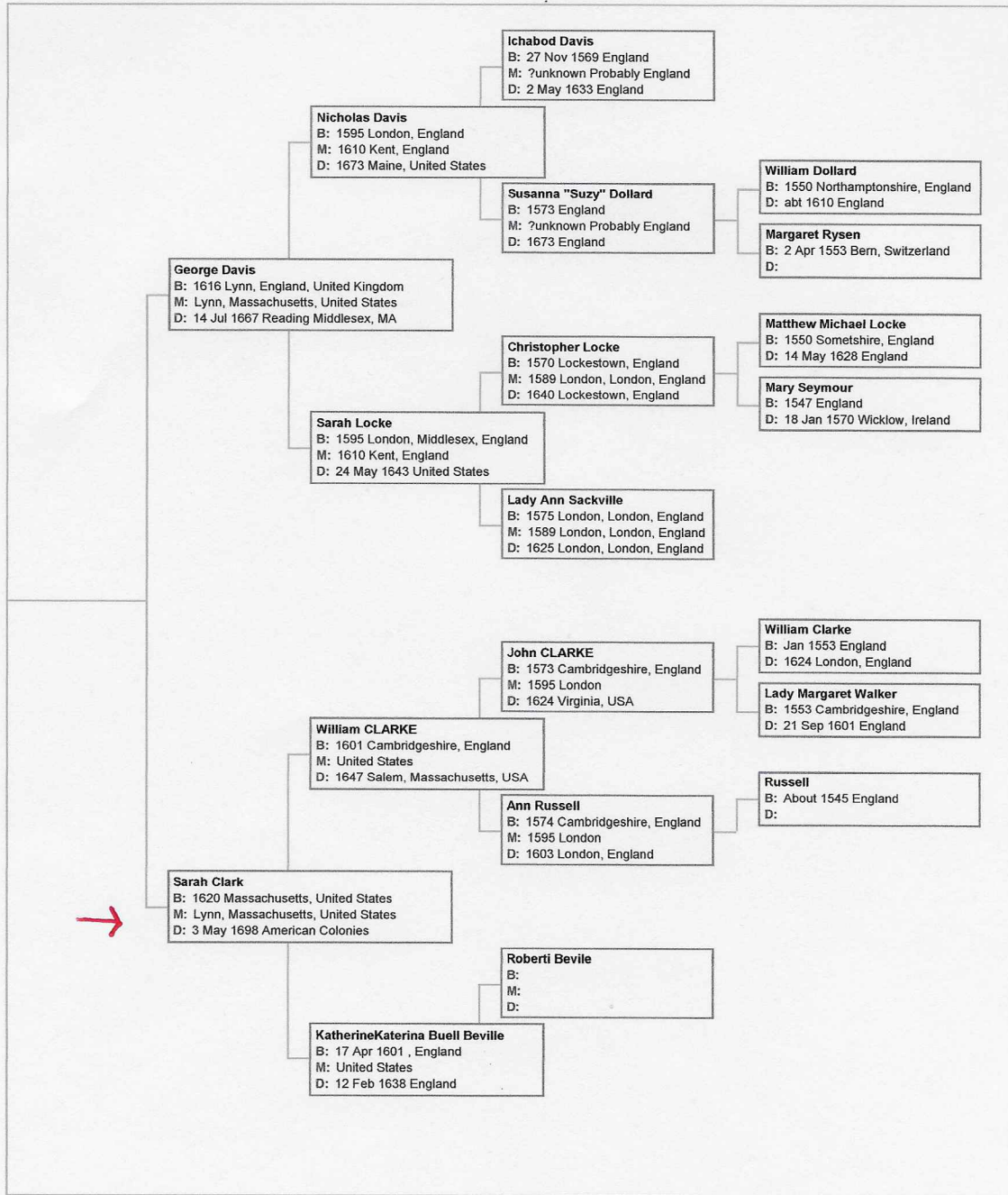
( Essex County Archives, Salem -- Witchcraft Vol. 2 Page 52 )

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(Complaint v. Martha Carrier, Elizabeth Fosdick,



Hannah  
Davis  
1648-  
1719



Ruth  
Boutelle  
1771-  
1820

