

# JOHN AND SARAH ARRIVE AT WATERTOWN 1634-1635

by  
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Who "John the Emigrant" was, and from whence he came, is a subject that has been treated by several genealogists and family history authors. From humble, puritan beginnings his progeny now number in the thousands and are scattered across America. The earliest historians said he and his wife Sarah, sailed from Ipswich, England in the ship "Elizabeth" in 1633 and came first to Watertown, Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> Further research revealed only Sarah Reynolds' name in the list of passengers on the Elizabeth. That she was a Reynolds during passage leaves no doubt about her marital status, but where did her and John marry? And where was John during Sarah's two and half month passage?



Kent and Suffolk coastline 1630. Mercator/Jansson

It is an amazing story of Providence and the skill of English seamen that dozens of Atlantic ocean passages were made in little wooden ships bringing our Puritan ancestors to America almost without mishap in the 1630's.

There were perhaps 30,000 emigrants from England to New England before the English Civil War in 1642. These folks were mainly from the English middle-class, self-reliant and motivated to find a place where they might live, worship, and raise their families without government harassment. **This movement of people is called the Great Migration.**

The ship at right is the *Norske Lowe*, a Dutch ship launched in 1643. She was 162 feet long from the bowsprit, displaced over a thousand tons, and could carry a max of 402 people. This ship would have been somewhat similar to the ships in Winthrop's fleet that delivered the early day puritans including our ancestors. The Pilgrim ship, the *Mayflower* was only 30 meters long and 10 meters wide at its maximum point. Below decks 100 people were crowded together with icy water leaking in everywhere. Since the voyagers had to live on dry meat and biscuits, a number of them suffered from scurvy at the end of the two month voyage.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Connecticut, 1600s-1800s Local Families and Histories, New England Families, Vol. IV, Genealogies and Memorials, Page 1937. Also, Vol. II, Surnames, R-S, Page 539.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.winthropsociety.org/ships.php>

John (1<sup>st</sup>) and Sarah's first child was named Elizabeth but we have no record of her birth. Some have supposed that she could have been born during passage and that she was named after the ship that brought her family to the new country but that seems a little questionable considering the discomfort of ship travel in that time; and it was said the passengers were crowded below deck and had to subsist on dried meat and biscuits—hardly an experience you would want to name your child for. Sarah, age twenty, signed her oath at Ipswich.<sup>3</sup> The voyage is known to have begun 30 April 1634 but the date of record was 12 November 1634.<sup>4</sup>

Of the 101 listed passengers Sarah was number 36. Master William Andrewes was in charge. The reason John does not show on the ship's passenger list is unknown but some speculation has been offered by those who have performed much work on our line. Dr. Glenn Reynolds said, "There is some speculation that he was a seaman, crew or officer, and perchance one of the Captains of one of the Winthrop fleet ships and that he made several trips back and forth to England, while at Watertown."<sup>5</sup> This conjecture would be consistent with the authors of the well known and well respected work, John and Sarah Reynolds of Watertown, who postulate that John "The Emigrant" was with part of the group that accompanied Sir Richard Saltonstall and John Winthrop. Upon arrival, part of this contingent remained in Boston; the remainder pushed on with Saltonstall as the vanguard that founded Watertown.<sup>6</sup>



#### **SIR RICHARD'S LANDING**

Here At The River's Edge  
On the North Bank of the Charles River  
The Settlers Of Watertown  
Led By Sir Richard Saltonstall  
Landed July 30, 1630

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<sup>3</sup> The tyrannical Archbishop William Laud, early in 1634, made it mandatory for all persons immigrating to New England to swear their allegiance to Church and King before their departure. Most of the lists were prepared at the customs house at the English port where the passengers were embarking. This record of the passengers' oaths usually gives the place where they were sworn, which was in most cases the emigrant's home town. Age and occupation of the passengers is also frequently stated

<http://www.winthropsociety.org/ships.php#passname>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.winthropsociety.org/ships.php>.

<sup>5</sup> Reynolds, Glenn G. M.D. *ibid.* Note: Dr. Reynolds has written that John (1<sup>st</sup>) was born in Boxford, Suffolk, England and there married Sarah Cheserton. He offers no authority but I know he has personally visited there.

<sup>6</sup> Excerpted from H. Minot Pitman, *Ancestry of Wm. Springer Mitchell* (n.p., 1967), 294-295.



The view above is a photo taken near Watertown that was published on a Geocaching entry (public domain).

**Sir Richard Saltonstall**

An adventurer and Assistant of the Massachusetts Bay Company.

Within a month of founding Watertown, Sir Richard Saltonstall, together with his group of Pilgrims or Separatists, "gathered" a church under Phillips as pastor. This took place on August 27, 1630. Unfortunately, the records describing the settlement of Watertown are not in existence.<sup>7</sup>

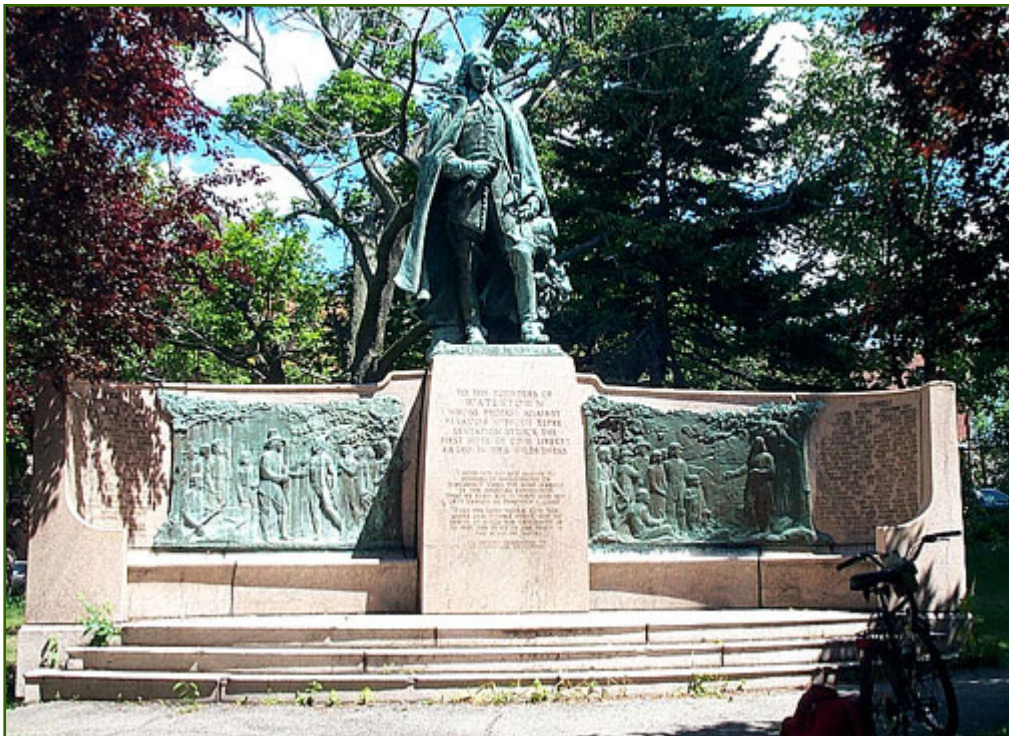
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<sup>7</sup> Reynolds, Cuyler, *Genealogical and Family History of Southern New York and the Hudson River Valley*, Volume I, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1914, page 392.



However, on page 4 of the earliest book of records in existence is the first entry in which the names of colonists are mentioned: "*Nov. 14, 1635—agreed that Daniel Patrick, Brian Pemberton, Richard Bernard, Ephraim Child, Abraham Browne, Charles Chaddock and John Reynolds shall divide to every man his Property and Meddow and upland that is plowable and the rest to be common.*"<sup>8</sup>

John (1<sup>st</sup>)'s name is noted on the monument to the original settlers of Watertown, Massachusetts, to have arrived in 1630 with Governor Saltonstall. His name is included with the original 60 other settlers listed on that monument.<sup>9</sup> One might assume that his name appears there because of his known presence on the occasion mentioned in the earliest existing records rather than during the summer of 1630. The date of Sarah's passage on the Elizabeth is certain. What is not known but entirely possible is that John, as an employ of the Winchester Fleet, arrived temporarily prior to 1633-34, procured land at Watertown and then returned to England for Sarah. This possibility would be consistent with the fact that he is not listed on the ship's passenger ledger. Evidently crewmen were not.



#### **Founders' Monument, Watertown, Massachusetts**

Included on this monument is also the name of Thomas Doggett, a progenitor of Elizabeth Daggett, who married Jeremiah Reynolds about 1772.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Reynolds, Glenn G., M.D., *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.