

# The Life and Times of John Endecott (1588-1665)

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John Endecott, (1588-1665), regarded as one of the Fathers of New England<sup>1</sup>, was also the longest serving Governor of Massachusetts. He served a total of 16 years, including most of the last 15 years of his life. When not serving as governor, he was involved in other elected and appointed positions from 1628-1665—except for the single year of 1634.

For the general reader to be able to understand John Endecott, the first step is to understand his times. King Henry VIII split the English Church away from the Roman Catholic Church in 1533 and, through the Act of Supremacy, became the head of the Church of England the following year.<sup>2</sup> This was the beginning of a conflict between religions, kings, and queens that would continue for the next 150 years. In about 1560, the Puritans emerged. These were persons in the Church of England who sought a more thorough reformation within the church than had been provided under Queen Elizabeth I and her Tudor predecessors. They were not united and included Anglicans, Separatists, and Congregationalists.<sup>3</sup>

In 1584, the Separatist Robert Brown published his "[Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Any](#)," This will become the basis for the society established in the Massachusetts Bay Colony some 48 years later.<sup>4</sup> In 1590, Archbishop Whitgift arrested scores of nonconformist Puritans and Presbyterians and charged them with sedition.<sup>5</sup> This was followed with the arrests of Nonconformists who denied the royal supremacy and worshipped in independent congregations. A total of nine of them were hanged.<sup>6</sup> Finally, at the Hampton Court Conference convened by King James I in 1604, the pleas of the Presbyterians were all rejected and Archbishop William Laud began persecutions of the Puritans.<sup>7</sup> This was the nature of the world as John Endecott experienced it in the early seventeenth century and led to his growing belief that the Puritans needed to leave England and find a place where they could establish a society that more closely conformed to Puritan beliefs and practices. That would be the Massachusetts Bay Colony. While his defense of Puritan society may have later become overzealous, there is little doubt that what he experienced in England from childhood on led him to his hatred for the King's government and the Church of England.

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<sup>1</sup> Jacob B. Moore. [Memoirs of American Governors](#). New York: Gates and Stedman. 136 Nassau Street. 1846. 362.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Doran. [The Tudor Chronicles 1485-1503](#). New York, NY: Metro Books, 2008, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 18. *Puritanism*. London: William Benton, Publisher. 1967. 879.

<sup>4</sup> John C.L. Giessler. [A Text Book of Church History. Volume IV. The Reformation and Its Results, 1517-1648](#). New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers. 340.

<sup>5</sup> Doran. *The Tudor Chronicles*. 370.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 374-375.

<sup>7</sup> Jenkins. [A Short History of England](#). 166-168.

## Ancestral History of the Endecott Family

Over the first two decades of the 21st Century, a great deal of new information regarding the family of John Endecott has been discovered that overturns much of what was assumed to be true about his early life. These discoveries provide new insights into his life and times. They include the Church Wardens' Accounts of St. Michael's Church in Chagford, 1480-1600; an in-depth research effort into the search of family records held by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; a new interpretation of the work of Sir Roper Lethbridge, and on-the-ground research in the County of Devon spread over the period 1980 to 2013.

John Endecott, (1490-1562), the great-great-grandfather of Governor John Endecott (1588-1665), came to Chagford from his father's home in South Tawton and was living as a tenant with his wife at Throston (Drewston Manor) by 1515.<sup>8</sup> All five of his children were born there. In his early years he became involved with the tin mining industry. In 1523, he served as a church warden alongside John Yoldon, the owner of Middlecott Manor which had its own tin works.<sup>9</sup> In 1528, John Endecott purchased Middlecott from John Yoldon. Another church warden in 1526 was William Bennett, who owned Drewston Manor.<sup>10</sup> He sold it to John Endecott in 1630, and John gave it to his eldest son, Henry Endecott (1515-1585). John then moved to Middlecott Manor. Henry Endecott was the great-grandfather of Governor John Endecott.<sup>11</sup>

By 1532, John Endecott (1490-1562) had achieved status and wealth in Chagford. In that year, he was serving as a Jurate for the Chagford Stannary at the Great Court held at Crockern Tor on 28 October 1532 and again on 25 September 1533.<sup>12</sup> The Stannary of Chagford had been established by King Edward I (1239-1307) in 1305 along with two other towns. They were to receive and process tin as a monopoly and were shown exceptional favor through the establishment of Stannary Courts with jurisdiction over the civil and legal affairs of those involved in the mining operations. They also had membership in the Stannary Parliament. The mayor of each Stannary Town chose 24 Jurates, who served as legislators and judicial magistrates at the Great Court. Membership came from miners, tin workers, and those with financial interests in the tin industry.<sup>13</sup>

John Endecott also continued to buy lands and properties in the Chagford area. Sir Thomas Denys, Knight and Kings Councilor, sold John all of his lands in Boadon, Little Cranbrook, Northwest Cranbrook, Cranbrook Downs, and Leigh Parkes in Morton Hampstead.<sup>14</sup>

John Endecott continued to live at Middlecott Manor for the remainder of his life. When he died in 1562, he passed along a great fortune to his eldest son, Henry Endecott.

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<sup>8</sup> Francis Mardon Osborne. *The Church Wardens' Accounts of St. Michael's Church, Chagford, 1480-1600*. Printed by Redwood Burn Limited. Trowbridge. 1979. 44.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 70.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 78.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 82.

<sup>12</sup> Anonymous. *All the Statutes of the Stannary*. London. William Serer. 1562. (Only known copy at Huntington Library, San Martino, California. Information provided by Tom Greeves of Devon to David Diamond and Teddy Sanford in 2014.

<sup>13</sup> G.R. Lewis, "[The Stannary. A Study of the Medieval Tin Miners of Cornwall and Devon.](#)" 1908.

<sup>14</sup> M.A. Thomas. *Morton Hampstead Enrolled Deed Number 102 dated 20 June 1540 (32 Henry VIII)*. Letter dated 5 October 1979 from M.A. Thomas to D.L. Endicott.

Henry Endecott (1515-1585) was the great-grandfather of Governor John Endecott. While his father had moved to Middlecott Manor in 1530 after buying Drewston Manor for Henry, there was no move by Henry from Drewston for the next 34 years. He first appeared on the scene in Chagford in 1626 when he served as a Church Warden for a single day during the feast day of St. Crispus and St. Crispianus.<sup>15</sup> He was 11 years old at the time.

During his life, Henry Endecott continued to maintain the wealth of the family and improve their social status even as commoners. He married the first time in about 1540, wife's name unknown, and there were three boys and two girls that came from this marriage. After the death of his first wife, he married Margery Hals. There were no more children from this marriage.

The eldest daughter of Henry Endecott was named Katherine, and she had married John Downe who died. Then she married Edward Knapman, son of William Knapman and the fourth grandson of William Knapman of Throwleigh (c. 1500-1563).<sup>16</sup> Edward Knapman had an older brother, Alexander Knapman (1545-1618), who married Anna, the daughter of Sir John Whiddon (1508-1576), Knight of Throwleigh.<sup>17</sup> The daughter of Alexander and Anna, Alice Knapman, married Robert Lethbridge of Nymet Tracy. These four families, Whiddon, Endecott, Knapman, and Lethbridge owned most of the tin-mining land in the Stannary of Chagford and were related by marriages. The Endecott family rose from its more humble social status and became regular associates of the local power elite.

In 1564, the eldest son of Henry Endecott, John Endecott (1541-1635) married Johanna (c. 1543-1637) in Chagford. As a wedding gift, Henry presented his son with Drewston Manor and moved to the family estate at Middlecott Manor. When Henry died in 1585, John inherited Middlecott Manor as well as the large tin mining properties in the area including the Cranbrook properties purchased by his grandfather. John Endecott was the Grandfather of Governor John Endecott.

John Endecott (1541-1630) and others in his family remained active in the affairs of St. Michael's Church in Chagford. In 1591, he was one of the head wardens, along with James Vogwil, as receivers of the charitable gifts for the poor and for the repairing and maintaining of the parish church. Late in the year, on 19 December, he and Vogwil "granted unto Barnabe Hore the 32nd part of a certain tinwork called Tawemarshe from the date hereof until the end and term that shall rise upon the 32nd part."<sup>18</sup> John continued to serve the church for the remainder of the century and was a warden in 1593, 1594, 1597, and 1598.<sup>19</sup> It is probable that John Endecott continued serving the church well into the next century since he lived until 1635 but the accounts for those years no longer exist.

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<sup>15</sup> Osborne. [\*The Church Wardens' Accounts of St. Michael's Church, Chagford, 1480-1600\*](#), p. 88.

<sup>16</sup> David Knapman. [\*An Account of All Known Instances of Families and Individuals Named Knapman in the 1840s and Their Origins\*](#). Compiled in May 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Sir Roper Lethbridge. [\*Hands Across the Sea: The Devonshire Ancestry and Early Homes of the Family of John Endecott, Governor of Massachusetts Bay, 1629\*](#). W.J. Southwood & Co. Catherine Street, Exeter. 1912. 18-19.

<sup>18</sup> Osborne. [\*The Church Wardens' Accounts of St. Michael's Church, Chagford, 1480-1600\*](#). 253,

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 260-267.

John Endecott (1541-1635) had a younger brother named William Endecott (1543-1630) who was also active in the church. He was a warden in 1570<sup>20</sup> and a Head Warden in 1592.<sup>21</sup> William will play a major role in the life of his nephew, Thomas Endecott (1566-1621), the eldest son of his older brother John Endecott. He will also be an important figure in the life of his great nephew, the future Governor John Endecott.

When John Endecott (1541-1635) married Johanna (1542-1637) in 1564, they moved into Drewston Manor, where all five of their children were born. The first child was Thomas Endecott (1566-1621) followed by Robert, William, Richard, and Wilmott.<sup>22</sup> As the children grew up, they moved from their father's residence at Drewston. Thomas Endecott apparently moved into Middlecott Manor which was also the home of their father's younger brother William.

Thomas and his unnamed wife married in 1587, and she soon was pregnant. Against all of the stories and legends surrounding the mother of the future Governor John Endecott, she died in childbirth or shortly thereafter. A list of deaths in Chagford during 1588 include the following entry, "Paid for the shroud for Thomas Endecott's wife 3 shillings 4 pence."<sup>23</sup>

During this same period, William Endecott (1543-1630), the uncle of Thomas Endecott (1566-1621), had just married Anne Ellis (d. 1637). They lived at Middlecott Manor, and Anne possibly was called on to assist in the delivery of the future Governor. At this point it would seem natural for Anne to have become a surrogate mother to raise the baby. Within two years, William and Anne had children of their own. Jane Endecott was born in 1590 and Henry Endecott was born in 1591.<sup>24</sup> It appears that Thomas Endecott also remained at Middlecott Manor for a number of years before starting another family. The three children might have grown up together in this extended family, and received a good education. They could read and write in English and they could speak French as well.<sup>25</sup>

## John Endecott's Life in England:

After growing up together at Middlecott Manor, John Endecott (1588-1665) and his two cousins went their own way. His cousin Jane Endecott (1590) married John Currie on 23 September 1611,<sup>26</sup> while cousin Henry Endecott (1591-1655) met and married a girl named Helmet in Stoke-in-Teignhead in 1611.<sup>27</sup> This would have been a major family event and John Endecott, along with his father, Thomas Endecott, would certainly have been in

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 218.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 257.

<sup>22</sup> Sir Roper Lethbridge. *Hands Across the Sea: The Devonshire Ancestry and Early Homes of the Family of John Endecott, Governor of Massachusetts Bay, 1629*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>23</sup> Osborne. *The Church Wardens' Accounts of St. Michael's Church, Chagford, 1480-1600*, p. 247.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Endecott. *English Births and Christenings 1538-1975*. Christened at St. John's Parish Church, North Bovey, Devon, Aug 1591. (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JWXB-YHC>).

<sup>25</sup> *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Volume XXXVI. Lower Canada, Abernaki's, 1650-1651*. Cleveland. 1899. 94-95. In 1651, Governor John Endecott received a visit by a Jesuit priest named Gabriel Druillette who was touring New England. In his 9 January 1651 report he says, "I went to Salem to converse with Sir Indecott who speaks and understands French well."

<sup>26</sup> Donald L. Endicott. *The Early Family of Governor John Endecott*. Privately Printed. Tucson, Arizona. 1981. Appendix A-2.

<sup>27</sup> Endicott. *The Early Life and Family of Governor John Endecott*. p. 6.

attendance. A local well-to-do widow, Alice Blackaller Andrew (1573-1643), was probably also in attendance given the small number of people living there.<sup>28</sup> This was probably when she and Thomas Endecott met for the first time. They found each other agreeable.

On 17 July 1612, Thomas Endecott married Alice Blackaller Andrew at St. Andrews Church in Stoke-in Teignhead.<sup>29</sup> At the time of her second marriage at St. Andrews, Alice was the mother of seven children including her adopted son, Gregory Andrew.<sup>30</sup> Thomas Endecott was the father at that time of only one child, the future Governor John Endecott. Between 1613 and 1616, Thomas and Alice had two more children. They were Margaret Endecott (1613-1637)<sup>31</sup> and a second John Endecott (1616-1683).<sup>32</sup> They were half-sister and half-brother to the future Governor, John Endecott.

Meantime, John Endecott was now a mature man and, at some point, he had taken up the Puritan cause, a dangerous step to take at the time due to the ongoing persecutions of Puritans. In 1615, Reverend Samuel Skelton, an ardent Puritan, became the curate in Sempringham, Lincolnshire, and soon after was the spiritual advisor to John Endecott who said that he received “much good” from his ministry and considered Skelton his spiritual father.<sup>33</sup>

Two years later, on 2 November 1617, John Endecott was one of five men who witnessed and signed the sealing and delivery of a deed between Sir Edward Coke, Chief Justice of the King’s Bench, and Sir John Villiers, brother of the favorite of King James I, which settled the marriage for Sir Edward’s daughter, Francis Coke and Sir John.<sup>34</sup> Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634) is considered to be the greatest jurist of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. He later entered Parliament and was instrumental in passage of the Petition of Rights, one of the three crucial legal documents of England. He also wrote the statute of Monopolies which

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<sup>28</sup> Mark Stoye. *Loyalty and Locality: Popular allegiance in Devon during the English Civil War*. Appendix. Adult Male Population in 1642. University of Exeter Press. 1994. On page 305, the adult male population of Stoke-in-Teignhead is shown as 159.

<sup>29</sup> Marriage of Thomas Endecott and Alice Blackaller Andrew. English Marriages, 1538-1973, index, Family Search (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/N2HQ-Hw5>).

<sup>30</sup> Christening of Gregory Andrew. English Births and Christenings 1538-1975, index, Family Search (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/IWFF-52>).

<sup>31</sup> Christening of Margaret Endecott. English Births and Christenings 1538-1975, index, Family Search (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/KWFF-5JB>).

<sup>32</sup> Christening of John Endecott. English Births and Christenings 1538-1975, index, Family Search (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/NSHS--CXV>). For those troubled by the fact that Thomas Endecott had two sons named John by different wives, there are many examples in England of a man having two sons with the same name but with different mothers. Consider the following: Thomas Southcott of Bovey Tracy (c. 1528-1600) was a Member of Parliament and sometimes Devonshire Sheriff and piracy commissioner. In his will of October 1593, he divided his principal lands. His eldest son, George Southcott, inherited the estates of Hennock and Bovey Tracy. This George was the son of Thomas Southcott and his second wife, Susan Kirkham. There was another George Southcott who was the son of Thomas Southcott and his third wife, Elizabeth Fitz Williams. One more point. The eldest George Southcott married and had a son named Thomas Southcott who later would own Mohun Ottery in eastern Devonshire. He, along with the future governor, John Endecott, were two of the six purchasers of the patent for the territory of the Massachusetts Bay.

<sup>33</sup> Reverend Samuel Skelton. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel\\_Skelton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Skelton)).

<sup>34</sup> Lawrence Shaw Mayo. *John Endecott, a Biography*. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. 1936. 4-5.

restricted the King to grant patents. This is considered one of the first actions in the conflict between King and Parliament that led later to the English Civil War.<sup>35</sup> John Endecott, at the young age of 29, was part of a very important and influential group.

Meanwhile, John Endecott's father, Thomas Endecott (1566-1621), was well settled and living with his wife and children in the village of Rocombe Cadhughe just outside of Stoke-in-Teignhead. In 1618, his wife, Alice Blackaller and Andrew Endecott renewed leases on two houses, outbuildings, meadows, and nine parcels of land that was part of her late husband's estate.<sup>36</sup> While this was evidently sufficient to their needs, Thomas appears to have had little of his own. Even though he was the first heir apparent to the Endecott fortune, his father, John Endecott (1541-1635), was still the head of the family and living at Drewston Manor.

The year 1621 was a momentous one for John Endecott (1588-1665) and the Endecott family. First, on the 26th of November, John Endecott married Jane Francis at the parish church in Bridford, barely 10 miles from Chagford.<sup>37</sup> This happy occasion was soon overshadowed, however, by the death of his father, Thomas Endecott (1566-1621) in Stoke-in-Teignhead. He was only 55 years old.<sup>38</sup> Alice Blackaller Andrew Endecott brought her husband's body back to Chagford where he was buried. She then returned to Stoke-in-Teignhead. The half-sister of the future Governor, Margaret Endecott (1613-1637), was just eight years old and her brother, John Endecott (1616-1683), was only five. The future Governor John Endecott became the heir to the fortunes of the Endecott family, but his grandfather, John Endecott (1541-1635) was still alive.

Over the next seven years, a number of important events occurred that resulted in John Endecott leading the Puritans out of England. First, the Plantation at Cape Anne, the Dorchester Company, was established in 1624 in New England, but was not an economic success. The overseer of this venture was Thomas Gardner. He was a nephew of Reverend John White.<sup>39</sup> In 1627, Roger Cognant and his small band of "Old Planters" move to Naumkeag in the Massachusetts Bay.<sup>40</sup>

About this same time, John Endecott would have been looking for the funds needed to purchase a share of the Massachusetts Bay. He needed look no further than his grandfather. Since the work by Sir Roper Lethbridge regarding the ancestry of Governor John Endecott in the early 20th Century, the story has circulated that John Endecott, (1541-1635), the grandfather, was at odds with John Endecott, (1588-1665), the grandson and had nearly disinherited him in his will. The passage in Lethbridge says, " – including 40 shillings to John, the eldest son and heir of his deceased eldest son, Thomas, who was thus practically

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<sup>35</sup> Catherine Drinker Brown. *The Lion and the Throne – The Life and Times of Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634)*. Little, Brown, and company. 1957.

<sup>36</sup> Alice Endecott lease. Devon Archival Center, Exeter, DRO Z12/39/13. The property descriptions are contained in the parcels clause of the lease transcribed on 25 April 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Marriage of John Endecott and Jane Francis. English Marriages, 1538-1973, index, Family Search (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/M9.1.1.N2V2-4WP>). A detailed search of all 45 administrative divisions of England revealed no other instance of a John Endecott marriage between 1606 and 1628 and the one that did occur was very near his family homes at Drewston and Middlecott (10-12 miles).

<sup>38</sup> Lethbridge. *The Devonshire Ancestry of Governor John Endecott*. 20.

<sup>39</sup> Mayo. *John Endecott, a Biography*. 14.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 11.

disinherited, and who subsequently disputed the will in Chancery.”<sup>41</sup> None of this is true. The John Endecott who received 40 shillings was the half-brother of Governor John Endecott. He was not in the line of succession, and most of the estate of the grandfather went to Governor John’s younger brothers including Robert, William, and Richard.<sup>42</sup> Why was the future Governor not mentioned at all? He likely received the funds needed to purchase a sixth share of the Massachusetts Bay from his grandfather; needed nothing else for his inheritance; and thus was removed from the will. While there is no proof that can ever prove this theory of events, it appears most likely given what is now known about the family relationships.

In regard to the suit filed in 1636 against the estate of the grandfather John Endecott (1541-1635) by John Endecott, the grandson, there is no question that the John Endecott (1616-1683) who made the filing was the younger half-brother of the Governor who describes himself as John Endecott, yeoman, of Stoke-in-Teignhead. The Governor had left England eight years before the filing and was heavily engaged in the religious, political, and military affairs of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Governor would have never identified himself as a yeoman (farmer) and he never lived at his father’s home in Stoke-in-Teignhead. The most important result of the filing was that the younger John Endecott (1616-1683) proved his lineage back to his Great-Great grandfather, John Endecott (1490-1562). In so doing, he also proved the lineage of his older half-brother, Governor John Endecott.<sup>43</sup>

On 19 March 1628, John Endecott, Sir Henry Roswell, Sir John Young, Thomas Southcott, John Humphrey, and Simon Whetcomb, six religiously motivated persons, representing “The New England Company,” purchased a patent for the territory of Massachusetts Bay from a corporation styled the “Plymouth Council for New England.” John Endecott was selected as a “fit instrument to begin the wilderness work,” and granted full powers to take charge of the plantation at Naumkeag. His new life in America was about to begin.<sup>44</sup>

## John Endecott Finds the Massachusetts Bay Colony

On 20 June 1628, Captain John Endecott;<sup>45</sup> his wife Jane Francis; and thirty settlers, “The New Planters,” boarded the Abigail in Weymouth harbor, and said goodbye to England for the last time. They sailed westward for two months and sixteen days, and landed at a location the Indians called Naumkeag, later changed to Salem, in the Massachusetts Bay on 6 September 1628.

“On making known to the planters who had preceded him that he and his associate patentees had purchased all the property and privileges of the Dorchester partners, both at Naumkeag and Cape Anne, much discontent arose. Endecott, and his Puritan Council viewed with no favorable eye the raising of tobacco, believing such a production, except for medicinal purposes, injurious to both the health and morals, while they insisted on

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<sup>41</sup> Lethbridge. *The Devonshire Ancestry of Governor John Endecott*. 22.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 21-22.

<sup>43</sup> LTC Teddy H. Sanford, Jr. *Out of the Mist of Times Past*. Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Privately Printed. Expressions Full Service Printing and Duplicating. Spring 2015. 22-23.

<sup>44</sup> Mayo. *John Endecott, a Biography*. 7-12.

<sup>45</sup> In many historical documents, John Endecott is often referred to as “Captain,” but while there has been conjecture about where he received the title, the proof remains to be seen.

abolishing the use of the Book of Common Prayer. The wise enactments of the company's court in London did much toward allaying these and similar disputes."<sup>46</sup>

To protect themselves against the Indians, a military company was organized by the settlers and John Endecott was placed in command. His attention was next called to the illegal trading and sinful ways of the settlers at Mount Wollaston, or Merry Mount, now Quincy. He personally conducted an expedition to the site and "rebuked the inhabitants for their profaneness", and admonished them. In the purifying spirit of authority, he then cut down the maypole on which Thomas Morton, their leader, had published his satires on the Puritans, while his followers made merry around it in the carousals from which they sold arms and ammunition to the Indians in order to get their supplies." He also changed the name of the settlement to Mount Dagon.<sup>47</sup>

Simultaneously during 1629, the purchasers of the patent to the Massachusetts Bay still in England, along with others such as John Winthrop, came together to create the Cambridge Agreement of 26 August 1629. This agreement laid out the plan for the mass migrations of Puritans out of England to the Massachusetts Bay. They also provided a copy of a charter to be forwarded to John Endecott that defined the establishment of a government in the Massachusetts Bay and made him Governor in the Massachusetts Bay Colony while Mathew Craddock was named the company's Governor in London.<sup>48</sup> John Endecott's deputy governor was Roger Ludlow who becomes his brother-in-law in the year ahead.

On 4 May 1629, the Reverend Samuel Skelton answering a request from Governor Endecott, left England along with the Reverend Francis Higginson, and journeyed to Naumkeag in the Massachusetts Bay. The six ships in this voyage were known as the Higginson Fleet. Along with them on the ship, George Bonaventure, was Samuel Sharp who brought a copy of the charter. On the 6th of August, Reverend Skelton was installed as the first pastor of what would become the First Church of Salem in the years ahead.<sup>49</sup>

The winter of 1629-1630 was particularly brutal and many of those living in Salem died. Among those was Jane Francis, wife of Governor John Endecott. For nearly two centuries, scholars have mistakenly identified the first wife of the governor as being Anne Gower. This error was first recorded in Charles M. Endicott's "Memoir of John Endecott (1847)," and appeared that same year in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Volume I, 1847.<sup>50</sup> In fact, Anne Gower did marry a John Endecott, but it was Dr. John Endecott (1657-1695), the oldest grandson of the Governor. They were married in London at St. Olave Church on 20 August 1688, 23 years after the death of the Governor.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Alexander Young. [\*Chronicles of the First Planters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, 1623-1686. The Company's Second Letter of Instructions to Endecott and his Council.\*](#) Baltimore. The Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc. 172-173.

<sup>47</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne. [\*Twice Told Tales. The May-Pole of Merry Mount.\*](#) Boston. American Stationers Company. 1837. 78.

<sup>48</sup> Mayo. *John Endecott, a Biography.* 22.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid. 22.

<sup>50</sup> LTC Teddy H. Sanford, Jr and LTC Gordon S. Harmon. *Family Legends and the Search for Anne Gower.* The Essex Genealogist, Volume 34, No. 2 May 2014. 95-96.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 97.



Governor John Endecott continued to exercise authority over the colony until 12 June 1630 when John Winthrop arrived with the Royal charter by which government of the colony was entirely transferred to New England. He became Governor and John Endecott, who was chosen one of his council of assistants, gave a cordial welcome to the new governor, and a friendship began which continues while they both lived.<sup>52</sup>

## A New Life with a New Wife

One of the passengers aboard the ship *Mary* and John in 1630 was a widow named Elizabeth Cogan Gibson (1607-1676). She was the eldest daughter of Philobert Cogan and his wife Ann Marshall. One of Elizabeth's younger sisters, Mary Cogan, was the wife of Roger Ludlow who was Governor Endecott's deputy. Elizabeth was soon introduced to Governor Endecott and they were married by Reverend Skelton on 17 August 1630.<sup>53</sup> They had two sons. The first son was John Endecott (1632-1667). John married Elizabeth Houchin on 9 November 1653. The couple had no children. The second son was Zerubbabel Endecott (1635-1684). He was a doctor and married Mary Smith in 1654. They had ten children.<sup>54</sup>

On 3 July 1632, the Court of Assistants granted John Endecott 300 acres of land situated between and three miles to the North of the main settlement at Salem. This was afterwards known as the Orchard Farm.<sup>55</sup> This is also possibly the year that John planted a pear tree on the property that continues to live into the 21st Century and is the oldest cultivated fruit tree in North America.<sup>56</sup>

In 1634, John Endecott was nominated to be one of the seven military commissioners for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In September, a rumor reached the colony that the King was demanding the charter in an attempt to force them to celebrate the ceremonies of the Church of England. Endecott, a staunch Puritan, was moved by the rumor, and, inflamed by the fiery eloquence of Roger Williams, publicly cut out the Cross of St. George from the colony banner with his sword. He stated that the cross in the banner "—savored popery."<sup>57</sup> Given the deteriorating conditions between Puritans and the Crown in England, the colony and Winthrop were not in a position to ignore the act, and brought action in the General Court, the colony's legislature, against Endecott where he was admonished and denied public office for one year. Endecott made his apologies that same day and retired from service for a year.<sup>58</sup> Two years later, Endecott's removal of the cross from the flag was vindicated. Many of the militia had refused to serve under the flag, and the Military Commission finally ordered that the cross be left out.

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<sup>52</sup> John Winthrop. [\*Winthrop's Journal 1630-1649, Volume I\*](#). New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1908. 71.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 71.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Moses Endicott. *The Endecott Family*. New England Historical Genealogical Register. Volume I. Reverend William Cogswell, Editor. Samuel G. Drake. Publisher. 1847. 335.

<sup>55</sup> Nathaniel B. Shurtleff. Editor. [\*Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, 1628-1686\*](#). Volume I. Boston. 1853-1854. 97.

<sup>56</sup> The Endecott pear tree probably came from England aboard the *Arabella* in June 1630. See Joseph D. Postman's article *The Endecott Pear Tree: The Oldest Living Fruit Tree in North America*. National Clonal Germplasm Repository – Corvallis, Oregon. Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Retrieved 2008-08-08.

<sup>57</sup> Mayo. *John Endecott, a Biography*. 84-85.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 83.

## First Major Conflict with Native Americans:

In 1636, the first major conflict between the new colonists and a Native American tribe occurred. The hostilities were precipitated by the killing of a trader, John Oldham. Governor Henry Vane called on John Endecott in August to lead a 90-man force to seek justice from the Pequot tribe. He was assisted by Captain John Underhill who was a professional soldier who had arrived with Governor John Winthrop in 1630. He had been a Puritan exile in the Netherlands as a child and had served as a cadet in service to Prince William, the Prince of Orange.<sup>59</sup>

John Endecott and his men proceeded to Block Island where they spent two days destroying villages and claiming that fourteen Indians were killed. The force then marched to Saybrook, a settlement at the mouth of the Connecticut River, and took its militia with them before attacking a Pequot village at the mouth of the Thames River. The Indians escaped but their village and food stores were either destroyed or confiscated. With this accomplished, John Endecott returned with his force to Boston while the Saybrook militia under Lion Gardner were left to remove the Pequot crops. The Pequot reformed and attacked. Under great pressure, the Saybrook militia was able to retire. John Endecott played no further fighting role in the war which ended with the Treaty of Hartford in 1638. The surviving Pequot members were dispersed among the other tribes.<sup>60</sup>

To better pursue the war, the militia in Massachusetts was organized into three regiments on 13 December 1636. The South Regiment was commanded by Colonel John Winthrop, Sr. with the assistance of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Dudley. The North Regiment was commanded by Colonel John Haynes and his deputy was Lieutenant Colonel Roger Harlakener. Colonel John Endecott was commander of the East Regiment with the assistance of Lieutenant Colonel John Winthrop Jr. In 1644, during the second term of John Endecott as governor, the militia was reorganized once again. The title of "Colonel" was abolished and the regimental commanders became "Majors". The chief military officer in the colony was given the title of "Sergeant Major General" and Thomas Dudley became the first "Sergeant Major General of Massachusetts." This old title was soon modified to the modern form of "Major General."<sup>61</sup>

On the 6th of June, 1639, John Endecott was granted 500 acres by the General Court.<sup>62</sup> Later that year, the Court granted an additional 550 acres upon the Ipswich River.<sup>63</sup> This is the land where he began to mine for copper in 1648 at a place called Blind Hole and which later became the Topsfield Copper Mine. It was the first copper mine operated by Europeans in North America but was never a great success financially.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Wikipedia. *Captain John Underhill*. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain\\_John\\_Underhill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_John_Underhill)).

<sup>60</sup> LTC Gordon S. Harmon. *Endecott-Endicott Family History*. 2002. ([https://beatll.barnard.columbia.edu/texts/gardeners\\_narrative.htm](https://beatll.barnard.columbia.edu/texts/gardeners_narrative.htm)) 91.

<sup>61</sup> LTC Teddy H. Sanford, Jr. *The Military History of John Endecott, First Governor of the Massachusetts Bay and Major General of Massachusetts*. Privately Printed. Elizabethtown, Kentucky. 2011. 4-5.

<sup>62</sup> Shurtleff: *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, 1628-1686. Volume I*. 206.

<sup>63</sup> *Town Records of Salem Massachusetts, 1634-1681*. Volume I. 103.

<sup>64</sup> Shurtleff. 262.

## The English Civil War and the Ascension of John Endecott:

In 1641, 1642, and 1643, John Endecott was chosen as Deputy Governor, and in 1642, he was also an Overseer of Harvard College. This was happening in the midst of the 1st English Civil War which pitted Royalist Forces against Parliamentary Forces. While John Endecott had held many offices in the years after his first governorship in 1629-1630, his stringent Puritanism had prevented his being elected to the governorship again as Winthrop and others had their hands full trying to rein in some of his more radical views on the Crown and the Established Church of England. However, in 1643, Parliament introduced the "Solemn League and Covenant" by which they undertook to introduce the full Presbyterian system with its "doctrinal rigidity and exacting discipline." Now with this new formation of society and the King's forces on the run, John Endecott came to the fore and was elected governor in 1644.<sup>65</sup> When John Endecott completed his term in 1645, he was appointed Major General of Massachusetts and he held this position until 1649. He also was elected as an assistant and one of the commissioners of the province.<sup>66</sup>

In 1648, the 2nd English Civil War erupted but was short lived. The King was captured and put on trial. He was convicted of high treason, and executed.<sup>67</sup> The winning Parliamentarians proclaimed the Commonwealth of England and the disestablishment of the Church of England. Their Puritan-based lifestyle in England was fully implemented.<sup>68</sup>

## The Glorious Decade of Puritanism in New England:

Upon the death of John Winthrop on 26 March 1649, John Endecott again was chosen governor. He maintained this office in annual elections until his death except for 1650 and 1654 when he was the Deputy Governor. Now released from the constraints of the King and with England adopting the Puritan lifestyle, Governor Endecott was free to move rapidly to order the colony more completely on Puritan principals. In 1649 he issued a formal proclamation against wearing long hair "after the manner of ruffians and barbarous Indians."<sup>69</sup>

The colony made rapid progress during his terms from 1655 to 1660 and was part of the Glorious Decade (1650-1660) for the Puritans, but religious tolerance became a crime. As the head of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, responsible for its spiritual and temporal welfare, John Endecott felt a duty to scourge, banish, or hang the unorthodox. He was particularly opposed to the Quakers who were coming into the colony in numbers after 1650. Their beliefs were not as rigid as the Puritans who saw them as a threat as they attempted to convert Puritans. Over time, Governor Endecott had many of them banished, imprisoned, beaten, or even executed. William Robinson and Marmaduke Stephenson of that sect were executed on 27 October 1659, and Mary Dyer was hanged the following

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<sup>65</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. Volume 8. *John Endecott*; London. 377-378.

<sup>66</sup> Charles M. Endicott. *Memoir of John Endecott. First Governor of the Massachusetts Bay*. 12.

<sup>67</sup> Simon Jenkins. *A Short History of England*. In Association with the National Trust. 2011. 181-183.

<sup>68</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. Volume 8. *Governor John Endecott*. London. 377-378.

<sup>69</sup> Stephens. Editor. *Dictionary of National Biography*. Volume 17. 373.

spring in 1660.<sup>70</sup> A fourth Quaker, William Leddra, was the last to be executed. He was hung in Boston on 14 March 1661.

With Puritans now in charge in England, Governor Endecott wrote a letter in 1651 to the Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Indians and they responded by sending money to the colony to carry on the good work. The Church Wardens' Account in Chagford lists the sixty-two subscribers who contributed which include a number of relatives of the governor. Included were John Noseworthy, Mary Noseworthy, and John Nosworthy, Jr. who were related to the governor through his aunt, Wilmot Endecott Noseworthy. Also on the list was Henry Hooper and his son Henry Hooper. The elder Henry was one of the administrators of the estate of John Endecott (1541-1635), the Governor's grandfather. There also was Henry Endecott (1591-1655), cousin to the Governor, who probably grew up with him at Middlecott Manor. These contributors demonstrate that Governor Endecott kept in touch with some of his family decades after his departure from England.<sup>71</sup>

Even in the early colonies there was a need for money, and John Endecott established a mint in 1652. This was against existing English law, but in the new Commonwealth, John was in no fear for his actions.<sup>72</sup> Coins continued to be minted until the abrogation of the charter in 1685, long after Governor Endecott's death. John also continued to increase his landholdings. In 1658, the General Court, thankful for his long service to the colony, granted him a fourth of Block Island.<sup>73</sup>

## Puritanism Falters and Governor Endecott Dies

After the death of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, in 1659, the Commonwealth of England began to crumble. Royalists were successful in restoring the monarchy under King Charles II in 1660.<sup>74</sup> In 1661, the struggle began in Massachusetts to save its royal charter and its local government. Governor Endecott drew up a petition to the King in the name of the General Court of Boston. It asked for the King's protection and a continuance of those privileges and liberties which the colony enjoyed. The capital blasphemies of the Quakers and their contempt of authority were also set before the King. King Charles returned vaguely favorable answers which asked Governor Endecott to seek out villains such as the regicides Edward Whalley and William Goffe,<sup>75</sup> and ordered all condemned Quakers to be sent to England where they would be dealt with.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Friends of London in 1660. *A Call from Death to Life; an Account of the Suffering of Stephenson, Robinson, and Dyer in New England, 1659*. Printed by the Aungervyle Society. Edinburgh. 1886.

<sup>71</sup> Lethbridge. *The Devonshire Ancestry of John Endecott*. 28.

<sup>72</sup> Shurtleff. *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay, 1628-1686*. Volume III. 256.

<sup>73</sup> William Cogswell. *Memoir of Governor Endecott*. Volume I. 221.

<sup>74</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. Volume 5. 307-309.

<sup>75</sup> Dr. Francis J. Bremer. *John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father*. 2003/ 151. Lieutenant General Edward Whalley and his son-in-law, Major General William Goffe, were prominent military officers in the Parliamentary forces under Oliver Cromwell during and after the English Civil War. Whalley and Goffe were two of the 59 signers of the death warrant for King Charles I. When the Commonwealth of England was overthrown and the Kingdom restored in 1660, both men fled to the

In 1662, the King expressed his willingness to take the colony into his care provided that all laws made during the “late troubles” derogatory to the King’s government be repealed. He also asked that the oath of allegiance be duly observed, and that the administration of justice take place in the King’s name. He went on to suggest that the principal end of the charter was liberty and conscience, and that the Book of Common Prayer and its ceremonies might very well be used by those desirous of doing so.

Commissioners were sent to the colony in 1664 where they sat in judgment of the Governor and the General Court. Governor Endecott addressed a strongly worded protest against this attempt to override their privileges to Secretary William Morrice on 19 October 1664. In his response, Morrice complained of Endecott’s disaffection and stated that the King would be happy to see someone else elected to lead the colony.<sup>77</sup>

Before the next election, John Endecott died in Boston on 15 March 1665 at the age of 77. His long service to the colony was recognized when he was buried on 23 March 1665 in the Granary Burial Grounds in Boston in Tomb 189.<sup>78</sup> In spite of many grants of land to the Governor over the years, he died land poor in that he was often without liquid assets and in debt. In the “Diary of John Hull,” the Mint Master and Treasurer of the Colony of Massachusetts, he comments on the death as follows, “Our honored Governor, Mr. John Endecott, departed this life – a man of pious and zealous spirit, who had very faithfully endeavored the suppression of a pestilent generation, the troublers of our peace, civil and ecclesiastical, called Quakers. He died poor as most of our rulers do, having more attended the public than their own private interests. It is our shame, though we are indeed a poor people, yet might better maintain our rulers than we do. However, they had a good God to reward them.”<sup>79</sup>

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Massachusetts Bay Colony and were well received by Governor Endecott. They were hidden and protected by the governor and they lived out their lives in the colony.

<sup>76</sup> Mayo. *John Endecott, a Biography*. 271.

<sup>77</sup> Mayo. *John Endecott, a Biography*. 271.

<sup>78</sup> LTC Gordon S. Harmon. *John Endecott’s Burial: Mystery Resolved*. GSH Visions. February 20, 2012.

<sup>79</sup> Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society, Volume III. *The Diary of John Hull*. Worcester, Mass. 1857.

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