

THE MAZE

Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc.

274 Wilder Drive, Forsyth, GA 31029

April - May 2009 Edition

Joseph Middlebrook, John Winthrop, Massachusetts Bay Colony and Fairfield, Connecticut

This is the first of a short series of articles briefly describing the happenings leading to Joseph Middlebrook's arrival in Massachusetts and the proving of his ancestry. The connection of the above names and places begins long before Joseph's birth in 1610 and gains momentum shortly after 1620. The underlying theme is the religious reformation of England and the ensuing migration to North America, resulting in the eventual arrival of Joseph Middlebrook in Boston.

The following time table was established to understand better the background leading to Joseph's October 1635 arrival. The date is noted by Louis F. Middlebrook's 1909 Register, but currently no passenger list has been located to verify Joseph's departure and home parish. Another approach to determining Joseph's home parish would be to establish the home towns of his Massachusetts neighbors. Researching their parish records could possibly turn up documentation leading to Joseph's ancestors.

Providing guidance and assistance in this research is Ian Middlebrook, a professional genealogist. His company is Wessex Family Research which is located in Weymouth, Dorset, United Kingdom, <http://expertgenealogy.com/?x=WessexFamilyResearch>. We are most grateful for Ian's help.

Our early ancestors typically migrated with or shortly after their neighbors. Knowing where these neighbors lived will be helpful in discovering Joseph's home area. Since the Massachusetts Concord Plantation was comprised principally of Puritans, understanding the motivation and timing of their removal to the New World is first necessary.

1532 England breaks ties with the Roman Catholicism; Pilgrims and Puritans are an outcome of this church reformation and the Puritan belief will eventually bring Joseph Middlebrook, yet unborn, to American soil.

1560s Puritans were recognized as ardent pure moral and religious reformers. They believed that it was possible to reform society from within the boundaries of the Church of England. The Puritan core was located in the middle eastern and southern sections of England.

1580s Pilgrims were recognized for similar moral and religious beliefs, but with a separatist view point. They believed that it was necessary to operate outside the organization of the state church.

1608 Pilgrims leave for Holland due to persecution in England.

1610 Joseph Middlebrook born in England. Most probably in the eastern midlands, once controlled by the Danes.

1620 Pilgrims returned to England, obtain backing of the North Virginia Company, and set sail for America on the original Mayflower.

1625 James I died and his son, Charles I, ascends to the throne. Charles' supposed Roman Catholic sympathies acerbated the tension between Charles and the Puritans.

1628 Group of Puritan settlers receive a charter to found a small colony in America. In the closing moments of Parliament the charter's name was changed to Massachusetts Bay Company (MBC) and not noted was the

omission of the board of governors' meeting location. The significance of the latter was selection of the meeting location in Massachusetts and the ability of the settlers to maintain their Puritan practices without oversight by the King and Archbishop.

Spring 1629 John Winthrop, lawyer, Puritan and future governor of the MBC, began drafting his decision to leave England with his family.

Summer 1629 Winthrop and 11 other Puritans sign agreement to be ready for a spring 1630 departure to the New World.

Fall 1629 Winthrop is elected as leader and governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company.

Mar 1630 Winthrop and 700-1000 other Puritans boarded seven of the eleven ships, known as the Winthrop Fleet. They lay at anchor for 9 days waiting on good weather. Their departure port was Southampton, Essex County.

Apr 1630 The first four vessels of the “Winthrop Fleet” embarked for the New World. These vessels were 1] the flag ship Arbella, 2] the Ambrose, 3] Mayflower (not the Mayflower of Pilgrim fame); each of the three arriving on about June 30, 1630 and 4] the Talbot arriving about July 20, 1630.

Apr 1630 Twenty days later the remaining seven vessels of the “Winthrop Fleet” embarked for the New World. The vessels were 5] the Jewel, 6] the Charles, 7] the Trial, 8] the Success, 9] the Whale, 10] the Hopewell, (the Hopewell made return trips to the MBC, sailing on Apr 1635 and Sep 1635) and 11] the William & Frances. Of these the Jewell, Whale and Success carried passengers, the remaining four transported livestock and freight.

Approximately 200 died during the voyage and some 100 returned shortly after arrival. Part of the remaining settled in the Salem, Massachusetts area and others moved north to Boston, northwest to Watertown and Concord.

The next in this series will identify the planters of the Concord Plantation. Using the list of planters we will endeavor to determine their home parishes and to tie their relation to Joseph Middlebrook. We will also familiarize ourselves with the “great migration” of 1630-1642 and the arrival of English families in the Caribbean, Canada, early Virginia and New England, thus explaining the arrival of other Middlebrook lines in North America.

For additional reading Google: Winthrop Fleet, John Winthrop, Puritans and England, and Puritans in America.

MFA 2990 Meeting

August 13, 14, 15th are rapidly approaching. We hope that you will make your plans to join us and to share this invitation with other family members. This year's meeting will be in Hope, Hemstead Co, AR and will explore the common ties of the Middlebrooks families of this area.

There will be two presentations on Middlebrooks from this area, special presentation by SW Arkansas historian, research time at the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, tours of the Hemstead and Nevada Counties area, cemetery “hopping” in Hope and Hemstead Counties, and family socializing.

Accommodations are available at the Holiday Inn Express, I-30 at N. Hervey St, Hope AR, 71891, (870) 722-6262. Group rates are \$89.10 + tax through July 13, 2009.

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Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc. was founded in 2001 for the purpose of assembling and preserving genealogical and historical material for future generations.