

A Genealogical Profile of Francis Eaton

Birth: Francis Eaton was born in Bristol, England shortly before September 11, 1596, the day he was baptized.

Death: He died in Plymouth sometime in 1633, between March 25 when his name appeared on a tax list, and November 8, when his possessions were inventoried for probate.

Ship: *Mayflower*, 1620

Life in England: The records in Bristol identify Francis Eaton as a house carpenter. The son of John and Dorothy (Smith) Eaton, he was the only one of their children known to have survived to adulthood. No record of his marriage or the birth of his first child has been found in Bristol, so he may have lived elsewhere in England before he traveled to New England.

Life in New England: Francis, his wife Sarah, and infant son Samuel arrived in New England aboard the *Mayflower* in November 1620. By the time of his death he was a freeman and owned various pieces of property in Plymouth. The inventory of "Fr Eaton carpenter of Plymouth" showed that his debts far exceeded the value of his estate. He was buried in Plymouth, but the location is unknown.

Family: Francis married (1) Sarah _____ in England. She died in the first winter of the "general sickness." Francis' second wife is generally believed to have been the maidservant of fellow *Mayflower* passenger, John Carver. Her first name was likely Dorothy. She died a year or two after the marriage. They had no children. He married (3) Christian Penn, who arrived in Plymouth in the summer of 1623, aboard either the *Anne* or *Little James*. They had three children. Christian Eaton married (2) Francis Billington, had nine children by him, and died in Middleboro around 1684.

Son of Francis and Sarah Eaton:

- Samuel grew up in Plymouth, later moving to Duxbury and then Middleboro, where he died in 1684. He married (1) Elizabeth _____ before March 10, 1646 and had two children. He married (2) his step-sister, Martha Billington, on January 10, 1660/1 and had four children.

Children of Francis and Christian Eaton:

- Rachel was born around 1625–6. She married Joseph Ramsdell (or Ramsden) in 1645 and had at least one son. She died in Plymouth between June 1656 and October 1661. Benjamin was born about March 1627/8. He married Sarah

Hoskins on December 4, 1660, and had four children. He died in Plympton on January 16, 1711/2.

- Of the third child, Governor Bradford in his list of *Mayflower* passengers said merely that the child was "an idiot" and was still alive in 1651.

For Further Information:

Robert C. Anderson. *The Great Migration Begins*. Boston: New England Historic and Genealogical Society, 1995.

Robert C. Anderson. *The Pilgrim Migration*. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2004.

Lee Douglas Van Antwerp. *Mayflower Families through Five Generations* Volume 9. Plymouth: General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1996.

Neil D. Thompson. "The Origin and Parentage of Francis Eaton of the *Mayflower*." *The American Genealogist* 72:301–304. July/October, 1997.



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Where do I go from here?

Researching your family's history can be a fun, rewarding, and occasionally frustrating project. Start with what you know by collecting information on your immediate family. Then, trace back through parents, grandparents, and beyond. This is a great opportunity to speak to relatives, gather family stories, arrange and identify old family photographs, and document family possessions that have been passed down from earlier generations.

Once you have learned all you can from family members, you will begin to discover other sources. A wide variety of records can help you learn more about the lives of your ancestors. These include birth, marriage, and death records; immigration and naturalization records; land records; census records; probate records and wills; church and cemetery records; newspapers; passenger lists; military records; and much more.

When you use information from any source — an original record, a printed book, or a website — always be careful to document it. If you use a book, you should cite the author or compiler, the full title, publication information and pages used. Also be sure to record the author's sources for the information. If the author's sources aren't provided, you will have to try to find the original source. Many genealogical works contain faulty information, and the Internet also contains many inaccuracies. In order for your work to be accepted — by lineage societies and other genealogists — it must be properly documented.

IMPORTANT GENEALOGICAL RESOURCES

New England Historic Genealogical Society

Founded in 1845, NEHGS is the country's oldest and largest genealogical society. The library contains over 200,000 books, plus significant manuscript and microfilm collections, and a circulating library by mail. NEHGS members receive two periodicals, the *Register* and *New England Ancestors*, and can access valuable genealogical data online.

NEHGS, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116;
888-296-3447; www.NewEnglandAncestors.org.

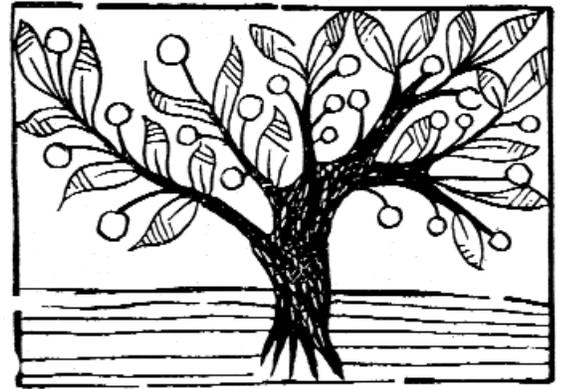
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As a non-profit, educational organization our mission is: to offer the public powerful experiences of history, built upon thorough research of the Wampanoag and Pilgrim communities. We offer multiple learning opportunities to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship of historical events to modern America. Members have access to our Research Library.

Plimoth Plantation, 137 Warren Avenue, Plymouth, MA 02632;
508-746-1622; www.plimoth.org

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

- www.PlymouthAncestors.org
- www.CyndisList.com
- www.FamilySearch.org
- www.USGenWeb.org



PLYMOUTH ANCESTORS[®]

GENEALOGICAL LIBRARIES IN PLYMOUTH

General Society of Mayflower Descendants Library

A collection focused principally on the genealogies of the descendants of the *Mayflower* passengers.

4 Winslow St., Plymouth; 508-746-3188; www.mayflower.org

Plymouth Collection, Plymouth Public Library

Over 1200 items relating to the descendants of the Pilgrims, as well as the many other immigrants who settled in the area.

132 South St., Plymouth; 508-830-4250;
www.plymouthpubliclibrary.org

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Genealogy by Christine Rose and Kay Germain Ingalls, Alpha Books, 1997.

Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research by Marcia Melnyk, NEHGS, 1999.

Shaking Your Family Tree: A Basic Guide to Tracing Your Family History by Ralph J. Crandall, NEHGS, 2001.

Unpuzzling Your Past by Emily Croom, Betterway Books, 2003.

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