

Biographical Sketch: Stephen Deane

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~paxson/deane/Deane.html>

It is not my intention to reproduce here a history of the Plymouth Colony. But it is necessary to review a few points about it in order to make sense of the records we have that mention **Stephen Deane**. He arrived in 1621 on the *Fortune*, the second ship to bring Separatist colonists and other settlers to Plymouth, and therefore he shared much of the early history of the colony with those who had come the year before on the *Mayflower*.

The expedition of the original colonists on the *Mayflower* was at least partially financed by selling shares to a number of so-called Adventurers who hoped to make a profit from their investment. Therefore along with the members of the Leiden congregation there were other Separatists from England as well as those William BRADFORD called "Strangers" who were not part of their church but were sent by the investors. Each settler, male or female, over the age of sixteen was given one share. The approximately seventy Adventurers paid £10 per share to raise the capital for provisions, equipment, and the voyage. According to the agreement with the Adventurers, the colonists were to share everything in common for the first seven years. Then the profits were to be totalled and divided among the share holders. Not surprisingly, already by 1623 there were complaints that some people were being lazy and others were doing more than their share of the work. So it was decided to give each man, woman, and child the use of [one acre](#) for their own personal cultivation, although everyone was supposed to continue cultivating the common land. Even though the colonists sent back some valuable shipments of furs, for a variety of reasons the colonists seemed to become increasingly indebted to the Adventurers. A new agreement was negotiated by Isaac ALLERTON in London on 26 October 1626 by which the Adventurers sold all the "stocks, shares, lands, merchandise, and chatles" to the Purchasers for £1,800. The Purchasers were 58 individuals living in the Colony. Among them were our ancestors John HOWLAND and Steeven [sic] Deane. Although the next year the Purchasers assigned both the shares in the company and its debt to twelve Undertakers (eight in Plymouth and four in London) these 58 continued to be privileged above all others when it came to future land grants in Plymouth. Part of the deal was that in exchange for taking responsibility for repayment of the entire debt the colonists would grant the Undertakers certain monopoly privileges, most importantly the fur trade. Stephen was one of the 27 men who signed it.

On 22 May 1627 it was decided that the cattle and goats belonging to the Company be divided by lot among all the present inhabitants, including servants, women, and children. The [division](#) was made in twelve lots of thirteen people each (meaning there were 156 free white inhabitants at the time). The twelfth lot included Stephen Deane. Their share was the "greate white backt cow wch was brought ouer with the first" in the *Anne*, the bull, and two she goats.

In 1627 "Phillip Delanoy" [sic] sold Stephen one acre on the north side of town between the first and second brook, which had been allotted to Philip in 1623. The price was £4. Two years later, 10 February 1629/30 Stephen sold this acre plus his own "inheritance", both acres

for £4, to Robert HIXE. I don't know why the price had apparently halved in two years. One other thing the deed shows, is Stephen's signature. He signed deeds in 1627 and 1630; he owned a Bible "and other books" valued at £1, showing that he was literate.

In 1629 or 1630 the widow Mary RING and her children Elizabeth, Susan, and young Andrew, arrived in Plymouth Colony. Soon Stephen and **Elizabeth Ring** were married. Their first child, a girl named [Elizabeth](#), was born before Stephen's mother-in-law died in July 1631.

Stephen's name appeared on the list of Plymouth freemen ahead of those admitted in January 1632/3. Either that month or in February 1632/3 the court gave Stephen permission to build a grist mill. He was granted monopoly rights on the conditions that he handle all the colony's needs, and that he charge no more than "one pottle" out of every bushel of grain that he ground. A pottle is a liquid measure equal to two quarts. A bushel holds 32 quarts. So Stephen was permitted to charge 1/16 or a bit over 6%.

On 25 March 1633 a tax rate was drawn up listing inhabitants and how much money each owed. Stephen Deane was charged 9 shillings, the minimum amount.

On 2 January 1633/4 the new governor, Thomas Prence, and twelve freemen, one of whom was Stephen, assessed eighty individuals for another tax levy that could be paid in grain or its equivalent. The amounts assessed varied from 9 shillings (45 individuals) to £2/5sh (two men). The collection was made on 27 March 1634 and this time Stephen Deane was assessed 12/. By this time his mill was up and running and he was able to make a modest profit, raising his economic standing.

Stephen made one more real estate transaction, on 10 March 1633/4, purchasing for £20 the "late dwelling house of Godbert Godbertson". William BRADFORD acted as executor for the Godbertson estate.

Stephen died, probably in late September 1634. His estate was inventoried on 2 October 1634 for a total value of £87.19.6, of which £42 was real estate. This was in three parcels: house and fens at Fresh Lake worth £2, his dwelling house and garden, worth £20; and his mill worth £20. It appears that Stephen was upgrading his situation, moving from a little old house at Fresh Lake to the probably larger one purchased from the Godbertson estate six months earlier. Final settlement of the estate was made on 5 April 1669 when William TWINING acting for himself by right of his wife, Elizabeth, plus Miriam Deane, his wife's sister, and Susanna SNOW, his wife's other sister, who were the three joint heirs of Stephen Deane's land. "All the lands" of Stephen Deane, deceased, were sold that day to Peter WORDEN for £8. I do not know if some of the land had been disposed of earlier, or was considered his widow's third. If not, there had been a large deflation in the price of real estate.

The widowed Elizabeth then married on 16 September 1635 Josiah COOKE. Josiah and his family were among those moving to Nauset (later Eastham) around 1645. He was listed there as a freeman on an undated list probably from the 1640s. In Eastham in 1647 he became a deputy;

earlier he had been a grand juror, surveyor, and constable. He signed his will 22 September 1673; it was proved 29 October that year. In it he declared himself to be about 63 years old. He named his wife Elizabeth and a number of children and step children from his blended family. These included his son Josias, son-in-law Joseph HARDING, and step-son-in-law [William Twining](#); his daughter Bethiah Harding, grandsons Joseph Harding and Amaziah Harding, granddaughter Anne SNOW, and step-grandson [Stephen Twining](#); and step-daughter Miriam Deane.