

PART I

ANCESTRY AND DESCENDENTS OF WILLIAM CURTIS OF MARCELLUS, N. Y.

I. JOHN CURTIS, the founder of this line, without doubt, came from England in the ship Lion—Capt. Mason—which, says Lawrence Memorials, "cast anchor Sunday eve., September 16, 1632. She brought, says Winthrop, 123 passengers, whereof 50 were children, all in good health. They had been aboard 12 weeks, 8 weeks from Land's End."

"Of the 123 passengers, the names of about 30 have been preserved, who were probably the most important. The Lion is said to have carried a better class of passengers, that is, those who had more means and were able to have more comforts." [Stiles Curtis.]

"Of these passengers were William Curtis and his wife Sarah (Eliot) and four children. John Curtis, brother of William, his wife Elizabeth (Hutchins) and three sons, and a sister, Mary Curtis, who had married, in Nazing, England, Thomas Ruggles. A third brother, Thomas Curtis, probably came also at the same time, who later settled in Wethersfield, Ct., and founded the 'Wethersfield Curtises'."

"However, mention is only made of William Curtis, wife and four children. In the same ship came William Heath and Daniel Brewer, and all three settled in Roxbury, William Curtis on Stony River."

"In the earliest records of Roxbury was a list of 'Ye estates of Ye inhabitants of Roxbury.' There is no date to this list, but it was between 1634 and 1643. In it are the names of William Curtis and thirteen persons in his family, forty acres of land, estate eight—probably lbs. sterling. Also John Curtis with five persons in his family. William Curtis seems to have been the largest land holder in the list, which contains 53 names, but there is a list of about a dozen larger land holders, among whom are Dudley, Gore and Heath."

It is said in N. E. Hist. & Gen. Reg., Vol. 28, p. 140, that "The first batch of Nazing pilgrims left England in the ship Lion, 1631 (Capt. William Pierce), having on board John Eliot, the celebrated apostle to the Indians, and William Curtis."

For some time this William Curtis was thought to be the son of William Curtis who came in 1632, but is now believed to have been a nephew, son of George Curtis in Nazing. His family joined him later, not long before his death, which occurred in 1634. He is mentioned in the town records several times as land holder. Historians say "God took him early."

It is said the only indication preserved to us of the locality (Nazing) of the colonists was found in the records by the apostle in the First Church in Roxbury. "John Eliot records the death of two of the Company (Graves and Ruggles); which occurred in Nov., 1644: 'These two break the knot of the Nazing Christians. I mean the first dyed of those Christians y^e came from y^e towne in England.' These Nazing Pilgrims left England, as has been stated, not in one company, but at different times, as they could best escape."

With William Curtis and his wife came Ann Mountford, the affianced of John Eliot, to whom he was married a month after her arrival. It is probable that it was largely the influence of his brother-in-law Curtis that induced John Eliot to leave Boston for Roxbury.

"The house built by William Curtis on Stony River is yet standing in a good state of preservation, and occupied by a lineal descendant in the 6th generation. The family tradition is that the house was built of timber cut upon the ground and is the second one built by him, which is confirmed by the following extract from the Records of Massachusetts Bay: 'William Curtis had leave to build upon his lot, his other house being situated so inconveniently.'

William Curtis, bapt. Nazing, England, Nov. 12, 1593, d. Roxbury, Dec. 8, 1672, ae 80. Sarah, his wife, d. Mar. 22, 1673, ae 75. [See Drake's Hist. Roxbury.]

Stiles H. Curtis says in N. E. Hist. & Gen. Reg., Vol. 43, p. 321-12: "in 'A note of ye Estates and Persons of the Inhabitants of Roxbury' about 1638, or 40, appears the name of John Curtis, having 15 acres, with five persons in his family. The family disappears and fails to be found in Mass., R. I., or Ct. records, till Stratford, Ct., about 1650, where the Widow Elizabeth Curtis, with her two sons, John and William, become known to historians as the founders of the Stratford Curtises."

The same writer, himself a direct lineal descendant, after research, gives the following, in N. E. Hist. & Gen. Reg., Vol. 54, p. 447:

Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page: "Curtis Allied from Mrs. Foster of NY Marcellus Descendants of William Curtis 1917 Mrs. Foster of NY Marcellus"

"Wm., John and Thomas Curtis.—I venture to offer some suggestions tending to show that Wm. Curtis of Roxbury, Thomas of Wethersfield and John, husband of Elizabeth, were probably brothers. William was baptized at Nazing, Eng., Nov. 12, 1592. Came to America in ship Lion in 1632. Thomas of Wethersfield was 6 years younger, having been born in 1598. It is generally accepted that the husband of Elizabeth was John; N. E. Hist. & Gen. Reg., Vol. 43, p. 392, identifies him with John Curtis who married, at Nazing, April 19, 1610, Elizabeth Hutchings and who had children, John, bap. Nov. 20, 1614 or 15; Wm., bap. June 21, 1618, and Thomas, bap. March 12, 1619, or 20.

"Among the early settlers of Wethersfield were Thomas Curtis and John Curtis, both of whose names appear in the land records, and whose residences are indicated on the map of that town in the Memorial History of Hartford, Ct., I., p. 447.

"Stratford, Ct., was settled by a colony from Wethersfield, among whom was the widow Elizabeth Curtis, and her sons, John, William and Thomas, the last of whom is known only by mention in his mother's will. It seems probable that John Curtis and Thomas Curtis left Roxbury some time after 1634, that they went to Wethersfield and acquired land there, that John was the husband of Elizabeth and that he had engaged to join the expedition to Stratford, and had disposed of his property preparatory to removal, that he died before the expedition started and his plans having been carried so far that they could not well be abandoned, his widow carried out his design."

The same Memorial History of Hartford Co., also states that "John Curtis left Wethersfield for Cupheag (Stratford) in 1639-40," which would confirm the above reasoning by Stiles, H. Curtis, as does the tradition handed down to my father, that "three brothers came from England, and our ancestor settled in Ct."

Hinman's Genealogy of the Puritans says: "Thomas Curtis was the first of the name in Wethersfield and one of the first of the colony where he settled and became a man of reputation and large estate: he died Nov. 13, 1681, ae 83.

"Thomas was freed from training, watching and warding by the General Court of Conn., May 21, 1657, as was Jasper Gunn, during his practice of phisicke."

I. JOHN CURTISS, son of Thomas and Mary (Camp) Curtis, who were married Aug. 24, 1585, Nazing, Eng., m., Apr. 19, 1610, Nazing, Elizabeth Hutchins. From the foregoing pages, it is probable he died in Ct. before 1650. His widow, Elizabeth Curtiss, first appears on the Town Records of Stratford, Ct., as a property owner and designated as Widow Curtiss, about 1650, with her two sons, John and William. Her lot was near or adjoining that of Rev. Adam Blakeman. She died June, 1658. Her will, proved Nov. 4, 1658 at Fairfield, Ct., Court, says: "Being weak yet perfect in her minde Imprimis. Unto her two sons John Curtiss and William doe give my Mare and Coalt. It. Unto John Curtiss & Jonathan Curtiss y^e Sonnes of my Sonnes John & William my Grandchildren I do give the Coalt that my young Mare hath: And after the sayd young mare hath up her first coalt, Then I doe give y^e sayd young mare to the Rest of my Grandchildren, Sonnes and Daughters of my aforefd Sonns John and William: It. I doe give one houte and Lott to my Grandchildren, John Curtiss & Israel & Jonathian & Sarah Curtiss y^e children of y^e sayd John & William: And they to enjoy it when they come to y^e age of twenty: It. I doe give unto my Grandchild Mary Curtiss y^e daughter of Thomas Curtiss forty shillings & to be paid unto her by my sons John & William within a yeare after my defease: It. I doe give unto my Sonns John & William Curtiss my two cowss, one heifer, one bullock and a calf after my decas: provided y^e if my sayd young mare before given to my Grandchildren should miscarry. Then my Will is if my two sons John and William Curtiss should give foure pounds each of them to their children y^e have no share in my house and Lott to be paid att Age of twentie: It. I doe give my Bible to John Curtiss my Grandchild the Sonn of John Curtiss also my desire is y^e there be so much of my Corn sould as may buy a Bible for Jonathian Curtiss y^e Sonn of my Sonn William and given to him:—The rest of my goods Within y^e horse that are moveable goods I do give to my Sonns John and William Curtiss to be equally divided betwixt them.

My two sons John Curtiss & William Curtiss I do make executors: My will is y^e John Burdseye, Henry Wakelyn and Joseph Hawley shall be overseers of this my Last Will and Testament.

In ye presence of

John Brinnsmaid
John Washborn.

ELIZABETH CURTISS.