

The indenture of John¹ Tripp of Horkstow, Lincolnshire, Boston and Portsmouth; and his three New England masters

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Margaret Bock compiled a very complete account of the immigrant John¹ Tripp and his descendants, which was published in 1983.¹ The baptism of John¹ Tripp, along with the marriage of his parents and baptism of his siblings can be found in the parish records of Horkstow, Lincolnshire, England. John Tripp and Elizabeth Moyses were married in Horkstow on 30 July 1609 and their son John Tripp was baptized in Horkstow on 8 September 1611.² The first known New England record for John Tripp is believed to be his name on the loyalty compact which was signed at Portsmouth, Rhode Island on 30 April 1639.³

Paul L. Tripp provided a considerable amount of information about his research into John Tripp of Horkstow and Portsmouth, which is available online.⁴ He relates that while doing research in the New Bedford Library during March 1991, he found a copy of a single-page, handwritten document appearing to have been written in 1670.⁵ A transcription of this document is as follows.⁶

The Relation of John the said John Tripp concerning the plases [= places] of his aboad [= abode] first I was born in Horstow [= Horkstow] in Lincolnshire 3 miles from Barton hambar [Barton-upon-Humber] and my father['s] name was John Tripp and my mother['s] name was Isabel moyses before she married my father when she was a maid and they had about 12 Children and much kindred we had and when I grew in years I was put an apprentice to a shaft carpender whose name was John baats of thorsbey [= Thoresby] 3 miles of [= off] from alsand in Lincone shire [= Lincolnshire] aforesaid where I served 7 yeare and sometime after wrought with him and after that I bound my self to one Frances East for 4 pounds a year for 4 years who sould [= sold] me after I had served him and his asins [= assigns] for about a year and a half hee sould me to Robert Jafra [?Jeffreys?] then Liveng in boston and boston Church members persacuting som to the ofending of others my master Came to Rhod Island with the said parsacuted people and I with him and his wife being sickly and they could not git their maid to come to Rhode Island with them because boston members Cried out against Rhode Island people whom the said members had exppeled from them therefore my master was forced to sel me to Randal Houlding [?Holden?] of porthmouth one [= on] Rhod Island and I served a while and after bought out the rest of time of him and after a while I married a wife whose maden [= maiden] name was mary paine & being about thirty or twenty eight years old or there about and

¹ *The Genealogist*, 4:59-128.

² FHL Film #1450458; Images provided by Paul Tripp are available at:

<http://www.trippgenealogy.org/TrippFamily/Paul%27s%20Info/Paul%20Tripp%20V55,MarriageJTripp&ElizMoyse sp52.pdf>

<http://www.trippgenealogy.org/TrippFamily/Paul%27s%20Info/Paul%20Tripp%20V55,Baptism,JohnTripp,p51.pdf>

³ Image available in article by Jim McGraw, "Original Portsmouth Compact coming Thursday," *East Bay Newspapers*, 3/4/2013.

<http://www.eastbayri.com/news/original-portsmouth-compact-coming-thursday/>

⁴ <http://www.trippgenealogy.org/wordpress/pau>

⁵ Image provided by Paul Tripp is available at:

<http://www.trippgenealogy.org/TrippFamily/Paul%27s%20Info/Paul%20Tripp%20V55,p50RelationOfJohnFounder .pdf>

⁶ Charlou Dolan provided the transcription provided here.

the Lord hath given us Eleven Children of which one is ded [= dead] the Eldest Is 29 years old and upward this 17th the second month [= April] 1670 prased be the [= thee] our Rock who hath been help and unto his [own] at all times give what thou pleseth it is marcy from the [= thee] to Receive anything[,] for the Earth and See [= Sea] is all thine and the fulness thereof.

This affidavit, apparently of statements made by John Tripp of Portsmouth, identifies his parents as John and Isabel (Moyses) Tripp of Horkstow, Lincolnshire. This matches the information found by others in the parish records. In his testimony, which was provided for an unknown purpose, John Tripp identified the places where he lived during his lifetime. Following an apprenticeship of seven years in Lincolnshire as a carpenter, John Tripp tells us that he entered into a contract with Francis East for a term of four years. While John Tripp does not explicitly tell us whether or not he entered into this contract in England or in New England, it appears likely that it was while in England and he likely emigrated as servant to Francis East. John Tripp next explains that after the first eighteen months or so Francis East sold his contract to Robert Jafry of Boston. John Tripp removed from Boston to Portsmouth along with his master Robert Jafry. Once in Portsmouth, Robert Jafry sold the contract to Randal Houlding and John Tripp was able to buy out the remaining term of his contract.

The purpose of this article is to better understand the first few years which John Tripp lived in New England through a better understanding of John's masters during this period of three to four years. It will be shown that a Francis East was a resident of Boston at least between 1636 and 1656, although no attempt has been made to dig very deep into his life. Also, it will be shown that a Robert Jeffreys was a resident of Charlestown and Boston between 1635 and 1638 before removing to Portsmouth and later to Newport. Further, it will be shown that Randall Holden was one of the men who signed the Portsmouth Compact in Boston on 7 March 1638 before removing to Portsmouth and later removed to Newport and Warwick. It is believed that these three men were the three masters of John Tripp who signed the loyalty compact at Portsmouth on 30 April 1639.

Francis East of Boston

Francis East, identified in the records as a carpenter, was admitted as a member of The First Church in Boston on 11d 10m 1636.⁷ He was admitted a freeman of the Massachusetts Bay Colony on 17 April 1637.⁸

The following children of Francis East, who were born and baptized in Boston, were recorded between 1639 and 1656.⁹

⁷ "Boston Church Records" The Records of the Churches of Boston. CD_ROM. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002, page 11. (Online database. *AmericanAncestors.org*. New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2008.)

⁸ *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 3:95.

⁹ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*. (Online database. *AmericanAncestors.org*, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2007.) Originally published as: *A Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston Containing Boston Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, Rockwell and Churchill, City Printers, Boston, 1883.

- Samuel of Francis & Mary East born 11 day 1st month 1639.¹⁰
- Samuel of Francis East 15 day 1 mo. 1640 (First Church baptism).¹¹
Mary of Francis & Mary East born 25 day 1st month 1642.¹²
- Mary of Francis East, aged about 3 days 27 day 1 mo. 1642 (First Church baptism).¹³
- Elizabeth the daughter of Francis & Mary East born 1 day 9th month 1644.¹⁴
- Elizabeth of Francis East, aged about 4 day 10 day 9 mo. 1644 (First Church baptism).¹⁵
- David of Francis & Mary East born 26th -- 11th month 1646.¹⁶
- David of Francis East aged about 3 day 28 day 12 mo. 1646 (First Church baptism).¹⁷
- Sarah of Francis East aged about 2 days 11 day 9 mo. 1649 (First Church baptism).¹⁸
- Daniel of Francis & Mary East born 21st Sept. 1652.¹⁹
- Daniel of Francis East 21 day 9 mo. 1652 (First Church baptism).²⁰
- Rebecca daughter of Francis & Mary East born 22 July 1656.²¹

The above dates seem to suggest Francis East arrived in Boston in 1636, although it is certainly possible he arrived earlier. It can be shown that when working backward, using the likely dates associated with John Tripp and his three masters, that the contract between John Tripp and Francis East was likely agreed upon in England sometime in late 1635 or early 1636. This conclusion is based partly on the likelihood that John Tripp would have entered into a four year indenture in order to gain passage to New England instead of shortly after arriving in New England on his own accord. The approximate date of the contract is partly based on the likelihood that John Tripp had bought out the remaining term of his four year contract sometime before 30 April 1639.

Robert Jeffreys of Boston, Portsmouth and Newport

A very thorough biographical sketch was prepared by *The Great Migration Study Project* regarding Robert Jeffreys.²² Robert Jefferies, aged 30, along with his wife [Marie Jefferies, aged 27] and three children [Thomas Jefferies, aged 7, Elizabeth Jefferies, aged 6, and Mary Jefferies, aged 3], along with two maidservants [Hannah Day, aged 20, and Suzan Browne, aged 21] were enrolled at London on 9 May 1635 as passengers on the *Elizabeth & Ann*. The Robert Jeffreys' family arrived in Weymouth in 1635 and removed to Charlestown in 1635. He next removed to Boston in 1637 before leaving for Portsmouth in 1638. Robert Jeffreys was associated with the men who left Massachusetts as a result of the Hutchinson and Wheelwright controversy. Robert Jeffreys likely purchased John Tripp's contract from Francis East in Boston in late 1637

¹⁰ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 7.

¹¹ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 10.

¹² *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 13.

¹³ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 14.

¹⁴ *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 8:38.

¹⁵ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 19.

¹⁶ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 24.

¹⁷ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 25.

¹⁸ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 30.

¹⁹ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 35.

²⁰ *Boston, MA: Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, p. 39.

²¹ *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 10:67.

²² Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration, Immigrants to New England, 1634-1635, Vol. IV*, (Boston: New England Historic and Genealogical Society, 2005), p. 33-36.

and likely sold that same contract to Randall Holden in Portsmouth sometime in late 1638. Robert Jeffreys removed from Portsmouth to Newport in 1639 when the original purchasers of Portsmouth split into two groups.

Randall Holden of Portsmouth, Newport and Warrick

Randall Holden was one of the signers of the Portsmouth Compact, which was signed in Boston on 7 March 1637/8. He was also one of the witnesses to the purchase of the Aquidneck Island lands from the Indians on 24 March 1637/8. Holden is believed to have been one of those to remove to Newport at the time of the split between the original Portsmouth settlers. Although his name is on a Newport list of freemen in March 1641, his name was removed in 1642 when he was disenfranchised. Holden joined the group which founded Warwick a few years later. It is believed likely that he would have allowed John Tripp to buy out the remaining term of the original four-year contract sometime in early 1639 as Tripp apparently wished to remain with the Portsmouth group and Holden was apparently transient at the time.

Chronology between 1635 and 1640

Based on what has been discussed above, we can put some of the key events during this five year time period into its likely chronological order.

- late 1635 or early 1636: John Tripp (carpenter) was indentured to Francis East (carpenter) in England, possibly in Lincolnshire near Horkstow.
- 1636: John Tripp arrives in Boston with his master Francis East.
- 1637: John Tripp's contract with Francis East was sold to Robert Jeffreys of Boston.
- 1638: John Tripp removes to Portsmouth with his master Robert Jeffreys.
- late 1638: John Tripp's contract was sold to Randall Holden of Portsmouth.
- early 1639: John Tripp purchases the remaining term of his contract from his master Randal Holden.
- early 1639: Robert Jeffreys and Randall Holden both removed to Newport, but John Tripp remained in Portsmouth.
- 30 April 1639: John Tripp signs the Portsmouth loyalty agreement.
- 1639 or early 1640: John Tripp marries Mary Paine in Portsmouth.
- 1640 or early 1641: John and Mary (Paine) Tripp's eldest child is born in Portsmouth.

Considerations for further research

It is believed that John¹ Tripp likely came to New England sometime in 1636, as a servant of Francis East, and was first a resident in Boston. It is likely that if any documentation of the emigration of John Tripp from England might someday be found, that it would be found associated with his master Francis East. An article on the passenger ships which arrived in New England between 1636 and 1640 includes the conclusion that "no passenger lists have survived for 1636."²³ Therefore, it is doubtful that John Tripp's name will ever be found on a ship passengers list.

²³ *Great Migration Newsletter*, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 18.

It is certainly possible that the contract between Francis East and John Tripp may have been recorded somewhere in England, possibly somewhere in Lincolnshire. It is also certainly possible that the sale of that contract between Francis East and Robert Jeffreys may have been recorded in Boston. It appears unlikely that the subsequent sale of that contract between Robert Jeffreys and Randall Holden would have been recorded at Portsmouth as the first records there begin with the loyalty compact which was signed by John Tripp in April 1639, likely after becoming free of Randall Holden who by then may have left Portsmouth.

The origin of the autobiographical statement made by John Tripp is still a mystery. One question relates to why would John Tripp of Portsmouth, who in 1670 would have been a mature man of sixty years as well as a prominent citizen of the Rhode Island colony [recently elected an Assistant and previously had served as a Deputy from Portsmouth], have written/dictated such an autobiographical statement. Another question relates to why would the only known copy of this document be found in the New Bedford, Massachusetts Public Library? There is one possibility as to why such a document might have ended up in the New Bedford Public Library. George Henry Tripp served as the clerk of the board of trustees and librarian for the New Bedford Public Library beginning in 1901.²⁴ He was a descendant of John Tripp of Portsmouth and a researcher and author regarding the Tripp family.²⁵ This suggests that it is certainly possible a collection of documents were deposited with the New Bedford Public Library during or following his tenure as librarian. Although we may never discover sufficient clues addressing these questions, they do suggest another direction for further research.

²⁴ Zephaniah Pease, *History of New Bedford, Volume II*, (New York: The Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1918), pp. 3-5. <https://archive.org/stream/historyofnewbedf02peas#page/n13/mode/2up>

²⁵ George H. Tripp, "Early Tripps in New England," *Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches, No. 26, Being the Proceedings of the Twenty-sixth meeting of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 30 September 1909*, (New Bedford, Massachusetts: Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1909), pp. 11-13. <https://archive.org/stream/olddartmouthhist01oldd#page/n109/mode/2up>