

THE DEDHAM EATONS

FROM 1635 TO THE FIFTH GENERATION

A REPORT READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
EATON FAMILY ASSOCIATION

IN BOSTON, OCTOBER 21, 1884

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(Of the Eighth Generation)

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NOTE

This sketch is printed for distribution in the family, in order that those persons who can trace their ancestry back to the fifth generation may learn something of their more remote progenitors and kin. For the sake of brevity, the exact dates and many items of interest are omitted, but these will be given as fully as possible in the Family History which the writer is at work upon, and which he hopes to see completed in a very few years. He here repeats his request to his kinsmen and kinswomen to furnish him with copies of family records, family traditions, and other information which may aid him in his task.

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, Dec. 1884.

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THE DEDHAM EATONS

JOHN EATON,¹ first appears, so far as any records show, as taking the freeman's oath 25 May, 1636.

His wife, Abigail, aged 35, and two children, Mary, aged 4, and Thomas, aged 1, were among the passengers who embarked at London in the "Elizabeth and Ann" in April, 1635, and it is probable that the husband and father came with them. Abigail had been the widow of a Dammant, for Jane Dammant, aged 9, came with her, and some years later (in 1640) joined the church at Dedham, being described as "y^e daughter of our sister Eaton of y^e Xh at Watertowne." In 1637 John Eaton removed from Watertown to Dedham, where he was occasionally chosen to minor town-offices, and where he died 17 Nov., 1658, having made a will in which he names his wife Abigail, son John, and daughters Mary Mason and Abigail, who afterwards married Robert Mason, brother of her sister's husband, John Mason.

The son Thomas, who was brought from England in 1635, died in 1639, and a son Jacob, born in 1642, died in 1646.

JOHN,² (b. about 1636, d. perhaps, 1694), lived in Dedham, as has the senior line of his descendants to this day. By his wife Alice, whose family-name is not known, he had seven sons and one daughter; the dates of their birth are all recorded. Only four sons lived to maturity, John, Thomas, William and Jonathan.

JOHN³ (b. 1671, m. Ann Whiting, d. before 1710), was a farmer at Dedham. He had but one son, who bore his own name of John. A John Eaton died at Dedham in 1694, but it is uncertain whether he was John² or John³.

THOMAS³ (b. 1675, m. Lydia Gay, 1697, d. 1748), settled in Woodstock, Conn., but about 1722 removed to Ashford. He was a blacksmith and farmer, and a man of much influence in the town where he lived. His children were Thomas, Lydia, Hannah, Nathanael, David, Joshua,

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Anne, Ebenezer and Ephraim. Lydia, Hannah, Ebenezer and Ephraim died unmarried. Anne married Seth Johnson of Lebanon, and left one daughter, Sibbel, who married her cousin Josiah Eaton. ✓

WILLIAM³ (b. 1677, m. Mary Starr,* 1704, d. 1718), lived in Dedham. His children were William, Mary (Herring), Josiah, Sarah (Fuller), Jeremiah and Abiel (a daughter).

JONATHAN³ (b. 1681, m. Lydia Starr, about 1706, d. 1748), settled on the Quinnebaug river near Killingly, Conn., and built a mill where now stands the village of Putnam. He was the first deacon of the Church at Thompson, Conn. He was greatly respected by his neighbors, and is the only grandson of John¹ whose gravestone can be seen to-day. He had seven daughters and four sons. Their names were Lydia (Chandler), Keziah (Cleveland), Alice (Leavens), Susanna, Jerusha, Hannah (Johnson), Jonathan, John, Penelope, Comfort (a son) and Marston.

We find then in the fourth generation twelve men of the family, all married and all blessed with children.

JOHN⁴ (b. 1695, m. 1729 Elizabeth, dau. of Robert Lovering, d. 1770), lived on the ancestral estate in Dedham, and had sons John, Robert, Thomas, Isaac and Joseph, and daughters Elizabeth (Ruggles), Abigail (Whiting), Sarah (Dana and [2d] Dean), and Alice (Draper), all of whom lived to be married. Of the sons, John⁵ lived at Dedham, had two sons and five daughters; the two sons, John and Luther, are still represented by families living in Dedham. Robert went to Warwick, Mass., and had one daughter only, Mrs. Mary Dexter Marsh. Thomas removed to Boston, where some of his descendants now reside. Isaac lived in Dedham, and died in 1822, leaving two sons and a daughter. Joseph lived also in Dedham; he had two daughters, one of whom married Richard Colburn of Boston.

* Mary and Lydia Starr were daughters of Comfort Starr, and Lydia Gay was his niece, the daughter of Lydia Starr. The mother of Comfort and Lydia Starr was Martha Bunker, daughter of George Bunker of Charlestown, who was owner of the top of "that hill of glory" called by his name. [See "History of the Starr Family"].

THOMAS¹ (son of Thomas,³ b. 1698, m. Elizabeth Parker, 1721, d. about 1773), settled in Tolland, Conn., about 1721, and had ten children, Thankful (Skiff), John, Thomas, Jacob, Joseph, Benjamin, Ebenezer, Elizabeth (Skiff), Moses and Aaron. John remained in Tolland, or near it. Thomas, Jacob, Joseph and Benjamin all went to Kent about 1757 or '58, but left in later years and died in the State of New York,* where most of their numerous descendants are still to be found, though one branch of Joseph's family remains in Kent to this day, and the largest branch of Jacob's family lives in Canada. Ebenezer lived in Ashford among his cousins. Some of his descendants live in Chenango Co., N. Y., and others farther west; a few are in Manchester, Vermont. Aaron perished in the ill-fated expedition to Havana, and Moses died in childhood.

NATHANAEL⁴ (son of Thomas,³ b. 1704, m. 1727, Esther, dau. of Capt. John Parry, d. 1785), lived in Ashford, Conn. His wife bore him fifteen children, eight sons and seven daughters; of these, five sons and three daughters had families, most of the others dying in infancy. The married sons were Nathaniel, the father of General William Eaton, Calvin, Elijah (the first, probably, of all the Eatons to go to New York State), John and Abel.† The three daughters who attained womanhood were Esther (Clark), Ann (Bicknell), and Lydia, who m. 1st, David Utter, and 2d, Jeremiah Springsted.

* Thomas m. Asenath Cady, had children Asenath, Lucina, Ephraim, James and Eleazar. . . . Many of the family now reside in Onondaga Co., N. Y.

Jacob settled near Mt. Sinai, Long Island, N. Y., m. Jane Robinson, had Jacob, Isaac, James, Thomas, Benjamin, Joseph, Patty, Mary and Calvin, besides three who died young.

Joseph's children were Jerusha, Joseph, Moses, Thankful, Stephen, Hannah, Jerusha 2d, Lucy, Beulah, Betsey, Aaron, Lemuel, Asahel and Thomas. Some of the family are still living in Onondaga Co., N. Y.

Benjamin m. Hepsibah [Skiff?], had Elizabeth, Chloe, Calvin, Thankful, Jacob, Lemuel, Lois, Jerusha, Joshua, Dimmis, Benjamin, Molly and Hepsibah. They settled in Herkimer Co., N. Y.

† Abel Eaton settled in Columbia Co., N. Y., was Deacon of the Church and Captain of the 1st company of Militia. His oldest son was Professor Amos Eaton of Troy, N. Y., the Geologist and Botanist. Professor Eaton was the father of the late General Amos B. Eaton, U. S. A., whose only son is the writer of this report.

DAVID⁴ (son of Thomas,³ b. 1706, d. about 1777), also lived in Ashford. He was married three times, 1st, Dinah Davis, 2d, Bethiah Tiffany, 3d, Patience Kendall, and had thirteen children. The married sons were Josiah, Ephraim, David (great-grandfather to Hon. Dorman B. Eaton), Asa, Ezekiel, Simeon and James. Josiah and Ezekiel remained in Connecticut; the others settled to the northward, James going to Springfield, David to Hanover, N. H., and Ephraim, Simeon and Asa to Vermont. The daughters were three successive Marys, Sarah and Anne.

JOSHUA⁴ (b. 1709, m. Ann Woodcock, 1737, d. 1785), brother of Thomas, Nathaniel and David, lived in Ashford. He left one son and a daughter. The daughter, Mehitabel, married Wm. Knowlton. The son, Samuel, had several sons, Philemon, Cyril, Charles, Roswell, Erastus Samuel and Charles, also daughters Abigail and Chloe, most of whom settled in the interior of the State of New York.

The sons of William³ of Dedham were three, William, Josiah and Jeremiah.

WILLIAM⁴ (b. 1705, m. Abigail Bracket, 1738, d. 1751), remained in Dedham. His only son, William, had several sons, who settled first near Rome, N. Y., but subsequently scattered throughout the State. It is within the last year that this branch of the family has been found and identified. One member of it, Hon. Augustus T. Eaton, is now Mayor or President of the village of Olean, N. Y., and is working up for us the history of his immediate kinsfolk. Another was a distinguished portrait painter, Mr. Joseph O. Eaton, who died a few years ago at Yonkers, N. Y.

JOSIAH⁴ (b. 1711, m. Sarah Day, 1736, d. 1802), settled in Needham, Mass., where he had ten children. The sons who had families were Ebenezer, John, Jonathan and William. Ebenezer lived in Westminster, Mass.; John was one of the early settlers of Gardner, Mass.; Jonathan also settled in Gardner, but his family is extinct; and William remained at Needham. One of William's sons, Josiah, born in 1807, is with us to-day, and is one of the very few living representatives of the sixth generation.

of the Eatons of Dedham. The daughters were Sarah (Kingsbury), Beulah, Silence and Mercy (Kingsbury).

JEREMIAH⁴ (b. 1716, m. Elizabeth Woodcock, 1751, d. about 1780-90), to Needham with his brother Josiah, and had four sons and four daughters. Three of the daughters died young women. The youngest one, Alice, married Ebenezer Ware of Hancock, N. H., and her brothers also removed to Hancock. Of these, the oldest, Jeremiah, was an old bachelor; the others, Moses, Lemuel and Samuel, all had families, and many of their descendants are now among the most prominent citizens of Hancock and the neighboring towns.

Deacon Jonathan's four sons remained at Killingly for some years after their father's death, two of them running the old mill a good while; but at last they all moved away.

JONATHAN⁴ (born 1721, m. Sarah (Johnson?) about 1747, d. 1775), the oldest, removed about 1760 to Adams, in western Massachusetts. He had sons Abner, Jonathan, Alpheus, Sylvanus and Parley, and daughters Penelope, Sarah (Johnson), Hannah (Sherwood) and Diadama (Holdridge). Abner settled in Underwood, Vermont. Jonathan died unmarried. Abner went to Saratoga Co., N. Y., where two of his daughters, now over 80 years of age, still reside. Sylvanus went to Schoharie Co., N. Y., thence to Cambridge, Vt., and thence to Gerry, Chautauqua Co., N. Y. His sons were men of sterling worth; one is still living in Rochester, Minn.; one is a farmer in Allegan Co., Michigan; another was a judge of a circuit-court in Wisconsin; another a farmer in Vermont, and another a sheriff in Michigan.

JOHN⁴ (b. 1724, m. Hannah Johnson, d. 1788), also removed to Adams, Mass., but died while on a visit to a son in Herkimer Co., N. Y. He had five sons, John, Elisha, Wyman, Rufus and Comfort, and six daughters, Rhoda (Bucklin), Esther (Richardson), Lydia (Richmond), Keziah (Knapp), Mehitabel (Benchley), and Hannah (Brown). The sons all settled in Herkimer Co., N. Y., and were men of character and

influence. Some members of the family still live in Herkimer Co., but most of them have moved away, and they are now found all the way from Olean, N. Y., to Nebraska. Several of them have been Baptist clergymen of considerable eminence, one was a chaplain in the U. S. Navy, and to one, Rev. Zelora Eaton, we are indebted for his having written out fifty years ago what he knew of the family history.

COMFORT⁴ (b. 1729, m. Mehitabel Whitmore, 1771, d. unknown), had four daughters, Abigail, Hannah, Abigail 2d and Sarah, and one son. Very little is known of this family, but it is thought that they removed from Killingly to somewhere in Vermont. Rev. Zelora Eaton preserved a tradition that Comfort Eaton, whether the father or the son I can not tell, drove a herd of cattle to Boston, sold them, had a hat full of silver dollars, and was never heard from again.

MARSTON⁴ (b. 1731, m. Elizabeth Lyon, 1762, d. 1776), the youngest son of the Deacon, removed to Belchertown, Mass., in 1776, and died there very soon after his arrival. He had three sons and one daughter, Walter, Rufus, Marson and Elizabeth. Descendants are now living at Worcester, Amherst, Northampton, Providence and Cincinnati.

The living descendants of John Eaton of Dedham are many thousands, and probably nearly two thousand of these inherit the name of Eaton. The number of distinguished men whose ancestry can be traced to this John Eaton is very considerable, and includes those who have made their mark in the pulpit, at the bar, in war, medicine, business, politics, literature, art and science; but these particulars must be left to the more extended History of the family. When this History may appear must largely depend on the promptness with which the living members of the family may reply to the letters of the compiler. Most of the names in the sixth generation are known, but there are many persons in the seventh, eighth and ninth generations, of whom no record has yet been received.

John and Robert Mason, who married the daughters of John Eaton,¹ had several sons and daughters, born at Dedham or at Medfield. No attempt has yet been made to trace their posterity.