

## JOHN ALDEN

**ORIGIN:** Southampton

**MIGRATION:** 1620 on *Mayflower*

**FIRST RESIDENCE:** Plymouth

**REMOVES:** Duxbury 1632

**OCCUPATION:** Cooper

**FREEMAN:** In "1633" Plymouth list of freemen, among those admitted prior to 1 January 1632/3 [PCR 1:3]; also in lists dated in or near 1637, 1639 and 1658 (in the latter two listed as of Duxbury) [PCR 1:52, 8:174, 198].

**EDUCATION:** Although there is no direct evidence for his literary and educational attainments, his extensive public service, including especially his appointments as colony treasurer and to committees on revising the laws, certainly indicates that he must have been well-educated.

**OFFICES:** "Mr. John Alden Sen[ior]" is in the Duxbury section of the 1643 list of men able to bear arms [PCR 8:189].

Assistant, 6 February 1631/2 [WP 3:65], 1 January 1632/3, 1 January 1633/4, 1 January 1634/5, 5 January 1635/6, 3 January 1636/7, 6 March 1637/8, 4 March 1638/9 [PCR 1:5, 21, 32, 36, 48, 79, 116 (the assistants elected on 3 March 1639/40 were not sworn until 2 June 1640, so John Alden continued to serve as assistant at a few courts in early 1640)]. Deputy for Duxbury to Plymouth General Court 1641, 1642, 1644 and 1646 to 1649, and also at courts of 20 August 1644, 28 October 1645 and 3 March 1645/6 [PCR 2:16, 40, 72, 75, 94, 95, 104, 117, 123, 144]. Assistant each year from 1650 to 1686 [PCR 2:153, 166; 3:7, 30, 48, 77, 99, 114, 134, 162, 187, 214; 4:13, 36, 60, 90, 122, 147, 179; 5:17, 34, 55, 90, 112, 143, 163, 194, 229, 256; 6:9, 34, 58, 83, 106, 127, 164, 185]. Acted as Deputy Governor on two occasions, in absence of Governor, 7 March 1664/5, 30 October 1677 [PCR 4:81, 5:245]. Treasurer, 3 June 1656, 3 June 1657, 1 June 1658 [PCR 3:99, 115, 135]. Council of War, 27 September 1642, 10 October 1643, 2 June 1646, 6 April 1653, 12 May 1653, 1 June 1658, 2 April 1667 [PCR 2:46, 63, 100; 3:26, 28, 138; 4:145]. Committee to revise laws, 4 June 1645, 3 June 1657 [PCR 2:85, 3:117]. Committee on Kennebec trade, 3 March 1645/6, 7 June 1648, 8 June 1649, 5 March 1655/6 [PCR 2:96, 127, 144; 3:96]. Appointed to numerous other minor posts and committees by Plymouth General Court.

**ESTATE:** In 1623 Plymouth land division granted an unknown number of acres as a passenger on the *Mayflower* in 1620 [PCR 12:4]. In 1627 Plymouth cattle division, included in company of John Howland, along with wife Priscilla, daughter Elizabeth and son John [PCR 12:10].



Assessed £1 4s. in Plymouth tax lists of 25 March 1633 and 27 March 1634 [PCR 1:9, 27].

Assigned mowing ground for the year, 14 March 1635/6, 20 March 1636/7 [PCR 1:40, 56].

On 6 March 1636/7, "A parcel of land containing a knoll, or a little hill, lying over against Mr. Alden's land at Blewfish River, is granted by the Court unto the said Mr. John Alden in lieu of a parcel of land taken from him (next unto Samuel Nash's lands) for public use" [PCR 1:51].

Granted "certain lands at Green's Harbor," 5 February 1637/8 [PCR 1:76]. Granted to Miles Standish and John Alden three hundred acres "on the north side of the South River," 2 July 1638 [PCR 1:91]. Granted "a little parcel of land... lying at the southerly side of his lot," 3 September 1638 [PCR 1:95].

On 3 June 1657 "Liberty is granted unto Mr. John Alden to look out a portion of land to accommodate his sons withall, and to make report thereof unto the Court, that so it may be confirmed unto him" [PCR 3:120].

13 June 1660: "In regard that Mr. Alden is low in his estate, and occasioned to spend much time at the courts on the country's occasions, and so hath done this many years, the Court have allowed him a small gratuity, the sum of ten pounds, to be paid by the Treasurer" [PCR 3:195].

Granted "a competency of land" at Namasskett, 7 June 1665 [PCR 4:95]. Granted one hundred acres at Teticutt, 4 March 1673/4 [PCR 5:141].

On 1 April 1679 John Alden gave to his son Joseph "all that my share of land... within the township of Bridgewater" [PLR 3:194].

On 8 July 1674 John Alden of Duxbury "for love and natural affection and other valuable causes and considerations" deeded to "David Alden his true and natural son all that his land both meadow and upland that belongs unto him situate or being at or about a place called Rootey Brook within the Township of Middleborough ... excepting only one hundred acres," containing about three hundred acres [PLR 3:330].

A description of the land of "Mr. John Aldin, of Duxbery," is entered under date of 4 December 1637, but with the modern annotation that this is a later entry, and with the internal statement that one of the abut-tors was "Philip Delano, deceased," which means that the entry must have been made in 1681 or later; this is immediately followed by an entry for another parcel of land which Alden bought of Edward Hall in 1651 [PCR 1:71, 73].

On 1 January 1684[/5] [36 Charles II] John Alden Sr. of Duxbury for "that real love and parental affection which I bear to my beloved and dutiful son Jonathan Alden" deeded to him all my upland in Duxbury, for which "see old book of grants and bounds of land anno 1637 folio 137," and all other lands at Duxbury whether granted by court at Plymouth or town of Duxbury [PLR 6:53].



On 13 January 1686[/7] [2 James II] John Alden Sr. of Duxbury for "that natural love and affection which I bear to my firstborn and dutiful son John Alden of Boston" deeded him one hundred acres at Pekard Neck alias Pachague with one-eighth of the meadow belonging to that place, and one hundred acres at Rootey Brook (brother David Alden is to have first right of purchase if John should wish to sell this hundred acres), together with a sixteen shilling purchase being the fifteenth lot, all in Middleborough, and one hundred acres, the first in a division of one thousand acres in Bridgewater [PLR 5:427].

On 19 August 1687 John Alden Sr. of Duxbury, cooper, gave to his sons Jonathan and David Alden five acres of salt marsh at Duxbury and "my whole proportion in the Major's Purchase commonly so-called being the thirty-fifth part of said purchase" [MD 9:145, citing PLR 4:65].

The inventory of John Alden's estate was taken on 31 October 1687 by Jonathan Alden, and totalled £49 17s. 6d., all movables. On 13 June 1688 the heirs of John Alden Sr. of Duxbury signed a release in favor of Jonathan Alden, stating that they had received their portion of the estate; those signing were Alexander Standish (in the right of his wife Sarah deceased), John Bass (in the right of his wife Ruth deceased), Mary Alden, Thomas Delano, John Alden, Joseph Alden, David Alden, Priscilla Alden and William Pabodie [PPR 1:10, 16; MD 3:10].

**BIRTH:** About 1599 (deposed aged 83 on 6 July 1682 [MD 3:120]; in his 89th year at death on 12 September 1687 [MD 9:129]; "about eighty-nine years of age" at death on 12 September 1687 [MD 34:49]).

**DEATH:** Duxbury 12 September 1687 [Sewall 150; MD 9:129, 34:49].

**MARRIAGE:** Plymouth about 1623 PRISCILLA MULLINS, daughter of WILLIAM MULLINS; she died after 1651, when she is mentioned in Bradford's summary of *Mayflower* passengers.

#### CHILDREN:

- i ELIZABETH, b. about 1624; m. Plymouth 26 (or 20) December 1644 William Pabodie [PCR 2:79; DuVR]; she d. Little Compton 31 May 1717 [LCVR 143], "a. 92" [*Boston News-Letter*]. (Her tombstone at Little Compton gives her age at death as "in the 94th year of her age," but as the current monument was erected in 1882, this may not have been on the original stone.)
- ii JOHN, b. about 1626; m. Boston 1 April 1660 "Elizabeth Everill, widow, relict of Abiell Everill, deceased" (although the correct date should probably be 1659, as a child was born to John and Elizabeth Alden on 17 December 1659 [BVR 69], and in the original form of the vital records, given in the second of the following cita-



tions but not in the first, this record is imbedded among others for 1659) [BVR 76; NEHGR 18:333; but see NEHGR 52:162 and Munsey-Hopkins 55, which interpret the 1659 birth record to imply that John Alden had had an earlier wife, also named Elizabeth]; she was born before 1640, daughter of William Phillips, and m. Boston 6 July 1655 Abiel Everill [BVR 52]; John Alden d. 14 March 1701/2 [Sewall 463]

- iii JOSEPH, b. about 1627 (in list of men able to bear arms in 1643, and therefore at least 16 [PCR 8:189]); m. by about 1660 Mary Simons, daughter of MOSES SIMONS or SIMONSON and Sarah \_\_\_\_\_ [MD 31:60].
- iv PRISCILLA, b. say 1630; living unm. in 1688 [PPR 1:16].
- v JONATHAN, b. about 1632; m. Duxbury 10 December 1672 Abigail Hallett; he d. Duxbury 14 February 1696/7 "in the 65 year of his age" [MD 9:159; NEHGR 52:365]. (The date on the tombstone is 14 February 1697, but the double-dating problem is resolved by the probate papers, as administration on the estate was granted on 8 March 1696/7 [MD 6:174-78].)
- vi SARAH, b. say 1634; m. by about 1660 Alexander Standish (date based on approximated birthdates of children [NEHGR 52:363-65]).
- vii RUTH, b. say 1636; m. Braintree 3 February 1657/8 John Bass [BrVR 716].
- viii MARY, b. say 1638; living unm. in 1688 [PPR 1:16].
- ix REBECCA, b. say 1640; subject of unfounded rumor that she was "with child," 1 October 1661 [PCR 4:7]; m. in 1667, before 30 October, Thomas Delano [PCR 4:168, 8:122; NEHGR 102:83, 86].
- x DAVID, b. say 1642; m. by 1674 Mary Southworth, dau. of CONSTANT SOUTHWORTH and Elizabeth Collier (in his will, dated 27 February 1678, Constant Southworth bequeathed to daughter Mary Alden [PCPR 4:1:18-20]).

**COMMENTS:** According to Bradford, "John Alden was hired a cooper at Southampton where the ship victualled, and being a hopeful young man was much desired but left to his own liking to go or stay when he came here; but he stayed and married here" [Bradford 443]. In his accounting of the *Mayflower* families in 1651, Bradford stated under William Mullins that "his daughter Priscilla survived, and married with John Alden; who are both living and have eleven [sic] children. And their eldest daughter is married and hath five children" [Bradford 445]. (As the marginal annotation for this entry gives the "increasing" as fifteen, and the eldest



daughter already had five children, the correct number for John and Priscilla is more likely ten [MD 39:111].)

Many suggestions have been made as to the English origin of John Alden. Alicia Crane Williams has recently examined all the relevant evidence carefully and exhaustively, and comes to the conclusion that, although one or two of the suggested origins are "tempting," all are far from proved [MD 39:111-22, 40:133-36, 41:201]. By entering "Southampton" under *ORIGIN* above, we are only taking note of Bradford's statement that Alden was hired at that port; we are not implying that he was born or raised there.

The present account differs somewhat from other accounts in the birth order of the children, and the approximated ages. The estimated dates of birth for the first two children (Elizabeth and John) are reasonably well-defined because they fell between the 1623 land division and the 1627 cattle division. The third child (Joseph) must have been born late in 1627 to appear on the 1643 list of men able to bear arms. The next date which we are able to fix is that of Jonathan, who was said at his death early in 1697 to be in his sixty-fifth year, and so born in 1632 (or possibly early in 1633); note that this gives us a gap of about five or six years between Joseph and Jonathan. We arbitrarily place one of the unmarried daughters, Priscilla, in this gap, although it might as well be Mary who fits here. The remainder of the children are then ranged after Jonathan at two year intervals. This makes Ruth about twenty-two when she married John Bass, and Rebecca about twenty-one when she was the subject of the unfortunate rumor. Given the paucity of solid evidence on many of these points, other plausible arrangements may be easily constructed.

Some accounts of the family of John Alden include a son Zachariah, who had a daughter Anne Alden who married in 1699 Josiah Snell. In 1948 Hallock P. Long demonstrated that this son never existed, and that Anna Alden was almost certainly the daughter of John Alden's son Jonathan [NEHGR 102:82-86].

Attempts have been made to include Henry Alden of Billerica, Roxbury and Dedham as a descendant of John Alden, but this cannot be. Henry Alden was rated in Billerica in 1688 [NEHGR 31:303], so he must have been born no later than 1667. The wills of John Alden's sons John and Joseph make it clear that neither of them had a son Henry. John Alden's son Jonathan did not marry until 1672, and his son David apparently even later than that. Henry Alden must have been a late immigrant to New England, with no known genealogical connection with John Alden of Plymouth and Duxbury [MD 42:21 ff.].

As noted above, John Alden was frequently a member of the committee on the Kennebec trade. He had actively participated in the trade himself, and in early 1634 he became involved in an incident in which a



party of Plymouth men led by himself and John Howland became embroiled with a group of men from the Piscataqua settlement which would grow into Dover. One man on each side was killed, and in the aftermath Alden was detained at Boston as security against the final resolution of the conflict. [See WJ 1:155-56, 162-63; WP 3:167-68; MBCR 1:119; and Bradford 262-68, for the particulars of this incident.]

The results of a 1960 season of digging are given by Roland Wells Robbins in *Pilgrim John Alden's Progress: Archaeological Excavations in Duxbury* (Plymouth: The Pilgrim Society 1969).

## FRANCIS ALEWORTH

1 March 1630/1: "Mr. Aleworth" was one of six (four styled "Mr.") to be sent back to England on *Lyon*, or by 1 May next, or by next ship after that, "as persons unmeet to inhabit here" [MBCR 1:82-83].

18 May 1631: "Frauncis Aleworth" admitted to freemanship [MBCR 1:366].

26 July 1631: "Mr. Frauncis Aleworth is chosen Lieutenant unto Captain Southcoate ..." [MBCR 1:90].

3 October 1632: "Lieutenant Aleworth hath liberty granted him to return to England by the ship *Lyon*" [MBCR 1:100].

**COMMENTS:** Pope speculates that Aleworth may have resided in Dorchester, since he was replacing another Dorchester man as head of the train band. This does not necessarily follow, since at this early date the train bands drew from more than a single town. However, the possibility is still there, and as a result a search in the West Country for a man of this name might turn up additional information.

Savage asserts that the man sentenced to deportation on 1 March 1630/1 was not the same as the man of the later records. This may be correct, but also does not necessarily follow. First, at least one other man who was also supposed to be sent home (JOSIAS PLASTOWE) was still in New England late in 1631. Second, we do not know what sin Aleworth had committed, but it was relatively minor, since he was not to be sent back in chains, as were two others at the same time. Thus, it is at least conceivable that he was able to rehabilitate himself, although this must have happened very quickly, since he was a freeman within three months of the announced banishment.