

Given Names Reflect a Puritan Persuasion
by R. Carter Blaisdell

A study of the given names of Blaisdell family members before and after 1635, the year our patriarch Ralph Bleasdale sailed to America, shows a shift from Teutonic to Biblical names, indicating a Puritan persuasion. Between 1559 and 1633 there were 16 male and 12 female given names among the Bleasdale/Blaisdell family members.

Names in England Before 1635

The male given names before 1635 are John (12 entries), Robert (9), Henry (8), James and Richard (7 ea.), Lawncelet and William (6 ea.), Thomas (5), Gyles (4), Leonard (2) with one entry for Alexander, Anthony, Marcus, Michael, Radi and Ralph.

The dominant female given names between 1559 and 1633 were Issabell (8), Alice (6), Elizabeth (5), Janet (4), Agnes, Anne, Ellen and Jane (3 ea.), Margaret (2), Grace, Katherine and Mary (1).

Early Male Names in America

After arriving in America in 1635 the dominant male given name of Ralph Bleasdale's progeny to the sixth generation were John (18 entries), Daniel, Ebenezer, Jonathan and Samuel (11 ea.), Henry (10), Jacob (9), David (8), Ralph (7), Abner, Ephraim, Stephen and William (6 ea.), Elijah and Enoch (5 ea.), Moses and Thomas (4 ea.), Isaac, Joseph, Nicholas, Philip and Richard (3 ea.).

Also: Eliphalet, Ezra, James, Joshua, Nathaniel, Oliver and Spencer (2 ea.), Aaron, Abijah, Christopher, Dummer, Eliot, Ezekiel, Harvey, Hezekiah, Jedediah, Jeremiah, Josiah, Levi, Lewis, Marcus, Micajah, Nehemiah, Parrit, Peter, Robert, Rodolphus, Roger, Sargent, Thomas, Timothy, Wells (1 ea.)

Early Female Names in America

The preferred given names for Ralph's female descendants in America to the sixth generation were Mary (28), Elizabeth/Betty (19), Sarah/Sally (18), Hannah (17), Abigail (11), Anne, Dorothy and Judith (9 ea.), Lydia & Ruth (7 ea.), Molly (6), Martha & Miriam (5 ea.), Susanna & Rhoda (4 ea.); Naomi & Polly (3 ea.), Eleanor, Dinah, Jane, Mehitable, Nabby and Olive (2 ea.), Margaret, Mercy, Patience, Rachel, Rebecca, Ruhamah and Thankful (1 ea.).

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