

Who was Ralph Bleasdale, America's Patriarch?

“Fitting all these various items into the composite picture in which the parts seem to confirm the whole and the whole the parts, we do get a consistent result, which, while it will always remain without actually positive assurance, nevertheless, does make a reasonable and probable whole. With these qualifications of uncertainty the result is as follows:

“Ralph Bleasdale was probably born near Bolton, Lancashire, shortly after 1600. [Later Blaisdell Family National Association Genealogists have concluded that he was born in Hawkshead in 1593; perhaps he later moved to the Bolton area.] In that [Bolton] general neighborhood his ancestors had lived for some generations. He was born into, or achieved, a measurable comfort by some form of association with the wool trade, which gave him the name of a ‘tailor.’

“He was brought up amid Puritan influences, which deeply impressed him and which ultimately shaped his life and sent him to the lands beyond the ocean. He was a man of more than common education.

“In Lancashire he married Elizabeth [Parker]....., who survived him. Before leaving England they had one son, Henry, who as a lad of three, accompanied his parents on their memorable journey and through whom the whole line of descendants who have deployed the family name throughout the world.

“As a trader in wool and woolen goods [‘tailor’] he became aware of the sea travel, and possibly himself had made the trip from near-by Liverpool to Ireland; then to Milford Haven [Wales] where he could take the ship to New England, thus avoiding the difficulties of the hard journey by land to the southern port of Bristol, where ships for America commonly started. This course he took.

“To what part he intended exactly to go in New England is uncertain, but his ship was wrecked at Pemaquid Point, Maine. Some of the passengers on board the wrecked vessel re-shipped to Boston, but he located temporarily at York, Maine, where he acquired property and from which place he moved a few years later [1640] to Amesbury [adjacent Salisbury east of Amesbury], where he spent most of his active life. Records of him in these places are considerable.

“In his last years he is said to have lived at Lynn and to have died there. All in all, he must have been a man in whom the family should take abundant pride as, let us hope, he might, in turn, take pride in the family which he founded.”

Above is quoted from *Blaisdell Papers*, Vol. II, No. 8 (Autumn 1944), pp 12-13.