

GIDEON ROYCE (1711-1761)

MARY DUTTON (1723-1746)

In 1963, Belle (Rice) Aamodt of Utah, collaborated with Donald Lines Jacobus in a search for all available data that would pertain to Gideon Rice and his son Titus.¹ Eva (Rice) Howell did some independent research,² and, more recently, Dora (Rice) Duncan, research chairperson of the Ira Rice Family Organization, has added much information to the above works, all of which has made this writing possible.³

The material referred to here became the main source for the story of Gideon and Mary Dutton Royce of Meriden, Connecticut and for the story of their son, Titus (1-5). On June 26, 1963, Jacobus wrote:

"Gideon Royce (or Rice), b. Wallingford, 4 May, 1711; died 30 Jan. 1761 (recorded both in Wallingford vital records and in the Meriden Parish church records). This and other records show that the family of Gideon Rice lived in the Meriden Parish of Wallingford which later, in 1806, was set off as a separate town of Meriden. Gideon married first at Wallingford 4 Oct. 1742, at the age of 31 years (Meriden Ch. rec.), Mary Dutton, b. Wallingford, 16 July 1723; d. 2 May 1746 (Meriden Ch. rec.), dau. of David and Lydia (Cook) Dutton. They had two children."⁴

The listing of all of Gideon's children is given full documentation in "Families of Ancient New Haven". They are listed here:

- "1. Mary Rice, b. Aug. 10, 1743, died Sept. 29, 1745, ae 2
2. Titus Rice, b. Feb. 4, 1744/5, bp. Jan. 27, 1745/6; md. Sept. 7, 1770 to Lois Kellogg"⁵ (Research has disclosed two later marriages not included in the above source) (See 1-5)

As noted earlier, Gideon's wife, the mother of his first two children, died May 2, 1746, leaving Gideon and his baby son, Titus, who was about fifteen months of age.

"Gideon married, second, Mar. 25, 1747, (Meriden Church records) Rebecca, dau. of Reuben and Mary (Dayton) Johnson, widow of Wait Abernathy, b. July 14, 1723, died May 13, 1811; ae.88; she married (3) Feb. 24, 1763 - Joseph Cowles. Gideon died 30 Jan. 1761.

The children of Gideon by his second marriage:

3. Wait Rice, b. July 11, 1748, bp. Aug. 14, 1748; died, 1831; res. Barkhamstead, 1782; md. May 4, 1775 to Esther, the dau. of Enos and Content (Curtis) Andrews.
4. Justus Rice, b. Mar. 25, 1750, 'Child', died Apr. 19, 1752, ae. 2
5. Gideon Rice, b. Dec. 26, 1751, bp. Feb. 9, 1752, died 1777
6. Mary Rice, b. Oct. 30, 1753, bp. Jan 13, 1754; md. Samuel Royce.
7. Justus Rice, b. Dec. 8, 1756, bp. Jan 1757, died 1809; md. Jan 12, 1789 - Lois, dau. of Stephen and Susanna (Curtis) Perkins, b. Sept. 26, 1760, died, Jan. 23, 1852, ae. 94
8. Rebecca Rice, b. April 16, 1758, died May 15, 1811, ae. 54; md. Jotham Mitchell.
9. Jotham Rice, b. Mar. 18, 1761, died 1782."⁶

(#8 above, Rebecca, is the half-sister of Titus, who was left with the care of Titus' young daughter, Rachel, mentioned in story (1-5), while Titus sojourned in Berkshire County, Mass., from where he enlisted as a soldier in the Revolutionary War.)

Even though the records specify Wallingford as the place of births, marriages and deaths, it is well to remember that the writer is bound to quote the records as they were written, regardless of the fact that we know the location of the Royce (Rice) homes was actually in the area of Meriden.

Much of the Royce land-holdings had been in the family from the time of its purchase by Gideon's grandfather, Samuel Royce, and his great uncles, brothers of Samuel, and such properties were referred to by the local people as the 'Royce Farms'. It was here that Gideon and his ten brothers and sisters grew to maturity and enjoyed the association of their parents who lived to a ripe old age. In fact, Gideon, himself, only lived a couple of years after his parents died in 1759. (Map #13)

In the veins of Gideon's posterity runs the blood of many Wallingford (Meriden) and New Haven pioneers, whose history is interwoven in events of these localities. The surnames Churchill (2-1), Foote (2-3), Cook (4-7), Parker (4-9), Ives (4-11), Merriman (4-13), Moss (7-73), Austin (7-64), Peck (7-72), Bradley (7-78), Brockett (7-81), and Atwater (7-82) are prevalent in the areas and represent lines of direct ancestors.

Eva Rice Howell left notes that are reminders of some of the facts of detail concerning Gideon and Mary's short time together:

"Their first child died at the age of two years. This sad event was followed closely by the death of the mother on May 2, 1746, when baby Titus was fifteen months of age.

"Rebecca (Johnson) Abernathy became the new mother and, as listed, seven more children graced the home as time went on." ⁷

Meriden Parish Church would indicate the religious leanings of this good family.

Mary (Dutton) Rice was a descendant of a long and illustrious line of ancestors. Because of early time Knighthoods with prestigious connections to royalty, the line of Dutton is unbroken and recorded to 974 A.D. Mary's great-grandfather, John Dutton (7-1), born in 1596, in Frodsham, Cheshire, England, immigrated to America in 1630 at the age of 34. For five generations her people had been pioneers helping to settle new areas in New England. Combine the contributions made by Mary's forebears to that of the great colonizers in Gideon's line, and we can feel indebted to them all for the heritage they gave us.

The situation of the settlements at the mouths of the navigable rivers that emptied into the Sound, such as New Haven of the Quinnipiac, Old Saybrook of the Connecticut, and New London of the Thames River, facilitated commerce for a widely extended back country and for the numerous mill seats and villages that soon occupied areas of the tributary streams. (See Map #5)

Gideon lived at a time when great Americans were being born. Benjamin Franklin was five years old when Gideon made his first appearance on the scene. Gideon was twenty-one years of age when George Washington was born and he lived to see the surrender of the French, ending the French and Indian Wars. He lived during the time the Thirteen British Colonies became a united force and

the birth of a new kind of nationalism seemed in the offing for America.

By the time Gideon came on the scene, Wallingford and Meriden were pretty well settled, but the forces of adventure were pressing the hearts of many to advance with those who were heralds of a new line of frontiersmen, destined to push on ever farther toward the west. Had Gideon lived longer, he may have encouraged his son, Titus, and his grandsons, the sons of Titus, in their response to the call of the western wilderness.

Through the years of the founding of new settlements in New England, great motivating forces seemed ever to wield an influence for migratory moves. The urge to own land was an ever present force. The elements of strife and contention kept groups moving on in an effort to find the ideal place to live. Sometimes families were enticed to new territory because settlements gave a colony support for its claim on land. As one reads of the difficulties encountered in so many, if not all, of the settlements in New England, one can realize that religion played the major role; an even greater role, in most cases, than did the Indian rivalry.

A diligent effort had been made by the settlers of the New Haven areas to set up the freedom and tolerance required for a harmonious society but, even so, the prevalence of persecution pervaded. The orderly system employed avoided much of what otherwise would have brought more suffering and strife to the people there.

In many settlements of New England, the persecution was so strong that bands of people united to migrate again and again into new areas. Indeed, we can say, without a question, that much of the movement into new and wild areas came about as a result of religious intolerance.

Where to go was most often determined by the accessibility of travel routes and by the modes of traveling. Mountain ranges were formidable factors. It was not until the time of Gideon's grandchildren that the mode of travel had advanced to an extent that the Appalatian range of mountains to the west was finally conquered, and the Conestoga wagon and river barges made travel possible for transportation of families into new areas out of Connecticut and Massachusetts. The early years of the nineteenth century saw a constant movement of people from New England heading for points west into New York and Pennsylvania. Up until then, canoes and rafts that could be readily built had been the mode of traveling to new settlements in the valleys of the river waterways. Horseback was the most common conveyance of land travel, though carts and wagons of a sort provided another way of carrying the family goods and provisions where trails could be followed.

Some of the earliest canoes were fashioned after the Indian methods. A log was hollowed out by burning and chiseling with crude hand-made tools. The more typical canoe was made of birch, spruce or elm bark. Its frame, however, was of cedar or spruce; and the bark was attached to the frame by tough, slender larch or balsam roots. To prevent leaking, the seams were sealed with melted balsam or spruce pitch. Longfellow describes it in 'Hiawatha':

Thus the birch canoe was builded
 In the valley, by the river,
 In the bosom of the forest;
 And it floated on the river
 Like a yellow leaf in Autumn,
 Like a yellow water lily.

Did you ever hear about bean porridge? To relieve hunger while traveling in winter, there was always a large round piece of frozen bean porridge taken along to last for days as the nursery rhyme suggests;

Bean porridge hot; bean porridge cold,
 Bean porridge in the pot, nine days old.

The posterity of the earlier planters was soon to multiply with each generation and though the sons could divide their father's land, it was not long until many of the sons found the situation too crowded for them all.

Gideon and most of his neighbors were reaping the benefits and harvests of a land that had belonged to their fathers. The lure of far away places did not attract them, as it did their sons; not enough to make them leave their improved places. Though conveniences were not what we now enjoy, they realized the blessings to be had in their peaceful community.

Gideon was fifty years of age when he died, leaving his wife, Rebecca, with six children and one more, Jotham, who was born less than two months after Gideon's death. Titus, Gideon's oldest child by his first wife, Mary Dutton, was 16 years of age when his father passed away in 1761. Rebecca, the step-mother of Titus, married Joseph Cowles in 1763, and thus was able to keep her children together as a family. However, Titus was bonded to a guardian, Charles Dutton, a brother of his deceased mother, Mary. According to the available scant data, we know that Titus was out on his own, providing for himself at an early age.

Julia M. Roys states that, "Between 1750 and 1800, a portion of the family began to spell their name Rice." ⁸

In the Connecticut Quarterly Magazine of January 1898, pp. 51-53, is found a write-up of some of the Colonial houses still standing in the Meriden area. Among the several mentioned was the farmhouse antedating its centennial by many years and shown as photographed here - 'The Rice House'. Deacon Esekiel Rice, mentioned in the write-up, was likely a descendant of Gideon and Rebecca (Johnson) Rice, though the line of descent has not been researched by the writer. It is of interest to include what is stated from the fact that the property undoubtedly was the same as that always referred to from the time of Samuel, (1-2) as the Rice Farms of Meriden. In the words of Mrs. Francis A. Breckenridge, we read with reference to the Rice house:

"...Low in its elevation, it is large upon the ground. Substantially built, its wide low hall with its staircase rising directly from it, gives an air of roominess not usual in dwellings of that period. This hall, now furnished with 'things new and old' gives access to the cosy rooms on each side, with their cupboards and corner fireplaces. This is, and has been for more than a hundred years, the 'Rice Farm.' There, many a year ago, Deacon

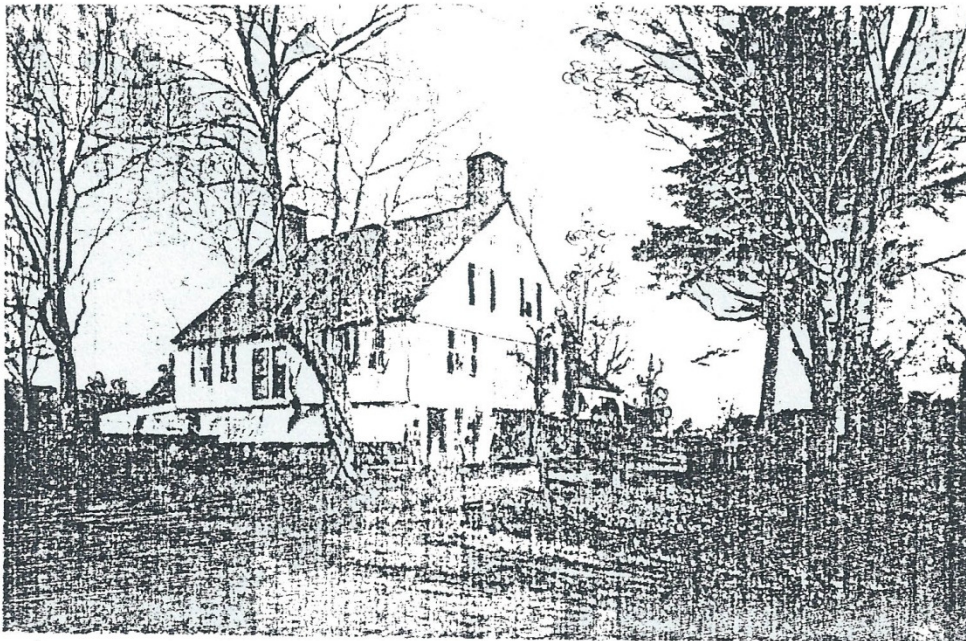
Ezekiel Rice, a widower with seven children, brought home as his bride the sometime widow of Dr. Hall of Wallingford. Into the family of seven Rice girls and boys, the new wife brought her three daughters. . . To these ten, six more were added and the sixteen grew up and all but one married. . . all known for the wealth of their intellectual resources.

"The house and land surrounding the home is still owned and occupied by members of the family name. Before the present dwelling (shown in picture) was built more than a century ago, there was another, of which only the door stones and an old well were discovered some years since. At the southwest corner of the low dooryard terrace, there stands a vigorous, and although distorted, very beautiful maple. This tree was a good size when the present house was built, and is at least a hundred and fifty years old. (This estimate was made at the time of this writing, 1898, which dates the tree back to Gideon's time.)

"A tall and vigorous pine tree has a pretty bit of family history connected with it. (To the right of the house in picture) One of the daughters, Rebecca (see #8, family listing) then a little girl, went to Middletown with her big brother, she riding behind him on a pillion. Going over the mountain, Rebecca saw a tiny tree, only a few inches high, and she transplanted it in the home dooryard. Some years later it seemed to be dying. It is a landmark, and would be missed, but it took a new start and bids fair to live through another generation. . .

"From the first this home was the center of good cheer and of an intelligent, social culture." 9

According to time calculation, the little girl of the story has reference to Gideon's daughter, Rebecca, and to one of her older brothers. This being correct, the home shown below was Gideon's and possibly dates back to the time of his father, Robert (1-3)



THE RICE HOUSE.

Gideon passed away in 1761, and his property was divided among his heirs. Jacobus reiterates the land records of Wallingford (18:407, 20:397, 22:200, 22:454, 23:585, 28:406) which show the sales of the lands belonging to Gideon as they were divided among the children after his death. Jacobus goes on further to state:

"It is apparent from these deeds that the son, Justus Rice, acquired the family property from the other heirs, his own brothers and sisters." 10

It is stated that the 'Rice farms' still remain in the possession of descendants of the original Rice owners. No doubt some of these descend from Gideon's son, Justus Rice. Justus had a son, Ezekiel in the armed forces of the Revolutionary War mentioned in (1-5) whose age would correspond to the Ezekiel referred to earlier and whose house is pictured in this treatise.

Titus, our ancestor, the oldest son of Gideon and half-brother of Justus, kept his share of the land until 1772 when he moved to Berkshire County, Massachusetts. Titus is the ancestor whose story (1-5) follows. He is the ancestor of a branch of the Rice family who came west with the Utah Pioneers, though he, himself, remained in Berkshire County, western Massachusetts, where he probably died.

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| 1. #156 | 6. ibid |
| 2. #157 | 7. #157 |
| 3. #158 and 159 | 8. #14, p.8 |
| 4. #156 | 9. #122 pp. 51-53 |
| 5. #3 Vol. 7, p.1557 | 10. #156 |