

NATHANIEL MERRIMAN (1613-1693/4) ae. 80

ABIGAIL OLNEY ( -before 1680)

A tremendous amount of material has been written on the life and works of Nathaniel Merriman. Of his first and second wife, there arose some controversy of opinions. I have preferred, in this writing, to use the statements of Mansfield Merriman in his "Nathaniel Merriman, one of the Founders of Wallingford" and John Merriman Adams in his "History of Adams and Evert Families". There seems to be only one documentation in vital statistics on this matter; that of Nathaniel's marriage to Joane Lines in 1680. This occurred after the births of all of his children, so we know that Joan (or Joane) was not the mother and that she was a second wife.

Mansfield Merriman's statement is:

"...that in 1649, Nathaniel Merriman married Abigail Olney, daughter of William Olney, one of the first settlers of Killingworth, Conn., and that in 1680 he married for his second wife, Jane Lines at Hadley, Mass." <sup>1</sup>

On page 9 of the same reference, the author had stated:

"This year (1649), or earlier, he (Nathaniel) had married and a son Nathaniel had been born. In 1692, when Nathaniel Merriman made his Will, the name of his wife was Joane (Jane), (taken from Colony records of New Haven) that she was a second wife and not the mother of his children." <sup>2</sup>

A quote found in the June 4, 1917 "Merriman Bulletin", New York, includes the statements of John Merriman Adams, in his "History of the Adams and Evert Families", and says:

"In 1906, James Shepard wrote to Mr. Adams for further information. In reply he received a letter from which the following extracts are here given, with the hopes that they may perhaps lead to the discovery of records:

" 'My G. Grandfather Stephen wrote up a record of the Olney and Adams families up to about 1800. Nathan I. Adams married Rachel Olney a cousin to Abigail who married Nathaniel Merriman. There is one thing about Abigail that I did not insert because Stephen did not, (and yet I believe it) and that is she married Jacob Lines who lived only 3 months after marriage. In due time she married Nathaniel and became the mother of his children. After Abigail's death he (Nathaniel) married Jane or Joane, an old maid sister of Abigail's first husband. One thing is certain to me that William Olney's daughter Abigail was the wife of Nathaniel and mother of his children...My G Uncle John's record shows it as does the record of Sally White, Susan Evert, as well as the record of my G. Grandfather Stephen Adams'." <sup>3</sup>

If we accept the statements of the above research, we can be fairly sure that Abigail Olney was Nathaniel's first wife and mother of his children, and that Jane or Joane Lines was a sister-in-law of Abigail, who we know from vital documents, was the second wife named in Nathaniel's Will.

Donald Lines Jacobus, an interested family member on the Lines

ancestry, who edited the material printed in "Merriman Reunion and Genealogy", accepted the fact of the marriage of Joane Lines and Nathaniel Merriman since it was on the vital records. Jacobus is the well known New England genealogist who relied heavily upon vital records for his facts.

Though it seems that efforts to verify the various author's statements has been fruitless, the writer feels that until such a time as the facts can be brought to light and cleared of any errors, it is well to concede to the sources studied that have named Abigail Olney as Nathaniel's first wife. Because of needed verification, the writer did not persue the Olney lines further than to accept the fact that Abigail was the daughter of William Olney, of Killingworth, Conn., whose wife was named Joan Bird.

The research accomplishments by the Merriman family organization has been thorough and complete. The Volume, "Merriman Family Reunion", 1913, edited by Jacobus in 1914, was the result of many years of study. It came out of reports made at a great gathering of the descendants of Nathaniel Merriman in 1913, and gave up-to-that-date findings. The writer quotes from this volume occasionally and would suggest that, if the reader of this story would like further information on Nathaniel Merriman and his descendants, he should consult the above mentioned book.

From this source comes the following background material:

"...The members of this line (Merriman) originally spelled their name with a 'y', but with many of them now the 'y' has become changed to an 'i'...

"It is probable that Nathaniel was born in London. At that time a boy in the middle class of life was quite fortunate if he were taught the bare rudiments of an education. We know that Nathaniel had this much, which he probably gained in a private or perhaps a parish school. But he learned far more in the school of experience as did all of his peers at that time. Books were scarce then and seldom owned except by those in good circumstances. In some of the parish churches there was a Bible chained to the pulpit which was read daily to all who would come and listen. The King James version was just beginning to take the place of the older translations, and those who came listened eagerly. No doubt Nathaniel with his parents heard it read on Sundays, and perhaps occasionally on week days.

"The sports and diversions in which Nathaniel engaged when a boy, were mostly such as boys always enjoy even to this day. And one which he would have witnessed with lively interest was the novel 'Punch and Judy' show which had been introduced in the streets of London only a few years previously.

"But we may safely assume that as soon as Nathaniel was old enough, he was put to work in his father's cooper shop and learned something of that useful trade. He did not aspire, however, to follow his father's occupation for a livelihood. He was content to leave that for his younger brother, John, while he preferred, even before he became of age, to seek his fortune in the new world. If 1613 was the year of Nathaniel's birth, he was only 19 when he bade farewell to parents, home and friends, and set out on a two-months' voyage for a far distant and little known country. How he served and wrought and succeeded, will be told you by those who follow." <sup>4</sup>

Other participants at the reunion shared their research in turn. Roger B. Merriman told about the Puritan Plough Company of 1630, and Nathaniel's voyage to Boston in 1632. Alice M. Merriman reported on Nathaniel's experiences in New Haven from 1640 to 1670. While continuing the life story of Nathaniel and his family, these two reviews have been used extensively. To cover the last portion of Nathaniel's life--that part that gives details about the family in Wallingford, the writer consulted the works of Mansfield Merriman.

In some Genealogical notes on the "Ancestry of Mary Elizabeth Billard", compiled by Wm. H. Edwards in 1959, there is found a concise statement covering Nathaniel's life in brief, which gives us a fair introduction to the more detailed information to be added later:

"Nathaniel Merriman was born in England about 1613, came to Boston in 1632, served in the Pequot War of 1637, lived in New Haven from 1640 to 1670, then became one of the principal founders of Wallingford, Conn., where he died Feb. 13, 1693/4. He was ensign of the military company in New Haven, lieutenant of that in Wallingford, and was appointed a Captain to raise troops for King Philip's War of 1675. (appnx. #4) He was town clerk of Wallingford for eight years, selectman for five years, and was nine times a deputy from Wallingford to the General Court of the Colony of Connecticut. He married Joan \_\_\_\_\_, who was born about 1628 and died in Wallingford Dec. 8, 1709. Lieut. Nathaniel Merriman, in his Will of June 6, 1692, mentions his wife, Joane; sons John, Samuel, and Caleb; daughter Mary Curtis; and surviving daughters (New Haven Probate Vol. 2, p.146)." <sup>5</sup>

The ancestry of Nathaniel Merriman is given by Jacobus in the story of his father, George, (see 4-12). His father recognized his New England son in his Will executed 31 Oct., 1655, and probated 19 May, 1656. After the usual preliminaries, it reads, as follows:

"I do give unto my son Nathaniel Merriman, now resident in New England, the sum of ten pounds of lawful English money, and unto my daughter Elizabeth Norman whom I have already advanced in marriage with Master John Norman, I give twenty shillings to buy her a ring in remembrance of my love. To my servant Henry Allison three pounds on this condition that he serve out the remainder of his time of apprenticeship with my son John Merriman. The residue to son John whom I do hereby make and ordain full and sole executor." <sup>6</sup>

Roger B. Merriman, eighth in descent from Nathaniel through his son Caleb, records in "The Merriman Reunion", the story of events that led Nathaniel to leave his native land and emigrate to New England. Religious unrest had been working for a long time in England, and many, rich, as well as poor, were ready to join Rev. John Davenport, ex-vicor of the St. Stephens Church in London, when he left home and country to arrive in Boston in June, 1637. To be sure, we hear often of some of the prominent ones who came such as Theophilus Eaton, who afterwards became Governor of the New Haven Colony, and others of his station.

Though Nathaniel Merriman did not come with Rev. Davenport and Eaton, still he must have left England around the same time (1632) or earlier. He left London near enough to that time to have been influenced by the same religious ideas and the same determination to come to a new country where those ideas

and convictions might have full sway.

It would seem that Nathaniel was from London since his father's Will in 1655 appears indisputable and gives that area as the place where George Merriman, his father, was living. "We can scarcely doubt that Nathaniel was the son referred to in the Will, since the Nathaniel mentioned was the only Nathaniel Merriman in New England in 1655." <sup>7</sup> (Map 1 #32)

It is not impossible that Nathaniel may, in early life, have been one of Rev. Davenport's London parishioners. This fact, as well as his experience in the Pequot War, and consequent acquaintance with this part (along the Long Island shore of what is now Connecticut) of the country, may very easily have led to his decision to join those who had begun the formation of a colony at Quinnipiac. Roger Merriman introduces us to the endeavor made by members of the "Plough Company" who had applied to the Council of Plymouth for a grant of land in New England; and on June 26, 1630, received a patent to an extensive piece of territory lying at the mouth of the River Sagadahoe, and comprising roughly what is now the southern portion of the State of Maine.

As told in Roger's same review, some of the members of this company came over to New England in the ship "The Plough" and a preliminary expedition of ten members of the company was sent out in the spring of 1631 to inspect the new grant. After a difficult trip, they finally returned to Boston July 6, 1631, very dissatisfied with what they saw. Whatever the case, it is certain that the full company of the "Plough" were left stranded in Boston and as recorded under date of Oct. 18, 1631, were in considerable financial straits. Whether or not the majority of the members of the company still in England had heard of the hard fate of their brethren of the ship "Plough", we cannot tell; at any rate, they were determined to persist in their enterprise and sent over other members of their Company in the spring and summer of 1632.

The ship "Whale"...arrived in Boston May 26, bringing about 30 passengers and 70 cows. Five members of the "Plough Company" were listed and the last of these five was our ancestor, Nathaniel Merriman. He was about nineteen years of age and he came, so it would seem, not on his own resources, for he undoubtedly had none. He came, it is stated, "upon the adventure of Peter Wooster; being now made up to ten pounds." <sup>8</sup> I take this to mean that Wooster had either made a loan for his passage or had made a gift of the amount.

The miseries of the members of the Company in New England seem to have been heightened rather than diminished after the arrival of the "Whale" and other shiploads of company members that followed. One of the five members of the company that came with Nathaniel apparently seized and retained the funds of the company and many, if not all, of the members suffered severely from his acquisitiveness.

"...A Court of Assistants in Boston records several orders for the 'inventorying and preservation of the goods of the company; for the paying of just debts out of the company estate, and for the binding over of some of its members'..." <sup>9</sup>

Much of the details of the circumstances are written in early recording of the Bay of Massachusetts area. Clearly by 1635, the Company was in a condition of insolvency and those members, who had not by then dispersed,

remained a not entirely welcome burden on the community.

In 1637 and '38, when Nathaniel would have been about 24 years of age, he served in the Pequot War. This fact became known with certainty when the General Court of Connecticut in 1698, made a grant of fifty acres of land to his son, John, "in consideration of his father's service in the Pequot War."

"This war was waged against the Pequot Indians in the coastal area off Long Island Sound on account of the many atrocities committed by them around the settlements. . . " 10

There is a possibility that Nathaniel might have come to this war with a detachment from Massachusetts, but Mansfield Merriman states that it would seem more probable that he was with those from Connecticut. Different writers assign him to different groups. After an initial attack had been made by the Connecticut troops, destroying about 500 Indians along the coast, they were joined by a party sent out from Massachusetts about twenty miles west of New Haven and there the combined troops killed and took captive most of the remaining Pequot.

In 1638, it is known that Nathaniel and a small number of soldiers spent the winter on the shore of the Quinnipiac Harbor, in a small hut as shelter. The next spring, a large party sailed from Boston, arriving in New Haven in April, and formed a permanent settlement there. Whether it is true that Nathaniel remained in New Haven at this time or returned to Boston and then came again with the Company who came with Rev. Davenport, can only remain a conjecture. However, the fact remains that he was a familiar acquaintance of Rev. Davenport, who had lived in London where Nathaniel had resided with his parents. The fact remains that he chose to be a part of Rev. Davenport and Theophilus Eaton's community and church in New Haven and made that new settlement his home in the New World. 11

The company that came to New Haven with the London merchant, Theophilus Eaton and the Rev. John Davenport, were the first settlers who attempted to set up a government and lay out a town with a covenant (see appendix #2), to be signed by anyone who wanted to settle within its confines. These two leaders had not been satisfied by the conditions they found in the towns around the Massachusetts Bay, and, in spite of inducements to settle in the neighborhood where they had landed, they sought for a virgin field where they could establish the religious and political ideas they had brought with them. The Quinnipiac meadows, near the mouth of the River by that name, was selected as a place where they could safely try their experiment in civil government. In New Haven the Bible was the Constitution and no one was entitled to the ballot who was not a church member in good standing. In other words, the colony was governed by what may be called a church oligarchy.

New Haven provided a considerably larger measure of liberty to dissenters than did the rule of the Puritans of the Bay of Massachusetts (Boston and area). Roger Merriman gave his reasoning for the late appearance of Nathaniel's name, affixed in his own handwriting, to the fundamental agreement in New Haven, to the fact that he was not, at the time the agreement was drawn up by those original fathers of the Colony, reckoned as a church member, and consequently was not in the enjoyment of full rights of citizenship.

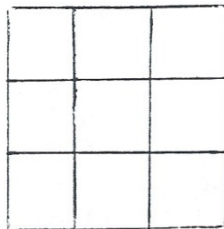
During those early years of settlement, the area was referred to as the

Quinnipiac, the Indian name given to the River and its mouth at the Sound. Streams, long since forgotten, but then navigable, were used by boats to go far inland for the fur trade that the Dutch prized so highly. They had thought the land unsuitable for habitation because of the ferocious Indians.

From the mouth of the Quinnipiac and on both sides, lay plains extending two miles at which distance stood basaltic rocks colored with iron, and very prominent in the landscape. Extending inland either to the east or the west were extensive salt meadows that spread out in the distance. Flowing into the Quinnipiac, a short distance above its outlet, was the present Mill River with its meadows. Further and to the north was West River. These extensive meadows, rich in provender, had doubtless greatly influenced the selection of the place given the English name of New Haven.

"The first business of the settlers had been to lay out the town in nine squares, the central one having been reserved as the market-place. The remaining eight squares had been divided into house-lots for the planters severally...Every planter had, also, some land in the meadows for pasture and some uplands for planting...To encourage colonization, the planters were gratuitously supplied with house lots of a few acres each. This division evidently took place in 1641, since in March of that year we find that Nathaniel was mentioned as third in order 'as their lots were drawne'. His lot was on what is now East Water Street." 12

The acreage that held the Market Place or 'trading post' also provided the 'Meeting House' space with its cluster of several 'block houses' or shelters, erected for the teams or saddle horses and the people who traveled any distance for an overnight stay. The center block of land also gave space for a field necessary for the exercises carried on by the 'military train band' which met regularly and, on occasions of special gatherings such as voting days, paraded in formation for the community members.



Alice Merriman, one of the contributors of research in the Reunion of mention (1913) stated:

"We may perhaps imagine his (Nathaniel's) marriage at about this time, although no specific record of it has thus far been discovered...The Town Court assigned to Nathaniel Merriman a farm; 'the land on ye east sid, betwixt the red rocks and Mr. Davenport's farne,' on Nov. 20, 1648..."

"Earlier in 1639, the colony had voted that the right of suffrage should be conferred on church members only...In 1644, it is noted that Nathaniel Merriman received the oath of fidelity on the 1st day of July, which proves him to have been a citizen 'in good and regular standing' in both church and state, as well as a man of usefulness in the community, a stipulated requirement of all signers of the 'fundamental agreement' of the colony." 13 (Appendix #7)

It is interesting to note that seats in the church were assigned according to social rank and official status. Church records are great for revealing the distinguished standing and respect accorded to those of accomplished honor and title. The Governor and Deputy Governor were given the entire front form; others occupied places behind them according to standing. (map #25) As stated by Miss Merriman:

"In this way we can see a gradual rise in our 'forefather's' position; at the first seating his name does not appear at all, but as time goes on, and there follows a second and a third seating, he is given a place at the side, and then is advanced to a seat in the middle isle;...

'Goodwife Merriman', or sometimes referred to as 'Sister Merriman', his wife, as was the custom for all wives, was given a seat across from her husband on the opposite side of the chapel... Doubtless the young people sat in the gallery, as only the heads of families are mentioned in the seating.

"In 1653, Nathaniel sold his home lot on East Water Street and all other properties, except his farm where he undoubtedly went to live. In 1659 a serious difference arose of opinion between the dwellers of the town and the inhabitants of the outlying farms who wished to establish villages of their own. Attendance at church was, of course, rigorously demanded of all; but at so great a distance as many were from New Haven, it proved a very difficult matter. The farmers asked for the privilege of establishing subordinate villages, having their own churches and constables so as to have the essentials of religious and civic government close at hand. The townsmen objected on account of the loss to them in 'rates' or taxes....

"Nathaniel took a part in this contention, bringing upon himself the criticism of being 'the spiteful man'. Censure in those days became very harsh even when perfect fairness seemed the point of view. The question, as serious and important as it seemed to the farther out farmers, was not settled until after the Revolution more than a hundred years later. It had meant that the farmers must come to town on Saturday and stay til after the 'Saboth' returning through the night or the next day. It meant a disadvantage to many of their children being unable to attend school...

"It may quite possibly be that the annoyance thus experienced had its bearings on his (Nathaniel's) subsequent removal to help found the town of Wallingford, although ten years later and, again, after settling in Wallingford, it is recorded that he continued to be one of the proprietors of New Haven." <sup>14</sup>

As mentioned before, Nathaniel was a veteran of the Pequot War of 1636-38, which experience put him in demand as a military commandant. The close proximity of the Indians made military protection necessary from the first, and every male from sixteen to sixty years of age was pressed into service. Nathaniel held positions over the train band of companies, squadrons, and dragoons for many years. In 1665, he was confirmed as the first Sergeant of the train band (military company).

As more shiploads of Pilgrims landed at New Haven, the town was being crowded with people who were anxious to find a place for a home. Crowding in those days would be considered sparsely settled for a town today. Each settler expected not only a spot of ground for his house, but a few acres extra upon which his sustenance depended. There must be some timber, some

pasture, and some arable land and ideally the settler might want his own stream for fishing. Milford, Branford and Guilford were founded and these three towns were soon welded into the 'Colony of New Haven'. (see maps #5, 8)

C. B. Gillispie, in his writings, tells us about the early endeavors of another Colony to the north of New Haven that was known as the 'Connecticut Colony' containing the three settlements of Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor. These three inland villages situated on the Connecticut River were in close proximity and Hartford became its governing center. The Connecticut Colony competed with the New Haven Colony in claiming much territory. The boundary line between New Haven and Hartford came into dispute for many years.

It is well at this point to mention the endeavors of the colonies beyond New Haven in order to perceive the problems that the exploiters of the land confronted.

We see many of our ancestors of both areas being involved, one way or another, in the early colonizations of the valleys in Connecticut; those fertile valleys along the rivers that emptied their waters into the Long Island Sound. The question of area contention was touched on in many of the previous stories. Because of Nathaniel Merriman's particular involvement, as one of a committee of surveyors, it might well stand mentioning once more, as it is given in selected explanations of Gillispie.

In 1638, a company of Englishmen landed in Boston with intent to further colonization inland to the West. The first company, led by Rev. Hooker, had, in 1635, traveled across country to investigate the area of what became Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield. These settlements were north of New Haven and were chosen as the earliest settlements inland on the Connecticut River. (Ancestors who were among the first to settle this particular area were the Churchills, (2-1), and Footes, (2-3), of Wethersfield, and the Porters (3-2), of Windsor.

Though the distance between New Haven and Hartford was only 36 miles, we must remember that the only means of travel had to be, even as late as 1672, over the narrow paths worn by the Indians; trails that were only two or three feet wide. In many places the savages kept the woods haunted, and fears of the lurking natives, as well as the dangers of wild beasts, brought on a tense strain to the nerves of the traveler. At any sudden noise, the colonist tightened his grasp on his trusty rifle; that constant companion of survival. Notwithstanding these hidden terrors of the wilderness, these brave and undaunting people slowly and relentlessly advanced the work of new settlements.

As the numbers, both at New Haven and Hartford, increased, the question of a dividing line between these sister governments began to attract the attention of the people. It is easy to imagine that when bounds had to be described only in deeds from the Indians, drawn up when limits were not considered of moment, accuracy in tracing these bounds would cause much friction. At last the New Haven Colony determined to leave no room for doubt as to the extent of her territory. At a General Court of the New



Haven Colony held April 23, 1660, it was ordered that Mr. Hale, William Andrews, John Cowper, John Brockett (7-81), and Nathaniel Merriman, with the help of Mantowese, an Indian considered with proper authority to convey the sale of a parcel of land to be understood as marking the northern bounds of the New Haven Colony, should proceed to make the necessary survey. 15

It is noted that two of these surveyor committeemen, one of whom was our Nathaniel Merriman and the other, our John Brockett (7-81), became leaders in the settlement of Wallingford ten years later. Probably their first acquaintance with that vicinity was made during their service on the committee to execute this vote of the General Court.

"As soon as spring had come, we may in fancy see these men, clad in leathern doublet and breeches, accompanied by the dusky warrior, Montowese, striding along the road leading to 'Connecticote', as the present valley of Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield was early called, crossing the bridge lately built by New Haven over the Quinnipiac River, and setting their faces towards the north where in the hazy distance can be traced the dim outlines of the 'Hanging Hills'. First we note the sturdy form of Nathaniel Merriman, a veteran of the Pequot War of 1636 and destined later, as captain of dragoons and accompanied by his son, Nathaniel, Jr., to play his part in the great swamp fort fight of King Philip's War; where, alas! many of the flower of Connecticut's young manhood perished, Nathaniel, Jr., among the rest. Our veteran as he firmly strides along is now in the prime of life; born in 1614, the son of George Merriman of London, who died there in 1656. Nathaniel had early cast his lot among the New Haven planters, and when Wallingford was settled in 1670 he was one of the pioneers, and until his death in 1694, was conspicuous and honored in that community. He is still represented among us by worthy and respected descendants.

"Of this surveying party we next see Thomas Yale, who came to New Haven a youth with Gov. Eaton and Rev. Davenport, who left many descendants of prestige. Then comes John Brockett, who also served in King Philip's War, and who had been frequently employed as a surveyor of early roads in and around New Haven. After Brockett comes Wm. Andrews who also accompanied Gov. Eaton to New Haven at the first settlement and last of all is John Cooper, a prominent man in the community, for many years manager of the iron works and a representative at the General Court of New Haven.

"If this company of surveyors had the time and inclination to admire the beauties of nature as they traveled the Indian trails that led them on into the interior, they would surely have been rewarded many times over. They must have been impressed as they entered the valley between 'Lamentation Mountain' on the east and the gently rising 'Hanging Hills' on the west, which, gradually climbing higher and higher, with here and there great spaces of rock, grey with the frosts of ages, to drop precipitously into the plain extending to the Sound. No other place on their weary journey could have compared in beauty and picturesqueness with this little valley that became Wallingford. But even the beauty of hill and dale can hardly have repaid them for the hardships endured during the long and weary thirty-six miles which lay between Hartford and New Haven, with hardly a house to break the monotony of the journey. There were only two methods of overcoming this distance: one must travel afoot or on horseback over a path without bridges and with the directions blazed on the trees of the primeval forest.

"The necessity for caution in following this particular trail through the wilderness may be judged by the following extract from a letter written by Rev. Davenport, of New Haven, to Gov. Winthrop at Hartford, dated June, 1660, in which he states in part that

Mr. Bishop on his return trip from delivering mail 'lost his way from Wethersfield and lay in the woods through the cold nights and came not to us til the last day of the weeke towards noon'.<sup>16</sup>

"The committee, intent on carrying out the instructions of the General Court, following the lead of Montowese, arrived safely to what became later Wallingford. They went as far as Pilgrim's Harbor and to other points as far as Montowese claimed his domain and here they placed 'lasting marks' which would define the boundaries between the Connecticut and New Haven colonies. Their work done, doubtless, they leisurely proceeded home, possibly lingering a little while on the hill where the future Wallingford was to lie."<sup>17</sup>

This action of New Haven caused much concern on the part of the Hartford assemblies and the actual markings that divided the two colonies brought on the final scene of which the absorption of all of the New Haven Colony was made by the Connecticut Colony in 1665. New Haven became a part of the greater Connecticut Commonwealth that years later became a State. The lands between New Haven and Hartford were for many years called "Wallingford Purchase Lands".

Nathaniel Merriman and John Brockett (7-82) who had been a part of the early survey of the particular area of Wallingford were among those who promoted the endeavor of the new settlement eight years later.

In 1668, the year Nathaniel's daughter, Hannah, married John Ives (see 4-1), a covenant was drawn up and the land granted in preparation for a survey to be made to lay out the new town of Wallingford. (See appendix #8)

The name of Nathaniel Merriman appears frequently with committees selected to lay out the town and set its bounds and manage the affairs of the place. His name appears in the covenant or original agreement of the first planters at Wallingford. (see appndx. #8) As a committee member, he was among those who helped make the allotments of land to each planter. His own house was built on one of the corner lots of south Cross Street, a short distance west of the old Whittelsey house.

Another source describes the house lot apportioned to Nathaniel and his wife, "six acres on the northeast corner of the present Main and Ward streets, and six acres on the northwest corner of the same street..."<sup>18</sup>

It was in 1670 that Nathaniel, then 57 years of age, moved his family to Wallingford. We are fortunate to have the 1670 map of Wallingford. (map #9) In the year 1671, they were settled in their house in the new town.

Nathaniel's daughter, Abigail, had married and remained in New Haven, but all the younger children and the oldest son, Nathaniel, age 23, had undoubtedly come with their parents to the new home: Mary, 14; John, 11; Samuel, 9; Caleb, 6, and Elizabeth, a baby. Hannah (Mrs. John Ives), the oldest daughter, had preceded her parents and family to the new area. She had married John Ives (4-11) in 1668 and had moved directly with her husband after he had signed the covenant and received his land grant in the new area

even before the townsite of Wallingford had been laid out.

Nathaniel and Abigail must have seen rough times as they met the hardships of building a home in the wilderness of Connecticut's interior. The discomforts of pioneer life in the crude log houses that were first built in haste to provide shelter, arouses our amazement. But mothers and wives such as Abigail, were willing helpmates, able to surmount any obstacles; they cared for their families in such a way that none went hungry and everyone kept urgently busy.

In this early period, schools were not provided for the children. Their education was almost entirely provided by active participation in group affairs. With limited facilities, in situations of mandatory and stern reality, these children of varying ages and ability acquired the knowledge, skills and techniques which fitted them for survival and progress.

Schools were established as a settlement became thickly populated and even then, instruction was for only short periods of time. This instruction included the rudiments of reading, writing, and "casting accounts". Even this limited provision for schooling was a development that came after 1680.

All social experiences were intimate and vital. They were closely connected for actual group survival. Abilities came as a by-product of the rugged life situations in which all ages did their part. It was a very real situation of "learning by doing". The responsibility of instruction remained largely with the heads of families. The ability to read was considered an essential skill by the learned clergy, who found themselves responsible to some extent to safeguard the cultural heritage of the settlers and to pass on this skill to others who were desirous to learn.

The period between 1640 and 1690 was one of population increase, land division and violent Indian attacks. In this manner, Wallingford wove its way into the warp and woof of the commonwealth. Ministers were there to lead their faithful flocks into new pastures and to lofty elevations of thought. In the fertile valleys of New England these English colonists had left their native country at a time when Puritanism, strong and militant, was waxing ready to assert itself in many ways. Their churches were the centers of community activity, the providers of law and order, as well as places of worship.

Eminent statesmen have claimed that 98 per cent of the original settlers of New England could trace their origin to the mother country of England. In the words of William Stoughton, "God sifted a whole nation that he might send choice grains into the wilderness." Significant among these were the first proprietors of New Haven and Wallingford.

The children of Nathaniel and Abigail, all born in New Haven, are listed in the "Merriman Reunion", as follows:

- "1. Nathaniel Merriman, b. about 1648. At the age of 27 or 28, he went forth in King Philip's War and gave his life in defense of the Colonies in the great Swamp Fort fight in Rhode Island on Dec. 19, 1675.
2. John Merriman, died in infancy, Sept. 26, 1651

3. Hannah Merriman, b. May 16, 1651, md. John Ives (4-1), Nov. 12, 1668, died after 1688. She had 5 children by John and after his death in 1681/2, she md. Joseph Benham in 1682 and had 3 more children. (4-11)
4. Abigail Merriman, b. Apr. 18, 1654; md. 1670/71 - John Hitchcock and had 11 children.
5. Mary Merriman, b. July 12, 1657, md. Thomas Curtis and had 12 children. (Another source states Mary (Mamre) md. Samuel Munson)
6. John Merriman, b. Feb. 28, 1659/60, md. (1) Hannah Lines by whom he had 3 children, md. (2) Elizabeth Peck, by whom he had 7 children.
7. Samuel Merriman, b. Sept. 29, 1662, md. (1) Anna Street, dau. of Rev. Samuel Street of Wallingford, by whom he had 4 children.
8. Caleb Merriman, b. May, 1665, md. Mary Preston, 1690, and had 8 children
9. Moses Merriman, b. 1667 )
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Merriman, twin of Moses, b. 1667 ) (no further record on these)
11. Elizabeth Merriman, b. Sept. 14, 1669, md. Ebenezer Lewis, Dec. 2, 1685, had 10 children." 19

Mention was made in (4-11) of the close friendship of John Ives and Nathaniel Merriman, Jr., and the coincidence of the early death of both. Nathaniel, Jr. left Wallingford in 1675 for war-time service, never to return, and John Ives died in 1682, seven years later, in Wallingford. The ancestral line-up of the Merrimans to Hannah (child #3), our ancestor, is shown here:

Thomas Merriman (4-12)  
 ↓  
 Gregory Merriman (4-12)  
 ↓  
 George Merriman (4-12)  
 ↓  
 Nathaniel Merriman md. (1) Abigail Olney  
 ↓  
 Hannah Merriman md. John Ives (4-11)

1675 and '76 were years of great anxiety on account of impending attacks made by the combined Narragansett and other Indian tribes. (King Philip's War) During the summer, the houses of Mr. Street and Mr. Merriman were ordered to be fortified and a special appeal was issued for men to build flankers at Merriman's barn.

"On Nov. 1, 1675, at a meeting of the Council of the Court of Connecticut, Nathaniel Merriman was confirmed as the captain of a troop of dragoons to be raised in New Haven Colony.

"King Philip's war then followed. It is not known what part Nathaniel Merriman, Sr. took in it, although the subsequent action of the people of Wallingford indicates that his services were important. His name is not found as captain of any of the five Connecticut companies which went to Rhode Island to subdue the Indians, however.

"On 19 Dec. the troops attacked the Indians in their fortified encampment in a swamp in Rhode Island, slew about five hundred and took many captives. Nathaniel Merriman, Jr., was killed in this bloody swamp fight." 20

The fortifying of houses in Wallingford under the direction of Nathaniel,

Sr. continued for some time. In 1678, at age 65, he was still holding town positions as commissioner, magistrate, and as deputy. Abigail, the mother of Nathaniel's children, died sometime before 1680, for the marriage of Nathaniel and Jane or (Joan) Lines took place in that year. As mentioned earlier, she was specified in his Will made out in 1692.

"In October of 1685, age 73, he represented Wallingford for the last time as deputy to the General Court in Hartford. Altogether he had served nine times in this honorable position...

"In 1691, age 78, he evidently contemplated retiring from the command as Captain of the train band (the position of military training), but dissension arose among the men in regard to his successor. The Court ordered on 14 May that he should continue...The following year the Court appointed a committee to go to Wallingford to lead the train soldiers to an orderly choice of officers." 21

Nathaniel probably felt that his age (79) was deserving of relief from a long life of exceeding activities. And so it was! Only a few of Nathaniel's reported positions have been included in this writing. The list of accomplishments for this great man were countless. Many of his endeavors overlapped. He must have been a man of great leadership ability, tremendous talent and vigorous of health.

Mansfield Merriman followed Nathaniel's activities chronologically from the time he arrived in Boston at the age of 19 in 1632 to the time of his death. His writing was done by an outline of every year from 1632 to 1694, each year including what was happening, where he lived, and what part he played in the scheme of things. Nathaniel was truly a man who involved himself in all the major events around him. His influence for good was, without doubt, tremendous. His mission in life was fulfilled with greatness.

"1692. On 6 June, he wrote his Will...On 9 Sept. another paragraph was added and he signed and sealed the Will in the presence of two witnesses.

"1694. Age about 80. On 8 Feb. he was probably ill and unable to sign a codicil which he desired to make to his Will, for later two witnesses swore in Court that on that day he declared a certain change to them.

" 'Capt. Nathaniel Merriman deceed in ye 80th year of his age Feb. 13, 1693/4.' Such is the Wallingford record. Land Book 1, p.159.

"At the time of his death, eight of his children were living. All had married and were settled in the town of Wallingford, the youngest son Caleb with his wife and two children residing in the parental home. Thirty-eight grandchildren and several great-grandchildren had been born.

"His Will was proved and recorded in the Probate Court at New Haven..." 22

The Will is recorded in Mansfield Merriman's review of reference here, part of which states:

" '...I do by these appoint constitute and ordaine my beloved wife Joane Merriman and my youngest son Caleb Merriman to be the Joint Executors'.

"The Will then devises to his wife the use during her lifetime of certain real and

personal property, all of which is to revert to his son Caleb on her decease." 23

The Will goes on to state the specified legacies to his other children. John and Samuel had already received their portions in housing, lands, cattle, and other estates to equal that of Caleb.

The absent part of the Will that Nathaniel was too ill to sign, was declared by witnesses in Court to the effect that his military book and his 'fan to fan corne' and his Carpenter 'toolles' shall be divided among his three sons and they shall have an 'equal share in them'.

"1698. The General Court of Connecticut granted to Sergeant John Merriman fifty acres of land in consideration of his father's service in the Pequot wars...

"Joan, the widow of Nathaniel Merriman died 8 Dec. 1709, aged 82." 24

The renovation of Nathaniel's home had recently been accomplished in 1973 and a 'for sale' sign was posted at the picket fence. Wallingford is very supportive of the work of restoring old homes. Much has been accomplished to keep a memory of its pioneer heritage, both in history writing and architecture. The following photo shows the writer at the time the home was visited in 1975.



The home of Nathaniel Merriman  
and his son Caleb after him

In referring to the posterity of Nathaniel and Abigail Merriman, the author, Mansfield Merriman, who attended the Merriman Reunion in 1913, stated:

"...The number of his descendants in this tricentennial year (1913) probably exceeds 40,000, of whom about 2,000 bear the name of Merriman." 25

The above estimate was made then. What might it be now?

1. #8, p.21
2. ibid, p.9
3. #9(b) (bulletin) pp 1,2
4. #9(a), pp. 36, 37
5. #32, p.4
6. #9, p.33
7. ibid
8. ibid, p.41
9. ibid p. 42
10. #8, p.7
11. ibid
12. #9, p.49
13. ibid p. 49-51
14. ibid, pp. 52-54
15. #123, pp, 10, 11
16. ibid, pp. 11, 9
17. ibid, pp. 11, 12
18. #8, pp. 13, 14
19. #9, pp. 57-59
20. #8, pp. 16-17
21. ibid, p.18
22. ibid, p.19
23. ibid, pp. 19, 20
24. ibid, p.21
25. ibid, p.23