

JONATHAN BRIGGS (1635-1688/9)
 EXPERIENCE HARVEY (1640 or 44-1688/9)

The D.A.R. record provided affirmation that Experience was the wife of Jonathan Briggs and provided a listing of their children.¹ Brainard T. Peck submitted a pedigree chart to the 'Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Inc.' that revealed that Experience's maiden name was 'Harvey,' and gave her parentage as a probable William and Joanna (Hucker) Harvey.² (7-18)

Their earlier writings seemed to be vague about any details on Jonathan and Experience though much has been written on both the Briggs and Harvey families. It required many hours of research on this line of ancestors to be convinced that one must rely heavily upon the above two sources to avoid becoming as confused as some of the early genealogists seem to have been. It seems logical that the D.A.R. and Brainard Peck had the vital records at their disposal as also was had by the earlier writers but the more recent work can always profit by past errors in a more thorough search for an accurate record and to correct those discrepancies that were bound to have occurred. Still, for the more personal items of an ancestor's life, the writings of those early historians are priceless. Most of them were fluent in the colorful details of circumstances, surroundings, and incidents of social customs.

Jonathan's father, in his youth, boarded the ship "Fortune" in 1621, arriving in Plymouth just one year after the "Mayflower." (see 7-8) The story of the sufferings endured by those Pilgrims during Plymouth's early settlement is a familiar one. Many died and those that lived experienced hardships that are difficult for us, today, to realize. When Clement Briggs, Jonathan's father, became a man of mature age he settled at Weymouth on the south shore of Massachusetts Bay, married Joan Allen, of Dorchester (now Milton), a town near by, in 1630/1 and they made Weymouth their permanent home.

Thomas Briggs was the first child born to Clement and Joan, June 14, 1633. Jonathan Briggs, our ancestor, was born June 14, 1635. Their mother, Joan (Allen) Briggs, died when they were very young. The father married again, Elizabeth _____ about 1638 when Jonathan was about three and his brother five. Four more children were born to this couple. Jonathan's father died in 1650, leaving Thomas, then about 17 years of age, Jonathan about 15 years of age, his widow, Elizabeth, and her children. (7-8)

After the death of Clement, Jonathan must have been placed in the care of a guardian to work out an apprenticeship bond. It was a common practice in early America, as it had been in England, to bond young men to someone who could teach them a trade in preparation for an occupation that would profit them a livelihood in the future. The master would gain from the labor performed by the young trainee and in return the youth was given his board and room for a certain length of time - usually a term of three or four years. The bond gave the master, upon the signed release of a parent, or in the case of an orphan, a court release, certain privileges. He became the trainer, the protector, as well as the controller of the conduct of the one under bond to serve. Jonathan's father, while a young lad in England, had learned the trade of a felt-monger (dealing with fur pelts) in the manner of serving an apprenticeship to a master, Samuel Lathame.

Jonathan was apprenticed to Mr. Willaim Hailstone of Taunton, Massachusetts. to learn the trade of tailoring. His brother Thomas also removed to Taunton and their half-sister, Remember, finally lived there.

According to details of court records, Jonathan, at age 18, "6 June 1654, complains that his master, William Hailstone, did not learne him the trade of a 'tailor'." Evidently Mr. Hailstone had been using Jonathan for work other than the specified trade and by the time Jonathan became 18 years old, he spoke out in behalf of himself against his master. We notice, too, that by Sept. 17, 1656, Jonathan had chosen Thomas Prence as a guardian, to which the court had given it's stamp of approval. However, it seems that Jonathan's troubles were consistently a matter of court procedures.

We arrive at these conclusions by an examination of the Plymouth Court records between 1654 and 1670. Taunton, though an inland town about thirty miles to the south of Weymouth on the Taunton River, along with other eastern coast towns and Cape Cod settlements, was under the jurisdiction of the Plymouth Colony for many years.

The author, Sam Briggs, in 1880, selected all items referring to our Briggs ancestors for his record and from this list is found notes which reveal some of the circumstances, in addition ot what has already been stated about Jonathan's early life. Arranged according to a sequence of dates, these items are as follows:

- "1654, June 6, Jonathan Briggs complains that his master, William Hailstone, 'did not learne him the trad of a taylor'
- 1655, Oct. 4, Jonathan Briggs, procures execution against William Hailstone.
- 1656, June 3, Jonathan Briggs, hath further controversie with William Hailstone
- 1656, June 21, Jonathan Briggs, for 15 pounds, settles with William Hailstone.
- 1656, Sept. 17, Jonathan Briggs, chooseth Thomas Prence, of Eastham for his guardian.
- 1657, Jan. 15, Jonathan Briggs takes oath of fidelitie
- 1657, Mar. 2, Jonathan Briggs, hath a controversie with his master, William Hailstone, a 'taylor.'
- 1657, June 3, Jonathan Briggs, took oath of fidellitie att Plymouth.
- 1662, Oct. 3, Jonathan Briggs sued by William Hailstone, 60 pounds damages.
- 1669, Mar. 1, Jonathan Briggs charged with adultery by Jane Halloway.
- 1670, May 29, Jonathan Briggs of Taunton, freeman, ae. 34
- 1670, June 7, Jonathan Briggs, charged with adultery by Jane Halloway." 3

The Briggs line of genealogy from Elizabeth, oldest child of Jonathan, to Clement was accepted by the noted New England genealogist, Brainard T. Peck, who submitted a pedigree chart on the ancestry of Elkanah Babbitt, son of Elkanah and Elizabeth (Briggs) Babbitt, to the 'Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Inc. in 1968. 4

According to Sam Briggs in his writing "The Briggs Family" the information on the ancestry of Elizabeth Briggs - Jonathan, her father, and Clement, her grandfather, - is correct and in agreement with what Mr. Peck recorded in the above mentioned chart. 5

Mr. Peck, in addition, gave his approval to a bit of information which had, through the years, been only a speculative thing that had confused the records;

he stated that the maiden name of Experience, the wife of Jonathan, was 'Harvey' and that her parents were, as stated earlier, probably, William and Joanna (Hucker) Harvey (see 7-18).⁶

One writer, Oscar Jewell Harvey, 1899, stated that Experience Harvey, born 1644, married her cousin Thomas Harvey.⁷ There were several Harvey families in New England and specifically in Taunton, Massachusetts. It is possible that there were two Experience Harveys who confused the genealogists and, if so, the data could easily have been crossed. A selection of what might be considered the more reliable had to be made for this writing, and the confidence placed in Brainard T. Peck, influenced the acceptance of his record. The word 'probably' was used in the above reference to William and Joanna, to show some absence of documental proof. Until such a time as this selection is proven incorrect, it would seem justified that we accept the mentioned probability and continue the Harvey ancestral lines of Jonathan Briggs' wife, Experience Harvey.

Experience was born 4 Mar. 1644 at Taunton Mass. Jonathan and Experience were married about 1662 or thereabouts. Their children are listed in the D.A.R. record as follows. No mention of birthplaces is made but it is thought that all of the children were born in the vicinity of Taunton:

- "1. dau. born about 1664
2. Elizabeth Briggs, b. abt. 1666; md. 25 June 1689, Elkanah Babbitt, son of Edward (story 7-2).
3. Jonathan Briggs, b. 15 Mar. 1668.
4. David Briggs, b. Dec 6, 1669,; md. Mary _____; lived in Berkley, Mass.
5. John Briggs, b. 13 Feb. 1672, md. Abigail _____; died May 19, 1764, in Berkley, Mass.
6. Hannah Briggs, md. April 2, 1705, Robert Woodard, son of John Woddard
7. Hopestill Briggs, b. abt. 1677; md. William Harvey, son of Thomas
8. Thomas Briggs, b. March 1680; md. 1 Oct. 1702 to Keturah Hatch, dau. of Thomas
9. Amos Briggs, b. abt. 1682; md. 2 Jan. 1706 to Sarah Paine, dau. of Ralph Paine.
10. Benjamin Briggs, b. abt. 1683; md. Sarah _____
11. Ebenezer Briggs, b. abt. 1685; md. May 19, 1713, Comfort King; died 1726
12. Nathaniel Briggs, b. abt. 1687; d. 1711
13. Experience Briggs, b. abt. 1689; md. 29 Mar 1711, Samuel Merrick." 8

The country between Weymouth and Taunton was the familiar grounds of the Indian chief "Metacom" who was responsible for the 'King Philips War' of 1675-6. King Philip was the name adopted by the English for Chief Metacom. "This chief lived on friendly terms with his neighbors, near his Winnicunnet Cave, a friendliness doubtless due to the fact that the English of the area had bought their township, (now Norton, Mass.) 6 June 1668, paying him 143 pounds in honest money, therefore." It is an amazing fact that within less than ten years this friendliness had reversed itself into the most ruthless conflict in colonial American history. The events which immediately gave rise to the war are briefly stated in the story of Edward Bobett (7-1), and referred to many times in the stories of those ancestors who lived during this particular period.

The Indian arousals had been agitated by King Philip over all the settlements of New England as far south as the coastal areas of what is now Connecticut and as far west as the valleys of the Connecticut River in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. Especially 'hard-hit' were the settlements of Hadley, Deerfield and Northfield in western Mass., (see map #6) where the French in Canada began to exploit the Indians against the English settlers. The final battle of King Philips War was fought to the west of Taunton and the Plymouth Colony settlements in the swampy areas in what is now central Rhode Island.

Taunton, located as it was in the very vicinity of Chief Metacom's home grounds, was particularly vulnerable to threats of attack.⁹ We can be sure that Jonathan and his wife and children (they had 6 children by this time) were relieved when the scare was over and King Philip had been given a trial and executed.

Jonathan's name appears in a listing of the heads of households along with Edward Bobbitt, William Briggs, William Harvey, Thomas Harvey Jr. and others of Taunton in 1675.¹⁰ The Military Company of Taunton was on constant duty from the first and by 1682 was made up of four squadrons that met successively by turns for training sessions. Each soldier brought his "armes fixed to every meeting with six charges of powder and shot and if any refuse, to be fined two shillings for every such default and ten shillings if in contempt." The names of Jonathan Briggs, Edward Bobbitt, Jr., William Briggs, Thomas Harvey, Sr., Joseph Harvey and others are in this military listing. Such responsibility fell upon all able-bodied men in the early settlements to be ready to protect their town from surprise Indian attacks and keep up a garrison of trained guards on constant duty.¹¹

The autograph is traced from a list of signers remonstrating the building of a grist-mill dam on Mill River, dated 7th day of Aug. 1711.

Jonathan Briggs 12

Jonathan died 1688-9, age about 54, when their oldest, Elizabeth, our ancestor, was 22 years of age and was married to Elkanah Babbitt that same year. He was survived by his wife Experience, and his large family of sons and daughters. His youngest child, a baby daughter, was born the year of his death, either just prior to or shortly after. Experience was left a widow with a great responsibility. The available records gave no further information on Experience except that she was living at the time of her husband's death.¹³

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| 1. #71 pp. 10, 11 | 7. #46 p. 41 |
| 2. # 2 Vol 2 chart (17-42) | 8. #71 pp. 10, 11 |
| 3. #45 pp. 86-87 | 9. #45 p. 173 |
| 4. # 2 Vol 2 sheet (17-42) | 10. #133 (b) p. 93 |
| 5. #45 p. 111 | 11. ibid p. 330 |
| 6. # 2 Vol 2 sheet (17-42) | 12. ibid p. 763 |
| | 13. # 2 Vol 2 sheet (17-42) |