

Note:

There were 2 early Robt ^{ROYCE FAMILY} Royces. This Boston one is not our Robt Royce of

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"to the Church by Michael Barne (or Tearne) and his wife, Elizabeth, and their son Joshua Rice." Thus Robert had died and Elizabeth had remarried. On page 353 another deed of sale is recorded, dated 14 JULY 1676, in which Joshua Rice mentions his father Robert Rice as deceased and his mother as "atill living". The highly regarded genealogist, Donald Lines Jacobus, points out also in his note in the Register, vol. 80, p. 107-109 (January 1926), that Stratford and Boston men were not one and the same. Stratford
New
London

With Robert Royce (Rice) out of the way, we journeyed to Somerset and the parish church at Martock. The Vicar, the Rev. Joan Cartwright, a delightfully astute and cultured scholar, graciously agreed to examine the original parish register with us -- for a slight consideration of five pounds duly deposited in the alms box! It was anticlimactic to discover that there was no record of any wedding on 4 June 1634, much less that of Robert Royce and Mary Sims! The entries prior to and after this date gave us no evidence. There were RICES, Royces, Roises, Rhyses, Royces, Ryses, Ryces and Hoyes in abundance but no Sims or Syms. Four miles north of Martock, in the beautiful Somersetshire countryside, is the parish church of Long Sutton. We did not see the Vicar, who was on holiday. We did, however, study the transcript of the parish register in the nearby Taunton Public Library. W. P. W. Phillimore's Somerset Parish Registers: Marriages (1898) vol. 1, p. 116, does record the wedding of Robert Royce (not Royce) and Mary Sims in Long Sutton, 4 June 1624 - ten years earlier than the date which we are seeking to confirm!

The proximity of the two towns and the approximation of the dates -- alike except for one digit -- gave encouragement for the moment. Further consideration establishes the probability that neither date fits the circumstances. There is nor record of the 1634 wedding heretofore alleged. The 1624 wedding hardly works out credibly or chronologically, with their emigration to America or the birthday of their first born.

A bit of speculation on this point will illustrate how unlikely it is that 4 June 1624 could be the marriage date of our Robert Royce and Mary his wife. Seven children were born to them, beginning with Sarah, who died in Norwich, Conn. 1 May 1711, aged 77 years hence born about 1633/34, ten years after this marriage record. The size of their family gives ample evidence of their fecundity. It would therefore seem most unlikely that Robert and Mary would have remained continent or been barren from 1624 to 1634 or that all their children born in that decade could have perished in infancy. There is no known record of the American Robert and Mary having a child born prior to 1633/34. This strongly suggests that the 1624 marriage was too early to be theirs. We also investigated the Royces of Lubenham, co. Leicester, on the site and with the aid of the Rouge Dragon of the College of Arms in London, but no proof was found connecting Robert and Mary with that branch of the family. Some Royce descendants, including the late Miss Helen M. Royce of Hartford, Conn. whose genealogical collection reposes in the archives of the Connecticut Historical Society, believed that the Royces descended from the branch of the family seated in that parish. This family was armigerous and its arms and pedigree may be found in VISITATION OF LORD 1633, 1634, and 1635, ed. by Joseph Jackson Howard 1883 (Hartford Society Publications, v. 1. 17).

Lubenham

At Lubenham, we visited the parish church, and enjoyed teas with the Vicar, the Rev. Mr. Peake, and his wife served graciously and hospitably at the vicarage. They had been married in Connecticut which made a point of contact. Later



ROYCE FAMILY

they escorted us through the church and its yard, where there was ample evidence that many Royces had lived there. The register listed many who had been born, married and died during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but there was none named Robert among them.

Elsewhere in England the Royces are plentiful, but the task of establishing the connection between our ancestor and his English locale still remains for future historians and genealogists to determine.

Two valuable points seem to have been established conclusively by this report. First: the claim set forth in several printed books here and abroad that Robert Royce and Mary Sims were married in Martock on 4 June 1634 is not a fact; second: the marriage in Long Sutton on 4 June 1624 with which the first seems to have been confused, almost certainly could not have been that of the young couple from whom we are descended. So the questions, "who was Robert Royce? where did he come from? who was Mary, his wife?" are still unanswered.

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References
re:
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(Families of Ancient New England
Barbour Collection - Hallowell, Me.

"Some Light On The Marriage of Robert and Mary Royce of Connecticut"

By Clarence Leslie Hewitt, Jr. of Clearwater, Florida

The limbo of Robert Royce's origin and ancestry still seems to be impenetrable despite efforts over many years to clear it up. There is ample evidence that he and his wife lived in Connecticut - in Stratford, New London, and Wallingford -- and that he left his mark on contemporary history of that period. It is well recorded that his wife's name was Mary but it is not all clear that her surname was Sims.

To those of us who are descendants of Robert and Mary Royce, the following report will prove disappointing. The writer's keen interest in tracing the English roots of his family had given rise to hope that some day a leisurely trip to England, with an automobile to provide convenient and adequate transportation would enable him to establish beyond question the link between the American and English families. In 1965 we took advantage of the opportunity afforded by recent retirement, and with our automobile indulged ourselves to the limit in this fascinating but frustrating experience.

The marriage of Robert Royce and Mary Sims has been stated frequently as having occurred in Martock, co. Somerset, ~~on~~ 4 June 1634. The date and place have no apparent validity as the following account of recent research seems to establish.

The search for this couple's origin and ancestry must of necessity start with the earliest record of either person. Robert was an early settler in Stratford, Conn., but it is not recorded how he got there or from whence he came. He had land --lot #4774-- recorded in his name as early as 16 Sept. 1648. In 1658 he appeared again in the Stratford land records as Robert "Rise" (New page, old folio #62, vol.I).

Robert Royce of New London. where Robert Royce of New London landed is not known. He appears first at Stratford where land was recorded to him, Sept. 16, 1658, according to Starr (Goodwin and Morgan Ancestral Lines, vol. 1. p 295), but 1648 according to Orcutt (History of Bridgeport and Stratford 2, p. 90), and on Oct. 4, 1656, he was appointed by the General Court Leather Sealer for the town. After this, except for the sale of two pieces of property, his name disappears from the Stratford Records and we find him in New London, where he was Constable in May 1660. His home lot in Stratford is recorded as having been sold to Thomas Wheeler in February, 1660 and his meadow land to Moses Wheeler in June 1667. In 1661 he was chosen Deputy to the General Court; Feb. 1661/2 and Feb. 1667, Leather Sealer; Dec. 1667, one of two "to gather ye Towne Rate in the ...? Flat"; Feb. 25, 1668, Townsman; Sept. 1666, he was on the Jury of the County Court and appointed by that court, Sept. 1668, a grand juror for New London, Feb..?. chosen to keep the ordinary and there he entertained the new minister, Rev..? Bradstreet, as the following vote shows: "To Goodman Royce for ye ministers.?. 15 lb." This same year he was "freed from training." In 1663 he successfully petitioned for land for his sons, Samuel and Nathaniel. He was a shoemaker by trade. ((Starr's Goodwin and Morgan Ancestral Lines; Caulkins' New London pp 293-4))).

over - B.

Robert
Koyce
arr. early
Am. to N. Eng.
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was the son of Robert the emigrant, of Boston 1631, freeman 1634 one of the
disarmed 1639 for the adherence to the opinions and party of Wheelwright and
Hutchinson, removed from Boston and was at Stratford (1644) there in (1657,
constable (1660), representative in Assembly 1662, d. 1693 (m. Elizabeth
at New London 5 sons and 3 daughters mentioned) estate £240.