

## John Mayo

Pg 1/3



No Picture Available

**Born:** 2 Apr 1598 - Greater Middleton, Northamptonshire, , England

**Married:** Thomasine Constable

**Died:** 3 May 1676 - Yarmouth, Barnstable, Massachusetts

**Parents:** John Mayo & Katherine Unknown

John Mayo was the only son of John Mayo and his wife Katherine of Northamptonshire, England. He was born and christened in Farthinghoe, but moved with his family to Thorpe Mandeville as a child. Early assumptions that he was from Cattistock, Northamptonshire, England have been shown to be incorrect.

In spite of his humble background, he matriculated (entered) Magdalen Hall, Oxford University 28 April 1615 at the age of 17 years. It was noted that he was a commoner's son.

John Mayo does not seem to have received a degree from Oxford. This was not uncommon for those scholars who disagreed with the established church. With the degree was an obligation to take an oath of allegiance to the Church of England.

We next find John Mayo at Leiden in the Netherlands in 1618. This town was notable because it was where members of the Pilgrim religious movement went in order to escape persecution in England. At the time they were simply called the Separatists, because of their separation from the Church of England. We do not know if John Mayo was then associated with the Pilgrim movement as there were other English in Holland at the time for various reasons.

While in Holland, John Mayo married Tamsen Brike, 21 Mar 1618. [In England it was still 1617 since they had not yet adopted the new calendar.] In the Reformed Church of Leiden wedding document he is called Jan Meyer. His bride is called Timmosijy Breyck. Both were listed as born in England. Her first name has been variously spelled as Thomasine, Tamosin or Tamsin.

While in Holland, John Meyer worked as a brazier of metal. The Pilgrims had been in Leiden since 1609 so it is obvious that John Mayo joined them later. By 1618 when he was certainly there, the Pilgrims were making preparations for the voyage to America. John Mayo did not join the Mayflower or any of the later ships that carried the Pilgrims from Leiden to Plymouth, and apparently went back to England. We do not know if any of his children were born in the Netherlands and we do not have any baptismal records in England.

When John Mayo and his wife returned to England they lived in North Newington, Oxfordshire, which is fairly close to Thorpe Mandeville where he was raised. North Newington is also not far from the town of Banbury in Oxfordshire, which was considered one of the centers of the Puritan movement. At Banbury is Broughton Castle, where it secret Puritan meetings were held in the 1630's between William Fiennes Lord Saye and Sele and supporters from Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. Fiennes was a leading activist against King Charles I. Some sources say the secret room was in the basement of the castle some say it was in an upper room. It is known that Rev. Mayo wrote Lord Saye and Sele after he left England and was once asked by Warwickshire settlers in Connecticut to be their pastor. Therefore it is possible that John Mayo was involved in some of these Puritan meetings.

North Newington is a village and civil parish in northern Oxfordshire, England, 2 miles west of Banbury. The Church of England Parish Church is St. Mary the Virgin. It is unlikely that, by this time, that John Mayo was still associated with the Church of England.

We do not know exactly when or how long John Mayo and his family resided at North Newington. In his father's will of 1630, no place of residence is mentioned for him. He does mention that his son-in-law was living in Slapton, implying that perhaps John was in Thorpe Mandeville at that time. In the will of his father, he is called "Mr. John Mayo". That title, not often given to those without some prominence, has suggested to some that he had taken "Orders" and had been preaching for some separatist congregation.

Throughout the 1630's there was much trouble in England. King Charles I was severely persecuting any person or group that strayed from the Church of England. Nevertheless there was much dissent and there was unrest in Parliament. In 1637

an edict forbade anyone from traveling abroad without license and plague was prevalent in 1638. At his time, John Mayo decided to leave England and go to America. In spite of the restrictions twenty ships carrying about 3000 passengers left England for Massachusetts Bay. Some religious separatists traveled under assumed names to avoid being stopped at the ports of England.

John Mayo and his family arrived in Cape Cod, Plymouth Colony, New England about 1638 or 1639. There is no existing passenger list that would provide an exact date of arrival or the name of the ship. Family histories that indicate they came over in 1635 in the "True Love" seem to be mistaken. It is possible that he came with his father's old friend, Rev. Charles Chauncy. The estimated birth dates of his children would indicate that his family was complete before he left England. They settled first in the town of Barnstable, Massachusetts, where John Mayo was made a freeman by the Plymouth General Court, 3 Mar 1639/40.

John Mayo was given house lot No. 5 at Barnstable, which included 12 acres of upland and adjoining meadows. This was located between Coggin's Pond and the site of the present courthouse. Rev. Joseph Hull was the minister there. The early services, weather permitting, were sometimes outdoors, often on "Shoot-flying Hill." Some of the worshipers were Indians. A third minister, Mr. John Latrop soon came to Barnstable from Scituate with 41 families, tripling the population of the town. Mayo and Hull and others built themselves substantial frame houses. John Mayo was ordained 2 Apr 1640 as a teaching elder at the new church of Barnstable, though he must have primarily engaged in farming to maintain his family. At this point Rev. Latrop had displaced Rev. Hull as pastor at Barnstable.

In the New England Memorial written in 1669 by William Morton to document early New England History, it was stated: "the Lord was pleased of his great goodness to accomplish and adorn the Colony of New Plimouth...with a considerable number of godly and able Gospel-preachers, ... who gave light in a glorious and resplendent manner, as burning and shining lights." His list included Mr. Chauncy, Mr. Latrop, Mr. Mayo and others.

There was a fair amount of religious and civic strife in early Barnstable. Rev. Hull had moved to Yarmouth 24 Mar 1640/41 to join some church secessionists without obtaining permission from the Barnstable Church and he was excommunicated. He was reinstated in 1643 after spending some time at Massachusetts Bay and England. John Mayo, in 1641, also pronounced the sentence of excommunication against the local Constable, William Carsley, "for carnal carriages." He also participated in the settlement of a boundary dispute between Barnstable and Yarmouth. In general, though, he avoided the controversies of the time and could be considered steady, reasonable and patient.

In 1642, John Mayo's daughter Hannah married Nathaniel Bacon one of the other first settlers of Barnstable. In 1643 his son Nathaniel Bacon was old enough to be part of the local militia. The two local ministers, Mr. Mayo and Mr. Latrop served as chaplains and opened and closed with prayer the military training sessions on Shoot-flying Hill.

In 1646 John Mayo moved to the newly incorporated town of Eastham and became the pastor of the church there. He had gone there with Mr. Thomas Prentice and others from Barnstable and they thus obtained "Mr. John Mayo the Reverend teacher of that Church to go over to them, and he became their Teacher." John Mayo's son Samuel remained in Barnstable and became a noted mariner, Master of the bark "Desire", the first important ship to hail from Barnstable.

Rev. John Mayo retained connections with Barnstable while in Eastham. In 1648 he still owned seven acres there and he returned there in 1649 to conduct the marriage ceremony of Elizabeth, the daughter of Mr. Bearse. It is also likely that both Rev. Mayo and his wife Tamsen attended the wedding at Barnstable of their son Nathaniel Mayo to Hannah Prentice, the daughter of the Governor of Plymouth Colony, 14 Feb 1648/49.

About 1655 Rev. Mayo decided to leave Eastham because of "some difficulties and discouragements" and become the first pastor of the Second Church of Boston. This church was also known as North Church. It had been built to service the expanding population of Boston. It was a three-storied structure in North Square, large for that era. The original North Church was a frame structure. It burned in 1676 and was rebuilt. Later, in 1775, it was demolished during the British occupation and used for firewood. The present brick church was built in 1845.

He sold 3 acres of property in Eastham to John Morton of Plymouth. He was ordained at Boston 9 Nov 1655, the congregation finding that he was "both available and suitable." They had been sent "an able gospel minister." The ceremony took place in the presence of "neighboring ministers." It was a considerable move for Rev. Mayo to come from the smallest town on Cape Cod to the largest city in Massachusetts Bay.

In spite of the prominence of his new position, we know little about the ideas of this pastor. He wrote very little and little was written about him during his term. He seems to have been a quiet man, but necessarily competent and intellectual because of the important role the clergy played in all aspects of life. Thus his term there was described as dignified but unspectacular.

Initially he lived in a house belonging to Bart. Bernard on the south side of Fleet Street, and then bought a house on the west side of Hanover (Middle) Street, between Parmenter and Prince Streets.

He was also an overseer of Harvard College. As such he signed a petition to be sent to Oliver Cromwell, the new ruler of England, asking him to afford "maintenance to our English College at Cambridge and to the Indian College for the education of the Indian youth in piety and learning." Rev. Mayo also attended Harvard Commencement in Jun 1656. This was the year that Increase Mather, the son of Richard Mather took his degree.

1658 was notable in Boston as the year of the "great earthquake," along with the publication of Eliot's "Indian Bible." The new Town House, began in 1657 was under construction and would contain a room for a library—something that was exciting for the town clergy. John Mayo's son Samuel joined his father in Boston in that year. In June he gave the election sermon for the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston.

In 1660 word arrived from England of the restoration of the monarchy and the death of Oliver Cromwell. In August 1660 all the authorities of Boston assembled with the people at the Town House to proclaim loyalty to Charles II, the new king. All concurred in thinking that silence and circumspection were best in Boston considering the events taking place in London.

That winter, John Mayo's son Nathaniel died at Eastham and in 1664 his son Captain Samuel Mayo died in Boston. In the

same year Increase Mather enrolled as a member of the church, and was installed as Teacher of the North Church. He wrote in his diary: "This day my ordination. My father & Mr. Mayo imposed hands." Rev. Mayo had been his mentor and now found that his patience and persuasiveness had been rewarded. In the custom of the time the pastor was expected to spend his strength mostly in exhortation, while the teacher was to indoctrinate the church. The teacher worked in the study, while the pastor "toiled in the open field." The result was that Rev. Mayo remained in charge of all but the pulpit duties.

Also in July 1664 Royal Commissioners had arrived from England and caused much anxiety in Boston. Their job was apparently to reestablish royal authority in the Colony. There were many petitions asking that the Colony's "Liberties be still continued." Among the singers were Rev. Mayo and Increase Mather.

The Mayo family must have been very hospitable because there are many references in the writings of contemporary leaders of Boston about dining at the Mayo's. It is likely that Mrs. Mayo was the principal cook for these dinners. Rev. Mayo's salary, at that time, was 65 pounds per year.

In 1662 Rev. Mayo participated in a Synod of all the ministers in Massachusetts. This group adopted the Half-way Covenant, which allowed children of non-conformists to be baptized. This was done because good standing in the church was necessary for full political rights in the colony and many of the second generation were not being baptized because of the earlier beliefs or actions of their parents. Though the change was progressive, it seems that Rev. Mayo was one of the dissenting minority.

In 1666 it was necessary for the North Church to excommunicate a vocal and impenitent member of the congregation. There was a confrontation between Rev. Mayo and this man during a service, resulting in the man walking out of the church complaining that the only reason of his expulsion was a difference of opinion on infant baptism. This member, though, seems to have been particularly belligerent and profane in his opinions. By 1669 Rev. Mayo had moderated his opinion on the form of baptism. In this year Increase Mather's father died and he also had to go back to Northampton because of the terminal illness of his brother. For some time, therefore, Rev. Mayo assumed the full duties of North Church.

By 1672 Rev. John Mayo had become elderly and had reached the point where his voice softened so that he "could not make his flock hear and be edified." He wisely chose to relinquish his place at North Church. With his consent the Church dismissed him on 15 Apr 1672/73, thirty-three years after his installation at Barnstable. He sold his house on Middle Street and received a pension from North Church for all of the good that he had done. Rev. Mayo returned to Barnstable on Cape Cod to live near his remaining children and grandchildren at Yarmouth, Barnstable and Eastham. In 1675 King Phillip's War began. Rev. Mayo contributed a horse to the army and that horse was killed. This loss was used to offset his war tax.

In late May 1676, John Mayo died in Yarmouth without making a will. His estate was settled in June 1676. His widow Mistress Tamsen Mayo reserved the goods and estate that she had before marriage and received the customary 1/3 of the estate. The value of his estate was small but average for that Colonial period. The total inventory of the estate was 111 pounds, 4 shillings. The inventory shows relatively normal furniture, clothing and household items in addition to silver valued at 30 pounds. The church in Boston paid for his funeral expenses. The grave cost 6 shillings, the coffin an equal amount. North Church in Boston was destroyed by fire 27 Nov 1676 and was rebuilt the next year.

Though uncontroversial and humble, he had been a resourceful man, above average in intelligence and well educated. He helped found two towns in Plymouth Colony and established three churches. It is said that he never lost a friend except by death. His associate, Mr. Increase Mather said of him: "He was blessing to his people and they lived together in love and peace."

Tamsen Brike Mayo died 26 Feb 1681/82 in Yarmouth at the age of 76, probably while living with her daughter Elizabeth Howes.

## Bibliography

Rodwick, Jean Mayo, Rev. John Mayo and His Descendants, 2001

Mayo-Lakatos, Jean, "Will of John Mayo of Thorpe Mandeville, Northamptonshire, England," Mayo Family Genealogy Forum, Genealogy.com, 2002

Mayo-Lakatos, Jean, response to "Hannah Mayo, Barnstable, Plymouth County, MA (1628), daughter of John Mayo and Thomasine Lumpkin" Message Boards, Ancestry.com, 2002.

Nickerson, Philip Tillinghast, "Rev. John Mayo, First Minister of the Second Church in Boston, Mass." New England Historic and Genealogical Register, Jan 1941, April 1941

Savage, James, A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, Boston 1860-1862.