

## Thomas Harris



No Picture Available

Born: 1579 ENG

Married: Elizabeth Hills

Died: 1634 MA

### Notes for Thomas\* HARRIS-----

THOMAS, one of the few in our country, often with an alias, being called, 19 Oct. 1630, at wh. time he req. to be made freem. as also 18 May foll. when he was adm. Williams, alias Harris. No doubt he came in the fleet with Winthrop [ref 20]

Thomas, son of William HARRIS and Agnes MASON. All children born in England, immigrated in Winthrop Fleet on the Lyon from Bristol, arriving Salem late in May 1630, two weeks before the Arbella; settled first at Winnissimmett. Oct 1630 requested freemanship (as "Thomas Will[ia]ms alias Harris") and admitted 18 May 1631 (as "Thomas Williams"). 18 Sep 1630 coroner's jury on the body of William Bateman (as "Thomas Williams"). Thomas died before land records were maintained, and left no will; does not appear in the lists of early Charlestown residents, or in Boston records, so it is likely that he supported himself solely by his ferrying operations. On 18 May 1631 "Tho[mas] Will[ia]ms hath undertaken to set up a ferry betwixt Winnetsem[e]t & Charlton, for which he is to have after 3d. a person, & from Winnetsem[e]t to Boston 4d. a person." No records of Thomas Harris in England have been found other than the mention in his father's 1599 will. Since the Winthrop Fleet was assembled mostly from East Anglia and London, one would expect to find evidence of the marriage of Thomas and the baptisms of his children in these areas rather than in Gloucestershire. Davis suggests, however, that Harris came on the Lyon, which sailed from Bristol and not from London. (The only reliable account of this family is in Walter Goodwin Davis, *The Ancestry of Bethia Harris ...* [Portland, Maine, 1934], pp. 3-34). Richard Iles was nephew of Thomas Harris, and may have come with him in 1630; in his will he names his cousins Thomas Harris, William Harris, Anthony Harris, John Harris, Anne Maverick and Daniel Harris, giving 20s. to each. [ref 26]

THOMAS<sup>3</sup> WILLIAMS alias HARRIS (William<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>), his wife Elizabeth, five sons and one daughter came to America in the great emigration under the leadership of John Winthrop in 1630. It is a logical conclusion that they were passengers on the ship "Lyon" which sailed from Bristol, bringing emigrants from that city and the western counties of England, and which made port at Salem in the latter part of May, some two weeks before the arrival of the governor in the "Arbella." His name (Thomas Williams) first appears in the Colonial records on September 18, 1630, in the list of a jury of inquest on the body of William Bateman, who died from illness and exposure at Pullen Point in Boston Harbor, after a voyage from Plymouth. On October 19, 1630, as Thomas Williams alias Harris, he applied to the court to be made a freeman of the colony, was admitted, as Thomas Williams, on May 18, 1631, and took the required oath. On that same day the court recorded that "Tho: Williams hath undertaken to sett upp a fferry betwixte Winnetsem<sup>t</sup> & Charlton, for which hee is to have after 3d a person, & from Winnetsem<sup>t</sup> to Boston 4d a person." Winnissimmet was the later town of Chelsea, and it was there that the family lived. Children: John, Thomas, Anthony, Anna, William, Daniel. Thomas Williams alias Harris died before September, 1634, when William Stilson, who married his widow Elizabeth, took over the ferry. Many years later, on June 15, 1680, Stilson, aged about eighty years, testified that "Thomas Harris lived at Winnissimmet, about fforty nine years since & was wont to transport persons over the Rivers, to Charlstowne & Boston till he died, and after that I married his Widdow, and kept the ffery, as my predecessors did." Why Thomas Harris used the double surname Williams alias Harris has not been ascertained. It is possible that, after the death of his father, his mother married a Williams and her sons were commonly called by the name of their step-father. It may also be that he was apprenticed as a small boy to a Williams and went by his master's name, that relationship often being much stronger than a purely business one. The commonest reasons for an alias, illegitimacy in the lower classes and marriage with an heiress in the upper, do not apply in our case. There is also the possibility that for some personal reason affecting his proposed emigration it was advisable to assume a new name. [ref 38:6]

# THOMAS HARRIS from the book "The Great Migration Begins"

## THOMAS HARRIS

**ORIGIN:** Hatherup, Gloucestershire (or vicinity)

**MIGRATION:** 1630

**FIRST RESIDENCE:** Winnissimmet

**OCCUPATION:** Ferryman. On 18 May 1631 "Tho[mas] Will[ia]ms hath undertaken to set up a ferry betwixt Winnettsem[e]t & Charlton, for which he is to have after 3d. a person, & from Winnettsem[e]t to Boston 4d. a person" [MBCR 1:87].

**FREEMANSHIP:** Requested October 1630 (as "Thomas Will[ia]ms alias Harris") and admitted 18 May 1631 (as "Thomas Williams") [MBCR 1:80, 366].

**OFFICES:** Coroner's jury, 18 September 1630 on the body of William Bateman (as "Thomas Williams") [MBCR 1:78].

**ESTATE:** Thomas Harris died before land records were maintained, and left no will. He does not appear in the lists of early Charlestown residents, or in Boston records, so it is likely that he supported himself solely by his ferrying operations. Examination of the land records of WILLIAM STITSON might show that some land was earlier held by Thomas Harris.

**BIRTH:** Born about 1590 in or near Hatherup, Gloucestershire, son of William and Agnes (Mason) Harris [Bethia Harris Anc 5].

**DEATH:** Prior to 1634, when Stitson took over the ferry between Boston and Winnissimmet.

**MARRIAGE:** By about 1613 Elizabeth \_\_\_\_\_. She married (2) WILLIAM STITSON, who took over the ferry operation. Her death is given as 16 February 1669/70, aged 93 [ChVR 1:73]; she was more likely a decade younger.

### CHILDREN:

- i ANNA, b. about 1613 (d. Reading 7 September 1697, aged 84); m. by 1635 Elias Maverick, son of Rev. JOHN MAVERICK.
- ii JOHN, b. say 1616; m. (1) by about 1645 Bridget \_\_\_\_\_ (eldest child b. by about 1645 [Bethia Harris Anc 10-11]); m. (2) Rowley 24 October 1677 Elizabeth (Rowlandson) Wells; m. (3) Alice \_\_\_\_\_, who survived him [Bethia Harris Anc 10].
- iii THOMAS, b. about 1618 (deposed aged about forty in 1658 [EQC 2:113]); m. Ipswich 15 November 1647 Martha Lake [Bethia Harris Anc 56].
- iv WILLIAM, b. say 1620; m. (1) by 1645 Edith \_\_\_\_\_ (first child b. Rowley 1 July 1645); m. (2) by Lydia (Wright) Smith, daughter of Thomas Wright and widow of Joseph Smith [TAG 23:153; Manwaring 1:233].
- v ANTHONY, b. say 1622; m. by 1651 Elizabeth \_\_\_\_\_, who survived him and was named in his 1651 will [Bethia Harris Anc 8, citing MPR Case #10479].
- vi DANIEL, b. say 1626; m. by 1651 Mary Weld (first child b. Rowley 2 April 1651), daughter of Joseph Weld (on 19 May 1652 "Daniell Harris and Mary my wife, one of the daughters of Captain Joseph Weld of Roxbury ... late deceased" sold to John Weld land that had been bequeathed to her by "her said father Joseph Weld" [SLR 1:260; Parker-Ruggles 500-01; Brainerd Anc 153, 155, 296-97; TAG 23:154]).

**ASSOCIATIONS:** Nephew Richard Iles also resided at Winnissimmet.

**COMMENTS:** Three documents are critical for defining this family: the 1639 will of Richard Iles of Winnissimmet; the 1680 deposition of William Stitson; and the will of William Stitson. Iles was nephew of Thomas Harris, and may have come with him in 1630; in his will he names his cousins Thomas Harris, William Harris, Anthony Harris, John Harris, Anne Maverick and Daniel Harris, giving 20s. to each, and also a coverlet to "my aunt for her pains and her love" [NEHGR 2:102-03]. (A discussion of this will by T. W. Harris is helpful, but must be used with care [NEHGR 3:218-21].)

On 15 June 1680, Deacon William Stitson testified that Thomas Harris kept the ferry from Boston to Winnissimmet and Charlestown forty-nine years ago, and that he married Harris's widow [Middlesex County Court Records, 1671-1680, p. 297].

In his will of 2 April 1688 William Stitson bequeathed to "John Harris, Thomas Harris, William Harris, Daniel Harris, and Anna Maverick, relict widow of Elias Maverick, deceased, the children of my first wife" [MPR Case #21376].

In some early records, Thomas uses the double name "Williams alias Harris" or simply the surname "Williams." The reason for this is not known, and his descendants used only Harris, the ancestral surname.

No records of Thomas Harris in England have been found other than the mention in his father's 1599 will. Since the Winthrop Fleet was assembled mostly from East Anglia and London, one would expect to find evidence of the marriage of Thomas and the baptisms of his children in these areas rather than in Gloucestershire. Davis suggests, however, that Harris came on the *Lyon*, which sailed from Bristol and not from London. (The only reliable account of this family is in Walter Goodwin Davis, *The Ancestry of Bethia Harris ...* [Portland, Maine, 1934], pp. 3-34.)

## Harris Family Crest

