

Pilgrim Village Families Sketch: Richard Masterson

By Robert Charles Anderson

Birth: Richard Masterson was born about 1594, based on his date of marriage.

Death: He died in Plymouth in 1633 during an epidemic of infectious fever.

Ship: Unknown, 1629

Life in England: Richard Masterson lived in Sandwich, Kent. He and several others were brought before church courts for criticizing the Church of England and the Book of Common Prayer, as well as for non-attendance of services. He was excommunicated several times.

Life in Holland: Richard Masterson was in Leiden by October 7, 1611. He was a wool comber by occupation. He bought a house on the Uiterstegracht on January 2, 1614, the sale of which was the subject of years of negotiation by his wife's second husband. With four others, he wrote a letter from Leiden to William Bradford in 1625 about their hopes of emigrating to New England. From Michael Paulick's research, it would seem that Masterson traveled between Leiden and Sandwich.

Life in New England: Richard Masterson arrived in New England in 1629 from Leiden. Nathaniel Morton in his history of the Plymouth church described Masterson as a "holy man" and "experienced saint," "the said Richard Masterson having bin officious with parte of his estate for publick Good; and a man of Abillitie as a second steven to defend the truth by sound argument Grounded on the scriptures of truth..." He died in 1633 in the epidemic of infectious fever. Mary Masterson married Rev. Ralph Smith, the minister for Plymouth until 1636. They moved to Manchester by 1645, and Ipswich by 1652.

Family: Richard Masterson married Mary Goodall on November 23, 1619, in Leiden and had two children. She married (2) Rev. Ralph Smith before July 1, 1644. She died in 1659. He died on March 1, 1660/1 in Boston.

Children of Richard and Mary Masterson:

- Nathaniel was born about 1620. He married Elizabeth Cogswell on July 31, 1657, in Ipswich and had three children. She died in 1691–2. He died before July 1, 1708.
- Sarah was born about 1625. She married John Wood/Atwood by 1645 and had nine children. He died between November 22, 1675, and March 7, 1675/6. She died probably early in 1701.