

Pilgrim Village Families Sketch: John Smith

By Robert Charles Anderson

Birth: Nothing is known of John Smith's date or place of birth.

Death: Nothing is known of his date or place of death.

Ship: Unknown, before 1633

Life in England: Nothing is known of his life in England.

Life in New England: There seem to have been two John Smiths in Plymouth in the early 1630s. On July 25, 1633, John Smith agreed to serve John Jenny for seven years, for which he would have twelve bushels of Indian corn and 25 acres of land. On January 2, 1633/4, John Smith, who had bound himself to Edward Doty for ten years, was able to renegotiate his contract down to five years, with two suits of apparel at the end. Since the times of service overlap, two different men must be involved. The next record referred to John Smith, laborer, who was before the court on November 8, 1638, for fathering an illegitimate child by Bennett Morecock. The couple married on December 7, 1638. Assuming this was father not a third John Smith, it is more likely the marriage of the John Smith, servant to Edward Doty, who would have been completing his service about then, but this hypothesis is far from proved. Plymouth births records in the 1650s referred to both John Smith and John Smith, Junior as fathers. The designation "Junior" does not indicate a family relationship, but differentiates men of the same name by their relative ages. It is possible that neither of these married men are the 1630s John Smiths. In the absence of further evidence, the histories of the John Smiths of Plymouth Colony remain a puzzle.

Family: A John Smith married Bennett Morecock in Plymouth on December 7, 1638, and had at least one child. John Smith, Junior married Deborah Howland on January 4, 1648, and had at least four children.

Children of John and Bennett Smith:

- A child born prior to November 7, 1638. There is no further information.

Children of John Junior and Deborah Smith :

- Hasadiah was born on January 11, 1649.
- John was born on October 1, 1651.
- Eliezer was born on April 20, 1654.
- Hezekiah was born on November 28, 1655