



### Phineas Pratt & the Wessagusset company

Phineas Pratt was a member of Thomas Weston's Wessagusset company. Thomas Weston was one of the original investors in Plymouth Colony, but he quarreled with the company, sold out his interests and struck out on his own. He sent three ships (first, the *Sparrow*, followed by the *Charity* and the *Swan*) to New England in 1622, intending to establish his own colony. The *Sparrow* sailed to Maine and then sent their ship's boat down the coast to Plymouth.

William Bradford describes the arrival of the *Sparrow's* boat in Plymouth at the end of May 1622 as "This boat brought seven passengers and some letters, but no victuals nor any hope of any." (Bradford, *Of Plimoth Plantation*, p. 100; all references to Bradford hereafter being to the Samuel Eliot Morison edition, first published by Knopf in 1952). (Phineas himself refers to 10 men in his narrative, but he may have been including ship's crew.) It is from Edward Winslow (*Good Newes from New England*, p. 16-17; all references to *Good Newes* hereafter being to the Applewood Press edition) that we learn "the boat proved to be a shallop, that belonging to a fishing ship, called the *Sparrow*, set forth by Master Thomas Weston, late merchant and citizen of London, which brought six or seven passengers at his charge, that should before have been landed at our Plantation, who also brought no more provision for the present than served the boat's gang for their return to the ship." The *Charity* and the *Swan* arrived at Plymouth in the end of June or beginning of July, 1622.

Weston seems to have been unscrupulous and untrustworthy, promising much and delivering nothing. Certainly, the judgment of Robert Cushman (a member of the Pilgrim community who was handling business details for them in London) was not favorable: "The people which they [the Weston ships] carry are no men for us; wherefore I pray you entertain them not, neither exchange man for man with them, except it be some of your worst... if they offer to buy anything of you, let it be such as you can spare; and let them give the worth of it. If they borrow anything of you, let them leave a good pawn... I fear these people will hardly deal so well with the savages as they should. I pray you therefore signify to Squanto that they are a distinct body from us, and we have nothing to do with them, neither must be blamed for their faults, much less can warrant their fidelity." (Bradford, p. 107-108). John Pierce, in whose name the Pilgrims' patent for the Plymouth land was written, agreed in this assessment, writing "But as for Mr. Weston's company, I think them so base in condition (for the most part) as in all appearance not fit for an honest man's company." (Bradford, p. 109).

The approximately 67 men (many of them ailing) who had been on the three Weston ships stayed in Plymouth during the summer of 1622, being fed and housed and cared for by the Plymouth colonists who were in desperate straits themselves. Edward Winslow (*Good Newes*, p. 19) complained "That little store of corn we had was exceedingly wasted by the unjust and dishonest walking of these strangers; who, though they would sometimes seem to help us in our labor about our corn, yet spared not day and night to steal the same, it being then eatable and pleasant to the taste, though green and unprofitable; and though they received much kindness, set light both by it and us, not sparing to requite the love we showed them with secret backbitings, revilings, &c." In the fall of 1622, the Weston men left to colonize an area north of Plymouth called Wessagusset. They soon fell into difficulties with the local Native Americans, as predicted by

Robert Cushman. They not only “so wronged the Indians by stealing their corn, etc.” that the Indians refused to trade with them, but they behaved generally in a very foolish and improvident fashion:

“After they began to come into wants, many sold away their clothes and bed coverings; other (so base were they) became servants to the Indians, and would cut them wood and fetch them water for a capful of corn; others fell to plain stealing, both night and day, from the Indians, of which they grievously complained. In the end, they came to that misery that some starved and died with cold and hunger...

By which their carriages they became contemned and scorned of the Indians, and they began greatly to insult over them in a most insolent manner. Insomuch that many times as they lay thus scattered abroad and had set on a pot with ground nuts or shellfish, when it was ready the Indians would come and eat it up; and when night came, whereas some of them had a sorry blanket or such like to lap themselves in, the Indians would take it and let the other lie all night in the cold, so as their condition was very lamentable.” (Bradford, p. 116.)

Massasoit, sachem of the Wampanoags, informed the Plymouth colonists that there was a conspiracy among the Natives of the Wessagusset area “they were resolved to cut off Mr. Weston’s people for the continual injuries they did them, and would not take opportunity of their weakness to do it, and for that end had conspired with other Indians their neighbors thereabout.” Massasoit then “advised them therefore to prevent it, and that speedily, by taking some of the chief of them [the Wessagusset Natives] before it was too late.” (Bradford, p. 117.) Myles Standish prepared to head north with a small company of Plymouth men to rescue Weston’s men. The same message was also delivered by one of Weston’s men, who came to Plymouth in March of 1623 “from the Massachusetts with a small pack at his back, and though he knew not a foot of the way, yet he got safe hither but lost his way; which was well for him for he was pursued, and so was missed. He told them here, how all things stood amongst them, and they he durst stay no longer; he apprehended they (by what he observed) would be all knocked in the head shortly.” (Bradford, p. 117-118).

Phineas Pratt was the man with the backpack. He had hidden his intention to travel to Plymouth and snuck out of the Wessagusset settlement, traveling for several days without food through a snowy landscape on his 25-mile journey.

The story is also related in *Good Newes from New England* (p. 44):

“On the next day, before he [Captain Standish] could go, came one of Mr. Weston’s company [Phineas Pratt] by land unto us, with his pack at his back, who made a pitiful narration of their lamentable and weak estate, and of the Indians’ carriages, whose boldness increased abundantly; insomuch as the victuals they got, they would take it out of their pots, and eat before their faces; yea, if in any thing they gainsaid them, they were ready to hold a knife at their breasts.”

Myles Standish and a small contingent (minus Phineas, who was still recovering from his arduous journey) headed to Wessagusset. The Plymouth contingent killed several Native Americans in the process (for which, they were roundly scolded by their pastor, John Robinson). Soon afterwards, Weston’s group abandoned Wessagusset and rejoined the English fishing settlement at Piscataqua. Sometime in late 1623, Phineas traveled down the coast again and joined the Plymouth settlement. His name appears in the 1623 Division of Land.

### **Phineas Pratt and the 1623 Division of Land**

The 1623 Division of Land marked the end of the Pilgrims' earliest system of land held in common by all. Governor Bradford explains it in this way

"And so assigned to every family a parcel of land, according to the proportion of their number, for that end, only for present use (but made no division for inheritance) and ranged all boys and youth under some family. This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so as

much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 75-6.

Plymouth Colony Records, Deeds, &c., Vol. I 1627-1651 is the oldest record book of the Plymouth settlement. It begins with the 1623 Division of Land, recorded in the handwriting of Governor William Bradford. The names of "Josuah Pratt" and "Phineas Prat," jointly receiving 2 acres, are the last names listed, ranking their claim to land below those who were passengers on the *Mayflower* (1620), the *Fortune* (1621), and the *Anne* and *Little James* (1623). [Note: There is no proof of any blood relationship between Joshua and Phineas Pratt but circumstantial evidence points in that direction.]

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 5.

### **Phineas Pratt & the 1627 Division of Cattle**

Plymouth Colony Records, Deeds, &c., Vol I 1627-1651 also tells of the 1627 Division of Cattle: "At a publique court held the 22th of May it was concluded by the whole Companie, that the cattell wch were the Companies, to wit, the Cowes & the Goates should be equally devided to all the psonts of the same company ... & so the lotts fell as followeth, thirteene psonts being pportioned to one lot ...

"The first lot fell to ffrancis Cooke & his Companie Joyned to him his wife Hester Cooke (3) John Cooke (4) Jacob Cooke (5) Jane Cooke (6) Hester Cooke (7) Mary Cooke (8) Moses Simonson (9) Phillip Delanoy (10) Experience Michaell (11) John ffance (12) Joshua Pratt **(13) Phinihas Pratt**. To his lot fell the least of the 4 black heyfers Came in the Jacob, and two shee goats."

### **Phineas Pratt: a 1626 Purchaser**

"In 1621, King James I authorized the Council for New England to plant and govern land in this area. This Council granted the Peirce Patent, confirming the Pilgrims' settlement and governance of Plymouth. Peirce and his associates, the merchant adventurers, were allotted 100 acres for each settler the Company transported. The Pilgrims had a contract with the Company stating all land and profits would accrue to the Company for 7 years at which time the assets would be divided among the shareholders. Most of the Pilgrims held some stock. The Pilgrims negotiated a more favorable contract with the Company in 1626. In 1627, 53 Plymouth freemen, known as "The Purchasers," agreed to buy out the Company over a period of years. In turn, 12 "Undertakers" (8 from Plymouth and 4 from London) agreed to pay off Plymouth's debts in return for trade benefits.

The list we have of the 1626 Purchasers includes the name "Phineas Pratt."

### **Phineas Pratt in the Records of Plymouth Colony**

**1633:** "The Names of the Freemen of the Incorporacion of Plymoth in New England, An:1633... Phineas Prat."

Phineas Pratt was also listed among the freemen in the list of 1636-7 and 1658. Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1: 3-4; p. 52; Vol 8, p. 173-174.

**25 March 1633:** "According to an order in Court held the 2d of January, in the seaventh yeare of

the raigne of o'r soveraigne lord, Charles, by the grace of God King of Engl., Scotl., France, & Irel., defendor of the faith, &c, the psons heere under menconed were rated for publike use by the Gov'r, Mr Will Bradford ...to be brought in by each pson as they are heere under written, rated in corne at vi s[hillings] p bushell, at or before the last of November next ensuing... Phineas Pratt ... 00: 09 [shillings]: 00."

Phineas Pratt was also rated 9 shillings in March 1634.  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 9-10, p. 26-27.

**28 October 1633** [When a resident of Plymouth Colony died, an inventory of their estate was taken by a designated member of the community]: "Phineas Pratt referred to further hearing at the same time [11 November 1633] about the goods of Godbert Godbertson & Zara, his wife."  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 18.

**11 November 1633**: "At this Court, Phineas Prat appointed to take into his possession all the goods & chattels of Godbert Godbertson & Zarah, his wife, & safely to preserve them, according to an inentory presented upon oath to be true & just by Mr. Joh. Done & mr. Steph. Hopkins."  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 19.

**25 November 1633**: "An inventory of the goods & Chattels of ffr Eaton Carpenter of Plymouth as it was taken by James Hurst, ffrancs Cooke & Phineas Prat the 8<sup>th</sup> of November and presented in Court upon Oath the 25<sup>th</sup> of the same."  
Mayflower Descendant, Vol. 1, p. 197-198.

**10 March 1633-4**: "Whereas Phineas Prat, joyner, in the behalfe of Marah, his wife, is possessed of thirty acres of land neer unto the high cliffe, the said Phineas & Marah have exchanged the fee simple thereof wth Mr Thomas Prence for other thirty acres of land at Wynslows stand, and next adjoyning to another portion of land belonging to the said Phineas. But whereas there is a brooke, wthin the said thirty acres thus exchanged & acknowledged by mutuall consent, wherent John Come, gent, may freely make use of, it is granted to him, his heires or assignes, provided he so make use of the said water, as the said Phineas be not annoyed thereby, but either by convenient inclosure, at the cost of the said Joh. or otherwise, shall save harmeles the said Phineas & his heires from any detrit or annoyance that shall or may befall them, the said Phines & Marah, their heires & Assignes."  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 26.

**2 March 1635-6**: "At the same Court, a jury of twelve being impaniled and charged, in the moneth of Febr. foregoing, to enquire after the death of Jhn Deacon, in the behalfe of our soveraigne lord, the King, gave in their verdict as followeth, in their owne words, under their hands, vizt: - Having searched the dead body, we finde not any blowes or wounds, or any other bodily hurt. We finde that bodily weakenes, caused by long fasting & wearines, by going to & fro, wth the extream cold of the season, were the causes of his death. Their names were John Jenny, John Cooke, Will Basset, Joseph Rogers, William Hoskins, Thomas Cushman, George Partridge, Stephen Tracy, Abraham Peirce, Richard Cluffe, Tho. Clarke, Phineas Pratt."  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 39.

**14 March 1635/6**: "At a Generall Meeting the 14<sup>th</sup> of march, concerning the Hey Grownds for Plymouth & Duxburrough.  
The places heerafter menciond were assigned to the severall psons, for their prnt use in the yeare 1636..."

That Phineas Pratt have between Fr. Billington and his owne howse.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 39-40.

**7 November 1636:** “Tristram Clarke appointed to have eight acres of land, fowr in breadth & two in length on the south side, a porcion allotted formerly to mr John Coome between Phineas Pratt & widow Billington.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol, 1, p. 46.

**14 January 1636-7:** “There is graunted this day, by the Court of Assistants, to James Skiffe, tenn acres of lands, lying next unto the lands graunted to Triston Clarke, five in length & two in breadth, betweene the lands of Phineas Pratt & widdow Billington.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol, 1, p. 47.

**20 March 1636/7:** “At a Genall meeting the xxth of March, 1636, according to the order of the Court, these Hey Grownds were assigned to the Inhabitants of Plymouth, Eele River, & Ducksbury.  
To eich pson as followeth, for theire use this prnte yeare following, vizt, 1637...  
To Phineas Pratt and Mr. Coomes, the hey ground they had the last yeare.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 55-56.

**12 July 1637:** “The said Edward Dotey for and in consideracion of the sume of one hundred and fifty pounds of lawfull money of England to be payd in manner and forme following Hath freely and absolutely bargained sould allienated enfeoffed and confirmed unto the said Richard Derby his heires and assignes All those his Messuages houses and tennements at the heigh Cliffe or Skeart hill together wth the foure lotts of lands and three other acres purchased of Josuah Pratt Phineas Pratt & John Shawe All which sd prmises are now in the tenure or occupacion of the said Edward Dotey and his Assigned and all his right title interrest clayme and demaund of and into the said prmises and every part and pcell thereof together wth all and singuler the appurtences thereunto belonging To have and to hold the said Messuages lands & prmises and all & singuler thapprtences utno the said Richard Derby his heires and Assignes forever to the onely pper use & behoofe of the said Richard Derby his heires & Assignes for ever...”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 20.

**2 October 1637:** “George Clark compaynes agst Edward Dotey in an action upon the case for denying him liberty to hold land for the terme he had taken yt for, to the damage of xx [li]. The jury found for the pltiff, and assessed xx [s] damage, and the charges of the Court. Execucion graunted.  
“Georg Clarke complains agst Edward Dotey, in an action of assault and battery, for strieking the plt, to the damage of v [li]. The jury found for the pltiff, and assessed xii [d] damage, and the charges of the Court. Execucion graunted.  
the jury names were these:  
Mr. Stephen Hopkins, Mr John Done, Josias Winslowe, James Hurst, Phineas Pratt...  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 7, p. 6-7.

**1 June 1640:** “At a Court of Assistants held at Plym aforesd, the first day of June...  
Phineas Pratt [is granted] five acres.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 153-4.

**3 August 1640:** “Forasmuch as it appeareth by the testimony of Josuah Pratt & otherwise, that the two acres of upland lying at Wellingsly Brook, on the north side of the lotts given to Godbert

Godbertson, were given by the said Godbert godbertson to John Combe, gent, & Phineas Pratt, in marriage wth their wives, his daughters, the Court doth confirme the said two acres unto the said John Combe & Phineas Pratt, their heirest & assignes for evr.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 159.

**5 August 1640:** “Memorand the fift day of August 1640 That John Combe gent and Phineas Pratt joyner do acknowledg that for and in consideracion of the sum of three pounds sterl to them in hand payd by John Barnes of new Plymouth have freely and absolutely bargained and sould unto the said John Barnes his heires & Assignes all those two acres of upland wch they had ot Goodbert Godbertson in marryage wth their wives lying at the North side next to the Towneward of that parcell of upland at Wellingsley brooke wch fell to him by lott in the first divisions, and all their right title and interrest of and into the said two acres of upland wth all and singuler thapprtences thereto belonging To have & to hold the said two acres of upland wth all & singuler their apprtences unto the said John Barnes his heires Assignes forever To the only pper use & behoof of him the said John Barnes his heires & Assignes for ever.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 61.

**2 November 1640:** “These sevall psons following are graunted meddowing in the North meddow by Joanes river ...  
To Phineas Pratt six acres.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 166.

**5 April 1642:** “Memorand That Mr John Combe doth acknowledg That for & in consideration of the sum of fourty shillings whereof vj bushells of Rye at 3 [s] 6 [d] p bushell is payd in hand and the remaynder to be paid in July next hath freely and absolutely bargained and sold unvo Mr Thomas Prence all those his two acres of marsh meddow lying before the house of the said Thom Prence at Joanes River next to the Marsh meddow of Phineas Pratt wth all & singuler thapprtences thereunto belonging and all his Right title & Interest of and into the said prmises & every pt thereof To have and to hold the said two acres of Marsh meddow wth all thapprtences thereunto belonging unto the said Thomas Prence his heires and Assignes forev to the onely pp use & behoofe of him the said Thomas Prence his heires & Asss forev.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 78.

**7 May 1642:** “Memorand That Josuah Pratt doth acknowledg that for & in consideracion of the sum of fourty shilings to him in hand payd by Edward Dotey hath freely & absolutely bargained and sold unto Edward Dotey one acre of upland lying at the heigh Cliff betwist the lands of Phineas Pratt & John Shawe and all his right title & interrest thereunto To have and to hold the said acre of land unto the said Edward Dotey his heires & Assignes forever to the onely pper use and behoofe of him the said Edward Dotey his heires & assignes forever.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 81.

**31 December 1642:** “Memorand That John Barnes for and in consideracion of the sum of sixteene pounds to be payd by Edward Edwards in manner & forme following that is to say five pounds six shilling & eight pence at or upon the sixteenth day of June next following and five pounds six shillings & eight pence that day twelve months after and thother five pounds six shillings & eight penc the xvjth day of June wch shalbe in the yeare of or Lord one thousand six hundred fourty & five wch said payments are to be made in money stockings shooes or other merchantable commodityes that the said John Barnes shall accept of at the days of payment Hath freely & absolutely bargained & sold unto the said Edward Edwards all that his house & lands lying at Wellingly brooke wch was lately purchased of mr Thomas Hill wth the two acres of

upland lying at Wellingsly brooke lately purchased of Mr John Combe & Phineas Pratt wth all & singuler thapprtences thereunto belonging and all his Right title & interrest of & into the said prmises & every part & pcell therof To have & to hold the said house and lands wth all and every their appurtenances unto the said Edward Edwards his heires and Assignes for ever to the onely pper use and behoofe of him the said Edward Edwards his heires & assignes for evr.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 87-88.

**August 1643:** “The Names of all the males that are able to beare Armes from xvj Yeares old to 60 Yeares, wthin the sevrall Townshipps.  
“Plymouth... Phineas Pratt.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 8, p. 187.

**22 June 1644:** “At a Townes meeting the xxii June 1644  
In case of alarume in tyme of warr or danger these divisions of the Township are to be observed and these companys to repaire together.  
At Joanes River: Mr Bradfords famly one, Mr Prences one, Mr Hanbury one, Mr Howland one, ffrancis Cooke one, Phineas Pratt, Gregory Armstrong, John Winslow, Mr Lee.”  
Records of the Town of Plymouth, Vol. 1, p. 17.

**5 November 1644:** “The fift of Novembr, 1644. Memorand: that Thomas Bunting, dwelling wth Phineas Pratt, hat, wth and by the consent of the said Phineas, put himself as a servant to dwell wth John Cooke, Junir, from the fifteenth day of this instant Novembr, for and during the terme of eight yeares now next ensuing, and fully to be compleate and ended, the said John Cooke fynding unto his said servant meate, drink, and apparell, during the said terms, and in thend thereof double to apparel him throughout, and to pay him twelve bushells of Indian corne, the said John Cooke having payd the said Phineas for him one melch cowe, valued at v [li], and fourty shillings in money, and is to lead the said Phineas two loads of hey yearly during the terme of seaven yeares now next ensuinge.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 78.

**17 July 1646:** “The 17 of ye 7 month 1646. Phineas Prate came before ye Gover and acknowledged the sale of his house & land, with all ye appurtenances thertoo belonging; to John Cooke, according to a deed then exhibited which they desired might be recorded Also his wife came before ye Govr and gave her consente to ye same sale.  
Allso Samuell Cudberte did ye same day & year above writen, freely relinquish all ye claime, title, or Intrest, that he ever had, or might pretend to have, to any parte, or parcell of ye lands afforsaid and did freely give, grante, and make over all ye right, and Intreste that he ever had, or hereafter should have, or at any time might pretend to have, to any parte or parcell of ye lands aforesaid, and those mentioned in ye deede Insuing; to Phineas Prate, & his heires, & assignes for ever; for his, & their onely proper use & behoofe.”  
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 137.

**26 August 1646:** “These presents doe witnes that Phineas Prate of Plimoth Joyner, for & in considertion of ye sume of twenty pounds sterl: to be payed by John Cooke Jun of plimoth afforesaid planter, in maner & forme following, that is to ssay five pounds to be payed in cloathing within one month nexte after ye date hearof five pounds in march next, either in wheat, or comodities, five pounds in a milch cowe as shee shall be prised by 2 Indifferent men chosen by either party one, and ye last 5 [li] this time twelfe months. Hath freely and absolutly bargained and sould, & by these presents doth bargaine & sell unto the said John Cooke, all yt his house, & howsing, and gardine place and orchard 9excepting ye fruite trees now growing therin, or so

many of them to be delvred to the said Phineas, or his assignes when he shall demande them, so it be in due time) and fiftie acres of upland tow acres of meadow at Joanes river, and all and singular the appurtenances therunto belonging, and all his right, title, & Interest of & into ye same, & every parte, & parcell therof; to have & to hold the said house, housing, garden, and orchard (excepting before excepted) the fiftie Acres of upland, and ye 2 Acres of meadow at Joans river, with the sixe Acres of upland meadow, at the great meadow with all, & every their appurtenances, unto the said John Cooke, his heirs, & assignes, for ever, and to the onely proper use, & behofe of him the said John Cooke, his heires and assignes for ever, and with warranties against all people, from by or under hin, claiming any righte, title, or Interest of, & into the said premises or any parte or parcell therof, and espetially against Samuell Cudberte his heirs, & assignes for ever by these presents; and the said Phineas Prate doth further Covenante and grant by these presents, that it shall & may be lawfull too, & for the said John Cooke either by him selfe, or his Attorney to enrole, or recorde the title or tenure of these before the Gouvernour for ye time being, according to ye usuall order & manor of enrolling & recording deeds, & evidences in his Ma'ties Court at plimoth in shuch case made, & provided In witnes wherof the said Phineas Prate hath hereunto sett his hand & seale the day & year first above writen.

Phineas Prate

In ye presence of Ralfe Whoorey, William Pady, Thomas Willet, Nathanel Sowther.

And in consideration of ye sune of 2 [s] 6 [d] to ye said Phineas Prate in hand paid hath freely, & absolutly bargained & sould unto ye said John Cooke all his right & Interest, of & into any lands lying at the head or ende of ye afforesaid bargained premises before the sealing and delivery of these presents.

Phineas Prate.”

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 137-138.

**28 May 1647:** In the last will & testament of Robert Hicks of Plymouth, the following bequests were made, among others

“Item I give unto the town of plymouth one cow calfe Item to William pontus I give twenty shillings to bee payed him in the cuntry pay within six months after my dessease item I give unto pheneas prat xx [s] to be payed in lick maner”

Mayflower Descendant, Vol. 8, p. 144-145.

**5 June 1658:** “Liberty was graunted by the Court unto Phenias Prat, or any for him, to looke out a pcell or tract of land to accommodate him and his posterities withall, together with other freemen, or alone, as hee shall thinke meet, and to make reporte of the same unto the Court, that soe a considerable propotion therof may bee confeirmed unto him.”

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 3, p. 145-146.

**16 March 1659:** “Richard Browne of Charlestowne” bequeathed to “Peneis Prate one suit of my wearing clothes.”

Richard Charles Anderson, The Great Migration Begins, Vol. 1, p. 264.

**In 1662,** Pratt presented to the General Court of Massachusetts a narrative entitled “A declaration of the affairs of the English people that first inhabited New England” to support his request for financial assistance. The extraordinary document is Phineas Pratt’s own account of the Wessagusset settlement and its downfall.

In response to his narrative, Phineas Pratt was, on 7 May 1662, given a grant of land.

"In answer to the petition of Phineas PRAT of Charls Toune, who presented to this Court with a narrative of the streights and hardshipes that the first planters of this colony under went in their



endeavors to plant themselves at Plimouth, & since whereof he was one, the Court judgeth it meet to graunt him three hundred acres of land where it is to be had, not hindering a plantation ... Laid out to Phineas PRATT of Charls Toune, three hundred acres of land (more orless) in the wilderness, on the east of Meremack River neere the upper end of Nacooke Brooke, on the south east of it: it begins at a great sare pine standing anent the midle of Nacooke Pond & joyneth to the line of five hundred acres of land lately granted to the toune of Billirrikey"

Susan E. Rose, *Mayflower Deeds & Probates* (Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, c1994), p. 57.

**8 June 1664:** "In reference unto the request of Phineas Pratte and the Elder Bates, in the behalf of the children of Clement Briggs, that wheras they, the said Phineas Pratt and Clement Briggs, have not had their proportions of land with others of this jurisdiction formerly called purchassers or old comers, that they might have some consideration of land in that respect in a pcell or tract of land lying neare unto the line betwist the massachusetts jurisdiction and us, neare unto Waymouth, the Court doth graunt unto the said Phineas Pratt and unto two of the said Clement Briggs his sonnes, viz, David Briggs and Remember Briggs, three hundred and fifty acres of the said lands, with all and singulare the appurtenances therunto belonging, unto them and their heires and assignes for ever, viz, unto the said Phineas Pratt two prtes of three of the said three hundred and fifty acres, and the remainder therof unto the two sonnes of the said Clement Briggs aforname; and this to bee layed forth for them by John jacob, of Hingham, and John Whitmarsh, of Waymouth; and incase any Indian or Indians shall heerafter lay claime unto the said lands, that the said Phineas Prat and the Elder Bates stand bound to the Court to answare the charge of the purchase therof and all other nessesary charges about the said land."

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 4, p. 68.

**4 October 1664:** "James Lovell, of Waymouth, produceing a deed of sale from the heires of Mr Nathaniel Souther for a sertaine tract of land long since graunted by this collonie to Mr Souther abovesaid, and alsoe propounding a place where hee desired to take it up, viz, neare the place where Phenias Prat and the sonnes of Clement Briggs were accommodated, between their land and the line of the pattent, this Court, takeing notice of the former graunt, doe accordingly allow unto the said James Lovell two hundred acres of land in the place abovemencioned, and have appointed Leiftenant Torrey and Cornett Studon, if hee may bee obtained, to view it and lay it out unto him, hee paying them for their paines..."

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 4, p. 74.

**7 June 1665:** "A certaine pcell of meddow, or such swampy ground as teneth towards meddow, is graunted by the Court unto Pheneas Pratt and James Lovell, lying on the westerly side of Phenias Pratts land that was graunted unto him the last June Court, neare unto the line betwixt the Massachusetts and this jurisdiction, the said pcell being about foure or five acres, bee it more or lesse, to bee equally devided betwist them, the said Pheneas Pratt and James Lovell, to them and their heires and assignes for ever."

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 4, p. 97.

**29 October 1668:** "In reference unto the request of James Lowell for to have an addition of swampey land neare unto his land hee hath in the right of Mr Nathaniel Souther, the Court have ordered, that Mr Constant Southworth and Cornett Studson shall view the said land, and allow him twelve acres therof, besides that which he hath alreddy graunted unto him with Phenias Pratt."

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 5, p. 5.

**1 January 1672/3:** "Phineas and Mary Pratt of Charlestown sold to John Shaw Sr. of Weymouth the land granted to them by the court of 8 June 1664 and 7 June 1665."  
Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins*, Vol. 3, p. 1515.

**30 June 1674:** "Phineas Pratt aged eighty one years or there abouts dus testifie that the Lands formerly which I did live upon and did enjoy at Plimouth that land or lott Containing twenty acres or there abouts which lay on the south side of that which was mine was graunted by the Court unto mr John Combs and there was no Common betweene those lands and the said Combs did enjoy that lott and Cut wood upon the land and Sold.  
Taken upon oath this last day of june 1674  
Before me, Constant Southworth, Assist."  
Mayflower Descendant, Vol. 12, p. 46.

Sometime before May of 1648, when he purchased a house and garden in Charlestown, Pratt left Plymouth. In 1662, Pratt presented to the General Court of Massachusetts a narrative entitled "A declaration of the affairs of the English people that first inhabited New England" to support his request for financial assistance. Under the date of May 7 is the following record "In answer to the petition of Phinehas Pratt, of Charlestown, who presented this Court with a narrative of the straits and hardships that the first planters of this Colony underwent, in their endeavors to plant themselves at Plymouth and since, whereof he was one, the Court judge it meet to grant him three hundred acres of land, where it is to be had, not hindering a plantation." (Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 4<sup>th</sup> series, Volume 4, 1858). In 1668, the nearly 80-year-old Pratt requested financial assistance from the General Court which was not granted, but in 1669, the Town of Charlestown did give him assistance. Pratt died in Charlestown in 1680.

### **THE FAMILY OF PHINEAS PRATT**

Phineas Pratt married Mary Priest, daughter of Degory and Sarah Allerton Vincent Priest and stepdaughter of Godbert Godbertson. Mary's father Degory had been a *Mayflower* passenger; Mary arrived with her mother, sister and stepfather on the *Anne* and *Little James*, in 1623.

Phineas was probably born about 1593, Mary was probably born about 1612. It seems likely, given the probably age of their oldest child at the time of her death, that they married about 1632. Phineas and Mary Pratt had 8 children.

According to his gravestone in the old Phipps Street Cemetery, in the Charlestown area of Boston, "Phinehas Pratt, agd about 90 yrs, decd April ye 19, 1680 & was on of ye first English inhabitants of ye Massachusetts Colony." (Mayflower Descendant, Vol. 6, p. 1-2).

Mary Pratt outlived her husband; the date of her death is not certain but she did receive stipends from the town of Charlestown in 1683/4 and 1686/7 (Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins*, Vol. 3, p. 1516).