

The Great Migration Begins

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JOHN DEVEREUX

ORIGIN: Unknown
MIGRATION: 1630
FIRST RESIDENCE: Salem
REMOVES: Marblehead 1637

OCCUPATION: Fisherman and fish processor.

Devereux was sued on two counts by William Keene of Marblehead at the January Term 1641/2 regarding the mackerel to be divided between Devereux and Edward Clark [[EQC](#) 1:31]. At the March Term, 1651, John Devereux sued Mr. Valentine Hill for expenses amounting to more than £178 incurred on a fishing voyage to Munhegan in Maine [[EQC](#) 1:214]. A long and difficult case, the depositions of many men were entered in the file, providing a rich and varied description of fishing practices in this early period, from paying for the bread Goody Knight baked for the fishermen to the meeting at Mr. Hill's house in Boston where Hill "importuned him [Devereux] to go to Munhigon with his men" [[EQC](#) 1:214-17; 221; 232; 325; 2:338]. The case was appealed to the Court of Assistants [[EQC](#) 1:233]. We learn more about his fishing business from a June Term, 1661, case in which the Nicholsons sued John over fish delivered in 1660 [[EQC](#) 2:290-1]. Wife Ann delivered receipts "with her own hands" and deposed to that effect [[EQC](#) 2:291]. When John Bartol of Marblehead died, he owed John Devereux £2 9s. in fish [[EQC](#) 3:257, June Term, 1665]. Major William Hathorn left a fish rack in the hands of John Devereux in the fall of 1666 [[EQC](#) 3:378]. At the November Term, 1672,

John Devereux, aged about fifty-five, deposed that he had built John Codner's stage about twenty years ago [[EQC](#) 5:110].

EDUCATION: Supposedly signed his name to several court documents, but made his mark to documents after June 1680 and to his will.

OFFICES:

Essex grand jury, 27 September 1660, 25 June 1661 (apparently failed to show up and was fined), 26 November 1678, 24 June 1679 [[EQC](#) 2:250, 281, 300, 7:106, 195].

Petit jury, 24 November 1663, June 1672, 26 November 1672 [[EQC](#) 3:102, 5:76, 107, 126]. Coroner's jury, November Term 1665, that met at his house to view the bodies of two men shipwrecked on the ketch *Phenix*, and March Term 1669, on the body of Marie the little daughter of Mr. Christopher Lattimore who drowned in a well [[EQC](#) 3:296, 4:211].

Selectman of Marblehead in 1667, 1668, 1671 [[EQC](#) 4:251; 276, 378].

Sworn constable of Marblehead, November 1657 [[EQC](#) 2:59].

ESTATE: He was granted half an acre for a Salem house lot 8 November 1637 [[STR](#) 1:59] and received ten acres there [[STR](#) 1:25], but was rated as an inhabitant at Marblehead that same year [[STR](#) 1:63]. He was granted half an acre of marsh on 25 December 1637, with a household of two [[STR](#) 1:102].

On 1 July 1659 John Devereux of Marblehead, "fisherman," purchased from Charles Gott of Wenham, attorney for Mr. Hugh Peters, sometime pastor of the church at Salem, three hundred and fifty acres of neck or meadow in Marblehead [[ELR](#) 1:63].

He was stinted two cows in his access to the commons, 10 April 1671 [[EQC](#) 5:279]. On 22 July 1678, John "Deverix of Marblehead Senr. with the free consent of Ann his wife" sold to Vinson Stilson Jr. a quarter acre in Marblehead [[ELR](#) 6:10]. On 5 November 1692, John and Ann Devereux sold one and a quarter acre of land and "rock" in Marblehead to John Waldron Sr. of Marblehead, anchorsmith [[ELR](#) 9:105].

John had one-eighth part of a windmill at Marblehead that was in controversy at the June Term, 1680 [[EQC](#) 7:384-5].

In his will, dated 4 September 1693 and proved 20 May 1695, John Devereux of Marblehead, yeoman, bequeathed to son Robert Devereux 300 acres with my now dwelling house and barn; to "my son Robert's son Joseph" when he is 21 twenty acres out of my son Robert's land lying next to Marblehead common, entailed; to the "three sons of my son Humphry Deverix deceased," John, Humphrey and Ralph Devereux, one-third part of my land when they are 21, entailed; Elizabeth Devereux "mother of these three sons John Humphry and Ralph" shall have nothing to do with the house or land or ever live on them at any time; to "my son Humphry's two daughters Elizabeth and Ann," £5 each; to "my son John deceased his three daughters Sarah, Susanah and Ann" £40 or 12 acres each when they are of age; to "my daughter Hannah Swett" £20 to her and her children that "she had by Knott"; to "my daughter Ann Nichols" and her children £20; to "my grandchild John Boason the house his mother now lives in", with appurtenances, his mother to hold it during her life, entailed; to "my daughter Bethia Bartlet" and her children £20 and the land her house stands on, entailed; to "my daughter Em Peach" and her children £60 or 20 acres of land; to my "dear and loving wife Ann Devereux," executrix with life estate in lands and household goods at her dispose; land in Dunstable to be sold to pay debts [[EPR](#) Case #7614].

The inventory of "John Deverix Senr." of Marblehead was brought to court 25 March 1712 and consisted of only "a thirty acre grant" valued at £25 [[EPR](#) 310:419-20].

A just claim by Elizabeth Barker of Deptford, England, daughter of Rev. Hugh Peters of Salem, prevented the passing of most of the estate as expressed in John's will, and his "only surviving son Robert" attempted to settle things as best he could as administrator *cum testamento annexo* [[EPR](#) Case #7614]. In the light of Barker's successful claim, Robert Devereux called together his brothers-in-law, sisters and their heirs to consider what was to be done to support their mother "in her old age." In March 1703/4 at the Marblehead house of Dr. Jackson, Robert Devereux met with "Joseph and Hannah Swett his wife, Anne Nichols, Bethia Bartlet, the said Hanah, Anna & Bethiah being three of the daughters of John Devouraux of Marblehead deceased, William Peach who married with Emm Devouraux one of the daughters as aforesaid and Joseph Abbet who married with Sarah Devouraux, granddaughter to said John Devouraux deceased," and discussed the tragedy of their loss [[ELR](#) 18:174].

BIRTH: Between 1614 and 1621 (deposed aged fifty years March 1669 [[EQC](#) 4:114]; but still aged fifty years November 1670 [[EQC](#) 4:313]; aged about fifty-five years November 1672 [[EQC](#) 5:110]; aged about sixty years 29 March 1675 [[EQC](#) 6:19]; aged about sixty-four years probably in June 1679 [undated, [EQC](#) 7:200]; aged about sixty on 19 September 1681 [[EQC](#) 8:180]; aged about seventy years June 1684 [[EQC](#) 9:241]).

DEATH: Marblehead between 24 December 1694 (deposition [[ELR](#) 11:131]) and 20 May 1695 (probate of will).

MARRIAGE: Almost certainly by 1645, and certainly by 3 September 1657 [[EQC](#) 2:74]; Ann _____; born about 1621 (deposed aged about forty-three for June 1664 court [[EQC](#) 3:158]; deposed aged forty-six in June 1667 [[EQC](#) 3:414]; aged fifty-four on 29 March 1675 [[EQC](#) 6:19]; aged about sixty years June, 1684 [[EQC](#) 9:241]); died on or shortly after 26 April 1708 (she is described as "not being dead above three months" on 26 July 1708 [[EPR](#) Case #7614]). (Mary Walton Ferris collected nine different clues that indicate that Ann was closely related, perhaps sister, to Margaret, wife of John Bennett [[Dawes-Gates](#) 2:293-94].)

ASSOCIATIONS: In depositions at the March Term, 1675, John and Ann described lodging Christopher Codner and his master, Joseph Emmons, cordwainer, at their house [[EQC](#) 6:19]. They were well enough acquainted that Ann could depose at the June Term, 1679, that Christopher was "twenty-one years old the latter end of September last past" [[EQC](#) 7:225]. Her knowledge of Christopher's age probably came from the fact that John Devereux and Christopher Lattimore were feoffees in trust for Christopher and Joane, children of the late Christopher Codner of Marblehead [[ELR](#) 2:31]. Young Christopher acknowledged that he had received full possession of his house and land in Marblehead from John "Deverix Sr." and Richard Knott, at his majority 15 August 1679 [[ELR](#) 6:127].

The Devereuxs were well acquainted with John Bennett, and testified in June 1684 that "Bennett built the house and lived in it and died there and was buried from there. Mary, mother of Jone Boobeer, had enjoyed the house twenty-seven years. Also that Jone, wife of Joseph Boobeer is the reputed daughter of Christopher Codner which he had by Mary, daughter of John Bennett" [[EQC](#) 9:241]. John and Ann deposed that Mary, wife of Christopher Codner, lived many years with Richard Downing as his wife and had many children by him...[[EQC](#) 9:265, June Term, 1685].

COMMENTS: John Devereux "undertook to pay" the fines of Marmaduke Barton and Robert Allen who, at that same term of court, were convicted of receiving stolen silver and sentenced to be whipped on lecture day and Allen was ordered to serve his master, Mr. Williams, for an extra month. The connection that the two young offenders had to John Devereux is not immediately apparent [[EQC](#) 1:35].

Throughout his life, John Devereux was in and out of court regarding suits for debts related to his business [[EQC](#) 1:42, 45, 320, 348, 409, 2:306, 4:414, 7:419]. In the estate inventories of many of his customers and suppliers, he appeared with debts or credits [[EQC](#) 1:106-7, 5:211, 6:308].

He was a debtor to the estate of George Pollard in September 1646 and the estate was, in turn, indebted to him for "diet for two years and a quarter," £17 12s. [[EQC](#) 1:106; 107]. At November Term 1655 John sued Samuel Yew "For killing his cow by the falling of a tree in the commons" [[EQC](#) 1:409]. Capt. James Smith had a writ served on John Devereux for slander, 29 September 1670 [[EQC](#) 4:324].

Devereux took the stand in many cases over the years, often giving his age. John Devereux and Sarah Allen were witnesses when John Peach Sr. was fined 20s. for "giving Trustrum Dolliver opprobrious provoking words urging to a breach of the peace" [[EQC](#) 1:49].

At July Term, 1645, John was a witness in the case against his neighbors Walter Price, William Browne and Samuel Archer for selling wine without a license [[EQC](#) 1:83].

He was again a witness at the February Term, 1645/6, when John Bartall was charged with working on the Sabbath [[EQC](#) 1:93].

John, aged fifty, deposed regarding the will of Susannah Pitts of Marblehead, November Term, 1670 [[EQC](#) 4:313].

John Devereux testified to the death of Mary Downing "last winter" at the June Term, 1684 [[EQC](#) 9:241].

He appraised the estates of several of his neighbors [[EQC](#) 2:259, 5:56] and once served as an administrator [[EQC](#) 3:136].

John was appointed and discharged as one of two feoffees in trust for the Codner children [[EQC](#) 3:295, November Term, 1665].

Devereux contributed to the effort to build the new prison at Salem in late 1669 and was paid £4 5s. for felling 17 trees and dragging them to the water's edge [[EQC](#) 4:213].

In March 1669 John, aged fifty years, deposed that he was asked to witness an offer of bedding by Richard Rowland to Mr. Moses Maverick in April 1667, and that Maverick refused it [[EQC](#) 4:114].

Despite his good works, he was a boisterous and sometimes violent neighbor. At the December Term, 1643, Devereux was fined a modest 40s. for striking Henry Stacy "in his own house" [[EQC](#) 1:58].

John Devereux and nine other men, including the contentious William Keene, were fined for drinking wine, "etc." at the January Term, 1644/5 [[EQC](#) 1:77].

John Devereux was sued for debt by Thomas Gray of Marblehead over merchantable and refuse fish at the July Term, 1647 [[EQC](#) 1:116]. The resolution of the case must not have been acceptable, for at the March Term, 1647/8, John Devereux of Marblehead was fined for fighting with Thomas Gray, "Also for breaking his face," as described by the witnesses, "Walsingum" Chilson and John Spark [[EQC](#) 1:135].

At the November Term, 1651, John sued Peter Pitford of Marblehead for defamation, claiming that Pitford often threatened him "whereby he went in fear of him" [[EQC](#) 1:243]. Perhaps he had reason to worry, for Pitford lived contentiously and was presented for striking Joseph Rogers "several blows with his fist" some years later [[EQC](#) 1:324].

John Devereux's wife Ann was a good match in many ways. At the July Term, 1644, we presume it was Ann Devereux who was called "Goody," indicating her husband's modest social standing. In this case, both John and Ann deposed regarding Alice Peach, wife of John Peach, Jr., defaming John Bartoll and his wife Alice, and Ann called John Peach a "wittall" [[EQC](#) 1:62].

She witnessed the 3 September 1657 agreement between Mr. William Paine of Ipswich, merchant, and William Beale of Marblehead, miller. When the arrangement went sour, "Anne Devorex" was called to depose about it at the June Term, 1658 [[EQC](#) 2:74]. Ann, aged about forty-three years, deposed that she weighed the pork for Andrew Rowland [[EQC](#) 3:158, June Term, 1664].

Trespassing through the Downings' lot on their way to John Devereux's house, William Beale's wife, Frances Gilligan and Mary Parnel came to blows with Margaret Bennet over using the land as a highway. Devereux's servant, Robert Newman, aged about 17, deposed in this case and Bethiah and Ann Devereux witnessed Margaret Bennett's letter of attorney [[EQC](#) 3:414; 443].

Devereux had many servants over the years, but not all stayed out of the courts. Devereux "his man Thomas" was a witness in the December 1642 case against William Keene, Devereux's old nemesis, but the charges were dropped since the house that was "suffering disorder" was not Keene's [[EQC](#) 1:48].

John Slade and John Ford deposed as workers for Mr. Devereux's farm [[EQC](#) 4:285, September Term, 1670].

Devereux servants John Hobbs and "one Francis" stole turkeys from Richard Downing in 1683 [[EQC](#) 9:146].

Sons John and Humphrey were not above reproach, and were sentenced to be fined or whipped for being part of a group of boys that met at night and committed petty theft [[EQC](#) 4:274 June Term, 1670].

In another extensive case, Christopher Nicholson is charged with pulling down the fence that John Devereux had erected near some rocks by the water. With the fence gone, a great deal of petty thievery went on, and some of Devereux's servants and hired hands were obliged to watch constantly, much to their inconvenience. While John was gone, Ann went to the selectmen for permission to erect another fence. This almost accomplished by servant Robert Paty, Christopher Nicholson came and pulled it down again. The outcome of this June Term 1662 case was in Devereux's favor [[EQC](#) 2:407-9, 431].

John prevailed in a suit against Mr. Moses Maverick, John Peach, Sr. and Jr., and Richard Rowland for failing to set up a fence as agreed, but it was repeatedly appealed and he ultimately lost. This troublesome boundary cost him a lost horse and a bull mired and killed, as well as his corn threatened by animals so that he had to keep watch even at night [[EQC](#) 4:190, 251, 285, 289]. John's trouble with fences lasted for decades [[EQC](#) 7:5-6, June Term, 1678; [EQC](#) 7:324, November Term, 1679]. John sued John Codner "for removing a landmark" and won in the May Term, 1670 [[EQC](#) 4:251].

At the June Term, 1679, John Devereux Sr., aged about sixty-four years, testified that about thirty-four years ago he cut hay in Kittell Cove marsh and was forbidden by Rev. Blinman of Cape Ann, but they afterwards agreed [[EQC](#) 7:201].

John Devereux, aged about sixty years, deposed that having been many years inhabitant of Marblehead, and still resident there, and having no interest in the property then under controversy, that the land had been owned by Marblehead men for the past thirty-four years [[EQC](#) 8:180].

"The Testimony of John Devereux of Marblehead aged about eighty years, testifieth & saith that about the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred & thirty I came over from old England to New England & the place of my abode and residence has been at Salem & Marblehead ever since & when I came hither here was an old Squaw called old Squaw Sachem the Squaw of the deceased sachem which had three reputed sons, viz: John, James and George, who were the reputed sachems & owners of all the lands in these parts as Salem, Marblehead, Lynn and as far as Mystic & in those days the land where Salem town now stands & the lands adjacent were called Nahumkege by the Indians & English then inhabiting in these parts," 24 December 1694 [[ELR](#) 11:131].

1. JOHN¹ DEVEREUX, of Salem and Marblehead, farmer, was born probably about 1615,* came to New England about 1630, perhaps in the fleet with Winthrop, and died between 24 Dec. 1694, when he deposed in court, and 20 May 1695, when his will was proved. He married ANN —, born about 1620, who survived him and died at Marblehead 26 Apr. 1708, in her 88th year.†

John Devereux of Marblehead, aged about 80 years, deposed on 24 Dec. 1694 "yt about ye yeare of Our Lord One thousand and six hundred and thirty I came over from old England to New England, & ye place of my abode and residence has since been Salem & Marblehead." (Essex Court Files.) The first grant of land to him was in Salem, in 1636. In 1637 a half acre was granted to him for a dwelling house. He was at Marblehead in 1637. He first rented and finally purchased, in 1659, the land in Marblehead which had belonged to Rev. Hugh Peters and which was afterwards known as the "Devereux farm." The old house there is commemorated by Longfellow in his poem called "Driftwood." After John Devereux's death this farm was claimed by Elizabeth Barker of Deptford, England, daughter and heir of Rev. Hugh Peters, as is set forth below in the records relating to the estate of John Devereux; and Robert Devereux, son of John, was at last compelled to buy again, for £350 sterling, the land for which his father had already paid. John Devereux's name was admitted as freeman 16 May 1683.

The will of John Devereux, omitting the customary religious phrases and certain legal expressions, is as follows:§

"IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN the fourth day of September in y^e yeare of our lord 1693 . . . I JOHN DEVEREUX of marblehead in the County of Essex in New england Yeoman . . . Doe make . . . And Declare, this my last Will and testament . . . I give and bequeath unto my Sonn Robert Devereux two thirds of all my land within the Stonnwall now lying in Marblehead being three hundred Acres more or less with my now dwelling house and Barne, only I giv unto my Son Roberts Son Joseph twenty Acres of land within y^e Stonn wall which is out of the two thirds of my Son Roberts land before mentioned which land lying next to marblehead comon Jyning to my land without the Stonn wall, when he shall be: 21 yeares of age, to them and there heires (All the land abovementioned) in way of intale fforever and ever, And to remaine in the family and name of the Devereuxes from generation to generation in way of intale fforever and ever Item I give and bequeath unto the three sonns of my Sonn Humphry Devereux deceased that is to say John Humphry and Ralph Devereux one third part of my land; and meddow that is now before my, now, dwelling hous, within the

*See deposition of 1694, given below. His age is given also as 45 in 1666 and as 55 in 1672; and at the March Term, 1669, and the November Term, 1670, he deposed, aged 50 years (Vital Records of Marblehead, vol. 3, p. 34). It seems, therefore, impossible to determine the exact year of his birth from the records thus far discovered.

†She deposed in June 1664, aged about 43 years, in Sept. 1666, aged 46 years, and in June 1667, aged about 46 years. (Vital Records of Marblehead, vol. 3, p. 34.)

‡See Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts, from 1636 on, *passim*, published by the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass.

§John Devereux's will and the other records given relating to his estate have been copied from Essex Probate Files, 7614.

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Stonn wall, my grandsonn John Devereux to have one halfe of the third and the other halfe to Humphry and Ralph to be equally devided betweene them, two, when they or eyther of them come to y^e age of one and twenty yeares or to y^e longer liver of them But if any of them before they come to age, and in want of an heire male in them or any of them dye before, then to the next male heire of my familie to be houlden and continue and remaine in the family and name of the Devereuxes from generation to generation in way of intale forever and ever And it is my will that Elizabeth Devereux mother to these three Sonns Jhon Humphry and Ralph that She Shall have nothing to doe with the housing or lands to come upon it to dwell with them or eyther of them at any time or times whatsoever Item I give unto my Son Humphryes two daughter Elizabeth and Ann five pounds apeece After mine and my wives decease: Item I give unto my Son John deceased, his three daughters Sarah Susanah and Ann fourty pounds in monyes to each of them after my decease and my wives, or twelve Acres of land to each of them without the Stonn Wall, And it is my will that my executrix and executor shall have y^e disposing this land untill they ar of age Item I give unto my daughter Hannah Swett twenty pounds in currant pay to her and her children that She had by Knott After mine and my wives decease Item I giv unto my daughter Ann Nichalls twenty pounds in currant pay to her and her children After mine and my wives decease I give unto my Grandchilde John Boason, the house his mother now lives in and y^e land halfe an Acre be it more or less belonging to y^e sd house in marblehead together with one cowes common in sd Towne after his mothers decease, and his mother to hold it dureing her naturall life, and then to him and his heires forever I give unto my daughter Bethia twenty pounds in currant pay to her and her chylren I give unto my daughter Bethia Bartlett the land that her house stands upon and that part of the house which belongs to me, with the garden and land to her and her chylren for ever I give unto my daughter Em Peach sixty pound in monyes or twentie Acres of land Without the Stonn wall to her and her children, After mine and my wives decease Item I give unto my deare and loveing wife Ann Devereux all my lands housin or houses during her naturall life and then to my children as in my will exprest After her decease Lastly I Apoynte . . . my deare and loveing wife Ann Devereux executrix And my Sonn Robert Devereux executor, And whatsoever, I have not in this my last will And Testament disposed of my Estate, I give to her my executrix, All my houseould goods which in my dwelling house and all my cattle sheep horses or horse Kinde whatsoever that is mine to be at her dispose; Alsoe I leave all my land that is without the Stone wall in marblehead And all my land that is at Dunstable to pay debpts and Legasyes as in this my will is exprest: This being now my last Will and testament given under my hand ad Seale

"Signed Seald in y^e presence of us

Signum
John X Waldren: Senr:
Robert Bartlett Sener
Jn^o Blany: Senr:
Jn^o Blany Junr:

of John
The mark X Devereux
Senr (seal)

"And it is my will that my Executrix or Executor Shall have the desposing of all the estate of lands that I have gave unto my Sonn Humphrye Devereux his three Sonns untill they or eyther of them shall bee at y^e Age of twenty one yeares

"Jn^o. Waldron Senr

Jn^o. Blany Senr

Jn^o. Blany Junr Jurati May. 20. 95 before Coll^o. Gedney.

"proved approved & allowed."

As has been stated above, the Devereux farm, which John Devereux had lawfully purchased, as he believed, in 1659, was claimed after his death by Elizabeth Barker of Deptford, England, daughter and heir of Rev. Hugh Peters, and the recognition of this claim by Robert Devereux and his mother led to the drawing up of the following petitions, which are undated, but must have been presented not later than 30 Mar. 1704.

"Petition of Anne Devorix of Marblehead widow of John Devorix late of Marblehead and of Robert Devorix only surviving son of sd. John Devorix to the Hon. John Appleton, Esq., Judge of Probate; sheweth that whereas ye said John Devorix was possessed of a considerable Farm being ye principle part of ye estate left by said deceased, which farm was formerly purchased by ye deceased of Charles Gott as agent to Hugh Peters, deceased, who pretended to have full power to sell ye same but on the contrary it appearing that his authority for selling was not sufficient in ye least degree and Elizabeth Barker alias Peters sending ample atturnship fully impowering her attorneys to sell her father's lands which were lawfully descended to her, as only daughter to sd. Hugh Peters & whereas your petitioners took ye best advice that we could of such as were skilled in ye law, who having perused ye papers and original grant to Mr. Hugh Peters informed us that his heir would certainly recover it, whereupon I ye sd Robert Devorix was forced to purchase sd. farm again whereby ye chief part of sd. Estate left as aforesaid is gone from ye surviving children wherefore pray that one of your petitioners, viz. Robert Devorix might have power of administration granted him that so an inventory may be taken and what further may be needful done as near as may be to the will.

"Signed Ann (her A mark) Devereux

Robert Devoreux"

"Robert Devorix upon consideration that the greater part of his father's estate hath been taken away by the heir of Mr. Hugh Peters who was prior possessor of that part taken, whereby it is impossible to fully discharge the legacies in the will renounces his executorship of said will and prays for the court's consideration of the within petition. Witness: George Locker, Daniel Rogers."

The Court, having considered these petitions, appointed Robert "Devorix" of Marblehead as administrator *cum testamento annexo* of the estate of his father, Mr. John "Devorix," late of Marblehead, and he gave a bond, dated 30 Mar. 1704, for £500, Jeremiah Neale and Joseph Neale, both of Salem, being sureties. He was directed to bring in an inventory of the estate at or before the first Monday of December, 1704, and to render an account of his administration at or before the first Monday of July, 1705.

A statement filed by him on 26 July 1708, after his mother's death, reads as follows:

"An acco^{tt} of y^e Estate of John Deuourex Late of Marblehead deod Is as followeth Viz—

"Imp^r: to his farme in Marblehead web he bought of Mr Charles Gott a pretended agent to Mr Hugh Petters & in Some considerable tyme after his decease the heires of the Said Mr Hugh Petters Came to my mother M^{rs} Ann Deuourex & demanded possession of y^e aboues^d farme Upon which demand my Said Mother aduised with all y^e rest of her Children then Liueing & with many other freinds whether she had better contest then y^e Said Petters heirs or deliuer them npossession who gaue her theire aduise that she should by noe means Contest the same with them at Law See my Honored Mother Considering her own Unability & the aduise giuen her, Saw Cause to Lett the sd heires of Mr Hugh Petters take possession

"2^{dly} To a Considerable Quantity of Land at Dunstable being all vacant And my Honnored Mother not being dead about three months who had the whole disposall & Improvement of it dureing her Life as may appeare by my fathers will & the Said Land Lying out of this County & a frontteere towne against the Enemy I am not Capeable at present to make any Just Valluation of it

"3^{dly} To a Small house & Land Giuen in Said will with one Cowes Comon to John Bossen web was left in possession with Said Bossens mother who was to haue it Dureing her Naturall Life as S^d will appeares & as I Conceiue I haue noe other acco^{tt} to giue of it.

"4^{thly} To a Small parcell of Land Giuen to Bethia Bartlett web her house Stands Upon & part of a house as p^r will appeares as I Conceiues needs no prizall

"5^{thly} To my fathers personall Estate It was wholly Giuen to my Mother dureing her Life & at or before her death had full power to Dispose of it & She haueing before her death disposed of it So I Conceiue that I as administrator Cum testamento aⁿnexo haue noe further to doe with it but to Giue your Honnor an acco^{tt} of it

"to seuerall debts deue from the Estate of said Deuerex yett unknowne.

Robert Deuereux

Adm^r.

"Left upon file pr. Adm^r July 26. 1708

attest Dan^l Rogers Reg^r."

On 25 Mar. 1712 the land of Mr. John "Deuerecks," Sr., in Dunstable, was described as "a therty acer grante where as part is laid out and the remainder may be laid out at the suckers desier," and was appraised at £25. It appears from the Dunstable records that John Devereux, Sr., was one of the proprietors of the town of Dunstable, and that he and his son John had each a lot of land there.

Children (in the order in which their names occur in their father's will):

2. i. ROBERT.*

ii. HUMPHREY, d. 31 Jan. 1689/90; m. ELIZABETH —. In his will, dated 31 Jan. 1689/90 and proved 24 June 1690, he mentions wife Elizabeth and children *Elizabeth, John, Ann, Humphrey, and Ralph*, the last-mentioned under fourteen years of age, and appoints his wife executrix. The witnesses were John Woods, John Devereux, and Joseph Devereux. The inventory of his estate, taken by John Blaney, Sr., and Robert Bartlett and returned 24 June 1690 by Elizabeth, widow and executrix, amounted to £53. 17s. 4d.

3. iii. JOHN.

iv. HANNAH, m. (1) PETER GREENFIELD, b. in 1633; m. (2) RICHARD KNOTT, surgeon, who d. in 1684; m. (3) at Marblehead, 8 May 1708, JOHN SWETT. Children, all by second husband and all bapt. at Marblehead: 1. *Richard*, bapt. 19 June 1687. 2. *Hannah*, bapt. 19 June 1687. 3. *Elizabeth*, bapt. 18 Sept. 1687. 4. *Eleanor*, b. in 1683; bapt. 19 June 1687; m. at Marblehead, 28 Apr. 1701, Thomas Martin, b. about 1675, d. before 22 Jan. 1759.†

*See *Historical Collections of the Essex Institute*, vol. 4, p. 238.

†Hannah Martin, bapt. at Marblehead 8 July 1716, second child of Thomas and Eleanor (Knott), m. at Marblehead, 29 Sept. 1719, Job Burnham; and their daughter, Sarah Burnham, bapt. 24 Aug. 1740, m. John Kimball and had many descendants. Cf. *History of the Kimball Family*.

- v. ANN, m. (1) ——— BOASUM; m. ——— NICHOLS. Child by first husband: 1. *John*, mentioned in the will of his grandfather, John Devereux.

Insert about the Boasums

New England Historical and Genealogical Register

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Walter Boatson, of Marblehead, married Ann, daughter of John and Ann Devereux, of Marblehead. They had John² and William² Boatson.

Widow Ann Boasum married, secondly, Robert Nichols [Nicholson].

William² Bosson married Dorothy ——— and had William² and Dorothy², who married Elias Monk, of Roxbury.

William² Bosson married Mary Phillebrown and had John⁴, married, first, Deborah Dyer, 30 June 1745 Dorchester; married, secondly, Eleanor Nesbitt, 3 Sept. 1747. (Rox. V.R.)

William⁴, born 29 April 1724, married Abigail Partridge 15 Aug. 1745.

Dorothy, born 11 July 1727.

Winter, born 1 Jan. 1732, married Mary Abrams in 1761, born 20 Jan. 1743, a daughter of Nathaniel and Mary Abrams, of Milton.

- vi. BETHIA, m. about 1680 JOHN BARTLETT. Children: 1. *Bethia*, b. about 1681; m. at Marblehead, 15 Oct. 1700, Robert Martin. 2. *Faithful*, b. about 1683; d. 10 Jan. 1748/9, in his 66th year; m. at Marblehead, 31 Oct. 1706, his first cousin, Ann² Devereux (3, iii), *q. v.*, dau. of John and Susannah (Hartshorn); four children (*vide infra*, 3, iii). 3. *William*, b. about 1685; m. at Marblehead, 9 May 1709, Mary Andrews; had William, b. at Marblehead 26 Mar. 1710, bapt. there 26 Oct. 1712, and Mary, bapt. at Marblehead 14 Dec. 1712.

- vii. EMME, b. about 1657; d. at Marblehead 17, 4 mo. 1737, aged 80; m. before 1680 WILLIAM PEACH of Marblehead, d. 10 June 1713, aged 63 years, 2 months, 8 days, s. of John, Jr., and Alice of Marblehead. Children, all bapt. at Marblehead 19 June 1687, when their mother was admitted to the church: 1. *John*, m. at Marblehead, 30 Nov. 1700, Sarah Stacey of Salem, b. 17 Jan. 1683, dau. of William and Priscilla. 2. *Thomas*, d. 9 Sept. 1731, aged 50; m. at Marblehead, 14 Dec. 1704, Mary Coes. 3. *William*, d. 10 May 1735, aged 51 years, 7 months, 20 days; m. at Marblehead, 4 Jan. 1710/11, Sarah Elkins of Lynn, who d. 13 Oct. 1752, aged 65 years, 7 months, 13 days. 4. *Hannah*, m. (1) at Marblehead, 9 Jan. 1710/11, John Calley, who was bur. 1 Mar. 1727/8; m. (2) at Marblehead, 19 Feb. 1728/9, Samuel Waters.*

2. ROBERT² DEVEREUX (*John*¹), of Marblehead, died before 22 Dec. 1740, when he was mentioned as deceased in a deed between his son Humphrey and his other children. He married HANNAH BLANEY of Lynn, born 11 Nov. 1667, daughter of John, who was born in England in 1627, settled at Lynn in 1659, and married, 11 July 1660, Hannah King, daughter of Daniel.

Robert Devereux retained possession of the Devereux farm, which he had been obliged to purchase again from the heir of Rev. Hugh Peters (*vide supra*), until 1 Apr. 1729, when, "for the amicable settlement of this estate," and in consideration of security given to him by his sons for a payment of £80 annually to him and his wife during their lifetime, he conveyed the land to his sons John, Robert, Humphrey, and Ralph, and to his daughters Sarah, Emme, and Hannah.

Children:

- i. JOSEPH,² mentioned in the will of his grandfather, John Devereux, who gave him "twenty Acres of land within y^e Stonn wall," probably d. before 1 Apr. 1729, as he is not mentioned in the deed of that date from his father, Robert Devereux, to the latter's other children.
4. ii. JOHN.
5. iii. ROBERT.
6. iv. HUMPHREY.
7. v. RALPH.
- vi. SARAH, living 22 Dec. 1740; m. WILLIAM WALLIS, who d. before 17 Sept. 1725. Child: 1. *Emma*, bapt. at Marblehead 2 May 1731.
- vii. EMME, m. at Marblehead, 8 Feb. 1713/14, WILLIAM DAVIS. Children, both bapt. at Marblehead 26 Nov. 1727: 1. *Hannah*. 2. *Joseph*, who joined in a deed to his uncle, Humphrey Devereux (6), 21 Dec. 1741, and signed his name "Joseph Davies."
- viii. HANNAH, m. at Marblehead, 9 May 1723, STEPHEN CHAPMAN; both

**Cf. REGISTER*, vol. 54, pp. 278-279.

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Descendants of John Devereux

[April

were living 22 Dec. 1740. Children, bapt. at Marblehead: 1. *Hannah*, bapt. 19 Nov. 1727; probably d. young. 2. *Stephen*, bapt. 19 Nov. 1727; m. at Marblehead, 24 Nov. 1748, Sarah Stacey. 3. *John*, bapt. 31 Dec. 1727; m. at Marblehead, 7 June 1750, Elizabeth Brown. 4. *Hannah*, bapt. 9 Aug. 1730. 5. *Daniel*, bapt. 24 Sept. 1732. 6. *Emma*, bapt. 23 Feb. 1734/5; m. at Marblehead, 18 Dec. 1766, Joseph Rhoads.

3. JOHN² DEVEREUX (*John*¹) is mentioned as deceased in the will of his father, dated 4 Sept. 1693. He married SUSANNAH HARTSHORN, born at Reading 2 Mar. 1659/60, died at Watertown 5 May 1718, daughter of Thomas and Susannah of Reading. She married secondly, at Marblehead, 10 Jan. 1694/5, Stephen Parker of Andover. In the records of the First Church of Marblehead is the entry: "Susanna Devereux, a child of the Church of Reading, was admitted to full Communion in this Church, 2 Feb. 1689."

Children, mentioned in the will of their grandfather, John Devereux:

- i. SARAH,² m. about 1700 JOSEPH ABBOTT. Children, bapt. at Marblehead: 1. *Susanna*, bapt. 10 Aug. 1701. 2. *John*, bapt. 31 Oct. 1703. 3. *Sarah*, bapt. 30 Mar. 1707. 4. *Mary*, bapt. 24 Apr. 1709. 5. *Ann*, bapt. 11 Feb. 1710/11. 6. *Joseph*, bapt. 15 May 1713. 7. *Hannah*, bapt. 24 Apr. 1715.
- ii. SUSANNAH, m. at Marblehead, 29 Oct. 1706, JONAS DENNIS, and was the executrix of his will in 1751. Children, bapt. at Marblehead: 1. *James*, b. 7 Feb. 1708. 2. *Susanna*, bapt. 23 Apr. 1710. 3. *Sarah*, bapt. 11 May 1712. 4. *Jonas*, bapt. 26 Sept. 1714. 5. *Devereux*, bapt. 30 June 1717; m. at Marblehead, 23 Aug. 1739, Sarah Bowden. 6. *John*, bapt. 19 Apr. 1719. 7. *Hannah*, bapt. 9 Apr. 1721. 8. *Elizabeth*, bapt. 3 Mar. 1722/3.
- iii. ANN, bapt. at Marblehead 24 Aug. 1690; m. at Marblehead, 31 Oct. 1706, her first cousin, FAITHFUL BARTLETT (1, vi, 2), b. about 1683, d. 10 Jan. 1748/9, in his 66th year, s. of John and Bethia (Devereux). Children: 1. *Bethia* (twin), b. at Marblehead 3 Sept. 170—; d. 21 June 1748 (*sic*, ? 1742), in her 35th year; m. at Marblehead, 4 Oct. 1726, Robert Hooper. 2. *Elizabeth* (twin), b. at Marblehead 3 Sept. 170—; m. at Marblehead, 4 Aug. 1725, Henry Hooper. 3. *Humphrey*, b. at Marblehead 8 Jan. 1710; m. at Beverly, 20 July 1731, Lydia Woodbury of Beverly. 4. *Ann*, b. about 1713; m. at Marblehead, 20 Feb. 1733, George Newmarch, b. at Marblehead 19 July 1709, s. of Joseph and Susanna (Fowle).

Select poems of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Campbell Longfellow

By Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 261

Composition and publication. L.'s *Journal* reads under September 29, 1846: "A delicious drive with F. through Malden and Lynn to Marblehead, to visit E. W. at the Devereux Farm by the sea-side. Drove across the beautiful sand. What a delicious scene! The ocean in the sunshine changing from the silvery hue of the thin waves upon the beach, through the lighter and the deeper green, to a rich purple on the horizon. We recalled the times past, and the days when we were at Nahant. The Devereux Farm is by the sea, some miles from Lynn. An old-fashioned farm-house, with low rooms and narrow windows rattling in the sea-breeze. After dinner we drove to Marblehead,--a strange old place on a rocky promontory, with narrow streets, and strange, ugly houses scattered at random, corner-wise and every-wise, thrusting their shoulders into the streets and elbowing the passers out of their way. A dismantled fort looks seaward. We rambled along the breast-works, which are now a public walk, and asked in vain for the reef of Norman's Woe, which is, nevertheless, in this neighborhood. On returning to the Devereux Farm we sat on the rocks and listened to 'the bellowing of the savage sea.'"

The outcome of this visit was the poem *The Fire of Drift-Wood*, which appeared in *Seaside and Fireside*, 1850.



Devereux Farm, near Marblehead.

marblehead.wickedlocal.com/article/20151015/NEWS/151019577

MARBLEHEAD 101: Devereux

By Pam Peterson

Posted Oct 15, 2015

In 1634, at about the same time that John Humphrey received the land grant known as Clifton, the Massachusetts Bay Company awarded property to another share holder, Hugh Peter. Peter's parcel also ran from the ocean to the river, with the forest River on the west, Throgmorton Cove northwest and Tinker's Island to the east. Peter had plenty of ideas for his land. His interests were in fishing and shipping, though he had a full life, both in the colonies and in England. He was a minister and also acted as a colonial advisor. He was a friend of Oliver Cromwell and took part in the Restoration. As a result, Hugh Peter was eventually accused of being part of a regicide plot. He was tried, convicted and executed in London, where his head was left to rot on a pillar on London Bridge. Peter's Marblehead property of 300 acres was sold for 300 pounds to John Devereux. John Devereux was reported to be the son of a nobleman, descended from Robert Devereux, earl of Essex, who was both befriended and beheaded by Queen Elizabeth I. Devereux established the boundaries of his land with a long stone wall and especially loved the area beside "ye sea." Devereux stated in his will that he hoped that it "remain in the family and keep the name of Devereux, forever and ever." Devereux was active in the town of Marblehead, becoming one of the first selectmen. His family married into several of the town's prominent families, including the Peaches, Swetts, Lees, Hoopers and Marstons. Devereux died in 1695. During the 18th century, the property did stay in the family mainly used as farms and orchards. The Devereux family remained active in town affairs. Humphrey Devereux was a well known physician. Benjamin Devereux joined Glover's Regiment in 1776, and Burrill Devereux was one of the founders of the Marblehead Academy, was a selectman and welcomed President George Washington to Marblehead in 1789. By 1800, the land had begun to be sold off.



Devereux Beach

Marblehead's premier beach, Devereux Beach's 5.48 acres of waterfront offers a refreshing swim in the Atlantic Ocean, pavilions, benches, picnic tables, restroom facilities, a restaurant and parking. It was once the site of the home of John Devereux (1615-1695), for whom the beach is named. While visiting the home in 1846, famed poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote his well-known poem "The Fire of Driftwood" about spending an evening in this old farmhouse. The home is no longer standing. Devereux Beach is located off Ocean Avenue at the beginning of the Causeway to Marblehead Neck.

The Peach Heroes

By John Harding Peach

2009

More About WILLIAM PEACH:

Will: Named in his second cousin, once removed, will - John Peach Sr.

More About EMMA DEVEREUX:

Date born 2: Abt. 1657

Property: Daughter of John Devereux, a prosperous landowner in Marblehead, who included Emma in his generous will.

Religion: Joined the Old North Congregational Church, Marblehead, MA Apr. 29, 1687 and had her four children baptized there on June 19, 1687. This marked the beginning of the Peaches of Marblehead being identified with this church as members for many generations.

Residence: Salem, MA

The First Board Of Selectmen: 1648

by Bill Purdin

“Good historians, I suspect, whether they think about it or not, have the future in their bones.
Besides the question: Why? the historian also asks the question: Whither?”
— E.H. Carr¹

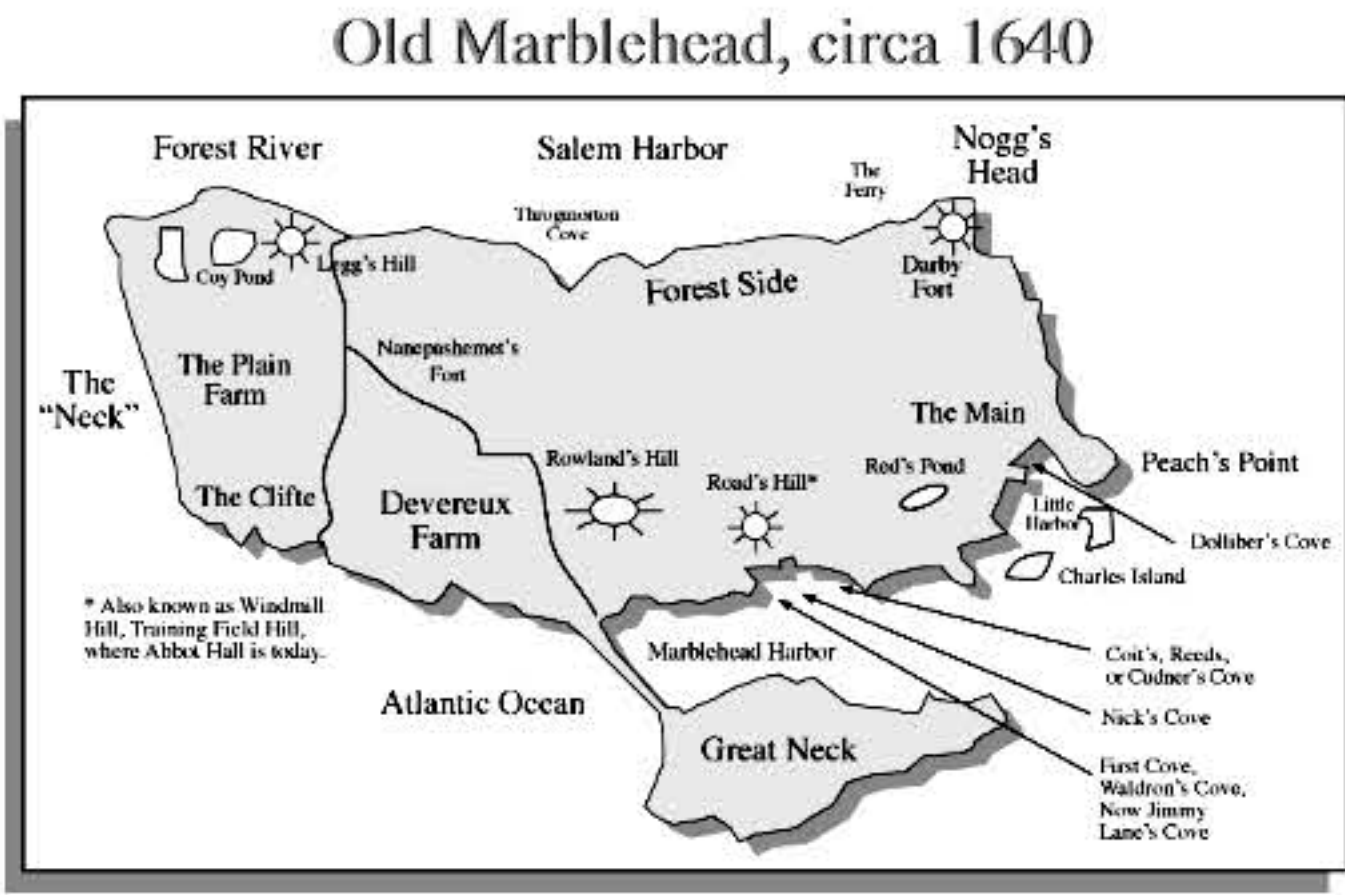
The records are sketchy. For those early settlers, it wasn’t about history; it was just the hard work of scratching out a living every day, day by day. Theirs was the business of building a community that could survive on its own. They succeeded, but in the beginning, it was a struggle.

It is hard for us to truly visualize the situation confronting that first Board of Selectmen in 1648, but remember that it wasn’t until 36 years later, in 1684, that the last descendants of Nanepashemet, chief of the Naumkeags, would sign a final deed for their land over to the Town. So, in the beginning, those first Marbleheaders were strangers in a strange land that had long been loosely controlled by Native Americans whose culture and appearance was as different from the newcomers as travelers from another planet might seem to us today.

The first European settlers came to Marblehead by sea and by land. The famous fishing station at Little Harbor, clearly the center of activity, and perhaps the area along the West Shore, were the first destinations. There were few homes or streets, obviously. It was overgrown, rough, rocky and probably even more beautiful and inviting then, than it is today. Fresh, virgin, untouched, open, in places richly forested, and thoroughly alluring; it must have been an exciting time, an exciting place.

That was around 1628 to 1630. The quiet land and shallow rocky seacoast just southeast of Salem had been Nanepashemet’s retreat and fortification, and perhaps his final resting place.² The Naumkeags were peaceful and unafraid, and they were ultimately overrun by the warlike Tarrantines, seizing on their weakness, destroying their pastoral existence, after devastating years of war and disease.

Beginning at Barnegat and “John Peach’s Neck,” along the Salem Harbor side, then expanding, in time, all the way to Forest River and across the “Neck” towards what is now Swampscott and Lynn, the settlement ultimately encompassed all our current area including one of the most beautiful and useful harbors on the East Coast, and the small island across the harbor connected by a narrow tombolo of sand and rocks at low tide.



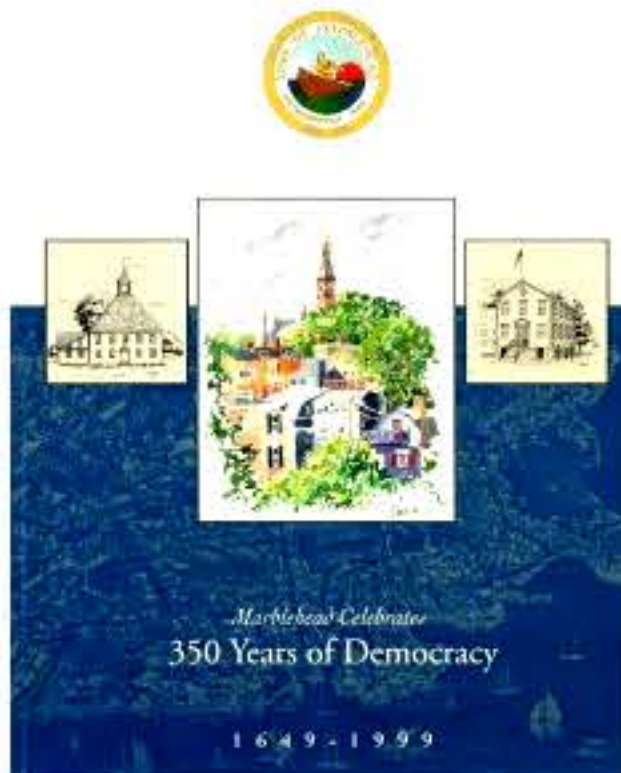
The first settlers were British subjects, born in England, and in the early 1600’s, living in the shadows of the intensely religious Puritans of Salem, who strongly advocated strict religious discipline and pressed their “simplified” ceremonies and creeds of the Church of England. “God’s elect” were to be members of the church, period. It was still to be decades before the then gathering force of religious intolerance took its toll, led by, among others, Increase Mather and inspired by his Illustrious Providences in which he outlined God’s special concern for New England and called for vigilance against “Witchcrafts, Diabolical Possessions, Remarkable Judgements upon noted sinners.” The infamous Salem Witch Trials, which have come to symbolize the widespread hysteria, culminated in damning accusations against hundreds of local people, many sentenced to death, 19 actually killed, before the trials were finally stopped in 1692. But all of this was still the distant future in those early days as Marblehead began its own unique historic journey.

Considering the risks they took, and the life they chose, the earliest inhabitants of these 4000 acres were courageously out of step with the Puritans, and motivated by freedom and independence. The first mention of the name “Marblehead” in Colonial records occurs on July 2, 1633, when James White and John Bennet were fined for public drunkenness.³ But to be fair, the residency of these two is not precisely established by the records, although a John Bennet was listed in the first 24 taxpayers,⁴ so we can surmise the truth. But, those same early records do clearly bear out that Marbleheaders, from the beginning, were feisty pioneers, if somewhat reluctantly, in their independent spirits, their innovative commerce, and their efforts to establish and sustain a new community.

In September, 1631, the addition of Isaac Allerton, from the Plymouth Colony, and more importantly four years later, his son-in-law, Moses Maverick, to the mix of settlers in this area ushered in the dawn of the Town of Marblehead. Preserved over the next 350 years by its patriotic, hardworking and forward-thinking inhabitants, and then, by its amazingly congruous Board of Selectmen, our Town has played a prominent and honored role in the history of the United States, and it can be said, in the real time emergence of democracy as a world-wide phenomenon in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. First, as the determined revolutionaries credited for crucial victories, and, ultimately, as a continuing symbol of American independence and freedom, Marblehead’s noble ancestry and incredibly consistent form of government of, for and by her people themselves, are truly unique. The history of the Marblehead Board of Selectmen is the history of democracy in America. The debates, the compromises, the lines that were not crossed, the men and women, the changing community, the conflict of preservation and progress, the politics, the leadership, and the ultimate history and traditions that emerged, all make for a story that is not over yet, and one that gets better each time we bring it up to date.

The establishment of “town lande,” the parcelling out of the land to inhabitants, raising a sum for a “meeting house,” arranging an amenable separation from Salem, taxing “strangers fishing or employed about fishing,” and generally conducting business as an “orderly and law-abiding township,” occupied the first Board’s time. Records indicate that the first meeting of this group of then “seven men or selectmen” was held on Friday, December 22, 1648. That first board was the only Board in history, that is known, on which all members were brand new. Moses Maverick went on to serve a total of 14 years as a Selectman. Samuel Doliber served only one, that one. Francis Johnson served three years. Nicholas Merritt served five years. John Peach, Sr. served for ten years. John Devereux served for four years. And, John Bartoll served for eight years. But, while that first year was probably not considered to be all that significant to the men who served, it determined much about the way the Board would conduct itself and how the Town would be governed for the next 350 years.

According to some historians, there were two factions at the time:⁵ fishermen, and the more educated “agents and owners,” or what we might call developers today. The latter were men like John Humphrey who had received land grants and, along with the enterprising fishermen, added to the Town’s emerging stability, offering opportunities for new inhabitants to productively join in Marblehead’s growth.



But remember, rather than a municipality at this point, Marblehead was more accurately a commercial venture, and a fairly successful one. For the owners, it was a foregone conclusion that they would serve in some capacity of leadership. The herding of cows back and forth from Barnegat to grazing land further inland, the raising of funds for a meeting house, the protection of the Town’s wood resources from outsiders, and continuing to lay out the land and determining how it would be parcelled up, these were the items of the Selectmen’s agenda, but

mundane. The real agenda was always, to the founders, the founding of a new community. In the end, that was the key. The establishment of the Town of Marblehead was accomplished on an “as needed” basis to protect the commercial interests that were driving the developing community. Issues came up and were dealt with on that basis. The first Selectmen were businessmen, not politicians. Their interests were in maintaining order, building necessary facilities, and protecting what they had achieved.

THE FIRST BOARD OF SELECTMEN

John Devereux. (Various spellings Deveroxx, Devorux, Devereaux, Devorix) Served for four years: 1648, 1666, 1667, and 1674. He was the only member of the first Board who lived outside of the harbor settlement, now the historic district, or “downtown.” He was born in 1615 in Suffolk, England and died in 1695 in Marblehead. Some historians believe that he came from “noble stock,” the fifth son of Walter Devereux, Viscount Hereford,⁹ or perhaps he was a descendant of “Robert Devereux, son of the Earl of Essex, beloved and beheaded by Queen Elizabeth.”¹⁰ He first came to New England, probably with John Winthrop, and then to Marblehead in 1636. He was a mariner, a farmer and a fisherman. He was literate, married and had 7 children. He bought a tract of land of 350 acres, known later as Devereux’s farm for 100 pounds in 1659. He was the owner of the windmill on top of Training Field Hill (where Abbot Hall is today), and he became a Freeman in 1683. He also served as constable, jurymen for trials, petty and grand juries. He was a boundary runner and fence-viewer. Much has been made of the famous Devereux Farm, but no better description of what it was like at its height is found than in Lord and Gamage’s book:

“The land on the eastern side along ‘ye sea’ was his preference, for its soil was rich and brooks and ponds sparkled in many places above the beach. The fishing and clamming were excellent, the small animals and birds plentiful, and the apple trees found the soil and moisture to their liking.” His will reflected this love for the land by specifying that it, “remain in the family and the name of Devereux from generation to generation... forever and ever.”

It might be stretching it to call John Devereux the first conservationist Selectman, but clearly his love of the land and of Marblehead’s natural resource cannot be overlooked. Late in his seventies, Devereux still served his community. Places named for him and his family: Devereux Beach, Devereux Street, Devereux Terrace. Burrill Devereux served on the Board of Selectmen in the years 1779, 1780, 1789, and, 1790.

The Town’s first Board of Selectmen was made up of seven men all born in England, mostly educated businessmen and landholders, selected by Town Meeting, directly engaged in and personally benefitting from commerce in Marblehead. They operated almost as a commercial organization’s Board of Directors directing life and commerce to protect commercial interests. John Peach and, perhaps, John Devereux were the only fishermen. There were no traffic issues, no dog hearings, or even school issues in those early years, but there were disputes to be settled and decisions to be made. 1648 was a gestation period of seemingly small beginnings. But year to year, decade to decade, century to century, the student of Marblehead history is led step by step to what we have today. There are missing records, and unaccounted-for years, but there is no doubt about the 350 years of continuous, congruous, and fascinating consistency of the Board of Selectmen as an institution, now elected every year, that safeguards the history and traditions of our Town. As individuals, the Selectmen, all 400 or so of them, are a history in and of themselves. But the Board of Selectmen itself is the single unifying element that brings us together across the years.



Nicholas Merritt, Sr. (Various spellings, Marriot, Merret, Merrett) Served 5 years: 1648, 1649, 1664, 1665, and 1671. He was born in 1613 (birthplace is unknown) and died in Marblehead in 1686. He came to Marblehead in 1636. He was a farmer with about 12 and a half acres and some cows. He was cited in Salem for fencing in land on “Marblehead Necke” (the area between Forest River and the ocean near what is now Swampscott) in violation of Salem’s orders. He was literate and married to Mary Sandin with 8 children. While on the Board, he was one of two collectors for pasture. Places named for him: Merritt Street (from Front Street to Circle Street). No other Merritt has served on the Board of Selectmen.

John Peach, Sr. (Various spellings, Pech, Peche) Served for ten years on the Board: 1648, 1649, 1656, 1657, 1659, 1660, 1661, 1671, 1677, and 1681. He was born in Dorset, England between 1604 and 1614 and died in Marblehead in 1684. He was literate and unmarried. He was a fisherman and a landowner. He first came to Marblehead around 1630. He was named with Merritt for illegally fencing in land of “Marblehead Necke” and with Merritt was a collector. He was a prominent member of the community and one of “the two Peaches,” with his cousin John Peach, Jr. His will names John Legg, William Peach, Peter and Joseph Dallivar as his cousins.⁸ Places named for him and his family: Peaches Point and Peach Highlands. Three other Peaches have served on the Board of Selectmen: John Peach, Jr., 1656, 1660, and 1661; George H. Peach, Jr., for one year in 1917; and Donald H. “Ki” Peach, for 7 years, 1962 to 1968.

John Bartoll. (Various spellings: Bartole, Bartol) Served 8 years: 1648, 1649, 1656, 1657, 1658, 1659, 1660, and 1661. Born in Somerset, England in 1600. He was found dead at sea on October 1, 1664 off Marblehead. He was a planter and a farmer, living on Coit’s Hill, or perhaps on an island according to another historian. He was literate and married with 5 children. He once brought John Peach, Jr.’s wife, Alice, to court for defamation. She had claimed that his wife, Parnell, had committed adultery with the boatswain of the ship “Sampson” in her cabin. No decision is recorded. John Bartoll also was once struck on the head with a rock by William Keene, a troublemaker, who was subsequently fined 3 pounds. He also served as a constable in 1654. He died without a will, and Moses Maverick assisted his widow in an inventory of his estate. An inquest found that Bartoll was the cause of his own death and that he had mentioned on the day of his death that “he was lost.”¹¹ Places named for him: Fort Sewall was once known as Bartoll’s Head (also Gale’s Head). Another John Bartoll served on the Board of Selectmen for six years: 1755, 1756, 1757, 1758, 1764, and 1768.