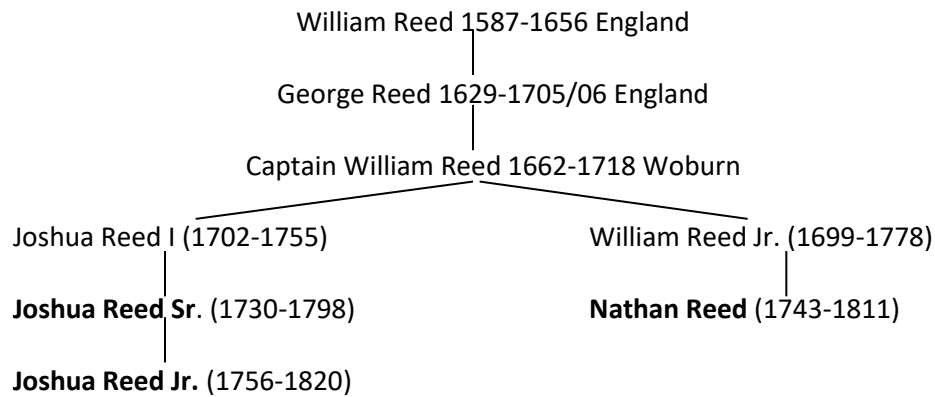


Nathan Reed
A Brief Biography
By Bill Poole

There were three members of the Reed family who participated in the action on Lexington Common on the morning of April 19, 1775. Joshua Sr. and Jr. were father and son, and Nathan was their first cousin



The progenitor of the Lexington Reed family was **William Reed, great, great grandfather of Nathan Reed, the subjects of this biography**. William was born in England about 1587. He, with his wife, Mabel (maiden name unknown), and their three children, George age 6, Ralph age 5 and Justice 18 months, were enrolled in London on July 18, 1635 for the voyage to New England of the ship *Defence*, Edward Bostocke, master, that arrived in Boston on October 8, 1635.¹ They first settled in Dorchester where he held the position of fence viewer in the years 1626 to 1638. He was admitted to Dorchester's First Congregational Church by 1638 and enrolled as a "freeman" of the Massachusetts Bay Colony on March 14, 1638/39.²

On March 18, 1637/38, he was granted land on "Squantum Neck," now part of the town of Quincy, and on August 26, 1639 he sold that land to Thomas Clark. By June 5, 1644 he was in Scituate where he held the office of Constable. In 1648 the family was living in the hamlet of Muddy River, now part of Brookline, when he purchased land in Woburn, MA.³

"On 7 July 1648, 'Nicholas Davis, of Charlestown' sold to William Reede of Muddy River 'his house & land in Wooburne containing fifty acres of upland, four acres of meadow before the door, four acres of meadow in Rock Meadow, & two acres in Brook Meadow, with all barnes, outhouses, fences & all privileges to the same belonging.'"⁴

"Their dwelling-house stood in a pasture, called the Baldwin Pasture, on the road from Kendall's mill to the Messrs. Duren. The pasture is now owned by them ; and remains of Mr. Reed's cellar and well are still to be seen there."⁵

At the time of William's death, his estate was the largest in New England at the time (L=400). His farm in Woburn contained 50 acres of upland, 4 acres of meadow before the door, 4 acres in Rockbrook, 2 acres in Brook Meadow. The farm was located on the old road from Salem to Concord. As of 1861, only the cellar hole was left.⁶

The "old Road From Salem," also called "The Old County Road," ran from Woburn through the northeast part of Lexington along North Street, then along the high ground somewhere in the vicinity of Willard's Woods. It eventually reached and crossed the Bedford Road (modern day Hancock Street) just north of Revere Street. The route then continued along that last named street, over Hill Street (formerly Hillside Street) and eventually

joined up with today's Massachusetts Avenue (the Concord Road) via Cedar Street. This route avoided the swampy areas that existed then to the north and west of Lexington Common.

William and Mabel had 8 children: 1. **George, Great, Grandfather of Nathan**, born in 1629 in England; 2. **Ralph**, born about 1630 in England; 3. **Justice/Abigail**, born about January 1634 in England, baptized December 30, 1638 in Dorchester;** 4. **Bethia**, born about 1637; 5. **Israel**, born in Scituate but baptized in Dorchester, MA July 31, 1642; 6. **Sarah**, born about 1644, probably in Scituate; and 7. **Rebecca**, baptized December 26, 1647 in Roxbury, MA.⁷

**There is confusion concerning Justice and Abigail with some, like Charles Hudson, postulating a name change. In any event, the name Justice did not appear in any records other than the manifest of the ship *Defence*.⁸

William returned to England sometime before 1656. Whether his return was motivated by the change in the religious and political atmosphere with the establishment of the Commonwealth, or because he still owned property there, or both, he settled in Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland. He died there between April 9, 1756 when he wrote his will and October 31 when it was proved in London. Mabel was granted full power and authority to carry out the provisions of the will under the authority of "Oliver, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, or the dominions thereto belonging."⁹

His wife Mabel accompanied him as did perhaps his younger children. She and they returned to New England where William's will was submitted for probate.¹⁰

On November 21, 1660, Mabel married Henry Summers (Somers) Sr. That same year, Israel Reed had appeared in court on June 19, 1660 to request that he be placed under the guardianship of his older brother, George. Israel, George and Mabel requested this "pleading the infirmity of said Israel by reason of his lameness."

the Court ordered that the said Israel Read be by his guardian and mother put forth an apprentice to such as he is most meet for & that the charges & disbursements for effecting thereof be allowed his guardian, out of the said Israel's portion [of his father's bequest]¹⁰

In his will dated October 14, 1675, Henry Summers Sr. included bequests "to my beloved wife Mabel" and to "my wife's children." Following his death, it was agreed that "lest there should arise contention between us that are relatives we therefor resolve to divide the said estate as followeth" with Henry Summers Junior agreeing to the maintenance of his stepmother and to the division of the land to his stepsiblings if he should die without issue. The signers were Mabel, Henry Summers, Jr, his sister, Susannah and all the Reed children.¹¹

Israel prospered, married and had at least seven children. However, Mabel was not very happy with the care and maintenance given her by her stepson, Henry Jr. In August 1684, she sued him, giving reasons why she had to remove from Henry's house.

1. I feared I should be blind and therefore thought by the tendance I should then be a sufferer.
2. The food prepared for me was such as my stomach through age and infirmity would not comfortably bear nor such as my nature did necessarily require.
3. I must either be confined to that room without any company though so aged, or else must go to some other house for it having but little quiet when in any other room.
4. Henry Summers affirming that I was so strong in drink that I could lay three men under the table, which knowing I took only for necessity I could not well bear to hear.
5. The pulling down part of the end of the house which exposed me to so much cold and the often want of comfortable firing and the much noise and lumbering overhead and otherwise that rendered my life uncomfortable.

6. These things premised and thinking I might enjoy myself more to the comfort of my life that little time I have to live are the reasons of my moving to the place where I am now.¹²

Robert Charles Anderson in *The Great Migration, Immigrants to New England* states that:

The Middlesex court files contain dozens of depositions and other documents relating to this dispute, including lengthy responses from Henry Summers Jr., spread over 1684, 1685, and 1686.¹³

I have not bothered to delve into this. Mable moved into her son George's Woburn home where she died on June 15, 1690.¹⁴

George Reed, Great Grandfather of Nathan

George married first, in Woburn on October 4, 1652, Elizabeth Jennison, born in Watertown on April 12, 1637. George and Elizabeth had eight children: 1. **Elizabeth**, born July 29, 1653; 2. and 3. **twin sons**, born November 14, 1654, but died a few hours old; 4. **Samuel**, born April 29, 1656; 5. **Abigail**, born June 27, 1658; 6. **George**, born September 14, 1660; 7. **Captain William, the Grandfather of Nathan**, born September 22, 1662; and 8. **Sarah**, born February 12, 1664/65.¹⁵

George's wife, Elizabeth, died February 26, 1664/65, most likely from complications of childbirth. With six children twelve and under, one an infant, it was imperative for William to find a partner to help raise them. He married on November 9, 1665, **Hannah Rockwell**, born in 1639 in Charlestown, with whom he had five children. George died in Woburn on February 21, 1705/06, and Hannah survived George dying on April 16, 1724.¹⁶

Captain William Reed, Grandfather of Nathan

Charles Hudson said of Captain William:

In the northerly part of the town, on Bedford Street, and on land still in possession of his descendants of the same name, William Reed from Woburn settled about 1685. William was known as Captain William Settled in Lexington about 1685. He was a large landowner, and had numerous descendants. He and his son William became prominent in the town. Northwesternly of the Reeds, on the other side of Tophet Swamp, so called, Thomas Kendall, probably from Woburn, settled at an early day.¹⁷

Although greatly reduced in area as a result of being drained through the years to create arable land, Tophet Swamp still exists, located north of Interstate I-95 (Route 128), and the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway passes through its western edge.

Captain William was a justice of the peace, selectman in 1713, Representative to the General Court in 1714, 1716 and 1717, and subscribed to the meeting house, and the purchase of the common. Members of the Reed and Bowman families were often rivals for office, sometimes one succeeding the other, and with the Reeds from the north part of town and the Bowmans from the south, the sections also were frequently pitted one against the other.¹⁸

Captain William married at Woburn on May 24, 1686, twenty year old Abigail Kendall, born April 6, 1666, daughter of Francis and Mary Tidd Kendall. They had eight children: 1. **Abigail**, born May 29, 1787; 2. **William Jr., father of Nathan**, born May 8, 1693; 3. **Mary**, born April 8, 1695; 4. **Benjamin**, born October 22, 1696; 5. **Samuel**, born October 24, 1688; 6. **Joshua I**, born June 20, 1702; 7. **Ruth**, died February 7, 1703/04 aged about three weeks; and **Hephzibah**, born December 10, 1705.¹⁹

Hudson has two other children of Captain William and Abigail: **Elizabeth**, married Joseph Munroe of Lexington, and **Rebecca**, married Edward Johnson of Woburn, but I have not been able to verify either the births or marriages of Elizabeth or Rebecca.

Captain William died May 12, 1718 and Abigail on October 12, 1734. They are buried in Lexington's Old Burying Ground.



Here lyes Buried ye Body
of Mrs ABIGAIL REED
Wife to Capt. WILLIAM
REED Who Died Octobr.
ye 12th AD 1734 in ye
68th Year of Her age

Here lyes
Buried the Body
of Capt. William
Reed, who depar-
ted this Life May
12th 1718. Aged
55 years &
8 months.

William Reed Jr. father of Nathan

REED, MOSES, Abington. Corporal, Capt. William Reed's co., Col. John Bailey's regt. of Minute-men, which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775; service, 1 week 1 day; *also*, Sergeant, Capt. William Reed's co., Gen. John Thomas's regt.; muster roll dated Aug. 1, 1775; engaged April 27, 1775; service, 3 mos., 1 week, 5 days; *also*, company return dated Camp at Roxbury, Oct. 6, 1775.

REED, MOSES, Lexington. Pay roll of a detachment from Lexington alarm co. commanded by Capt. Edmund Munro; service, 5 days; detachment reported on command at Cambridge from May 16 to May 20, 1775, by order of Committee of Safety.

REED, MOSES, Newbury. Private, Capt. Joseph Fox's (3d) co., Col. Henry Jackson's (16th) regt.; pay roll for June and July, 1780; enlisted July 7, 1780; *also*, list of men raised for the 6 months service and returned by Brig. Gen. Paterson as having passed muster in a return dated Camp Totoway, Oct. 25, 1780; *also*, pay roll for 6 months men detached from militia of the town of Newbury for service in the Continental Army during 1780; marched to camp July 3, 1780; discharged Dec. 4, 1780; service, 5 mos. 13 days, including travel (240 miles) home.

REED, MOSES. Private, Lieut. Benjamin Bates's co. in a regiment commanded by Maj. Eliphalet Cary; marched July 30, 1780; discharged Aug. 9, 1780; service, 11 days; company marched from Abington to Tiverton, R. I., on an alarm.

REED, NATHAN, Lexington. Private; pay roll of a detachment from Lexington militia co. commanded by Capt. John Bridge; service, 5 days; detachment reported on command at Cambridge from May 11 to May 15, 1775, by order of

REED, NATHAN, *continued*.

Committee of Safety; *also*, pay roll of a detachment from Lexington militia co. commanded by Capt. John Parker; service, 2 days; detachment reported on command at Cambridge from June 17 to June 18, 1775, by order of Committee of Safety.

REED, NATHAN, Rutland. Private, Capt. William Henry's co.; enlisted Oct. 6, 1779; discharged Nov. 10, 1779; service, 1 mo. 8 days, at Castle and Governor's Islands, including travel home; company raised in Worcester Co.; *also*, Capt. Jonathan Sibley's co., Col. Luke Drury's regt.; entered service Aug. 9, 1781; marched Aug. 13, 1781; arrived at camp Aug. 22, 1781; discharged Nov. 21, 1781; service, 3 mos. 23 days, including 10 days (200 miles) travel home; residence, Rutland; engaged for town of Rutland; regiment raised for 3 months.

REED, NATHAN, Sudbury. Private, Capt. John Nixon's co. of Minute-men, Col. Abijah Pierce's regt., which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775; service, 7 days.

REED, NATHAN. Capt. Amasa Cranston's co.; company return endorsed "1776;" said Reed reported as fit for duty; company probably belonged to Col. Eleazer Brooks's regt.

REED, NATHAN. Private, Capt. Benjamin Munroe's co.; entered service Jan. 2 [year not given, probably 1778]; service, 3 mos.; *also*, order on Capt. Benjamin Munroe, payable to said Reed, dated North Kingston, March 14, 1778, signed by Calvin Eames, for \$5 on account of wages; *also*, order on Capt.

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REED, NATHAN. Capt. Amasa Cranston's co.; company return endorsed "1776;" said Reed reported as fit for duty; company probably belonged to Col. Eleazer Brooks's regt.

REED, NATHAN. Private, Capt. Benjamin Munroe's co.; entered service Jan. 2 [year not given, probably 1778]; service, 3 mos.; *also*, order on Capt. Benjamin Munroe, payable to said Reed, dated North Kingston, March 14, 1778, signed by Calvin Eames, for \$5 on account of wages; *also*, order on Capt. Munroe, payable to said Reed, dated North Kingston, March 22, 1778, signed by Reuben Priest, for \$3 on account of wages. [The foregoing all appear among orders, returns, etc., taken from Capt. Benjamin Munroe's papers.]

REED, NATHAN. Private, Capt. Ephraim Stearns's co., Col. John Rand's regt.; enlisted July 10, 1780; discharged Oct. 11, 1780; service, 3 mos. 12 days, including 10 days (200 miles) travel home; regiment raised in Worcester Co. to serve for 3 months.

REED, NATHAN. Private, Capt. Thomas Brintnal's co., Col. Cyprian Howe's regt.; enlisted Aug. 2, 1780; discharged Nov. 1, 1780; service, 3 mos. 3 days; regiment raised in Middlesex Co. to reinforce Continental Army at Rhode Island for 3 months.

REED, NATHAN. Private, Lieut. Benjamin Miles's detachment from Col. Jonathan Groat's regt.; entered service Dec. 21, 1780; discharged Jan. 4, 1781; service, 14 days; detachment escorted prisoners of war from Rutland to New London to be exchanged Dec. 26, 1780.

REED, NATHANIEL, Littleton. Descriptive list of men raised in Middlesex Co. to reinforce the Continental Army for the term of 9 months from the time of their arrival at Fish-Hill, according to resolution of April 20, 1776. Capt. T. H. K.

Jupiter, servant of Jushua Brooks, of Lincoln, and Pegg, servant of Wm. Reed, Esq., Aug. 2, 1756.

p. 65 bond for servant Pompei