

Benjamin Newberry and Mary Allyn

Emigrated: 1634 on the ship Recovery

Benjamin Newberry was born in about 1624 in Marshwood Vale, Dorset, England, to Thomas Newberry and Jane Dabinott. He was one of five children. In 1634, when Benjamin was about ten years-old, he migrated to America with his family on the ship Recovery. The family first settled in Dorchester, Massachusetts, where Benjamin's father soon died. In about 1636, Benjamin's mother moved the family to the new settlement of Windsor, Connecticut. She married Reverend John Warham, the leader of the Windsor church, in about 1637, and had four children with him.

Benjamin was granted land in Windsor in 1640, property that would have gone to his deceased father. On October 10th of that year, he received "a home-lot of thirteen acres, five acres of meadow, and another lot in what is now South Windsor, ten rods wide and three miles long, extending back easterly from the Connecticut River." He later acquired other land by inheritance from his brother, by various purchases, by gifts from his father-in-law, and by a grant made him by the General Court in October, 1667, of a two-hundred-and fifty-acre farm.

On June 11, 1646, Benjamin married Mary Allyn in Windsor. Between 1647 and 1669, they had nine children. Benjamin held many offices in Windsor, including assessor in 1662 and 1663, attorney during those same years, and representative to the General Court "for forty semi-annual sessions." On June 13, 1662, Benjamin was a member of the Grand Jury of the court which convicted Mary Sanford to death as a witch. In 1663, he was involved with awarding lots in the new town of Simsbury, Connecticut, although it's believed he never actually lived there.

On June 7, 1660, Benjamin was appointed captain of the Hartford County Militia and played an important role in defending the area from Indians. He was also prepared to defend against the Dutch if they chose to attack Connecticut, which they didn't. Benjamin was a member of the "Council of War" in 1672 and 1673, which was appointed to "act in establishing and commissioning of military officers, in pressing of men, horses, ships and to order and dispose of the Militia of the Colony in the best way and manner they can, for or defense and safety."

In June 1672, Benjamin was made second in command of the Hartford County Company of Militia. Benjamin's military status led to him having heavy involvement in King Philip's War. In August 1675, he was put in charge of 163 dragoons for the defense of Hartford County. In May of 1676, he was to serve as a guard at a proposed peace meeting with the Indians, but because of the action at Turner Falls and its aftermath, the war heated up again and he was ordered to march to Northampton, Massachusetts. Upon arrival, Newberry was "eager to attack" and wrote that if he could have 50 more men, he would willingly lead them into battle against the 300 Indians in the area. Benjamin wrote, "our souldiers are very willing to be doeing something rather notlie garrison; little is likely to be got by garrisoning wtever may be saved."

On May 2, 1676, Benjamin wrote another report from Northampton: "Loving brothr yrs from ye councill 26th jnst and received whereby I understand Major Talcott is jntended towards Narrowgansitt. I have could haue binne glad yf it had binne othrwise. sir on Thursdaymorning yr was Alarum at Hadly; his man was shott at goeing to ye mill and prsently after fowre men more being sent foerth as a scout to discover were also shott at by seaven or eight indians and narrowly escaped; the Indians made severall shots at ye mill but thorow gods goodnes none was hurt, we being sent [for] drew all over & togethr wth severall of ye towne went foerth to mill; saw many tracks and also where ye indians Lay ye Ambushments as we judged but could not finde the Indians so as to make any thing of it; some sd they saw some but so kept of that we could not come at them; we found where they had newly kild nine horses yong and olde and to be feard have driven away severall cattle yt could not be found. I much doubght yf some effectual course be not taken much Loss of cattle If not of men will soon be in these parts. our being hear as garrison cannot prserue ye cattle neither can we pursue after to releiue them but with great hazard. the Lord guide you in all waighty concernes before you wth humble respects to you and service to ye Honard deputy Govor wt ye rest take leave remaining yvrs to serue & command Ben: Newbery."

On July 2, 1676, Benjamin took part in a force of about three hundred men under the command of Major John Talcott who surrounded a force of Indians and massacred 126 of them. This is viewed as the last major action of King Philip's War. Benjamin returned to Windsor and continued to serve the community until his death. At a Windsor town meeting held in June 1685, he was one of the six men to whom the patent of the town was ordered to be made out, and he was one of the representatives of the town to receive the deed for the town land from the Indians in May 1687. In December 1684, Benjamin was a member of the committee to see to the building of the new meeting house. He was appointed Major of the Hartford County Regiment of militia on September 4, 1689. On September 11, 1689, just one week after that final appointment, Benjamin died. His wife Mary had died earlier that year on July 29th. Benjamin's estate was valued at over £563. Famous descendants of Benjamin Newberry include Nancy Reagan, Bess Truman and Mike Huckabee.

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