

The Thomas Eames Family of Framingham

To escape the political and religious chaos of the 1600 and 1700's, thousands of European families began to migrate to the New World in search of land and freedom from religious and political persecution. The passage was expensive and the ships were dark, crowded, and generally unsafe for passengers traveling as steerage; however, those who made the voyage safely encountered opportunities that were not available to them in their European homeland. Many of the families that reached the New World at this time went on to contribute to the emerging nations of the United States and Canada and Mexico. Research into various historical records has revealed some of the first members of the Eames family to immigrate North America. Abraham Eames settled in Virginia in 1663; John Eames settled in Boston in 1637, and Thomas Eames had settled in Massachusetts Bay Colony (now Framingham, MA) in 1634 (Temple, 1887).

Thomas Eames (Emms, Eams, Eammes, Eamms) was born about 1618 in England and immigrated to The Massachusetts Bay Colony by 1634. As a young man, he served in the Pequot War in 1637. He was a brick-layer and stone-cutter by trade, and made his living building chimneys and cutting foundations of stone for new homesteaders. It is unclear whether it was through his service in the Pequot War or through his years as a brick-layer, but it is said that he was "maimed in the limbs" (Temple, 1887). After the Pequot War he married Margaret (of whom little is documented). Thomas and Margaret Eames took up residence first in Dedham in 1640 and then in Medford from 1652-1659. Thomas Eames fathered three children before Margaret died: John (born May 16, 1641; died before reaching his first birthday), a second son named John (born October 6, 1642) and a daughter Elizabeth (born 1645).

Thomas Eames married again in 1662 and moved to Cambridge with his second wife, Mary (nee Blandford) Paddleford Eames. Mary, a widow from her first marriage, had five children: Zachariah Paddleford (born 1667), Edward Paddleford (born 1670) and three others (of which no names or dates found). Within the first few years of their marriage Mary Eames gave birth to three more children: Thomas Jr. (born July 12, 1663), Samuel (born January 15, 1664) and Nathaniel (born December 30, 1668).

In 1670, Thomas Eames at 50 years old moved his wife and ten surviving children, to the "Pelham Farm" in Sudbury. There the family leased land from Thomas Danforth within the bounds of the Plantation of Framingham. Thomas Eames built his house on the southern slope of Mount Wayte, between the Sudbury River and Farm Pond at a distance of about seven miles southwest from the early town lines of Sudbury, and about three miles east from the Indian "Praying town" of Magunkook, and took up farming.. While in Framingham, Thomas and Mary Eames expanded their family by two more children for a total of twelve: Sarah (October 3, 1670) and Lydia (June 29, 1672). However, by now his eldest son John, had taken up his residence in Watertown and Mary's two eldest sons were away in military service and eldest daughter married.

King Philip's War broke out in June, 1675. As Mr. Eames was "maimed in his limbs," he was not liable to be pressed into service; but his horses were not exempt. And September 1st, 1675, he sends the following petition:

To the Honorable Council now sitting.

Devine providence having cast my lot in a place both remote from neighbors in the woods, betwixt Marlborough and Medfield, and in a place of no small danger in this day of trouble, when God hath so signally let loose the heathens against his people everywhere. And it is my duty to seek by all lawful means to preserve my family from the rage of the enemy, and to provide for our welfare both at home and on our journeyings, from place to place, which I cannot do with any comfort without the horses I continually use; My humble petition therefore to this honorable Council is, that I may have my horses free from the press, to which they are continually exposed, whenever I travel to the neighboring towns, nay, so that I cannot pass on a Sabbath, which in every respect is grevous to me who am, your humble petitioner,

Thomas Eames

And, according to Josiah H. Temple's History of Framingham, Massachusetts 1640-1885, his reply came back as such:

The Council grants the petitioner freedom from the impress of his horses at such times as he and his family coming to the public worship of God in Marlborough or Sudbury.

Soon after the hostilities of King Philip's War had erupted, the Council in Boston sent four soldiers to guard the scattered families in and around the Framingham Plantation. The residents were required to supply the soldiers with food and lodging in return for their furnished protection. The war quickly moved south of Boston and then to the eastern side of the Massachusetts Colony. Little need was found to keep the guards in the Framingham area so they were removed.

The guard had been withdrawn several months by late January, 1676, when Thomas Eames went with his horse to Boston to secure a supply of ammunition and request additional protection. This left his wife and children vulnerable when eleven warriors swept up from Magunkook (the neighboring Indian Praying Town) looking for food and revenge. “Mary Paddlefoot Eames did the best she could to defend her family and her home. As the warriors poured through her kitchen door she used whatever tools she could put her hands on to defend herself, and when that failed she grabbed a kettle of soap that had been boiling on her hearth and flung it into the onslaught, to no avail (Stephen Herring, Framingham An American Town, 2000).” In addition to Mary Eames, the attackers killed Thomas, Jr., age twelve, who probably helped his mother resist the assault. Also dead were Sarah, age five, and little Lydia, only three. There may have been others slain, but the record is not clear. The attackers burned the house, the barn and the livestock but not before carrying off at least three of the children and any food stuffs or supplies they pilfered from the house and barn. According to the confession of one of the attackers, a small band of warriors had returned for some corn left in their granaries and finding that it had been destroyed or removed, decided to obtain supplies from the nearest settler. It is probable that Mrs. Eames’ obstinate resistance provoked them to the brutal attack.

The children were carried to the village of the Wachusett, and at least one of them as far as Canada. Samuel, who was eleven, Margaret, nine and Nathaniel, seven were able to escape or were eventually ransomed from their captors and returned home over the course of a few months. The escape of Samuel is recorded as a remarkable journey. "On the next day, (May 12), a youth of about eleven years made his escape from the Indians, who was taken prisoner when his fathers house was burnt and his mother murdered on the first of February last; and though the boy knew

not a step of the way to any English town, and was in continual danger of the skulking Indians in the woods, and far from the English, yet God directed him aright, and brought him to the sight of Plantain (the herb which the Indians call English Foot, because it grows only amongst us and is not found in the Indian plantations); whereupon he concluded he was not far from some English town, and accordingly following the Plantain, he arrived safely amongst us (Temple, 1887)." It is remarkable that Samuel Eames, following the direction of the rising sun for more than 30 miles through the wilderness, returned to an English town and to his father. Nathaniel (7) was with the party of savages that attacked Sudbury the 21st of April and discovered by a colonist.

Margaret, age nine, seems to have had a different, rather romantic fortune for she was taken as far away as Canada and it was a year or longer until she was discovered and ransomed paid for her return. The colonial government "dispatched some agents to obtain the release of captives detained in Canada, one of their company was in his own turn captivated by the attractions of the daughter of Mr. Eames, whose release he had obtained (William Barry, *A History of Framingham, Massachusetts, Including the Plantation, from 1640 to the Present Time*. 1847)." In 1688, at the age of 21, Margaret Eames married Joseph Adams – who was "captivated by the attractions."

An inventory of the loss of Thomas Eames, when his house was fired by Indians at Framingham near unto Sudbury in the county of Middlesex, the first of Feb 1675/6.

Imprimis--- A wife and nine children.

Item---	A house 34 feet long, double floors and garrett, and cellar, and a barn 52 feet long, leantir'd one side and two ends,	100,00,00
Item---	4 Oxen	24,00
Item---	7 cows fair with calf	28,00
Item---	2 yearlings	3,00
Item---	1 Bull	2,00

Item---	2 heifers fair with calf	6,00
Item---	1 heifer	2,00
Item---	8 sheep fair with lamb	3,12
Item---	30 loads of hay in ye barn at 8s.per load	12,00
Item---	10 bush. Wheate at 6s. p. bush.	3,00
Item---	40 bush. Rye at 4s. 8d. p. bush.	8,00
Item---	210 bush. Of Indian a 3s. p. bush.	31,00
Item---	Hemp and Flax in ye barn	1,00
Item---	Fire Arms with other arms and ammunition	6,00
Item---	Butter 20s., Cheese 40s, 2 ½ barrels of Pork	
	Four fitches of Bacon	1,00
Item---	Carpenters and Joyner's tools	5,00
Item---	2 great spinning wheels and 2 small wheels 4.s.	
	4.s. for cards	1,00
Item---	6 beds 3 of them featherbeds and three flock, 6	
	Rugs and 12 blankets	12,00
Item---	one chest of linnen, with ye sheets and shifts	10,00
Item---	a livery cupboard with what was in it	2,00
Item---	My wife's linen and wearing apparel, and	
	Children's cloathing, and my own cloathing	
	With clothing that was my former wifes.	25,00
Item---	Pewter, Brasse, and iron ware	14,00
Item---	Churns and other Dairy vessels with other	
	Wooden lumber	5,00

This was a considerable estate for the 1600-1700's and comprised all he possessed- totaling £ 330, except for the two horses, wagon and money he had with him while in Boston.

The Colonial General Court granted Eames 200 acres of land for his severe loss. He also sued the Indians in court and received a tract of land amounting to 300 acres. Although Thomas Eames was generously awarded a total of 500 acres of land, the horrible and tragic loss of his family and home could never be replaced. Thomas Eames died January 25, 1680, about a week before the 4th anniversary of the event come to be known as "The Eames Massacre." He was ≈ 62 years old.

Five C's	PRIMES
<p>Context: Colonization</p> <p>Contingency: If Metacomet had not taken the issues as personal slights, there would have been more harmony</p> <p>Causality: Expansion of colonists for land</p> <p>Change Over Time: The Eames Massacre marked the end of significant Native American landholding</p> <p>Complexity: Massasoit was a friend to the Newcomers of Plymouth while his son Metacomet initiated King Philip's War</p>	<p>Political – The conflict influenced political decisions made throughout the region.</p> <p>Military – The family event was central to King Phillip's War.</p>

Annotated Bibliography

Barry, William. *A History of Framingham, Massachusetts, Including the Plantation, from 1640*

to the Present Time. Boston: James Munroe, 1847.

This can be difficult to plough through. It is cumbersome and dull but well equipped with the Framingham history details one may need to complete a research paper. Definitely not a "coffee table" book.

Callahan, Raymond J. *Framingham Historical Reflections*. Edited by Martha Dewar and M. Joan

Gilbert. Washington, D.C.: McGregor and Warren, Inc., 1974.

This features short and concise descriptions of a select few historic events in Framingham's history. Not a complete history of the town, but a good resource for the most famous events.

Drake, James D. *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676*. Amherst:

University of Massachusetts Press, 1999.

There are literally hundreds of books to choose from for details of King Philip's War. I chose this book for its readability and short passage that included an account of the Eames Family. It's an interesting non-fiction book that can be read in a weekend.

Herring, Stephen W. *Framingham: An American Town*. Framingham, MA: Framingham

Historical Society, 2000.

This is a very readable, story-like account of the history of Framingham with a few maps and illustrations.

Parr, James L, and Kevin Swope. *Framingham Legends & Lore*. Charleston: The History Press,

2009.

-And what would be a research paper about Framingham without our own team member's recently published book? Enough said!

Temple, Josiah H. *History of Framingham, Massachusetts, 1640-1885*. Framingham, MA: Town

of Framingham, 1887.

This is the alpha and omega of Framingham's history! A very dense book written over a hundred years ago with details and accounts one cannot do without when reading or writing about Framingham. The language is weighty and at times awkward, but manageable.