

JAMES GYLES' ACCOUNT

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Copied from Vinton's book:

(1) Vinton, John Adams, The Giles Memorial, Boston, MA: Henry W. Dutton, 1864, pp. 112-118:

JAMES GYLES. . . .

Our knowledge of him is wholly derived from a manuscript now extant in New Jersey, and in the possession of Hon. Charles S. Olden, the present governor of that state, who is a descendant of James Gyles. By some means, the existence of this MS. became known to some members of the Maine Historical Society, and a copy of it was furnished by Mr. Olden in Sept. 1853, to Bishop Burgess of Maine, by whom it was given to John McKeen, Esq., of Brunswick, Me., for the Maine Historical Society. Mr. McKeen kindly permitted me to take a transcript of it, which is now inserted, entire, verbatim et literatim, in this volume. It has never before been printed:?

"A true account of our travels from Old England to New England In the year 1668, with the several transactions and removes in America.

"August 22nd 1668. We took our journey from the Park to Faversham, and so to London, where we staid some days, till the ship was ready, and then fell down to the Downs, where we staid two days for a wind; and the 5th of September, the wind being fair, we hoisted sail and proceeded on our voyage, but the third day after, met with a contrary wind and a storm, which forced us into Cowes in the Island of Wight; where we staid two days, and then proceeded on our voyage.

"November the 9th we arrived at Boston in New England, having been nine weeks and two days at sea; and winter coming on so fast, as we could not look out for a place to settle, and being unwilling to winter in the town, after three weeks stay, and having refreshed ourselves after our long voyage at sea, November the 30th we went to Braintree, where we hired a house until Spring, in 'which time I took a voyage eastward to look out for a place to settle.

"Winter being over, the 3rd day of May 1669, we went from Braintree to Boston to get a passage eastward. May 10th we hoisted sail from Boston, and proceeded on our voyage eastward. May 17th we arrived at Merrimathing in Kennebec River, and not liking that house, the 14th of October, we removed from thence to Whidby, a house on the same river, and having lived there two years I bought a tract of land of the Indians, and having bought a house upon the same, October 31st 1671, we removed from Whidby to go into our own house; but Muddy river being frozen over, we were fain to go into James Thomas' house.

"April 16, 1672, we removed from thence into our own house nt Muddy river, and having lived there three years and four months, the Indian war began in New England about June 1675, and in August the Indians rose at the Eastward and forced us to forsake our house and go to Samuel York's house to garrison, where we staid about a month, but the Indians growing too strong for us, killed our cattle and swine, plundered our houses; and having killed several people in Casco bay, several of our men grew faint-hearted and left us, so as we had but nine men left in garrison, and too weak to withstand so great a power of Indians if they should set upon us. About the middle of September, we were forced to forsake our garrison and go down to Rowseck house to the main garrison, where we staid about six weeks, in which time we had some skirmishes with the Indians as we were gathering our corn at Muddy river, and having killed several, the rest ran away, and came no more to trouble us all the winter.

"About the latter end of November, the winter setting in so violent, and the house being so full of people, as we could not endure there any longer, five families of us joining together went to Sylvanus Davis house on the westward side of the river, where we staid all the winter. Towards spring, the Indians sent down to make peace with the inhabitants; upon which we gave them a meeting at Pemaquid, and there concluded a peace with them, which continued until they had an opportunity to break it in August after. [The peace was made] about the beginning of April 1676.

"All being at peace and quiet, I went down the river to Mr Weaswell's' house which stood empty, and there planted some Indian corn and other things, intending in the

fall to go up again to our own house at Muddy river, with the rest of our neighbors, if the peace had continued with the Indians; but the Providence of ALMIGHTY GOD had otherwise ordered it, for about the middle of summer, Philip being killed, and most of the chief sachems being killed and driven out of the Narraganset country, such as were left alive came away Eastward to join with these Indians, who were glad of an opportunity to play the rogue; and the ninth of August 1676, early in the morning, when no Englishman thought of any war; they came down to Rouseck, and took it, and killed and took away about fifty people, and burnt down the house and all other buildings about; killing and destroying all that came in their way; so as we were forced to fly for our lives in it canoe and leave all ever we had, and glad that we could save our lives.

"We and the rest of Kennebec neighbours, whom God had preserved from the cruelty of the Indians, got to Bananas Cove, a fishing island about. Two miles from the main land, where we met the people el' Shipment, Pentaquid, and all other places thereabout, who fled thither to save their lives. We staid there a week, in which time we made several attempts into the river to see if we could get off any thing that was left behind; but all in vain, for the Indians lay in ambush and beat us off, so as we could get nothing from the main land but blows, and saw all our houses burnt and our cattle killed, and every thing ruined and destroyed, and no help like to come to us from the Bay; and we being about three hundred souls on a little island, and no meat, drink, or any thing else to relieve us, and being in a poor condition, we thought good to call a council to consult what course to take for relief; and first to consider what vessels and boats there were in the harbour, and finding there was enough to carry all the people away, the 16th day of August at night we set sail and left not one man, woman, or child behind; some for Piscataway, Salem, Boston, and other towns in the Bay, according as they had friends and relations.

"August 18, I arrived at Boston, where we found good friends and relief, and there we staid about seven weeks; but the town being very full of people, and winter coming on, and no hope of returning again to our former habitation, we thought it time to look out for some other place or settlement; and consulting with several friends what course to take, I met with one at last that advised me to go westward, and also gave me a letter of commendation to Richard Brown of the town of Southold on Long Island in the Province of New York; and looking out for a passage, met with a sloop belonging to the same town, with whom I bargained for a passage.

"October 11, 1676, we set sail from Boston, and 26th of same month we arrived at the town of Southold at the house of Richard Brown, who received us kindly, and took us into his own house, and provided for us like a father, until we were able to shift for ourselves; the rest of the neighbours being very helpfull unto us, with whom we staid one year; in which time I bought a lot of land lying about fourteen miles westward from the place; and being desirous to be as near it as I could, October 26th 1677, we removed from Richard Brown's to Mattetock, a house that was empty and about two miles from my lot, where we staid about one year.

"November 1678, we removed to Thomas Mape's house, which was very near to my lot of land, intending to build a house upon it. as soon as I possibly could; but after some improvements made upon it, I found the land very poor and barren, and no meadow to be got for my cattle, and having lived there almost a year and a half, I began to dislike the place. In the mean time, Sir Edmond Andross, then governor of New York, sent for me to come to him at the fall of the year to York to wait upon his honor at York, and he promised to give me a lot of land upon Staten Island; but winter coming on so fast, as I could not remove till Spring, and then I hired a small ketch to carry me away; and the 7th of April, 1680, we set sail from Southold for York, where we arrived the 17th day, and were kindly received by Sir Edmond Andross, who provided a place for us for the present. May 22nd we went from York to the Governor's house on Staten Island, where we staid four months. September 7, we removed to Mr. Witt's house, to look after his land, until Sir Edmond could get a lot of land laid out for me; but he being called home for Erigland so suddenly that I could not get a good lot of land as I did expect, for I did not think it worth building a house upon it, and therefore I sold it to Captain Palmer of Staten Island, who carried me over to New Jersey to see if I could meet with a better lot of land; and meeting with a lot to my mind that was to be sold, lying upon Rariton river, I got Captain Palmer to buy it for me, which he did.

"October 14th 1681, we removed from Staten Island to Benjamin Hull's house in Piscataway, where we staid all the winter, until our own house was ready. April 6th 1682, we removed into our own house at the Bound Brook upon Rariton River in Piscataway in the East Province of New Jersey. JAMES GYLES."