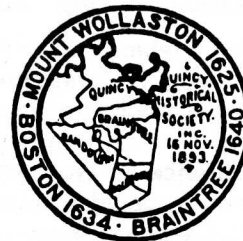


Quincy History



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Wollaston and Morton

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It is strange that two names so well known in Quincy are of people about whom Quincy residents know very little, and whose lasting influence on our local history was negligible.

In the case of Capt. Wollaston, until recently we did not even know his first name. Virtually all that we knew of him came from Governor William Bradford who had only second-hand information on his activities and on his plans that did not work out.¹ Thus the information is meager and the conclusions have proved to be inaccurate. He turns out to be a man of minor importance, and whose stay here was very short. Why a small hill and the area now comprising Quincy excepting North Quincy, Braintree, Randolph and Holbrook was named for him is a mystery. His name endures primarily because the Old Colony Railroad selected it for a station, and the community served by the station took the name of Wollaston.

We know of Thomas Morton's stay here principally from two sources—again William Bradford¹, and Morton's own book *The New English Canaan*.² Since his activities here were far from conventional, the two accounts were written from two very different points of view. Rather than seek a factual middle ground, most of what has been since written about him has favored one side or the other, generally his biased account. A very colorful interesting character, his neighbors tolerated his escapades for a time. When it was discovered that he had traded to the Native Americans more firearms than they possessed collectively, and boasted of how well he had taught

the Indians to use them, the colonists of the area had him arrested and sent back to England. His sojourn here is commemorated by the name Ma-re Mount, now Merrymount, the name he gave to the hill that had been Mount Wollaston. It is unfortunate that he is remembered principally for his escapades rather than for his book which gives a fine description of this area when the English settlers arrived and made a valuable contribution to the colonization of Massachusetts.

Captain Richard Wollaston

A detailed story of the search for Capt. Wollaston is given in the paper *Wollaston of Mount Wollaston*.³ The paper which is well annotated as to sources, records material relating to the enterprise that brought Capt. Wollaston to New England, to Humphrey Rastall who headed it, and to some of Capt. Wollaston's activities.

A genealogical search of the prominent Wollaston family in England failed to identify a possible candidate.

The search then turned to expeditions of exploration in which such a person might have been involved. The earliest mention was found in the description of a voyage of Capt. John Smith in 1615.⁴ John Smith records a confrontation with a Capt. Barra, an English pirate, whose lieutenant was "Capt. Wollistone". Two years later in 1617 a Capt. Wollaston is mentioned in the account of Raleigh's expedition to Guiana.⁵ Capt. Wollaston was on a vessel that "slipped away . . . bent on piracy". In 1618 the pirates were in Newfoundland. Raleigh blamed Wollaston and others for the failure of the expedition, and names him as Capt. Richard Wollaston. On March 18, 1626, Capt. John Pennington (in the Downs)

reported to the Duke of Buckingham that Capt. Wollaston "was buried yesterday."⁶

It is noted that at that time, the title of "captain" was applied to the master of a vessel, and also to the man in charge of a group of soldiers or others on the vessel but not officers or crew of the vessel. This captain generally did not take his orders from the master of the vessel but from a party who was often not on the vessel. It was therefore a job of considerable responsibility since he had to provide for their living as well as direct their activities.

The above accounts of a Capt. Wollaston indicate a man of the soldier of fortune type, of considerable capacity, but not one who would have headed a business enterprise such as the one that brought our Capt. Wollaston here.

This led to research of the Mr. Rastall with whom Capt. Wollaston was associated. He turned out to be Humphrey Rastall who was earlier a Bristol merchant but, by the time of our interest in him, a London merchant. Happily for us, he had a propensity for getting into trouble, mainly for failure to fulfill contracts. We were thus able to learn much about his activities from court records, including the enterprise that brought Capt. Wollaston here.

For the story of the enterprise, we will quote directly from *Wollaston of Mount Wollaston*.³ This contains much that does not relate directly to Capt. Wollaston but does show that it was purely a commercial venture, and that neither Wollaston, Rastall or anyone else associated with it had any idea of a settlement here as some historians have suggested. It also makes it clear that Thomas Morton had no association with it as some historians have suggested. It should be noted that

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