

Ancestor Profile: Edward Cottle (1628-1710)

By James Reed Campbell Jr.

Vacationers to Nantucket, Cape Cod or Martha's Vineyard may well thank our ancestor, **Edward Cottle** (1628-1710), who was an early settler or founder of each scenic destination. This great-great-grandfather of **Ruhahmah Doane** (1745-1812) also was a founder of Amesbury, Massachusetts, 40 miles northeast of Boston along the border of New Hampshire.

Edward was born in England in 1628, likely in Lanford, Wiltshire, England. He is presumed to have been a brother or cousin to William Cottle (1626-1668), who arrived in Boston in 1638 on the "Confluence" as an apprentice or employee of John Sanders "of Lanford." William was joined on this voyage by 110 country men and women, mostly from Wiltshire, including Roger Eastman (1610-1694), immigrant ancestor to the founder of Eastman Kodak, Inc. William completed his term of service; and then relocated to Salisbury, Massachusetts, where he was joined by 22-year-old Edward in 1650 (there is no prior record of Edward's arrival in America). Salisbury was named after Salisbury, the shire town of Wiltshire. William died in Salisbury in 1668, leaving a wife and children.¹

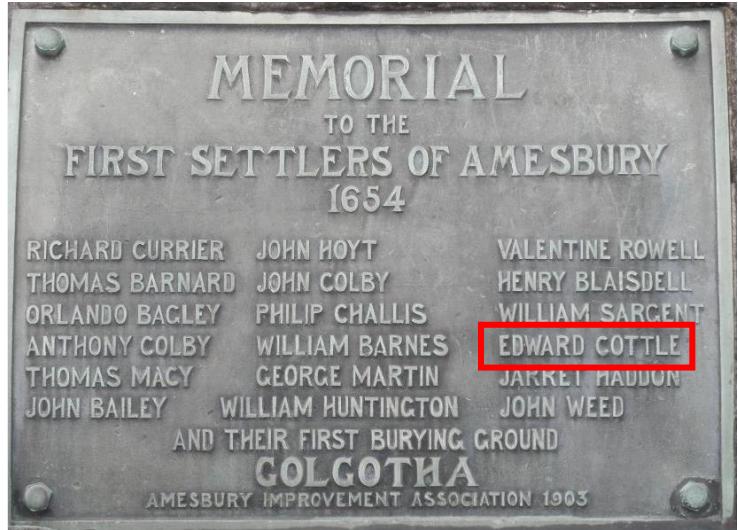
Edward brought with him to America a wife, **Judith (MNU, possibly Osgood)** (1629-aft 1681), whom he had married in England.² They would have seven children born in Salisbury, including our ancestor, **Mary** (1653-1706), their second-oldest child, born in 1652.³ After first living in Salisbury village from 1650 to 1654, the Cottle family moved to the western part of Salisbury. In 1654, this part was separated from Salisbury as "New Town." It was renamed in 1667 as New Salisbury; and then again in 1668 as Amesbury, after another town in Wiltshire. Edward was credited among the 18 "first settlers of Amesbury, 1654" on a plaque erected by the Amesbury Improvement Association in 1903.⁴

Edward accumulated considerable property over time: two acres in 1652; one acre in 1657; 50 acres and a half meadow in 1658; 16 rods in 1659; 160 acres in 1662; and lots in a great swamp in 1664.⁵ He was regarded as a prominent citizen of Amesbury, being awarded one of the more prestigious pews at the erection of a meeting house in 1667.⁶

But Edward ran into hardships. His first house at Lion's Neck burned down by accident, consuming all of his possessions. He mortgaged properties in 1667 to rebuild a smaller house at Jamaica,⁷ which also was burned down, this time by Native Americans, in 1668. Lion's Neck adjoined the Powwow River,⁸ which was named for being an important gathering place for Native Americans. Tensions had been further exacerbated when Salisbury settlers decreed that one colonist only would be permitted to draw fish from the Powwow River. Apparently, Edward's second house fell victim to these ongoing tensions.

In Edward's own words many years later:

I the sd Edward Cottle obtained among other lands a tract called the Lion's mouth being a neck of land ... & built a sufficient house—sd lands possessed many years, which house being providentially burnt together with my goods, I then built a small house att a place called Jamaica, w'thin same township, w'ch being burnt by the Indians & not being so able in estate as some other of my associates in said parts was necessitated to try what success I might have by removing to the southwardly part of New England, hoping in time the Eastern parts might obtain a settled peace that I might then return to my Inheritance again: but matters occurring Contrary, I purchased a small settlement at ye town of Tisbury in Dukes County afores'd, & being now grown aged & out of hopes of Ever returning.⁹



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Edward's "associates" in Amesbury included neighbors who first settled Nantucket, starting in 1659 with Thomas Macy (1598-1692), immigrant ancestor to the founder of R.H. Macy & Co. Department Store. Edward began selling off most of his lands in Amesbury in 1667 before sailing his family to Nantucket in 1669, staying for seven or eight years.¹⁰ Edward was assisted in all preparations; and then joined in Nantucket by his son-in-law and our ancestor **Samuel Bickford** (1648-bef 1701), who had married Mary in Amesbury in 1668.¹¹ Edward and Judith would have at least four more children born in Nantucket.¹² They appear to have been renters of land, not owners. There is one hint that Edward's family encountered difficulties: in 1673, Judith was sanctioned by the court for "reproachful words" directed against Tristram Coffin (1609-1681), another first settler of Nantucket and former neighbor in Salisbury.¹³

In 1675, Edward and his family sailed back to Cape Cod to settle in "Mannamoiett," later known as Chatham. They stayed as tenants of Chatham's founder William Nickerson (1604-1690) for three or four years.¹⁴ Here, too, they encountered difficulties. Family researcher Velma Cottle Musick explains:

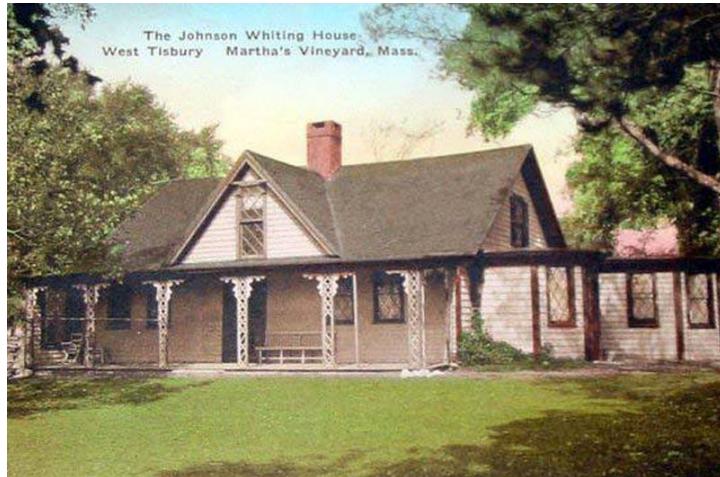
A certain Timothy Hedges came to Cottle and one or two other tenants of Nickerson's land and tried to eject them. He involved the Cottles, husband and wife, and others in the controversy. One of the days on which this contentious discussion occurred was a Sunday. William Nickerson sued Hedges for one thousand pounds "by defaming the title of the land--and moreover, he had taken it upon himself to warn (the occupants) from their habitation, telling them it was his--and advised them not to pay to said William Nickerson for they should not enjoy it." (Court Records.) The suit was settled, and the Cottles remained on the property, but in the following March it was disclosed that someone, probably Hedges, had registered a complaint against the Cottles and others. The accused were summoned to appear before the Court

at Plymouth, sixty miles overland from Mannamoiett. The Court Records of the Colony of New Plymouth read: "At the Court of His Ma'tie held in Plymouth, the fifth of March Anno Dom. one thousand and seventy and seven: Edward Cottle and his wife of Mannamoiett, for prophaning the Sabbath by quarreling, fined forty shillings, silver money, or to be whipt" (if the fine was not paid.) The others involved were likewise fined--but not Hedges.¹⁵

These difficulties doubtless prompted Edward's next move, to Tisbury on Martha's Vineyard by 1680 or 1681. He may have been encouraged by another son-in-law, John Hillman (1651-1719), who had lived in Tisbury from 1675 to 1679, before moving to Nantucket to marry Edward's daughter Hannah (1661-1728). Edward also may have been joined by son-in-law Samuel, who was called "of Tisbury" as defendant in a suit in 1681.¹⁶

On Martha's Vineyard, Edward returned to his role as a civic participant and leader. He was chosen for a committee to procure a new town charter in 1687; to divide proprietors' lands in 1688; to serve as a fence viewer in 1688; as a constable in 1689; and as surveyor of highways in 1699. In 1688, Edward purchased the eastern half of the home lot of Josiah Standish (1633-1690), consisting of 24 acres, which he sold to his son John (1675-1705) in 1700.¹⁷ At that time, historian Charles Edward Banks notes that "the families of Thomas West, Isaac Chase, and Edward Cottle comprised all the known residents in the present town limits [of Tisbury], and the three households numbered 27 persons of all ages and sexes."¹⁸ Banks also cites Edward's 1695 purchase of land in West Tisbury "bordering on the Lagoon and extending half way towards Kuttashimmoo...at Manehchah-hankkanah, the name given by the Indians to the locality where the purchase was made."¹⁹

Eventually, Edward moved five miles southwest, to what was then the Keephigone district of Chilmark, to live with his son James (1668-1750). Chilmark had been established as a



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town in 1694, with Edward one of its founders. It was named for Chilmark in Wiltshire, England—just as Salisbury and Amesbury had been named a half-century earlier. Edward passed his remaining years in Chilmark until his death in 1710.²⁰ He had disposed of all his property, leaving no public record of his death. There also is no public record of Judith's death in Tisbury earlier in 1681.

Vacationers to Martha's Vineyard may still view a living link to Edward in the Old Parsonage House on State Road in West Tisbury. This house stands upon the Josiah Standish home lot of Edward's purchase and was occupied by the Cottle family for three generations. It was built by Standish in 1688 and served for more than a century as the parsonage of the West Tisbury Congregational Church (Edward was a Congregationalist). Now sitting on three acres of farm land, it is the second-oldest home on Martha's Vineyard.²¹ The Whiting family had owned the Old Parsonage House since 1852, with Dr. Henry Whiting installing its distinctive diamond-paned windows as part of the initial renovation. But the descendants sold it at auction in 2013 for \$600,000.²²



¹ Hoppin, Charles Arthur. *The Washington Ancestry and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families*. Greenfield, OH: 1932. 437. Print.

² Torrey, Clarence Almon. *New England Marriages Prior to 1700*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1985. 381. Print.

³ *Vital Records of Salisbury, Massachusetts to the End of the Year 1849*. Topsfield, MA: The Topsfield Historical Society, 1915. 59. Print.

⁴ *Memorial to the First Settlers of Amesbury, 1654, and Their First Burying Ground, Golgotha*. Amesbury Improvement Association, 1903. Bronze Plaque.

⁵ Merrill, Joseph. *History of Amesbury and Merrimac, Massachusetts*. Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1978. 47, 58, 59, 63, 78, 81. Print.

⁶ Ibid, 90.

⁷ Hoyt, David W. *The Old Families of Salisbury and Amesbury, Massachusetts, Vol. III*. Providence, RI: Snow & Farnham Co., 1916. 857, 897. Print.

⁸ Musick, Velma Cottle. *The Cottle Family*. Kingfisher, OK: 1961. 3. Print.

⁹ Smith, William C. *A History of Chatham, Massachusetts*. Hyannis, MA: F.B. & F.P. Goss, 1909. 112. Print.

¹⁰ Banks, Charles Edward. *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County, Massachusetts, Volume I, Town Annals*. Boston: 1911. 42, 43. Print.

¹¹ *Vital Records of Amesbury, Massachusetts to the End of the Year 1849*. Topsfield, MA: The Topsfield Historical Society, 1913. 33. Print.

¹² Roberts, Gary Boyd. *Mayflower Source Records*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1986. 254, 255. Print.

¹³ Philbrick, Nathaniel. *Away Off Shore: Nantucket Island and Its People, 1602-1890*. Nantucket: Mill Hill Press, 1994. 37. Print.

¹⁴ Banks, Charles Edward. *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County, Massachusetts, Volume II, Town Annals of West Tisbury*. Boston: George H. Dean, 1911. 43. Print.

¹⁵ Musick, Velma Cottle. *The Cottle Family*. Kingfisher, OK: 1961. 5. Print.

¹⁶ Banks, Charles Edward. *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County, Massachusetts, Volume II, Town Annals of West Tisbury*. Boston: George H. Dean, 1911. 68. Print.

¹⁷ Ibid. 43.

¹⁸ Banks, Charles Edward. *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County, Massachusetts, Volume III, Town Annals of Tisbury*. Boston: George H. Dean, 1911. 5. Print.

¹⁹ Ibid. 15.

²⁰ Hoppin, Charles Arthur. *The Washington Ancestry and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families*. Greenfield, OH: 1932. 455. Print.

²¹ Tumin, Remy. "Old Parsonage House in West Tisbury Heads to Public Auction." *The Vineyard Gazette*. 5 Sep 2013. Print.

²² Tumin, Remy. "Documentary Filmmaker Buys Old Parsonage for \$600,000." *The Vineyard Gazette*. 23 Sep 2013. Print.