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*Flagon & Trencher: Taverner and Innkeeper
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WILLIAM HILTON 1590 - 1656

Ordinary Keeper, Kittery Point, Maine, 1648

William Hilton was born in Northwich, England in 1590. He married in England and died intestate in York, Maine in 1656.

William Hilton and his brother Edward were thrifty merchants in London and members of the London Fish Mongers Guild before deciding to move to the colonies. William came to Plymouth, Mass. on 9 November 1621 in the ship FORTUNE. He was an adherent of the Church of England, but was pleased with the country and the Pilgrim society. His wife and children came with his brother Edward in the ship ANNE in August, 1623.

William left Plymouth in 1623/4 and settled with his family at Dover, N.H. on Hilton's Point where he and his brother established their fishing industry and started the settlement of Dover, formerly called Hilton's Settlement. A New Hampshire State historical marker has been erected at Hilton Point, or Dover Point as it is now called, near Hilton Park, in honor of the brothers.

Edward and William removed to Exeter where William received marshes in Oyster Bay on 3 December 1640. He removed to Dover Neck where he was declared a freeman in May 19, 1644. He was appointed Judge of Dover in 1642 and chosen Deputy in 1644 to the Massachusetts General Court, Dover being a part of Massachusetts until 1680.¹

By 1648 William had moved to the mouth of the Piscataqua River at what is now Kittery Point. At a Court held in Georgeana, 27 June 1648,

"It is ordered by the Court that William Hilton being licensed for to keep the ordinary at the mouth of the Piscataqua River and none other shall keep a private ordinary there nor sell wine or beare nor Licker, etc."

The Court also ordered that he should keep a ferry. This ferry ran to various points on the Great Island and to the Strawberry Bank side of the river. The order explained just how Hilton should ferry people across and the charges he was allowed to collect.¹

He lived at Kittery until 1651 when he moved to York, Maine, being one of the fifty who acknowledged themselves as freemen. He was one of the signers that put the town under the rule of Massachusetts on 22 November 1652. In 1652, 1653 and 1654 he was one of the Selectmen of York.

William Hilton died intestate in York in 1655/56; letters of administration were granted on 30 June 1656 to Richard White, his son-in-law.²

- by Ruth Hilton Cleland

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REFERENCES

- 1 New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, N.H.
- 2 History of Dover, N.H.