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Ordinary keeper, Rehoboth, Massachusetts, 1649 -

John Read (Reed) was born in England in 1598, died 7 September 1685, aged 87 years and was buried at Seakonk burial ground (Rehoboth). He married Sarah ( - ) (possibly Lessie) who survived him and died in April 1702.

John came in the 1630 Winthrop fleet to Massachusetts Bay Colony. By the mid 1630's he was at Dorchester, then removed to Weymouth where he was made a freeman in 1640. He moved again, to near Braintree and then in the middle 1640's to Rehoboth in Plymouth Colony. In 1645 he was one of the land owners and in 1644 he served in the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company.

In Plymouth Colony John Read held many positions: constable, inn keeper, ordinary keeper in 1649 when he was allowed to draw and sell wine and strong drink and to keep and Ordinary. In 1651 he was surveyor "of the Hiweaies" and in 1671 he was one of three elected as "grand enquest."

After Read's death in 1685 his wife Sarah was allotted 4 acres of land to which he was entitled. The family resided "on the rim" in the Seakonk area of Rehoboth, adjoining the Ten Mile River, now in Providence County, Rhode Island, near East Providence. His lots appear on an early map dated 1675 which shows his Inn in the north western portion of the settlement facing the communal Green and close to the Boston Road.

The exact name of Read's Ordinary or its sign have not survived. However, the name of its location, Seakonk, is derived from the Wampanoag Indian names for black (seaki) and goose (honk), a place where the black geese were thick. Is it too much to suspect that Read's Inn was simply called The Black Goose?

-by William Brand Pryor  
#78-37

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