



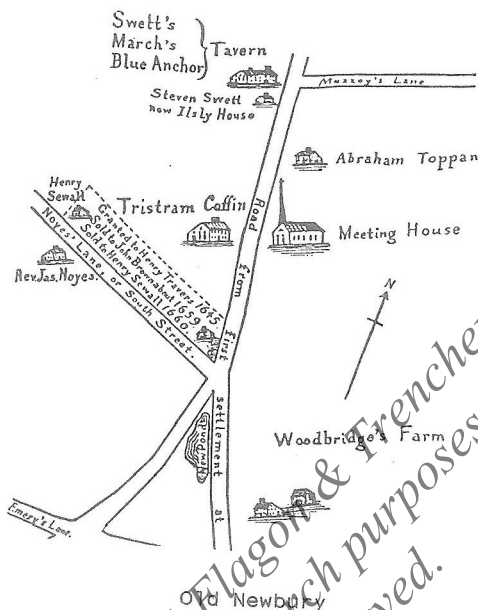
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#85-26



SWETT-ILSLEY HOUSE, from Currier, Old Newbury, 190

## Ordinary Keeper, Newbury, Massachusetts 1653-1667

Stephen Swett was born in England ca. 1618 and died probably at Newbury, Massachusetts between 16 November 1691 when he sold his house, lot and shop to Hugh March, Junior and 9 January 1693/4 when Hugh March sold "the house I bought of Steven Swett, deceased". He married first at Newbury on 24 May 1647 Hannah Merrill, born in England and died at Newbury 4 April 1662, daughter of John and Elizabeth (---) Merrill. He married second at Newbury 4 August 1663 Rebecca Smith born at Newbury 20 February 1639 and died there 1 March 1669, daughter of Thomas and (----) Smith. Stephen and Hannah had seven children.

As a teenager, Stephen Swett came to America with his parents and siblings. Members of the Reverend Thomas Parker's Company, they settled briefly at Ipswich and then at Newbury. Stephen was called cordwainer before 1653 when on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month of the year, after due deliberation, the Court held at Ipswich decided "Stephen Swett, being presented by the Townesmen of Newbury to keep an Ordnarye, is allowed by this court." His dwellinghouse with several acres was on the westerly side of High Street near the head of Marlborough. He continued to operate the ordinary until about 1664, when for three years the town was fined for failing to provide any place for travelers. According to Ipswich Deeds 3:215 on 12 March 1669/70 he sold to Hugh March who expended a large sum of money repairing and extending the "antient tavern". (See Hugh March in Colonial Tavernkeepers, Volume V, 15-16). March continued to operate the tavern until his death, first as March's Tavern and later as the Blue Anchor; it then passed through several owners until October 1755 when it was taken down.

Meanwhile, Stephen Swett had reserved for himself a portion of the property on the southerly side of the tavern where in 1690 he built a one over one room structure. It was much enlarged and altered after his death as it passed through various hands. During his occupancy Stephen Swett became Sealer of Leathers for the town. A later owner, Oliver Putnam, kept a tavern there from 1783-1797. It then became the property of Isaiah Ilsley, remaining in his family until 1911 when it was acquired by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, first of its currently owned New England houses. Known as the Swett-Ilsley House, it stands at 11-13 High Street, Newbury, Massachusetts.

Elizabeth Warren Gude

#85-01

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