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Sign of the Anchor, Boston, Massachusetts, by 1643

Robert Turner was born probably near Southwark, Surry, England ca. 1612 and died probably at Boston by 24 August 1664 when his will was proved.¹ He married Penelope (--) by 13 December 1639 when their eldest son Ephraim was born. They had at least five other sons and one daughter.²

Robert Turner came to the New World in the Winthrop Fleet of 1630, the man servant of Edward Bendall, a merchant from Southwark, Surry.³ He was "a thrifty innholder who at the sign of the anchor, furnish lodgings and refreshment to the members of the government frequently to Commissioners of the United Colonies of N.E. to juries, and to the clergy, when summoned into the synod by our Gen. Ct."⁴

On 28 March 1643, "Robert Turner to be paid 18s. for diet, beer and fire, for the selectmen."⁵ He is also credited with being a "vintner" and "proprietor" in addition to "innholder".⁶ He was admitted to the church 8 September 1633 and made a freeman 4 March 1633(/4).⁷ A few years later in 1640, he joined the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts.⁸ It is recorded that among others, Robert Turner served as Constable in 1646.⁹ Still later, in 1654 and 1655, he was ordered to "run the line" with several other men:

"... and Robt. Turner to run the line between Cambridge and 'Rocksbury', and Boston 'in pambulatory'."¹⁰

"... Robt. Turner, ... 'to run the line between Cambridge and Boston, and Roxbury and Boston, at Muddy River'."¹¹

On 5 October 1652, "Sergt. Robert Turner may let his new house jet into the street further than his old one is, and to pay 2s. and 6d. a year forever."¹² In his will, Robert gives to his Eldest sonne,

Ephraim Turner, "my new Built house, a part whereof he now dwelleth in, Reserving to my Deare wife one roome to herselfe During her life time, either in the new end or the old, at her Owne choyce."¹³

Also, Robert Turner mentions his daughter Sarah's husband, "my sonne Faireweather" to receive the house and land upon the Hill Formerlye Delivered into his possession. He also gives money to the Churches of Boston and Cambridge and to the New Church. His substantial estate amounts to £1221 17s after inventory.¹⁴

References to some holdings of Robert Turner are mentioned in the appendix to The History and Antiquities of Boston in "The Book of Possessions", p. 798, as follows:

"GRIDLEY, RICHARD -- House and lot, the Street S and W, the Bay E'ly, Jno Harrison N'ly
--Also a lot, Robt. Turner NW, Jno Harrison SW, the Bay SE, the Fort NE."
"HARRISON, JOHN -- House and lot, Richd. Gridley S'ly, the Bay E'ly, Richd. N'ly, Robt. Turner W'ly."

- Marion Douglass Newcomb
#85-33

REFERENCES

- 1, 13, 14. New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 13:11-12
2. Boston Births, Baptisms Marriages and Deaths, 1630-1699, William S. Appleton, Ed. (Baltimore, GPC 1978)
- 3, 7. The Winthrop Fleet of 1630 by Charles Edward Banks (1930; repr. Balto. GPC 1983), 94.
- 4, 8. Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, James Savage (1981 repr. Balto. GPC) 348.
- 5, 9, 10, 11, 12. The History and Antiquities of Boston (Boston, 1856) 268, 302, 336, 341-342, 332.
6. The Pioneers of Massachusetts, Charles Henry Pope (Boston 1900; repr Balto GPC 1986) 465.