

SMITH FARM

by Sally M. Aldrich

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Title to the English land records of Smith Farm begins with **John Dunham** of Plymouth Colony, who was one of the original shareholders of the Dartmouth Propriety. He sold his share in 1662 for 42 pounds to **John Briggs Sr.** (b. 1609 in England, d. 1690 in Portsmouth, RI). John Briggs Sr. came to New England in 1635, and kept a tavern on Aquidneck Island. It appears that he owned a dwelling house in Dartmouth on Tucker Road (near Allen St.), which he sold to Philip Cummings in 1687. [King Philip's War devastated Dartmouth in 1675.]

In 1679 **John Briggs Sr.** gave a 1/2 share of Dartmouth to his eldest son, **John Briggs, Jr.** with various inheritance restrictions (Vol. 10, p. 211). John Briggs, Jr. (1642-1713) lived in Little Compton, RI and in 1689 he sold for 30 pounds half of his half share, or 1/4 share of Dartmouth to **James Akin** of Portsmouth. This represented "undivided land" in the Dartmouth Propriety but did include 9 acres of salt meadow set off and bounded easterly by meadow of Peleg Sherman. The deed was not recorded until 1697 (Vol. 2, p.124).

John Briggs Sr. had a second son, **Thomas Briggs** (b. 1644 in Portsmouth, d. 1720 in Dartmouth). He married Mary Fisher (1650-1717) about 1670. In 1678 John Briggs Sr. gave son Thomas a similar quarter share in Dartmouth, including 35 acres already laid out next to where Thomas' brother John Jr. had land at Nomquid. Thomas and Mary's first child was **Mary Briggs** (b. 1671 Dartmouth, d. 1708 Dartmouth). In 1687 (she married **Capt. John H. Akin** (b. 1663 in Portsmouth, d. 1746 in Dartmouth). According to historian Henry Worth, Akin purchased the land that became this farm in 1692 from his father-in-law, Thomas Briggs.

John Briggs Sr. had a third son, **Job Briggs** (b. 1648 Portsmouth, d. 1733 Little Compton). Job Briggs sold for £830 10^s a 1/4 share in Dartmouth to **John Akin** of Dartmouth (Vol. 2, p.300 and also entered 1718 in Vol. 12, p. 158 & 159). The quarter share was of undivided land except for 19 acres of upland already divided (described in a 1688 deed from John Briggs to Thomas Briggs as "19 acres which was John Dunham's at Namquid Creek" (Vol. 8, P.379).

Surveyor **Benjamin Crane's** field notes are available on the DHAS website, and in Vol. A on pages 101, 102, and 103 are the field notes for his work in May 1712 for the following landholders, who were claiming layouts of "divided land": Benjamin Howland [Round Hill], John Akin [369 Ac. Smith Farm], Deliverance Smith, Judah Smith's homestead, Gershom Smith's homestead, 16 acres added to Jude Smith's homestead, and 61 acres belonging to heirs of Hezekiah Smith. Some of these others about Akin land. Crane's returns of surveys served as deeds from the Dartmouth Proprietors.

It seems clear that, whether by quarter-share purchase or by deed of a specified tract, **John Akin** had a farm just north of Round Hill, which he left to his son **David**, and nearby were farms or salt meadow owned by the families of James Akin, Thomas Briggs, John Briggs, Job Briggs, and various Smiths and Howlands.

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The son of John Akin and Mary (Briggs) Akin, **David A. Akin Sr.** (1689-1779) married Sarah Allen (1692-1780) in Dartmouth in 1711. By 1745 they had moved to "the Oblong" in New York and in 1745 said **David Akin** gave a deed (Vol. 33, p. 305) to **William Anthony [Jr.]** (1709-1787) of Taunton to whom he sold for £600 the following (some paraphrasing):

Two certain tracts or parcels of land which are situate & Lying in a neck of land called Nonquit Neck in ye township of Dartmouth. One of said tracts or parcels of land is my former homestead farm which I moved from when I left y^c town of Dartmouth, which William Ricketson Jr. now liveth on, both y^c upland and salt meadow belonging to it & bounded as followeth: Viz^t. Westerly on a highway, Southerly on land belonging to Barnabas Howland, Easterly on y^c Sea or salt water, Northerly partly by a creek which divides y^c homestead farm from y^c salt meadow which belongs to y^c heirs of Thos. Briggs, dec'd & partly on upland and salt meadow belonging to the heirs of James Akins or to them that they have sold unto this said old homestead farm. Containing (both upland and salt meadow) 204 Acres 151 rods+/. It is all my old homestead farm thus set out and bounded.

The other of said tracts or parcel of land is of one-sixth part of 100+/- acres of upland and salt meadow, bounded: Southerly on aforesaid old homestead farm, Easterly partly on salt meadow belonging to heirs of Thos. Briggs, dec'd and part on upland belonging to said heirs and Northerly on and belonging to Job Briggs and Westerly on ye aforesaid highway, all which said homestead as it is above bounded and described, together with y^c housing building orchards and fencing standing or being on the same and also 1/6 part of said parcels of upland and salt meadow as above described I do sell over, surrender up, and confirm unto him y^c said **William Anthony [Jr.]**, his heirs and assigns forever, etc.

Release of dower by Sarah Akin. Signed by both. Dated 1-3-1744/45. Recorded 4-10-1745.

William Anthony Jr. was born in 1709 in Swansea, the son of William Anthony (1675-1743) and Mary Coggeshall (1675-1739) of Portsmouth, RI. In 1733 he married in Freetown Alice Eddy (1715-1796), daughter of Zachariah Eddy III (1691-1743) and Ruth Thurston. William Jr. (died 1787 in Dartmouth) and Alice Anthony left a son, **William Anthony III** (1736-1810), who in 1757 married Sarah Sherman [Shearman] (1738-1784), daughter of Seth Sherman (1710-1773) and Ruth Lapham of Dartmouth. **William III** was an active Quaker and during the winter months was allowed to hold meetings for Smith Neck families at his house by Dartmouth Monthly Meeting of Friends in the late 1790s (the Smith Neck Quaker Meeting House was built in 1818).

The youngest son of eight children of **William Anthony III** and his wife Sarah was **Humphrey Anthony** (1779-1860), who in 1808 married Phebe Soule (1778-1844). This **Humphrey Anthony** (1779-1860) had an older brother **Gideon**, born in 1759 (20 years earlier), who also had a son named Humphrey (born in 1802), who married Phoebe Thornton Smith (1809-1876), the sister of **Abner G. Smith** mentioned below. Abner⁶ and Phoebe⁶ were children of Increase Smith⁵ (1786-1817), son of George Smith⁴ (1731-1817), son of George Smith³ (1701-1769), son of Deliverance Smith² (1667-1729), son of John Smith¹ (1618-1692) and Ruhamah Kirby.

William Anthony III (1736-1810), under his 1809 Will, split his farm into two parts, giving the east section bordering on Buzzards Bay to his older son **Gideon Anthony** (1759-1816) and the western half bordering on Smith Neck Road to his younger son **Humphrey Anthony** (1779-

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1860). Gideon had the right to pass through Humphrey's farm to reach Smith Neck Road and Humphrey had the right to pass through Gideon's farm to fetch sand and seaweed from the beach for his own use. This way later acquired the name of **Featherbed Lane**.

Two Anthony Farms:

"Benjamin S. Anthony Farm"

Back in 1791 for £60, **Gideon Anthony** (1759-1816) had bought 40 acres in the southeast corner of the Anthony farm from his father, **William Anthony III** (Old Taunton Vol. 20-349, deed recorded 1812). Under his father's Will, in 1810 **Gideon** inherited the east portion of his father's homestead farm. His father's Will also gave to another son, **Daniel Anthony**, a 4-acre marsh lot ("Barekneed Meadows") to the north, which Daniel sold for \$168 to his brother Gideon in 1811 (Old Taunton Vol. 20-350, deed recorded 1812). Gideon's farm passed next to his son, **Benjamin S. Anthony** (1803-1891), who built the farmhouse still standing on Featherbed Lane. In 1882 Benjamin sold his 100-acre farm for \$2,000 to his son, **Job Anthony** (1829-1902), who also paid \$250 to [Benjamin's 2nd wife] Amey Anthony and Job's sister, Cynthia Kirby, for a quitclaim deed (Vol. 101, p.68). In 1883 **Job Anthony** sold the "Benjamin S. Anthony Farm" to **Robert Swain Gifford** (Vol. 108, p. 518) to become the community of **South Nonquitt**.

"The Anthony Farm," later the "Smith Farm"

In 1848 **Humphrey Anthony** (1779-1860) sold the homestead farm where he was living and which he had inherited from his late father, **William Anthony III** (1736-1810), for \$5,000 to **Capt. Abner G. Smith** (Vol. 18, p.108). It was bounded Northerly by Tucker Smith's land, Easterly by Benjamin Anthony's land, Southerly by heirs of Joseph Howland land (Round Hill), Westerly by the highway: 135 Acres, saltmarsh included.

It appears that **Capt. Abner G. Smith** (1813-1874) of Dartmouth was a sea captain. His first wife was **Sarah Soule Anthony** (1815-1855), daughter of the above Humphrey Anthony (1779-1860). They married about 1838. By 1841 Capt. Abner Smith was Master of the *Golenda*. The 1850 census reports the household at the Anthony Farm consisted of Abner Smith (36), wife Sarah S. Smith (34), William P. Smith (10), David P. Smith (8), Phebe A Smith (4) and Humphrey Anthony (72). Five years later the census of 1855 shows the same individuals plus two servants. Abner's wife Sarah died later that year.

The second wife of Capt. Abner G. Smith was **Elizabeth A. Howland** (m. 1857). She went on several whaling voyages with him, one of four years' duration and one of three. In 1957, their daughter, (by then) Sarah A. Howland, wrote Llewellyn Howland, Jr. that she was born at the farmhouse that was still standing in 1957 and was then scheduled to be demolished. The names of Sarah's siblings may have been Phebe (Gifford?) and Edward Smith. Abner Smith's brother-in-law was Nathaniel Howland, Executor of Abner's Estate. [The Dartmouth map of 1871 shows two buildings owned by "Capt. A. Smith" at this location.]

Upon the death of **Abner G. Smith** in Sept. 1874, under Third Clause of his Will, he gave his real estate to his widow, **Elizabeth S.H. Smith**, with the right to sell but if she died or remarried, it would go to *her* children equally. On Oct. 12, 1877 (Vol. 86, p. 453) she sold "the Anthony Farm," so-called, with all the buildings thereon, for \$4,500 to **Lorenzo D. Wood** of New

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Bedford, the 135 acres bounded: Beginning at the northwest corner in the east line of the highway which leads from Padanaram Bridge to Mashaum [*sic*] Point and at the corner of wood land of the late Benj. C. Smith and bounded north by said wood lot, & marsh of E. L. & J. Faunce & Creek, easterly by land of Benj. Anthony, southerly by land of Joseph Howland's heirs, westerly by said highway to northwest corner of orchard wall; thence easterly in line of said wall, 11 R. 10 l. thence northerly 14 R. 5 l. thence westerly 11 R. 10 l. in line of Ephraim Mosher's land, to east line of highway, thence northerly in line of Highway to place of beginning. For further description see plan of said farm. Lorenzo D. Wood (and wife Ady Ann Wood) immediately gave a mortgage of the farm for \$2,500 back to Elizabeth S.H. Smith for part of the purchase money.

Note the small carve-out of Ephraim Mosher's lot of 11 x 14 rods at northwest corner of the parcel. A day later than the Lorenzo Wood sale, on Oct. 13, 1877 **Elizabeth S.H. Smith** (Vol. 87, p.161) sold to **Ephraim Mosher** for \$281, "with building thereon," a one-acre piece at the northwest corner of Abner's orchard. A plan is mentioned. In 1889 (Vol. 136, pp.118-119) **Lorenzo D. Wood** sold a one-acre lot to **Lurana C. Mosher**, wife of Ephraim Mosher, bounded west by the highway, north by Benjamin T. Smith Estate, east and south by land formerly of said Lorenzo, now Ephraim. These ended up in the ownership of **Caroline E. Potter** (d. 1957), who in 1916 bought for \$400 a lot with a dwelling and a shed from the Estate of Ephraim Mosher (her father) (442/367) and the one-acre lot to the north from the Estate of her mother, Charity L. Mosher (442/445).

Lorenzo D. Wood died in 1892, intestate, leaving his widow, Ady A. Wood (died 1893), and two sons, **Charles T. Wood** and **Frank E. Wood**. His inventory included a farm of 140 acres, 2 houses, 2 barns and other small buildings. Probate No. 8441. *It appears that Capt. Abner Smith's widow, Elizabeth S.H. Smith DID remarry - to said Charles T. Wood*, and upon her marriage, she turned over to Abner Smith's Estate the \$4,500 proceeds from the 1877 sale to Lorenzo Wood.

In 1894 (Vol. 165, p.446) **Charles T. Wood**, for \$1 and other valuable considerations, deeded to **Frank E. Wood** an undivided one-half of a five-acre piece, with the building thereon, at the southwest corner of the Abner Smith farm: from the northwest corner of Gideon Howland's land, north along the highway 261 feet to a wall; thence east along with wall in line of other land formerly of their father, **Lorenzo D. Wood**, 655 feet to a wall; thence southerly in the line of the wall 341 feet to the land of said Gideon Howland; and thence westerly in line of said land 676 feet to said highway and place of beginning. Release of dower and homestead by Elizabeth S. H. Wood (wife of Charles T. Wood). Deed dated October 29, 1894. Frank already owned the other half, inherited from his father, Lorenzo (see "Frank E. Wood 5 Acre parcel" below).

A year later, **Charles T. Wood** and **Frank E. Wood** deeded the 130-acre formerly Anthony Farm, exclusive of the five acre carveout retained by Frank E. Wood, for \$1 and other valuable consideration to **Antonio Mare Carvalho** of New Bedford, with reference to the deed from Elizabeth S.H. Smith to Lorenzo D. Wood, (86-452) and Charles and Frank being the heirs of Lorenzo D. Wood. Frank's wife, Jessie S.W. Wood, joins Elizabeth S.H. Wood in release of dower and homestead. Deed dated 11-12-1895. Vol. 174, p. 296. This is immediately followed by a deed dated 11-13-1895 of a half interest in the farm for \$1 from Robert A. Terry, unmarried,

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to Antonio Mare Carvalho and the same deed back from Carvalho to Terry, excepting encumbrance of a mortgage given to James S. Smith and Alvin F. Waite for \$2,700 and joining in this deed is Carvalho's wife, Maria Isabel Carvalho, (making her mark) to release dower and homestead. Dated 11-13-1895 (Vol. 174, p. 300). This arrangement is usually indicative of a "straw" transaction.

Next, in Vol. 199, p. 313 is the 1898 deed from **Antonio M. Carvalho** and Annie R. Carvalho, formerly Maria Isabel [Carvalho], to **James Henry Smith** and **George W. Butts** of Dartmouth for \$1 and other valuable consideration the land and buildings [of the Smith Farm] described as follows:

Beginning at a point in the East line of the highway leading from Padanaram Bridge to Mishaum Point and at the southwest corner of land of Ephraim Mosher; thence Easterly in line of said Mosher land 11 Rods and 10 links; thence Northerly by the East line of said Mosher land to land of Benjamin T. Smith; thence East in line of land of said Smith and marsh of E. L. Faunce and creek to land formerly of Benjamin Anthony; thence Southerly by last named land to land of G.K. Howland; thence West by said Howland's land to a stone wall - said wall being the East bound of land of Frank E. Wood; thence Northerly in the line of said stone wall 341 feet to another stone wall, the north bound of said Wood land; thence Westerly in the line of said stone wall 655 feet to the East line of the Highway; thence Northerly by said Highway to the place of beginning. Containing 130 Acres +/- and being the same as [deed recorded in] Bk. 174, p.297. See also deeds recorded Bk. 174, pp. 299 & 300. This deed dated 11-2-1898, rec. 11-9-1898.

In 1898 **Smith** and **Butts** sold a 50-foot strip of land (3+ total acreage) along the southern boundary of Smith Farm (and north of the Wood 5-acre parcel) to **Caroline E. Bates** and **William R. Pulsifer** by deed recorded in Bk. 199, p. 531. Bates and Pulsifer owned property in South Nonquitt and wanted to be sure they had a right of way to exit to Smith Neck Road without the use of their easement to pass over Featherbed Lane, which ran through the middle of the Smith Farm. This strip later passed from the Pulsifer heirs to Bates (Bk. 258, p. 543) and in 1984 **Elliot Bates McKee** gave this strip (which was never used) to Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust (**DNRT**) Bk. 1911, p. 451. [However, McKee reserved a right of way to pass if the road between Nonquitt and South Nonquitt becomes impassible. This may have since been released.]

A mortgage (maybe for this farm) given by Smith and Butts to Thomas R. Plummer dated 11-8-1898, recorded Bk. 203, p.422, is discharged on 9-25-1899, said discharge recorded in Bk. 205, p. 469.

Immediately following (Bk. 205, pp. 469-470) is the deed from **George W. Butts** to **James Henry Smith** of Dartmouth for \$1 of George's undivided one-half interest in the "land on Smith's Neck" conveyed to them by deed 11-2-1898, recorded Bk. 199, pps. 313 & 314, EXCEPT for what was deeded by them to Bates and Pulsifer. Deed dated 9-25-1899 and signed by George and his wife, Elnora Thompson Butts. As of 1899 and thereafter, this farm was known as the **Smith Farm**, not the Anthony Farm. [James Henry Smith⁸ (1871-1957) is descended from David Walter Smith⁷ (1821-1908), son of George Smith Jr.⁶ (1790-1870), son of George Smith⁵ (1760-1835), son of Deliverance Smith⁴ (1727-1778), a different son of George Smith³ (1701-1769) mentioned above.]

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James Henry Smith used the Smith Farm for dairy farming until the mid-1950s. In August of 1956 he sold the farm to three partners: **Richard S. Aldrich** (no relation to this author), **Llewellyn Howland, Jr.** and **W. Julian Underwood** (Bk. 1192, p.422). They bought 14 additional acres (either north or east). In 1957, they tore down the old farmhouse, which was not in good repair. For some years, Julian's wife, landscape gardener Sue Underwood planted a nursery of shrubs near where the farmhouse stood.

In 1982 the property was split up, with Howland and Underwood donating the northern 83 acres to the **Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust** (DNRT) (Lot "B") and Aldrich passing ownership of the other 54 acres to the **Portuguese Cultural Foundation** of Providence, RI (Lot "A"). Not having use for it, the Portuguese Cultural Foundation negotiated with Robert Desmond, who was then developing neighboring Round Hill, for an option to buy Lot "A" and build an additional 35 houses on the former Smith Farm. This aroused consternation in the community, which led to a fund drive by the DNRT to purchase the 54 acres, which it did in 1991. Founded in 1971, DNRT had received land donations and conservation restrictions in the past, but this was its first purchase. With the McKee donation of the 3+acre strip in 1984, the **Smith Farm** was now 140 acres.

With plenty of frontage on Smith Neck Road, there was at one time a provision by the DNRT to set aside two acres (in conformance with current zoning laws) for a replacement colonial farmhouse to be built on the road. Two lots (Parcels C and D: basically the parking area and Smith house location) came under the ownership and/or control of Cynthia F. Parsons from about 1991 until recently, when she died. DNRT has since worked out an arrangement with a subsequent owner and it seems unlikely a house will be built at that location. Featherbed Lane continues to run through these parcels.

Frank E. Wood 5 Acre parcel (carved out of Smith Farm in 1894)

As mentioned above (*see p. 4 above*), in 1894 (Vol. 165, p.446) **Frank E. Wood**, as one of the sons of the late Lorenzo D. Wood, ended up with a five-acre tract, roughly 300' x 670' with a cottage, built about 1881, at the southwest corner of the former Anthony Farm, bounded on the South by Round Hill, on the west by Smith Neck Road, on the north and east by the rest of the current Smith Farm.

Frank E. Wood died in 1937. His wife, Jessie S.W. Wood predeceased him in 1936. There were three children: Jessie E. Brightman, Ady A. Briggs, and Edith J. Chamillard. Frank's inventory included: "Cottage and 4 acres and 100 rods of land on east side of Smith's Neck . . . valued at \$1,500." The three Wood children sold the parcel to Martin Jackson and Madeline Jackson 6-11-1940 (Bk. 829, p. 39). The Jacksons lived in the cottage from 1940 to 1962, while Martin was foreman of Concordia Company boatyard at South Wharf in Padanaram.

Martin Jackson leased the back (east) portion of the land to Concordia boatyard in 1956 for building Beetle Cats and custom wooden boats. Concordia put up the buildings. Later that section of land was sold to Concordia and others and now is owned by Davis & Tripp.

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Martin and Madeline Jackson sold the Wood cottage to Leo & Alma Telesmanick in 1962 and built a retirement house due north, which they sold to Charles L. Morse in 1974, a property acquired by his daughter, Sally M. Aldrich (*this author*), in 1985. The Jacksons had given the lot behind the Telesmanick house to David Brunette in 1971, where he built a house. Leo Telesmanick built Beetle Cats from the age of 16 until his death, and for about 40 of those years walked a few yards to work at the boatyard behind his house. After Leo's death in 2002, their granddaughter, Sarah Sullivan and her husband Sean bought the original 1881 Wood cottage, and have renovated it more recently.

There are now three houses and a set of boatyard buildings on the 5-acre parcel, with a private lane, called "Jackson Lane" running east from Smith Neck Road down to the boatyard.

Sources: Other than personal knowledge and documents given to Sally M. Aldrich by Llewellyn Howland, Jr., she used Bristol County (S.D.) Registry of Deeds, familysearch.org, and DartmouthHAS.org for this research.