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Mary Bradbury

Mary (née Perkins) Bradbury (baptized September 3, 1615 – December 20, 1700) was tried, convicted and sentenced to hang as a witch in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. However, she managed to evade sentence until the trials had been discredited, and died in 1700, aged 85.^[1]

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Early life

Mary Perkins was daughter of John and Judith (née Gater) Perkins, baptized in 1615, at Warwickshire, England. Her family immigrated to America in 1631, sailing on the "Lyon" from Bristol. In 1636 she married Thomas Bradbury of Salisbury, Massachusetts, considered one of its most distinguished citizens, land agent for his great-uncle Ferdinando Gorges and son of Elizabeth Whitgift, whose uncle John Whitgift was Archbishop of Canterbury under Elizabeth and James I.

Witch trials

In the notorious witch trials of 1692, Mary Bradbury was indicted for (among other charges):

Certaine Detestable arts called Witchcraft & Sorceries Wickedly Mallitiously and feloniously hath used practiced and Exercised At and in the Township of Andivor in the County of Essex aforesaid in upon & against one Timothy Swann of Andivor In the County aforesaid Husbandman – by which said Wicked Acts the said Timothy Swann upon the 26th day of July Aforesaid and divers other days & times both before and after was and is Tortured Afflicted Consumed Pined Wasted and Tormented..

Witnesses testified that she assumed animal forms; her most unusual metamorphosis was said to have been that of a blue boar. Another allegation was that she cast spells upon ships. Over a hundred of her neighbors and townspeople testified on her behalf, but to no avail and she was found guilty of practicing magic and sentenced to be executed. Through the ongoing efforts of her friends, her execution was delayed. After the witch debacle had passed, she was released. By some accounts

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| Mary Bradbury | |
| Born | Mary Perkins <p>bap. September 3, 1615</p> Hillmorton, Warwickshire, England |
| Died | December 20, 1700 (aged 85) <p>Salisbury, Province of Massachusetts Bay</p> |
| Known for | Salem Witch Trials convict; later exonerated while still alive |
| Spouse(s) | Thomas Bradbury |
| Children | 11 |
| Parent(s) | John and Judith (née Gater) Perkins |
| Relatives | Ray Bradbury, Bradbury Robinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson |

she was allowed to escape. Others claim she bribed her jailer. Another account claims that her husband bribed the jailer and took her away to Maine in a horse and cart. They returned to Massachusetts after the witch hysteria had died down. Mary Bradbury died of natural causes in her own bed in 1700, aged 85.

Her family friend, and her son-in-law's father, Major Robert Pike, was in command of all the forces of Norfolk County, Massachusetts Bay Colony and those located in present-day Maine. As early as 1650 he was what would now be called a trial justice and in 1672 an associate judge of the courts of Norfolk Co. In political life a member of the General Court when 32 and of the Governor's Council from 1682–96, when having reached the age of 50 years he retired to the private life of the farm.

Posthumous

In 1711, the governor and council of Massachusetts authorized payment of £578.12s to the claimants representing twenty-three persons condemned at Salem, and the heirs of Mary Bradbury received £20. A petition to reverse the attainder of twenty-two of the thirty-one citizens convicted and condemned as a result of the trials was passed by the Massachusetts General Court in 1711. In 1957, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts reversed the stigma placed on all those not covered by earlier orders.^[2]

Descendants

Mary Perkins Bradbury and Thomas Bradbury had eleven children:

1. Wymond Bradbury (1637–1669), married Sarah Pike, daughter of Major Robert Pike
2. Judith Bradbury (1638–1700), married Caleb Moody
3. Thomas Bradbury (1640–1718)
4. Mary Bradbury (1642–1724), married John Stanyan
5. Jane Bradbury (1645–1729), married Henry True
6. Jacob Bradbury (1647–1669), died in Barbados
7. William Bradbury (1649–1678), married Rebecca Wheelwright
8. Elizabeth Bradbury (1651–unknown), married Rev. John Buss
9. John Bradbury (1654–1678)
10. Anne Bradbury (1656–1659)
11. Jabez Bradbury (1658–1677)

Her descendants include:

- Ray Bradbury (1920–2012), American fantasy, science fiction, horror and mystery fiction writer; a seventh great-grandson.^{[3][4]}
- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), transcendentalist; a fourth great-grandson.^[4]
- Linda Hamilton (born 1956), actress; a ninth great-granddaughter.^[4]
- Christopher Reeve (1952–2004), actor; a ninth great-grandson.^[4]
- Bradbury Robinson (1752–1801), fought for the patriots at the Battle of Concord (1775) and testified that the Redcoats fired first; a great-great-grandson.^{[5][6][7]}
- Bradbury Robinson (1884–1949), threw American football's first legal forward pass; a sixth great-grandson.^[7]
- Alan Shepard (1923–1998), first American astronaut in space; an eighth great-grandson.^[4]
- James Matthew Jones (born 1961), US global health expert; a ninth great-grandson^[8]

Meghan Markle is a descendant of hers as well

One of Mary's brothers, Jacob Perkins, was an ancestor of Humphrey Bogart, Calvin Coolidge and Mary Aspinwall, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's paternal grandmother. Another brother, John Perkins, was an ancestor of Millard Fillmore and Endicott Peabody.

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