

Rebecca Standish, Wife of Calvin Bryant of Sheffield, Massachusetts: A Myles Standish, John Alden, and James Chilton Line

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Rebecca Standish was the daughter of Zachariah Standish Jr. and his second wife Olive Poole, daughter of Isaac Poole Jr. and his wife Sarah Leonard.¹ A sketch of this family appears in *Mayflower Families Through Five Generations*, volume 16, part 5, which states that Rebecca was probably born at Plympton, Massachusetts, about 1774.² The sketch does not cover any marriages or further data on Rebecca. The purpose of this article is to present evidence to show that Rebecca Standish was the wife of Calvin Bryant of Sheffield, Massachusetts.³

Calvin Bryant⁷ was the son of Ezekiel Bryant and Lucy Bearse⁶ (*Austin*⁵, *James*⁴, *Experience*³ *Howland*, *John*², *John*¹).⁴ He was probably born at Plympton 10 May 1774,⁵ and died at Sheffield 5 January 1830. Calvin and his three wives—Rebecca, Mary, and Lucy—are buried at Ward Cemetery, Sheffield.⁶

In 1924, Helen Grannis joined the Daughters of the American Revolution after documenting her descent from Zachariah Standish Jr. through this daughter Rebecca, wife of Calvin Bryant.⁷ Helen also

¹ Zachariah Standish Jr. and Olive Poole were ancestors of James Danforth Quayle, U.S. Vice President under George H. W. Bush, as summarized in Gary Boyd Roberts, *The Mayflower 500: Five Hundred Notable Descendants of the Founding Families on the Mayflower* (Boston: NEHGS, 2020), 69–70.

² MF5G, 16, Alden, part 5 (2016), 175–177.

³ This Calvin Bryant should not be confused with the Bridgewater, Mass., man of the same name whose wife was Rebecca Morse.

⁴ Richard Hall, “Lucy Bearse, Wife of Ezekiel Bryant of Plympton, Massachusetts: A John Howland Line,” *MD* 71 (2023): 52–60; *Lineages of Members of the National Society of Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims, To January 1, 1929* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1988), 108; DAR membership application for Helen Grannis, no. 205215, citing Bibles and records in possession of Mrs. Georgia (Miller) Sharkey. Georgia was a granddaughter of John Milton and Marcia (Bryant) Miller. Helen was a great-granddaughter of John and Marcia, and a niece of Georgia.

⁵ *Lineages of Members of the National Society of Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims*, 108; DAR membership application for Helen Grannis, no. 205215.

⁶ Gravestone images at FindAGrave.com (memorials #71387139 [Calvin, Mary, and Lucy] and #71387201 [Rebecca]).

⁷ DAR membership application for Helen Grannis, no. 205215.

joined the National Society of the Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims using the same lineage.⁸ Among references Helen cited to support her DAR application were “Bibles” and “records in the possession of Mrs. Georgia Miller Sharkey,” her aunt. On both membership applications, Helen gave the marriage date for Calvin and Rebecca as 5 February 1797, and Calvin’s birthdate as 10 May 1774. Since no town or church records have been found for either event, these dates are probably derived from the Bibles or family records that Helen cited. The location of these items and whether they have survived is unknown. Fortunately, other evidence supports Rebecca, wife of Calvin, as the daughter of Zachariah and Olive.

Rebecca Standish is mentioned in her father’s will, dated 7 February 1780.⁹ On 5 March 1781, the guardian of Rebecca, “under the age of 14,” was her mother Olive.¹⁰ On 5 April 1781, Rebecca, her mother Olive, and her surviving siblings received shares in the division of the real estate of her father.¹¹ Olive and her children Peleg, “Rebecker,” and Sarah appear in the list of tax assessments for Plympton in 1783.¹² The gravestone for Rebecca, wife of Calvin Bryant, at Ward Cemetery, Sheffield, Massachusetts, reads:

In Memory of
Mrs. Rebecca wife of
Mr. Calvin Bryant
Who died 18th Dec
1801 aged 27 years
And nine months

This age at death gives Rebecca, wife of Calvin, an estimated birth date of 18 March 1774, which matches the estimated age of Rebecca, daughter of Zachariah Standish Jr. Calvin Bryant and Rebecca Standish were both likely born at Plympton in 1774, as the fathers of both were from Plympton. Rebecca’s father Zachariah Standish Jr. was born at Plympton 30 May 1739 and died there 26 March 1780.¹³ Calvin’s father

⁸ *Lineages of Members of the National Society of Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims*, 108.

⁹ Plymouth County Probate Records, no. 19189, will of Zachariah Standish, dated 7 Feb. 1780.

¹⁰ Plymouth County Probate Records, no. 19161, 5 March 1781, with Olive Standish appointed guardian for Rebecca Standish.

¹¹ Plymouth County Probate Records, no. 19189, 5 April 1781, division of Zachariah Standish’s estate.

¹² *Massachusetts, U.S., Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988*, Ancestry.com, Plympton Tax Valuation Lists, 1783-1809, image 9.

¹³ *MF5G*, 16, Alden, part 5 (2016), 175-177.

Ezekiel Bryant was born at Plympton 16 June 1746 and died in 1774. Ezekiel's probate records list him as "late of Plimton."¹⁴

Naming patterns are also suggestive; a son of Calvin and Rebecca was John Standish Bryant. The will of Calvin Bryant, dated 30 December 1829, gives his "son John Standish Bryant a certain tract of land lying & being situate in the Town of Windham, Portage County & State of Ohio."¹⁵ In a petition and notice of probate, dated 9 February 1830, Calvin's son is identified in a list of heirs as "John S. Bryant living in the State of Ohio."¹⁶ Calvin's will does not mention the age of John Standish Bryant nor which of Calvin's three wives was John's mother. No birth or death records have been found for John Standish Bryant. In order to identify which of Calvin's three wives was John's mother, an estimated age of John Standish Bryant will be established below.

Calvin's first wife, Rebecca, died 18 December 1801. Calvin Bryant's daughter Juda was born 20 August 1804, so Calvin must have married his second wife, Mary _____, before that date.¹⁷ Calvin married his third wife, Lucy Everson, 30 January 1813.¹⁸ Calvin's son John Standish Bryant married, as his first wife, Rebecca Jackson at Litchfield, Connecticut, 29 November 1821.¹⁹ These dates certainly eliminate Calvin's third wife Lucy as John's mother. Assuming John was at least twenty years old when he married Rebecca, he was probably born by about 1801.

John Standish Bryant lived in Portage County, Ohio, at the time of his father's death in 1830.²⁰ The page in the 1830 federal census to which John is indexed is too faint to read.²¹ John and his first wife Rebecca sold land in Portage County to Asahel Foot, 14 October 1837.²² John Standish Bryant purchased land at Marion County, Illinois, 26 November 1838.²³ He appeared in the 1840 federal census in Marion County, aged 40 to 49. His wife Rebecca appears to have

¹⁴ *Vital records of Plympton, Massachusetts, to the year 1850* (Boston: NEHGS, 1923), 45 (birth); Plymouth County Probate Records, no. 3134, for Ezekiel Bryant.

¹⁵ Berkshire County Probate Records, no. 4979, will of Calvin Bryant, dated 30 Dec. 1829, proved 9 Feb. 1830.

¹⁶ Berkshire County Probate Records, no. 4979, 9 Feb. 1830, list of heirs.

¹⁷ Gravestone image at FindAGrave.com, (memorial #85054249, includes Juda's birthdate and place).

¹⁸ Sheffield, Massachusetts, Vital Records, FHL #7897702, image 265.

¹⁹ *Massachusetts, U.S., Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988*, Sheffield, p. 4 (intention); Litchfield, Connecticut, Town Records, FHL #7734299, Image 241 (marriage), transcriptions of this record misread Rebecca as Phebe.

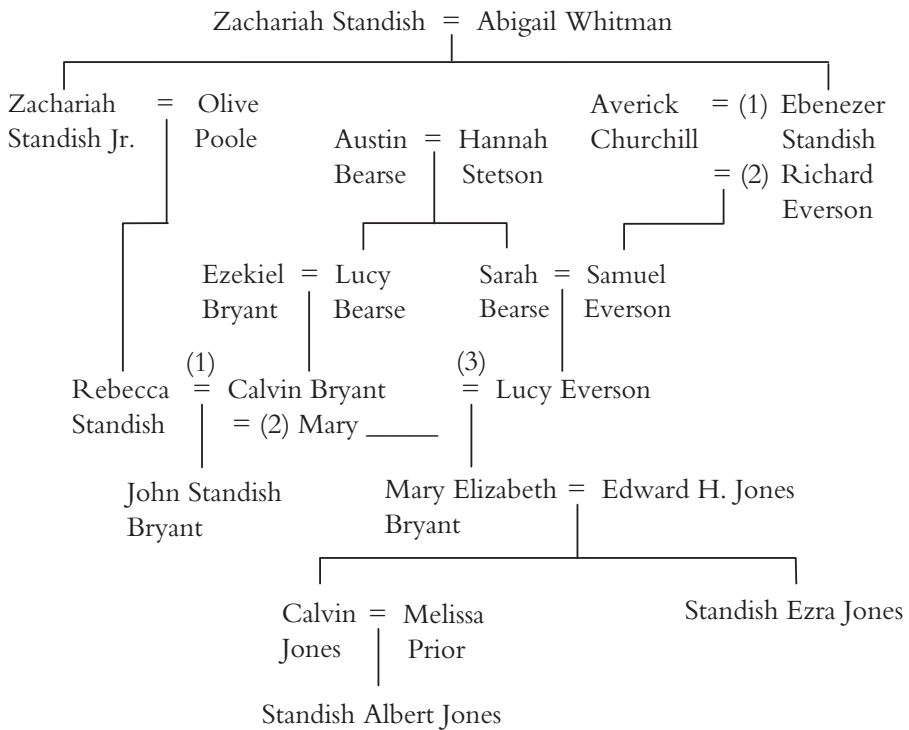
²⁰ Berkshire County Probate Records, no. 4979, 9 Feb. 1830, list of heirs in petition and notice of probate.

²¹ 1830 U.S. Federal Census, Portage Co., Ohio, p. 277, FHL #5156961, Image 557, John S. Briant household.

²² Portage Co., Ohio, Deed Records, 1795-1881, FHL #8302105, Images 122-123, 14 Oct. 1837.

²³ Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records, gloreCORDS.blm.gov, purchase of land by John Standish Bryant at Marion Co., Ill., 26 November 1838.

died before the census, as no females over 20 appear in his household.²⁴ John S. Bryant married, second, Elizabeth (____) Hall in Marion County 6 January 1849.²⁵ John S. Bryant (age 49, b. Massachusetts), his wife Elizabeth, son John (age 14, b. Ohio), and two step-daughters Melissa and Madora Hall appeared in the 1850 federal census at Marion County, Illinois.²⁶ The elder John's age in both the 1840 and 1850 federal censuses also show that he was at least 20 years old at the time of his first marriage. Thus, John Standish Bryant was born no later than 1801, the son of his father Calvin's first wife Rebecca (d. 18 December 1801).



The 1890 obituary for Calvin's daughter Mary Elizabeth Bryant, wife of Edward H. Jones, stated that she was a "descendant of Miles Standish, the renowned New England Indian fighter."²⁷ Mary named a son Standish Ezra Jones. The 1928 obituary for Standish Ezra Jones had the subtitle "Illness of Several Months Fatal to Well Known Citizen –

²⁴ 1840 U.S. Federal Census, Marion Co., Ill., p. 160, Jn. S. Bryant household.

²⁵ Marion County, Illinois Marriages, B:18, FHL #1010515, image 19.

²⁶ 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Marion Co., Ill., family 591, John S. Bryant household.

²⁷ *The Watertown News* (Watertown, Wisc.), 5 Feb. 1890, p. 5.

Was Descendant of Miles Standish.” The obituary later says: “He was a lineal descendant of Captain Miles Standish, of early Puritan fame, and was proud of his ancestral lineage.”²⁸ Another of Mary’s sons Calvin Hughes Jones named a son Standish Albert Jones.²⁹

Unfortunately, the claim that Mary Elizabeth (Bryant) Jones was a descendant of Myles Standish is false. Mary was the daughter of Calvin’s third wife Lucy Everson, daughter of Samuel and Sarah (Bearse) Everson.³⁰ Samuel was the son of Richard and Averick (Churchill) (Standish) Everson. Averick had previously been married to Ebenezer Standish, brother of Zachariah Standish Jr., and uncle of Rebecca Standish, first wife of Calvin Bryant.³¹ Thus, Mary was not descended from Myles Standish, but had two Standish connections by marriage. Since Mary’s mother died when she was less than 2 years old, Mary may have believed she shared the ancestry of her half-brother John Standish Bryant.

Based on evidence presented above, Rebecca Standish, daughter of Zachariah, was almost certainly the wife of Calvin Bryant. The chart above outlines the Standish connection for two of the three wives of Calvin Bryant and the use of the Standish surname among descendants of Calvin Bryant.

Genealogical Summary

REBECCA⁶ STANDISH^{6,9} (*Zachariah⁵ Standish⁵, Zachariah⁴ Standish⁴, Ebenezer³ Standish³, Alexander², Myles¹; Sarah² Alden [wife of Alexander² Standish], John¹; Olive⁸ Poole [wife of Zachariah⁵ Standish], Sarah⁷ Leonard, Joseph⁶, Joseph⁵, John⁴, Sarah³ Chandler, Isabella² Chilton, James¹*), was probably born at Plympton, Massachusetts, 18 March 1774 (calculated from age on gravestone). She died 18 December 1801 and was buried at Ward Cemetery, Sheffield, Massachusetts.³²

Rebecca married probably at either Plympton or Cornwall, Connecticut, 5 February 1797, **CALVIN BRYANT**, son of Ezekiel and Lucy (Bearse) Bryant. Calvin’s sister Zerviah and brother Ezekiel were both married at Cornwall. Calvin was born probably at Plympton 10 May 1774. Calvin died at Sheffield 5 January 1830 and is buried there at Ward Cemetery.³³

²⁸ *Albany Ledger* (Albany, Missouri), 12 Jan. 1928, p. 1.

²⁹ Jefferson County, Wisconsin Probate Records, Edw. H. Jones, 1890, box 194, names children including sons Calvin and Standish Jones; Washington marriage cert., Spokane Co., 1912, no. 13369, names Standish Jones’s parents.

³⁰ Connecticut Probate Records, Litchfield District, 1787, no. 2027, estate of Samuel Everson of Cornwall.

³¹ MF5C, 16, Alden, part 5 (2016), 171–172.

³² MF5C, 16, Alden, part 5 (2016), 177; gravestone image at FindAGrave.com (memorial #71387201).

³³ Hall, “Lucy Bearse, Wife of Ezekiel Bryant of Plympton, Massachusetts: A John Howland Line”; Nathaniel Goodwin, *The Foote Family: or the Descendants of Nathaniel Foote, One of the First Settlers of Wethersfield, Conn.* (Hartford, Conn.: Case, Tiffany and Company,

Calvin married, second, before 20 August 1804 (daughter's birth), **MARY** _____. Mary was born by about 1779 and died 18 July 1812. She was buried at Ward Cemetery and shares a gravestone with her husband Calvin.³⁴ Calvin married, third, at Sheffield 30 January 1813, his cousin **LUCY EVERSON**⁷ (*Sarah Bearse*⁶, *Austin Bearse*⁵, *James Bearse*⁴, *Experience*³ *Howland*, *John*², *John*¹), daughter of Samuel and Sarah (Bearse) Everson. Lucy was a descendant of *Mayflower* passenger John Howland. Lucy was born by about 1784 and died 19 December 1816. She was buried at Ward Cemetery and shares a gravestone with her husband Calvin and his second wife Mary.³⁵

Children of Calvin and Rebecca (Standish)⁶ Bryant:

- i. MARCIA BRYANT⁷, b. Cornwall, Conn., 10 Jan. 1800; m. (1) Sheffield, Mass., 25 June 1822, JOHN MILTON MILLER; m. (2) Branford, Conn., 27 Jan. 1839, HARRISON FOOTE.³⁶
- ii. JOHN STANDISH BRYANT, b. Sheffield about 1801; m. (1) Litchfield, Conn., 29 Nov. 1821 (int. Sheffield 4 Nov. 1821), REBECCA JACKSON; m. (2) Marion Co., Ill., 6 Jan. 1849, ELIZABETH (____) HALL.³⁷

Children of Calvin and Mary (____) Bryant, all b. Sheffield:

- iii. JUDA BRYANT, b. 20 Aug. 1804; m. 13 June 1824, EZRA STARR COMSTOCK.³⁸

1849), 213; Abram W. Foote, *Foote Family* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle, 1907), 1:152; Berkshire County Probate Records, no. 4979, Calvin Bryant's estate; *Berkshire Journal* (Lenox, Mass.), 28 Jan. 1830, p. 3 (obituary); gravestone image at FindAGrave.com, memorial no. 71387139; *Lineages of Members of the National Society of Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims*, 108; DAR membership application for Helen Granniss, no. 205215.

³⁴ Hall, "Lucy Bearse, Wife of Ezekiel Bryant of Plympton, Massachusetts: A John Howland Line"; gravestone images at FindAGrave.com (memorial #71387190 [Mary] and #85054249 [daughter Juda's birth date]); Berkshire Co., Massachusetts, Land Records, FHL #7464300, image 607, sale of two acres at Sheffield in 1806 by Calvin Bryant and his wife Mary to Jeremiah Bushnel.

³⁵ Connecticut Probate Records, Litchfield District, 1787, no. 2027, estate of Samuel Everson of Cornwall; Sheffield, Massachusetts, Vital Records, FHL #7897702, Image 265 (marriage); gravestone image at FindAGrave.com (memorial #71387172).

³⁶ Berkshire County Probate Records, no. 4979, will of Calvin Bryant, dated 30 Dec. 1829, and list of heirs dated 9 Feb. 1830; *Lineages of Members of the National Society of Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims*, 108; DAR membership application for Helen Granniss, no. 205215; 1800 U.S. Federal Census, Cornwall, Litchfield Co., Conn., Calvin Bryant household (birth location); 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Branford, New Haven Co., Conn., Family 235, Mercy Foot household (birth location); *Massachusetts, U.S., Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988*, Sheffield, 13 (first marriage); Branford Vital Records (Barbour) 3:376 (second marriage); Thomas Edmunds "Tom" Price (b. 1954), former U.S. Sec. of Health and Human Services is a great-grandson of John Milton and Marcia (Bryant) Miller.

³⁷ Berkshire County Probate Records, no.; *Massachusetts, U.S., Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988*, Sheffield, p. 4 (intention); Litchfield, Connecticut, Town Records, FHL #7734299, Image 241 (first marriage), transcriptions of this record misread Rebecca as Phebe; Marion County, Illinois Marriages, B:18, FHL #1010515, image 19 (second marriage).

³⁸ Berkshire County Probate Records, no. 4979; Cyrus B. Comstock, *A Comstock Genealogy: Descendants of William Comstock of New London, Conn. Who Died Aft. 1662* (New York: The

- iv. LUCY BRYANT, b. ca. 1808; d. after 9 Feb. 1830.³⁹
- v. DELIA M. BRYANT, b. 1 Feb. 1812; m. in fall of 1829, JOHN M. STOCK-BRIDGE.⁴⁰

Child of Calvin and Lucy (Everson) Bryant:

- vi. MARY ELIZABETH BRYANT, b. Sheffield 6 Jan. 1815; m. EDWARD H. JONES.⁴¹

See p. 60 for author biography.

Knickerbocker Press, 1907), 119, 195 (marriage date); gravestone image at FindAGrave.com (memorial #85054249, inscription with birth date and location).

³⁹ Berkshire County Probate Records, no. 4979. Birth estimates and places among siblings are based on the order in Lucy's father's will, and the 1820 Federal Census counts for females 10 through 15 (one; Lucy), and females under 10 (two; Delia and Mary Elizabeth). Lucy was unmarried as of 30 Dec. 1829 (date of father's will).

⁴⁰ Berkshire County Probate Records, no. 4979; Amasa A. Redfield, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Surrogates' Courts of the State of New York, Vol. 1* (New York: John S. Voorhies, Law Publisher and Bookseller, 1864), 478–479, Decker vs. Morton (birth and marriage dates for Delia).

⁴¹ Berkshire County Probate Records, no. 4979; *The Watertown News* (Watertown, Wisc.), p. 5, obituary for Mary (Mrs. Edward Jones), gives her birth date as 6 Jan. 1816 and her gravestone has 6 Jan. 1815. Her age is given as fifteen in probate records for her father's estate, dated 9 Feb. 1830, which supports 1815 as the correct year.