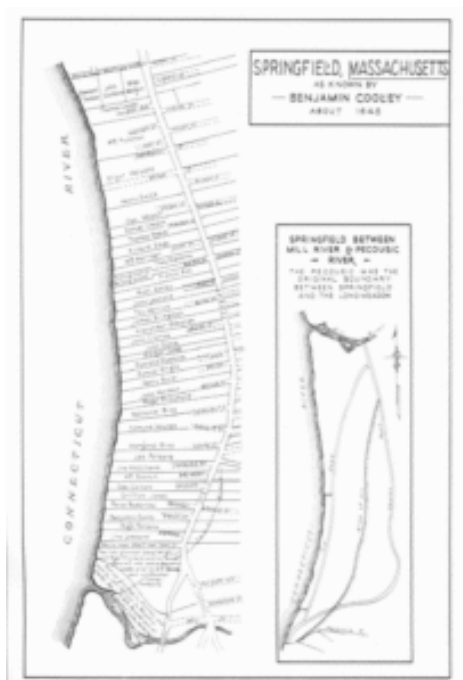


Bodurtha – Ye streete fence to Ye great river



Reice Bodurtha, my 8th paternal great-grandfather, was born in 1621 in Wales and married Blanche Lewis in 1646 in Springfield, Massachusetts. Together, they had four children (John (died at birth), John, Joseph, **Samuel**) during their marriage. In 1645, he was granted a house lot, wet meadow and woodland by the Plantation of Agawam (Springfield Colony). The house lot extended from “Ye streete fence to Ye great river.” The map (at left) illustrates the location of the Bodurtha house lot.

Sadly, Ye great river – the Connecticut River, was the place where Reice and his family suffered a tragedy. The event is described in [Stories Carved in Stone: Agawam, Massachusetts](#) (Rusty Clark, 2005).

River Crossings

One of the turning points in the history of the settlements on the west side of the Connecticut River involves a multiple drowning. In March 1682/83 Reice Bodurtha, an experienced riverman, and his family were crossing the river in a dugout, carrying with them a newborn baby who was to be christened at the meeting house on Court Square in Springfield. Tragically, the canoe overturned in the frigid water and Reice, his son John, his daughter-in law, Lydia, and granddaughter, Mercy, the week-old daughter of his son, Samuel and his wife, Mercy [Dumbleton], were all drowned.

Which, Witch?

In 1652, Hugh Parsons, of Springfield, Massachusetts, was convicted before William Pynchon on formal charges of witchcraft. One of his formal accusers (along with his wife and most of the town) was Blanche Bodurtha, my 8th great-grandmother.

[Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England: A Documentary History 1638](#)

[Before Salem: Witch Hunting in the Connecticut River Valley, 1647–1663](#)

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