

A photograph of a grassy field with trees and an American flag on a tall pole under a blue sky with clouds. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up at the flag and the sky. The foreground is a lush green lawn. In the middle ground, there are several large, leafy trees. A tall, silver flagpole stands in the field, with the American flag flying at the top. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and patriotic.

***JAMES  
OTIS***

***RUTH  
OF BOSTON***

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***RUTH  
OF BOSTON***

**James Otis**

# **Ruth of Boston**

**A Story of the Massachusetts Bay Colony**

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# FOREWORD

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The purpose of this series of stories is to show the children, and even those who have already taken up the study of history, the *home life* of the colonists with whom they meet in their books. To this end every effort has been made to avoid anything savoring of romance, and to deal only with facts, so far as that is possible, while describing the daily life of those people who conquered the wilderness whether for conscience sake or for gain.

That the stories may appeal more directly to the children, they are told from the viewpoint of a child, and purport to have been related by a child. Should any criticism be made regarding the seeming neglect to mention important historical facts, the answer would be that these books are not sent out as histories,—although it is believed that they will awaken a desire to learn more of the building of the nation,—and only such incidents as would be particularly noted by a child are used.

Surely it is entertaining as well as instructive for young people to read of the toil and privations in the homes of those who came into a new world to build up a country for themselves, and such homely facts are not to be found in the real histories of our land.

JAMES OTIS.

# A PROPER BEGINNING

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Truly it seems a great undertaking to journey from London into the land of America, yet I have done so, and because of there being very few girls only twelve years of age who are likely to make such a voyage, it seems to me well if I set down those things which I saw and did that might be interesting to myself in the future, when I shall have grown to be an old lady, if God permits, or to any other who may come upon this diary.

Of course I must first set down who I am, in case strangers should some day chance to find this book, and, growing interested in it—for who can say that I may not be able to tell a story which shall be entertaining, because of there being in it much which the people of England have never seen—give me credit for having written a diary without a proper beginning.

You must know, then, that my name is Ruth. In the year of our Lord, 1630, when, as I have said, I was but twelve years of age, my father joined that company led by Master John Winthrop, whose intent it was to go into America to



spread the gospel, and there also build up a town wherein should live only those who were one with them in the worship of God.

This company was made up of four classes of people. First there were those who paid a sum of money for their passage to America, and, because of having done so, were to be given a certain number of acres of land in the New World.

In the second class were those who, not having enough money to pay the full price for their passage, agreed to perform a sufficient amount of work, after arriving in America, to make up for the same.

In the third class were those called indentured servants, which is much the same as if I said apprentices.

The fourth and last class had in it those people who were to work for wages, at whatsoever trade or calling they were best fitted.

It needs not that I should say more by way of a beginning, for surely all the people in England, if they do not know it now, will soon come to understand why we, together with those who have gone before us, and the companies that are to come after, have journeyed into America.

## **ON THE BROAD OCEAN**

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It was decided that my parents, and, of course, myself, should sail in the same ship with Master Winthrop, and the name of that vessel was the *Arabella*, she having been so called in honor of Lady Arabella Johnson, who journeyed with us.

My mother was sadly grieved because of Mistress Winthrop's deciding not to go on the voyage with her husband, but to join him in the New World later, and this decision was a disappointment to very many of the company. I am in doubt as to whether the Lady Arabella would have gone with us on this ship, had she not believed Mistress Winthrop also was to go.

It was on the twenty-second day of March, in that year which I have previously set down, that, having already journeyed from London to Southampton, we went aboard the *Arabella*, counting that the voyage would be begun without delay, and yet, because of unfriendly winds and cruel storms, our ship, with three others of the company, lay at anchor until the eighth day of April.

Then it was, after the captain of the ship had shot off three guns as a farewell, that we sailed out on the broad ocean, where we were tossed by the waves and buffeted by the winds for nine long, dreary weeks.



Had it not been for Master Winthrop's discourses day after day, we should have been more gloomy than we were; but with such a devout man to remind us of the mercy and goodness of God, it would have been little short of a sin had we repined because of not being carried more speedily to that land where was to be our home.

There was one day during the voyage, when it seemed verily as if the Lord was not minded we should journey away from England.

We had not been out from the port many days, when on a certain morning eight ships were seen behind us, coming up as if counting to learn what we were like; and then it was that all the men of the company believed these were Spanish vessels bent on taking us prisoners, for, as you know, at that time England was at war with Spain.

It was most fearsome to all the children, but very much so to Susan, a girl very nearly my own age, with whom I made friends after coming aboard, and myself.

## **MAKING READY FOR BATTLE**

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When Susan and I saw the men taking down the hammocks from that portion of the vessel which was called the gun deck, loading the cannon, and bringing out the powder-chests, truly were we alarmed.



Standing clasped in each other's arms, unheeded by our elders, all of whom were in a painful state of anxiety or fear, we watched intently all that forenoon the ships which we believed belonged to the enemy.

Then I heard one of the sailors say that the Spaniards were surely gaining on us, and the captain of the vessel, as well as Master Winthrop and my father, must have believed it true, for all preparations were made for a battle.

The small cabins, leading from the great one, were torn down that cannon might be used without hindrance, and the bedding, and all things that were likely to take fire, were thrown overboard. The boats were launched into the sea and towed alongside the ship so that when the worst came we might fly in them, and then that which was most fearsome of all, the women and children were sent down into the very middle of the vessel, where they might not be in danger when the Spaniards began to send iron balls among us, as it seemed certain they soon would.

While we were huddled together in the darkness, many weeping, some moaning, and a few women, among whom was my mother, silent in the agony of grief, Master Winthrop came down to pray with us, greatly to our comforting, after which, so I have been told since, he went up among the men where he performed the same office.

It was not until an hour after noon that our people discovered that those ships which we believed to be Spanish, were English vessels, from which we had nothing to fear.

Then word was sent down to us in that dark place that we might come up above, and once in the sunlight again, we found all the passengers rejoicing and making merry over the fears which had so lately beset them.

How bright the sun looked to Susan and me as we stood near the rail of our ship, gazing at the vessels which only a few hours before were a fearsome sight, but now seemed so friendly! It was as if we had been very near to death, and were suddenly come into a place of safety.

## **THE REST OF THE VOYAGE**

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From that time until St. George's Day, which you all know is the twenty-third of April, nothing happened deserving of being set down here. Then it was, however, that during the forenoon the captain moved our sails so that the ship would remain idle upon the waters, which is what sailors call "heaving to," and the captains of the other vessels, together with Master Pynchon and many more gentlemen, came on board for a feast.

Lady Arabella and the gentlewomen of our company had dinner in the great cabin, while the gentlemen partook of their good cheer in the roundhouse, as the sailors call it, which is a sort of cabin on the hindermost part of the quarter-deck.

By four o'clock in the afternoon the feast was at an end; the gentlemen who had come to visit us went on board their own ships, and again were the vessels headed for that country of America in which we counted to spend the remainder of our lives.

Susan and I were much together during this voyage, for neither of us made very friendly with the other children, and I do not remember that anything of import happened until we were come, so the captain said, near to the New World.

It is not needed I should set down that again and again were there furious storms, when it seemed certain our ship would be sunk, for there was so much of such disagreeable weather during the nine weeks of voyaging, that if I were to make a record of each unpleasant day, this diary would be filled with little else.



I have set down, however, that on the seventh day of June, which was Monday, we had come, so Master Winthrop said, off "the Banks," where was good fishing to be found; but why this particular spot on the ocean should be called the Banks, neither Susan nor I could understand. The waves were much like those we had seen from day to day; but yet, in some way, the captain knew that we had come to the place where it would be possible to take fish in great numbers, and so we did.

It is not seemly a young girl should set down the fact, with much of satisfaction, that she enjoyed unduly the food before her, and yet I must confess that those fish tasted most delicious after we had been feeding upon pickled pork, or pickled beef, with never anything fresh to take from one's mouth the flavor of salt.

It was a feast, as Susan and I looked at the matter, far exceeding that which we had on St. George's Day, and