



The Rainborowes: One Family's Quest to Build a New England

Adrian Tinniswood

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The period between 1630 and 1660 was one of the most tumultuous in Western history. These three decades witnessed the birth of English America and, in the mother country, a vicious civil war that rent the very fabric of English social, political, and religious life. It was an era of death and new beginnings, and at its heart was one remarkable family: the Rainborowes.

In *The Rainborowes*, acclaimed historian Adrian Tinniswood tells the story of this all-but-forgotten clan for the very first time, showing how the family bridged two worlds as they struggled to build a godly community for themselves and their kin. The Rainborowes' patriarch, William, was a shipmaster and merchant whose taste for adventure and profit drew him into the expanding transatlantic traffic between England and its colonies in the New World. Eventually two of his daughters settled in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, marrying into the upper echelons of New England society. Back in England, meanwhile, William Rainborowe's sons threw themselves behind the English parliament in its rebellion against King Charles I. So, too, did many New World settlers, who returned to England to fight for the parliamentary cause. When the monarchy was restored in 1660, many of these revolutionaries quit their homeland for New England, where their dreams of liberty and equality were much closer to being realized.

Following the Rainborowes from hectic London shipyards to remote Aegean islands, from the muddy streets of Boston to the battles of the English Civil War, Tinniswood reveals the indelible marks they left on America and England—and the profound and irrevocable changes these thirty years had on the family and their fellow Englishmen in Europe and America. A feat of historical reporting, *The Rainborowes* spans oceans and generations to show how the American identity was forged in the crucible of England's bloody civil war.

The Rainborowes: One Family's Quest to Build a New England Details

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From Reader Review The Rainborowes: One Family's Quest to Build a New England for online ebook

Eliz says

I really enjoyed this book. if you are interested in the Great Migration or the English Civil War, it is a very good view of both through a small group of people, giving us a different view than most histories. The author explains what records he uses and what they explain and account, which I found good, letting you see where he is drawing his conclusions from. People traveled back and forth between the colonies and England, and this book shows how common that interaction really was. The beginning of the book is a bit more of a fact list, but later as more material exists on the family this improves.

Carl says

An excellent family history set during a turbulent time in both England's and the Colonies' history. Tinniswood does a magnificent job of tying the family to the events around them and shows how truly connected both "Englands" were. Most histories seem to tow the line towards either geographical area being separate from each others political influence. The Rainborowes removes such nonsense and shows how inextricably linked they were. A lovely overview of one family's influence on both "Englands" and how much of history is written or re-written by the victors.

!Tæmbu?u says

KOBOBOOKS

Reviewed by The Guardian (8 Sep 2013)

Cara says

(note: won a free copy from Goodreads)

I expected this book to be interesting, but I didn't expect it to be exciting (it's a history book after all). But it actually was - I got through most of it in a single sitting. Pirates, wars, Puritans - all sorts of fun stuff. *The Rainborowes* tells the story of a 17th century English mariner family, their settlement in New England, their role in the English Civil War, their fights against North African pirates.

Beverly says

Interesting perspective on early settlement in Charlestown and area. Civil War a little confusing to me. Not enough background.

PJ Ebbrell says

This definitely worth a read. The author covers a lot of the Rainsborrowe family history, in much great details than I had know. I liked the parts about the kinsmen who came back and served in the New Model Army and the reasons for it. I learnt more about Thomas' Irish adventures, which had proved challenging to find. Also Judith Rainsborrowe and her life in Massachusetts with her family. Maybe not enough about Richard Rainsborrowe, the son, later history, who some claim became one of the Muggletonian sect, where some strange hybrids of English protestant resulted. It is a pity that the author lost track of the family and they disappear into the opening up of the new continent. Whether this was intention and to hide from Royalist agents, we will never know.

This was more coherent a read than Tinniswood Barbary Pirates, but only cover part of the period in this book.

Lori says

I received this book free in a Goodreads First Read Giveaway for my honest review. Here it is:

I tried many times over many, many months to get through this book and could not. I LOVE history books but this one misses the spark of the great historical novels. It's very dry and even though I am especially interested in how America was settled, I couldn't get past page 60. For the record, I am an American, originally from New Jersey, one of the original 13 colonies. I was very disappointed by this book.

Bettie? says

to look into/hunt down

Arleen says

Note: A free book from Goodreads.

The Rainborowes is a serious, compelling narrative on a period of history that is little known to most readers. The name Rainborowes meant something in marine society during the period between 1630 and 1660. The research for this book seems impeccable. It's a tale of the family and their far reaching influence from William Rainborrow as a rich marine officer, his rise to Parliament, and then focuses on his descendants. Details emerge of "New England" life and the reign of Charles I of England and his demands. A vivid picture is described in words for the reader to image what it was like living in this time period.

One tends to think once people migrated to the New World, they stayed and developed a life for themselves and their family. Tunniswood showed clearly this was not true. People traveled back and forth between the colonies and England for many reasons.

Ruth Feathers says

You couldn't make this stuff up. Transatlantic adventures, murder and mayhem. All true.

Peter Dunn says

I really couldn't resist buying a biography of my favourite civil wars figure Thomas Rainsborough or Rainborowe. Of course, as the cover makes clear, Thomas Rainsborough is not the sole focus of the text and in fact much whole the Rainborowe / Rainsborough clan in the 17th century are covered. I therefore fully expected to simply skim through the rest of the book until it reached Thomas. However I found that the other lives, particularly Thomas' pirate hunting father William Rainborowe, were equally interesting in the details of their lives and have their stories extremely well told in this very engaging book.

Alan says

Not a detailed biography nor full history, this was nonetheless an interesting snapshot of the time period. The author frames the story around the eponymous family. They play a relatively prominent role in some of the key developments in the English speaking world in the first half of the 17th century from the settlement of Boston to the English Civil War. It seems the family had little impact on history post-Civil War on either side of the Atlantic and it could be argued that while they took part in key moments, they rarely played the pivotal role in any, they do form a good anchor for the story.

Nicole (Reading Books With Coffee) says

I have really mixed feelings about The Rainborowes. It is interesting to see this family in the context of a very tumultuous time, and on two different continents. But I also felt like the book had a jumble of names and dates and events that was hard for me to keep track of. It just seems like the Rainborowes had a lot going on and were really involved in important events, and I wish I had taken notes so I could keep better track of everything. I think me not keeping up with everything was pretty much my fault, since I didn't pay as much attention as I could have. I did find myself going back a few pages a few times, because I felt like I missed something important.

I think another reason why I have mixed feelings is that I wasn't expecting a book about the family and how they fit in to what was going on around them. While it is the best way to talk about this very large family, I think I was expecting more about them. I liked some of the details about life in New England, especially some of the details about the churches they attended, but there were times when the book got bogged down in the details.

I think the thing I liked the most about The Rainborowes is that I was reminded of how there are people and families throughout history that played a really important part in things and yet they don't get the recognition they deserve.

The Rainborowes also felt a little over the place, and just when I got used to reading about one side of the Atlantic, the book would switch locations, and we'd be on the other side of the Atlantic. It did seem pretty linear, but there was something non-linear about it at the same time.

Final Thoughts: I'm not sure what else to say about *The Rainborowes*. It is an interesting look at a family I had never heard of before and how instrumental they were on both sides of the Atlantic, but the book got weighed down in the details at times, and I had trouble keeping track of the many people in the book. While interesting, I don't think it's the book for me. *The Rainborowes* gets 2 stars.

Jo-Ann Murphy says

I was lucky enough to win this book in the Goodreads giveaway.

Fascinating book about a fascinating family that was involved in both the settling of the US and major event in England and the United Kingdom. They held major political and military roles and then just disappear from history.

I never heard of the Rainborowes, though I had heard of Gov. Winthrop of MA and many of the other names mentioned in the colonies. The writing became a bit dry and a little confusing at times because of the complex familial connections but the overall story kept my interest. I learned many things about the colonies and English history I never knew.

Dana says

The back and forth of the transatlantic pilgrims of these times were incredible. But there are two things that threw a wrench in my reading! First being the monotony of the name dropping, and secondly, all the Old England towns, villages, and cities.. just way too much to take in. I was expecting a more detailed description of the family Rainborowe alone and their contributions toward the building of NEW ENGLAND, not all the other people and places in OLD ENGLAND. Their names were put forth only a handful of times.

What I did enjoy were the descriptions of the religious depictions, some of which I'd not known before. Such as the ways a person was "admitted" into a congregation. As if it were a test of your worth.

Another being the childbirth situations, and the mortality rates of those times. I found some portrayals put forth very fascinating.

I left the book though not knowing truly who the Rainborowes were myself. Thomas and William's lives were somewhat more described and Thomas' death was a moment of interest in the story. But that was clearly all I could glean from the book.
