

Sheltering in Place

The Winthrop Society

Fleet News

Descendants of the Great Migration 1630-40

Volume 17, Number 2 - Late Fall 2020

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Massachusetts Bay
Company Seal

"Whereas the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Company and their elected Governor, John Winthrop, emigrated to New England in 1630 to found a "City on a Hill," the Winthrop Society, Descendants of the Great Migration, is dedicated to honoring and preserving their memory, philosophy, and tradition, and transmitting their example of courage, faith, civic duty, and integrity."

Excerpt from the Winthrop Society Charter

SOCIETY PRESIDENT - Anne Caussin Heninger

Greetings Esteemed Members!

I hope that by now everyone has received our inaugural Membership Directory for 2020–2022. Its preparation involved countless man-hours of work on the part of a number of volunteers. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the Board members who worked on it and to Jared Nathan, our intrepid Chairman. Hopefully, we've now established a tradition which future administrations will perpetuate.

With that in mind, our Chairman is starting to add Supplemental information to the master copy to enhance any subsequent editions. Please keep us informed of any changes in your contact information so that we can ensure you receive future publications.

One of the constant goals of our Society has been to grow our membership, and I am very pleased to welcome a bevy of new members. Thank you Registrar Marie Seelye for the countless hours you have spent reviewing and verifying new and supplemental applications. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

We have recently established a Facebook group for the Winthrop Society. It is private to us and accessible at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/402772960883471/>

While Fleet News and Society emails and mailings will continue to be the primary means by which we disseminate information, the Facebook page is envisioned as a venue where members can share photographs of Winthrop events and post informa-

tion on additional events and publications relating to the Winthrop Society and its purpose.

At present we are making tentative plans for Lineage Week 2021 and our Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Of course, any in-person meeting will depend on the situation, vis-à-vis COVID-19, and follow all appropriate guidance and directives issued by the District of Columbia.

The health and safety of members is our greatest priority. If it seems we will be unable to gather in April, we will pursue options for an on-line meeting at approximately the same time. On behalf of the Board, I extend our best wishes for a healthy and happy Holiday season to you and yours.

Anne



*Come, Ye Thankful People, Come ...
Raise the song of harvest home! All is safely
gathered in ... Ere the winter storms begin ...
From hymn written by Henry Alford, London, 1844*

Whaling Tradition



Whaler off the Vineyard--Outward Bound, 1859

The Early Years

Whales have been good to New England -- so good that, for a time from the early 18th to the mid-19th century, whale hunting and processing just about built the economic infrastructures of New Bedford, Cape Cod, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard. During those halcyon years, sea captains' homes were the most lavish in town, and widow's walks on rooftops became all the rage as families waited for their men to return from as long as three years at sea.

During the early 1700s, Martha's Vineyard colonists and the Native American Wampanoags alike profited from the abundance of whales offshore. Whales were so thick in the immediate area that all that was necessary to harvest them was a small boat, a harpoon, and several strong-armed men. The Wampanoags, in particular, used all parts of the whale, including its meat, oil, and bones. So important were whales to Wampanoag culture that the tribe often stipulated rights to offshore whaling and beached whales whenever they sold land to the whites. In fact, the Wampanoags, as indigenous people, to this day retain the right to claim any beached whales.

The settlers, on the other hand, were most interested in whale oil that provided fuel (often for lighthouses); spermaceti, which was used to make candles; ambergris, added to perfumes; and whale bones, which formed the ivory background for jewelry and other items.

Large Scale Expansion

By the 1760s, the whale population in the island waters had been depleted to the extent that small boats and crews could no longer sail far enough to capture them. This ushered in the era of large seagoing

schooners and ships that sought whales as far away as the Pacific. Edgartown, with its natural and protected deep harbor, and Vineyard Haven became important whaling ports, though they never handled the volume of ships that docked in Nantucket and New Bedford. Edgartown was the whaling capital of the island. Evidence of the town's wealth is seen in the stately sea captains' mansions along North and South Water streets, facing the harbor, and in Main Street's Old Whaling Church, a magnificent Greek Revival structure with immense columns. Edgartown's 1840 Fisher House, open for tours, was the home of Dr. Daniel Fisher, who built factories in town to process the whales and who was at one time the primary supplier of whale oil throughout the region. Herman Melville, one of the whaling industry's greatest chroniclers, shipped into Edgartown on a whaler named the Acushnet. In his seminal 1851 novel, *Moby-Dick; Or The White Whale*, an Aquinnah Wampanoag character named Tashtego is considered to be the most skillful of all harpooners.

The End of an Era

American commercial whaling reached its peak in 1846, when 740 vessels and some 70,000 people were engaged in the industry. By the end of the 19th century, the great whaling days were over. Cheaper and easier-to-gather fuel in the form of kerosene was discovered in the process of refining crude oil, and the whale population had been decimated. Attacks by Confederate ships during the American Civil War hindered the great whaling fleets, and the industry dwindled with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Martha's Vineyard became known more as a vacation retreat than a whaling center, and the great captains' manses, once passed along through generations of family, ended up in the hands of investors and outsiders, many destined to become the B&Bs and inns so popular on the island today.

New York Times archived article. - Editor

Painting by William Bradford shown above was acquired by the Smithsonian Museum in 1978.

Bradford is best known for his paintings of the Arctic, but his early work focused on the ships of New England. He grew up near New Bedford, Massachusetts, which was home to a successful whaling industry. In this image, he painted a large whaling ship with a smaller schooner sailing in the foreground, and the cliffs of Gay Head, Martha's Vineyard, in the background. This area was the standard route for whalers entering and leaving the port of New Bedford.

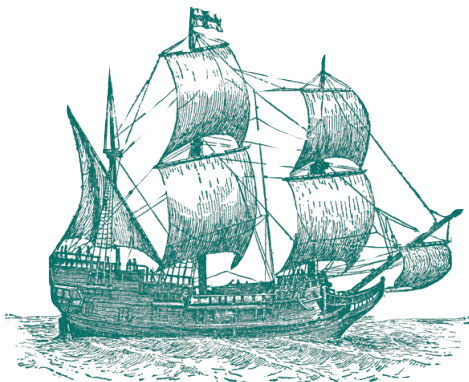
Wikipedia Commons



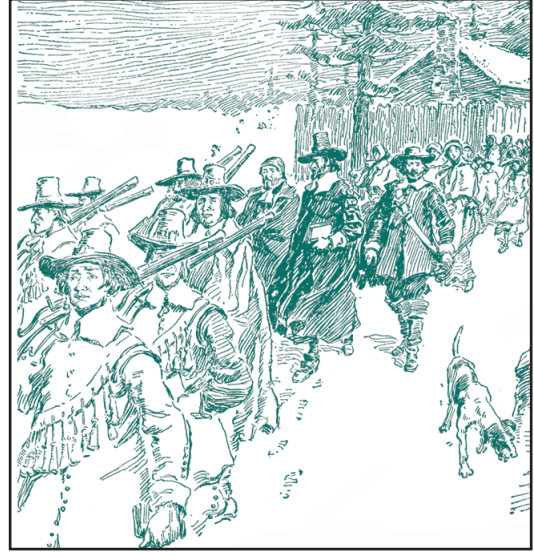
Every year when Americans celebrate the annual Thanksgiving holiday, debate bubbles up about whether the Fall 1621 gathering of Pilgrims and Natives was indeed America's first thanksgiving, and what type of an event it was. Many are quick to point out earlier occasions of thanksgivings in Florida, Texas, and Virginia. Some who address the Plymouth event deny that there was a religious dimension, pointing to its similarity to Native harvest rituals, or likening it to an English harvest festival. Such discussions will undoubtedly receive heightened discussion this year, as we commemorate the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower, and even more so next year, which will mark the four hundredth of the actual 1621 gathering.

Putting aside the question of similar events in other colonies, how does the Plymouth event fit into the history of New England days of thanksgiving? Let's begin by pointing out that the first American Thanksgiving of the Pilgrims occurred not in the Fall of 1621 but in November of 1620. The 102 colonists crowded onto the Mayflower had just endured a physically and emotionally challenging voyage of sixty-six days. Adding to their concern was their knowledge of the disastrous voyage of another separatist group led by Francis Blackwell of the Ancient Church of Amsterdam. Setting forth for Virginia in 1618, "packed together as herrings," they had experienced "the flux [dysentery] and also want of fresh water," with the result that 130 of them died before reaching America

On their own voyage, the Mayflower experienced "cross winds, and met with fierce storms." The colonist William Bradford remembered that during some of these "the winds were so fierce and the seas so high as they could not proceed further towards their destination," sails being lowered and the ship pushed back some ways towards England. During a particularly bad storm, one of the main beams midship cracked. The ship could have broken up and sunk, but a house jack the Pilgrims had brought with them was able to push the beam back into place and secure it.



The Pilgrims First Thanksgiving



After sixty-six days crossing the "vast and furious ocean," the colonists disembarked and "fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven who had brought them over the vast & furious ocean and delivered them from all the perils & miseries thereof." This was their first American thanksgiving. It would not be their last. Indeed, little more than a month later, on December 20, 1620, having settled upon the site of the former Native village of Pawtuxet as their new home, one of the colonists recorded in his Bible that "We meet for prayer and thanksgiving."

In the early modern world of the Pilgrims, most men and women believed that there was no hard and fast division between their earthly experiences and the spiritual cosmos. In their everyday lives they might be touched by the divine – or potentially by the devil. They believed that their experiences were at least in part shaped by supernatural interventions. If they suffered misfortune individually or as a society it was likely that they were being punished by God (directly, or by his allowing the devil to work against them) for their failures to live godly lives. If they experienced good fortune they attributed it to God rewarding them.

For centuries it had been common for Christians to do penance for sins and beg God's forgiveness. In England puritans would have joined in English prayers to relieve the sufferings of Plague as well as the prayers of thanks offered to God for the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The 1571 Book of Homilies issued by the Church of England recommended the observance of days of fast and prayer. Such fasting and raising prayers for God's blessings, and prayers of thanksgiving when prayers were answered

by Francis J. Bremer PhD

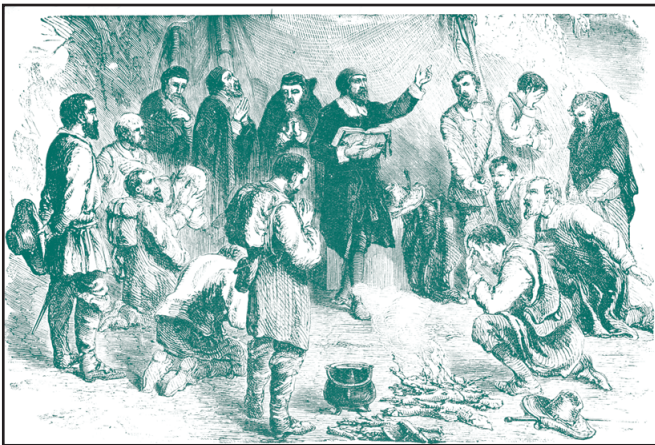


became a particularly important aspect of how puritans related to their world. Accustomed to the practice in England, they brought it with them to the colonies.

Over the course of the seventeenth century there were literally hundreds of fast and thanksgiving days, some set by towns or individual congregations, and many set by colonial authorities. What is common about all of these days is that they were not, unlike our November celebration, regular occurrences. Indeed, the puritans never did and never would have appointed an annual thanksgiving because they would not have assumed that they could count on regularly receiving the blessings of God. The gifts of God were to be earned, so specific blessings demanded specific days for giving thanks

A good example of a day of thanksgiving in the Plymouth colony was recorded by John Lothrop, the minister of the town of Scituate on December 26, 1636. On a very cold day the congregation gathered in their meetinghouse around 8:30 in the morning. They joined in a short prayer, sang a psalm, listened to a longer prayer, followed by another psalm. They then listened to the Reverend Lothrop preach. After a closing prayer and psalm they dispersed around noon “for making merry,” the “poorer sort being invited to the richer” for a thanksgiving day meal.

What does this tell us about the Fall 1621 “First Thanksgiving.” It is true that we don’t have any detailed account of the event. Governor William Bradford, the colony governor, simply recorded a successful harvest accompanied by the catching of cod, bass and other fish, and the hunting of waterfowl, wild turkeys (yes, they had turkey), and deer. One of the other colonists, Edward Winslow, offered a more substantial account: after the success of the harvest, the governor sent out hunters “so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors.”



“and he that soweth, and he that reapeth,
might rejoice together” John 4:36

They “killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week.” It is Winslow who also tells us of the arrival of Wampanoag visitors, who outnumbered the colonists two to one, and who themselves supplied venison for the feast.

Everything we know about these puritans and their beliefs make it reasonable to believe that before the first feasting began there was a session of prayer, preaching, and singing psalms. It was something that was part of who they were. And while neither of the men who recorded the event called it by the name of a thanksgiving, Winslow’s account incorporated biblical phrases from John 4:36 (“and he that soweth, and he that reapeth, might rejoice together” and Psalm 33 (where the righteous are called to bless God for the gifts he gave them.)). We have more, again indirect, evidence from a few years later. Faced with a severe drought in May of 1623, Governor Bradford appointed “a special day of humiliation to seek the Lord by humble and fervent prayer.” When that was followed by “seasonable showers” that resulted in a “fruitful and liberal harvest,” they “set aside a day of thanksgiving.”

Something should be said about one of the many days of thanksgiving that followed, because it has been the subject of much misrepresentation. In 1636 New Englanders were threatened by two separate challenges. The religious foundations of the region were challenged by divisions that had arisen in the Boston church, centered on the views of Anne Hutchinson and her followers, and dividing John Cotton from other ministers. And the very existence of the English settlements was threatened by war with the Pequot tribe. The colonists also were keeping an eye on the course of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) in Germany, which many perceived as the climactic struggle between Catholicism and the Protestant cause.

By the Fall of 1637 the storms that had threatened the region had receded and the General Court of Massachusetts decreed a day of thanksgiving should be observed to “thank God for his mercies in subduing the Pequots, bringing the soldiers in safety [home], the success of the conference [dealing with the religious controversy], and good news from Germany.” The Scituate church, and presumably others in Plymouth colony, observed the day of thanksgiving on October 17, the church records stipulating it was for “the victory over the Pequots” and “reconciliation between Mr. Cotton and the other ministers.”

To be continued on Page 8





● REGISTRAR - Marie Seelye

NEW MEMBERS

MAY thru OCTOBER 2020

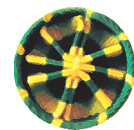
Susan Gould, Tennessee Ridge, TN
 Dr. James Berry, Olathe, KS
 Dr. David, Berry, Olathe, KS
 Thomas Alton, Philadelphia, PA
 Jean Walker, Sarasota, FL
 Barbara Stern, Lyme, NH
 Karen Wolcott, Concord, NC
 Martin Conroy, West Dover, VT
 Linda Easterwood, Rome, GA
 Mark Easterwood, Rome, GA
 Marilyn Pratt-Holmquist, Keene NH
 Kenneth Harrington, Louisville, TN
 Adam Boyce, Reading, VT
 Caroline Heintzelman, Chicago, IL
 Marianne Grant, Atkinson, NC
 Erica Reid, Blacksburg, VA
 Joan Nathan, Medford, NY
 Sue Arentsen, North Port, FL
 Ronn Mercer, Duvall, WA
 Joel Hustis, Gainesville, GA
 John Lansing, Plainfield, IL
 Matthew Dupee, Aiken, SC
 Frederick Cron, Centennial, CO
 Robert Sholly, Cadiz, KY
 Christopher Bowen, Herndon, VA
 Larry Potter, Johnstown, OH
 James Griffith, Woodlands, TX
 Ben Stone, Windsor, CA

Thomas Hooker, 1633, Cambridge
 Simon Bradstreet, 1630, Boston
 Simon Bradstreet, 1630, Boston
 George Stocking, 1634, Cambridge
 Robert Walker, 1632, Boston
 John Winthrop, 1630, Boston
 William Gager, 1630, Charlestown
 William Chase, 1630, Roxbury
 Roger Conant, 1626, Salem
 Jared Spencer, 1634, Cambridge
 John Winthrop, 1630, Boston
 Henry Wolcott, 1630, Dorchester
 Thomas Dudley, 1630, Charlestown
 John Hill, 1633, Dorchester
 John Gage, 1630, Boston
 John Mills, 1630, Boston
 Stephen Batchiler, 1632, Lynn
 Walter Haynes, 1638, Sudbury
 John Jackson, 1635, Ipswich
 Robert Huestis, 1635, Boston
 Robert Feake, 1630, Watertown
 John Bailey, 1635, Salisbury
 William Ballard, 1635, Lynn
 John Cogswell, 1635, Ipswich
 Isaac Stearns, 1630, Watertown
 Robert Potter, 1634, Roxbury
 Ezekiel Richardson, 1630, Charlestown
 Gregory Stone, 1635, Watertown



Medallion

Visit our website to order our Society's Medallion or its Rosette at www.winthropsociety.com



Rosette

Contact Anne Henninger to order our Cockade, a new and limited edition item.

president@winthropsociety.com



Cockade

Supplemental Ancestry

Amy Hall, Framingham, MA:

Wm Dyer, 1635, Boston; John firmin, 1635, Watertown
 Wm Buckland, 1634, Hingham; Anthony Eames, 1634, Charlestown
 Wm Hutchinson, 1634, Boston; Edmund Rice, 1639, Sudbury
 William Buttrick, 1635, Concord; Richard Ibrook, 1634, Hingham
 Robert Wellington, 1635, Watertown; George Farr, 1636, Lynn
 Wm Johnson, 1636, Roxbury; Edward Spaulding 1639, Braintree
 Samuel Bass, 1630, Roxbury

Please note, each application can take from one hour to several months. As well as checking new applications, I spend an additional 15-25 hours per week answering questions (by email), suggesting where to look for proofs, doing research to verify information, suggesting a new qualifying ancestor to use for membership, and obtaining missing information, and etc.

Marie Seelye, Registrar

Winthrop Society Board 2020-22

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Vice President – Jane R. Power

Secretary – Gayle M. Coan

Treasurer – Walter C. Seelye

Archivist – Katherine C. King

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Parliamentarian – David J. Stringfellow

Registrar – Marie A. Seelye

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J. Michael Phelps, CA

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Carla W. Odom, NC

Dear Attendees of the Charter Day virtual lectures sponsored by the Partnership of the Historic Bostons this past Fall. Our objective was to present the world of early New England in all of its complexity. It was a dynamic world, asserting its autonomy and struggling to find a path forward in a tumultuous time.

In these lectures, we tried to look honestly at the Massachusetts Bay Colony, its internal relations and its workings with Plimoth Plantation, the building of its vibrant economy and the inner-workings of United Colonies, and it's inevitable and deeply regrettable conflict with the Indigenous Nations.

The Partnership appreciates your attendance, your Q&A, and your concentrated engagement with the Charter Day lectures. Thank you from the Trustees, Members, and Advisors of the Partnership of the Historic Bostons and The Winthrop Society.

John Morrison, President

Partnership of the Historic Bostons, Inc.

<https://www.historicbostons.org>



Try the Ice



"With caution due the man is crossing o'er, And with a pole he tries the ice before, O'er the deep current he finds the ice is thin; He shuns the place; he's saved from plunging in."

— John W. Barber, 1857

● TREASURER - Walter C. Seelye

We offer credit card processing at our website for dues payment, insignia purchase, and meeting reservations using PayPal services. PayPal offers secure, confidential transaction processing. The Winthrop Treasurer never sees your credit card.

Make sure that Fleet News reaches you! Kindly inform me well in advance if (and when) you will have an address change, including seasonal addresses.

Questions or suggestions; please send them to me at:

Walter C. Seelye, Treasurer
13802 Pine Glen Dr E
Black Forest, CO 80908-3508
or

treasurer@winthropsociety.com

● WEBSITE Coordinator - Walter C. Seelye

Our website address is www.winthropsociety.com
Tour our website. Do you have suggestions to attract more visitors? Your ideas are welcome.





THE WINTHROP SOCIETY

Volume 17, Number 2 - Late Fall 2020



This event has been misrepresented by some writers, who claim that it was a celebration of the massacre of some 700 Pequot men, women, and children when the colonial forces stormed a Native fort near modern Mystic, Connecticut. Some have even called that thanksgiving day a celebration of ethnic cleansing! Others have even confused it with the 1621 event.

None of us today would approve of the tactics used by the colonists to defeat the Pequots – rather than enter the fort and engage in wetu to wetu (the native dwellings) fighting against superior numbers, the colonists set the fort on fire and shot all who sought to escape. It doesn't matter that the murder of civilians was commonplace in English attacks on Irish rebels in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and was perpetrated by both sides in the Thirty Years War then raging.

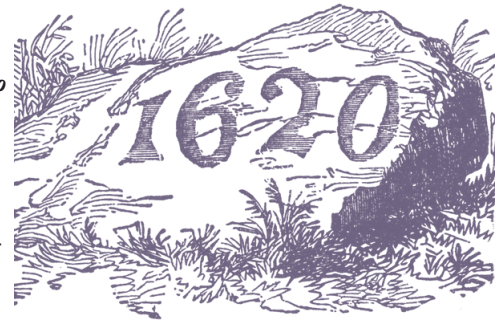
But nothing we know of the Fall thanksgiving in 1637 mentions the tactics. It was a time to thank God for victory, not a commentary on how it was achieved, nor an expression of racism (the colonists had Native tribal allies). And, equally important, it was the offering of thanks for the resolution of the religious conflict that was perhaps the more serious threat to the colonists.



One of the important developments in the commemorations of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Mayflower is the recovery of the story of the peoples of Dawnland, the original inhabitants of New England. Over time the consequences of the English settlement of the region led to disputes and wars, including the Pequot War. But that should not obscure the fact that for a brief time, in the Fall of 1621, both Englishmen and Wampanoags gathered together to share a feast in peace, offering a promise of amity that was not to be realized.

The author, Francis J. Bremer, is our steadfast contributor to the pages of Fleet News. He is Professor Emeritus of History at Millersville University of Pennsylvania and coordinator of New England Beginnings. Dr. Bremer is co-editor of the 400th Anniversary Edition of William Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation, and author of One Small Candle: the Plymouth Puritans and the Beginnings of English New England, published in August 2020.

While the original Pilgrims may never have come to Plymouth Rock, it certainly draws pilgrims of a different sort today. Upwards of a million people visit it each year.



Did you know?

Native American peoples have inhabited the land we now call Maine for 12,000 years. Today, they are a First Nations and Native American confederation of four principal Eastern Algonquian tribes: the Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and the Penobscot. They are known collectively as the Wabanaki or "People of the Dawnland."

Members of the Wabanaki Confederacy, roughly the area that became the French colony of Acadia, is made up of most of present-day Maine in the United States, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Island, Prince Edward Island and some of Quebec south of the St. Lawrence River, Anticosti, and Newfoundland in Canada. The Western Abenaki live on lands in Quebec as well as New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts of the United States.

Wikipedia