

Harvard College in 1720

The Winthrop Society

Fleet News

Descendants of the Great Migration 1630-34

Volume 6, Number 2, Fall 2009

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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*

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



Greetings to our Members

The Winthrop Society Newsletter has been serving the Winthrop Society for six years now. Our first issue was published in the Spring of 2004 and we publish twice a year (in Spring and Fall). Feedback from our membership continues to be very positive.

Also, I would like to take this opportunity to express all our thanks to Carol Taylor, the Winthrop Society Publications Editor and graphic designer. Carol has done an outstanding job and her continuing efforts are greatly appreciated.

The feature article of the current newsletter focuses on the founding of Harvard University. Our predominately Puritan ancestors knew and valued education. Soon after the Boston Latin School was established to educate children, the Court voted to establish a “new college in the new town”.

A few years later, the “new town” was named Cambridge in honor of the many Cambridge University (in England) graduates serving on the Court or as clergy and the “new school” was named Harvard College as a result of a deathbed monetary bequest of John Harvard who, contrary to popular belief, played no real role in the founding of Harvard University.

I would also like to welcome our new Vice President, Mr. Roland Johnson, to the Board. To better serve our membership, Mr. Johnson welcomes suggested changes and/or improvements to the Society from our members. Please email Mr. Johnson at:

vicepres@winthropsociety.com

Warmest Wishes for the upcoming holidays,

Barry A. Cotton



* Jonathan Gillett and his Descendents by Cheryl Gillette Vislay *

The ship *Mary and John* sailed from Plymouth, England on 20 March 1630 and landed upon the south side of Dorchester Neck two weeks before the Winthrop Fleet. No passenger's manifest has been found, but historians have pieced together some passengers. Among them are my ancestors Jonathan Gillett and his brother Nathan. The passengers, recruited by the Reverend John White, were Puritans fleeing religious persecution under King Charles I. Most came from the West counties of Somerset, Devon, and Dorset, England.

The Gilletts had been impacted by religious persecution for three generations. Jonathan's grandfather, the Rev. Jacques de Gylet, was born near Bergerac, France where he was a Huguenot. On St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572, Frenchmen at the behest of Catherine de Medicis massacred 5,000 - 10,000 French Protestants. Spared life, but caught up in the persecutions, Jacques de Gylet was banished from France and his property confiscated when he continued to preach the Protestant Gospel. He escaped to Scotland and eventually to England where the family lived until 1630.



Jonathan was about 21 years old and was one of a dozen single men among the passengers of the *Mary and John*. Bachelors were discouraged from the Bay Colony and families encouraged. Thus he returned to England and married Mary Dolbere in 1634 at St. Andrew's Church, Colyton, Devonshire. The couple then returned to Dorchester on the ship *Recovery*. Jonathan became a Freeman of the Massachusetts Bay Colony on May 6, 1635.

The first winter was full of hardship. When Massachusetts Bay Governor John Winthrop visited the settlement in mid November 1630, he found the settlers living in "bark wigwams or sail-cloth tents that almost in every family, lamentation, mourning, and woe were heard". However, these men and women and children persevered and became the backbone of New England. (For almost 200 years English families of the Great Migration of 1629-1640 and their descendents comprised most of the population of the "New England." - Ed.).

The Puritans were pious folks who were required to read the Bible every day – more than once. Jonathan owned a 1599 Geneva edition of the Bible. In New England it became known as the "Bear Bible" because "once, in the olden days, it had been placed in a window to keep the sash raised. It is said that a bear endeavoring to effect an entrance clawed it, leaving its claw marks so deeply upon the edges of the leaves that they are still plain to be seen." Other accounts say that Jonathan was attacked by a bear and used the Bible to shield himself. In this Bible is written "My father Gillett came into new-inglan the second time in June the yeare 1634 and Jonathan his sonne was



born about half a year after he came to land." The Bible is on display today at the Windsor, Connecticut Historical Society.

Many of these settlers resented the political and religious infighting and what they perceived to be aristocratic officials in the settlements. Following his brother and many others, the Gilletts moved 100 miles southwest to Windsor, Connecticut (now a part of Hartford.). In 1639, he was granted a lot 17 rods wide (4 acres). His brother Nathan's lot was nearby. Jonathan served in the Pequot War in 1637 and was granted, in 1671, land in Simsbury, Connecticut for his service. He had lost two of his sons to Indian uprisings in 1675 and 1676. Jonathan died in Windsor in 1677.

Five generations later Warren Gillett, born 12 May 1784, along with his brother Zadok would leave Granville, Massachusetts for the frontier of Sheshequin (near Bradford, Pennsylvania). This land was part of the Susquehanna Company of land granted by Charles II to the Connecticut colonies. First settled in 1783, stories of Indian attacks and kidnappings rival those of the Wild West. From Warren's diary "1819 Oct. 1st, this day moved into Sheshequin, Pa., after a tedious journey of 250 miles from Granville, Mass. Settled on the highlands in my 35th year."

Warren's youngest child, Rossiter Gillette was born in Sheshequin, PA in 1826. His long life was passed on the farm bought by his father. Rossiter's son, Claude Wesley Gillette, became a doctor and married Elsie Sherwood. Elsie was a descendent of Thomas Sherwood of Fairfield, CT who had arrived on the ship *Francis* in 1634. Claude moved his family back to Connecticut where Jonathan Gillett of the Massachusetts Bay first settled.

Continued on Page 8

Did you Know...

The Pequot War was an armed conflict in 1634 - 1638 between an alliance of Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies, with Native American allies (the Narragansett and Mohegan tribes), against the Pequot tribe. This war saw the elimination of the Pequot as a viable polity in what is present-day Southern New England.

Most of the Pequot people, warriors or otherwise, were killed by the colonists and their allies or captured and sold into slavery in Bermuda; the rest dispersed. It would take the Pequot more than three and a half centuries to regain their former political and economic power in their traditional homeland region along the Pequot (present-day Thames) and Mystic Rivers in what is now southeastern Connecticut.



- Source: Wikipedia



Josiah Quincy, past President of Harvard University, says in his History of Harvard University, "The General Court appointed twelve of the most eminent men of the colony to take order for a college at Newtown, all of them names dear to New England, on account of their sacrifices, their sufferings and virtues. Of the twelve, six were magistrates and six were clergy. The most influential of these were John Winthrop, Thomas Dudley and Rev. John Cotton."

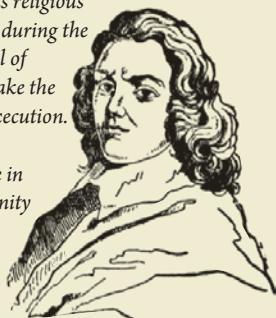


"To these names add the name of Sir Henry Vane because he was governor and head of the court that first proposed the college in 1636." Ironically, the proposal to establish Harvard College took place seven months before John Harvard emigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Henry Vane arrived in Boston during the summer of 1635 and was invited to live in the home of the Rev. John Cotton to which he added a large extension for himself. At the time, Vane was but twenty-two years old and must have found a worthy mentor, friend, and father figure in John Cotton. Both men were university educated and spoke several languages. Vane had attended Oxford University but had dropped out due to his Puritan leanings. He was then sent to Europe as an ambassador by his father, who was household chancellor to Charles I. John Cotton had been the head lecturer at Emmanuel College, Cambridge University and was the most distinguished cleric and scholar in New England at the time. Cotton was fluent in Latin, Greek and Hebrew and wrote poetry in Greek. Vane knew Greek and Latin and spoke several European languages.

Sir Henry Vane (1613 – 1662), son of Henry Vane the Elder, served as a statesman and Member of Parliament in a career spanning England and Massachusetts. A constant theme of his life was religious tolerance. He was a leading Parliamentarian during the English Civil War. Vane served on the Council of State during the Interregnum, but refused to take the oath which expressed approval of the king's execution.

At the Restoration in 1660, after much debate in Parliament, he was exempted from the Indemnity and Oblivion Act. In 1662, he was tried for high treason, found guilty, and beheaded on Tower Hill.



At the time, John Cotton was 50 years old and a father for the first time. His son, Seaborn, was born on the voyage to America in 1633. Earlier that year, Cotton had established the Boston Latin School to provide for the education of the town's youth. The school was modeled after the Boston Grammar School in Boston, England that he was responsible for as vicar of St. Botolph's Church.

As a new father and a scholar, there can be little doubt that the Rev. John Cotton had a vested on-going interest in education. It is also reasonable to assume that Cotton and Vane discussed the need for a college during meals and during long evenings by the fire so the idea incubated for over a year before being proposed and passed by the General Court in October 1636 during Sir Henry Vane's term as Governor.



Harvard/Chaderton window at

The Founding of Harvard College from Court Records

28 October 1636 The General Court headed by Governor Henry Vane decided that "the good people of Massachusetts, through their representatives, would give £400 to the establishment of a place of education "whereof £200 would be paid the next year, and £200 when the work is finished, and the next Court to appoint where and what building."

May 1637 John Harvard emigrated to New England with his wife and settled in Charlestown, Massachusetts.

15 November 1637 Court Records state, "The College is ordered to be at Newetowne."

27 November 1637 Court records show, "For the College, the Governor, Mr. Winthrop; the Deputy, Mr. Dudley; the Treasurer, Mr. Bellingham; along with Mr. Cotton (and others) that these or the greater part of them, whereof Mr. Winthrop, Mr. Dudley, or Mr. Bellingham, to be always be one, to take order for a College at Newetowne." In addition, Mr. Nathaniel Eaton, a graduate of Trinity College Cambridge, was appointed first professor and master of Harvard College.

2 May 1638 Court records state, "It is ordered, that Newetowne shall henceforth be called Cambridge."

College by Barry Cotton ✨

11 May 1638 Nearly three acres were granted “to the professor and to the Town’s use forever, for a public school or college; and the use of Mr. Nathaniel Eaton as long as he shall be employed in that work; so that at his death, or ceasing from that work, he or his shall be allowed according to the charges he hath been at, in building or fencing.” And so, the new college opened for classes and Nathaniel Eaton commenced teaching in 1638.



Emmanuel College Cambridge

14 September 1638 John Harvard died in Charlestown at age 31. Although he left no written will, Harvard made a verbal disposition of his property; such that half of his estate and all of his library would go to the new college being proposed for the Newe Towne.

18 March 1639 In recognition of John Harvard’s endowment, Court records state “It is ordered, that the College agreed upon formerly to be built at Cambridge shall be called Harvard College.”

4 September 1639 Mr. Nathaniel Eaton was censured for beating an assistant teacher, Nathaniel Briscoe, with a cudgel

by striking him over two hundred blows. The next day, other teachers and students testified to similar beatings and to the “ill and scant diet of his boarders” to which Mrs. Eaton confessed that she served students skimpy portions of bad food but denied any knowledge of goat dung being added to their hasty pudding.



The Court fined Mr. Eaton £40 and “debarred him from teaching children within our jurisdiction.” Eaton fled to Virginia before it was discovered that he had taken over £200 from college funds and received £500 in cash from worthless bills of exchange sold to merchants. As a result, the court seized his estate and closed the college for a year.

23 September 1642 The first commencement at Harvard College took place as “nine bachelors gave good proof of their proficiency in the tongues and arts.” The General Court also decided that magistrates and teaching elders of the six nearest churches would be governors of the college and most of these dined with the students at commencement.

27 December 1643 “By order of the General Court all the magistrates and the teaching elders of the six nearest churches were appointed to be forever governors of the college, and this day they met at Cambridge and considered of the officers of the college, and chose a treasurer, H. Pelham, Esq., being the first of that office.” The Rev. John Cotton represented the First Church of Boston.

* * *

*Barry Cotton is the 7th great grandson of the Rev. John Cotton.
Barry is President and Trustee Chairman of the Winthrop Society.
Mr. and Mrs. Cotton are moving from Austin to New York City this Fall
where Barry will be working at the United Nations. - Ed.*

Did you Know...

Harvard is the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States and currently comprises ten separate academic units. It is also the first and oldest corporation in the United States.



Eight presidents of the United States – John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Rutherford B. Hayes, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, George W. Bush, and President Barack Obama – have graduated from Harvard. Obama was the first black president of the Harvard Law Review. Furthermore, Harvard’s faculty has produced more than 40 Nobel Laureates.

Veritas is the motto of Harvard University as seen in its logo here. In Roman mythology, Veritas (meaning truth) was the goddess of truth, a daughter of Saturn and the mother of Virtue. - Wikipedia

☛ According to its website, the name of John Harvard is more widely known than that of almost any other Emmanuel (UK) graduate; yet of the man himself we know little. Neither is there any contemporary portrait of him. The stained glass window put up in the Chapel at Emmanuel College in Cambridge, UK in 1884 is but an “icon” for which the artist was instructed to follow the portrait of John Milton and make the hair a little longer! The stained glass window was gifted by Harvard University and photographed by Barry Cotton on a visit to Emmanuel. - Ed.





THE WINTHROP SOCIETY

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Barry Cotton (Acting)
bacotton@austin.rr.com

VICE PRESIDENT Roland Johnson
vicepres@winthropsociety.com

REGISTRAR Judith Creamer
mrsjccreamer@aol.com

CORR. SECRETARY Donna Malek
dmalek4@aol.com

REC. SECRETARY Elizabeth Crafts
eac@npmlaw.com

TREASURER Bill Arnebeck
arnebeck@gmail.com

WEBMASTER: Charlie Banks
chip3@aol.com

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR &
GRAPHIC DESIGN Carol Taylor
coastalgraphics@cfl.rr.com

TRUSTEES

Barry Cotton, Chairman
David Ely Cain
Beverly J. Doucette
J. Michael Phelps, Esq.
James K. Raywalt
Charlotte Winslow

The EMERITI
Verna Griffith Maleski (2008)
Verle Bresson (2008)

MEMBERSHIP / INQUIRIES
The Winthrop Society
c/o Registrar
7174 Egbert St
Melbourne, FL 32940
registrar@winthropsociety.com

Visit our website at:
www.winthropsociety.com

Paragon Printing & Graphics
West Melbourne, FL 32904



ROSETTE

● REGISTRAR/Judith Creamer

I am pleased to announce that the available Winthrop Society applications are now on file in my house in Florida. Any copies may be ordered for \$7.00.

Access to these may help you make another Massachusetts Bay connection.



The Winthrop Society has experienced a significant drop in new applications and members this past year. Please encourage family members to join. Become a cheerleader for your family history to others.

A membership makes a great birthday or holiday gift.

My address and email is in the banner at left.

New Members

Joan Elizabeth Linaberry Brackin / John Winthrop
Barry F. Gugeon / William Beamsley
Donna Lockwood Hubner / Joseph Redding
Katherine Cullen King / Jacob Barney
Ann Margaret Linaberry Levine / John Winthrop
Gail Larson Toerpe / Richard Palgrave
Kristine Ann Marsh / Thomas Goldthwait Roxbury

Gold Member

Steven John Alston / Mary Kilbourne

Life Member

Kristine Ann Marsh / Thomas Goldthwait Roxbury

● INSIGNIA

Society Insignia is available to members by writing our Treasurer:

Bill Arnebeck
744 Fuzzy Zoeller Circle
Galloway, OH 43119

Made by City Pride, the miniature medallion is 3/4 inch in diameter and crafted of solid brass with an antique finish. It is suspended from a silk drape in the Winthrop Society's colors. \$40.00 each.

The rosette by Dexter Rosettes is about 1/2 inch and in the Winthrop Society's colors. \$10.00 each.



MEDALLION

● PUBLICATIONS EDITOR/Carol Taylor

It is a banner issue for Harvard - starting with the right mix of printing color for **Harvard** crimson by me! Harvard's was founded for the education of the clergy - the most important occupation in New England at the time. Hasty Pudding was a Harvard staple - the Pop Tart of its day - and names its theater group.

Our members and interested historians are invited to submit articles for publication in *Fleet News*. Tell us about your qualifying ancestor. The feature article is 2 pages - others 1-2. This job falls to me so...the more you spell check and abbreviate the better! Cite your sources especially if you have borrowed from the web and please adhere to an informal style. I do not post footnotes.

We also have *Watchamacallit* - send me your idea for a unique colonial item or gadget. Lastly, we have *Did you Know...* something relevant to the times of the Puritans, 16th century Mass Bay Colony; we were not Pilgrims.

Please note, *Fleet News* is a biannual publication.

Whatchamacallit?



The answer is found on page 8.

Cotton Mather

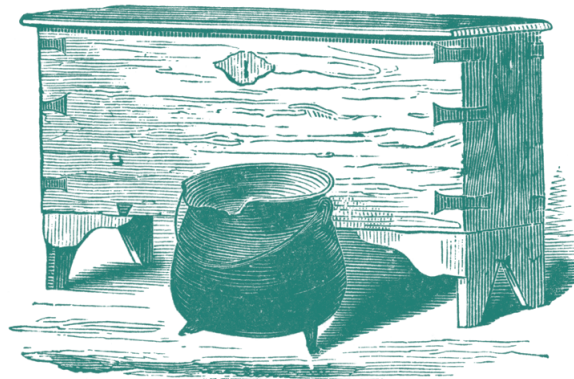
The son of Increase Mather and the grandson of John Cotton and Richard Mather, Cotton Mather lived all his life in Boston. He entered Harvard at the age of 12, easily passing entrance requirements to read and write Latin and to "decline the Greek nouns and verbs."



Mather devoted himself unremittingly to study and prayer. At age 18, he received his M.A. degree from the hands of his father, who was President of the college.

Mather preached his first sermon in his father's church in August 1680 and in October another from his grandfather John Cotton's pulpit. He was formally ordained in 1685 and became his father's colleague.

Source: *Fire and Ice: Puritan and Reformed Writings*



● WEBMASTER/Charlie Banks

For those of you who missed the announcement, we've **changed** our website address. It is now with a .com on the end: www.winthropsociety.com.

Speaking of Harvard...

Hasty Pudding ... was an English tradition for centuries. Printed references to hasty pudding in England date to 1599, while Indian Pudding recipes - a similar concoction - start appearing in American cookbooks in 1796 we are told.

In 1662, John Winthrop, Jr. wrote the following about the pudding in his letter to the Royal Society in London.



Hasty Pudding

... thif if to be boyled or Stued with a gentle fire, till it be tender, of a fitt consistence, af of Rice fo boyled, into which Milke, or butter be put either with Sugar or without it, it if a food very pleafant. . . but it muft be obferved that it be very well boyled, the longer the better, fome will let it be ftuing the whole day: after it if Cold it groweth thicker, and if commonly Eaten by mixing a good Quantity of Milke amongft it.

(Remember, the olde English "s" looks like an "f" above.)





THE WINTHROP SOCIETY
c/o Publications Editor
4042 Green Oak Drive, South Oaks
Melbourne, FL 32901

Fleet News Fall 2009

Jonathan Gillet continued from page 3

His son, Sherwood Townsend Gillette (my grandfather) was born in Westport in 1910. He married Ann Wilkinson Hall and they eventually settled in Long Island, New York. Our Gillette family line today includes John Dunham who was one of the original Separatists to move to Leiden, Holland with the Rev. William Brewster. Also, Jehue Burr (who arrived with the Winthrop Fleet 1630) counts Aaron Burr among his descendents. Further, the Mayflower passenger Richard Warren is a family descendent. Lastly, Anne Winthrop Hoskins was a cousin of Gov. John Winthrop. Her father, also named John Winthrop, was the elder brother of Governor Winthrop's father. Anne's father was originally Lord of Groton Manor but when he left England to live in Ireland he sold Groton Manor to Governor Winthrop.

While we modern Americans enjoy religious and political freedom and comfortable homes and conveniences, we remember with pride those whose sacrifice and hard work made it possible.



The author, Cheryl Gillette Vislay, was originally from Queens, NY. Cheryl is the 11th generation from Jonathan who fathered 10 children. The name was changed to Gillette by the generation of Claude Gillette. Cheryl lives in Charlotte, NC with her husband Steve and their five year old son Sean. She is in the I.T. department at Family Dollar Corporate.

Cheryl relates that 18 months ago she stumbled upon the Winthrop Society website and was inspired to explore her family history. She is a member of the Winthrop Society as well as the Mayflower Society chapter in NC. Email: cvislay@earthlink.net - Ed.



**Make me, O Lord, thy Spinning Wheele compleat;
Thy Holy Worde my Distaff make for mee.
Make mine Affectionf thy Swift Flyerf neate,
And make my Soule thy holy Spoole to bee.
My Conversation make to be thy Reele,
And reele the yarn thereon spun of thy Wheele.**

(Remember, the olde English "s" looks like an "f" above.)

The Puritan View of Christmas



Christmas was a target in the ideological warfare of the European Reformation. Most Anabaptists, Quakers, Congregational and Presbyterian Puritans regarded the day as an abomination while Anglicans, Lutherans, the Dutch Reformed and other denominations embraced the holiday and joined Roman Catholics in celebrating it. When the Church of England promoted the Feast of the Nativity as a major religious holiday, the Puritans attacked it as residual Papist idolatry.

The Puritan community in New England heaped contempt upon the holiday, called it 'Foolstide', and suppressed attempts to celebrate the day for several reasons. First, no holy days were sanctioned in Scripture, and secondly, they saw men dishonoring the Lord by engaging in the most egregious and excessive behaviors during the Christmas season. The Puritan also argued that December 25 was historical, and Jesus was more likely to have been born in September or October. They regarded the selection of the December date as an early Christian hijacking of a Roman festival, and, in their view, to celebrate a December Christmas was to defile oneself by paying homage to a pagan custom. The Puritan view prevailed in New England for almost two centuries.

- Source: Wikipedia

Bah ... Humbug!

Whatchamacallit?

It is the first street light in America. Early in 1795 several large cressets were placed on the corners of Boston's most frequented street. Pine-knots were placed in these fire baskets by the night watchman."

