

# Fleet News

Spring 2023  
Vol. 20 No. 1



*John Winthrop*

• “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” — *Matthew 5:1*

• “For we must consider that we shall be a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world.” — from “A Model of Christian Charity” — a sermon delivered onboard the Arbella, flagship of the Winthrop Fleet (1630)

## Aboard with President Coan!

We are only weeks away from all the in-person meetings in April in D.C. The Board members have been busy with their end of the year reports commenting on all the accomplishments this past year. Just to mention a few ...: Grace has edited our newsletters beautifully, Sunny has been sending out get well wishes and sympathy cards, Shirley has kept a close eye on our treasury and has filed all the necessary reports, Alex has processed new members and made our website information more informative and usable, David has been working on the yearbook that should be out this summer and working with Alex to update membership information, and Sandra will be writing up the minutes.

I have had the pleasure of talking with several prospective members and directing them to our website for information which Leda has made available for all. As they told me the story of their ancestor, I could only smile at all the history being shared. For me that’s a high point of any day. I’m looking forward to this next year now that the “new normal” has become the standard. In person meetings are coming back, and societies are beginning to realize more applications for memberships. Even supplementals are again on the rise. It brings me great pleasure to know more



and more of our ancestors are being recognized by our members. Imagine how those ancestors might feel today if they could see all the families that they created in America just by taking a boat ride!

Over this next year, the first project of this president is to put the finishing touches on the Bylaws revision. Over the years the original scope of the society began to broaden out of the intent of the original Board. It is now necessary to return to the original meaning of our name – *The Winthrop Society*. More information will be going out to the members as the project is finished and ready for the Society to approve.

I’m looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year’s meeting. I know we will be having a wonderful dinner with a chance to catch up on all that’s been going on over the past four years.

*Gayle*

## The Logbook . . .



“Because Massachusetts Bay Colony started out legally as a chartered trading company, freemanship was in a sense limited to the stockholders, those who had contributed financially to the company. But when the charter and the government were transferred to New England in 1630 the nature of the corporation began to evolve, and so did the nature of freemanship.”

*(continued on page seven)*

# The Winthrop Society Executive Board 2022-2024



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<b>NOMINATIONS</b> .....	Jane R. Power, Chairman Ida Ransom Bernie Roback

# ***Ships of the Winthrop Fleet: Robert Charles Anderson***

1629

“The Massachusetts Bay Company arranged for six vessels to sail for New England in 1629, only five of which reached their destination. The salient details for each of these sailings are summarized below:

- *George Bonaventure*, Thomas Cox, master. She left the Isle of Wight 4 May 1629, and probably reached Salem during the first half of July. Samuel Sharp and the Rev. Samuel Skelton were two of the passengers.
- *Talbot*, Thomas Beecher, master. This ship left London 25 April and the Isle of Wight 11 May, arriving at Cape Ann 27 June and Salem 29 June 1629. The Rev. Francis Higginson was one of the passengers.
- *Lyon’s Whelp*, John Gibbs, master. The *Lyon’s Whelp* sailed with the *Talbot*; the Rev. Francis Bright was a passenger.
- *Mayflower*, William Peirce, master. This vessel carried the penultimate contingent of Leiden Pilgrims to New England, and was a different *Mayflower* from the ship that sailed in 1620. William Bradford reported that it sailed ‘in May and arrived here about August.’
- *Four Sisters*, Roger Harman, master. She carried ‘many cattle with passengers & provision.’
- *Pilgrim*, William Woolrige, master. This ship sailed in August but ‘was seized off Canada by Captain Daniell of Dieppe who stripped her of her lading. On 31 October 1629 as she was returning to England she ran into foul weather off the Scilly isles and her masts and sails were cut down to save her.’ The number of passengers on the *Pilgrim* is not known.”

1630

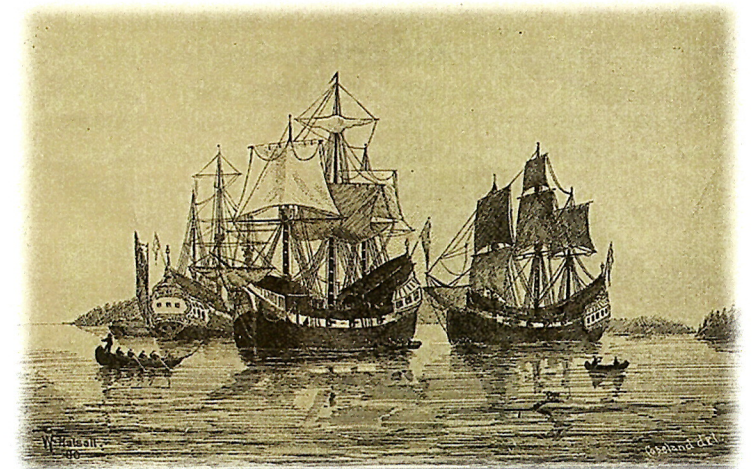
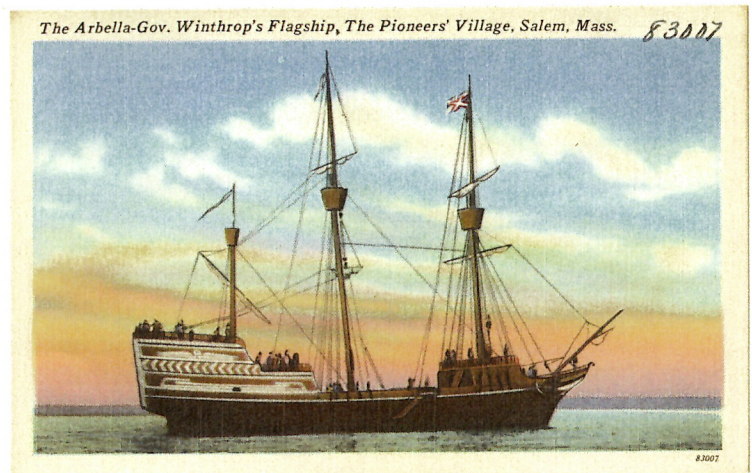
“At least eighteen vessels carrying passengers sailed from England for New England in 1630, not all of which were part of the Winthrop fleet. The *Arbella* is probably the most famous of this group, which sailed in late March from Cowes. John Winthrop recorded the arrival in Salem of four vessels which had set out together in late March: *Arbella* (12 June), *Ambrose* (13 June), *Jewel* (19 June), and *Talbot* (2 July).

Seven other ships arrived during the first week of July: *Mayflower* and *Whale* (1 July), *Hopewell* and *William & Francis* (3 July), *Trial* and *Charles* (5 July), and *Success* (6 July).

Finally, two other vessels – *Gift* and the *Thomas & William* – were financed by individual merchants associated

with the Massachusetts Bay Company, and should be considered part of the Winthrop Fleet.

So, too, perhaps, should be the *Handmaid*, which arrived at Plymouth on 29 October with sixty passengers. One of the passengers on this vessel was John Eddy of Boxted, Essex, whose affiliations position place him within the Massachusetts Bay Company’s orbit; this ship may have been the latest arrival of the Winthrop Fleet. Additional information on the merchant or financier behind this voyage would be useful. (Adapted from the introduction to *The Winthrop Fleet*.)”



The Arrival of Governor Winthrop’s Fleet in Boston Harbor

## Sources

1. Anderson, Robert Charles. *Vita Brevis, Ships of the Winthrop Migration—1629-1630*. New England Historic and Genealogical Society, Boston, 7 April 2014.
2. Images are in the public domain.

# Part I – That Winthrop Woman: The Amazing Story

Presented by **George J. Hill, M.D., D.Litt.** for the Winthrop Society at Washington, D.C., April 12, 2015



The title of this talk is taken from the book, *The Winthrop Woman*, which was written by Anya Seton Chase. It was first published in 1958 and it is still in print. My copy is a well-preserved first edition paperback. Anya Seton, daughter of Ernest Thompson Seton, a founder of the Boy Scouts of America, wrote a dozen novels. This one, written near the end of her career, is said to have been a “towering great seller.” It is likely that millions of copies have been sold. Much of the action takes place in Greenwich, Connecticut, where both Anya Seton and Elizabeth, the Winthrop Woman, lived.

Seton’s book is a historical novel – that is, it is a novel that is based on actual history and real people, and presumably with solid documentary evidence. It also qualifies as a “romance novel” – by which I mean a racy novel set in a historical context, in which hints of seduction, adultery, and illicit sex titillate the reader and make it a page-turner. For example, on one page (46), chosen at random, her father, Thomas Fones, “felt sharp apprehension as he stared at the flare of [Elizabeth’s] nostrils, the lush curves of her mouth. It was not [his wife] Ann Winthrop whom she resembled now, but Thomas’s own grandmother, the passionate Cornish woman, with the long lewd eyes of a gypsy [who, it was said] had loved too well a Spanish sailor cast up from the Armada on the Cornish coast near her home.”

The enduring success of this book is a tribute to Seton’s mastery of the details of history and her ability to tell a story very well, plus the incredible story itself – the story of the “Winthrop Woman,” the woman who was, to give her full name, Elizabeth Fones Winthrop Feake Hallett. I will usually just call her Elizabeth, as does Seton.

Philippa Gregory wrote a Foreword to the 2006 edition published by the Chicago Review Press. Philippa Gregory, born in 1954, was a prize-winning novelist and media expert on the Tudor period. She was the author of *The Virgin’s Lover*, about Queen Elizabeth, and *The Other Boleyn Girl*, about the sister of Anne Boleyn, which appeared as a Miramax movie in 2008. Gregory wrote, and I agree: “Of all Anya Seton’s historical fiction, *The Winthrop Woman* is my per-

sonal favorite.” There is nothing that comes close to it as a description of daily life in colonial America, and it is especially valuable because it tells the story through the perspective of a woman of that period.

Seton wrote that she used “hundreds of source books,” and she names many of them. I have a few of these books in my own library, such as George Francis Dow’s *Every Day Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony*. Furthermore, I am pretty well acquainted with the history of medicine, and I can say that I have never read a better description of medicine, surgery, and pharmacy (especially pharmacy) in the seventeenth century than is in Seton’s book. For example, she says [pp. 32-34]: “It snowed softly on Christmas Eve in the year of our Lord 1628, which was the fourth year of King Charles the First’s reign, and on Christmas morning a fleece as white and soft as a Cotswold lamb lay over London town. . . . And while Elizabeth in the Fones apothecary shop impatiently pounded snail shells in a mortar, she heard rowdy singing directly outside the shop door on Old Bailey Street. ‘Is it mummings,’ she cried, throwing her pestle down on the counter top. [Elizabeth] peered at the battered calfskin book which contained her father’s secret prescription for the famous mithridate remedy. Many apothecaries made ‘mithridates’ of their own concocting, but this one was particularly efficacious. It contained forty ingredients: herbs like rue, and more exotic materials, powdered snails, dried mummy, fresh-water pearls, and a piece of lung from a hanged felon. Elizabeth read her father’s cramped Latin with ease and duly added a dram of camphor to the mixture in a beaker. [Elizabeth’s stepmother] said, your father is quite distracted . . . says you must bring the bottle upstairs for his inspection as soon as you’ve finished . . . and did you steep the betony with Ach --- Ach --- . ‘Achilles millefolium,’ said Elizabeth, smiling.”

Here is the story of Elizabeth Fones Winthrop Feake Hallett, excerpted from Wikipedia (3/16/15): “Elizabeth Fones (21 January 1610 – 1 February 1673) was an early settler in the Massachusetts Bay Colony where her father-in-law (and uncle) John Winthrop served as Governor. *The Winthrop Woman* begins with young Elizabeth Fones and her family travelling to visit their family at their grandfather’s countryside estate. Elizabeth’s uncle, John Winthrop [later Governor Winthrop], is especially pious and strict about Protestantism; and he chides his sister for not taking proper care of her children, Elizabeth in particular, who is hot-headed and capricious. Elizabeth is caught blaspheming and is beaten, resulting in her becoming areligious and instilling in her a hatred for her uncle.

Years later, Elizabeth Fones has become a beautiful young woman working in her ailing father’s apothecary. Though

## *of Elizabeth (Fones) (Winthrop) (Feake) Hallett*

she is in love with her cousin John ("Jack") Winthrop, Jr., [who later becomes Governor of Connecticut] it is Jack's friend Edward Howes who seeks to marry her. Just as she becomes engaged to Howes, her cousin Henry Winthrop (or "Harry"), Jack's younger brother, returns from his adventures in Barbados. Unlike his father and brother, Harry is wild and carefree, reckless to the point that he has depleted all his money and nearly brought his family to financial ruin. Unwilling to return to his father, Harry instead stays at Thomas Fones's house and spends his time frolicking with his equally profligate friends. One night, Harry and Elizabeth spend an especially long night out, their lust overcomes them, and they sleep together in a garden. In yet another reckless act, Harry declares that he is in love with Elizabeth and demands her hand in marriage.

*Henry Winthrop, b. Groton 10 Jan 1607/8, m. 25 April 1629 Elizabeth Fones. Henry, son of Gov. John Winthrop and his first wife, Mary Forth, drowned off the coast of Salem 2 July 1630. Elizabeth Fones and Henry Winthrop were first cousins. Henry's mother Ann was a sister of Gov. John Winthrop.*

"The couple are wed, much to the dismay of both fathers (John Winthrop believes that his son could do better than a Fones and is not fond of Elizabeth; Thomas Fones is dismayed because his daughter was already engaged to marry Edward Howes). Elizabeth and Harry move to the Winthrop estate in the countryside (John Winthrop no longer resides there as he has taken a position elsewhere). For a while, the couple live a happy life. However, it soon becomes obvious just how profligate Harry is, as he neglects his wife and family to have his own fun. In the meantime, Jack returns. It is apparent that he and Elizabeth still have strong feelings for each other; but, while attempting to cover his feelings for his brother's wife, Jack accidentally kisses Martha, Elizabeth's younger sister, and soon the two are wed."

"Finally, in an attempt to control his son, John Winthrop forces Harry to come to New England with him. In a final act of recklessness, Harry drowns when he attempts to jump in and swim [to shore]. Elizabeth is left a pregnant widow. After she gives birth to her daughter (Martha [Martha Joanna Winthrop]), she, Jack, Martha, and John Winthrop's wife, Margaret, all depart for Massachusetts."

"In the strict colony in the New World, Elizabeth runs into more trouble than ever. On her uncle's suggestion, Elizabeth marries Robert Feake, a weak-willed and strangely disturbed man who often has nightmares and commits odd deeds in his sleep. She also attempts to befriend Anne

Hutchinson and chooses a tainted Indian woman, Telaka [a real person, unnamed in historical records], for her maid. Eventually, Elizabeth and Robert are driven out of their house in Watertown because the other colonists believe Telaka to be a witch. The Feakes then settle in Greenwich in the colony of New Haven. After run-ins with Indians, Elizabeth and the other leader of the town, Daniel Patrick, join Greenwich to the Dutch colony of New Netherland. After Daniel Patrick is murdered by an old enemy, Elizabeth's husband, Robert, becomes completely mad and attempts to return to England. Meanwhile, Joan [her daughter, Martha Joanna Winthrop] marries Thomas Lyons, who turns out to be a prospective gold-digger. [Notice how Seton characterizes Lyons as a "gold digger" – we'll come back to that later.] When William Hallett, a previous acquaintance of Elizabeth's, begins courting her and gains more and more control over the Feake household, Lyons grows jealous. Finally, Elizabeth and her lover are accused of adultery after not having married properly under English law, and all their lands are confiscated. Elizabeth and William Hallett hide under the protection of Jack Winthrop, who is now an important member of another town in Connecticut [New London]."

After Jack does all he can for his cousin and ex-lover, Elizabeth and William Hallett are once more free to move back to Greenwich, where Indians then set their house afire. Elizabeth and William Hallett have no choice but to start anew once more [in Long Island, under protection by the Dutch], their hearts heavy but their wills strengthened. "Elizabeth has numerous descendants in the United States, including those from the marriage of her daughter, Martha Johanna Winthrop, to Thomas Lyon of Byram's Neck, Greenwich, CT." Elizabeth had eight children: one by Harry Winthrop, five by Robert Feake, and two by William Hallett. Hallett later married four more times.

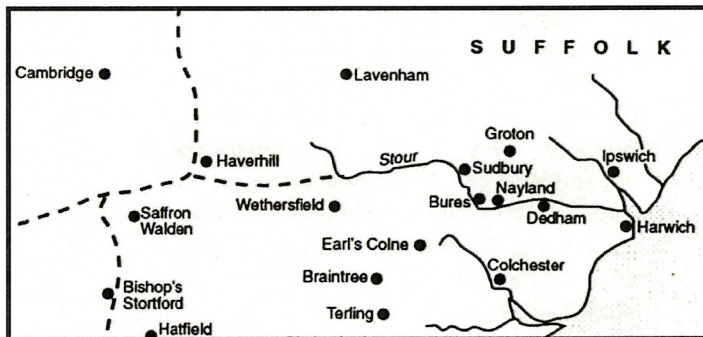
Seton wrote that her book "is based on a solid framework of fact; from these facts I have never knowingly deviated, nor changed a date or circumstance. . . . I have also incorporated my characters' own written words into the dialogue whenever possible. All these characters are real; even Peyto and Telaka (though nameless in the references) are based on fact. . . . Elizabeth has thousands of descendants today; many of these – guided by Victorian genealogists and a biased presentation – have a vague feeling that they should be ashamed of her . . . I believe that her life was significant and praiseworthy. True, she was a rebel against the Puritan code, as exemplified by Governor John Winthrop the elder, who was her uncle, guardian, and father-in-law. She . . . suffered the handicaps peculiar to her sex and her time, but she had the remarkable endurance which characterized all the first settlers – those who managed to survive."  
*(to be continued)*

## Francis J. Bremer, Ph.D., on John Winthrop



*This is the third in a series of articles on the story of the men and women who emigrated to New England in the Great Migration -- their beliefs, the lives they led in England, the reasons for their emigration, and the world they created in New England.*

In Early Modern England the ability of the central government to impose its will on the people was dependent on the support of local authorities in state and church. While not autonomous, county leaders and diocesan officials could determine whether the wishes of kings and archbishops were obeyed or not. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the local authorities in the Stour River Valley, the region of south Suffolk and northern Essex,



A map of the Stour River Valley

were supporters of a more reformed Protestantism than that desired by Queen Elizabeth and then James I. This was a region that had long been known for forms of religious dissent, going back to the fourteenth century Lollard movement. During the reign of Queen Mary Tudor (1553-1558) there had been notable challenges to that monarch's efforts to reimpose Catholicism on the English people. All but two of the parishioners of Stoke-by-Nayland, on the south side of the Stour, refused to receive communion in the Catholic form, and on the north side of the river the Protestant preacher **Rowland Taylor** was burned in a field outside of Hadleigh as one of the Marian Martyrs.

John Winthrop was born here, in Edwardstone in 1588, and raised in the next-door towns of Groton and Boxford. His grandfather Adam had purchased Groton Manor, former church land seized at the Reformation. John's father Adam Winthrop attended Trinity College, Cambridge and studied law at London's Inns of Court. This Adam was closely tied to leaders of the puritan movement in the Stour Valley, where he spent most of his life and where he raised his children, including John.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1553-1603) landed gentry and sympathetic bishops supported, or at least tolerated, the creation of a reformed religious culture that made the region, as one contemporary commented, a "closer approximation to the type of a godly commonwealth than in any part of England in any time." This was reflected in a variety of ways. Supportive landlords furthered the cause of having an educated clergy by appointing puritans, many educated at Cambridge University, to parish livings that were in their control.

In this region, ministers such as John Knewstub in **Cockfield** and Henry Sandes in Boxford ignored the ceremonial practices of the Church of England that they disapproved of; they explained the basics of Calvinist doctrine to their flocks; and they preached a social gospel based on



St. Peter Church—Cockfield

Christ's command to love all of one's neighbors. In the godly commonwealth one was expected to place the welfare of the community above individual self-interest. Knewstub, for example, told his listeners that the scripture taught that "we are all members of one body"; "The Lord to maintain brotherly love among his, hath made one the store house of necessities of another;" and "being fellow members of one body, we have our benefit & fare the better for the several gifts of others." John Winthrop would say much the same in his "Christian Charity" lay sermon to his fellow colonists in 1630. Clergy met in regional conferences such as one at Cockfield and another at Dedham, discussing among themselves how best to advance their cause.

Inspired by such preaching and by the suggestion offered by the Essex clergyman Richard Rogers in his *Seven Treatises*, lay believers formed groups which met regularly to share their experiences, discuss sermons, and sing psalms. Brigit Cooke was the leader of one such group in Kersey, not far from Winthrop's Groton, and Winthrop himself was part of another such communion of saints. Individuals demonstrated their social caring by individual actions, such as Winthrop's donation of some of his land for the building of a poor house. Meeting in town assemblies the godly in communities such as Dedham, Boxford, Finch-

## and the Godly Society of the Stour Valley

ingfield, and Braintree developed orders to promote Sabbath observance and to reform manners. Because of the puritan insistence on the importance of Bible reading, some individuals founded and endowed free schools. In Boxford, the community next to Groton, a school was founded in 1595 with the clergymen John Knewstub and Henry Sandes and the laymen Adam Winthrop (John's father), Brampton Gurdon, and William Clopton on the board of governors.

Because puritanism was not a centralized movement there were varying regional emphases in the character of the faith. Following his marriage to Mary Forth in 1605 John Winthrop spent time in south Essex near the town of **Great Stambridge**, where the reform cause was more embattled. Over the next few years he found that puritans there rejected practices he was accustomed to, such as card playing and hunting fowl along creeks. In England, as would be the case in New England, the godly were constantly seeking further understanding of God's wishes for them.



Great Stambridge Parish Church

In 1613 John moved his family from the marshlands of southeast Essex and returned to the Stour Valley, where he reconnected with the godly clergy and laymen who had helped shape his faith. He was appointed to the Suffolk commission of the peace (the magistrates who oversaw the administration of the law) and worked to sustain the region's reputation as a godly commonwealth. He was named as an attorney at the Court of Wards in London. But puritanism was soon to be imperiled. The rise of energetic conservative forces in the church represented by **William Laud** (bishop of London and then Archbishop of Canterbury) and the accession of Charles II (1625-1649), a monarch who was a strong supporter of Laudianism, led to a crackdown on puritans everywhere, including in the Stour Valley. Puritan clergy were deprived of their church livings. It became increasingly difficult for someone like Winthrop to perform his civil duties while being true to his faith. By the late 1620s he began to think of creating a new godly community in a new world.



During the reign of James' son, Charles I (1625-1649), not only was pressure on puritans increased, but it seemed to many that the English church was both diluting its Calvinist teachings and moving backwards toward reinstating ceremonial Catholicism.

At left: Anthony van Dyck's Portrait of **William Laud** (1573-1645), Archbishop of Canterbury, c.1635-1637

Many more English puritans began to emigrate, with many now going to America. There they established the colonies of Massachusetts, Plymouth, New Haven, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. This will be the story pursued in coming chapters.



The burning of **Dr. Rowland Taylor** in the fields outside Hadleigh in the **Stour Valley**.

Images are courtesy of Francis J. Bremer, Ph.D. and /or in the public domain.

*The Logbook, continued from page one:*

“As a result, on 18 October more than one hundred men requested to be made free. Winthrop and his fellow Assistants presumably took the winter to think this over, and on 19 May 1631, just before the General Court in that year, more than a hundred men were admitted freemen, the list being not quite the same as that of the previous fall. Once this group had been made free, the General Court ordered that henceforth one had to be a church member to become a freeman, and so it remained until after the Restoration in 1660.”

Robert Charles Anderson, *The Winthrop Fleet: Massachusetts Bay Company Immigrants to New England 1629-1630*, p. xxix.

# Membership Report: January—April 2023

## Welcome to Our Newest Members

Leslie L. Rathell; Oakland, TN  
Daniel A. Ames; Alexandria Bay, NY  
Douglas P. Harden; Annandale, VA  
Virginia K. Zisson; Austin, TX  
Karen M. Wills; Stevens Pointe, WI  
Nancy M. Wark; Marvin, NC  
Scott M. Pierce; Tifton, GA  
Linda L. Grover; Duluth, MN  
David A. Kennedy; Baltimore, MD  
Todd B. Frary; Dallas, TX

Samuel Chapin; 1638, Roxbury  
Thomas Hayward; 1635, Cambridge  
Thomas Newhall; 1638, Lynn  
Elizabeth Fones; 1631, Boston  
Richard Kimball; 1634, Watertown  
John Firman; 1630, Watertown  
William Chesebrough; 1630, Boston  
Rowland Stebbins; 1634, Roxbury  
Abraham Brown; 1631, Watertown  
John Frary; 1637, Dedham



Medallion

## Robert Feake, abt. 1602-1660/1

A goldsmith, Robert Feake was born about 1602 and died at Watertown on 1 February 1660/61. “In 1640, Feake and Daniel Patrick purchased the site of Greenwich, CT from the Indians, which for a period of time was under Dutch authority.”

Between 2 November 1631 and 27 January 1631/32, Robert married Elizabeth (Fones) Winthrop, widow of Henry Winthrop, son of Gov. John Winthrop. Five children were born to the couple, most notably Elizabeth Feake who married John Underhill.

During his lifetime, Feake held several offices at Watertown, including Deputy for Watertown to the Massachusetts Bay General Court, selectman, magistrate, and committeeman.

In 1647, Feake left abruptly for England without explanation. By August 1649, Elizabeth (Fones) (Winthrop) Feake married William Hallett. A scandal developed when it was thought that Elizabeth had not properly divorced Robert Feake prior to marrying William Hallett. Genealogist George McCracken argued

that the couple had received only a legal separation; In 1966, genealogist Donald Lines Jacobus reviewed the matter, concluding that the couple had obtained a divorce from the Dutch government and that the marriage was performed by John Winthrop, Jr., Elizabeth’s former brother-in-law.



Feake’s now-restored house is open to the public at Greenwich. Information about the house can be found here:

[The Feake-Ferris House — Greenwich Point Conservancy](#)

Note: See Dr. Hill’s article about *The Winthrop Woman* on pages 4-5 of this issue and Robert Charles Anderson’s sketch in *The Winthrop Fleet*, pp. 301-306.

Contact the Registrar for the form to order the medallion or rosette or visit the Members section of the website.



Rosette



Cockade

Contact the Treasurer to order the cockade.