

# EDWARD WINSLOW OF THE *MAYFLOWER*

Among those on board the ship *Mayflower* when it finally reached New England in November, 1620 were Edward Winslow and his wife Elizabeth. Winslow was born October 18, 1594 in Droitwich, Worcestershire, England. He was called a printer of London when he was married on May 16, 1618 in Leyden, Holland to Elizabeth Barker.

A religious group called the Separatists had fled from England to Holland to escape the fines and punishments for their illegal religious practices. Edward Winslow was one of the influential leaders of this religious group. After about 10 years in Holland, the Separatists found that jobs were hard to find and they were poor. They did not approve of the Dutch customs and way of life, and they did not approve of their children mixing with the Dutch children. They wanted to keep their English customs and their own religion, so they decided to go to the New World in search of religious freedom.

After several financial and political problems, two ships were obtained. The *Speedwell* (which leaked and could not make the trip) sailed from Leyden, Holland with the Separatists. And the *Mayflower* sailed from Southampton, England with the London and English group. One problem after another delayed their departure until they had to cross the stormy North Atlantic Ocean during a bad time of the year. After 66 miserable days at sea with 102 passengers packed in that tiny ship, they finally anchored near Provincetown on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Because of the mumbling and grumbling on board the ship, an agreement was signed by 41 men, including Edward Fuller, called the Mayflower Compact. This famous historic document is an example of our country's earliest democratic government.

Winslow was one of the 10 men who explored the shores of Cape Cod in search of a suitable site to establish Plymouth Colony. It was December and very cold before the area at Plymouth Rock was finally selected. Today we call this group of people who settled there the Pilgrims. Edward Winslow survived that first terrible winter when half of those who had just arrived perished from some unidentified epidemic, but wife Elizabeth died. He was married again in Plymouth on May 12, 1621 to Susanna (-----) White, widow of Pilgrim William White of the *Mayflower*. This was the first marriage performed in Plymouth Colony.

Edward Winslow was a Colony Assistant many times and served as Colony Governor in 1633, 1636 and 1635. In 1623 he had returned to England to transact business for the Colony and returned the next year with supplies as well as three heifers and a bull (these were Plymouth's first cattle). He went to London again in 1630 and 1635, and in 1646 he was employed there in Oliver Cromwell's government. Edward Winslow died aboard ship and was buried at sea on May 8, 1655.

The only known portrait of a Pilgrim is that of Edward Winslow, which hangs in Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth.

Edward Winslow had five children but only two lived to marry and have children:

1. JOSIAH married PENELOPE PELHAM and had four children.
2. ELIZABETH married ROBERT BROOKS and GEORGE CORWIN and had two daughters.

Which child of Pilgrim Edward Winslow is your Mayflower ancestor?

Compiled by Margaret Harris Stover from various sources, 2006  
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