

# A genealogical profile of Robert Cushman

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**Birth:** Robert Cushman was baptized on February 9, 1577/8, at Rolvenden, Kent, son of Thomas and Elinor (Hubbard) Cushman.

**Death:** He died in 1625, in England.

**Ship:** *Fortune*, 1621

**Life in England:** Robert Cushman was one of five children born to Thomas and Elinor Cushman. In his February 10, 1585/6, will, Thomas Cushman gave bequests to his three surviving children: sons Richard and Robert, and daughter Sylvester. Elinor Cushman married (2) Emmanuel Evenden on October 17, 1587, and (3) Thomas Tilden on November 6, 1593. Robert apprenticed to George Masters in Canterbury to learn the trade of grocer. If he served a full seven-year apprenticeship, then he started in 1598. In November 1603 while an apprentice, he was brought before the church court for saying, "he will not come to his parish church, because he cannot be edified and saith he can and will defend it by the word of God." He was excommunicated a year later, but granted absolution and received again into the church in July 1605. Shortly thereafter he became a freeman of Canterbury.

Robert Cushman returned to England in the winter of 1621/2. He worked as Plymouth Colony's agent, sending supplies, etc. until his death in 1625.

**Life in Holland:** Robert Cushman and his family emigrated to Leiden sometime before November 4, 1611, when he purchased a house. He worked in the city as a woolcomber. Beginning in September 1617, Cushman spent much of his time in England, working on arrangements for the new colony. He and his family were among those that left England in the summer of 1620, but stayed behind when the *Speedwell* was abandoned.

**Life in New England:** Robert Cushman and his son, Thomas, traveled to Plymouth Colony aboard the *Fortune* in 1621. While there, Robert preached a sermon, published in 1846 as "The Sin and Danger of Self-Love." Leaving his son in the care of Governor William Bradford, Cushman returned to England with the *Fortune* that winter.

**Family:** Robert Cushman married (1) Sara Reder at St. Alphege, Canterbury July 31, 1606, and had three children. She was buried in Leiden on October 11, 1616. He married (2) Mary (Clarke) Shingleton, widow of Thomas Shingleton, on June 5, 1617. There are no recorded children, but some identify

the Sara Cushman who married William Hoskins in Plymouth on November 2, 1636, as Robert Cushman's daughter by one of his wives. This theory remains unproved.

## Children of Robert and Sara Cushman:

- Thomas was baptized at St. Andrew, Canterbury on February 8, 1607/8. He married Mary Allerton about 1636 and had eight children. He died in Plymouth on December 11, 1691. She died in Plymouth on November 28, 1699, the last of the Mayflower passengers.
- Child, buried at the Pieterkerk, Leiden on March 11, 1616.
- Child, buried at the Pieterskerk, Leiden on October 24, 1616.

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## For Further Information:

Robert C. Anderson. *The Great Migration Begins*. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1995.

Robert C. Anderson. *The Pilgrim Migration*. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2004.

Robert E. Cushman and Franklin P. Cole. *Robert Cushman of Kent (1577–1625): Chief Agent of the Plymouth Pilgrims*. Plymouth: General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1995.



# Where do I go from here?

**Researching your family's history** can be a fun, rewarding, and occasionally frustrating project. Start with what you know by collecting information on your immediate family. Then, trace back through parents, grandparents, and beyond. This is a great opportunity to speak to relatives, gather family stories, arrange and identify old family photographs, and document family possessions that have been passed down from earlier generations.

Once you have learned all you can from family members, you will begin to discover other sources. A wide variety of records can help you learn more about the lives of your ancestors. These include birth, marriage, and death records; immigration and naturalization records; land records; census records; probate records and wills; church and cemetery records; newspapers; passenger lists; military records; and much more.

When you use information from any source — an original record, a printed book, or a website — always be careful to document it. If you use a book, you should cite the author or compiler, the full title, publication information and pages used. Also be sure to record the author's sources for the information. If the author's sources aren't provided, you will have to try to find the original source. Many genealogical works contain faulty information, and the Internet also contains many inaccuracies. In order for your work to be accepted — by lineage societies and other genealogists — it must be properly documented.

## IMPORTANT GENEALOGICAL RESOURCES

### New England Historic Genealogical Society

Founded in 1845, NEHGS is the country's oldest and largest genealogical society. The library contains over 200,000 books, plus significant manuscript and microfilm collections, and a circulating library by mail. NEHGS members receive two periodicals, the *Register* and *New England Ancestors*, and can access valuable genealogical data online.

NEHGS, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116;  
888-296-3447; [www.NewEnglandAncestors.org](http://www.NewEnglandAncestors.org).

### Plimoth Plantation: *Bringing Your History To Life*

As a non-profit, educational organization our mission is: to offer the public powerful experiences of history, built upon thorough research of the Wampanoag and Pilgrim communities. We offer multiple learning opportunities to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship of historical events to modern America. Members have access to our Research Library.

Plimoth Plantation, 137 Warren Avenue, Plymouth, MA 02632;  
508-746-1622; [www.plimoth.org](http://www.plimoth.org)

## RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

- [www.PlymouthAncestors.org](http://www.PlymouthAncestors.org)
- [www.CyndisList.com](http://www.CyndisList.com)
- [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org)
- [www.USGenWeb.org](http://www.USGenWeb.org)



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## GENEALOGICAL LIBRARIES IN PLYMOUTH

### General Society of Mayflower Descendants Library

A collection focused principally on the genealogies of the descendants of the *Mayflower* passengers.

4 Winslow St., Plymouth; 508-746-3188; [www.mayflower.org](http://www.mayflower.org)

### Plymouth Collection, Plymouth Public Library

Over 1200 items relating to the descendants of the Pilgrims, as well as the many other immigrants who settled in the area.

132 South St., Plymouth; 508-830-4250;  
[www.plymouthpubliclibrary.org](http://www.plymouthpubliclibrary.org)

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

*The Complete Idiot's Guide to Genealogy* by Christine Rose and Kay Germain Ingalls, Alpha Books, 1997.

*Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research* by Marcia Melnyk, NEHGS, 1999.

*Shaking Your Family Tree: A Basic Guide to Tracing Your Family History* by Ralph J. Crandall, NEHGS, 2001.

*Unpuzzling Your Past* by Emily Croom, Betterway Books, 2003.

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[www.PlymouthAncestors.org](http://www.PlymouthAncestors.org)