

A genealogical profile of Edward Ashley

Birth: He was probably born after 1600. A 1629 letter by James Shirley in William Bradford's history described him as "an understanding young man" and Bradford described him as "a profane yonge man."

Death: He died on his way home from Russia sometime after 1632.

Ship: Unknown, 1628; *Lyon*, 1630

Life in England: The only clue to Edward Ashley's background come from James Sherley's March 19, 1629/30, letter to William Bradford. Written from Bristol, the letter referred to some able men of [Ashley's] own kindred who were willing to invest financially in his New England venture, so he may have had Bristol connections. At Isaac Allerton's instigation, two of the colony's English investors, James Sherley and Timothy Hatherly, chose Ashley to manage a new trading post at Penobscot, Maine. They also strongly requested that the Plymouth colonists support him in this venture, supplying him with trading goods, etc. This effort set him in direct competition with their trading post.

Life in New England: Edward Ashley first came to New England about 1628. In William Bradford's words, "He had for some time lived among the Indians as a savage and went naked amongst them and used their manners, in which time he got their language." He may have had contact with the Plymouth colonists at that time. After 16 months, he returned to England for five months. He sailed from Bristol in March, 1629/30, aboard the *Lyon*, in company with Isaac Allerton, arriving in New England in May. Plymouth officials reluctantly supplied him with trade goods. Mistrusting him the officials also sent another new arrival, Thomas Willet, with him as a partner.

Ashley continued working at Penobscot until October 1631. At that time he was found trading guns, powder and ammunition to the Natives in direct violation of both his agreement with Plymouth and the King's proclamation. He was arrested and returned to England. After a short stay in the Fleet prison, Ashley was released after February 17, 1631/2, but warned never to trade weapons, etc. again. Instead of returning to New England as planned, he was sent by some merchants to Russia, mostly likely for the fur trade. He was cast away at sea on the return voyage.

Family: No wife or children of Edward Ashley have been identified.

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.

Bradford, William. *History of Plimmoth Plantation*. Edited by W. C. Ford. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912.

Bradford, William. *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647*. Edited by Samuel Eliot Morison. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952.



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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.

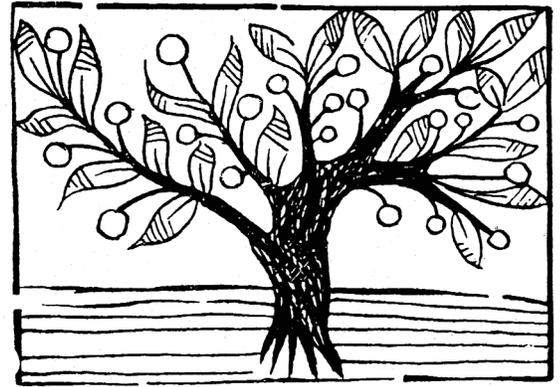
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As a non-profit, educational organization our mission is: to offer the public powerful experiences of history, built upon thorough research of the Wampanoag and Pilgrim communities. We offer multiple learning opportunities to provide a deeper understanding 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

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

- www.PlymouthAncestors.org
- www.CyndisList.com
- www.FamilySearch.org
- www.USGenWeb.org



PLYMOUTH ANCESTORS

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

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

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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