

A genealogical profile of William Brewster

Birth: William Brewster was born about 1566, most probably in the Scrooby, Nottinghamshire area.

Death: He died in Plymouth, April 10, 1644. His place of burial in Plymouth is unknown

Ship: *Mayflower*, 1620

Life in England: William Brewster was born to William and Mary (Smythe)(Simkinson) Brewster. His father worked for many years as the bailiff and postmaster of Scrooby manor. In 1580, he became a student at the University of Cambridge, but left there to work for Secretary William Davison. After his father's death in 1590, William continued in Scrooby as postmaster until 1603. It was most likely at this time that he joined the Separatist movement. Eventually he, along with many others of the congregation, emigrated to the Netherlands in order to worship openly.

Life in Holland: The Scrooby congregation lived first in Amsterdam for about a year, and in the spring of 1609 left there for Leiden. William Brewster lived near Pieterskerk [St. Peter's church] with his wife and children. He taught English to Leiden University students and worked as a printer. His son, Jonathan, was a ribbonweaver. William was chosen first as assistant to Pastor John Robinson and later as elder. It was in this capacity that he traveled to Plymouth Colony in 1620.

Life in New England: William Brewster, his wife, and sons, Love and Wrestling, came to Plymouth aboard the *Mayflower*. Jonathan arrived in 1621 aboard the *Fortune*, and his two daughters, Fear and Patience, came to Plymouth in 1623 aboard either the *Anne* or *Little James*. William preached in the Plymouth church for many years. He died in 1644.

Family: William married a woman named Mary _____ by 1593. She died in Plymouth in April 1627. William Bradford in writing of William Brewster's life and death wrote, that Brewster had "many children." If so, there may be others besides those listed below as yet unidentified.

Children of William and Mary Brewster:

- Jonathan was born in Scrooby on August 12, 1593. He married Lucretia Oldham on April 10, 1624, in Plymouth and had eight children. He moved first to Duxbury and about 1650 to Pequett (later New London), Connecticut where he died on August 7, 1659. He is buried in the Brewster Cemetery, Preston, Connecticut.

- Patience was born in Scrooby around 1600. On August 5, 1624 she married Thomas Prence. They had four children. She died in an outbreak of "pestilent fever" in 1634.
- Fear was born in Scrooby around 1605. She married Isaac Allerton in Plymouth around 1625 as his second wife, and had two children. She died in 1634 during the outbreak of "pestilent fever."
- Love was born about 1607 in Scrooby. He married Sarah Collier on May 15, 1634, and had four children. He died in Duxbury in 1650. His name was recorded by a grandson as "Truelove."
- A child of William was buried at St. Pancras, Leiden on June 20, 1609.
- Wrestling was born around 1611 in Leiden. He died in New England unmarried between 1627 and 1651.

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.

Emma C. B. Jones. *The Brewster Genealogy, 1566–1907*. 2 vol. New York: Grafton Press, 1908.

Mayflower Families in Progress: William Brewster. Barbara L. Merrick, comp., in four parts. Plymouth: General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1999–2003.

Mary R. Sherwood. *Pilgrim: A Biography of William Brewster*. Falls Church, VA: Great Oak Press, 1982.



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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

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NEHGS, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116;
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- www.PlymouthAncestors.org
- www.CyndisList.com
- www.FamilySearch.org
- www.USGenWeb.org



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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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