

Women of the Mayflower

Much has been said of the Pilgrim fathers, but how little we hear of the Pilgrim mothers. What a double heroism and courage it was their lot to bear, as they left peaceful homes, and in some cases, part of their families, that peaceful morning in August, 1620, to sail across the "vast and furious ocean," their destination a new and undiscovered country, inhabited by savages, or wild beasts, they knew not what.

With woman's natural heroism, they not only had to keep up their own spirits, but quietly to encourage the men, when discouragements and hardships came to them.

We seem to see them, on the long, tedious voyage, and then at last when land was sighted, what joy and hope, to have found a haven of refuge.

While the men went ashore to explore their new found country, they quietly stayed on board the Mayflower and finally they also landed and their first work was to do the family washing.

We find that of the whole company of 103 who actually arrived in the new country, twenty-six were women.

We all know that Dorothy Bradford, wife of Gov. Bradford, was drowned in Cape Cod Harbor, in Dec. 1620.

Another well known woman passenger was Priscilla Mullens. She was a young girl, and both of her parents died of the general sickness first winter. She was of French descent, and with the French love of dress and gaiety she must have been somewhat of a trial to the sober, pious Pilgrim mothers. Can we not imagine the dainty maiden as she coyly answers John Alden "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

It has been said that Mary Chilton, daughter of James Chilton, was the first woman to land on Plymouth Rock. She grew up and married a brother of Gov Winslow.

Susanna White is deserving of mention as being the mother of Peregrine White, the first white child born in New England. The father died in the first winter, and she married Gov. Winslow.

Elizabeth Hopkins, wife of Stephen, lived some twenty years after the settlement at Plymouth.

Another woman passenger was Desire Minter, who returned to England and died there.

A maid servant who came over, married at Plymouth and died there after a few years.

The wife of Elder Brewster lived

to a good old age and died at Plymouth.

Ellen Billington, wife of John, married for her second husband Gregory Armstrong.

The following women died in the first winter in the great sickness, or soon after:

Katherine, wife of Gov. John Carver.

Elizabeth, wife of Gov. John Winslow.

Mary, wife of Isaac Allerton.

Rose, wife of Capt. Miles Standish.

The wife of Christopher Martin.

The wife of Wm. Mullins.

The wife of Edward Tilley

The wife of John Tilley.

The wife of Thomas Tinker.

Alice, wife of John Rigdale.

The wife of James Chilton.

The wife of Edwin Fuller.

Sarah, wife of Francis Eaton.


It is a long stretch of the imagination to look at our modern preparation for the annual Thanksgiving feast, by the women of the household, with every need and luxury at her command, and then look back to the women's part in that first Thanksgiving, with the crude and small means to work with, and yet of the two, will we not find real thankfulness the more deeply expressed on the first occasion?

All honor to the brave women of the Mayflower, whose trials, sorrows and hardships have made possible for us, in this three hundredth anniversary of their coming, the luxuries, comforts and blessings we enjoy.

1952 - 1953

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The  
Research Club of Provincetown  
Incorporated



Membership --- Mayflower Descendants

Organized October 18, 1910      Incorporated April 11, 1923  
Historical Museum Established September 1, 1923  
Museum Opened to the Public May 27, 1924

