



# Society News

## THE PILGRIM WILLIAM WHITE SOCIETY

AN ENDORSED FAMILY SOCIETY  
OF THE GENERAL SOCIETY OF MAYFLOWER DESCENDANTS

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## Message from the Governor

*Dear Cousins,*

2021 is now behind us but the year was quite eventful for Pilgrim William White descendants with the release of the Peregrine biography by historian Stephen O'Neill and research into William's excommunication around the time he relocated to Amsterdam by Sue Alan, Caleb Johnson, and Simon Neal. The year also marked the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first harvest festival of Thanksgiving in Plymouth. TPWWS gained a total of 11 new lineage and 5 friend members for the year. It can be a rewarding and enlightening experience to compile the required documentation for Mayflower Society membership and then ultimately finding your way into our endorsed family society. It can be more of a difficult task for others in gathering specific family records. Personally, I was fortunate to have my family descent well documented by a genealogist when I was young. For my application I only had to gather information beginning from my 2nd great-grandfather, who survived his service in the Ohio Battery during the Civil War. Our community is delighted to welcome all new members and are thankful for all who have joined since the organization's founding 9 years ago.

A lot of people begin the new year with a sense of renewal along with uncertainty of the future. Our Pilgrim ancestors faced much uncertainty while deciding to leave Leiden, negotiate with the merchant sponsors, and undertake the arduous transatlantic *Mayflower*



*Governor Patrick White*

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voyage to the new world. Despite the unknowns the Separatists remained determined to live their lives free from persecution. I hope everyone had a great start to their new year and are looking ahead with a resolute spirit.

*Patrick*

## The Excommunications of Mayflower Passenger William White and His Half-Siblings Henry and Jacomine May, at Wisbech, Cambridgeshire

*Sue Allan, Caleb Johnson, and Simon Neal*

Editor's note: What follows is a reprint of an article appearing in *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 175 (Spring 2021) appearing in this newsletter with permission from the *Register* and the authors. In their introduction, the *Register* noted the further research in Ely Diocesan Records has revealed that William and his half-siblings were cited in Wisbech for non-conformity in early 1608. By the end of 1608 all three were living in Amsterdam. William White's occupation was previously not known; in these records he was called a shoemaker.

Mayflower passenger William White was baptized on 25 January 1586/7 at Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, the son of Edward and Thomasine (Cross) (May) White. His mother, Thomasine, had been previously married to John May, and by him had children Henry and Jacomine May — William White's half-siblings.<sup>1</sup>

During a recent search of the church records of the Diocese of Ely, Cambridgeshire, currently housed at the Cambridge University Library, some additional records were discovered relating

to William White, Henry May, and Jacomine May. These records, transcribed below, show that Henry and his sister Jacomine May, and William White, shoemaker,<sup>2</sup> were cited for non-confirmation.

Henry and Jacomine May were cited for separating themselves from the congregation and “pretending to joyne themselves to a reformed Church in Amsterdam,” while William White was cited for being “negligent in coming to divine service” and for being a “favourer of the sort of the Brownists.” The citations were all made on 16 March 1607/8. This was followed by the proclamations being posted to the church door during divine services on 3 April 1608. When the Mays and William White did not appear, a suspension was announced during the church services on 17 April 1608. On 4 June 1608, the excommunications were formally issued by the church, and were announced at divine services on 19 June 1608.

At the same time that the Mays and White were cited in March 1607/8, Thomas Adam, shoemaker, and John Bewer, cobbler, were cited “for being supposed and reported to have private conventicles in their houses.”<sup>3</sup> Given the common occupation with William White, it might not be a significant leap of the imagination to suspect he knew Thomas Adam and John Bewer, and perhaps was attending those private conventicles as well.

William White arrived in Amsterdam in May 1608, even before his formal excommunication had been issued and announced. Henry May — and presumably his sister Jacomine, and his children, including Dorothy — arrived in Amsterdam in August 1608.<sup>4</sup> There they all joined with

<sup>1</sup> Caleb Johnson, Sue Allan, and Simon Neal, “The English Origin and Kinship of Mayflower Passengers William White and Dorothy (May) Bradford of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire,” *The American Genealogist* 89 (2017):81–94, 168–188, 241–264.

<sup>2</sup> This is the first record we have of Mayflower passenger William White's occupation. Note that the longstanding claim that he was the woolcomber of Leiden has been disproved. That was an unrelated man of the same name. For more information, see the article referenced in note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Cambridge University Library, Ely Diocesan Records, B/2/26 (Act Book 1606–1608), folio 132.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, Allan, and Neal, “William White and Dorothy (May) Bradford” [note 1], *The American Genealogist* 89:84, citing Amsterdam Archives, *Poorterboeken*. Henry May's wife Katherine was buried in Wisbech 21 October 1605, before these events occurred (*ibid.*, *The American Genealogist* 89:181).

the Ancient Brethren Church; when the congregation split shortly thereafter, they followed Henry Ainsworth. On 5 May 1609, Jacomine May married in Amsterdam, printer Jan l'Ecluse, with her half-brother William White accompanying her.<sup>5</sup>

[At Wisbech St. Peters]<sup>6</sup>

Wee present Henry Maye and Jacomyn Maye his sister for that they have separated themselves from our Congregac[i]on, pretending to joyne themselves to a reformed Churche in Amstelredam in the Lowe Countryes.

And 16th March 1607[/8] from the original citation gained by William Oldcorne, apparitor, [ . . . ] they did not appear by ways and means, etc, on Saturday the 9th day of April next at Cambridge

And on 9th April 1608, the aforesaid decree having been exhibited to William Oldcorne, apparitor, the aforesaid decree was executed by the affixing of the same upon the door of the parish church of Wisbech St Peter on Sunday at the time of divine service. 3 April 1608, etc, not appearing, a publication of suspension issued. And the letters of the aforesaid suspension were announced in the church there at the time of divine services on Sunday 17th April 1608 by Master Matthew Champion, clerk, vicar there, just as appears

And 4th June 1608, with their contumacy increasing, there issued an excommunication. And letters of the aforesaid excommunication were announced in the church there at the time of divine services on the 19th of June 1608 by master Matthew Champion, clerk, vicar there, just as appears.

Jachomyn Maye presented, as above. And 16th March 1607[/8] the original citation, having been exhibited by William Oldcorne, the apparitor, was cited. Not appearing, there issued a suspension. And letters of the aforesaid suspension were announced similarly, as above. And on the 4th of June 1608, her aforesaid contumacy increasing, there was issued an excommunication. And letters of the aforesaid excommunication were announced similarly, as above.

[At Wisbech St. Peters]<sup>7</sup>

William White, shoemaker, presented for that he is negligent in coming to divine service. And on 16th March 1607[/8] the original citation having been exhibited by William Oldcorne, apparitor, proclamation, not appearing by ways and means, etc, until Saturday the 9th day of April next at Cambridge.

And on 9th April 1608, the aforesaid decree having been exhibited by William Oldcorne, apparitor, the aforesaid decree was executed by the affixing of the same upon the door of the parish church there on 3 April 1608, etc. With him not appearing, a suspension issued. And the letters of the aforesaid suspension were announced in the church there at the time of divine services on Sunday 17th April 1608 by Master Matthew Champion, clerk, vicar there, just as appears.

And 4th June 1608, with his contumacy increasing, there issued an excommunication. And letters of the aforesaid excommunication were announced in the church there at the time of divine services on the 19th of June 1608 by master Matthew Champion, clerk, vicar there, just as appears. The said William White presented for that he is suspected to be a favourer of the sort of the Brownists. And 16 Mar 1607[/8], the original citation having

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., *The American Genealogist* 89:83–84

<sup>6</sup> Ely Diocesan Records, B/2/26 (Act Book 1606–1608) [note 3], folio 132d.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

been exhibited by William Oldcorne, the apparitor, proclamation, not appearing by ways and means, etc, until Saturday the 9th of April next at Cambridge.

And on 9th April 1608, the aforesaid decree having been exhibited by William Oldcorne, apparitor, the aforesaid proclamation was executed, as above. With him not appearing, a suspension was issued. And the letters of the aforesaid [suspension] were announced similarly, as above. And 4th June 1608, with his contumacy increasing, there issued an excommunication. And letters of the aforesaid excommunication were announced similarly, just as appears.

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([www.admin.mayflowermaid.com](http://www.admin.mayflowermaid.com)) is the Official Historian at Scrooby Manor and Historian for the Pilgrim Fathers UK Origins Association. She has written several books, including *In Search of Scrooby Manor* (2013), *James Brewster, Bawtry Chapel & a Trybe of Wicked People* (2014), *William Brewster: The Making of a Pilgrim* (2016), and *In Search of Mayflower Pilgrim Susanna White Winslow* (2018).

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*Simon Neal*  
([nealresearch.co.uk](http://nealresearch.co.uk)) specializes in English records of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He has a Master's degree with Honours in Latin from the University of St. Andrews, and is a member of the Association of Genealogists and Record Agents (AGRA) and the Society of Archivists. He was a contributing editor of *Mayflower Descendant* from 2011 to 2014.

## Looking Back

*By Cousin Alan Smith*

It might be the weather or COVID-19 or just me, but I have been thinking a lot about mortality. So, I have been digging through the mortality records of our ancestors.

Apart from the death of William on February 21, 1621 at thirty-three, our people had great lives and longevity. Peregrine, who probably should have died in infancy aboard the *Mayflower*, lived to be eighty-four. Resolved lived to be around seventy-two. Susanna survived multiple child births, which was a leading cause of early deaths of young women. While most of the adult women died before the First Thanksgiving, she lived to be at least fifty-four (date of Edward's will) and could have been as old as seventy-five (date of her son Josiah's will).

We don't know where they are buried, but likely they are buried in the Marshfield Cemetery. Resolved and Judith's children were not for the most as long lived. William, their oldest son, seems to have been in ill health at forty-two and was cared for by a tenant on his lands. He had no known issue. The next son John apparently died young or at least before 1684/5 when he could have been forty. Resolved II died at twenty-three. It is uncertain when their youngest daughter Susanna died.

Four children did live to have issue. Samuel was born in 1646 and died c. 1729/30 about eighty-four. Anna was born in 1649 and died in 1714 at sixty-four. Elizabeth was born in 1652 and died after 1712/13; so, she was at least sixty. Josiah was born in 1654 and died in 1710 at fifty-six. Therefore, of Resolved and Judith's children with issue Josiah was the youngest. We come from a line of strong, healthy adults; therefore, we shouldn't be so morbid. -- In the next issue, I will explore the longevity of Peregrine's children.



The dates and information are based on The William White Silver Book.

*Alan*

## Presidential Proclamation

In July 1863, the Battle of Gettysburg resulted in more than 50,000 American casualties. Despite these losses, the United



States gained a great victory. On October 3, 1863, with this victory in mind, as well as its cost, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation:

*I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, ...to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving... And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him ..., they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.*

This proclamation is viewed as the beginning of the national holiday of Thanksgiving Day. It was one of nine similar

proclamations that Mr. Lincoln issued during the Civil War. Mr. Lincoln issued the proclamation, but he did not author it. Secretary of State William Seward penned the October 1863 proclamation.

## Our Cape Cod Ancestor

*By Ann Wilkerson*

The lineage society of Descendants of Cape Cod and the Islands recently changed their eligibility rules to include any Mayflower descendant. I like to write about each ancestor that I have honored through a society membership, and this is what I wrote for Susanna. It doesn't cover any new ground, but I hope that I conveyed my affection for her.

Susanna Jackson

10th Great Grandmother

Society: Descendants of Cape Cod and the Islands

Scenario: You and your husband are discussing moving to America. You have a four-year-old son and are thinking about growing your family. You are part of a group who secure transportation on two ships that will leave England to cross the Atlantic in the summer of 1620. Around April or May, you discover you are pregnant. You still decide to go, but delays with the seaworthiness of one of the ships means you don't leave for the two-month crossing until early September when you are in your last trimester of pregnancy. You live in extremely close quarters, but you have the companionship of many women, including two who are also pregnant. Your ship is buffeted by gales and slowed by the prevailing Gulf Stream. By the time you reach America, it is not at your destination of the Hudson River but 220 miles to the

north at Cape Cod. Your ship anchors off Cape Cod on November 11, but you must continue to live onboard, and there you give birth to your second son. Within months your husband will be dead, and within the next year, 52 of your 102 fellow passengers will also die.

This is the story of Susanna Jackson who was probably born in 1592 in Scrooby in Nottinghamshire. For religious reasons, Susanna moved to Amsterdam around 1608 where she married William White. Together they joined with those from the Leiden church congregation to embark on the *Mayflower* journey.

Despite the early death of her husband William, Susanna's story did not end sadly. In the first wedding of Plymouth colonists, she remarried to Edward Winslow whose wife had also recently died. Edward rose to prominence in the colony and became Governor of Plymouth on three occasions. Susanna had five more pregnancies, and two children with Edward grew to adulthood (Josiah Winslow became the first Plymouth-born Governor of the Colony.) Edward supported Oliver Cromwell during the English Civil War, and he spent his last years in England. Dressed in black finery, Edward's portrait commissioned in England is the only existing contemporary portrait of a Mayflower Pilgrim, and it came to represent erroneously the attire of all pilgrims, who truly did not wear just black. The portrait depicts him holding a letter signed "your loving wife Susanna."

Both her sons by William thrived and grew up to be productive members of the colony. Resolved married Judith Vassall (connected to Jamestowne through her grandfather) and they had eight children. My 9th great grandfather Peregrine White, the baby born onboard the Mayflower in Cape Cod Harbor, married Sarah Bassett and they had seven children together.

These quotes from Sue Allan's book about Susanna captures for me the essence of honoring my *Mayflower* women ancestors:

"You may ask why it is so important to be able to identify the family roots of [Susanna]. The truth is that all of the women of the *Mayflower* were important to the seeding of the Plymouth colony, and yet we know so very little about their lives simply because of their gender. They were born into an era where women had very few legal rights, were unable to exercise ownership over property unless widowed, and were regarded almost as "property" themselves. Thus, genealogically researching women is particularly challenging as there is often little trace of them in written records."

And

"Although she was the wife of one Plymouth Governor and the mother of another, and the first Plymouth bride, Susanna, like many of the other early colonial women, slipped from history and was forgotten in the records written by men. She probably died at the family's estate in Marshfield and was buried in the historic Old Winslow Burying Ground, nowadays known simply as Winslow Cemetery, which was established around 1650."



Scrooby Manor, the only surviving building of the property owned by the Archbishops of York. Susanna Jackson White Winslow lived here as a child. The secret worship meetings of the Separatists were held here until the congregation left for the Netherlands to avoid persecution and arrest.

## Welcome New Members

**William Twining Madden - Resolved**

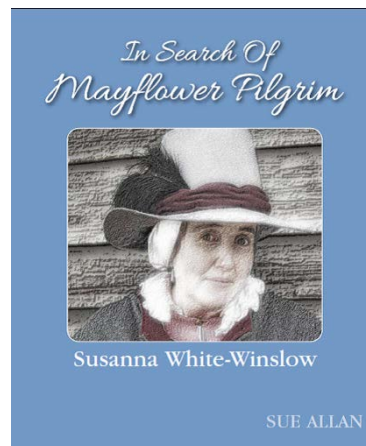
**William Ernest Wry - Friend**

**Fr. Loyd D. Morris -- Friend**

them each time. I wish I could think of something newsworthy to send you to include, but so far, nothing. I will keep looking tho.

*Cousin Linda Smith*

**Your letter here – in the April newsletter!**



[www.mayflowermaid.com](http://www.mayflowermaid.com)

## Letters to the Editor

*Hello Cousin Michael,*

Great newsletter!

I was at the Thanksgiving dinner mentioned while I was at the BGOA in September. One item was missing from the place settings..... there were NO forks.



I'm attaching a picture of what I sat down to. Eating without forks had some challenges!! 😊

*Cousin Nan*

*Hello cousin Mike,*

Thank you so much for all your hard work on the newsletter. I look forward to reading







Toe Stir

Settle

Gridiron

Sugar Nipper

Bake Kettle

Sparking Lamp

*Match the colonial  
household items on the left  
with their names on the right.*

Photos are courtesy of the Jabez Howland House in  
Plymouth, Massachusetts and the web





### Answers

*Match the colonial household items with their names*

**Bake kettle** - A heavy iron pot with a lid used for baking breads, pies and for making soups and stewing meats.

**Toe Stir** - Is this where we got the name, toaster? It is said that bread was placed in the rack and set on the hearth near the flames of the fire. The rack was on a pivot, so after the bread was toasted on the first side, it was turned with the toe of someone's shoe to toast the other side.

**Sparkling Lamp** - These were very small lamps and did not contain much oil. When the lamp was about to burn out, it would flicker, signaling that it was time for the young man courting the young lady of the house to leave for the night.

**Settle** - The high back of this bench was a protection from the drafts of an opened door. It was most frequently placed near the fireplace in the sitting-room.

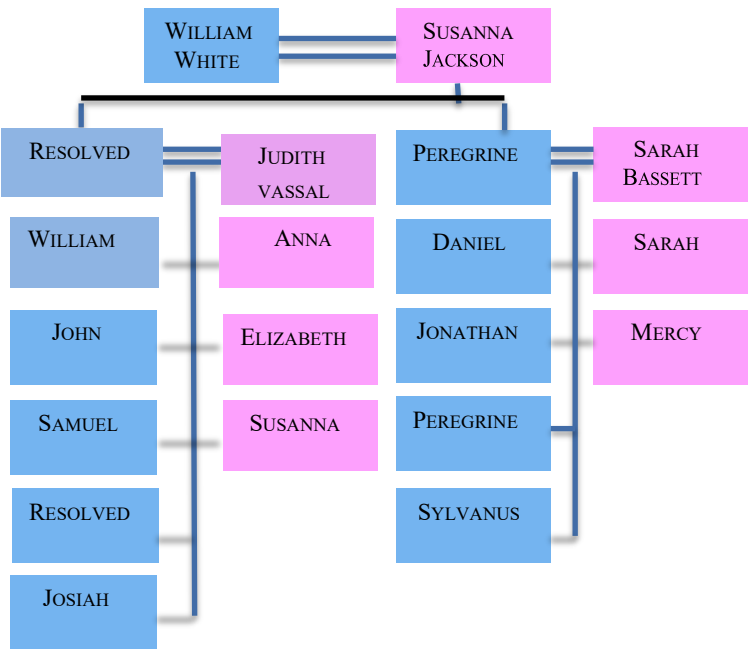
**Gridiron** - A metal grate with parallel bars typically used for grilling meat and fish. The word "gridiron" has been in use since the 14th century and refers to a metal grid for cooking food over a fire. The American football field resembles a gridiron, which is probably why we use the term "gridiron football".

**Sugar Nipper** - White sugar came from tropical islands in the shape of cones or loaves. Many loaves during the period were traditionally wrapped in blue paper with string for hanging. Before using, small pieces had to be cut with sugar nippers, then ground for use in cooking.

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# THE PILGRIM WILLIAM WHITE SOCIETY

**Our Mission:** Provide a forum for members to gain information about our common ancestor, William White; to keep our Pilgrim heritage alive; and to promote education in our schools, communities and other societies.



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