

THOMAS ROGERS OF THE *MAYFLOWER*

Among those on board the ship *Mayflower* when it finally reached New England in November, 1620 were Thomas Rogers and his son Joseph. At this time we don't know when or where the Rogers family came from

A religious group called the Separatists had fled from England to Holland to escape the fines and punishments for their illegal religious practices. Thomas Rogers was a citizen of Leyden, Holland in 1618, probably a part of this religious group. After about 10 years in Holland, the Separatists found that jobs were hard to find and they were poor. They did not approve of the Dutch customs and way of life, and they did not approve of their children mixing with the Dutch children. They wanted to keep their English customs and their own religion, so they decided to go to the New World in search of religious freedom.

After several financial and political problems, two ships were obtained. The *Speedwell* (which leaked and could not make the trip) sailed from Leyden, Holland with the Separatists. And the *Mayflower* sailed from Southampton, England with the London and English group. One problem after another delayed their departure until they had to cross the stormy North Atlantic Ocean during a bad time of the year. After 66 miserable days at sea with 102 passengers packed in that tiny ship, they finally anchored near Provincetown on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Because of the mumbling and grumbling on board the ship, an agreement was signed by 41 men, including Thomas Rogers, called the Mayflower Compact. This famous historic document is an example of our country's earliest democratic government.

It was December and very cold before the area at Plymouth Rock was finally selected as the site to establish Plymouth Colony. Today we call this group of people who settled there the Pilgrims. Son Joseph survived that first terrible winter when half of those who had just arrived perished from some unidentified epidemic, but his father Thomas Rogers died.

The poll list of 1622 in Leyden, Holland includes the names of widow Elsgen Rogers, whose maiden name is not known, and her children, John, Elizabeth and Margaret Rogers. Son John Rogers came over to Plymouth Colony about 1630, but nothing is known about his sisters.

Children of Thomas and Elsgen (-----) Rogers who married and had children:

1. JOSEPH married HANNAH ----- and had eight children.
2. JOHN married ANNA CHURCHMAN and had four children.

Which son of Pilgrim Thomas Rogers is your Mayflower ancestor?

Compiled by Margaret Harris Stover from various sources, 2006
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