

CAPTAIN MYLES STANDISH OF THE *MAYFLOWER*

Among those on board the ship *Mayflower* when it finally reached New England in November, 1620 were Myles Standish and his wife Rose, whose maiden name is not known.

A religious group called the Separatists had fled from England to Holland to escape the fines and punishments for their illegal religious. Myles Standish was in Leyden, Holland, where he was a part of the British troops sent by Queen Elizabeth to assist the Dutch in their war against Spain. He was not part of this religious group though he was acquainted with them. After about 10 years in Holland, the Separatists found that jobs were hard to find and they were very 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. And they needed a military leader.

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 Myles Standish with the respected title of "Mr.," 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. Myles Standish survived that first terrible winter when half of those who had just arrived perished from some unidentified epidemic, but his wife Rose died. He was married again by 1623 to a lady named Barbara, maiden name unknown.

Myles' exact date and place of birth are not known, but we do know that he died on October 6, 1656 age past 70. And we know that he was a short man as he was called Captain Shrimp by some, that he had red hair, and that his face turned red when he lost his temper-which was often. Standish did not join the Plymouth church, yet he held the responsible position of military leadership, served many years as an Assistant and five years as Colony treasurer. A razor and sword that were owned by Captain Myles Standish are on display at the Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth. A 14 foot statue of Standish tops the 116 foot tower on Captain's Hill in Duxbury on land once owned by him.

Children of Myles and Barbara (-----) Standish born in Plymouth and Duxbury:

1. CHARLES died young. 2. ALEXANDER married SARAH ALDEN, daughter of Pilgrim John Alden of the *Mayflower* by whom he had eight children and DESIRE (DOTY)(SHERMAN)(HOLMES), daughter of Pilgrim Edward Doty of the *Mayflower*, by whom he had three more children. Alexander had 66 grandchildren. 3. JOHN died unmarried by 1650. 4. MYLES married SARAH WINSLOW, granddaughter of Pilgrim James Chilton of the *Mayflower*, but had no children. 5. LORA died before 1656. 6. JOSIAH married MARY DINGLEY and SARAH ALLEN and had eight children and 26 grandchildren 7. CHARLES died after 1656, probably unmarried.

Which son of Pilgrim Captain Myles Standish is your Mayflower ancestor?

Compiled by Margaret Harris Stover from various sources, 2006
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