



WINSLOW HERITAGE SOCIETY



THE HISTORY OF CORN AND THE PILGRIMS

By Kathy Myers



*Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home;
All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin.
God our Maker doth provide for our wants to be supplied,
Come to God's own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.¹*

As another growing season comes to a close in PA and Thanksgiving approaches, the words from the old hymn, *Come Ye Thankful People, Come*, bring to mind a crop that is unique to the Americas---corn. Part of the grass family, the many varieties of corn were developed from wild plants over a period of time by the people native to the Americas. These include dent corn, flint corn, flour corn, popcorn, sweet corn, waxy corn and pod corn.

The list of corn related foods in use in the USA is extensive---corn meal, corn on the cob, corn bread, johnnycakes, corn fritters, corn oil, corn margarine, corn flakes, corn syrup, corn soup, corn pudding and corn chips just to name a few, as well as corn grown as feed for cattle, chickens and other livestock. All around our nation, companies are turning corn into ethanol, an alternate source of fuel to power our cars.

The word "corn" in other countries refers to grains such as wheat, barley and rye. But here, the crop that we today call corn was known as maize to the early settlers, coming from the Native American word "mahiz", which means "that which sustains us."² "Archaeological and paleobotanical discoveries provide evidence that cultivated corn has existed in the southwestern US for at least 3,000 years. Discoveries in the Tehuacan Valley of southern Mexico have yielded evidence that wild corn existed

¹ Words: Henry Alford, *Psalms and Hymns*, 1844; Music: St. George's Windsor, George J. Elvey, 1858

² <http://www.rlrhouse.com/history-of-corn.html>



there from 5,000 to 3,400 B.C.”³ As to the cultivation of corn, “Archaeological evidence of corn’s early presence in the western hemisphere was identified from corn pollen grain considered to be 80,000 years old obtained from drill cores 200 feet below Mexico City.”⁴ Wherever corn originated, it was known to Native Americans long before Europeans reached this continent.

Corn spread through North America along the various trade routes of rivers and trails traveled by the Native Americans. Some speculate that “...cultivating corn is responsible for turning the Native American tribes from nomadic to agrarian societies.”⁵ Research reveals that corn was a well-established crop in North America by the time of the arrival of the Pilgrims in 1620.

Corn was taken to Europe by the early Spanish explorers and eventually spread around the world. “At first, corn was only a garden curiosity in Europe, but it soon began to be recognized as a valuable food crop. Within a few years, it spread throughout France, Italy and all of southeastern Europe and Northern Africa. By 1575 it was making its way into western China...”⁶ Were our Pilgrim ancestors familiar with corn before their arrival in the new world? According to an account by William Bradford, probably not.

It was during a scouting expedition that men from the *Mayflower* found a cache of corn buried underground in a place still known today as Corn Hill. Recorded in William Bradford’s writings *Of Plymouth Plantation*, we read, “Which, they digging up, found in them divers fair Indian baskets filled with corn, and some in ears, fair and good, of divers colors, which seemed to them a very goodly sight (having never seen any such before).” With supplies running low and an uncertainty as to whether the grains they brought with them would grow in this new land, the Pilgrims took corn from this cache at Corn Hill with the understanding that they would provide compensation to its owners.

The Wampanoag (meaning People of the First Light), had been living for thousands of years in the region where the Pilgrims landed. The next spring, it was Squanto, of the Wampanoag Nation, who taught our ancestors how to grow corn. “The seed the Pilgrims had stolen on the Cape is known today as northern flint corn---eight-rowed with kernels of several colors...Using mattocks---hoes with stone heads and wooden handles---the Indians gathered mounds of earth about a yard wide, where several fish were included with the seeds of corn. Once the corn had sprouted, beans and squash were added to the mounds. The creepers from the beans attached to the growing cornstalks, creating a blanket of shade that protected the plants’ roots against the searing summer sun while also discouraging weeds. Thanks to Squanto, the Pilgrims’ stolen corn thrived while their own barley and peas suffered in the alien soils of the New World.”⁷ This method of planting these three crops, corn, beans and squash, known by the Wampanoags as the Three Sisters, is claimed to be superior to the European method of planting in rows.

At <http://www.plimoth.org> we find the following account by the Wampanoags, “Around 1,000 years ago, the elders tell us, our relative the Crow flew from the Southwest to the Wampanoag Nation, bringing us the first corn and bean seeds (weachamin gka tuppquam wskannemuneash) as a gift from

³ Funk and Wagnall’s New Encyclopedia

⁴ *Origin, History and Uses of Corn (Zea mays)*, Gibson and Benson, Iowa State Univ., Dept. of Agronomy

⁵ <http://www.rlrouse.com/history-of-corn.html>

⁶ *Origins, History and Uses of Corn (Zea mays)*, Gibson and Benson, Iowa State Univ., Dept. of Agronomy

⁷ *Mayflower*, by Nathaniel Philbrick, p. 101-102



the Creator. Since that time, we have learned from our grandmothers and grandfathers how to sow, tend and harvest these wonderful plants.”

To the Native Americans, “...corn was of divine origin---it was the food of the gods that created the earth.”⁸ William Bradford said, “And sure it was God’s good providence that we found this corn for we know not how else we should have done.”*

For additional information on the Pilgrims and the history of the Wampanoag Nation, visit www.plimoth.org



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- Jessica Winslow, descendant of John Winslow**
- Naomi Winslow Ingraldi, descendant of John Winslow**
- Ronald Alton Knapp, descendant of Josiah Winslow**
- Brenda Martino Becker, descendant of Kenelm Winslow**
- Marjorie Dawn O’Brien, descendant of Kenelm Winslow**
- Julia A. Nedderman Heston, descendant of Kenelm Winslow**
- Tammy Lucille O’Brien, descendant of Kenelm Winslow**

2017-2020 Officers

**Elected at the annual meeting in
Plymouth, MA, September 10, 2017**

- Kathy Myers, Governor**
- Judy Quinn, Deputy Governor**
- Bruce Fensley, Secretary**
- Alice Zimmerman, Treasurer**
- Betty Mapes, Chaplain**
- John White, Historian/Genealogist**

Winslow Heritage Society presented a display of membership options and the Winslow charm in the Exhibition Room at Hotel 1620, Sept. 8-11, during the GSMD Congress.



⁸<http://www.ontariocorn.org/classroom/history.html>

*The author is a 12th generation descendant of William Bradford



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 4TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WINSLOW HERITAGE SOCIETY



*The garden at the Mayflower Society House, Plymouth, MA, September, 2017 (Photo by John Myers)
The house was once owned by Edward Winslow, great-grandson of the Pilgrim Edward Winslow*

The full Minutes of the Meeting held in Plymouth on Sunday, September 10, 2017, will be distributed prior to next year's annual meeting. Members attended in person, by teleconference, and with others voting by proxy. The officers, elected for a three year term, are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

The meeting began with an invocation and ended with a benediction, both provided by Betty Mapes, Chaplain.

It has been another year of accomplishment for the Society. Judy Quinn, Deputy Governor, designed and launched our official web page which can be found at <http://www.winslowheritagesociety.org>. You will find an article in this newsletter with statistics on visitors to the site. Kathy Myers, Governor, continues to support and monitor the Facebook page which will be found at winslow.heritage.society. The Society developed a silver Winslow charm and the first orders went out in July.

Bruce Fensley, Secretary, has developed a comprehensive list of members which includes member number, ancestor name, type of membership, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address. We ask anyone who has made any changes to notify Bruce at b0408fensley@gmail.com



Alice Zimmerman, Treasurer, gave a detailed report showing a balance in the WHS account of \$2,428.10
Judy Quinn, co-Historian, updated the members on the DNA project. An article appears in this newsletter with the latest statistics.

The Governor has openings in the standing committees for someone to chair education/research and a juniors committee. Interested members should contact Kathy at jkmyers2@verizon.net.

2020 Commemorative Projects: Any member with suggestions or ideas for commemorative projects should contact the Governor. Bruce Fensley has put forth an idea to create pamphlets on our Winslow ancestors to be offered on the website and at Congress in Plymouth in 2020. This would be a team project where participants could learn and share details about the family. Interested members should contact Bruce.

WHS will sponsor a day of music at the Worcester Cathedral in memory of Edward Winslow.

+++Note to members interested in attending the GSMD Congress in 2020: Plymouth Hotels have started accepting advance reservations.+++

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## Welcome to the Winslow Heritage Society Website!



The Winslow Heritage Society web site at [www.winslowheritagesociety.org](http://www.winslowheritagesociety.org) continues to attract new interest every month. In the past 7 days the site averaged 127 unique visitors a week with 386 page views. So far this month however, there have been 579 page reviews. The highest page views were Newsletters, Winslow Shop, Genealogy/History and the Governor’s Greeting. Folks were referred to our web site by 94 unique referring sites with the majority, however, being Google, Facebook and Bing.

**Judy Quinn, Web Master**

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The Winslow DNA Project at Family Tree DNA (administered by World Families) had 14 members in 2014 when I first became associated with the project. At the time of this year’s annual membership meeting of the Winslow Heritage Society in September, we had 40 members. I’m very happy to report that as of this writing, we have 45 members. The break down is 23 men and 22 women – an increase of 5 women in one month! This is very important and significant because even though our specific Winslow project is a Y-DNA project, there is so much that female MtDNA can contribute to research. Family Tree DNA has partnered with the Mayflower Society and is working to identify direct lines through MtDNA for our female Mayflower ancestors! They are also working to



identify male lines through YDNA testing and your Family Finder tests will contribute with autosomal results.

I want to encourage all of our members to take as many of the test offerings as they feel able to afford and join as many of the projects as they feel are pertinent to their own ancestry, especially the Winslow Project and the Mayflower Project. The greater the number of participants with Pilgrim ancestor lines the more accurate the research will be. Also, to help facilitate this, encourage as many of your sisters, brothers, cousins, aunts, uncles, children and grandchildren to test. As an example, I have tested myself, my daughter, a niece, two nephews and a first cousin. I feel that both my mother and father's ancestral DNA lines are well represented in the projects.



If you have tested with any other provider such as Ancestry or 23 & Me, please upload your results to FamilyTreeDNA.com and become a part of this very important research. I feel that I am already part of history because of who my ancestors were and I don't know about you but, I know I want to be a part of this ground breaking research when the discoveries are made and the news flash breaks! Mayflower Society members will receive discounted rates on FTDNA according to the latest Mayflower Quarterly Magazine dated Fall-2017. "There are directions online on what tests you may want to purchase at the discounted rate and how to join the Mayflower Project."

As a reminder, women can take an MtDNA and a Family Finder test and men can take YDNA, MtDNA and Family Finder tests. They are all important. You don't have to take them all at the same time. Once you have submitted your sample you can order further tests from the same sample at a later time just by notifying FTDNA.

In researching the Family Tree database I note that the majority of the 45 participants are NOT members of the Winslow Heritage Society (yet) and for those who are members, the majority have NOT also joined the Mayflower Project. It's as easy as a click of your mouse. Please don't be left behind when DNA makes Pilgrim history.



Judy Quinn
Winslow DNA Project Administrator



2.1 cm wide by 2.5 cm high

The silver Winslow Charm makes a thoughtful gift for any Winslow descendant. It takes approximately 4 weeks from the time the order is placed to completion. The charm is \$125 plus \$10 shipping. (Orders are payable in advance). Contact Kathy Myers, at jkmyers2@verizon.net. Mailing address: 2540 Beechtree Road, Falls Creek, PA 15840

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A Note from the Governor: *“When I returned home from Congress, Maggie was waiting for me”*



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Congratulations **CONGRATULATIONS to WHS Member, Jane Schleinzer, on her election to Member-at-Large, General Society of Mayflower Descendants Board. Jane can be reached at JSANTIQUES@aol.com**