



Copyright, 1962, by E. H. Snodgrass, Alhambra, California
 Printed in the United States of America

Photo added by Ronnie

Elder William Brewster, IV

BIRTH 1566 • Scrooby, Bassetlaw District, Nottinghamshire, England

DEATH 10 Apr 1644 • Duxbury, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, USA

BURIAL Burial Hill • Plymouth, Plymouth County,
Massachusetts, USA

GPS Latitude: 41.95594, Longitude: -70.66517

MEMORIAL ID 16195888

Pilgrim colonist, leader and preacher

Elder William Brewster came from Scrooby, in north Nottinghamshire and reached what became the Plymouth Colony in the Mayflower in 1620. He was accompanied by his wife, Mary Brewster, and his sons, Love Brewster and Wrestling Brewster. The town of Brewster, Barnstable, MA was incorporated Febr 19, 1803 and was named for Elder William Brewster. A large part of the inhabitants being his descendants



Added by Kenneth546

William Brewster attended Peterhouse College, Cambridge 1580-15... 83; was postmaster and baliff-receiver at Scrooby, England 1590-1607. Organized Scrooby congregation 1606-1609; removed his family to Amsterdam and later to Leyden, Holland where he tutored 1609-1616 and was ruling Elder 1616-1619. He was in flight and hiding in England in 1619-1620 while arranging passage for the Sainets to New England. William, his wife and two youngest sons arrived Plymouth via the Mayflower in 1620. At Plymouth, William was Ruling Elder until 1643. He was also purchaser 1626; Undertaker 1627-1641

Biography compiled by William L. DeCoursey, GSMD #68501,
a descendant of William Brewster.

William BREWSTER, son of William and Mary (SMYTHE) BREWSTER of Scrooby, England, was born in January 1563/4. He was regarded as leader of the Pilgrims at Scrooby (near Sherwood Forest), where his father became bailiff of the Manor of Scrooby in 1675, and was later appointed postmaster by Queen Elizabeth. In 1580, William Brewster (1563-1644) matriculated at Peterhouse College, in Cambridge, where it is believed he acquired his earliest Separatist ideas. The Separatists held the view that "the worship of the English Church is flat idolatry; that we admit into our Church persons unsanctified; that our preachers have no lawful calling; that our government is ungodly; that no bishop or preacher preacheth Christ sincerely and truly; that the people of every parish ought to choose their bishop, and that every elder, though he be no doctor nor pastor, is a bishop; that set prayer is blasphemous." These were radical views, which struck at the very roots of the government established English church. In Cambridge William BREWSTER joined the Separatist "underground" teachers and students who militantly refused to attend the compulsory services in the state-controlled churches. After completing his studies at Cambridge, William BREWSTER (Jr.) was employed by Puritan, Sir William DAVISON, Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth and her personal envoy to Holland. William BREWSTER accompanied DAVISON, as his personal aide, to Holland, during the war with Spain. When the Netherlands surrendered their "cautionary towns" to Elizabeth, the keys of these towns were entrusted by DAVISON to the custody of BREWSTER. William BREWSTER visited the Netherlands in 1584 and again in 1585/86, returning to Scrooby in 1588 after the disgrace of DAVISON, which followed the execution of Mary STUART.

William BREWSTER (Jr.) married, ca.1585, to Mary --?--, her maiden surname unknown.. William BREWSTER had



Added by Caryn

children: William, Edward, Jonathan BREWSTER (1593-1659)
m. (1) --?-- and m. (2) Lucretia OLDHAM; Love BREWSTER
(1595-1651) m.1634 Sarah, dau. William COLLIER; Wrestling
BREWSTER; Patience BREWSTER m.1624 Gov. Thomas
PRENCE; and Fear BREWSTER (1606-1634) m.1626 Isaac
ALLERTON.

Regarding the possible identity of William Brewster's wife,
Mary, John G. Hunt in the January 1965 issue of THE
AMERICAN GENEALOGIST, v.41, pp.1-5,63, presents
circumstantial evidence that William BREWSTER's wife was
Mary WENTWORTH, dau. of Thomas and Grace (GASCOIGNE)
WENTWORTH. The evidence has not been accepted as
conclusive, however.

In 1587, Thomas COPE/COPP presented the Presbyterian
"Book of Discipline" to Parliament, and offered a bill for its
enactment into law. For this offense he, together with Peter
WENTWORTH, another Puritan, who then stood up for
freedom of speech, was committed to the Tower by order of
Queen Elizabeth. - (Note: Some say that Elder William
BREWSTER, of the Mayflower, married, ca.1585, to Mary
WENTWORTH, dau. of Thomas and Grace (GASCOIGNE)
WENTWORTH. The Peter WENTWORTH who was condemned
to the Tower, perhaps was a brother or cousin of Mary
BREWSTER.)

(According to Marshall GARDNER of Yuma, Arizona, William
BREWSTER married Mary LOVE. No evidence given.)
Until more evidence becomes available, all that can be said
is that William Brewster's wife was "Mary", maiden name
unknown.

In 1587, Queen Elizabeth, in an effort to conceal her own
complicity in the death of Mary STUART Queen of Scots,
ordered her Secretary of State, William DAVISON, to trial for
supposedly concealing Mary STUART's death warrant
among other papers he presented to Elizabeth for her
signature. (He was the scape-goat.) He was found guilty,
fined and thrown into prison. Queen Elizabeth immediately

pardoned Davison, and revoked the fine, and restored his position and title, but unable to face him, she exiled him from the court along with his entourage, including his aide, William BREWSTER.

William BREWSTER [Jr.], upon receiving news of the illness of his father, William BREWSTER, Sr., , returned to Scrooby in early 1589. Upon the death of the Senior William BREWSTER, Sir William DAVISON recommended his former aide, William BREWSTER (Jr.), for the bailiff and postmaster positions previously held by BREWSTER's deceased father. During his father's illness, young BREWSTER served more than eighteen months as his father's deputy. On 22 August 1590, a letter was sent from Mr. John STANHOPE to Sir William DAVISON, Queen Elizabeth's secretary. Mr. STANHOPE sent his regrets that he could not comply with DAVISON's request. On the death of old BRUSTER, one Samuel REVERCOTES wrote to STANHOPE for the place of postmaster at SCROOBY, and STANHOPE had complied. He stated his reasons for not conferring the place on young BRUSTER, who had served in that place for his father, old BRUSTER. Secretary DAVISON returned the letter with notes in his own hand in defense of young BREWSTER, and pointed out that since, young BREWSTER had held the positions for over a year-and-a-half during his fathers illness, that he should be allowed to continue. Secretary DAVISON apparently was persuasive and/or able to use his influence. BREWSTER got the positions, which he held until he departed for Holland in 1609.

Parliament, in 1593, forbade the Separatists to hold their own services. Anyone who refused to attend church for forty days, and who went instead to private meetings "contrary to the laws and statutes of this realm [and] being thereof lawfully convicted, shall be committed to prison, there to remain without bail or mainprise, until they shall confirm and yield themselves to come to some church."

In the 1593 Parliament, the speaker, Edward COKE, presented the usual petition to the queen, asking for liberty

of speech for freedom from arrest, and for access to her majesty. For answer he was told that privilege of speech was granted, but it consisted in saying "yea" or "no;" and that members of Parliament could have access to her majesty at times convenient, and when she was at leisure from other important causes of the realm. Considering this a sharp rebuff, Peter WENTWORTH again shocked Parliament and the Queen by bringing in a bill for settling the succession to the crown, and again he was promptly committed to the Tower. Parliament, in 1593, forbade the Separatists to hold their own services. Anyone who refused to attend church for forty days, and who went instead to private meetings "contrary to the laws and statutes of this realm [and] being thereof lawfully convicted, shall be committed to prison, there to remain without bail or mainprise, until they shall confirm and yield themselves to come to some church."

A church court was in session in 1597 to consider simony charges against James BREWSTER, vicar of Sutton cum Launde, Nottinghamshire. Before the Rev. Mr. John BENET, L.L.D., "appeared William BREWSTER, gen., brother of the aforesaid James BREWSTER, cleric, which William gave assent to the findings of the court, by which the salary of said cleric was to be withheld."

As early as 1606, a Separatist congregation was formed in Scrooby, which met in the manor house where William BREWSTER lived. "After they were joined together into communion he was a special stay and help unto them. They ordinarily met at his house on the Lord's Day, which was a Manor of the Bishop's [the Archbishop of York]; and with great love he entertained them when they came, making provision for them, to his great charge, and continued to do so, whilst they could stay in England." William BREWSTER was dismissed from his postmaster position at Scrooby, in 1607, because of his Separatist activities.

The Puritan persecution intensified under James I, and William BREWSTER, William BRADFORD and other Scrooby Separatists, at last decided to escape to Holland. "In

Autumn 1607, those who had not yet been arrested and thrown into prison resolved to smuggle themselves out of the country. Packing their personal belongings and led by their pastor, Richard CLIFTON, the Separatists set out for the port of Boston, Lincolnshire, England (sixty miles from Scrooby). At Boston, they were betrayed by the captain of the ship that was to have transported them; their goods were ransacked; and they were imprisoned for a month or more. BREWSTER, BRADFORD, and CLIFTON were the last to be set free having served about a year in the prison at Boston, England.

"On 1 December 1607, William Brewster of Scrooby was cited before the High Court of Commission on information that he was a Brownist and disobedient in matters of religion. He was fined 20 pounds." (And apparently he went to prison in addition to the fine.)

A diary entry of 1608 reads, "Seeing themselves thus molested, and that there was no hope of their continuance there, by a joynte consente they resolved to go into the Low Countries, where they heard was freedome of Religion for all men." Their exile to a new and foreign land was not easy. "The ports and havens were shut against them. So as they were fain to seek secret means of conveyance; and to bribe and fee the mariners, and give extra-ordinary rates for their passages. And yet were they often-times betrayed, many of them; and both they and their goods intercepted and surprised, and thereby put to great trouble and charge."

In 1608, another attempt was made by the Separatists to escape to Holland. They were pursued, and in their haste to avoid capture or worse, many of the men were separated from their wives, and families. The women left behind in England were arrested, but their captors, not knowing how to dispose of these women whose only crime was wanting to join their husbands, released them. The families gradually re-united in Holland and settled first in Amsterdam and in 1609 at Leiden, Holland.

In February 1609 permission was granted by the Burgomasters of Leyden, Holland for 150 persons, or thereabouts, to re-settle in Leyden, "provided such persons behave themselves and obey the laws and ordinances. Elder William BREWSTER removed to Leiden, Holland, where he was chosen a ruling elder in the new church. He, at first, made a living as "ribbon maker" in a silk factory, but, as an educated man, he soon was able to earn money by teaching. "His outward condition was mended, and he lived well and plentifully. For he fell into a way, by reason he had the Latin tongue, to teach many students who had a desire to learn the English tongue, to teach them English; and by his method they quickly attained it with great facility; for he drew Rules to learn it by, after the Latin manner. And many Gentlemen, both Danes and Germans, resorted to him, as they had time from other studies; some of them being Great Men's sons."

Elder William BREWSTER, aged about forty-two years, came before the aldermen at Leiden, Holland, 12 June 1609 (eight days before the burial of an un-named child of William BREWSTER), as guardian of Ann PECK, native of Launde (near Scrooby, England), when they granted to Thomas SIMKINSON, merchant of Hull (he probably was son of John and Mary (SMYTHE) SYMKINSON and half-brother of Elder William BREWSTER), the power to receive seven pounds sterling that Ann PECK had left in the hands of William WATKIN, pastor of Clarbrough (six miles south-east of Scrooby) when she left England.

Ann PECK and her brother Robert PECK were wards of William BREWSTER. That they were William BREWSTER's neice and nephew is apparent, for it seems that their parents were Robert and Prudence (BREWSTER) PECK of Everton (about two miles east of Scrooby); which Robert PECK, in his will dated 1598, proved at York the same year, named wife Prudence and left his daughter Ann seven pounds, six shillings, eight pence.

The register of St. Pancras church, Leyden, records the burial

on Saturday, 20 June 1609, of a child of William BREWSTER. The age and sex of the child are not specified. (Comment - It might be reasonable to assume that the "child of William BREWSTER" who was buried, 20 June 1609, was Prudence (BREWSTER) PECK, dau. of William BREWSTER, Sr. and wife of Robert PECK, since her brother, Elder William BREWSTER appeared in court eight days earlier as guardian of Prudence's minor daughter, Ann PECK.) -

On 25 June 1609, Elder William BREWSTER, aged about forty-two (other records would make him closer to 45), Mary BREWSTER, about forty, and their son Jonathan, sixteen, appeared in Dutch Court to testify as witnesses in behalf of a merchant of Amsterdam who had a dispute with a supplier of cloth. Their residence was in the "stinckteech" in Leiden on the "Pieterskerkhof," in the little colony of houses on the estate of John ROBINSON.

William BREWSTER witnessed the betrothal of William PONTUS, weaver, and Wybra HANSON at Leyden in 1610. In 1611, the Separatists congregation purchased an estate at Leiden, where they lived and worshiped. William BREWSTER witnessed the betrothal of Randall THICKINS and Jane WHITE, in 1612, at Leyden.

In 1616, William BREWSTER, with the aid of John REYNOLDS, a master printer from London and his 22-year-old assistant Edward WINSLOW, printed several anonymous Puritan pamphlets and books, that were smuggled into England for sale there. The publishing house (an extension on the rear of William BREWSTER's house which faced the Stincksteeg, or Stink Alley) was financed by his young friend, Thomas BREWER. King James's government regarded these publications as treasonable; and the English ambassador to Holland insisted that the Dutch authorities imprison Thomas BREWER. William BREWSTER had to go into hiding to avoid arrest, and the printing equipment was seized and impounded.

In 1619, the twelve years truce between Spain and Holland

was about to expire, and Holland was again menaced by talk of war. The Pilgrims were living as exiles in poor circumstances, in a strange land that might turn into a bloody battleground. They could not return to England, but wanted to find a place that they could raise their families as English away from foreign influence. They looked to America. Elder William BREWSTER was chosen their leader, and while he was in England petitioning the Virginia Company of London, for a land patent and passage to the New World, an order for his arrest went out at the instance of the English ambassador in Holland; however he escaped.

On Friday, 31 July, 1620, William BREWSTER, his wife, his sons, Love and Wrestling and two boys "bound out" to him, Richard MORE and his brother, left Leyden along with other Pilgrims for Delfshaven on the Maas River. They boarded the "Speedwell" there and sailed the next day, and after a quick passage to Southampton, England they met the "Mayflower." The rest of the BREWSTER children, including son, Jonathan, remained behind in Holland and came over afterwards. The two vessels set sail on 5 August, 1620; but after covering about 150 miles, the "Speedwell" was reported to be leaking, and both vessels put in at Dartmouth. There it was decided that the "Mayflower" was to make the voyage alone, and it's final departure was from Plymouth on Wednesday, 6 September, 1620. There were 102 passengers aboard. William BREWSTER was the fourth signer of the Mayflower Compact, 11 November 1620 O.S.

William BREWSTER, in 1627, became one of the eight who assumed the Plymouth Colony's debt.

Mary BREWSTER, wife of William BREWSTER, died at Plymouth, Massachusetts, 27 April 1627.

Elder William BREWSTER died 10 April 1643/4, "age about 80 years," at Plymouth, Massachusetts. He failed to make a will, and on 5 June 1644, his "onely two sonnes surviveing," Jonathan and Love BREWSTER, were appointed administrators of the estate. His inventory taken by Capt. Miles STANDISH, John DONE and Thomas PRENCE in May

1644, showed that he was a man of wealth when he died.

The inventory included an extensive library of Latin and English works.

Family Members

Parents



William Brewster
1535–1590



Mary *Smythe*
Brewster
1535 – unknown

Spouse



Mary Brewster*
1569–1627

Children



Elizabeth *Brewster*
Emerson*
1584–1638



Edward Brewster*
1587 – unknown



Jonathan Brewster*
1593–1661



Patience *Brewster*
Prence*
1600–1634



Fear *Brewster*
Allerton*
1606–1634



Love Brewster*
1611–1651



Wrestling Brewster*
1614 – unknown

*Calculated Relationship

Maintained by: Kay Cynova

Originally Created by: LF

Added: 15 Oct 2006

Find A Grave Memorial **16195888**

Sponsored by Paddington

Find A Grave, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 9 February 2018), memorial page for Elder William Brewster, IV (1566–10 Apr 1644), Find A Grave Memorial no. 16195888, citing Burial Hill, Plymouth, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, USA ; Maintained by Kay Cynova (contributor 47064119) .