

STEPHEN HOPKINS OF THE *MAYFLOWER*

Among those on board the ship *Mayflower* when it finally reached New England in November, 1620 were Stephen Hopkins and his wife Elizabeth. He was born probably in Hampshire, England about 1582. His first wife Mary ----- died in Bursley, Hampshire in 1613. He was married again in London on February 19, 1618 to Elizabeth Fisher.

Stephen Hopkins served as a clerk on the *Sea Venture*, which sailed from London in 1609. But they were shipwrecked in Bermuda, where Hopkins was court-martialed and sentenced to death. But he managed to talk himself out of the situation, and the men sailed to Jamestown, Virginia in 1609. He may have had contact with Native Americans at that time.

A religious group called the Separatists had fled from England to Holland to escape the fines and punishments for their illegal religious practices. 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. Stephen Hopkins was called one of the "Londoners" or "strangers," not a part of the religious 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 Stephen Hopkins, called the Mayflower Compact. Because he had had some education, Hopkins may have been one of those who wrote this famous historic document, 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. Stephen Hopkins brought his wife Elizabeth and three children from London, and son Oceanus was born on board the ship. The Hopkins family survived that first terrible winter when half of those who had just arrived perished from some unidentified epidemic.

Children of Stephen and Mary (-----) Hopkins born Bursley, Hampshire, England:

1. ELIZABETH died young.
2. CONSTANCE married NICHOLAS SNOW and had 10 children.
3. GILES married CATHERINE WHELDEN and had ten children.

Children of Stephen and Elizabeth (Fisher) Hopkins:

4. DAMARIS born in England about 1618 and died young.
5. OCEANUS born on board the *Mayflower* but died young.
6. CALEB died in Barbados and had no children.
7. DEBORAH married ANDREW RING and had six children.
8. DAMARIS married JACOB COOKE, son of Pilgrim Francis Cooke of the *Mayflower*, and had seven children.
9. RUTH had no children.
10. ELIZABETH had no children.

Which child of Pilgrim Stephen Hopkins is your Mayflower ancestor?

Compiled by Margaret Harris Stover from various sources, 2006
Junior Membership Chair, General Society of Mayflower Descendants
Past Governor, Mayflower Descendants in the State of Florida