

HENRY SAMSON OF THE *MAYFLOWER*

Among those on board the ship *Mayflower* when it finally reached New England in November, 1620 was a teenager named Henry Samson. He was baptized in Henlow, Bedfordshire, England on January 15, 1604, the son of James and Martha (Cooper) Samson.

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 group 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 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, including young Henry Samson and his cousin Humility Cooper with relatives Edward and Ann (Cooper) Tilley. 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 Edward Tilley, called the Mayflower Compact. Henry Samson was too young, and he could not sign it. This famous historic document is an example of our country's earliest democratic government.

It was December and 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. Young Henry Samson and Humility Cooper both survived that first terrible winter when half of those who had just arrived perished from some unidentified epidemic, but Edward and Ann Tilley both died.

Henry Samson was married in Plymouth on February 6, 1636 to Ann Plummer. They lived in nearby Duxbury and raised nine children:

1. ELIZABETH married ROBERT SPROUT and had eight children.
2. HANNAH married JOSIAH HOLMES and had six children.
3. DAUGHTER married JOHN HANMORE (or HANMER) and had two children.
4. JOHN did not marry.
5. MARY married JOHN SUMMERS (or SOMERS) but had no children.
6. DORCAS married THOMAS BONNEY and had three children.
7. JAMES married HANNAH ----- and had seven children.
8. STEPHEN married ELIZABETH ----- and had eight children.
9. CALEB married MERCY STANDISH AND REBECCA (BARTLETT)(BRADFORD) STANFORD and had nine children.

Which child of Pilgrim Henry Samson is your Mayflower ancestor?