



FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

Female Ancestor Number: 001

Name: Chilton, Mary

Dates: (c. 1606-1670)

Colonial Society: MA

Date added to ROA: before 11-2014

Service: Mayflower Passenger, 1620

Authority: Bradford's History of Plimouth Plantation, 533-538

Biography:

Legend tells of a 12 year old "orphan" named Mary Chilton who was the first to step upon a rock which became known as Plymouth Rock, "a stepping-stone used by passengers to come ashore". She is deserving of being the first female approved for the NSCDA Register of Ancestors.

Mary was born in Sandwich, Kent England to James Chilton and his wife Susanna. The Chilton's were part of the Puritan Separatist movement seeking to "purify" the Church of England from its Roman Catholic remnants. The Separatists faced persecution from King James I and were forced to flee England. When Mary was a very young girl, she and her family migrated to Leiden, Holland fleeing religious persecution and joined the Pilgrims' church. James Chilton was actively involved in the Puritan movement and was one of the Mayflower Compact signers. In 1620, age 13, Mary and her parents boarded the *Mayflower* bound for the new world. James Chilton died before the Pilgrims disembarked in the new world and Mary's mother died that first harsh winter leaving Mary an orphan.

In the 1623 land division document, "Marie Chilton" is listed. Her three-acre property was located between the land belonging to Myles Standish and John Alden. John Winslow arrived in Plymouth in 1621 on the *Fortune* and joined his older brother Edward, who by that time was a prominent leader (he later became Governor) in the colony and a fellow *Mayflower* passenger whose land was not too far from Mary's.

John Winslow and Mary Chilton married before 1627. The Winslow family was a highly influential wealthy merchant family in Plymouth Colony. After their marriage, Mary and John left Plymouth for Boston in the 1650s so that John could advance his trade as a merchant. They were active in the growing trade economy of New England, accumulating wealth and social status. John was very successful and became a wealthy merchant. John and Mary raised ten children: John who arrived in 1627, Susanna, Mary, Edward, Sarah, Samuel, Joseph, Isaac, Benjamin and an unnamed child.

John Winslow died in 1674. Mary wrote her will in 1676 and died about 1679/70. She is thought to be buried in King's Chapel Burying Ground in Boston. The descendants of Mary and John became influential figures in colonial New England and played a role in colonial politics, military affairs, and commerce. Some of Mary's descendants include notable American figures, including President Zachary Taylor and poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.