

# WALTER WOODWORTH TALK

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I want to start by saying that Walter did not come over on the Mayflower, but he was raised in the culture that created the event. For those of us who are descended from the Mayflower families, our connection is through the families that Walter's descendants married in to.

Even though we know nothing about Walter's father, other than his name was, Henrye, he married Jone Webe in Chartley on Stowe in 1600, and that Henrye and Jone had two sons. Due to the location of where they were living, I'm surmising that Henrye worked for or around Chartley Manor.

Chartley Manor was built as a castle in 1073 by William the Conqueror, in an effort to keep control of his followers. All the land belonged to the King and was doled out to his followers, friends and the church. (One of his friends was Henry de Freers, who helped him survey the area) According to the Domesbury Book, Chartley was owned by Earl Algar and the area was called Certilie in 1065 it was worth 100s, but by 1086 with 15 households it's value increased to 110s. It appears that Earl Algar had given over his land to Henry de Freers in the 1070s.

Chartley was re-built in stone by Ranulph de Blundeville, a DeFreers in-law, in the early 1200's. In 1232 it was passed on to William de Ferres (one of Ranulph's brothers-in-law) and remained in the de Ferres family until it burned down in 1894. Along the way it was converted to a manor house.

Mary, Queen of Scots, was imprisoned there before she was beheaded. This was in the 1587 during Walter's parents' lifetime.

Walter's mother was Jone Webe. The Webe's appear to be very prolific family in the area. I wish I could move there for about three months to research them because I think they will provide more information on Walter's background.

We all know the story of Henry VIII and his disagreement with the Pope, which helped exacerbate the breakaway of Europe from the catholic church and development of Protestantism.

Henry was catholic, his only beef was that he didn't like the Pope telling him what he could and couldn't do. The Church of England was established with most of the Catholic rituals and Henry's son, Edward, continued the status quo. However, after Edward died, his sister, Mary (who was the first Queen, ever, to rule a kingdom in her own right) was out for revenge, as she was the daughter of Henry's first wife that Henry disowned. She tried to undo the balance of power between the Catholic and Protestant religious practices, thus, her nickname Bloody Mary. (Beheading was common then). The result was that many of the upcoming Protestant leaders, moved to northern Europe, where they all got to know each other and joined forces, among other things, they wrote or/edited "The Book of Common Prayer" which is the foundational text that helped standardize the Protestant worship services. Then, once Mary died and Elizabeth I took over, the Protestant leadership power plays began, as the Protestant leaders returned to England.

The procedure for holding communion, to wearing of the surplice, the placing of a table, to baptism practices, and interpreting the "Book of Common Prayer" were debated and argued over for decades. Some church leaders were even arrested for not exercising these rituals to please the powers to be.

Up until this point, the leaders of the catholic churches controlled the local societies, the income and the resources of the area. However, as the catholic churches were dismantled, the Protestant factions filled in the voids, and a lot of these activities occurred in the midlands area where Walter was raised.

Queen Elizabeth I was fine with the Protestants retaking control and with, the exception of the leaders squabbling, she was fine with being the head of the Church of England. But, when King James I took over the throne in 1603, things Changed.

James was the son of Mary Queen of Scot's, raised Catholic, and once his grandfather died, also King of Scotland (which became Presbyterian). Even though he really didn't like the Protestants, he was the head of their church, so he dealt with it, even rewriting the bible deleting sections he didn't like.

The Protestant leaders joined together and petitioned James asking that they be allowed to practice their faith as they chose, and he refused them.

In the meantime, it was also a time when as the Spanish invaded central America that the British, French and Dutch wanted to share in the resources the Spanish were stealing.

In the beginning, Queen Elizabeth I supported the earlier explorations in the Virginia area. The plan was to build a fort to keep the Spanish pirates out. However, it was the businessmen, called the Merchant Adventurers, who saw the capitalist profit side of these endeavors. They joined forces by investing money into these enterprises, purchasing, and equipping ships and starting the settlement explorations.

Once James' archbishops started to try to tighten the rules on the warring protestant leaders, the Puritans, who wanted to clear out the church services from the idolatry, icons, saints, etc. and the Separatists (later referred to as the Pilgrims) wanted to be left alone to worship the way they chose. The different sects involved in this melee were the Baptists, Brownest, Presbyterians, Dutch Reformists, and several sects with different leaders.

Finally, by 1606, the Separatists, who were being harassed by the church governments, began to feel threatened and decided it was time to relocate to Holland, where several of the other sects had already moved.

After a couple of tragic/dramatic drawbacks, they finally made it to Amsterdam. However, the protestant battles were also happening there and when Leiden accepted their petition to move there, they tried to settle in.

Life in Leiden was not the panacea they were looking for. For example, they weren't really accepted into society. They weren't given decent paying jobs, their children, who were being educated in Leiden, were becoming "Dutchified" and when a boy threw a rock and hit James Chilton in the head, they decided it was time to move on.

Luckily, only a small part of the Separatist congregation resettled in Leiden. There were many wealthy families that remained in England, and this helped the Merchant Adventures collect the resources they needed to finance the adventure.

First, the separatists had to get approval to resettle in the new world. In their world, the crown owned the land and when Jamestown started to build their fort in Virginia, it was just taken for granted that the land belonged to the British crown.

In 1606, The Virginia Company originally divided their "Colony land" into two sections. Jamestown was the name of the southern area and they named the northern area Plymouth (which I think may have been part of what is now Pennsylvania and New Jersey). Therefore, their original Royal charter was set for the area they called Plymouth.

Since the financing was enabled by the Merchant-Adventures investment coalition, only half of the passengers were Separatists, and the others were travelers from other stations of life, many of them were members of Church of England. Because the leaders of the group determined that since their Royal Charter didn't cover their new settlement area and the makeup of the different classes and beliefs of the travelers, The Mayflower Compact was written to replace the Royal Charter in an effort to consolidate and manage the group.

In 1620, when the Mayflower made its voyage, Walter was 12 years old.

Even though the return the investors earned from the Mayflower adventure was disappointing, many of them hung in there until the 1630's. One of those investors was Francis Webe from Staffordshire. Francis had sold out by 1630 and moved his money into the settlements that they were trying to develop in Ireland.

I have not been able to find out much about Francis, but it is a hint that Walter must have been aware of the migration to America, and maybe, how he obtained his land in Scituate.

The story of the Mayflower voyage and the Plymouth Colony settlement are well known, so I'll just mention a couple of facts:

A. The unique part of this settlement is that it was the first one to concentrate on settling families.

- B. Three babies were born on the ship (one was stillborn),
- C. After the first rounds of deaths, 3 intact families survived.
- D. Of the 53 passengers who survived that first winter, 4 adult women and 4 teenaged girls were left to care for all the children and the boys and men.
- E. The trip itself took about 10 weeks, but they lived on the ship for about 3 months until the snow melted and suitable land with fresh water was discovered.
- F. They still thought that they were living on Crown land, and that finding land that had already been cultivated was a gift from God.

The Wampanoag Indian tribe that taught the settlers how to survive didn't approach them right away. They watched them for several months and once it appeared like they were staying and not a threat, decided that it was better to befriend them because they had guns and the neighboring Narraganset tribe was threatening their land.

By 1627, the Plymouth settlement had their new Royal charter, were legally settled and were starting to expand. The final Settlers from Leiden arrived in 1632.

In the meantime, however, the Puritans in the UK were not idle. The Merchant Adventurers (under another name) were planning for what became the Great Migration of 1630. The first part of their plan was to clear land in the Salem, Massachusetts area for this large group. To do this, they indentured as many young men as they could, shipped them to Massachusetts and left them there to do their work. Walter was 21 by this time.

The indentured men were to receive certain resources as payment when the ships arrived. However, John Winthrop, who was the leader of the group used all the resources for his contingent of ships and when he arrived couldn't keep his part of the contract with the indentured men. By this time, many of the workers had died, several of them returned to England and a few remained moving into Plymouth. Walter could have been one of them.

If you've had a chance to read the article on Scituate in your packet, you'll read that Scituate was established to pay the indentured men who completed their contracted time, and the investors who chose to settle in Plymouth with the Scituate land. Walter could have fit in either of those categories. Francis Webe could have been a relative of

Walter's and given Walter his land when he chose to move on to "greener pastures" or Walter could have earned it through an indentured contract.

What we do know, that in 1633, Walter was taxed 9 shillings for his land, but in 1634, when Reverend John Lothrop visited the area with the idea of settling the congregation he brought over from Kent, England, he listed the names of the families that were living in Scituate at the time and Walter's name wasn't listed, even though some of his parishioners shared land borders with him.

It wasn't until 1639-40 that we find Walter with his wife and, at least, son Thomas living in their home there. If I had to guess, I'll bet Walter either indentured himself or hired out with one of the wealthy families in Scituate while he built his own house. After all he needed to eat and have someplace to sleep. And it was about 7 years later that we found him listed as living there.

I doubt that Walter was a religious man as none of his children show up on any church records, but I am guessing that he was a responsible and respected citizen, who was referred to as an Old comer/Indentured and he may have been both.

Anyway, it appears that he was an upstanding citizen, who participated in the necessary civic life and raised a healthy and cared-for family, and I think we should be proud that we are descended from him.