

1620 AND ALL THAT

June 2025

I have an account with Family Search which is offered by **The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints**. This Mormon organisation homed in Salt Lake City, founded by **Joseph Smith** in the 1820s, is constructing a family tree of the entire world population. I was much impressed when I visited, not only by the Salt Lake itself, but even more by their courtesy, generosity, litter-and-drug-free streets, and of course the majestic tabernacle.

They advised me recently that I had two ancestors buried in the **Coles Hill Burial Ground** in **Plymouth, Massachusetts**.

Intriguing to say the least!

Further enquiry revealed that they were two children, **Mary More (1616-1621)** and her brother **Jasper More (1613-1620)** who were on the **Mayflower** when she sailed from **Plymouth, Devon** in 1620. Jasper died at sea and Mary survived only a short while in the raw New England winter conditions. With them on the voyage were another sister, **Ellen** and a brother **Richard**. Only the latter survived to maturity. They were the children of **Katherine More (1586-1640)** #15337 allegedly by her husband **Samuel More (1594-1662)** #15335 but in truth by Katherine's adulterous lover, **Jacob Blakeway (1583-1620)**. Samuel More is my nine times great grandfather.

For over 300 years historians have wondered how on earth a wealthy Shropshire land owner came to despatch his tender young children, unaccompanied on a dangerous 3,000-mile voyage to a wild and lawless colony. Resulting from some genealogical research, we now know the answer, but it is not a simple story.

Samuel's father, **Richard More** was master of the Linley estate in Shropshire, which today is the site of Linley Hall, a grade 1 listed Palladian Villa built in 1740 designed by Henry Joynes. He did a deal with a relative, **Jasper More**, master of the 1,000 acre Larden estate, also in Shropshire, for which there was no male heir, that Jasper's daughter Katherine should marry Richard's son thereby keeping both estates in the family.

On learning that Katherine's children were not his, Samuel hatched his extraordinary plan to get them out of the way. They were parcelled out as indentured servants; Ellen to **Edward**

Weston, Jasper to **John Carver**, the first governor of Plymouth and Richard and Mary to **William Brewster**, the Pilgrims' spiritual leader.

In 1625 Samuel marries secondly **Elizabeth Worsley (1592-1655)** #15336 with a view to fathering an heir and in February 1626 is granted a royal pardon as technically he still had a living wife. This was not difficult as he is working in London as secretary to **Lord Zouche**, a Privy Councillor, diplomat, and courtier.

During the English Civil War, Samuel More fought for **Parliament**. As a Colonel he commanded the garrison at **Hopton Castle** in Shropshire. In 1644 it was besieged by a 500-strong force of **Cavaliers**. As his force numbered only about 30, without external support, surrender was inevitable. Twice he refused. Finally, the Cavaliers breached the castle's fortifications and his loyal men were all brutally slaughtered. He was removed to Ludlow and was later given his freedom in a prisoner exchange.

If ever anyone got off lightly it was my nine times great grandfather, Samuel More!

Anthony Cobbold

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