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Mayflower

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Sea Venture

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From Plymouth to Pokonoket by Judith Brister and Susan Abanor

In the spring of 1621, Pilgrims Stephen Hopkins and Edward Winslow were sent out on an official mission by Governor Bradford which entailed a two-day trek from Plymouth to the Pokonoket village of the Great Sachem, or Massasoit, of the Wampanoag Confederacy. The village was likely located in what is now Warren, Rhode Island, some 40-50 miles from Plymouth.

The path from Plymouth to the site of the Pokonoket village traverses the existing towns of Carver, Middleboro, Taunton, Dighton, Somerset and Swansea, in Massachusetts, and Barrington and Warren, Rhode Island. Today, except for a small patch, the ancient Native American path has been covered by paved roads that wind through these towns and outlying areas. In 1621, the region was unknown territory for the Pilgrims, whose explorations until then had been limited to Plymouth and Cape Cod.

The mission of Hopkins and Winslow was carried out shortly after the negotia-

tion of a peace accord with Massasoit during his March 22, 1621 visit to Plymouth. Known by the Pilgrims as simply Massasoit (which was really his title; he had other names among his people, including Ousamequin), this leader presided over the Pokanokets, the headship tribe of the various tribes that constituted the Wampanoag nation. When the Mayflower arrived, the Wampanoags had been devastated by two recent outbreaks of smallpox brought by pre-Pilgrim Europeans, and despite misgivings and some internal dissension, they concluded that an alliance with the Pilgrims would make them less



"Gifts for Massasoit, Spring, 1621." Oil on Canvas 30"x 40" by Ruth Major, Alden, Mullens, Howland and Tilley descendant.



vulnerable to possible threats from the strong Narragansett tribe to the West, which had been unaffected by smallpox epidemics. Under the original March 22 accord, the two parties agreed to abstain from mutual aggression, to deliver offenders, and to assist each other if either were unjustly attacked.

The Hopkins/Winslow mission was a follow-up to this initial accord. Winslow's account of the mission, "A Jour-

ney to Pokonoket the Habitation of the Great King Massasoit," was published in London in 1622. The term "Pokonoket," also called "Sowams," referred to a district including several villages and unoccupied land, now the Rhode Island towns of Warren, Bristol, Barrington and East Providence, and Swansea, Seekonk and Rehoboth in Massachusetts.

According to Winslow, an important purpose of their assignment was strategic, as it would allow them to "...

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## Message from the Governor

To preserve information for the future, both for the PHHS descendants and for my family, we needed to walk the walk. On April 2 and 3 of this year my family and [I trekked from the location of Stephen Hopkins' house](#) in Plymouth to the site of Massasoit's spring in Warren, R.I., following the route we supposed Hopkins and Winslow took to visit Massasoit nearly 400 years ago.

The paths the Pilgrims traveled have become the roads and bridges we traversed. The fish that supplied the roe they ate still return to spawn in the rivers and streams. There are still wooded places that have not been developed and ponds that may have existed at the time of their journey.

We passed through villages that have formed since 1621, saw museums that preserve the history of the area and viewed cranberry bogs that are now part of the region's industry, covering 40 some miles, just as Hopkins and Winslow did. We were very tired at the end of our walk, but not nearly as exhausted as the Pilgrims must have been! We knew where we were going, didn't have to ford streams, sleep in a field, or return to Plymouth in two days. Many thanks to my family for their support and for going along with another of my adventures.

On other matters, it is celebration time! We finally received our tax-exempt status from the IRS, thanks especially to the stellar job done by Rod Fleck. Thank you Rod! (See details below.)

The next meeting for the PHHS will be in New Orleans. It should be fun and I hope to see many of you there.

Kenneth Whittemore is standing in as secretary for the PHHS. Linda Hart, who has served us so well in that job,



*Day two, just before dark, destination reached!*

*Left to right: Susan Abanor, Sarah Abanor, Harold Woolley, Evan Woolley.*

needed to step down. Please let us know if you can help out with some of these duties until the next election in 2014. Thanks to Linda Hart and to Kenneth Whittemore! 📷

Sincerely,  
Susan B W Abanor, Governor PHHS

## Tax-Exempt Status Granted by Rod Fleck

Big news!! Finally, after some 12-14 months, the IRS sent notice that the Pilgrim Hopkins Heritage Society has been officially granted 501(c)(3) status! While this may sound like a simple "given," for a handful of PHHS Board members, it has been a "long journey into the unknown."

The first step was to incorporate the PHHS, and thus make it a legal entity. This was accomplished in 2011, when the Society became a Massachusetts corporation. Next, Board members sought tax exempt status from the IRS, submitting the relevant application in the Spring of 2012, with various attachments explaining the financial operations of the organization since its founding. Ed Flaherty provided numerous detailed reports that were used by Rod Fleck to fill out the application. The Board of Directors and the Membership had to make some adjustments to the various founding documents or adopt specific conflict of interest provisions. When the very large packet was submitted to the IRS, we were told it would be reviewed in the next four to six months. In fact, it took over a year, but in early June we received the long-awaited IRS letter confirming that we were granted tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3)! I emailed the news in all caps to Governor Abanor.

With this letter, the IRS determined that the PHHS is a "public charity" under the federal tax code. As such, the PHHS is specifically limited in engaging in political activities, and these activities need to be reviewed prior to being under-

taken. Further, the Society has to ensure its activities lead to no substantial private compensation or benefit to its officers, directors, key employees or members. Here, we will be following the simple rule of "when in doubt, let's find out."

In addition, our treasurer will be asked to submit an annual report on the PHHS's financial dealings. What in the past was a rather forgiving report has become the focus of a great deal of attention in the past five years. In this context, it will be extremely important that those who fill the post of PHHS treasurer be familiar with financial documents.

What all this means to you, loyal members of the PHHS, is that your donations to the Society are henceforth tax deductible. As noted above, such donations need to be made with the understanding that they cannot create a private benefit to the donor or specific individuals. The IRS uses the phrase that the Society would be "prohibited from allowing more than an insubstantial accrual of private benefit" to specific individuals. While dues would not be tax deductible, the donations made to help fund plaques, monuments, markers, etc., can qualify as tax deductions. As the Society grows, we may even look into creating a scholarship program, with the appropriate advance consultation.

To all who received the many frantic emails, odd requests, and detailed documents which resulted in this decision – thank you and congratulations! 📷

## From Plymouth to Pokonoket

From page 1

see their [the Pokonokets'] strength, discover the country...". On the diplomatic side, Governor Bradford charged them with giving Massasoit a lace-trimmed red coat, "...in witness of the love and good will the English bear unto him." Another gift to Massasoit was a copper chain, which they requested be carried by any of his people he authorized to visit Plymouth, thus stemming the stream of Native Americans who came to Plymouth expecting hospitality from the food-strapped Colony. Next, they invited Massasoit to bring them skins for trading. They then offered restitution for the buried corn they had taken on "Corn Hill" in Truro shortly after their arrival on the *Mayflower*. Finally, they asked Massasoit for some corn seed, "...that we might make trial which best agreed with the soil where we live...".

While the diplomatic achievements of this mission were quite significant, so too were the many carefully described discoveries Hopkins and Winslow made about the land and its peoples during their journey.

Winslow states that he and Hopkins departed "...the tenth of June at nine o'clock." Archaeologist Maurice Robbins, in his 1984, "The Path to Pokonoket: Winslow and Hopkins Visit the Great Chief" (containing background, maps and modern-day directions and a critical reading of the Winslow account), points out that this date might have been an error made by an English printer. Robbins suggests that the English printer would have used the Gregorian calendar, in which March was the first month, to interpret what may have been Winslow's original statement of "...we set forth on the tenth day of the fourth month...". As an ardent Separatist, Winslow may have rejected the Gregorian calendar due to its Roman origin, and been using the calendar in which April would have been the fourth month. Moreover, according to Robbins, June 10 in 1621 would have fallen on a Sunday, and it was forbidden for Pilgrims to start a journey on the Sabbath, except in cases of dire emergency (the

Plymouth Court eventually passed a law to this effect).

Another reason for thinking the trip took place in April was the mention of shad roe at the crossing of Nemasket river, at about three o'clock, six hours into their journey on the first day, in the exist-

ing town of Middleboro. At this "Wading Place", now marked with a plaque, Winslow notes, "...the inhabitants entertained us with great joy...[giving them] the spawn of shads, which they then got in great abundance." According to a number of sources, Massachusetts alewives spawn in late March to mid-May, when the temperature reaches about 51 degrees, rather than in June (although blueback herring



Photo by Susan Abanor

Taunton River at "Sqawbetty"

do spawn later – April through June – when the water reaches about 57 degrees).

Finally, given the starvation the Pilgrims suffered during their first winter, Robbins suggests, they would have been more likely to have requested corn seed to plant in April rather than in June, when the corn should have been already "in leaf."

The village by the wading place over the Nemasket River which the two Englishmen and their guide Squanto ("Tisquantum") reached in the afternoon of the first day was full of local inhabitants, who entertained the men:

...with joy, in the best manner they could, giving us a kind of bread called by them mazium,, and the spawn of shads, which then they got in abundance, in so much as they gave us spoons to eat them, with these they boiled musty acorns, but of the shads we ate heartily.

The Nemasket locals then requested that Hopkins and Winslow shoot crows that were threatening their corn, and the Englishmen obligingly killed "...some fourscore" for them. After this, Squanto urged them to proceed another eight miles towards their destination, as otherwise they would not reach the Pokonoket village by the end of the second day.

Robbins believes the party slept in the open fields at "Sqawbetty," near a second wading place, this time over the Taunton River, at the spot in East Taunton where a bridge carries South Street East over the river today. There is some disagreement about this, as Middleboro historian Thomas Weston, writing in 1906, insists they were taken by Squanto to a site called Fort Hill in North Middleboro, also eight miles from the Nemasket village and wading place.

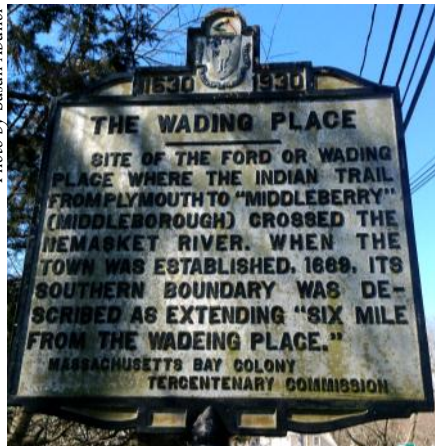
Wherever they slept, they arrived there "...at sun setting..." and encountered:

...many of the Nemascheuks (they so calling the men of Nemasket) fishing upon a weir which they had made on a river which belongeth to them, where they caught abundance of bass. They welcomed us also, gave us of their fish, and we them of our victuals, not doubting we should have enough where we came....

Winslow's next passages allude to the ravages of the recent epidemic:

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Photo by Susan Abanor



## From Plymouth to Pokonoket

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...The head of the river [Lake Nippenicket] is reported to be not far from the place of our abode; upon it are, and have been many towns, it being a good length. The ground is very good on both sides, it being for the most part cleared; thousands of men have lived here, which died in a great plague not long since; and a pity it was and is to see, so many goodly fields, and so well seated, without men to dress and manure the same...

When the Plymouth party set out the following morning, they were accompanied by "some six savages." After following the Taunton River for six miles, they came to another wading spot, where they had to "...put off our breeches...". Winslow recalls the courage of two old men on the other side of the river, the sole survivors in their village, who upon seeing the group of strange men approaching them,

...ran very swiftly and low in the grass to meet us at the bank, where with shrill voices and great courage standing charged upon us with their bows, they demanded what we were, supposing us to be enemies, and thinking to take advantage of us in the water; but seeing we were friends, they welcomed us with such food as they had, and we bestowed a small bracelet of beads upon them..."

The second day was "...very hot for travel..." but luckily the countryside was "...so well watered, that a man could scarce be dry, but he should have a spring at hand to cool his thirst, besides small rivers in abundance...". The six "savages" accompanying Hopkins and Winslow helpfully carried them across "...any small brook where no bridge was..."

Winslow observed that most of the river shores had once been inhabited and the ground had been cleared:

There is much good timber both oak, walnut-tree, fir, beechen, and exceeding great chestnut trees. The country, in respect of the lying of it, is both champanie and hilly, like many places in England. In some places it is very rocky both above ground and in it; and though the country be wild and overgrown with woods, yet the trees stand not thick, but a man may well ride a horse amongst them.

As they neared the Pokonoket village, they met:

...another man with two other women, which had been at rendezvous by the salt water, and their baskets full of roasted crab fishes, and other dried shell fish, of which they gave us, and we ate and drank with them; and gave each of the women a string of beads, and departed...



This terrain on Cummings Road in Swansea, Massachusetts, may not have changed much since Hopkins' and Winslow's 1621 walk.

After reaching "...a town of Massasoit's where we ate oysters and other fish..." Hopkins and Winslow proceeded to Pokonoket, but "Massasoit was not at home." He was sent for, and when he arrived, Hopkins and Winslow were invited into his house, where they very successfully discharged their diplomatic duties, as described above.


Winslow's account of the memorable night they spent at Massasoit's house is familiar to most schoolchildren. Their business done, the men from these two vastly different cultures sat around smoking tobacco and talking more generally about England, the King (Massasoit marveled that "he should live without a wife") and other topics. "Late it grew, but victuals he offered none, for indeed he had not any, being so newly home." So, on empty stomachs, Hopkins and Winslow "...desired to go to rest":

...he [Massasoit] laid us on the bed with himself and wife, they at one end and we at the other, it being only planks laid a foot from the ground, and a thin mat upon them. Two more of his chief men for want of room pressed by and upon us, so that we were worse weary of our lodging than of our journey...

Later in his narrative, Winslow recalls that due to "...the savages barbarous singing (for they sing themselves to sleep), lice and fleas within doors and mosquitoes without, we could hardly sleep all the time of our being there..."

Luckily for the hungry Pilgrims, the next day Massasoit "brought two fishes he had shot, they are like Bream, but three times so big, and better meat..." which fed some forty people. The following morning at sunrise Hopkins and Winslow started out on their journey home, this time with a new guide, Tokamahamon, replacing Squanto (who was retained by Massasoit "to send from place to place to procure truck for us..."). They spent the first night at the "weir where we lay before..." After a plentiful supper of fish, they fell asleep – only to be awakened at two in the morning by:

...a great storm of wind, rain, lightning and thunder, in such a violent manner, that we could not keep our fire; and had not the savages roasted fish while we were asleep, we had set forth fasting; for the rain continued with great violence, even the whole day through, till we came within two miles of home.

Stephen Hopkins and Edward Winslow finally made it back to Plymouth, "...wet, weary and surbated [foresore]." With some challenges, the peace accord they helped cement during this well-documented visit lasted for about 55 years, and has been credited with saving the Colony from extinction. 

Many thanks are due to staff at the Library of General Society of Mayflower Descendants in Plymouth, Robbins Museum of Archaeology in Middleboro, Massachusetts and at the Plimoth Plantation, as well as to Patricia Read, Vice-President of the Massasoit Historical Association in Warren, Rhode Island for their helpful guidance and inputs to this article.

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## The Mysteries of Caleb — Part Two by Susan Abanor and Judith Brister

This is the second and final part of the article about Stephen Hopkins' son Caleb. Part One appeared in our [December 2012 issue](#).

### Caleb's passage

The accounts that lured Caleb to Barbados may have reached him by way of captains and seamen who had been there. And more than a few had:

...In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Barbados had connections with almost every point of the Atlantic seaboard from the Piscataqua River in the north to Charleston in the south. We know of persons from the Piscataqua who immigrated to Barbados in the 1640s, and in the 1670s a Barbadian was Governor of South Carolina... (Brandow 1983, v).

During the English Civil War a chief concern of Barbados' "plantocracy" was maintaining the island's free trade policy. It was then that Barbados' trade ties to North America, including New England, solidified:

...Paradoxically, it was the decade from 1640 to 1650, when England was torn by internal strife, that saw the emergence of Barbados as one of the wealthiest settlements in the New World. Trading connections with England were disrupted by the Civil War, and Barbados had to look elsewhere for the bulk of its supplies and for the capital it needed for development. The North American colonies, whose export trade to England had also suffered, were seeking new outlets for their provisions, their livestock and their lumber, and from this period dates the close trading relationship between North America and Barbados (Campbell 1972, 85).

Ligon gives this eyewitness account of the bustling shipping activity on the island in 1647:

...riding at Anchor, 23 good ships, with boats plying to and fro, with Sails and Oars, which carried commodities from place to place: so quick stirring and numerous, as I have seen it below the bridge at London... (Ligon 1657, 21).

Caleb might well have been aboard one of those boats Ligon observed in the harbor. Exactly when Caleb sailed to Barbados, on which ship and under whose command, is yet another mystery surrounding his post-Plymouth life. What is clear, however, is that there were many ships plying the waters between these two English colonies when he was ready to leave Plymouth. Of the 49 men who commanded these ships in the 1640s and 1650s, 18 were New Englanders, mostly from Boston, Charlestown and Salem, Massachusetts (Gragg 1991, 106).

These shipmasters frequently had a financial stake in their voyages, and took the associated financial risks:

...Many organized a partnership of owners; usually they sought out merchants. Because they were only part owners, shipmasters were also employees. They contracted only a single voyage at a time...Through much of the seventeenth century their pay was 120 shillings per month. In addition, on voyages to Africa, the West Indies and North America, masters could carry some cargo freight free, including slaves...(Gragg 1991, 106).

Their trade was sometimes triangular, sometimes quadrilateral, linking Europe, West Africa, the West Indies, and the eastern seaboard of North America (Britannica 1992, Vol. 29, 730). According to Ligon, "...about a hundred sail of ships yearly visit this island..." bringing with them:

...servants and slaves, both men and women; horses, cattle, assingoes, camels, utensils for boyling sugar...all manner of working tooles for tradesmen...iron, steel, lead, bras, pewter, cloth of all kinds...shoes, gloves, swords, knives,

locks, keys... victuals of all kinds, that will endure the sea in so long a voyage. Olives, capers, anchovies, salted flesh and fish, pickled macquerels and herrings, wine of all sorts, and the boon Beer, d'Angleterre...(Ligon 1657, 40).

The products the ships carried away with them from Barbados, Ligon wrote, were, "...Indico, cotton-wood, Tobacco, sugar, ginger and Fustick-wood..." (Ligon 1657, 40).

One of the New England captains Caleb may have sailed with was Thomas Webber, "...who owned almost a quarter of the Mayflower when he sailed from Boston to Barbados and London and then back to Boston in 1652 (Gragg 1991, 108). He may also have worked under John Peters, hired in April 1649 by John Parris, a New England merchant, or John Thompson, Abraham Palmer (who became rich as a result of his tenure at sea), Clement Campion (whose 1647 cargo of fish for Barbados spoiled when the ship leaked), Isaac Addington of Boston, or John Allen of Charlestown (Gragg 1991, 109). He could have been a sailor on the True Return, owned by Walter Price, which sailed from Salem to Barbados with "an unspecified cargo" in 1648. (Vickers 2005, 46). Or he might have worked aboard the Dolphin, commanded by the intrepid John Wall, who arrived in Barbados from Boston in August 1649:

...When Royalists on Barbados challenged the Commonwealth government in 1650 by proclaiming their allegiance to Charles Stuart and banishing political opponents, Parliament prohibited trade with the defiant colony. Wall not only continued to sail to the island but also, as Roger Williams explained to John Winthrop Jr. in the summer 1651, offered passage to some on the wrong side of the island's civil war...(Gragg 1991, 108).

### Other Plymouth/Barbados links

A few other men, who had strong connections with both Plymouth and the West Indies, may have had something to do with Caleb's voyage to Barbados as well.

The first was Capt. Richard More (1614-1694/96). More was a Mayflower passenger, deposited with his three siblings on that ship by his father Samuel, who had found out they were not his legitimate children. Richard's three siblings died young, but he was raised in the household of Elder William Brewster, and thrived. As an adult, he became a well-know sea captain, crossing the Atlantic many times, sailing to the West Indies, and delivering supplies to various colonies. Caleb might have known about Barbados through Richard, only eight years his senior, or even joined him on one of his voyages.



Windmills, still a common sight in the Barbados countryside, were built in both the Plymouth Colony and Barbados in the 1700s as a result of Dutch influence.

Photo by Susan Abanor

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## Mysteries of Caleb

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The second was William Vassall (1592-1655-57), who lived in Plymouth and died in Barbados. Vassall first visited the Bay Colony briefly in 1630, arriving on the Lyon and going back to England soon thereafter. He then returned with his family in 1635, lived for a short while in Roxbury (Massachusetts Bay Colony) and eventually settled in the Plymouth Colony (Scituate). In both the Massachusetts Bay and the Plymouth colonies, he actively pressed for increased religious freedom for non-Puritans. In Plymouth his efforts were supported by several men, including the close friend of the Hopkins family, Capt. Myles Standish. He was strongly opposed by Governor Bradford and assistants William Collier, Thomas Prence, as well as by Edward Winslow, once Vassall's friend.

Vassall returned to England in 1646 to make his grievances against religious intolerance in the colony known, and that same year Edward Winslow returned to defend the colony's policies against Vassall's accusations. Frustrated in his attempts to sway the authorities, in 1648 Vassall relocated to Barbados, which had a reputation for more religious tolerance. He bought land in the St. Michael Parish, and no doubt worked it with the help of slaves. Ironically, his daughter Judith Vassall (b. 1619) married Mayflower passenger Resolved White (b. 1615), son of Susannah and William White and then stepson of Edward Winslow (when following William White's death, Edward married Susannah).

In another irony, like Vassall, Winslow died in the Caribbean, carrying out an attack on Jamaica in 1655, at the behest of Cromwell. In sum, Vassall was in Barbados about the time of Caleb's death there, and was well-connected with Plymouth Colony leaders. He could have been a friend of Caleb's father Stephen Hopkins. Did he have anything to do with Caleb's voyage to the island? Another unresolved mystery.... (Brandow 1983, 666-668).

### The Barbados Hopkins

Exactly how, where, and when Caleb died is his final mystery.

Ligon wrote that upon his arrival in 1647 the island was wracked by disease and famine:

...Yet notwithstanding all this appearance of trade, the inhabitants of the islands, and shipping too, were so grievously visited with the plague (or as killing a disease) that before a month was expired, after our arrival, the living were hardly able to bury the dead. Whether it were brought thither in shipping (for in long voyages, diseases grow at sea, and take away many passengers, and those diseases prove contagious), or by the distempers of the people of the island, who by the ill dyet they keep and drinking strong waters, bring disease upon themselves, was not certainly known...In this sad time, we arriv'd in this island and it was



*William Vassall, well-connected with Plymouth Colony leaders, lived in Barbados at the time Caleb died there. He is portrayed here with his son by John Singleton Copley.*

doubt whether this disease or famine threatened most, there being a general scarcity of victuals throughout the whole island... (Ligon 1657, 21).

Ligon's observations are echoed by a more recent author, who states that, "...An unspecified 'plague' also killed off perhaps 1,200 whites on Barbados between 1647 and 1650" (Rogozinski 2000, 70).

The early Barbados burial records at the National Archives in Bridgeport are extremely faint microfiche copies of originals (the latter being too fragile to be viewed by researchers). For the years just prior to 1651, when Bradford wrote that Caleb, a seaman, had died "at Barbados," no reference to a Caleb Hopkins, or in fact any Caleb, was found by the authors' October 2012 review of those records that could be deciphered. In a number of cases, however, an unnamed "seaman" was buried, perhaps a casualty of the disease described by Ligon.

Caleb may have been one of the anonymous seamen buried in Barbados. Or he may have perished at sea, near Barbados, and been given a burial at sea. Perhaps Bradford was misinformed, and Caleb actually died at one of the other English colonies in the Caribbean at the time: Nevis, Antigua or Montserrat.

While in Barbados, the authors scoured records for baptisms, marriages and wills, as well as burials, for the name Hopkins, in search of links to Caleb, including relatives from England who may have encouraged him to come to the island. The search revealed that a good number of Hopkins did live in Barbados in the 1650s and thereafter, some bearing the same first names used in Pilgrim Stephen Hopkins' family. Whether or not they were relatives of the young man from Plymouth is as of yet unclear.

The first Hopkins found in the records was a "Jno" Hopkins, buried in 1650, in St. Michael Parish (where the current capital, Bridgeport, is located). Two Stephen Hopkins were found in the records. The first was baptized on July 22, 1655, the son of a William and Alice Hopkins, also in St. Michael Parish. The second was the father of Rebekah, baptized on Feb. 24, 1744, and married to Jane (?). The burial of this Stephen Hopkins is not recorded. A few Hopkins arrived as indentured servants: Margaret (spinster, from Swansey, Glamorganshire), in 1655, whose "bondmaster" was William Sheene; William Hopkins (yeoman, London), in 1657, pledged to work for Edith Grimes, and Joane Hopkins, in 1666, who would work for William Andrews.

Various Hopkins family configurations were identifiable, not just in the St. Michael Parish, but in the parishes of St. Joseph, St. Philip, and Christ Church. There is scant information on just what they were doing in Barbados, but there is no evidence they were among the elite families of the island. Richard Hopkins, married to Sarah (?), whose daughter Mary was baptized on December 11, 1796, was in fact a soldier of the "14th reg.". The Hopkins name seems to peter out in the 19th century, and the current phone book contains just two Hopkins surnames.

It is possible that like many other white families, when economic opportunities in Barbados dried up, most Hopkins opted to move on to other Caribbean islands or to the Carolinas and Virginia, where prospects seemed more promising. Many such families, bringing with them their slaves, established a plantation-based society similar to that of the West Indies. Some prospered. In fact, two signatories of the American Declaration of Independence, Lewis Morris and Arthur Middleton, "... were descended from men who had arrived from Barbados a century earlier (Brandow 1983, vi).

### A reappearance?

While the many mysteries of Caleb's life and death may forever remain unresolved, they have quite unexpectedly led back to

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## Mysteries of Caleb

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another unresolved Hopkins family mystery. In scanning Barbados vital records for the Hopkins name, one entry stood out above all others. It was the 1669 record of the baptisms of two girls in the Christ Church Parish. The entry reads as follows:

1669, 25 April

Damaris begotten of Elizabeth Hopkins

Elizabeth begotten of Elizabeth Hopkins

(Sanders 1984, 267)

The original Christ Church, where this baptism would have taken place, was a wooden structure built in 1629, near Dover Beach, not far from the southern port of Oistins. It was so close to the beach, in fact, that it was destroyed in 1669, the year this baptism took place, by a flood which scattered coffins and bones from the churchyard along the beach. Only a few gravestones remain, including those for "William Ralston, 26 October 1659," for "Mary Addams, wife of Samuel Addams, deceased. 15 Dec. 1672," and for "Dorothy, wife of Daniel Gilbert, Jan. 13, 1661-2." There are no tombstones for Hopkins (Oliver 1915, 111).

Interpreting this baptismal entry is challenging. By comparing it with other entries, however, and after consulting with historians and archivists in Barbados, the authors conclude that the girls Damaris and Elizabeth were not necessarily twins (although they could have been), nor did they have to be infants. They may just have been two sisters, of any age, brought in to be baptized by their mother on the same day. It is also more than likely they were born out of wedlock, as this was the usual manner in which such a circumstance was recorded.

Most importantly, however, the two girls bore the same names as two of Pilgrim Stephen Hopkins' daughters, one of them being the Elizabeth who simply disappeared from the Plymouth colony after 1657. Could the repetition of these two Plymouth Hopkins family names been just a coincidence, or is it within the realm of possibilities that the two girls' mother was the missing Elizabeth Hopkins from Plymouth, now about 37- years-old, who had named her daughters after her older sister Damaris and herself --and, of course, their mother Elizabeth (Fisher?), wife of Stephen Hopkins?

During the relevant period, there is no Barbados marriage record for an Elizabeth Hopkins (neither for mother nor daughter). An Elizabeth Hoskins did marry Daniel Holland on 5 July 1669, also in the Christ Church Parish, and sometimes the names "Hoskins" and "Hopkins" were used interchangeably in Barbados. It is unclear whether that occurred in this case. There is a July 16, 1703 burial entry, however, for an "Eliz:a Hopkins, spinster" in St. Michael Parish. If this had been Caleb's little sister Elizabeth, born about 1632, the "spinster" would have been around 71 years-old. Alternatively, if her daughter Elizabeth had never married, she would have been 34 in 1703, which in those times would have qualified her for "spinster" status" as well.

Supposing that the mother Elizabeth Hopkins was indeed Stephen Hopkins' mysteriously disappeared daughter, how and why did she end up in Barbados? If she was in Plymouth until at least 1657, well after Caleb's death, she did not accompany him there. (See [Atlantic Crossings Vol 2, #1](#)) Another family connection to Barbados, some relative or close friend who might have invited her to the island and helped her get settled, has not been identified.

In this context, a "person of interest" could be John Pickett, the husband of Elder William Brewster's granddaughter Ruth. Born in 1631 in Plymouth, the daughter of Jonathan Brewster and Lucretia Oldham, Ruth was about Elizabeth's age. They would surely have known each other and very likely been




Photo by Susan Abunor

Just a few gravestones of early English settlers remain at Dover Beach, near the port of Oistins.

friends. Ruth's husband John Pickett died on August 16, 1667 at sea, returning from Barbados.

Whether it was Pickett or someone else with Plymouth/ Barbados connections who helped her, it would have been daunting for Elizabeth, even as the daughter of the free-spirited, strong-willed Stephen Hopkins, to have set out for Barbados alone and unassisted. What could have propelled her?

As in the many mysteries of Caleb, these are matters of pure conjecture. 

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## Hopkins Family Event

Hopkins Vineyard Triathlon at Lake Waramaug in Warren, Connecticut, Saturday July 20, 8am start. Enjoy a .5 mile swim in beautiful Lake Waramaug, followed by a 10 mile bike ride through the surrounding countryside, and finish with a 3.1 mile run with a short cross country section around manicured vineyard fields.

[www.hopkinsvineyardtri.com](http://www.hopkinsvineyardtri.com)



## Contact Us

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## Next Meeting

**When:** Saturday, 14 September 2013, 4:30-5:30 PM

**Where:** Omni Royal Hotel, The Observation Deck  
621 St. Louis St, New Orleans, Louisiana 70140

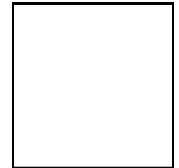
Our meeting is taking place during the Board of Assistants meeting for the General Society of Mayflower Descendants. For more information on that meeting go to:

[www.themayflowersociety.com/board-of-assistants-meeting](http://www.themayflowersociety.com/board-of-assistants-meeting)



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