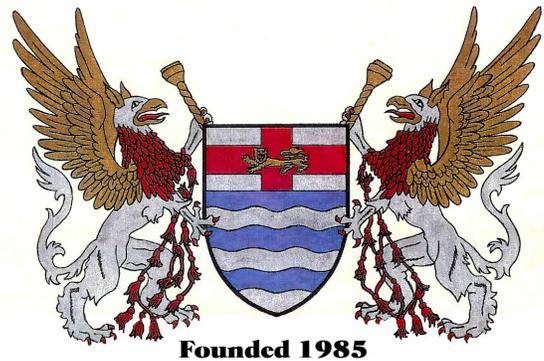


THE HEREDITARY ORDER OF THE FIRST FAMILIES OF MASSACHUSETTS, INC.

*A National Organization of
the Descendants of the Puritans*



The Hereditary Order of the First Families of Massachusetts was established to commemorate the families of our Puritan ancestors. Because there is a tendency to think chiefly in terms of male ancestors, the Order places equal emphasis upon the wife and mother. Her ceaseless work in the home and the sharing of her husband's interests in religion and community affairs contributed essentially to maintaining a civilized community in a wilderness surrounded by savage circumstances. The Order honors these women and gives particular attention to the word "families" and to its meaning, both for our forebears and for ourselves.

It is Massachusetts where the largest number of early American families had their first home on this side of the Atlantic. It is Massachusetts where the most remarkable advances were made during the first 20 years of its existence in religion, education, government and financial enterprise. Today it is to her records, so complete and so readily available, that untold numbers of people turn for information about their ancestors.

The Puritan story is well known. England was in turmoil, both in religion and in politics. Parliament had been dismissed. There was every indication that no reform of the Church was possible and that it might well return to the Papacy. So the Puritans determined to leave their native land, and they prepared methodically to do so.

John Winthrop, who was designated as the first official Governor, was a gentleman of birth and wealth from Groton, Suffolk. He was to occupy the foremost place among the founders of New England. He was intensely religious, had remarkable strength of character, was scholarly and charitable. His arrival during the year 1630 with his fleet of 17 ships and nearly 1,000 settlers was the beginning of the *Great Migration*. In this migration, a principle of selection was at work that insured an unusual uniformity of character and purpose among the settlers. To this uniformity of purpose, combined with homogeneity of race, is due the early and lasting leadership of the colony established on the Massachusetts Bay.

The common purpose of John Winthrop and his friends in coming to the Bay was the construction of a theocratic state, to consist of a united body of believers; there was no room for heretics. The Puritan was intensely conservative in religious attitude. There was a strong desire to lead a godly life, and to drive out sin from the community. Yet, the Puritan was practical. In the aspiration to "win a crown of glory" hereafter, he did not forget that the present life has its simple duties, in the exact performance of which the existence of society mainly consists. Each individual must hold his religious opinions at his own personal risk. The result was a conservative, yet flexible, intelligence that assured the Puritan of predominance in his own day and for several succeeding generations.

Although the *Great Migration* ended, for all practical purposes, in 1640, there often was no occasion for public records, such as wills or property transfers, to be entered for some years afterward. The year 1649 was the end of an era. King Charles I was executed, bringing a temporary end to the English monarchy, and John Winthrop died that year. For these reasons it is appropriate that the restrictive date for establishment of the settling of a propositus ancestor in the Colony is "before the year 1650."

The following settlements comprised the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay before the year 1650: Andover (1634), Boston (1630), Braintree (1635), Cambridge (1632), Charlestown (1629), Concord (1635), Dedham (1636),

Dorchester (1630), Gloucester (1642), Haverhill (1641), Hingham (1634), Hull (1630), Ipswich (1633), Lynn (1632), Lancaster (1643), Malden (1649), Manchester (1645), Marblehead (1630), Medford (1630), Newbury (1635), Reading (1642), Rowley (1639), Roxbury (1630), Salem (1626), Salisbury (1640), Springfield (1636), Sudbury (1639), Topsfield (1648), Watertown (1630), Wenham (1643), Weymouth (from 1622), Woburn (1647).

In addition, the following New Hampshire settlements qualify:

Exeter (1638) [with the settlement of Rev. John Wheelwright], Hampton (1638) [with the settlement of Rev. Stephen Batchiler], Portsmouth (1630) [known then as Strawberry Banke, under the leadership of Capt. Walker Neal] and Dover (1623) [with the settlement of John Tuttle].

OBJECTIVES OF THE ORDER

The objectives of the Order are:

- To identify and honor the memory of ancestors who were “First Families of Massachusetts,” as defined in the Order’s Bylaws;
- To associate the living descendants of these “First Families of Massachusetts,” bringing them into closer association through activities revolving around matters of common genealogical and historical interest;
- To collect and preserve records, documents and relics pertaining to the genealogy and history of the “First Families of Massachusetts”;
- To produce and distribute publications of all kinds relating to the genealogy and history of the “First Families of Massachusetts,” and
- To do everything and anything reasonably and lawfully necessary, proper, suitable or convenient for the achievement and furtherance of these purposes.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORDER

The Order was founded at Melrose, Massachusetts, in 1985 by Roswell Levi Atwood, PhD. Dr. Atwood passed away in February 2004. At the time of his death, the Order had established more than 700 memberships. Unfortunately, the Order had become inactive by the time Dr. Atwood died.

On Tuesday, October 5, 2004, Alden Atwood, Charles Owen Johnson and James Raywalt met for lunch at the Harvard Club in Boston to reorganize the Order. Mr. Atwood, as successor to the Directorship of the Order, appointed Mr. Johnson to the office of Governor General, himself to the office of Deputy Governor General and Mr. Raywalt to the office of Genealogist General. Both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Atwood had established their membership in the Order at its founding. Mr. Raywalt became a member before the reorganization meeting. At the reorganization meeting, a plan of action was devised so that within a year’s time, the Order would be able to once again operate effectively. In September 2005, with all legal matters effectively addressed and their goals accomplished, the Order began receiving new members.

WHO MAY JOIN?

Men and women, over the age of 18 years, who are lineal descendants of men or women who settled within the bounds of the Massachusetts Bay Colony before the year 1650 may be eligible for membership. For purposes of this Order, the term “settler” refers to one who lived in the Colony for at least one year, although possibly in more than one town during that time.

The initiation fee is \$25. To it must be added either \$40 annual dues and certificate (for a total of \$65) or \$265 for lifetime membership and certificate (for a total of \$290). Supplemental applications may be filed with the Order for \$30 each.

For an application or further information, please write the Genealogist General: Jean (Mrs. William) Hacker, 13810 West Via Mañana, Sun City West, AZ 85375-2068; telephone 623/584-7035; e-mail: whacker@cox.net.