

## OUR AMERICAN BEGINNING

William Almy came to America first between 1628 and 1631. He very likely worked for his passage as he is not included in any passenger list (available at this date). Further, his family was not with him. We know he was in Lynn, Massachusetts in 1631 and that he went back to England before July 1634. In 1635 he returned to America in the ship *Abigail* with his wife Audrey and his two children; Anne, age 8, and Christopher, age 3.

On his return to America he lived in Lynn, which is just a few miles south of Salem. In the Spring 1637, he and nine others founded Sandwich, on Cape Cod, in the Plymouth Colony. On 22 June 1642 he sold his Sandwich house and lands and was soon in Portsmouth, Rhode Island where he received a grant of land in 1644.

This is about all we know about William Almy, but the following article on the Pilgrims' neighbors in the *Mayflower Log* of the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Arizona gives us an idea of what was going on around our immigrant ancestor.

"Nine years after the *Mayflower* arrived at Plymouth, six ships from England put in at Salem harbor -- 45 miles to the north -- bringing 400 men, women, and children.

The following summer, in 1630, nearly a thousand colonists - traveling aboard fourteen vessels -- put in at points between Salem and Dorchester. Thus, in just over a year's time, the population of this short coastal stretch was suddenly about three times that of ten-year-old

Plymouth Colony. Who were these people? And what precipitated such a massive migration?

They were Puritans -- individuals who were dissatisfied with the ceremonial trappings of the Church of England but had hoped to institute reform while remaining as members of the Church. (In the latter respect, they differed from Separatists who wished to cut off all ties with the Church and did so when they migrated to Holland and eventually to Plymouth Colony.) By the late 1620s, however, many Puritans had become discouraged about the prospect of achieving the desired reform. Additionally, there were many who were now dissatisfied with the whole social and political climate of England. These were seeds for what became both a colonial enterprise and Puritan refuge in America. A royal charter was obtained by a few leaders and they formed a corporation known as Massachusetts Bay Colony. Their territory was to encompass all of the land in Massachusetts between parallels three miles north of the Merrimack River and three miles south of the Charles River (roughly from today's Newburyport south to Dorchester).

In the spring of 1629 six ships carried the initial migration of Puritans to the new colony. A military figure, Captain John Endecott, had been named as Governor. Salem became the colony's center of activity - temporarily, as it turned out.

Then a strange thing happened.

The breath of freedom in a new world several thousand miles from England opened up a

fresh and independent train of religious thought; before the summer was over, the Puritans adopted a form of church similar to that of their Separatist neighbors in Plymouth.

Late in 1629 a group of Puritans in east England managed to obtain control of the Massachusetts Bay Colony charter. This was an influential band, capable of organizing a massive colonial venture. They did so with incredible speed and efficiency. Unlike the *Mayflower* emigration which was financed by a group of merchant backers to which the colonists were indebted for years, this Puritan venture was financed almost entirely by the participating colonists themselves.

John Winthrop was named governor and would replace Endecott on arrival in America. Winthrop was born in 1588 in Groton, Suffolk, about the same time as Pilgrim William Bradford was born in York. Winthrop was the son of well-to-do parents, received a good education, and became an attorney in 1626. He married four times, first when he was only 17. His third wife, Margaret Tyndale, was the one who accompanied him to America.

The first ship sailed in February 1630. The *Arbella* was the flagship of a fleet of four which started out together on April 8 (about a month later than originally planned). Winthrop and several other leading figures were aboard the flagship. Two months later, June 8, the passengers on the *Arabella* sighted the high hills of Mount Desert Island (Maine) and shortly thereafter the hills of Camden. On June 14 the ship anchored in Salem Harbor.

Considerable time was spent debating whether there was a more suitable site than Salem for the seat of the new colony. Finally, it was decided that the environs of Boston Harbor were preferable. Seat of the new government was moved from Salem to Charlestown.

Like the colonists of the previous year, the new arrivals soon adopted the congregational form of church modeled after that of Plymouth Colony.

As in the case of Plymouth Colony in 1620, the first winter saw much sickness and a few died.

This was to a large extent due to wasting the summer months because of indecision regarding a colony site. But the years that followed were much better, except for one more bout of sickness, and the colony prospered. By 1643 the population had reached about 16,000.

From a week before departure from England until he died nineteen years later, Winthrop maintained a running account of events. This filled three notebooks which he rather presumptuously entitled "History of New England". Winthrop served as governor or assistant for the entire nineteen years prior to his death in 1649 (eight years before his counterpart in Plymouth Colony, William Bradford, succumbed)."

#### Article of Interest

Alan G. Atwell (1233-5180-332) of Greensboro, North Carolina wrote "I have been reading your newsletters that my late mother, Edith Almy Atwell, received and that my 94 year old father receives. They are much enjoyed and appreciated."

"I enjoyed the article about Franklin Almy as one of his sons, Dr. Thomas Almy, delivered me in Union Hospital in Fall River in 1938. Dr. Tom was a cousin of ours."



#### New Family Member

Clara Hubbard Almy (1408-6612-1243) was born 16 September 1993 at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She joins her brother and sister, Mark and Ruth. Her proud parents are Kenneth and Anne Almy.



Remember when the iceman always chipped off some chunks so we could grab them off the truck.

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### 1911 SURPRISE MARRIAGE

The following is from a 1911 newspaper clipping sent to me by Patricia Almy Forte (see article in the last newsletter).

"A surprise party marriage!

Something new? Yes, and from no larger a place than the village of Little Compton, buried almost in the vales of the beautiful valley of the Narragansett. Yet here they do new things.

A short distance away is gay Newport, where they have monkey dinners and all sorts of strange things. In Little Compton they go Newport one better and they have 'surprise marriages.'

There isn't the slightest doubt but that the marriage party of Miss Henrietta Williams Moore and John Franklin Almy has given an impetus to the work of Dan Cupid in the county.

For it is whispered that several similar weddings will soon take place and it will be a surprise if Little Compton does not take first place before long as the record-breaker in the marriage line.

#### *The Congregation Surprised*

That the congregation of the pretty village was thoroughly surprised is certain. That they no more expected a wedding on that memorable Sunday than they did a shower of dollar bills is certain.

And that the affair was a great success is also certain; and that the minister, Mr. Brooks, achieved his purpose of hinting to young couples the desirability of getting married is a positive certainty.

The district had, for a long time, been 'dead.' Things had been at a standstill, attendance at the churches had been scant, and marriages had been but few.

Mr. Brooks, one of the liveliest and most progressive as well as earnest young preachers in the section, was sent recently to care for the flock at Little Compton, and, incidentally, to 'wake up' the congregation to the need of religion and activity.

Just how to do this was a question; for resources are not many in the country, and Little Compton is not so thickly settled that ordinary methods could succeed. The usual inducements to churchgoing were unavailing, and, moreover, there were objections to good many.

One night, John Almy, who is but 21 years of age, came to the little parsonage of the minister, and brought with him his blushing sweetheart, Miss Moore, who is not ashamed to confess to her 16 years of girlhood.

They wanted to be married, and quickly; for life was getting pretty dull, and John was an impatient swain and was no longer content to 'go with' the girl of his choice in the usual manner of country swains. And pretty, blonde, smiling, Miss Moore agreed with him, or she wouldn't have come to the parsonage with him. The minister, Mr. Brooks, was just about to marry them.

Suddenly a thought struck John Almy. 'Mr. Brooks, you've been looking for a surprise to waken up the church members, haven't you?' he asked. 'I have indeed answered Mr. Brooks.' 'But what's that to do with your getting married?' 'Well, I just thought -- that is, if Miss Moore is willing -- that we might -- if she consents -- get married -- if Henrietta won't object --

well -- er -- er--' Miss Moore here came to his rescue by saying that she didn't object to anything he might suggest, except going to the North Pole on the honeymoon.'

So Mr. Almy came out with it: 'Why can't we get married in church, right before the regular meeting, just as a surprise to the congregation.?''

Mr. Brooks almost cried out 'Eureka.' Anyway he had found what he'd long looked for -- a means of waking up the flock, and a means of boosting matrimony. So he let it become known that he had a surprise in store for the congregation at the next service. He wouldn't tell what it was or the nature of it, or anything about it, believing that a surprise is only a surprise when it surprises.

So on Sunday night the little church was crowded. They came from miles around Compton to see the minister's 'surprise.' It was almost like a reunion, and people who hadn't been to church for years came out to attend this service, and renew old ties.

The song service began, and the meeting progressed as usual, while the flock -- many of whom found standing room the only available means of seeing the proceedings -- began to think that something had gone wrong and that the surprise had petered out. The organist had been playing very quiet hymns and had performed her part of the service without attracting very much attention. But now every eye was turned towards her, wondering what had come over her.

For she was playing a tune -- what was it? It had a familiar sound -- many in that congregation had heard it one day -- on the happiest day of their lives. What could the tune be? No -- yes -- yes indeed; it was the sweet, joyful, mystical music of Mendelssohn's wedding march!

And as the chords, as the thrills and the bells of the music rang out, down the aisle walked Henrietta Williams Moore, leaning on the arm of her aunt, Mrs. Evelyn E. Grinnell, while on the other side came John Franklin Almy, attended by William C. Brown. Both met in the centre, before the clergyman. And while the wedding march played -- the same one that Mendelssohn wrote to accompany the walk of the happy lovers in 'A Midsummer's Night's Dream,' full of fairies and elves -- the two were made one.

Was it a surprise? Indeed it was, and the congregation has since been growing, for they find the church a pretty interesting place after all. And if there are not soon a number of marriages in Little Compton then the town prophets are in the wrong, and Mr. Brooks' experiment has failed. But he doesn't think it has, for he tells of the occurrence with pride. 'Well, it just looked like an opportunity to do some thing to awaken the people of Little Compton,' he said, 'and it has done so.'

Miss Moore and Mr. Almy were only too delighted to give the village a surprise. That the wedding was a real surprise is certain, for one could almost hear a pin drop so great was the astonishment when the organist began playing the wedding march. 'I had told them that there would be a surprise, but they were not prepared for one like this.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

John Franklin Almy above is Almy No. 1239-2145-29. He was born in Tiverton, RI, 4 Aug 1891, the son of Frank Ellery and Annie Elizabeth (Westgate) (Sherman) Almy. John married Henrietta Williams Moore on 30 Jul 1911.

*John and Henrietta's descendants are known and some receive the Almy Family Newsletters.*

## DEATHS IN THE ALMY FAMILY

Charles Coit Almy (1233-3252-411) 89, died earlier this year. Charles was born in Avoca, New York, 26 August 1904, the son of Coit Charles and Josephine N. (Goff) Almy. He married in Tulsa, Oklahoma, 14 October 1931, Olive Irene Ellis. They have two sons.

Robert Theodore Almy (1252-9512-923) 59, of Canyon Country, California, died 6 January 1994 in a car accident. Robert was

born in Salina, New York, 24 October 1934, the son of Henry S. and Aline (Fones) Almy. He married Dianna Jean Hibbard in 1960 and they have four children.

William T. Brightman, Jr. (1407-1632-2W) 93, of Providence, Rhode Island, died 25 February 1994. He was born in Taunton, Massachusetts 5 May 1900, the son of William T. and Jennie (Blake) Brightman. On 10 October 1925 he married Marjorie Howland Almy, daughter of Frederick W. C. and Louisa B. (Almy) Almy.



## CONTRIBUTIONS

Following is a listing of those cousins who have sent in contributions since the last issue of the Almy Family Newsletter to help defray the costs of printing and mailing. This help is most appreciated. I thank each and everyone of you.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Almy Number</u>	<u>Residence</u>
Olive B. Hoffman	1233-3221-6221	California
Mary Almy Merrell	1233-3252-3111	Virginia
Peter E. Almy	1233-3252-4112	Texas
Millie Almy	1233-4666-21	California
Floyd C. Almy	1233-4668-15	Washington
Everett C. Atwell	1233-5180-33W	North Carolina
Constance M. Price	1235-4131-1111	Ohio
Madeleine Anderson	1235-4131-1113	Ohio
Brooks Almy	1235-4131-1233	New York
Larry W. Turner	1252-9137-1132	Virginia
Frank W. Knowlton, Jr.	1252-9773-32	Florida
William A. Knowlton	1252-9773-34	Virginia
Philip W. Almy	1407-1532-1	Rhode Island
Lois B. Almy	1407-1532-3	Rhode Island
Richmond Almy Day	1407-2551-2	Arizona

Your cousin (1408-3312-112),



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SPRING IS HERE !

ENJOY !!