

Researchers have been looking for the birthplace and parentage of George Soule for at least one hundred years. A number of possibilities have been uncovered over the years, but none was particularly convincing. Past issues of this publication have contained articles on new information as it was discovered. We continue this vital work with the following article that was originally published in the June, 2008 issue of *The Mayflower Quarterly*. It explores new possibilities discovered in Holland and presents the fascinating possibility that George Soule began his voyage in Delftshaven, rather than the commonly held belief that he joined the group just before it left England. Previously thought to be a "stranger," it now appears he may have been one of the "saints."

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Pilgrim George Soule: Update on his possible ancestry

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In the group decision to determine the members of the congregation who were to leave first for the wilds of North America, it was recorded by Edward Winslow in 1646 that "it was best for one part of the Church to goe first, and the others to stay, viz., the youngest and strongest part to goe."^[1] In 1620 Edward Winslow was 24 years old, and George Soule, who accompanied him in 1620 as a servant, was certainly younger than Edward, and probably aged 18 years.^[2] There is nothing to indicate that George Soule was not in Leiden before the *Speedwell* left Delfshaven in 1620 for Southampton, England.

Y-DNA testing has yielded a very distant connection (16/25 match), if any, for George Soule (back some 4,500 years) with William Throope, who is known to have come ca 1664 from Nottinghamshire in England.

George Soule came on the *Mayflower* as servant to Edward Winslow, who was closely associated with William Brewster in Leiden. It would not be surprising that William Brewster could have suggested George Soule to Edward Winslow as one of the "youngest and strongest" who were ready to venture across the Atlantic Ocean in 1620. William Brewster had removed to Leiden by May 1609 and in 1611, as "Willem Bruyster" was a witness to the marriage there on 27 Dec 1611 between "Willem Boekrum" (William Buckram) of Ipswich, Suffolk, widower of "Judick Boeckrums" (Judith Buckram), block-maker to "Lijsbeth Neel" (Elizabeth Neal) of "Scroebe" (Scrooby).^[3]

Nottinghamshire is where William Brewster came from: his first child was b. 1593 in Scrooby, Nottinghamshire. Initial Y-DNA testing of Brewster descendants indicates a very distant connection (14/25 match), if any, to George Soule (some 5,500 years back) and a more recent connection (21/25 match) to William Throope (some 2,000 years back). No birth or marriage records have been found for William Brewster or for his wife Mary, although it would appear such records, if extant, should be found in Nottinghamshire. Records of Scrooby in the Nottinghamshire Archives, however, have been checked with no findings.^[4]

William Brewster is presumed to have been born ca. 1566/7 and his wife Mary is presumed to have been b. ca 1568/9.^[5] In Leiden their household would have included these children: Jonathan (b. 1593), Patience (b. ca. 1600), Fear (b. ca. 1606), child (bur. Leyden 1609), Love (b. 1611), and Wrestling (b. 1614).^[6]

It would appear that William Brewster's household in Leiden would have also included his printing associates: first, John Reynold(s), who had completed his 8-year apprenticeship in England, moved to Leiden, where he married in 1617 and apparently moved out of William Brewster's household shortly. His space in the Brewster household was probably taken by Edward Winslow, who married in 1618, so probably also moved out before 1620. If George Soule

had been taken into the Brewster household about 1619, then George Soule, being apparently a lusty young man, would have been a prime candidate from the "youngest and strongest" for sailing on the first voyage of the *Mayflower*.

Thus, while it is always possible that George Soule was related to Mary (---) Brewster, or Elizabeth Neal, both apparently from Nottinghamshire, more weight should be given to the relative Y-DNA distance of the George Soule Y-DNA from both Brewster and Throop Y-DNA. Y-DNA distance often translates into geographical distance over time. Thus it is possible that George Soule was connected to an English or Huguenot (Walloon) family in Leiden and Canterbury and continued this association in Plymouth.

This conclusion is supported by the grouping of the *Mayflower* families in the 1623 land division: George Soule is included in the group on the south side "of the brooke to the baywards" which consisted of persons mostly from south-eastern England (ranked by age), and, more importantly, still associated with William Brewster: William Brewster, Robert Cushman, Samuel Fuller, John Billington, Isaac Allerton, William Bradford, Peter Brown, Richard Gardener, Joseph Rogers, George Soule.^[7]

In Leiden is the record of Susanna "Sule" of Canterbury in England,^[8] who was betrothed on 31 May 1629 to Hugo del Porte of Tourcongie.^{[9] [10]} The relationship of the bride and groom to the others mentioned in this record is open to interpretation, including the appearance of Jan Solet (a French pronunciation of Soule or Sule), who is listed as "step-father" [future father-in-law?] of the groom, unless we take the interpretation that Jan Solet had married the widowed mother or step-mother of Hugo del Porte. Likewise, Jenne Fromenu, named as "mother" of Susanna Sule, may also be her future mother-in-law.^[11]

The only other similar surname entered in these records at Leiden pertains to the death by drowning of "Jacques Sulley" of Canterbury, about 25 years old, with permission to bury the body 16 Jan. 1617.^[12] It may well be that the age or surname, or both, of this "James Sulle" was misstated or copied in error.

The following nuclear family is proposed for George Soule:

John/Jean/Jan SOULE/SULE/SOLET b. ca 1575; d. Leiden after 5 Dec 1612 and possibly after 31 May 1629; m 1. ca. 1600; m 2. ca. 1612 Jenne? (Fromenu) del Porte?

Possible children:

1. George Soule b. ca 1602 d. before 22 Jan 1678/9.
2. Susanna Sule b. Canterbury? ca 1610; m. Leiden 1629
Hugo del Porte, of Tourcongie [Hugo possibly m 2. Leiden
ca. 1636 Catherina Stalle]

While the first name Susanna is relatively common, George Soule's daugh-

ter Susannah m. ca 1661 Francis Waste/West. George Soule's second son was named John Soule, who m1. ca 1656 Rebecca Simmons and m2. 1678 Esther (Delano?) Sampson. A distant connection to the Delano and Mahieu families, with their numerous Jennes (or Janes), may be indicated, as Phillipe Delano's family was from Tourcongie and environs.^[13]

And then there is the remote possibility that George Soule's wife, apparently Mary Bucket/Becket [Bouquet in French?], may have come from a Walloon family. A slightly similar surname, "Bussche" (Bushet/Bursher?), is found in the early Leiden marriage records and these persons are listed as coming from Canterbury, Sandwich, London, and probably Colchester.^[14] One Edward Burcher received land in the 1623 land division.^[15]

Furthermore, one George Sole, apparently of Woodchurch [near Canterbury in Kent], is noted as having sold land to John Sharpe of Westwell, the elder, in Sharpe's will proved 13 Sept 1593.^[16] No link has been found to date between George Sole of Woodchurch and George Soule of the *Mayflower* although the older George could turn out to be an uncle or grandfather, if records can be found.

1. Jeremy D. Bangs, *Pilgrim Edward Winslow: New England's First International Diplomat* (2004) p. 14.

2. He received land in the 1623 division of land in Plymouth, and was thus most likely 21 years old in 1623.

3. Johanna W. Tammel, *The Pilgrims and other People from the British Isles in Leiden, 1576-1640* (1989) p. 197.

4. Research by Jeremy Bangs, mentioned in e-mail 9 Mar 2008.

5. *MFIP Brewster* (2000) p. 1.

6. *MFIP Brewster* (2000) p. 4.

7. *MF 12 Cooke* (1999):p.6.

8. Accompanied by Jenne Fromenu, her mother, and Maria del Porte.

9. Accompanied by Jan Solet his step-father, and Anthony del Port, his uncle.

10. Johanna W. Tammel, *The Pilgrims and other People from the British Isles in Leiden, 1576-1640* (1989) p. 253.

11. E-mail from Jeremy Bangs, 9 Mar 2008.

12. Johanna W. Tammel, *The Pilgrims and other People from the British Isles in Leiden, 1576-1640* (1989) p. 253.

13. MD 56 (2): pp. 150-161.

14. Johanna W. Tammel, *The Pilgrims and other People from the British Isles in Leiden, 1576-1640* (1989) pp. 63-64.

15. *MF 12 Cooke* (1999) p. 7.

16. A. W. Hughes-Clarke, *Kentish Wills: Genealogical Extracts from Sixteenth Century Wills in the Consistory Court at Canterbury* (1929) p. 98.

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