

## The More Children and the Mayflower

Ellinora Moore filia Samuelis Moore de Larden on 24 May 1612  
Jasperus Moore filius Samuelis Moore de Larden Generosi on 8 Aug. 1613  
Richardus Moore filius Samuelis Moore de Larden et uxoris ejus on 13 Nov. 1614  
Maria Moore filia Samuelis More et Caterinae uxoris ejus de Larden on 16 April 1616  
(Shropshire Parish Register)

It is thought that there were 31 children (20 boys and 11 girls) on board the Mayflower during the voyage to America. While nearly half of the ship's passengers did not survive the winter of 1620/1621, it is believed there were fewer deaths among the children, which meant the struggling colony had more chance of flourishing. (Mayflower400UK-org)

The four More children were passengers on the Mayflower (the language above is from their baptismal records from the Parish Registers of Shipton). Unfortunately, 3 of the 4 died shortly after arriving in Plymouth; only Richard survived. (He died at about the age of 84 and is the only known Mayflower passenger to have a marked grave.)



Elinor (Ellen, age 8), Jasper (age 7), Richard (age 6) and Mary (age 4) More hailed from the small village of Shipton in Shropshire. When they sailed on the Mayflower they were not accompanied by their parents. For centuries, historians thought the four young More children who arrived on the Mayflower were homeless orphans. The story is more complicated than that.

Let's look back ...

## First, the Land

“More is a parish and township situated 2 miles north of Bishops Castle. This place takes its name from the family of More, who have been settled here since the 13th Century.”

“Linley is a township 3 miles N. E. of More, owned by the More family. Linley Hall is a handsome manor in the Grecian style of architecture, the seat and property of the More family.” (English Ancestry of Richard More of the Mayflower)

Richard More was a respected parliamentarian who owned an estate, with approximately 3,000-acres, at Linley, in Shropshire, close to the Welsh border.

Nether Larden (now simply Larden) was an approximate 960-acre farm and estate and a “charming 17<sup>th</sup> Century main residence” (called Larden Hall). The Larden estate was held by Jasper More.



At various times, the estates of More, Linley and Larden were split between male heirs and then reunited when one branch of the family died without issue or if cousins married. With the death of an owner, tradition was that land in More and Larden would usually go to the eldest son and land in Linley to the second son. (Shropshire Archives)

Jasper and Elizabeth More had three sons; they all died young. They also had a daughter, Katherine. English law prohibited women from inheriting property. Richard and his wife Sara had an unmarried son, Samuel.

“Having no heir to the family seat, Jasper was keen to settle Katharine with her cousin so that the two estates would be combined. Significantly, the combined estates would pass down the family line.” (Shropshire Star)

## Then, the Marriage Settlement

A “Marriage Settlement” (noted in the British National Archives and held by Shropshire Archives), dated October 8, 1610, notes the agreement between Jasper More and his cousin Richard More. The 1<sup>st</sup> Party are Jasper More of Larden, Salop, Esq. & Eliz. his wife; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Party are Richard More of Linley, Salop, Esq. & Sara his wife and a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party are Edward Cludd of Orleton, Salop, Esq. Lawrence Lee of Withington, Salop, clerk, John Smithe of Morvild, Salop.esq & Vincent Edwardes of Ledham, Salop, gent.”

It appears from the record that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party is to hold the title to the land (likely, in trust) while the others enjoy 'use' of the respective properties, as noted in the agreement.

Under the terms of the agreement

1. "For the forthcoming marriage between Samuel More eldest son of [Richard and Sara] and Katherine More, daughter of [Jasper and Elizabeth] £600 paid to [Jasper and Elizabeth] by [Richard and Sara].
2. Jasper More transfers his Larden and other property to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party, but retains the use of it "for the rest of his natural life, then to the use of his wife, Eliz. for her natural life, with the yearly rent of 100 marks due to her, then to the use of Samuel and Katherine More and the heirs of their bodies"

"Jasper More also to provide Samuell and Katherine More and their children with sufficient meat, drink, lodging and houseroom with Jasper More or if they wish to live in their own house, Jasper More is to pay them a yearly sum of £40."

3. Richard More transfers his Linley and other property to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party, but retains their use "for their natural lives, and then to the use of Samuel and the heirs of his body by his wife, Katherine".

"Richard More during his life, is to have all power over the lands aforesaid, to lease the land for 21 years, 3 lives or a determinable number of years as he wishes."

Seventeen year old Samuel More married his 25-year-old cousin Katherine More in 1611.

The Agreement noted "the tenure of Wm. Blakeway" on the Larden property. Records note that Jacob Blakeway lived at Larden.

### **Claims of Adultery**

Samuel and Katherine took up residence at Larden. Katherine had four children, starting with Elinor (Ellen) a year after the marriage, followed by Jasper in 1613, Richard in 1614 and Mary in 1616.

Samuel obtained a post as secretary to Lord Zouche (Lord President of the Council of Wales, Warden of the Cinque Ports, Privvy Councillor, diplomat and courtier) in London.

Samuel spent a great deal of time in London as secretary to Lord Edward Zouche.

Samuel was suspicious that Katherine and the neighboring Jacob Blakeway had been having an affair – and that the four children were not 'his', but, rather Blakeway was their father.

Katherine didn't deny the accusation. She said Jacob Blakeway was her husband. She then tried to get an annulment from Samuel. But unfortunately for Katherine, the witnesses to their betrothal contract had died. (New England Historical Society) The declaration of the marriage contract was then deemed to be an admission of the adultery.

Samuel had reached the conclusion by the time that Katherine's fourth child was born (Mary in 1616), that none of her children were his. He thought they looked too much like Jacob Blakeway. Samuel spent most of his time in London as secretary to Edward Zouche, Lord President of the Council of Wales, amongst his several important posts. Jacob was one of Katharine's father's tenant farmers. (ShropshireMayflower)

In April 1616, Samuel arranged a separation from his wife. Katherine may have moved to stay with relatives in London. The children were sent to live with tenants of his father, near Linley.

Katherine sued for an annulment of the marriage because of her pre-contract but, there being no witnesses, she lost the case. Samuel responded with a charge of adultery against Jacob Blakeway. Jacob lost the case and fled in the face of large fines. No more is heard of him. Samuel sued again, this time against Katharine for a judicial separation which gave him control of the children. Katharine's appeal failed. (ShropshireMayflower)

### **Samuel Sends the Children on the Mayflower**

Lord Zouche, Samuel's employer, was a member of the Virginia Company which had been transporting children from London to meet the need for labor in America. He had invested £100 in the Virginia Company, which financed the Mayflower's voyage to North America.

Meanwhile, a small band of Separatists (much later to be known as the Pilgrim Fathers), hoped to emigrate to America to gain greater freedom for their religion. A deal was struck: free land for the Separatists in America, £10 share per person to pay for the voyage, unaccompanied children to be looked after by the adults.

Samuel paid £80 for double shares for the four children and they were allocated guardians. Ellen (8) was placed with Edward Winslow; Jasper (7) with John Carver; Richard (5) and Mary (4) with William Brewster.

As noted by Edwin Hall in 'The English Ancestry of Richard More of the Mayflower',

"What more natural for such a man, in such a case, than to seek a safe asylum for his helpless, motherless children, in the new commonwealth about to be founded beyond the seas by men of his own religious and political faith, and to arrange through his affiliations with the Mayflower company for their transportation to New England under the care of and adopted into the families of the leaders of the pilgrim band."

Hall notes that the children were likely not servants to the Pilgrims, but actually may have been considered adopted into the Pilgrim families. He notes,

"Instead, then, of being mere London waifs, bound out to service, as some writers have heretofore surmised, they were evidently the children of a friend or respected political associate or sympathizer, honorably adopted into the various families in which we find them, and without doubt generously provided for financially by their father, Col. Samuel, who was probably well able so to do.

"The fact that before the embarkation at London we find them at the house of such a man as Thomas Weston, awaiting the coming of the Leyden party, as sworn to by Richard of Salem in his affidavit of 1684, is no more than would have been expected under all the circumstances.

The names of those which came over first, in y<sup>e</sup> year 1620 and were (by the blessing of god) the first beginners, and (in a sort) the foundation, of all the plantations, and Colonies, in New-England. (And their families.)

“If this view is correct, and these children were adopted rather than bound out, we have here an explanation of the fact that some early writers speak of Jasper More as Governor Carver's son, son by adoption so to speak.

[For example, in ‘Lives of the Governors of New Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, page 46, it states, “Jasper, a son of Governor Carver, had died the 6<sup>th</sup> of December preceding, and his affectionate wife, overcome with grief for the loss of her husband and son, soon followed them to the grave.”]

“Being an adopted son he might readily, and with a certain degree of truth be spoken of as Carver's son. This statement has usually been considered a mistake of the early writers in question, but perhaps it may not be so much of a mistake after all as has been heretofore supposed.” (English Ancestry of Richard More of the Mayflower)

8. m<sup>r</sup> John Carver.  
 Kathrine his wife.  
 Desire winter, &  
 2. man-servants  
 John Howland.  
 Roger Wilder.  
 William Latham, a boy,  
 & a maid servant & a  
 child y<sup>e</sup> was put to him  
 called Jasper More

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6. m<sup>r</sup> William Brewster.  
 Mary his wife, with  
 2. sons, whose names  
 were Loue, & Wrasling.  
 and a boy was put to  
 him called Richard More; and another  
 the rest of his children  
 were left behind & came  
 over afterwards.

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5. m<sup>r</sup> Edward Winslow  
 Elizabeth his wife, &  
 2. men servants, called  
 Georg Somle, and  
 Elias Story; also a little  
 girls was put to him called  
 Ellen, the sister of Richard  
 More.

Hall also notes, “At their tender ages, they would of course necessarily become members of some one of the existing families, and hence it is that, as Bradford writes, they were “put” respectively to the families of Governor Carver, Elder Brewster and Mr. Edward Winslow. Col. More himself was of the English gentry; we naturally find his children attached to the families of three of the most prominent English gentlemen in the party.”

“In a word, the point I wish to make is this, that even if by Bradford's expression “put to,” we are to understand an apprenticing or binding out of children, in the ordinary acceptance of that phrase, yet, in

reality, this was a case of adoption rather than ordinary service or apprenticeship, which, however, took that legal form in order to give to Carver, Brewster and Winslow the same paternal authority over these children that a father would have over his own children.”

### **Ellen, Jasper and Mary Die Within the First Year**

As noted in Bradford,

In the family of Edward Winslow in 1620 was “a little girl ... put to him called Ellen, the sister of Richard More,” who died “soon after the ship's arrival” [Bradford 44 1,444 ].

In the family of John Carver was “a child that was put to him called Jasper More,” who died before the spring of 1621 “of the common infection” [Bradford 441,443].

The family of William Brewster in 1620 included “a boy ... put to him called Richard More, and another of his brothers” [Bradford 441]. Thirty years later, in summarizing the Brewster family, Bradford reported that “Richard More's brother died the first winter ...” [Bradford 444]. (It has been concluded by many that Bradford’s reference to a ‘brother’ is more likely Mary, a sister.)

Richard More, sole survivor of the siblings, went on to become a successful merchant and landowner, winning battles at sea and captaining ships that supplied the colonies.

In 1636, he married Christian Hunter. Shortly afterwards they moved to Salem where he took to the sea, owning the ketch he commanded. He traded with Virginia and the West Indies, and probably made voyages to England.

He served with his ship in 1653 in an unsuccessful expedition against the Dutch settlement on the Hudson (later to become New York). In the following year he took part in a successful operation against the French in what was to become Nova Scotia. He and Christian had five sons and two daughters, all baptised at Salem. Jane died in Salem in 1686; Richard continued to live there until his death about ten years later.



*Richard More is the only known Mayflower passenger to have a marked grave.)*

Information here is from, English Ancestry of Richard More of the Mayflower by Edwin Hill in The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, 1904; Shropshire Archives; British Archives; Shropshire Star, Andrews, February 9, 2020; ShropshireMayflower-com; NewEnglandHistoricalSociety-com; Origin of the Mayflower Children Jasper, Richard and Ellen More, Anthony Wagner, 1960;

In an effort to provide a brief, informal background summary of various people, places and events related to the Mayflower, I made this informal compilation from a variety of sources. This is not intended to be a technical reference document, nor an exhaustive review of the subject. Rather, it is an assemblage of information and images from various sources on basic background information. For ease in informal reading, in many cases, specific quotations and citations and attributions are often not included – however, sources are noted in the summary. The images and text are from various sources and are presented for personal, noncommercial and/or educational purposes. Thanks, Peter T. Young