

# PILGRIM HOPKINS HERITAGE SOCIETY



Mayflower

# ATLANTIC CROSSINGS

ENGLAND ~ BERMUDA ~ JAMESTOWN ~ ENGLAND ~ PLYMOUTH



Sea Venture

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

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DECEMBER 2011

## The Story of Constance by Judith Brister

*This is the fifth in our series of articles on Stephen Hopkins' children. Due to its length, this article will be published in two parts. We welcome readers' comments, insights, corrections and additional information on these common ancestors. Your feedback will broaden and enhance our preliminary research, and will be shared in the newsletter, as appropriate.*

The story of Constance, the second eldest daughter of Pilgrim Stephen Hopkins and his first wife Mary, is one of very wide interest, as she is the direct ancestor of a huge number of Hopkins descendants, including PHHS members.

There is some dispute as to how many children she had, but she could have had up to 12. The nine children who genealogists are sure about gave Constance a total of 74 grandchildren.

As seen in the profiles of Stephen's other daughters (Elizabeth, Damaris and Deborah) in previous issues of this newsletter, piecing together the lives of women in early American history is challenging, given the paucity of information on them in the records. Constance's life story is no exception.

We do know, as noted in the first issue of *Atlantic Crossings*, that Constance's baptismal records were found by Caleb Johnson (author of the 2007 Stephen Hopkins biography, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*) in the parish registers of Hursley, Hampshire, England. She was baptized on May 11, 1606, one of three children of Stephen Hopkins and his first wife, Mary (?). An older sister, Elizabeth, was baptized on March 13 1605, and her younger brother Giles was baptized on January 30, 1608.

Her early years were marked by loss and upheaval. As indicated in the *Atlantic Crossings* article on Giles ([Vol. 3, Issue 2](#)), the first loss felt by Constance and her siblings was that of their father, who on June 2, 1609, when Constance was just



Gravestone for Constance in Eastham's Old Cove Burial Ground.

Photo by Steve Henslip / Cape Cod Times

three, apparently set sail for Jamestown, Virginia on the *Sea Venture*. This vessel was the flagship of the "Third Supply Relief Fleet," comprised of seven ships and two pinnacles owned by the Virginia Company of London, whose mission was to provide fresh supplies and new colonists from England to the young and troubled Jamestown settlement. He most likely had a contract to work for seven years, and might have planned to serve this out before sending for Mary and the children. In his absence, probate records suggest that Mary ran a shop to support the family. On July 25 the *Sea Venture* ran into a hurricane and was buffeted by the storm for three days, until the leaky boat was wedged between two reefs to prevent it from sinking, just off the Bermuda coast. Stephen Hopkins and the other



Image courtesy Pilgrim Hall Museum

Constance Hopkins' hat, shown here, is on exhibit at Pilgrim Hall Museum. Beaver fur, imported from the colonies, was processed into felt to make hats like this. They were very popular in the early 17th century for both men and women.

### Also in this issue:

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## Message from the Governor

This has been a productive year for the Pilgrim Hopkins Heritage Society.

Our election meeting last September gave us a new slate of officers and board members. Some officers have stayed on and are continuing the great work they have been doing for us: Ed Flaherty as Treasurer and Rod Fleck and Carole Dilley as members of the Board of Assistants. Kenneth Whittemore stepped down as Corresponding Secretary and has taken on the task of Historian. We welcome new officers Rick Denham as Deputy Governor, Linda Hart as Corresponding Secretary and David Morton as member of the Board of Assistants. Many thanks to the wonderful volunteers that have retired but are still active members of PHHS: Ruth Freyer, Deputy Governor; Judith Elfring, Historian, and Everard Munsey, member of the Board of Assistants.


The Signage Team, led by Helen MacLaren, made good progress this year, placing the first PHHS historic plaque on the Hopkins House in Brewster, Massachusetts. Helen worked closely on this project with team member Judith Brister and the very cooperative owners of the Hopkins House bakery and gift shop, the late Mary Beth Baxter and her daughter Heather. Photos of the plaque were displayed at the

election meeting in Plymouth, thanks to help from PHHS members Harold Woolley, Eunice and Donald Ballam.

Rod Fleck and Edward Flaherty worked hard on the process of incorporation of the PHHS in the state of Massachusetts and the papers have been filed.

Our historian Kenneth Whittemore has been extending our lineage for the website. If you have approved applications, please send him a copy so he can add your lineage (for privacy reasons we do not include people born after 1900). This new data should facilitate the task of all those researching their Hopkins family lines.

Looking ahead, our dynamic new Deputy Governor, Rick Denham is organizing an exciting cruise to Bermuda in June for PHHS members and others. The cruise will feature author Caleb Johnson and will raise funds for PHHS signage projects. Check out the details on page 7 of this issue.

Wishing you all the best for the holiday season and health and happiness in the New Year. 

Sincerely,  
Susan B. W. Abanor, Governor PHHS

### Website Usage

Since the counter on the website began operating on 6 January 2008, we have had 101,336 visitors. The pages most visited are as follows:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| History .....          | 14,921 |
| Latest News .....      | 7,974  |
| Membership .....       | 7,484  |
| Events .....           | 5,973  |
| Newsletter .....       | 5,336  |
| Activities.....        | 4,670  |
| Links .....            | 4,212  |
| Contact Us .....       | 3,791  |
| Lineage .....          | 2,006  |
| Approved Lineage ..... | 1,659  |

### Pilgrim Hall Museum

You can help preserve Constance Hopkins' hat by supporting Pilgrim Hall Museum. You can also receive information directly to your home about Pilgrim Hall Museum's programs by becoming a museum member. You receive newsletters, advance notice of programs and members events, free admission to the museum, a discount in the museum store and the knowledge that you are helping preserve the objects belonging to the *Mayflower* Pilgrims – your ancestors. You can access a membership application on line at [www.pilgrimhall.org](http://www.pilgrimhall.org) or by contacting the museum's director Ann Berry at [director@pilgrimhall.org](mailto:director@pilgrimhall.org) or 508-746-1620 x2.

## Our September Meeting

At the Pilgrim Hopkins Heritage Society meeting on September 11, 2011 in Plymouth, Massachusetts, 37 members signed the guest book. Participants came from all over the country.

Harold S. Woolley was nominated and elected Secretary pro-tem, and the minutes of the last meeting were distributed and approved.

By a show of hands, participants indicated their line of descent from Stephen's children. Some were descended from more than one child.


|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| Constance ..... | 17 |
| Giles .....     | 15 |
| Deborah .....   | 1  |
| Damaris .....   | 8  |

Reports from PHHS officers were then presented. Among the issues discussed at this meeting were our application to incorporate and our need to

file for non-profit status. Associated by-law changes were discussed and approved. A conflict of interest policy was proposed, discussed, amended and approved.

The proposed slate presented by our Nominating Committee, chaired by Ruth Freyer, Deputy Governor, was as follows:

|                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Governor: .....              | Susan B. W. Abanor  |
| Deputy Governor: .....       | Carl Richard Denham |
| Corresponding Secretary: ... | Linda Hart          |
| Historian: .....             | Kenneth Whittemore  |
| Assistant: .....             | Carole Dilly        |
| Assistant: .....             | Rod Fleck           |
| Assistant: .....             | David Wade Morton   |

With no new nominations from the floor, this slate of officers was elected. 



Participants at our September triennial election meeting at Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Photo by Susan Abanor

### *In Memoriam*

Edward Winslow, Jr.

October 3, 1939- October 15, 2011



## Constance Story

From page 1

castaways spent ten months in Bermuda before arriving in Virginia in May 1610.

During this period it seems Hopkins was unable to communicate with his family, and they had consequently given him up for dead. This was clear in 1613, when seven-year-old Constance and her siblings suffered a second major loss: the death of their mother. The Hopkins children were legally deemed orphans and placed under the supervision of Thomas Syms. One can only imagine how they were affected by these abrupt and major changes.

Author Caleb Johnson speculates that the Virginia Company may have sent word of Mary's death to Stephen Hopkins (Johnson 2007, 60). At any rate, it seems that by 1617 he was back in England, settling his children in a home just outside the east wall of London and finding them a new mother, Elizabeth (Fisher?), whom he married on February 9 1617/18 at the St. Mary Mat-fellon church in Whitechapel, London. With the return of their father and a step-mother to care for them, the Hopkins children may have at last enjoyed an interlude of stability in their young lives. It did not last long.

### From duel to marriage

Constance would have been 14 when she and her family departed on the *Mayflower* in 1620. By then she had a new half-sister, Damaris. Accompanying the family were two young servants, Edward Leister and Edward Doty. The fate of Constance's older sister Elizabeth is unclear; since she no longer appears in the records, she may well have died by 1620. Another daughter with this name was born later (see *Atlantic Crossings* Vol.2, Issue 1).

A fictionalized account of Constance's first few years in Plymouth Colony, until her marriage to Nicholas Snow some time before May 22, 1627, can be found in Patricia Clapp's *Constance – A Story of Early Plymouth*. Anchored in historical events but narrated by a young Constance conjured up by Clapp, the book portrays her as more than a hard-working, dutiful Plymouth Colony daughter. In Clapp's imagination, she is also a spirited, fallible, flirtatious girl making the

difficult transition to adulthood during the Colony's tumultuous first years.

Central to the author's take on Constance's personality was no doubt the first duel to take place in New England, on June 18, 1621, between Stephen Hopkins' two servants, Edward Leister and Edward Doty. Clapp is among a number of historians and writers who speculate that the two young men were fighting over the affections of their master's daughter Constance.

Thomas Prince, in his *A Chronological History of New England, in the Form of Annals*, asserts that both young men were wounded,

...the one in the hand, the other in the thigh. They are adjudged by the whole company to have their head and feet tied together; and so to lie for twenty four hours, without meat or drink. Which is begun to be inflicted; but within an hour, because of their great pains at their own and their master's humble request; upon promise of better carriage, they are released by the Governor" (Prince, Vol.III, 40: 1887).

Constance married neither of these two hotheaded young men. By the time of the "1627 Division of Cattle" in the Colony, she had apparently wed Nicholas Snow, as the couple were listed as part of the seventh company in this division, headed by Stephen Hopkins (PCR 12:11).

Nicholas Snow had arrived in the *Anne* or *Little James* in July, 1623. There is evidence he was baptized at St. Leonard's Shoreditch, London, on January 25, 1599/1600, making him about six years older than Constance. He was granted land (acreage unknown) abutting Hobbs Hole in the 1623 Plymouth land division (PCR 12:6), and admitted as a freeman at Plymouth on January 1, 1632/3 (PCR: 1:4).

The couple's Plymouth home was probably between those of Edward Bangs and Stephen Hopkins. Nicholas Snow was most likely a carpenter and a cooper, given the many tools of these trades listed in the inventory of his estate at his death. Like other heads of household, he no doubt also farmed and raised livestock, and he was granted "hay ground" and other land in and around Plymouth over the years. When they finally left Plymouth in the mid-1640s, he sold off

Photo by Susan Ahanor



*In the first years of her married life, when Constance and her husband were just starting out, it is likely that she dressed simply. Her clothes might have been quite similar to the well-researched attire of the Plymouth Plantation enactor Vicki Oman, above.*

*continued on page 5*

## Constance Story

From page 4

close to 52 acres of land in the area to Thomas Morton (PCR 12:134), so it would seem the couple had been comfortably off.

The records indicate that in Plymouth Snow was called upon to serve his community in a variety of ways: as surveyor of highways, arbitrator, and on juries. The records also document two incidents with servants which suggest that Snow may not have been the easiest of masters to work for. In the first incident, a servant asked on Jan. 5, 1634/5 to serve out his indenture with another master, John Cooper. The second involved the servant Twiford West, who had a six-year indenture agreement with Governor Edward Winslow. Presumably by mutual accord he was at some point assigned to Nicholas Snow, but he apparently disliked working for Snow and asked Winslow to take him back. An arrangement by which this was allowed, conditional upon West's working an extra year for Winslow, was agreed to by all three men on Feb. 12, 1635/6. Yet another glimpse of Snow in the records occurred on Dec. 1, 1640, when he and two others were "presented" for failing to mend highways. They avoided a sentence by promising to do the repairs during coming year.

A deed dated July 6, 1638 indicates that Nicholas Snow sold his house and garden in Plymouth to Samuel Eddy for 12 pounds sterling, to be paid in forty bushels of Indian corn at current rates. It is unclear where the family moved in or around Plymouth after that. What is evident, however, is that by 1638 Constance and Nicholas had six children: Mark (b. 1628), Mary (b. ca. 1630), Sarah (b. ca. 1632), Joseph (b. ca. 1634), Stephen (b. ca. 1636), and John (b. ca. 1638). No doubt they needed a larger house, where they could also accommodate three other children who were to arrive shortly thereafter: Elizabeth (b. ca. 1640), Jabez (b. ca. 1642), and Ruth (b. ca. 1644).

### Nauset beckons

Like Stephen Hopkins, Nicholas Snow was one of the "purchasers" or "old comers," the 53 heads of household in good standing who resided in Plymouth in 1627, plus five London merchants, to benefit from the surrender to the colony in 1640 of the Bradford Patent (previously held by Bradford and his associates). By virtue of their special status, as those who had struggled to get the colony on its feet in its first challenging years, the purchasers and old comers and their heirs were given proprietary rights forever over land in one of three large tracks of land ("plantations" or "reserves") carved out by the colony. Snow and Hopkins chose to claim their shares on the reserve located on Cape Cod, whose western boundary was with the town of Yarmouth, and whose eastern boundary was the Namskaket creek, in what is now Or-



The first Cape Cod home of Constance and Nicholas Snow was probably located on the north bank of Great Pond, above, in what is now Eastham.

leans. This reserve, which stretched from bay to ocean, later became the old town of Harwich, which in 1803 split into Harwich and Brewster (see *Atlantic Crossings Vol. 2, Issue 2, December 2008*).

With this status, Nicholas Snow would have participated prominently in the debate that divided the colony into two camps in the early 1640s over the issue of abandoning Plymouth, whose poor soil could not support the growing community, and moving the settlement's entire population to a site with more economic potential. As a woman, Constance would not have attended public meetings on the matter. No doubt she was deeply engaged in the decision-making process on the home front, however, given her concerns over her own large family's future.

Bradford, whose priority was congregational unity and who wanted to avoid the dispersal of the original Plymouth community, describes the different sides in this debate in detail. Those who wished to remain in Plymouth, he noted, alleged that those favoring removal did so,

...not for want or necessity so much...as for the enriching of themselves. Others were resolute upon removal and so signified that they could not stay: but if the church did not remove, they must...

Those set on removal were led by the prominent citizen Thomas Prence, who had by then served two terms as governor. As Governor Bradford stated above, a point came when members of this group simply announced their determination to migrate, despite the naysayers. Faced with this situation, those against the move agreed to it if a site could be found which would accommodate the whole colony.

With the better land near Plymouth already granted to others, the focus turned to Cape Cod, and in particular, to the area which now comprises the towns of Wellfleet, Eastham and Orleans, and was then known as Nauset.

This site, some fifty miles from Plymouth, lay just east of the reserve granted to Stephen Hopkins, Nicholas Snow and the other purchasers or old comers. There was already some familiarity with Nauset. On December 6, 1620,

*continued on page 6*



## Constance Story

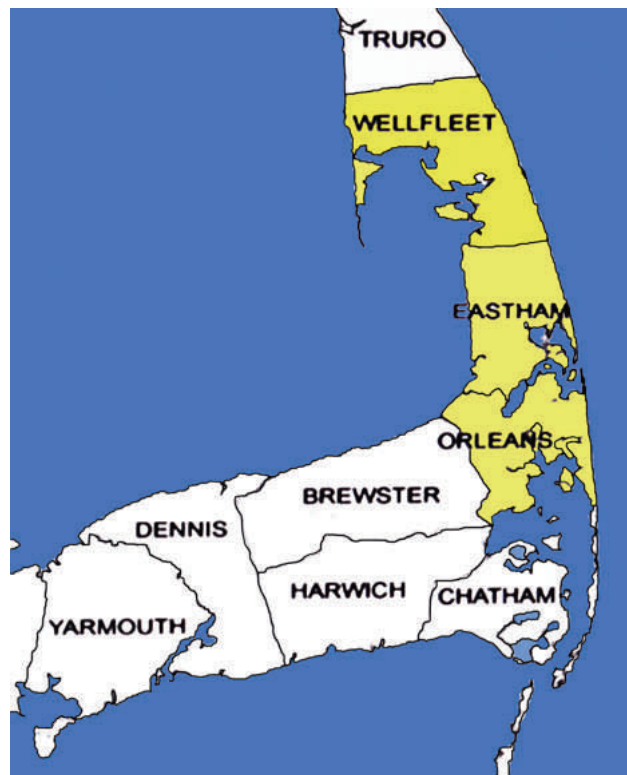
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before the *Mayflower* had even reached Plymouth, Pilgrim explorers had landed just north of Great Pond, and spent the night there. The area was visited the next year by colony leaders when the lost Billington boy had to be retrieved from the Nauset tribe. Various times during Plymouth's difficult first years, Governor Bradford and others went to Nauset to trade with the Indians for provisions. It was also visited in the winter of 1627, when the ship *Sparrowhawk*, headed for Virginia with passengers and supplies, ran aground off Chatham Harbor and was ultimately wrecked by a storm. Governor Bradford led a relief expedition to assist the castaways, sailing from Plymouth to Namskaket Creek (in what is now Orleans) and then hiking across the Cape to Chatham (King, 30-31).

Nicholas Snow was a member of committees sent in 1640, and again in 1643, to reconnoiter the Nauset territory and to assess its economic potential and overall suitability for a possible resettlement there of the entire Plymouth congregation and for making it the new seat of government. That Snow was picked for these assignments speaks both to his standing in the community and to his interest in its relocation.

The exploratory committees were favorably impressed by the land and climate of the Nauset territory, and relocation of the colony to that site was viewed favorably by many. After several meetings and much consultation, however, it was deemed that this territory was not large enough to sustain the colony given its expected population growth, and displacement there might eventually result in even more hardship than if the group remained in Plymouth. Nauset was also seen as too far from the rest of the colony to be the seat of government.

While the 1643 exploratory committee, led by Governor Bradford himself, had concluded that Nauset could not sustain the entire Plymouth congregation, the committee nevertheless thought it prudent purchase land there from the Nauset sachems Mattaquason and



*The Nauset territory, where Constance and her husband Nicholas settled in the mid 1640s, covered the areas of the current towns of Wellfleet, Eastham and Orleans, on Cape Cod, shown above.*


George (successor of Aspinet), on behalf of the Plymouth church (Freeman, Vol. II, 348-50).

The final conclusion, painful to some and positive to others, was that the handful of families who wished to move to the Nauset territory should be allowed to do so. It is clear this decision was a wrenching one for Governor Bradford:

...And thus was this poor church left, like an ancient mother grown old and forsaken of her children, though not in their affections yet in regard of their bodily presence and personal helpfulness; her

*continued on page 7*

## Constance's MtDNA

As part of our ongoing MtDNA research, we have recently identified, on a preliminary basis, two lines for Constance Hopkins. They are shown below, to only the 10th generation, for privacy considerations. If you have information about these families please contact [dna@pilgrimhopkins.com](mailto:dna@pilgrimhopkins.com). 

|                       |   |                          |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Constance Hopkins     | - | Nicholas Snow            |
| Mary Snow             | - | Thomas Paine             |
| Dorcas Paine          | - | Benjamin Vickery         |
| Dorcas Vickery        | - | Jonathan Sparrow         |
| Dorcas Sparrow        | - | Thomas Nickerson         |
| Dorcas Nickerson      | - | Thomas Lewis             |
| Naomi Lewis           | - | Jonathan Snow            |
| Eliza Snow            | - | Parker Bearse            |
| Eliza Parker Bearse   | - | Joe Hamblin              |
| Mariah Norris Hamblin | - | Edward Everett Carpenter |

|                      |   |               |
|----------------------|---|---------------|
| Constance Hopkins    | - | Nicholas Snow |
| Mary Snow            | - | Thomas Paine  |
| Mary Paine           | - | James Rogers  |
| Mary Rogers          | - | John Cole     |
| Phebe Cole           | - | David Wickham |
| Ruth Wickham         | - | Jabez Cowdery |
| Chloe Cowdery        | - | Samuel Austin |
| Beda Austin          | - | Enos Hayward  |
| Jerusha Hayward      | - | Dana Phillips |
| Mabel Agnes Phillips | - | Merritt Welch |
| Alma Welch           | - | Fred C. Grady |

## Constance Story


From page 5

ancient members being most of them worn away by death, and these of later time being like children translated into other families, and she like a widow left only to trust in God. Thus, she had had made many rich became herself poor...

In addition to Nicholas Snow and Thomas Prence, the determined group who moved to Nauset included John Doane, Josias Cook, Richard Higgins, John Smalley, and Edward Bangs and their families — some 49 people. These seven families were allowed to establish their own church in Nauset, thus founding the third town and church to be a direct outgrowth of Plymouth, (after Duxbury and Marshfield), and the first Cape Cod town to be settled by Plymouth families (Sandwich, Yarmouth and

Barnstable, founded before 1646, had been largely settled by non-Plymouth inhabitants). The grant obtained for Nauset was as follows:

The Court doth grant unto the Church of New Plymouth, or those that go to dwell at Nauset, all the tract of land lying between sea and sea, from the purchasers' bounds at Namskaket to the Herring brook at Billingsgate, with said Herring brook and all the meadows on both sides of the said brook with the great bass pond there, and all the meadows and islands lying within the said tract.

The tract was some fifteen miles long, bordered by the reserve of the "purchasers" on the south, by what is now the southern border of the town of Truro on the north, by the bay on the west, and by the ocean on the east. 

*To be continued in the next issue*

## Cruise to Bermuda

Featuring presentations by Caleb H. Johnson, author of *Here I Shall Die Ashore*:


**Time:** June 8, 2012 - June 15, 2012  
**Ship:** NCL "Dawn"  
**Price:** Round trip Boston-Bermuda starting at \$1850.00 per couple  
**Contact:** Rick Denham at Caribbean Sunset Cruises  
**Email:** [rick@caribbeansunsetcruises.com](mailto:rick@caribbeansunsetcruises.com)  
**Phone:** 432-697-9503 or 432-664-5680

Join us for a 7-day round-trip cruise from Boston to Bermuda. A highlight will be presentations by Caleb H. Johnson on the life and adventures of Pilgrim Stephen Hopkins before, during and after his near-fatal sojourn in Bermuda.

The cruise ship will be docked for three days at King's Wharf, Bermuda to allow passengers to explore and enjoy the historical sites. For Pilgrim Stephen Hopkins de-

scendants this is a wonderful opportunity to visit St. Catherine's Beach, where Hopkins and other Sea Venture castaways landed in July 1609 and lived while building the new ships that took them to Jamestown in May 1610. The Sea Venture was stripped of all useful parts and materials as it sat on the reefs off Gate's Bay, but the sand-covered remains of the wreck are still there, in a protected site. Some artifacts from the wreck are on display at the Bermuda Maritime Museum in the Royal Naval Dockyard. There is also a replica of the Deliverance (one of the two ships built by the castaways in Bermuda) on Ordnance Island in town of St. George, near St. Catherine's Beach.

The cruise is open to everyone. The presentations by Caleb H. Johnson are a special feature to help raise funds for the Pilgrim Hopkins Heritage Society Commemorative Plaque Committee.

Please join us from June 8 - Jun 15 on this history-packed voyage. 





## Contact Us

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[secretary@pilgrimhopkins.com](mailto:secretary@pilgrimhopkins.com)

PHHS website: [www.pilgrimhopkins.com](http://www.pilgrimhopkins.com)



## Increasesings

A new Hopkins descendant was born on 21 December 2011:

Alexis Morgan Poole, Hopkins descendant and granddaughter of PHHS Secretary Linda Hart, was born at 7:43 a.m. Her proud parents are Tracey & Clint Poole of Sudbury, Massachusetts.

Please send your family's news on "Increasesings" (births) and "Decreasings" (deaths) for future issues of the newsletter to [editors@pilgrimhopkins.com](mailto:editors@pilgrimhopkins.com)

## Next Triennial Meeting

**When:** Weekend of 7-9, September 2012

**Where:** Mount Laurel, New Jersey

More details will be posted on the website.

Registration information will be in the June 2012 *Atlantic Crossings*.



*Atlantic Crossings*

Pilgrim Hopkins Heritage Society  
251 Oxford Drive  
Cotuit, MA 02635

