

Hannah
aboard the
Angel Gabriel

Kate Meeks-Hall

Hannah aboard the *Angel Gabriel*

by

Kate Meeks-Hall

For Trent, Kaleigh, Christopher, Tabytha,
Makenna and future generations of Cogswell
descendants

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The Cogswell Party aboard the *Angel Gabriel*

Hannah Cogswell was a ten year-old girl living in Westbury, Wiltshire County, England in 1634. Wiltshire was a hilly place with castles, a medieval village, a marketplace, and the ancient Stonehenge Circle nearby. Farmers raised goats and sheep for wool which Hannah's father turned into broadcloth, serge, cassimere, and felt at his mills.

In 1635, Hannah's father, John Cogswell sold his mills, his orchards, his meadow and pasture land, his barn and his cottage. He packed his farming tools, bridles and harnesses. He herded up his animals. Elizabeth, Hannah's mother, packed up their furniture, their cook pots, their beds and clothes, EVERYTHING they owned!

They joined the "Great Migration" from England to America. No one knows exactly why

they chose to make this big decision. It might have been because of the heavy taxes King Charles I was demanding, or there might have been hard times at the wool mills because people had started using cotton and linen fabrics, or they might have wanted to separate from the Church of England. It might have been a combination of these things. No matter their reason, in May of 1635, the family was at the harbor in Bristol. They were boarding the *Angel Gabriel* to begin their journey across the Atlantic Ocean!

The Cogswell Party Aboard the *Angel Gabriel*

- John and Elizabeth
- Mary
- William
- John
- Hannah
- Abigail
- Sarah
- Elizabeth
- Edward
- Samuel Haines apprentice to John Cogswell
- William Furber servant to John Cogswell

The *Angel Gabriel* was a large ship called a galleon. She weighed 240 tons, was equipped with 14 cannons and was used in Sir Walter Raleigh's expeditions. Under his command she defeated three Spanish ships off the coast of Calais in 1627. There was even a ballad written about the battle and her amazing victory. Now the *Angel Gabriel* would

transport Hannah and her family to New England, if the winds ever let up!

For most of May, the winds howled and made the water rough. The ship pitched from side to side even with the protection of the harbor. Everyone waited anxiously to start the voyage. They waited nearly two weeks! The sailors made good use of their time securing cargo and ensuring there was enough food and water on board for people and animals. Hannah watched the waves, the fish, and the other ships being loaded and unloaded at the docks. This was the first seaport she had ever seen. Wiltshire was a landlocked county, which means it has no beaches or seashores. The only waterways near her home were ones like the river that powered the wheel at her father's mill.

One day two soldiers came aboard each ship in the harbor. They spoke with every adult and checked to see that everyone had permission to travel to "the New World." Then the soldiers asked each grown up to swear an allegiance to the Crown. This meant that even though Hannah's mother and father were going to start a new life in a faraway place, they were still British citizens.

On Thursday, June 4, 1635, the wind calmed enough that the anchor was lifted and the ship got underway. Four other ships left at the same time. The *Angel Gabriel* was the biggest of them all and the best armed. The other ships, the *James*, the *Mary*, the *Diligence*, and the *Elizabeth* (which sailors called the "Bess") were glad to have her in the fleet to help protect them from pirates.

The little fleet was just underway when something frightening happened. The sailors

aboard the *Angel Gabriel* were pulling up her anchor when they lost their grip. It went crashing back into the waves, just narrowly missing the bow of the *James*! Everyone on board the ships was startled. This time they were lucky and no harm was done. They traveled nearly one hundred miles on the first day out, but had to anchor at nightfall because the waters were just too rough to go on. In the morning, they tried again to sail. The waters were very choppy and most of the passengers were quite sick. So, they anchored at Lundy Island, which lies at the end of the Bristol Channel and the mouth of the Celtic Sea. Some of the men from the *James* went ashore. When they returned, they reported that there was only one house on the entire island. However, they made everyone aboard the ships happy because they returned with eggs, milk, cheese and various fowl.

All of the ships stayed anchored at Lundy Island for three more days. Even more people were seasick and most felt even worse than they had before! On Tuesday June 9, it began to rain and the ship's master decided to find a better harbor to wait out the weather. They sailed to Milford Haven. Once they landed, the men were again pleased to go ashore and feel the ground under their feet. Poor little Hannah, her brothers, sisters and mother waited on the ship for their return. When they came back, they brought more eggs, bread and fish. By Thursday everyone knew they still could not sail, because the weather was too severe.

On Friday, a real knight, named Sir James Parret, came aboard the *Diligence*. He said many good people were going to America and

it made him a bit sad that they were leaving England. He wished everyone success on the journey and went on his way.

When Sunday came, every able-bodied person left the ship and went to a church called "Nangle." A very old preacher named Mr. Jessop gave the sermon, Psalms 91:11. Hannah thought that the words in the psalm were just right, "For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways"; and she hoped they were true. Mr. Jessop said guardian angels would watch over them on their trip to the New World because they were good and keeping true to their faith.

The weather went from rainy to windy to foggy. Near the end of the week, there was some excitement when one of the sailors, Jephrey Cornish, was put off the ship for quarrelling and brawling with the other seamen. He was drunk. Hannah watched as he was dragged ashore by several of his mates. He was cursing and fighting the whole way!

Later that day, Mr. Jessop paid a visit to the ships to wish everyone well and to offer his blessings again. While his words were kind, they really did not help because the winds just kept making the anchorage choppy, the ships rock to and fro, and the people sick to their stomachs.

Hannah woke up on Sunday, June 21, to a beautiful summer day. It was very calm and everyone was relieved. Rev. Richard Mather invited everyone from all of the ships to join him on the *James* for his reading of the Gospel.

On Monday, after twelve days in Milford Haven, the fleet set sail again. By noon, Hannah could no longer see land. She was happy they were on their way but, of course, everyone got seasick again. Hannah was starting to wonder if everyone would be sick for the entire trip!

By evening, the *Diligence*, the *Mary* and the *Bess* had all gone well ahead of the *Angel Gabriel*. Because she was the largest ship, she was also the slowest. The three Newfoundland bound ships were taking advantage of the improved weather. The master of the *James* ordered the sailors to lower three sails to slow their pace to match the *Angel Gabriel's*.

Now that the weather was clear, Hannah, with her brothers and sisters, watched the vast ocean. There were many porpoises swimming along the ship, frolicking with others in their pod. It was amazing to watch them pop up from the water, first nose, then fin, then tail, then disappear altogether just to reappear 10, 20 or 30 feet off the bow.

Everyone enjoyed watching the porpoises for days, then after a while the grownups decided that they might be good food too. One of the sailors struck a large porpoise with a harpoon and others helped him haul the great creature onto the ship. Hannah was used to seeing animals butchered because this was how the family lived on their farm in Old England. So, she wasn't sad to see the porpoise cut open, and she was amazed at how much the insides resembled a pig! They made good use of the meat. They ate the liver, lungs, heart, stomach and the filets.

Everyone on the ship was grateful to the porpoise for its sacrifice and to the sailor for his skill. The meal was desperately needed, as it had been six weeks since they left Bristol.

On Friday, Captain Andrews invited Reverend Mather, Mr. Michael and Captain Taylor of the *James* aboard the *Angel Gabriel* for a fine meal of boiled mutton, roast turkey, and good wine. The *Angel Gabriel* continued slowly making her way. Now in addition to porpoises, the children could also see great whales, which Rev. Mather called crampushes. He wrote in his journal that they "saw with wonder and delight abundance of porpoises, and likewise some crampushes as big as an ox, puffing and spewing up water as they went by the ship". William, Hannah's brother, said he could land a whale. He was fourteen years old and almost as big as a man, so Hannah had no doubt that he could do it if he wanted.

Things continued this way for another week, as they sailed across the Atlantic Ocean. On some days it rained a bit and on others it was clear. By the time it was Friday again, the winds were back and the seas were rough. All of the children, most of the women, and even some of the men were seasick. Everyone was weary of the close quarters on the ship and fearful of the tumultuous sea. Reverend Mather reminded the passengers of the words in Psalm 107:23-30. Those passages tell the story of seafarers tossed about on a stormy sea and promise the Lord will make it calm and bring them safely to their desired haven. So, Hannah and her family prayed and hoped for the best.

Things did not look good for the great ship and her passengers. As the weather deteriorated, the *James* put up her sails, bid those on the *Angel Gabriel* well, and tried to quickly get across the ocean to safety. Hannah watched the *James* grow smaller and smaller in the distance. Now, they were alone.

When it was not raining, the wind was helpful. The ship was able to pick up pace. Mary whispered that she hoped that they might outrun the storm. Hannah hoped so too, but all they could do for now was huddle beneath deck. The ship creaked while the rigging crashed and clanged above. There was a terrible jumble of sound as howling winds whistled through the lines, small children cried, and mumbled prayers filled the air.

It rained hard, the winds blew, and the waves were as high as any hillside back in Wiltshire. Hannah missed her fields, her orchards, and days when she was able to splash in the creek. She was not at all certain that they would survive this trip. She was very concerned about Sarah and Elizabeth, her littlest sisters. Edward was trying to act like a big man even though he was the baby of the family and only six years old. It seemed that bravado alone would carry him through the darkest times. Hannah gathered Abigail, Sarah and Elizabeth and did her best to comfort them. Mary and Mother tried to help those who were bruised or bleeding from being tossed about the ship. William and John offered their assistance to the sailors and Edward followed like a puppy. He wanted very much to be just like them. The sailors, who had

been friendly at the beginning of the journey and when they anchored at Lundy and Milford Haven, had become brusque. They could use Father's strength, but they had no time to entertain children or to teach them the trade. In the end, the boys helped where they could; mostly they tied things down and moved quickly out of the way of the frantic seamen.

After eleven weeks at sea, land was in view. The storm was still viciously attacking the ship. Cables were snapping in two. The sails were ripping as if they were old and rotten. The sounds of the decks breaking apart reduced even the bravest and most faithful of men to tears.

The ship found her way to the coast of Maine, at a place called Pemaquid Point. Somehow, the crew managed to drop anchor and the passengers started to disembark. They were filled with joy to scamper up the big rocks to the trading post and settlement above.

The storm was the biggest anyone could ever remember. Trees blew over and some snapped right in half. Some houses were knocked down completely and many lost their roofs. The *Angel Gabriel* was tossed about on the waves. Desperate attempts were made to remove some of the valuables from the ship.

The storm was too strong and she was wrecked upon the rocky coastline. Some of those aboard were swept out to sea. The Cogswells lost their livestock and most of their goods, including their gold.

John Cogswell had brought a large tent with him. He had the foresight to bring it along as the family escaped the ship to the

relative safety of the shore. They weathered the storm overnight in the tent. In the morning, the job of recovering the remains of their material wealth began.

Forty years later, Samuel Haines and Mary Cogswell remembered that day. They said a good quantity of the household goods were found. They named some of those things including feather beds and bedding, dinner plates, some brass pans, iron vessels, and pewter platters. Many of the barrels, which contained the family's provisions (dried peas and salted meats, flours and grains), and John Cogswell's personal trunk covered in horsehide with his initials embedded on it were collected. The family's heirloom "Turkey worked" carpet was found. The carpet was of significant sentimental value to the family because it had belonged to John Cogswell's father, Edward, and had been passed to John when Edward died. They had taken very special care of it and used it as a table covering, never placing it on the floor. Still much of the estate, which had been valued at around 5,000 pounds, was lost.

The Cogswells lived in their tent on the coast of Maine for a few days. John Cogswell traveled to Boston and hired a bark to transport his recovered property and his family to their land grant in Massachusetts. Hannah grew up and married her father's farmer, Cornelius Waldo. They had nine children.

John Cogswell's trunk is in a museum in Pemaquid, Maine today (2013.)

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This story was constructed from family legend and interpretation of Richard Mather's 1635 journal. It is enhanced by the author's genealogical study. Our family is eternally grateful to Dr. Riess for his decades long search for the sunken remains of the *Angel Gabriel*.

Special thanks to Laura Clark and Carol Misoff for their help editing this story and to Margaret Cherry Roumanis for her years of dedicated research. Aunt Margie blazed the trail, which led to the discovery of the Cogswell line, including finding the crucial document - Katherine Stebbins Cherry's death certificate, which proved her mother was a Waldo.

Other works to read, if you want to learn more about the Cogswell family or the *Angel Gabriel* and her final voyage:

Jameson, E. O. *The Cogswells in America*. Boston: A. Mudge & Son, Printers, 1884. Print.

Mather, Richard. *Journal of Richard Mather. 1635*. Dorchester: David Clapp, 1850. Google Books. Google. web. 06 Feb. 2013

Riess, Warren C. *Angel Gabriel: The Elusive English Galleon: Its History and the Search for Its Remains*. Bristol, ME: 1797 House, 2001. Print.

Glossary

bark - a small sailing ship
bravado - boldness or courage

brawling - fighting

broadcloth - a shiny, closely woven cloth of wool

brusque - abrupt, blunt or curt in manner or speech

butchered - to kill an animal for food

cassimere - a soft fabric made from goat wool

citizen - a legal resident of a country

deteriorate - to become worse

felt - a sturdy fabric made from animal hair by compressing the fibers

fleet - a group of ships

Great Migration - the years 1620-1640 when tens of thousands of people immigrated from England to "the New World"

porpoise - a sea mammal related to whales and dolphins

quarrelling - arguing

rigging - ropes, wires and pulleys that control the masts and sails of a ship

sacrifice - giving up something valuable

serge - a strong cloth, usually made of wool, used especially to make coats, jackets, and pants

tumultuous - greatly agitated

The Author's American Cogswell Family Line

John Cogswell (c. 1592-1676)+ Elizabeth
Thompson (c 1594-?)

Hannah Cogswell (c.1624-1704) + Cornelius
waldo (c.1624-1700)

John waldo (c.1655-1700) + Rebecca Adams (?-
1727)

Edward waldo (1684-1767) + Thankful Dimmick
(1682-1757)

Shubael waldo (1707-1776) + Abigail Allen
(1712-1799)

Calvin waldo (1759-1815) + Judith Graves
(1764-1808)

Judith Maria waldo (1803-c.1877) + Nehemiah
Stebbins (c.1800-1865)

Katherine Douglass Stebbins (1847-1911) +
John Douglas Cherry (1848-1928)

Alan Emerson Cherry (1883-1960) + May Abbott
Seitz (1879-1967)

Helen May Cherry (1910-1992) + william
Clifford chinault (1917-2005)

Your grandparents (The author's Mom and Dad)

Your parents

YOU!

You my darling children are here because
they survived. John, Elizabeth and Hannah
Cogswell were some of your first ancestors
to arrive in America!

About the author:

Kate Meeks-Hall is a retired police commander and the mother of three. She resides in Bradenton, Florida with her wife and their youngest child. She is the family historian and an amateur genealogist. She has discovered several family lines that originated in America during colonial times. She hopes to write and publish more family stories for future generations.

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