

Rededication of Lothrop Bible  
Sturgis Library, Barnstable, MA  
October 10, 2009

Seldom in the course of one's lifetime does the occurrence of four important events converge to give cause for celebration. Such is the case for the descendants of Rev. John Lothrop. One of these important events is marked by this occasion.

I want to thank Lucy Loomis for arranging the rededication of this bible to coincide with the gathering of the Lothrop Family Reunion. Nothing is dearer to the hearts of the descendants of Rev. John Lothrop than his bible and the pewter communion service you see here displayed. You will understand why this occasion holds so much meaning to us and we shall be eternally gratefully.

Three hundred and seventy-five years ago, Rev. John and 34 of his followers came to America to settle in Scituate. They came as the First Independent Church of London. "This congregation came together of its own free will, chose its minister by free election and supported him by contributions freely organized and given. Some have seen the seeds of modern democracy here". I am quoting from the sermon by Rev. Michael Waters, Vicar of St. Mary's Church in Etton, England where Rev. John was baptized, the sermon given when the Lothrop family visited that church in 1977.

Three hundred and seventy years ago, Rev. John and his followers came from Scituate to Cape Cod by land and across Cape Cod Bay to settle in Barnstable, then known by the Indian name, "Mattacheese", meaning 'plowed fields'. With them came this bible and the pewter communion service. They arrived in Mattacheese on October 11, 1639 and ten days later they held a whole day of 'fasting, humiliation and prayer', during which time, I am sure, this beautiful communion set was used.

On the the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Rev. John's arrival in Barnstable, the first national gathering of Lothrop descendants was held

here on Cape Cod. It was at this time that the Lothrop Family Foundation was formed. This reunion of the Lothrop family marks the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Lothrop Family Foundation.

With an interesting heritage such as this, it is not difficult to understand why so many family members responded to that first gathering in October 1989. At that first reunion we were three hundred and four strong with descendants from seventeen states. Over the last twenty years we have grown as our existence has become known around the country.

You have heard of the path of succession as the bible was passed from father to son through the generations. At one point it was passed into the hands of a female descendant after which time the whereabouts of the bible became unknown to several branches of the family.

It was rumored to be in England but how it went from America back to England was a mystery. It wasn't until 1966, in a letter from John Howland Lathrop, Jr. to my aunt, Maude Lathrop Collins, that we learned that Grace Lathrop Dunham of the ninth generation from Rev. John and in whose possession the bible lay, married Theodore Luling of London, England. It was she who took the bible with her to England where she resided with her husband. She kept it in a vault in a London bank. Thus the mystery was solved.

The bible had been held within the Lothrop family for nine generations until it was gifted to the Sturgis Library in 1957 where it appropriately resides today.

The spelling of the Lothrop surname exists today with more than fourteen variations. The spelling used in the Lothrop Foundation was chosen because that is the way Rev. John himself signed his name, as evidenced in records he kept when he was vicar of the church in Egerton, England and which records are kept in the archives of Canterbury Cathedral, the repository for the records of the Anglican Church in England. Copies of some of these records with his signature are available for you to see. The spelling used in naming the Lothrop Family Foundation is the generic spelling and all inclusive.

The Lothrop Family Foundation is open for membership to all descendants of Rev. John Lothrop and Mark Lothrop and to any other people interested in this period of American history. As a tax exempt organization, we award scholarships in historical research and in historic preservation. We maintain a website [LOTHROPP.org](http://LOTHROPP.org). We also publish a newsletter three times a year and hold biennial reunions across the country. We welcome anyone into membership - relatives or not and no matter how you spell your name.

Remarks given by Helen Lathrop Taber