

THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER
NEWSLETTER
OF
THE SOCIETY OF MAYFLOWER
DESCENDANTS
IN THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA



Table of Contents

The Highlights.....	2
ND Society Officer Information	2
ND Society Annual Meeting 2023	2
Nominations for Officer Positions	2
Welcome New Members.....	2
Feature Column.....	3
Featured Pilgrim: The Billington Family	3
In Memoriam.....	5
How You Can Help Our Newsletter	10



THE HIGHLIGHTS

ND Society Officer Information

Governor – Sandy Roe

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Deputy Governor – Rachel Roe-Longtine

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Secretary – Sandy Sidler

sesid@hotmail.com

Treasurer – Diane Resvick

rehcaet@midco.net

Historian – Marti Bobertz

marti.bobertz@gmail.com

ND Society Annual Meeting 2023

The Annual Meeting will be held in Bismarck. Mark you calendars!

When: Sunday, October 8th, 2023

Where: North Dakota Heritage Center & State Museum

612 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck, ND
58505

Formal invitation with luncheon cost to be sent at a later date.

Nominations for Officer Positions now being taken

This year we will be voting on members to fill the Officers positions. If you are interested in running for an office please contact Governor Sandy Roe at smroe73@gmail.com

Welcome New Members

Welcome to our new members (since the last annual meeting):

<i>Member</i>	<i>Descendant</i>
JoAnn Buriak	John Alden
Rob Cushing	Edward Fuller
Autumn Trosen	Joan Hurst, Thomas Rogers, John Tilley
Kevin Cramer	William Bradford
Curtis K. Miller	William Brewster
Barbara Peterson	Francis Cooke
Paul Nather	John Alden
Cindy Huffman	Thomas Rogers
Tamerlee Ruebke	Thomas Rogers

FEATURE COLUMN

Editor's note: If you would like a feature column on your Pilgrim ancestor, please send information about your ancestor to the newsletter (reroe20@gmail.com)

Featured Pilgrim

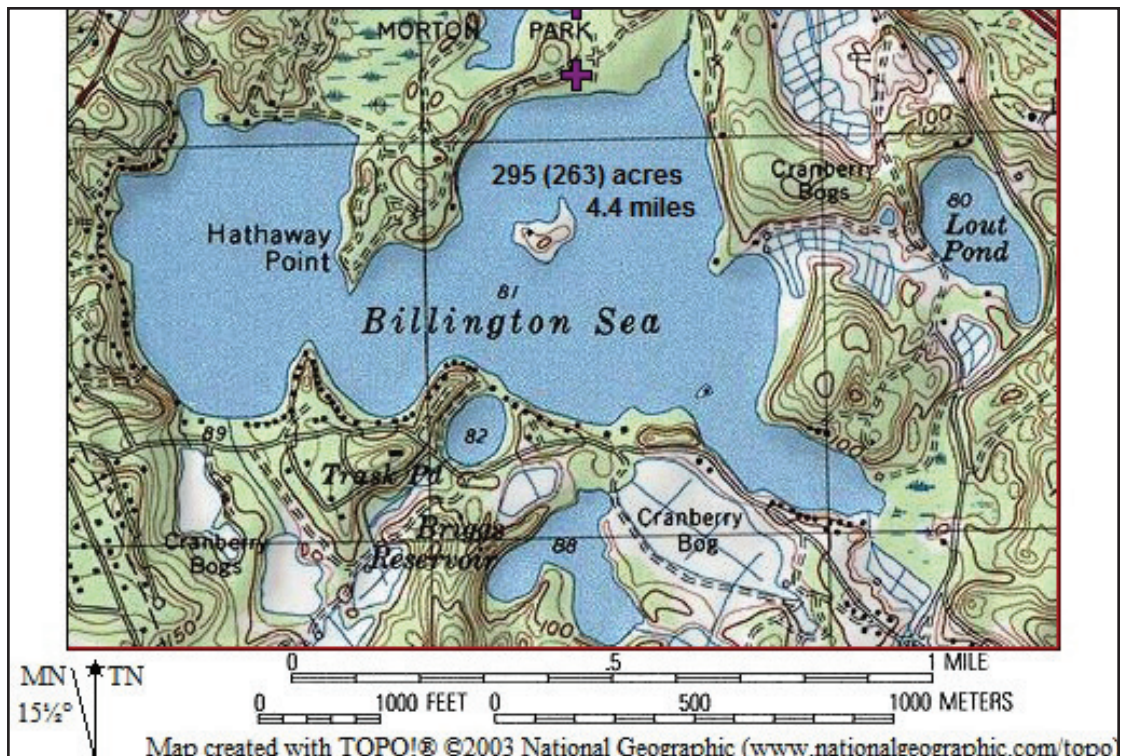
The Billington Family

Article originally published in the California Mayflower newsletter Vol. XLII No. 2 2018. All emphasis original to article.

Even aboard ship there was an aborted mutiny in which Billington was reportedly involved. The powder keg incident didn't help the Billington case. Later young John Jr. wandered off into the woods and was lost for almost a week. The community didn't appreciate the major effort it had to make to find him safe among Indians out on Cape Cod. And Francis did his exploring inland to the west where he discovered a large pond still known as Billington Sea. These kids were venturesome! But they were survivors. The Billington household was one of only four in

the colony which completely escaped the epidemic which wiped out half the colony in that first winter. One might wonder if there was some bitterness in the company that these least deserving members had the best of good fortune. In the first year at Plymouth, Billington, the hot-head, alienated the establishment by attacking Myles Standish with "opprobrious speeches". Standish had ordered Billington to military duty and Billington's response to this first draft in the New World was the equivalent of "Hell no! I won't go!" For this he was sentenced to "have his neck and heels tied together".

Three years later, the Lyford affair brought further condemnation down on John. Oxford-trained Rev. John Lyford had been sent to Plymouth to deal with a serious lack of scholarship in the community. Lyford was outwardly humble and ingratiating. He soon had a following of complainers and malcontents who became a threat to the authority of



Governor Bradford, Elder Brewster and Captain Standish. Bradford, in a covert action, intercepted some seditious letters Lyford had written to the plantation's backers in London. Eventually, Lyford was brought to trial. When the letters were introduced as evidence, Lyford broke down and confessed, repented and named Billington as one who abetted him. That didn't help Billington's standing at Plymouth. Just weeks later, Lyford resumed his rantings. Well, the record shows that Bradford, in particular, had it in for Billington. Most of the anecdotes about Billington are taken from Bradford's journal - the powder keg affair, the Lyford episode to name only two. Bradford, characterizing the passenger list, describes the Billington as "evidentially an ill-conditioned lot and unfit for the company of planters", and he says: "I know not by what friend shuffled into their company". But one historian had a more balanced view. He wrote: "The family was radically bad throughout but they have had not a few worthy descendants." Billington just couldn't keep his mouth shut, and that led Bradford to describe him as "a knave, and so will live and die". Prophetic, wasn't he?

It was true Billington to get into a quarrel with one John Newcomen in 1630. Newcomen was a new-comer to Plymouth. Apparently Billington got out his blunderbuss and went after Newcomen who ducked behind the tree, but still couldn't avoid the blast delivered from Billington. In accordance with a 1623 Plymouth statute, Billington was tried before a jury of 12 honest men and found guilty of "willful murder by plain and notorious evidence". Bradford's will faltered at the prospect of Plymouth's first

execution, so he asked the Bay Colony's just-arrived Governor Winthrop if the Bay Colony concurred that Billington "ought to die and ye land be purged from blood". Governor Winthrop obliged with the desired answer, and John was duly hanged, drawn and quartered. [...] Some questions remain. Might John Billington have died of natural causes after a full life, but for his continuously noxious personality and record of community affronts prior to 1630? Is it not possible that John Newcomen provoked Billington's attack? Consider that ten-year record of disdain and hate by William Bradford and Myles Standish (whom Billington referred to as Captaine Schrimpe), might not that have predisposed the jury to the supreme penalty. Just possibly, John Billington got a bum rap.

IN MEMORIAM



Angela M Kokott

September 6, 1955 ~
April 26, 2023

Angela Kokott, 67, of Fargo, ND, formerly of Jamestown, ND, passed away Wednesday evening, April 26, 2023 at Essentia Health, Fargo, ND.

Mass of Christian Burial was held on Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at St. James Basilica, Jamestown.

Burial was held at Calvary Cemetery, Jamestown.

Angela M. Kokott was born September 6, 1955, at Trinity Hospital, Jamestown, the daughter of James E. and Margaret O. (Williams) Kokott.

Angela attended Jamestown College and went on to double major in Library Science and Art at St. Katherine's College, St. Paul, MN. She worked as Librarian at the Jamestown Hospital and the Wildlife Research Center. Angela also owned a Scottish shortbread business.

She was a gifted musician, song writer, music therapist and teacher, wire sculptor an artist extraordinaire, polish paper cutter, quilter and genealogist.

Angela is survived by brother, James Kokott; sister, Linda (Paul) Brooks; brother, Timothy Kokott; and sister, Theresa Kokott.

She was preceded in death by her parents and three brothers, Mark Kokott, Scott Kokott, and John Kokott.

A Prayer Service was held on Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at Eddy Funeral Home, with a Rosary which began at 6:30 p.m.



IN MEMORIAM



James Billey

September 23,
1935 — October 5,
2022

James Oscar Billey,
87 of Ellendale, ND
died at his home
in Ellendale on
October 5, 2022.
James was born
September 23,
1935, in Aberdeen,

SD to Harold and Lucy (Warnick) Billey. Jim attended high school in Ellendale, graduating in 1953. He attended Ellendale Normal and Technical School for one year, then transferring to the University of North Dakota where he graduated in 1957 with a degree in Civil Engineering. Jim spent the next 5 years working as an engineer in Grand Forks and Minot, after which he moved to Washington, DC to attend law school at George Washington University. While attending law school he began working for Senator Milton R. Young (R-ND), where after two years he became Senator Young's Legislative Assistant. On December 28, 1963 he married Dianne R. Miller in the Hettinger Lutheran Church in Hettinger, ND. After completing law school and passing the ND Bar Exam, the couple moved back to ND for Jim to farm with his father on the Billey family farm. After years of raising cattle as well as grain, Jim switched to raising sheep and joined the ND Lamb and Wool Producers organization, and in 1986 he was chosen as the Master Sheep Producer of the year. After his years of raising livestock, Jim was chosen to be a member on the ND Board of Animal

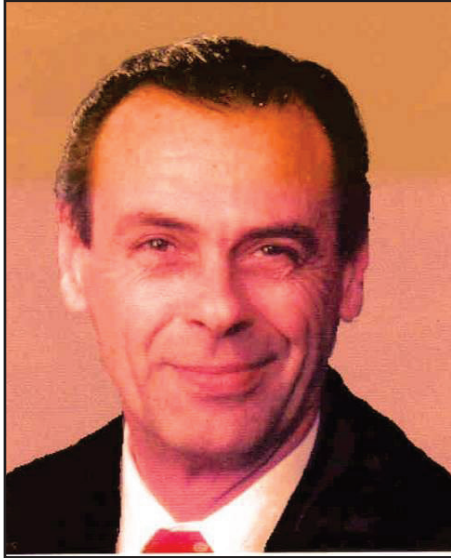
Health for a 6-year term. Although the family farm was his chief interest, Jim quickly became involved in the community and his church. One of his families' interests had always been healthcare. Jim became a member of the Ellendale Hospital Board of Directors where he served for 20 years, many of them as President. He aided in hauling the bricks from the railroad for the construction of the hospital and was instrumental in the conversion into The Evergreen Place which continues to benefit the community. Jim was a dedicated member of Christ the King Lutheran Church and served in a variety of roles over his lifetime including three different terms on the church council, one as treasurer. Jim strongly believed that quality of life should be possible for all and would do whatever he could to improve that quality. He began donating blood through the influence of a teacher while in high school and continued this practice until he was diagnosed with cancer in the summer of 2022. At the time of his last donation, he had donated 474 times for a total of 59.25 gallons of whole blood and platelets. In addition to his donations, he was a volunteer driver who moved supplies and blood throughout the system and traveled over 100,000 miles. After his formal retirement from farming, he downsized and continued the tradition of gardening passed on from his mother. In addition to all the produce used by his family he shared his bounty with many throughout the community and in recent years had begun donating to the Emergency Food Pantry in Fargo. Since 2015 his donations of vegetables had totaled 14,266 pounds. Jim served many years on the Dickey County Social Services Board and the Health District Board. Jim served 9 years

on the ND AARP Board of Government Affairs. In 2013 he was awarded the ND AARP's highest award for service, the AARP Andrus Award. Grateful for sharing his life are his wife Dianne, Ellendale, ND; sons Lloyd, Fargo, ND and Mark, Frederick, SD; step grandchildren, Richard & Jaiden Handrigan, Providence, RI; sister-in-law Bonnie Smith, Hettinger, ND; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents Harold and Lucy Billey. The memorial service was held on Saturday, October 15, 2022 at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Ellendale with Pastor Lucinda Lien officiating. Burial was at South Savo Lutheran Cemetery, rural Frederick, SD. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to Kedish House, Global Health Ministries or donate blood or platelets. Memorials sent to the family will be distributed to these organizations. Jim's service was live streamed on his obituary page at hovenfuneralchapel.com Arrangements by Hoven Funeral Chapel, Ellendale. Vitalent will be holding the Ellendale Community blood drive at the Church of the Nazarene was held on Wednesday October 19th, 2022. Please donate as Vitalent honors Jim's years of donations and volunteer service.



IN MEMORIAM

Longtime member Andrea Rootham lost her husband, John, earlier this year. We give Andrea and her family our sympathies.



John E. Rootham

June 12, 1943 — March 31, 2023

John Edwin Rootham passed away March 31, 2023, at his home in Glyndon, Minnesota. He entered the VA Hospital at Fargo on January 31st, and transitioned to the Elim nursing facility through February, finally coming home under Hospice of the Red River Valley care with his wife Andrea attending him at their home through March.

John was born June 12, 1943, at home in Glyndon, to his parents, Ernest and Dawn (Moore) Rootham. He graduated from Glyndon High School, Class of 1961, where he enjoyed playing basketball. He was baptized and confirmed at the Hawley Lutheran Church along with his cousin Tom Legler. John was a member of the Maranatha Free Lutheran Church. His Christian witness was through a quiet and enduring faith.

John had many stories to share about growing up in Glyndon. In the mornings, he arose early and delivered the area newspapers around town. John, along with his cousins and buddies from the neighborhood, was a prolific explorer, builder, mechanic, and guitar picker. He and his accomplice were even known to find some dynamite blowing up the back yard which may have blown out his grandmother's glass window. John was also an avid fisherman and had plenty of stories to share about fishing at the region's rivers and lakes. He happily showed his kids and grandkids how to catch the big one.

After high school graduation, John attended Moorhead Teacher's College. Then along with his best friend, Larry Wayman, they decided to sign up and join the military. In April 1962, John took his initial training at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas. He boarded a train from Fargo, heading south to San Antonio, and then, later north to Chanute AFB, Rantoul, Illinois, where he trained in aircraft ground power. Upon finishing his training, John was transferred to Kadena AFB, Okinawa, 498th Missile Squadron, 6313th Air Base Wing, with TDY into Cambodia, Vietnam, East China, and the Ryukyu Islands. Out of a group of airmen transferring in to Kadena AFB, he was tagged along with three other airmen to retrain in missile facilities and missile weapons systems training. This was contingent upon completing a full background check which required Air Force personnel to personally make door-to-door visits inquiring about John's character, his school performance, and completion of a law enforcement background check. Out of the four tagged, two received clearance, and

John was one of them. Upon returning to the mainland in 1964, John was stationed at Strategic Air Command, Omaha, Nebraska, 549th Strategic Missile Squadron. SAC then sent him to the Scribner AFB, a communications and missile maintenance base near Hooper, Nebraska, where he completed his final year of service. He was honorably discharged in 1966. Special recognitions were Good Conduct Medal & Certificate of Merit in Recognition of Outstanding Contribution and Service to the Mission of Strategic Air Command. Several years ago, John was videoed about his service during the Vietnam War by Prairie Public TV. His video can be found on YouTube.

While stationed at Scribner, John met and fell in love with his one and only, Andrea Waage. They were married August 21, 1965, at the First Methodist Church in Fremont, Nebraska. Upon discharge in April 1966, John and Andrea returned to Glyndon where they literally built their home from the ground up, with expansions about every decade or so, and where they have since continued to live and raise their family.

John worked in appliance repair and refrigeration. There wasn't anything he couldn't build, fix or repair. He worked many years at the Montgomery Ward store which was near the 8th Street Dairy Queen in Moorhead and at Sears West Acres, retiring about 1995. After that he worked with Mark Akin at Akin's Electric in Moorhead.

John performed in bands in the Fargo, ND-Moorhead, MN region, singing and playing lead and steel guitar from the Canadian Border into South Dakota, Minnesota, and Nebraska. He had fans wherever he

went! John performed with Dave Kolle, Orville Hieb and the Music Makers, Chuck Swiggum, and Country Cargo. He sat in with many groups and enjoyed participating in music jams whenever he could. He recorded on LPs, music tapes, and CDs. He had a natural ear for music. Once he listened to a song on the radio, he could pick it out and sing it as if he had known it all his life! Some of his music can be found on YouTube.

John is survived by his wife Andrea of 57 years; two children, Robert (Cindy) Rootham and Kirstin (Todd) Carlson, Moorhead, MN; four grandchildren, Alexander Rootham, Sophie Rootham, Nathan Carlson and Aiden Carlson; and step-granddaughters Tabitha (Michael) Swab and Chelsea Ness; sister Sharon Ahrens, Moorhead, MN; nephew, Dennis Gregor and niece, Denise (Jeff) Elvecrog; with cousins in Fargo-Moorhead, Denver, Texas, and Washington.

He was preceded in death by his parents Ernest and Dawn (Moore) Rootham, grandparents Edwin & Leona (Riley) Moore and John and Hazel (Fuller) Rootham; and great grandparents John and Mary Ellen Riley, all of whom are interred at the Riverside Cemetery north of Glyndon where John will be laid to rest.

The family wishes to express sincere thanks to the Fargo VA, Elim nursing facility in Fargo, and the Hospice of the Red River Valley for their excellent care and support.

Visitation was held Saturday, April 15, 2023, with the funeral service at Maranatha Free Lutheran Church, Glyndon, MN.

Interment will be at Riverside Cemetery, Glyndon, MN.

Our purpose as North Dakota Society members is to continue this legacy through purpose, preservation of historical facts, and the education of others so our descendants understand and appreciate the sacrifices their ancestors made to ensure basic freedoms. Together as a Society, we have the resources to accomplish these goals.



HOW YOU CAN HELP OUR NEWSLETTER

Become involved by emailing newsletter editor Rachel Roe-Longtine at reroe20@gmail.com

- ▶ Pictures
 - ▶ How about those Thanksgiving dinner pictures of the family around the table?
 - ▶ Get all of the cousins together for a Junior Membership photo
- ▶ Family activities or travels relating to the Mayflower, Plymouth, the Pilgrims
- ▶ Interesting books or information about the Mayflower, Pilgrims, Plymouth you have read about and wish to share

Check out our Society website for more pictures and information about the ND Society at: ndmayflower.org

We also have a private Facebook page:
North Dakota Mayflower Society