

# The Founding of Boston

## From Captain Edward Johnson's "Wonder-working Providence," 1654.

**Of the voluntary banishment, chosen by this People of Christ, and their last farewell taken of their Country and Friends.**

And now behold the several Regiments of these soldiers of Christ, as they are shipped for His service in the *Western World*, part thereof being come to the Town and Port of *Southampton* in *England*, where they were to be shipped, that they might prosecute this design to the full, one Ship called the *Eagle*, they wholly purchase, and many more they hire, filling them with the feed of man and beast to sow this yet untilled Wilderness withal, making sale of such Land as they possess, to the great admiration of their Friends and Acquaintance, who thus expostulate with them, What, will not the large income of your yearly revenue content you, which in all reason cannot choose but be more advantageous both to you and yours, than all that Rocky Wilderness, whither you are going, to run the hazard of your life? Have you not here your Tables filled with great variety of Food, your Coffers filled with Coin, your Houses beautifully built and filled with all rich Furniture? (or otherwise) have you not such a gainful Trade as none the like in the Town where you live? Are you not enriched daily? Are not your Children very well provided for as they come to years? (nay) may you not here as pithily practice the two chief Duties of a Christian (if Christ give strength), namely Mortification and Sanctification as in any place of the World? What helps can you have there that you must not carry from hence? With bold resolvedness these stout soldiers of Christ reply; as Death, the King of terror with all his dreadful attendance, inhumane and barbarous, tortures doubled and trebled by all the infernal furies have appeared but light and momentary to the Soldiers of Christ Jesus, so also the Pleasure, Profits and Honors of this World set forth in their most glorious splendor, and magnitude by the alluring Lady of Delight, proffering pleasant embraces, cannot entice with her Siren Songs, such soldiers of Christ, whose aims are elevated by Him, many Millions above that brave Warrior Ulysses.

Now seeing all can be said will but barely set forth the immoveable Resolutions that Christ continued in these men; Pass on and attend with tears, if thou hast any, the following discourse, while these Men, Women and Children are taking their last farewell of their Native Country, Kindred, Friends and Acquaintance, while the Ships attend them; Many make choice

of some solitary place to echo out their bowel-breaking affections in bidding their Friends farewell, dear friends (says one) as near as my own soul doth thy love lodge in my breast, with thought of the heart-burning Ravishments, that thy Heavenly speeches have wrought: my melting soul is poured out at present with these words, both of them had their further speech strangled from the depth of their inward sorrow, with breast-breaking sobs till leaning their heads each on others shoulders, they let fall the salt-dropping dews of vehement affection, striving to exceed one another, much like the departure of *David* and *Jonathan*: having a little eased their hearts with the still streams of Tears, they recovered speech again. Ah! my much-honored friend, hath Christ given thee so great a charge as to be Leader of his People into that far remote, and vast Wilderness, I, oh, and alas thou must die there and never shall I see thy Face in the flesh again, were thou called to so great a task as to pass the precious Ocean, and hazard thy person in Battle against thousands of Malignant Enemies there? There were hopes of thy return with triumph, but now after two, three, or four months spent with daily expectation of swallowing Waves, and cruel Pirates, you are to be Landed among Barbarous *Indians*, famous for nothing but cruelty, where you are like to spend your days in a famishing condition for a long space; Scarce had he uttered this, but presently he locks his friend fast in his arms, holding each other thus for some space of time, they weep again, but as *Paul* to his beloved flock: the other replies what do you, weeping and breaking my heart? I am now pressed for the service of our *Lord Christ* to rebuild the most glorious Edifice of Mount

*Sion* in a Wilderness, and as *John Baptist*, I must cry, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight, for behold He is coming again, He is coming to destroy *Antichrist*, and give the whore double to drink the very dregs of His wrath.

. . . They thrust in among the throng now ready to take Ship, where they beheld the like affections with their own among divers Relations, Husbands and Wives with mutual consent are now purposed to part for a time, 900 Leagues asunder, since some providence at present will not suffer them to go together, they resolve their tender affections shall not hinder this work of Christ, the new Married and betrothed man, exempt by the Law of God from war, now will not claim their privilege, but being constrained by the Love of Christ, lock up their natural affections for a time, till the Lord shall be pleased to give them



After the original bronze statue in Springfield, Massachusetts.

He holds a Bible in his left hand.

From, *Great American Statesmen and Heroes*

© 1994 by Catherine Millard

a meeting in this *Western World*, sweetly mixing it with spiritual love, in the meantime, many Fathers now take their young *Samuels*, and give them to this service of Christ all their Lives. Brethren, Sisters, Uncles, Nephews, Nieces, together with all Kindred of blood that binds the bowels of affection in a true Lover's knot, can now take their last farewell, each of other, although natural affection will still claim her right, and manifest herself to be in the body by looking out at the Windows in a mournful manner among this company, thus disposed doth many Reverend and godly Pastors of Christ present themselves, some in a Seaman's Habit, and their scattered sheep coming as a poor Convoy loftily take their leave of them as follow, what doleful days are these, when the best choice our Orthodox Ministers can make is to take up a perpetual banishment from their native soil, together with their Wives and Children, we their poor sheep they may not feed. *Lord Christ*, here they are at thy command, they go, this is the door thou hast opened upon our earnest request, and we hope it shall never be shut: for *England's* sake they are going from *England* to pray without ceasing for *England*, O *England!* thou shalt find *New England* prayers prevailing with their God for thee, but now woe alas, what great hardship must these our endeared Pastors endure for a long season, with these words they lift up their voices and wept, adding many drops of salt liquor to the ebbing Ocean; Then shaking hands they bid adieu with much cordial affection to all their Brethren, and Sisters in Christ, yet now the Scorn and Derision of those times, and for this their great enterprise counted as so many cracked-brains, but Christ will make all the earth know the wisdom He hath endued them with, shall overtop all the humane policy in the world as the sequel we hope will show. . . .

**Of the wonderful preservation of Christ, in carrying his People – Men, Women, Children, through the largest Ocean in the World.**

Being safe aboard weighing anchor, and hoisting sail, they betook them to the protection of the Lord on the wide Ocean, no sooner were they dispersed by reason of the wideness of the Sea, but the *Arrabella* (for so they called the Eagle which the company purchased in honor of the Lady *Arrabella*, Wife to that godly Esquire, *Izack Johnson*) espied four Ships, as they supposed, in pursuit of them, their suspicion being the more augmented by reason of a report (when they lay in harbor) of four Dunkerkmen of war, who were said to lie waiting for their coming forth, at this fight they make preparation, according to their present condition, comforting one another in the sweet mercies of Christ: the weaker sex betook them to the Ship's hold, but the men on Decks wait in a readiness for the enemy's approach. At whose courage many of the Seamen wonder, not knowing under whose command these their passengers were, even He who makes all his soldiers bold as Lions. Yet was He not minded to make trial of his people's valiancy in fight at this time, for the ships coming up with them proved to be their own Countrymen and friends, at which they greatly rejoiced, seeing the good hand of their God was upon them, and are further strengthened in faith to rely on Christ, for the future time against all Leaks, Storms, Rocks, Sands, and all other wants a long Sea-voyage procures, sustaining them with all meekness and patience, yet sensible of the Lord's frowns, humbling their souls before Him, and also rejoicing in His deliverances in taking the cup of Salvation, and paying the tribute of thankfulness

to the Most High, whose provident hand was diversely directed toward them, purposely to point out the great hardships they must undergo in this their Christian warfare, and withal to tell them, although their difficulties were many and mournful, yet their victories should be much more glorious and joyful, eminently eyed of the whole World, but now keeping their course so near as the winds will suffer them, the billows begin to grow lofty and raging, and suddenly bringing them into the vale of death, covering them with the formidable floods, and dashing their bodies from side to side, hurling their unfixed goods from place to place at these unwonted works. Many of these people amazed, find such opposition in nature, that her principles grow feeble, and cannot digest her food, loathing all manner of meat, so that the vital parts are hindered from cooperating with the Soul in spiritual duties, insomuch that both Men, Women and Children are in a helpless condition for present, and now is the time if ever of recounting this service they have, and are about to undertake for Christ; but He, who is very sensible of His people's infirmities, rebukes the winds, and Seas for their sakes, and then the reverend and godly among them begin to exhort them in the name of the Lord, and from the Lord, being fitted with such words as much encourages the work they are going about, many of their horses and other cattle are cast overboard by the way, to the great disheartening of some, but Christ knew well how far His people's hearts would be taken off the main work with these things. And therefore although He be very tender in providing outward necessities for His, yet rather than this great work (He intends) should be hindered, their Tables shall be spread but thinly in this wilderness for a time. After the Lord had exercised them thus several ways, he sent Diseases to visit their Ships, that the desert Land they were now drawing near into might not be deserted by them at first entrance, which sure it would have been by many, had not the Lord prevented by a troublesome passage: At forty days' end, or thereabout, they cast to sound the Seas' depth, and find them sixty fathom, by which they deem the banks of New found Land are near, where they being provided with Cod-line and Hook haul up some store of fish to their no small refreshing, and within some space of time after they approach the Coast of *New England*, where they are again provided with Mackerel and that which was their greater rejoicing, they discover Land, at sight thereof they blessed the Lord. . . .

**Of the first leading of these People of Christ, when the Civil Government was Established.**

But to go on with the Story, the 12<sup>th</sup> of *July* or thereabout, 1630, these soldiers of Christ first set foot on this *Western* end of the World; where arriving in safety, both Men, Women and Children. On the North side of *Charles River*, they landed near a small Island, called *Noddells* Island, where one Mr. *Samuel Maverick* then living, a man of a very loving a courteous behavior, very ready to entertain strangers, yet an enemy to the Reformation in hand, being strong for the Lordly Prelatical power on this Island, he had built a small Fort with the help of one Mr. *David Tompson*. About one mile distant upon the River ran a small creek, taking its Name from Major Gen. *Edward Gibbons*, who dwelt there for some years after; On the South side of the River on a point of Land called *Blaxtons* point, planted Mr. *William Blaxton*, of whom we have former spoken: to the South-East

of him, near an Island called *Tompsons* Island lived some few Planters more, these persons were the first Planters of those parts, having some small Trading with the *Indians* for *Beaver-Skins*, which moved them to make their abode in those parts, whom these first Troops of *Christ's* Army, found as fit helps to further their work. At their arrival those small number of Christians gathered at *Salem*, greatly rejoicing and the more, because they saw so many that came chiefly for promoting the great Work of *Christ* in hand, the Lady *Arrabella*, and some other godly Women abode at *Salem*, but their Husbands continued at *Charles Town*, both for the settling the civil Government, and gathering another Church of *Christ*. The first Court was held aboard the *Arrabella* the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August. When the much-honored *John Wintrop* Esq. was chosen Governor for the remainder of that year, 1630. Also the worthy *Thomas Dudley* Esq. was chosen Deputy Governor, and Mr. *Simon Brodestreet* Secretary, the people after their long voyage were many of them troubled with the *Scurvy*, and some of them died: the first station they took up was at *Charles Towne*, where they pitched some Tents of Cloth, others built them small Huts, in which they lodged their Wives and Children. The first beginning of this work seemed very sorrowful; First for the death of that worthy personage *Izaak Johnson* Esq. whom the Lord had endued with many precious gifts, insomuch that he was had in high esteem among all the people of God, and as a chief Pillar to support this new erected building. He very much rejoiced at his death, that the Lord had been pleased to keep his eyes open so long, as to see one Church of *Christ* gathered before his death, at whose departure there were many weeping eyes. . . .

#### **Of the great cheerfulness of their Soldiers of Christ, in and under the penuries of a Wilderness.**

These were the beginnings of these resolute soldiers of Christ Jesus in the year, 1631. Even to lay the Foundation of their several Churches of *Christ*, built only on Him as their Chief Corner Stone. But as His chosen *Israel* met with many difficulties after their return from Captivity, in building the

Temple and City, which they valiantly waded through; So these weak worms (Oh Christ to thy praise be it spoken) were most wonderfully helped in such distresses, as to appearance of man seemed to be both hopeless, and helpless, threatening destruction to the whole building, and far from accomplishing such great things as you have in part seen already, and shall in the following discourse (God willing) see more abundantly, adding a strong testimony to the work, that as it was begun by *Christ*, so hath it been carried on by Him, and shall to the admiration of the whole World be perfected in His time, and unless men will be willfully blind, they must needs see and confess the same, and that the influence thereof hath already run from one end of the Earth unto the other.

This year, 1631. *John Winthope* Esq. was chosen Governor, picked out for the work, by the provident hand of the Most High, and enabled with gifts accordingly, then all the folk of Christ, who have seen his face and been partaker of the same, remember him. . . .

These people of God having received these further helps, to instruct, and build them up in the holy things of Christ, being now greatly encouraged, seeing the Lord was pleased to set such a broad Seal to their Commission for the work in hand, not only by His Word and Spirit moving thereunto, but also by His Providence in adding such able instruments for furthering this great work of Reformation, and advancing the Kingdom of Christ, for which they spent this day of rejoicing, and sure the Lord would have all that hear of it know, their joy lay not in increase of Corn, or Wine, or Oil, for of all these they had but very little at this time, yet did they not spare to lend such as they had unto the poor, who could not provide, and verily the joy ended not with the day, for these active instruments of Christ, Preaching with all instancy the glad Tidings of the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, rejoiced the Heart of this People much.

(Excerpted from, *The Christian Heritage of the 50 United States of America*, copyright 2000 by Catherine Millard.)