

Pilgrim Village Families Sketch: John Billington

By Robert Charles Anderson

Birth: John Billington was born in England about 1582.

Death: He was hanged in Plymouth in September 1630 for the murder of John Newcomen.

Ship: *Mayflower*, 1620

Life in England: Nothing is known about John Billington's life in England. His son, Francis, was named in a lease of property in Cowbit, Lincolnshire in 1612 and either John or Elinor, or both, were probably associated with this area.

Life in New England: John, Elinor and their two sons, John and Frances, came to Plymouth in 1620. The Billington family appeared several times in the accounts of early Plymouth Colony. Francis made squibs and fired a musket in the *Mayflower* while the ship was anchored off Cape Cod. He went exploring soon after their arrival, and discovered the body of water now called Billington Sea. His brother, John, got lost in the woods for several days, eventually being returned home from Nauset, on Cape Cod. John Senior challenged Myles Standish's order in March of 1620/1 and was punished for it, the first of many confrontations. Finally, in 1630, he was tried and executed for the murder of John Newcomen, the first such execution in the colony.

Family: John Billington married Elinor _____ in England. They had two sons. After John's death, Elinor married Gregory Armstrong in September 1638. She died after March 2, 1642/3. Gregory Armstrong died in Plymouth on November 5, 1650.

Children of John and Elinor Billington:

- John was born about 1604. He died in Plymouth between May 22, 1627, and his father's death in 1630.
- Francis was born about 1606. He married Christian (Penn) Eaton in Plymouth in July 1634 and had nine children. He died in Middleboro on December 3, 1684.