

THE FLIGHT TO FREEDOM



s a non-conformist minister (Puritan) the Reverend Peter would not have been permitted to leave England if he had been recognized, so he had to very carefully plan and prepare for the family exodus. He sent his young son, Edward, to Boston with some of the family wealth with instructions to prepare for the rest of the family's arrival.

Obtaining transportation to New England was very difficult for the Reverend Peter Bulkeley as the government employed spies to prevent the departure of those whose presence in England was desired for whatever reason.

In April of 1635 friends of the Bulkeley family using false names successfully booked passage for the Reverend Peter's young sons John, Joseph and Daniel on the ship Susan and Ellen which was to depart in May.

On May 8, 1635 "Grace Bulkeley" aged 33 was entered as a passenger on the Elizabeth and Ann, a ship that was to sail at the same time as the Susan and Ellen. Grace (Chetwood) was in fact the new bride of the Reverend Peter, his first wife, Jane Allen, having died in 1626. On May 9, 1635 "Peter Bulkeley" aged 50 was entered as a passenger on the Susan and Ellen. It should be noted that both Grace and the Reverend Peter gave their proper names to the shipping clerk because as a conscientious minister he would not have told a deliberate falsehood. He obviously preferred the risk of recognition to the telling of a lie. At the last minute just prior to sailing, Grace switched places with another woman of similar age and appearance so that she in fact would be on the Susan and Ellen with her husband and his sons. Had they booked on the same ship their departure possibly would have been detected, but the last minute switch, which obviously was well planned, was accomplished without incident and the Susan and Ellen departed for the New World with the Bulkeley family together.