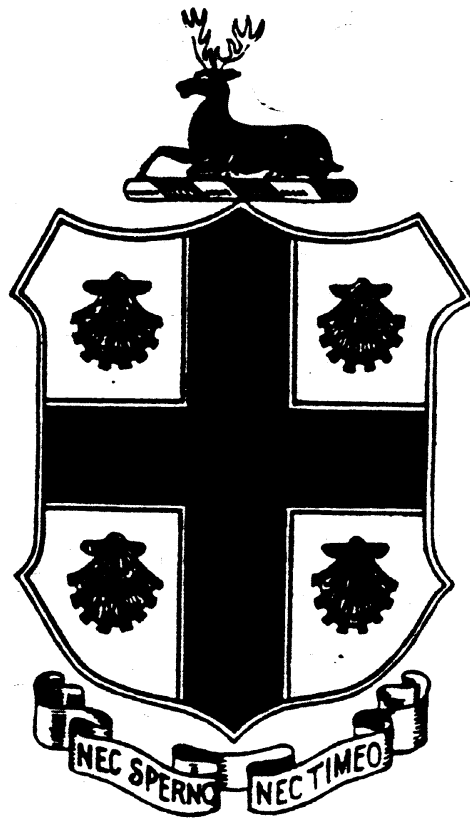


*the* COGSWELL COURIER

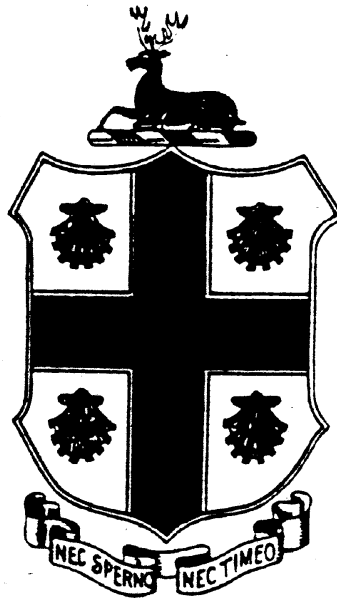


Cogswell

*"I neither despise nor fear"*

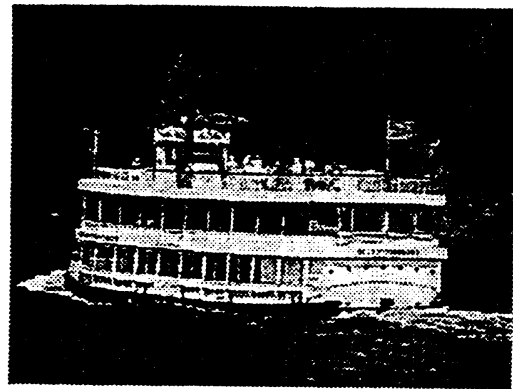
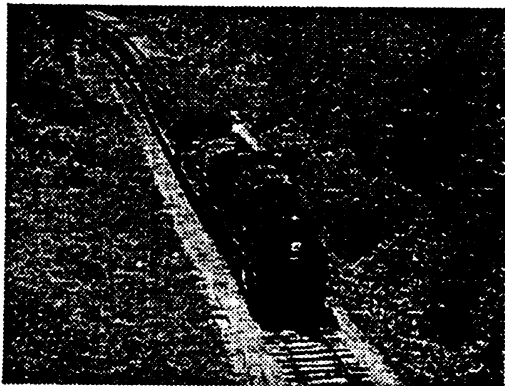
*August 1995*

# CALLING ALL COGSWELLS!



Cogswell

TO OLD SAYBROOK, CT  
ON  
SEPTEMBER 29, 30, OCTOBER 1, 1995  
FOR  
FAMILY FUN



**THE ESSEX STEAM TRAIN & RIVERBOAT RIDE**  
*How green is our valley! And how colorful too, when autumn brings  
spectacular foliage for all to see.*

Just a few more weeks until our meeting in Old Saybrook. Please check the schedule included in the April Courier and **BE SURE TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NO LATER THAN AUGUST 25TH.** Allow me to quote Shakespeare, whom I never met, but get a chuckle from his thoughts: 'The world is a book and the person who stays at home reads but one page'.

**MAYFLOWER QUILT?** An interesting course of events has taken place since last March when I made enquiry at the Lovely Lane Museum regarding this quilt. A recent letter from a professional genealogist commissioned to investigate this quilt is requesting Cogswell ancestral information.

As we have read, much misinformation has been printed concerning the quilts arrival in America. A call placed a few days ago to the Museum revealed an extensive effort has been launched to establish the true authenticity of original owner and other facts. More on this as information is received.

**CYRIL COGSWELL, OUR FOUNDER.** A biography was to have been included in this edition but since information is still being sought it will be delayed until December.

**THE AUGUST FEATURE ARTICLE** is a letter from Reg Cogswell, to whom much honor and recognition is due. It will serve as an introduction to a series about the Cogswell home in Westbury Leigh. Part II will continue in December with his account of 'The Discovery and Rescue of a Home'.

**I'D LIKE TO URGE** the membership to submit brief biographies about themselves and their ancestors. This will serve three purposes: information for the Jameson sequel; to be shared with the membership through the Courier, and to have on file information about our members that may be helpful when receiving requests from those still seeking connection with Cogswell ancestors. Also, please send photos of your family members that you will want to be included in the planned sequel to Cogswells in America. Do not send copy machine copies. . . they do not always reproduce well.

See you all soon! We have much to discuss at our business meeting, so be sure your vote is there.

Bernice Sonna

LT. COMMANDER REGINALD JAMES COGSWELL, RN  
(RET.)  
SALTFORD, BRISTOL, ENGLAND  
17 AUGUST 1979

Dear Bernice Sonna:

As this is a long and bulky letter it will be best for me to introduce myself before we go any further.

I am Reginald James Cogswell, a retired Lieutenant Commander of the Royal Navy and brother to Mrs. Winifred Elkins of Bratton and Mrs. Betty Callaghan of Westbury Wilts.

I know that you correspond with my sisters, and one of them, most often called Winnie, has shown me your letter to her dated 18 February '79 which letter makes it plain how interested you are in the discovery of the old Cogswell homestead in Westbury Leigh. With this letter I enclose my account of that important, even romantic, episode in the story of our family.

I grew up knowing very little of the story of my family except that for generations down to the time of my grandfather they had been clothiers in Trowbridge, also that at some time in the past, some members of the family had emigrated to America. And that they had prospered there, so much so that they had been in a position to have a book written about their doings on that side of the Atlantic. But they didn't lose interest in the land of their forebears or in their kinsfolk there as an incident in, about, 1913 was to prove. Although only a small boy at the time I distinctly remember hearing my father telling my mother of how, that day, two men had called on him at his place of business and had questioned him about the history of the family. They gave him to understand that they were seeking information for Cogswells in America. Whether they were members of the family or professional researchers acting on their behalf was never clear to me but whichever they were left my father with the impression that they knew more about his family than he did.

My father, Frederick Cogswell, died in 1925 but in his lifetime, although communicative enough in the ordinary way, as well as being extremely kind to us, he was strangely reticent about the circumstances of his early life; but he did know about the Cogswell book written in America and he did know that some not very close relatives of his occasionally exchanged letters with Cogswells in that country.

So matters rested until late in 1931 by which time, after some years of foreign service afloat and with a spell of home service before, I had married. About that time it came to light that my father's second cousin, who had maintained occasional contact with Cogswells in America, had constructed a part family

tree. She had done that partly with the help of a Trowbridge clergyman with an interest in genealogy and partly with the help of Cogswells in America. Her name was Helena Cogswell, otherwise Nellie, who I had never heard of until then. Neither did I see her family tree itself until many years afterwards, well after her time. Some years after that while serving as the electrical engineer officer in the cruiser HMS Exeter on the American and West Indies Station, I received through a third party, an invitation from a Mr. William Cogswell to visit him if ever I chanced to come to New York. The chance came in 1939 when the ship was in the port for a few days as part of the British presence at the New York Worlds Fair. William was the first male Cogswell I had ever seen, apart from my father and his brother. And it was at his home, high up in an apartment building on East 68th Street, that I first saw a copy of the Cogswells in America book. A book printed in 1884 and which my father had told me about so many years before. Perhaps I was the first English Cogswell to ever see it.

Time did not allow me to read more than a few pages of the historic book but I did learn from it that the earliest records available showed our family as living in the parish of Westbury Wilts and not in Trowbridge as we in England had always supposed.

By that time, we in the ship Exeter, having been out for two and a half years, were expecting orders for home. But the coming of the war kept us on the station; only after having fought, and won, the Battle of the River Plate were we able to limp painfully home in February of 1940. My account of that terrible battle and what came afterwards has its place in the Cogswell family records. I learnt nothing more of our family history until about 1972 by which time my dear wife had died after giving me many happy years of romantic love. The sons she gave me were out in the world raising families of their own while I stayed alone in the home we had made after my service at sea was done. It was in that year that my sister Betty was shown the family tree which Nellie Cogswell had produced more than twenty years before. Nellie had left it with some other family papers, to her more immediate relatives, and they let Betty make a copy of it. They also gave her photocopies of some pages out of the Cogswells in America book, one of which contained the will of Edward Cogswell, clothier of Westbury Leigh. In that will Edward left his dwelling house to his wife Alice with reversion to his son John, who went to America in 1635 and there found your dynasty. The will also disposed of other real estate in which he had an interest in the area.

The foregoing paragraphs, except the first two, outline all the information about the early history of our family that I had until 1975, or ever expected to have. My sisters may have a few more details, but their lives have always been centered on Westbury whereas mine has not. Also, during their earlier years, they might have learned something from fairly frequent contact from our two aunts, my father's sisters, both of whom lived in Trowbridge. Although both of them were older than my father they both outlived him for years.

It will be clear then that nearly all of what my sisters and I know of the Cogswells who lived in the Parish of Westbury nearly four hundred years ago came to us by way of America. But for our kinsfolk there, as far as we are concerned, all knowledge of them could have been lost forever. However, the discovery in 1975 of the old Cogswell homestead in Westbury Leigh, although we had nothing to do with it other than admire the efforts of the people who brought it about, has gone a long way to redress the balance. And I, as the last Cogswell man to be born in Westbury Wilts can write about it and so record a chapter to be added to the story of the Cogswells. The result is attached to this letter.

While writing that it gradually came into my mind that an attractive writing project for the coming winter would be to write down what I know, or could find out, about how the clothier Cogswells of Westbury Leigh lived their lives and conducted their business in their corner of the West of England which, in their days was the most highly industrialised part of the kingdom. Some verbatim extracts from the Cogswells in America book, the account herein, extended a little, with some later history of the English Cogswells to form part of the whole.

My winters since my wife died have been spent writing, not with a view to publication but simply to please myself and, I hope, my family and friends. Doing that has brought me a tranquil acceptance of my loss. With one exception my subjects hitherto have been my experiences at sea, some of which were worth recording; the project for this winter will be rather different.

Part of my plan is to take Edward Cogswell's will and search out and describe whatever is left of the properties mentioned. Except for the dwelling house at "Leigh" it turns out that there were fulling mills, or tucking mills which is the same thing. I also intend to describe, with illustrations as necessary, the processes carried out in those mills and the tools and machinery used. For both these purposes I have managed to accumulate a fair sized file of information, and there is more to come. Fortunately industrial archaeologists have ensured the preservation of examples of these old things. Another aspect to be touched upon, but briefly, is the economic and legal conditions under which the clothiers of those times had to work. In aid of all this I have been so fortunate as to meet an eminent textile historian who was so kind as to give me access to hitherto unpublished material; that taught me a lot about the later Cogswell clothiers. Other people have given me the benefit of their knowledge and experience too, including a landlord of a country pub, the White Hart Inn at Corsley on the county boundary between Wiltshire and Somerset.

Something about people the Cogswells knew, or were their friends, must be written too. The Whitakers for instance. They were clothiers also. No Westbury pie without a Whitaker finger in it. "My well beloved Jeffrey Whitaker" was named as an overseer of Edward Cogswell's will. Whitaker descendants live in the Westbury area still. My father dealt with them in the course of his business, Winnie and Betty know four of a later generation. I used to know one. And the

Adlams, they were wealthy clothiers. Robert Cogswell married an Adlam daughter. Clothiers sons tended to marry clothiers daughters and vice-versa. A later generation Jeffrey Whitaker courted a Mary Adlam but she threw him over for another man; poor Jeffrey stayed single all his life. And I must describe the countryside in which they earned their livings. Being brought up in the district I know the shape of the land; that doesn't change; and the streams that drove the Cogswell mills still flow. There are the roads they must have used to be looked to as well. Though most of them are now surfaced and realigned for motor traffic there are still a few that are little better than tracks.

I have found ancient buildings the Cogswells must have known, and a surprising number of those there are; some, modernised and extended, are still used as homes. The owners are very proud of them, so they should be, those houses weren't built of soft bricks and firewood as so many new houses are today. Already I have been inside three, having been invited in to take a cup of tea. Following those out-of-the-way tracks and lanes is good testing for my new car; and better fun for me than motorways and busy A Class roads. I have received much kindly guidance. Country people are very courteous. I carry a copy of Edward Cogswell's will as if it were a calling card. The sight of that has produced enthusiasm and help from utter strangers beside the ways that Edward Cogswell and John his son once knew.

I find this form of research a fascinating occupation whereas I hesitate to attempt serious genealogical investigation which, if carried out unskillfully, would most likely lead other enquirers astray and so waste their efforts. However, I do feel able to produce a written description of, at least, some parts of the background against which our ancestors lived their lives, and by doing so add something to the written story of our family.

I am, dear lady  
Yours sincerely,

(signed) Reg Cogswell

EDITOR'S NOTE: Letter printed verbatim.

## FYI

Our sympathy and condolences to CFA members, Keith and June Cogswell of Denver, CO at the news of the death of Dorothy Davis Cogswell, b. Oct. 12, 1908, Hutchison, KS, d. June 22, 1995, age 86. Wife of Herbert Wm. Cogswell, and mother of Keith.

**FAMILY TREE:** Why do we refer to a genealogical diagram as a 'Family Tree'? It is believed by some authorities that the idea of a family tree had its origin from the efforts of artists in the Middle Ages to depict the prophecy in Isaiah 11:1, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse." Jesse was a patriarch of the tribe of Judah and father of David. A typical example showed a tree growing from the chest of a reclining Jesse with each branch ending with one of his descendants who became a king. This may have given rise to the term "family tree" as a synonym for genealogy. From: SW Louisiana Gene. Soc.: 'Kinfolks'

**MAY 1935** (60 years ago), Franklin D. Roosevelt was President and 13 million Americans were out of work due to what we today know as 'THE GREAT DEPRESSION'! Many of us remember those days with a shudder. 'Relief' came in different forms. The formation by Pres. Roosevelt of a program commonly known as the 'WPA': 'Works Progress Administration' was one such program. What does that mean to us today as a Society that is interested in its heritage? One result was The Historical Records Survey Program as one portion of the WPA's output. This offered 'honest labor' to many who were embarrassed to accept 'charity' and preferred to earn their living. How often have we as researchers come across an index, inventories, or historical materials prepared by out-of-work historians, lawyers, teachers, researchers, and clerical workers? "The intent of the program was to organize historical materials, particularly the unpublished government documents and records which are basic in the administration of local government and which provide invaluable data for students of political, economic, and social history. Archival guides were designed to meet the requirements of day-to-day administration by federal and local government officials, AND ALSO THE NEEDS OF LAWYERS, BUSINESSMEN AND OTHER CITIZENS WHO REQUIRE FACTS FROM PUBLIC RECORDS TO CONDUCT THEIR AFFAIRS. FAMILY HISTORIANS CONTINUE TO REAP THE BENEFITS OF THESE WORKS, WHICH SURVIVE IN ORIGINAL, MICROFILM, AND PUBLISHED FORMS IN LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES." Excerpts from 'The WPA: 60-Year-Old Investment Still Yields High Dividends', With permission, by Loretta Dennis Szucs, Acquisitions Manager, 'Ancestry'.

**MAY 1995** (60 years later) "Contract With America" "In the fine print of this document, the new Congressional leadership recommends major reductions over the next five years in funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Some members of Congress have even called for its complete elimination. The NEH has long supported programs of teaching, research, and



preservation in the history field. Many NEH dollars have been spent on newspaper microfilming projects in states from coast to coast. Numerous libraries and institutions which recognize family historians as important patrons have received matching grants from the NEH to establish endowments for the continued acquisition of historical and genealogical materials. Staffing constraints precipitated by budget cuts at the Library of Congress have forced that agency to reduce the number of hours its reference rooms are open for researchers and the number of staff devoted to filling patron requests from the closed stacks. More fine print in the contract indicates the Congressional Joint Committee which has jurisdiction over the Library of Congress is slated for elimination. If this happens, who will speak for that agency when federal dollars are being divided in the coming months? The National Archives opened a state-of-the-art archival facility in College Park, Maryland, last year. With essentially no new staff, they are now responsible for providing records maintenance and professional information services at two sites. The regional branches of the National Archives lose nearly every professional level position that comes open through resignation, retirement, or transfer in order for the entire organization to comply with mandated across-the board cuts. The fine print in the Contract With America seems to point toward even more across-the-board cuts."

"What is going to happen to OUR national archives? We need to make sure that balancing the federal budget does not mean planned obsolescence for those federal programs that are vital for our history and heritage. Are there tough decisions to be made? Absolutely! Is there federal "fat" to be trimmed? Almost definitely. The process of deciding what to trim must be done with prudence and wisdom, establishing priorities and weighing consequences. The best way must be sought over the easiest way. Wouldn't more prudent action involve making sure that hundreds of millions of defense dollars that are currently spent on activities similar to private jet rides for reassigned generals, their aids and pets actually be spent in a more responsible manner? You and I have a responsibility to make sure the Contract With America does not become a Contract ON America. Examine the contract, exercise your choice, AND contact your congress person." With permission from Curt B. Witcher, FCS president, "Contract With America" It's Still OUR Choice. Forum, Spring 1995.

One giveth and one taketh away. Food for thought in this day of diminishing services at increased rates. Similar to a recent report revealing companies that are increasing costs by reducing quantities in their packaged products.

**IN A LIGHTER VEIN:** Why does a golf course have 18 holes? Originating in Scotland where the weather is such that internal fortification is sometimes necessary, the canny Scots found that a jug would last exactly 18 holes, not allowing for spillage which NO Scotsman would allow. 128 = the number of ounces in a gallon; 5 = the number of 5ths in a gallon, 128 divided by 5 = 25.6 ounces in a fifth, 1.4 the number of ounces in an average drink, 25.6 divided by 1.4 = 18 drinks in one fifth.

## QUERIES:

Does anyone have access to a genealogy of the Bartlett family which might trace a connection from ROBERT BARTLETT, who arrived at Plymouth, Mass., July 1623 on the ship "Anna," to: SARAH BARTLETT, b. Plymouth, Mass., Feb. 13, 1736/37, dau of JOSEPH BARTLETT JR. and wife SARAH? Connection would prove my parents to be 8th or 9th cousins. Please contact: MALCOLM COGSWELL, 413 Main St., Lachute, Quebec, J8H 1Y1, Canada.



Reverse Query: Need the name of person seeking information on Charles Wesley Cogswell, #1714. Answers are available from Donald Cogswell, 1115 Damsontown Road, Queen Anne, MD 21657.



Seeking parents of RUTH ELIZABETH COGSWELL, b. 30 Mar., 1812. Place unknown. Was living in Marion, (now Wayne Co.), NY before 1830. M'd. BARTON COGSDILL 13 Dec., 1830 & moved to a farm in Southfield, Twp., Oakland Co., MI. Had 5 children before Barton died in 1842: Fannie Ruggles, Gideon (my grandfather), Challon, Jerome, and William who died at 4 years. She m'd. (2), David W. Adams in 1844 who moved the family to Corrunna, DeKalb Co., IN. About 1868 they moved to Charlotte, Eaton Co., MI. It is thought that about 1895 Ruth and David left Charlotte to live with dau, Fannie; address unknown. No death record. There were 3 Cogswell families in Marion, NY: Giles, Robert and Joseph, but cannot place Ruth in any. Giles lived his life there dying at age 71; the others were gone by 1830. Any help will be appreciated. Send to: WILLIAM L. COGSDILL, 23103 Farmington, Farmington, MI 48336. (Note: Wm. reports the evolution of his name: Coggeshall in 1778, Cogswell in 1800, next generation: Cogsdill.)



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INCORPORATED MASSACHUSETTS,  
FEBRUARY 17, 1989

Cyril Gray Cogswell  
Founder, President Emeritus

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