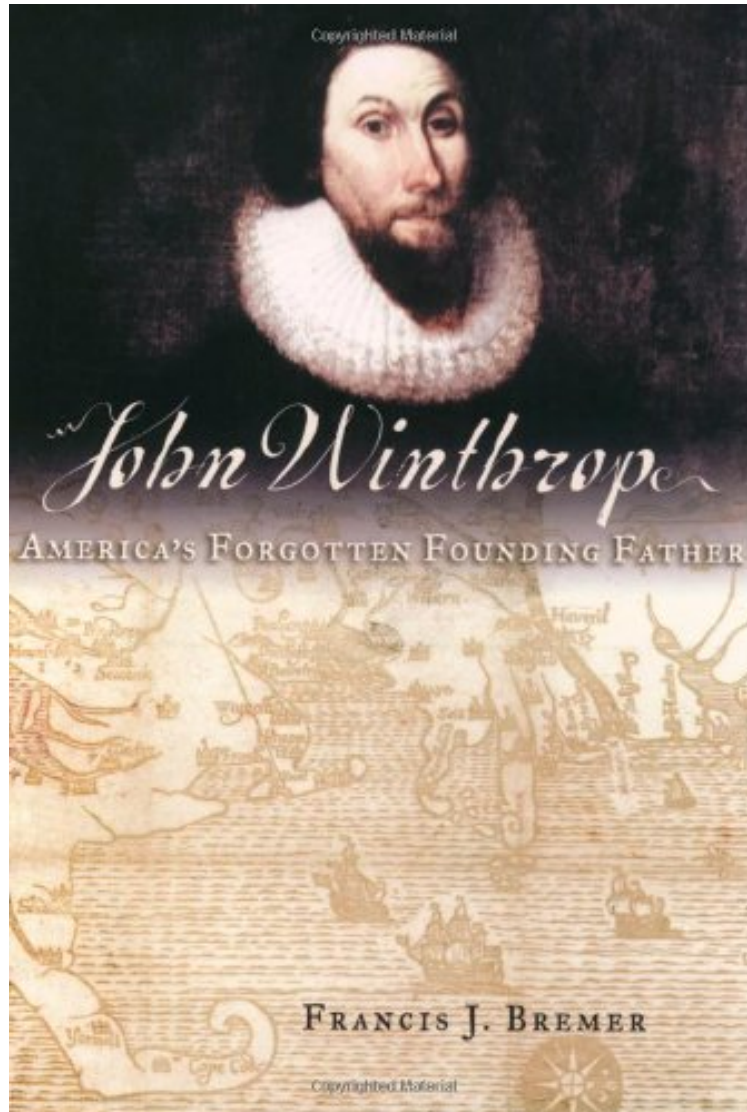


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John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father

Francis J. Bremer

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Francis J. Bremer : John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. At lest one important error.By J. AronsonThis is an excellent example in the new Atlantic style of history that attempts to link early American history with English or European history.As it is likely that this book will become a standard, Bremer appears to have made at least one important mistake of fact worth noting. Bremer describes John Winthrop's fourth and last wife as "Martha Nowell Coytmore."I think this is incorrect. Every other source in the UK and US says Winthrop's last wife was "Martha Rainborowe

Coytmore" the sister of Thomas and William Rainborowe and the sister of Judith Rainborowe Winthrop, who was married to Winthrop's son, Stephen Winthrop. Bremer appears to have relied upon a pre-nuptial agreement in the form of an indenture dated October 20, 1647, at "Records of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay," vol. II (pp. 232-33) in which Martha Rainborowe Coytmore describes Increase Nowell, who was her agent, as "my brother." Nowell was frequently elected an assistant in the Bay Colony. The early records show he functioned as the secretary of the General Court and was a founding elder of Martha's church in Charlestown. But he is not known to have had a sister Martha. One must always be careful about evaluating the terms "brother" and "sister" in puritan writing. They very often used the words brother and sister to express the idea "brother (or sister) in Christ" (Mark 3:35). Col. Thomas Rainborowe and Maj. William Rainborowe are quite well known figures. At the time, they were former residents of the Bay Colony who were on the cutting edge of the Leveller faction in the New Model Army. Both lived in the Bay between 1638-42, both spoke at the Putney Debates in 1647 and Col. Rainborowe's exchange with Gen. Henry Ireton is very famous. In 1648, Col. Rainborowe was killed, possibly assassinated by either Charles I or Cromwell. Maj. William Rainborowe survived the war and is said to have been a ranter. He is thought to have died in Charlestown after 1670. It would have been nice if Bremer had been able to explore this very interesting connection.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Exhaustive research, a bit hard to read. Does ...
By Customer Exhaustive research, a bit hard to read. Does create a sense of living the lives and times in several successive generations in the Old and New Worlds.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I like the author's excellent researched presentation
By Luann D. Sterling I wanted the book to keep. It was a clean copy but did have a broken spine at the very front and very back. I mended the two areas; it is a satisfactory inexpensive copy for my purposes. I like the author's excellent researched presentation.

The preeminent figure of early New England, John Winthrop was the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. More than anyone else, he shaped the culture of New England and his effort to create a Puritan "City on a Hill" has had a lasting effect on American values. In *John Winthrop*, Francis J. Bremer draws on over a decade of research in England, Ireland, and the United States to offer a superb biography of Winthrop, one rooted in a detailed understanding of his first forty years in England. Indeed, Bremer provides an extensive, path-breaking treatment of Winthrop's family background, youthful development, and English career. His dissatisfaction with the decline of the "godly kingdom of the Stour Valley" in which he had been raised led him on his errand to rebuild such a society in a New England. In America, Winthrop would use the skills he had developed in England as he struggled with challenges from Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson, among others, and defended the colony from English interference. We also see the personal side of Winthrop--the doubts and concerns of the spiritual pilgrim, his everyday labors and pleasures, his feelings for family and friends. And Bremer also sheds much light on important historical moments in England and America, such as the Reformation and the rise of Puritanism, the rise of the middling class, the colonization movement, and colonial relations with Native Americans. Incorporating previously unexplored archival materials from both sides of the Atlantic, here is the definitive portrait of one of the giants of our history.

From Publishers Weekly Today John Winthrop (1588-1649) is perhaps best remembered for the famous sermon in which he likened the Massachusetts Bay Colony to a "city upon a hill," a model to the world of social and religious order. Bremer, editor of the Winthrop papers for the Massachusetts Historical Society, draws on those papers to add tremendously to our understanding of this pivotal figure, eloquently reminding us in a rich, magisterial biography how much Winthrop contributed to the founding of the colonies. Bremer studies Winthrop's early life in exhaustive detail, chronicling how his first four decades, in England, shaped his views and actions as the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Bremer focuses on his youthful spiritual struggles, carefully recorded in a journal, including his early decision to pursue a religious vocation and his sudden, unexplained decision to give that up to marry his first wife when he was only 17. After he gained the respect of his peers as an even-handed magistrate, he was elected governor of the new Massachusetts Bay Colony, where for eight years he governed with a judicious hand, mediating in religious and political feuds, including the expulsions of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson for their dissenting views. Bremer uses previously unavailable materials in the Winthrop archives to vividly recreate the religious and political reform movements in early 17th-century England. Bremer's definitive biography gracefully portrays Winthrop as a man of his time, whose influence in the new colony grew out of his own struggles to establish his identity before he left England. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist Known but to God and American history majors, Winthrop has lapsed into obscurity. It wasn't always so--interest in him was palpable 50 years ago, when his collected papers plus a popular biography by the distinguished historian Edmund Morgan (*The Puritan Dilemma*, 1958; 2d ed., 1999) were published. Going one step further than his predecessors, Bremer encompasses Winthrop's entire life, which is extraordinarily well documented for the time, in part because of a journal Winthrop maintained during the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. A natural leader, Winthrop organized the emigration from England that in 1630 founded Boston. Winthrop envisaged his city as that of an ordered, godly state, but as Bremer presents in exhaustive detail, his de facto theocracy grated. Resistance to it

produced Roger Williams and Rhode Island and Winthrop's own deposition as governor. Including the formation of Winthrop's redemptive theology among the Puritans in England, Bremer's diligently researched work is the definitive landmark study of its subject. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Bremer's diligently researched work is the definitive landmark study of its subject."-Booklist "An impressive, scholarly analysis of the life of John Winthrop."--Library Journal "Bremer, editor of the Winthrop papers, draws on those papers to add tremendously to our understanding of this pivotal figure, eloquently reminding us in a rich, magisterial biography how much Winthrop contributed to the founding of the colonies.... Bremer's definitive biography gracefully portrays Winthrop as a man of his time, whose influence in the new colony grew out of his own struggles to establish his identity before he left England."--Publishers Weekly "A richly researched life of the Massachusetts Bay Colony's first governor, arguing that the Puritan leader was more moderate than history has conveyed.... One of Bremer's great achievements is to add flesh to the previous, skeletal portraits of Winthrop's life in England before he sailed West in 1630.... This scholarly makeover adds considerable color to Winthrop's wan cheeks."--Kirkus s "Bremer's excellent and comprehensive biography restores Winthrop to his rightful place in American memory."--Weekly Standard "His deeply learned book is so rich in physical description and offers so many subtle and surprising intellectual insights that it should appeal even to readers whose eyes otherwise glaze over reading about 17th-century theology. You might say that the times are so well described that we are carried through the life.... He has marshaled his deep knowledge of the 17th century to give us a new, passionate, moderate and community-centered Winthrop."--Minneapolis Star Tribune "In his 1630 sermon 'A New Model of Christian Charity,' John Winthrop provided the defining and enduring metaphor of America as the 'City Set on A Hill.' Too long has the person behind the vision been lost to the obscurities of 17th century Puritanism. Frank Bremer has now restored him to his rightful place as the first founding father in the American pantheon."--Peter J. Gomes, Pusey Minister in The Memorial Church, Harvard University "A wonderful achievement. The story of Winthrop's pilgrimage from unendurable stress in the Old World to endurable stress in the New World is captured with a freshness and vividness that kept me enthralled. The result is a convincing recreation of Winthrop's mental and physical worlds. This is one of the great early modern biographies."--John Morrill, University of Cambridge "In this remarkable biography of John Winthrop, Bremer brings to life the English society that shaped John Winthrop's character and purpose and the colonial society that was in turn shaped by him. A major contribution to the field of puritan studies."--Carol Berkin, Baruch College and The Graduate Center, CUNY "This is a splendid work, not afraid to take sides with its subject, but always judicious and sensitive to the context of a life spent in two continents. Bremer's study has wider implications than one man's career; he has thrown a flood of light on the beginnings of the Anglo-American world." --Diarmaid MacCulloch, Professor of the History of the Church, Oxford University. "A brilliantly-researched example of what is now often termed the 'new' Atlantic History. Drawing upon archives in England and Massachusetts, he reconstructs the career of Governor John Winthrop, showing from a fresh and original perspective what it meant to be a Puritan."--T.H. Breen, Northwestern University