***The Speedwell Sailing Ship***

The “*Speedwell*” was a 60-ton sailing vessel built in 1577 by the English under the original name, “*Swiftsure*” in preparations for the war with Spain.

During the conflict, the “*Swiftsure*” participated in the fight against the Spanish Armada. On the Earl of Essex’s 1596 Azores expedition, she served as the ship of his second in command, Sir Gilly Merick. After the hostilities with Spain ended, she was decommissioned in 1605 and renamed *“Speedwell”.*

In 1620, in Holland the Leiden Separatists bought the *Speedwell*. The ship was refitted with two masts. On July 22, 1620, under the command of Captain John Thomas Chappell, the ship sailed from Delfshaven to Southampton, England to meet the sister ship, *Mayflower,* which had been chartered by merchant investors to go the New World. In Southampton, they joined other Separatists and others hired by the investors. The *Speedwell* was already leaking. The two ships lay at anchor Southampton for almost two weeks while the *Speedwell* was being repaired for the voyage to America. While waiting, many of the passengers had to sell some belongs, foods and stores to cover the costs of repairs and port fees.

On August 5, 1620, the two ships began their trip to the new world, but the *Speedwell* was found to be taking on water. The two ships returned to Dartmouth for repairs. On the second attempt, *Mayflower* and *Speedwell* sailed for about 300 nautical miles beyond Land’s End in Cornwall, but the *Speedwell* was leaking again. The theory was the two new masts that were installed in Holland were too big for the ship and the added stress caused holes to form in the ship’s hull. Another theory was the leaks were caused by a loose board approximately two feet long. Both vessels returned to Plymouth, England.

The Separatists decided to continue to America on the *Mayflower*. Eleven people from the Speedwell joined with the other eighty people on the *Mayflower.* For a third attempt, the *Mayflower* sailed from Plymouth, England on September 6, 1620. On November 11, 1620, they landed at Plymouth Rock at Cape Cod Harbor in Massachusetts.

Back in London, the *Speedwell* was sold at auction. After being repaired again, the ship made a number of successful trips to the North America for its new owners.

*Speedwell*’s replacement eventually followed, arriving at Plymouth Colony one year later on November 9, 1621.

Captain John Thomas Chappell made several other trips to ports up and down the eastern shores of the New World. On one of those trips, he and his son, Thomas, landed in Jamestown, Virginia. They were the first Chappell ancestors to set foot on American soil. In following years, Captain Chappell returned back and forth to England several times, while his son stayed in Virginia and died at Charles County, Virginia in 1665.

In 1656, a vessel named *Speedwell* made a voyage from England to Boston carrying a party of Quakers. After arriving in Massachusetts Bay Colony under the Governorship of John Endecott, they were deported for religious reasons and obliged to return to England.

In 1751, a vessel named *Speedwell,* captained by Joseph Wilson, made a voyage from Rotterdam to Halifax, Nova Scotia, carrying a party of “Foreign Protestants”. They left Rotterdam on May 18, 1751 with 229 passengers, arriving in Halifax with 212 passengers on July 10 or 21, 1751.