

Medieval Hanchetts
AND
Two Puritans to America
SUPPLEMENT TO
The English Ancestry of
Thomas Hanchett

Puritan Settler of Connecticut

Leland J. Hanchett, Jr.

Martin K. Hanchett

Medieval Hanchetts and Two Puritans to America Supplement to *The English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett, Puritan Settler of Connecticut*

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Martin K. Hanchett, martin.hanchett1948@gmail.com

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Introduction

With the publication of *The English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett* in 2015, we were left with several unanswered questions. In 2020, we found a high probability argument that John and Thomas Hanchett from Brent Pelham, Hertfordshire, were the same as John and Thomas Hanchett, who arrived in Boston in 1635. The conclusion was reached after studies of yDNA samples from American, English, and Australian Hanchetts by Family Tree DNA. That work is included in this volume.

The medieval period (500-1500, before England had a King through Henry VII) presented more questions to be answered. We still do not have all the answers, but we need to record what we did find and make educated guesses about the rest. As Martin and I are getting on in years and have no Hanchett with historical interest to pass our work to, we need to publish our findings formally and place them in genealogical libraries around the globe.

One lingering question is our geographical origin: were we descended from the Normans or the Anglo-Saxons? The answer lies in our yDNA. Leland Hanchett submitted a sample several years ago to Family Tree DNA when we were testing for the origin of Thomas Hanchett of Connecticut. That sample was recently used in the Big Y 700 test to determine the global path taken by the Hanchett ancestors. Lindsay Hanchett of Australia also followed up with a similar submission in 2024. The testing took us back to the late bronze age when French farmers decided growing crops in England might be more useful than farming in France. Once again, science fills in where records are missing.

New material, including a long-awaited *Suffolk Place Names* book and more complete transcriptions and translations of the Hanchett family's early records (by Kristina Bedford), provides a deeper insight into their earliest days. This addition helps us understand the meaning of the name Hanchett and its probable origin.

A third question that needs to be answered is the fate of the children of John Hanchach, who participated in and lost his life during the Peasant's Revolution of 1381 (King Richard II.) For the original work on *The English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett*, we had not seen the petition that John's wife, Ann, had written to the King. She stated that she had four children when her husband, John, was

Introduction

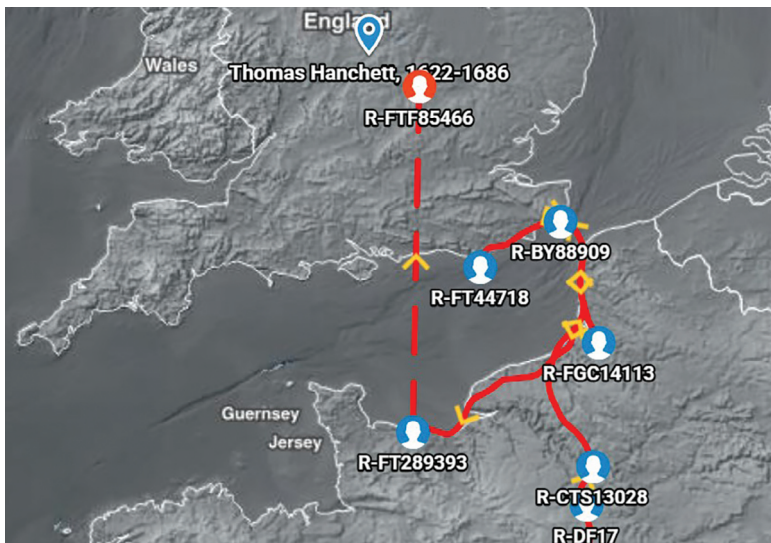
decapitated. By following land records leading up to that event and seeing to whose hands the land was transferred, we can explore the continuance of his family line.

We have obtained further data on the Hanchett Family of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Beginning in the early thirteenth century, we can trace them from their earliest location, now known as Hanchet Hall, in County Suffolk, England, to their Manor house at Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire, and from there on to Bedfordshire, Essex, and London. That manor house at Shudy Camps was known as Hanchetts for centuries after the Hanchetts sold it. Hanchett Hall in Suffolk still carries the family name.

Chapter One

DNA Testing Reveals the Hanchett's Origins

Family Tree DNA's Big Y Test is designed to show the migration of a particular Haplogroup as it traversed from Africa to Central Asia, through the Middle East, and into Central Europe. From there, the Hanchett family ancestors migrated to Southern France and along the coast of France where Normandy would be located.¹



Hanchett Ancestors Migration Across Europe into France and England Leland Hanchett's earliest known ancestor is Shown in Red

Most of the men who followed William the Conqueror in his campaign to win control of England came from Normandy, with a few from other parts of France. The ancestors of the Hanchett family migrated to England through France between 500 BCE and 1066. Note that arrows are crossing the channel in both directions on the map. The English and French freely circulated between the two countries.

Our timeline goes like this: Around 1000 BCE, our ancestors lived in a part of France that became Normandy. At some point in time we came from Normandy to England. We may have come not as warriors but as simple farmers. By 500 BCE, they were well-established in England as farmers, still predominantly in the South.

According to an article in *Nature Magazine*, a large group migrated from France to Southern England starting 3,000 years ago.² They moved north from Southern England, with at least one collateral ancestor buried in Cherry Hinton between 950 and 1100 CE. That location is in Cambridge, England, near where the Hanchetts would settle at Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire.³

A new study claims that mass migration from France to England and Wales around 3,000 years ago replaced about half of Great Britain's ancestry.

An international team of researchers examined the DNA of 793 ancient individuals from Bronze Age Britain, which began around 2,000 BC and lasted for nearly 1,500 years.

These new migrants became thoroughly mixed into the Southern British population in the period 1000 BC to 875 BC – likely a time of ‘intense and sustained contacts between many diverse communities, the researchers say,

Although the exact origins of the migrants cannot yet be established with certainty, they are most likely to have come from communities in and around present-day France.

Researchers based their findings on newly discovered ancient remains (skeletons) from British towns, including Amesbury in Wiltshire, Lechlade in Gloucestershire, Ditchling Road in Brighton, and Ulva Cave in Scotland. DNA from these British samples was compared to ancient individuals recovered from parts of mainland Europe.⁴

So, what happened to the French farmers already in England after William’s conquest? Unlike the Anglo-Saxon nobility, which largely lost their land and power, the existing French population in England generally kept their positions and was not significantly displaced. Many Frenchmen already in England likely allied with the new Norman rulers, further consolidating their influence.



Clare Castle, Clare, Suffolk⁶

King William's close followers, the Norman Montfitchets, de Veres, and de Clares, were overlords of property held by the Hanchetts. The de Veres and de Montfitchets took their surnames from where they lived in Normandy, France, while the de Clares and de Hanchetts took their family names from their locations in England.⁵ Using a location-based surname was a trait of the Normans.

The de Clares' family seat, Clare, Suffolk, was only eight miles from the Hanchett location at Hanchett Hall in Suffolk. Richard Fitz Gilbert (de Clare) was the overlord at Hanchet Hall in 1086.

The Montfitchets were located at Stanstead Mountfitchet in Essex but were overlords of Shudy Camps when the Hanchetts settled there before 1250.



Mountfichet Castle, Stanstead Mountfichet, Hertfordshire⁷

The de Veres settled at Castle Heddingham, Essex, but also held Castle Camps, Cambridgeshire, next to Shudy Camps.⁸ In the fifteenth century, they would hold both Shudy and Castle Camps.

Finally, there is the Gray Coat of Arms, first appearing in a window in Hinxworth Manor, Hertfordshire, around 1550. This display depicts that a Hanchett male was married to a Mountfichet female at some point in the Hanchett family history. The difficulty in establishing a time when this happened was because women's maiden names were only infrequently mentioned in the records preceding the 16th-century marriage records from the parishes.⁹ In Chapter Three, we will discuss who our first choice for the Mountfichet wife would be.



*Castle Heddingham, Heddingham, Essex*¹⁰



*Gray Arms at Hinxworth*¹¹
Hanchett-Mountfitchet in Upper Right Quarter

Chapter Two

Source of the Family Name from Hanchet Hall in Withersfield, Suffolk, England

From the English Place-Name Society, Dr. Keith Briggs provided his analysis of the meaning of Haningehet (more probably Haningchec) as the original image appears in the *Little Domesday Book* under Suffolk.¹²

Hanchet Hall

Withersfield, Risbridge Hundred, Suffolk

Dr. Briggs states the name means: “The hatch or gate associated with Hana’, (Old English) masculine personal name *Hana+ing+hæcc. The specific is uncertain, but Haning- in the Domesday Book form is best taken as a personal name *Hana or perhaps *Han”, with connective -ing.”

Interestingly, both brothers, John and Thomas Hanchett, who ventured to America in 1635, named their second

daughters Hannah, possibly as an alliteration, after naming their first daughters after their respective wives.

Dr Briggs goes on to say:

The former personal name has been widely proposed as occurring in place names¹³ (Briggs 2021a, 152), though it is apparently unrecorded in isolation. Hanningfield in Essex, which has -n- rather than -nn- in early spellings and probably has the same explanation. (*Place Names Essex* 250), makes a useful comparison. There is uncertainty in the Domesday Book reading of the last four letters of the present name; they may be -chet, -chec, -ehet, or -ehec. Despite this ambiguity, the generic is most likely Old English hæcc. Just possibly, this hatch was a gate on the border with Cambridgeshire since Hanchet Hall is less than 200m from that border, with Shudy Camps lying on the other side. It remains to be explained why the name did not become **Hanninghatch or **Hanhatch. The medial -ch- [tʃ] in most spellings may be a result of the -g- in -ing- having had the affricated pronunciation [tʃ], as in Cowlinge and Horringer, a phenomenon discussed in detail by Dodgson (1967b, 367). If the Domesday Book reading is either Haningehec or Haningchec, then these spellings would be consistent with both

parts of this proposed etymology. The later final -t rather than -ch must then be a more recent dissimilation. Here, we should look at the later surname forms. The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland states Hanchet Hall to be the origin of the modern surname Hanchett, which was found in 1881, mostly in Essex.¹⁴ The earliest bearer in that work is given as Thomas Hanchet 1440 of Hertfordshire, but no explanation is offered for final -t rather than -ch at such an early date. This Thomas Hanchet was a member of a land-owning family which had interests at various times in Withersfield, Shudy Camps, and Hertfordshire in the Braughing, Letchworth, and Baldock areas. According to Leland Hanchett (personal communication), the Hertfordshire manor, originally called Montfitchets, was renamed Hanchetts in the late fifteenth century after his ancestors acquired the manor. This raises the possibility that the irregular change of the final consonant (later brought back to the Suffolk place), if not a purely phonetic change, was influenced by the name Montfitchet. An indenture of 1566 (National Record Office HARE 6113, 228X2) mentions that the manor of Hanchet Hall had appurtenances in Wytherfylde and Haveryll. Copinger (1909c, 311) has a little on the descent of lands called Hanchet Hall in Withersfield. The

Subsidy Rolls 1327 forms above were misread by the editor as -bache; both men were assessed in Withersfield. The three Subsidy Rolls Cambs 1326 taxpayers (taken from Muskett (1904–8, 120)) were from Schudechampis (Shudy Camps).

A simplified version of Dr. Briggs' explanation of the etymology might be helpful for those who need more time to study his highly technical explanation.

- 1) Place names frequently use the first syllable of a personal name, i.e. Han or Hana. A good example is Hanningfield in Essex.
- 2) In the reading of the Little Domesday Book, there is uncertainty as to the last syllable being either chet, chec, ehct, or ehcc. The generic version is most likely Old English, hæcc meaning gate.
- 3) This hatch or gate was possibly on the border with Cambridgeshire. That border ran through the farm.
- 4) The replacement of the “ch” with a “t” must be a more recent occurrence. (See Chapter Three concerning Matilda, the wife of William Hanchach.)
- 5) A possible explanation for the change from Haningehet Hall to Hanchet Hall could be that Thomas Hanchet of Braughing and his son-in-law, Thomas Bernardiston, leased Hanchet Hall farm for

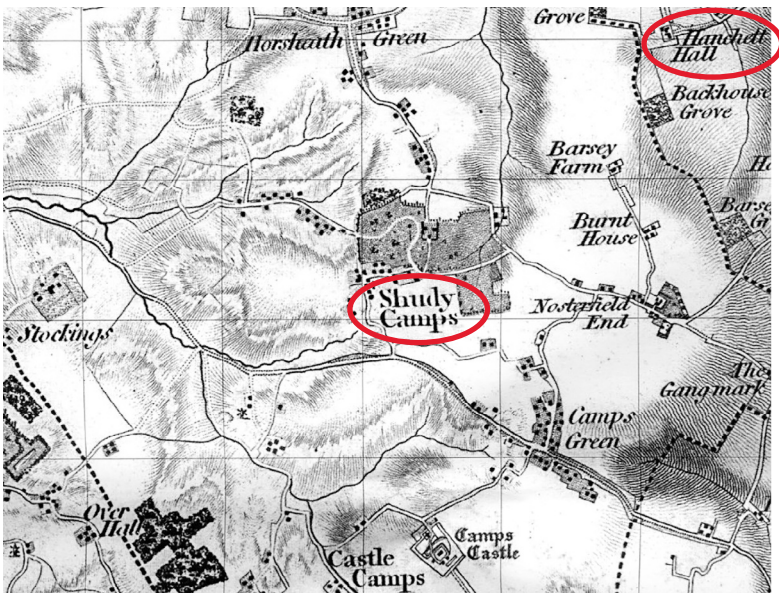
30 years in the 16th century. This name correction may have occurred at that point.

By the 12th century, the manor house, today known as Hanchet Hall, was one of three manors near Haverhill. The other two were Haverhill Manor and Horsham Manor.¹⁵ Town boundaries shifted as towns grew. Hanchett Hall was at different times in Haverhill or Withersfield. At the time of the Domesday recording, 1086, Hanchet Hall was part of a designated village of very small size. The manor's overlord was Richard, the son of Count Gilbert (de Clare). Curiously, he was the overlord, but no lord was mentioned.¹⁶ The Alwine noted at the time of the Conquest may have been our ancestor, but that name is not repeated for 1086. In the usual Norman style, they became de Hanchach, the most common spelling through the fourteenth century. By the mid-thirteenth century, they moved to Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire. Shudy Camps Manor, later known as Hanchetts, was the principal manor of that larger village.

The first detailed description of Hanchet Hall Estate occurred in 1884 when it was placed on the market as Freehold Property. At that point, it contained 183 acres of land and a farmhouse. Its location was on the border of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, in the parishes of Withersfield and Shudy Camps. A few pages of Real Estate advertisement¹⁷ revealed that the house had a drawing room, dining room, kitchen,

dairy, back kitchen with bedroom over, four capital bedrooms, and extensive cellarage.

The land was described as “Lying in a ring fence with considerable frontage to the main road from Haverhill to Horsborough (Horseheath?), is exceedingly rich and fertile, and comprises some very useful and arable land, with several luxuriant pasture enclosures. It is advantageously intersected with thriving young plantations of Larch and Spruce Furs, is well watered, and is bounded by a stream.”



1800s Map Showing Shudy Camps and Hanchett Hall

At first glance, one would assume that Hanchach was simply a misspelling of Hanchet created by scribes spelling a name as they heard it. As usual, there is more to the story. An armorial design found in a 1500s window of Hinxworth Manor in Hertfordshire tells us that at some prior time, a male Hanchett married a female Mountfitchet.¹⁸

The Montfitchets, a Baronial family, held their primary seat at Stanstead Montfitchet in Hertfordshire. It was a rarity for a member of the nobility to form a marital bond with someone from the landed gentry, making the union between a Hanchach and a Mountfitchet unique. But then, even the Montfitchets had descendants who were not included in the noble class.¹⁹ Richard de Mountfitchet, the last of the male Noble Montfitchets in England, died in 1257 in possession of Shudy Camps Manor but without heirs. His holdings there first descended to his sister Margaret and then to his sister Phillipa, who married Hugh de Playz.²⁰

The earliest documented instance of the spelling de Hanchet appears in the Lay Subsidy Tax Roll of 1327 for Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire. In this record, Matilda, widow of William de Hanchach, has her surname as de Hanchet.²¹ Altering the name Hanchett is not so unusual. In both the United States and England, we find examples of altering the spelling of Hanchett to suit someone's preference. It morphed into Hanchant in England and transformed into Hanchen in the USA. Could William's wife

PARTICULARS.

THE VALUABLE AND IMPORTANT
FREEHOLD PROPERTY,
KNOWN AS THE
HANCHET HALL ESTATE,
 Close to the rapidly increasing Market Town of **HAYERHILL**, on the borders of
SUFFOLK AND CAMBRIDGE,

In the Parishes of Withersfield and Shudy Camps, and within easy reach of the important Towns of Cambridge, Newmarket, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffron Walden, and others, and easily accessible from London by G.E.R., which runs within a hundred yards of the Estate.

THE PROPERTY COMPRISES A SUBSTANTIAL
FARM HOUSE,

Consisting of a Drawing and Dining Room, Kitchen, Dairy, Back Kitchen with Beef Room over, Four capital Bed Rooms, and extensive Collarage.

Small **FLOWER GARDEN**, and **KITCHEN GARDEN** with *Fruit Trees*.

THE OUT-BUILDINGS

Are in excellent order and conveniently arranged, and comprise *Stow House* with Copper, *Fowl House*, *Grannery*, *Cow House*, *Root House*, *Nag Stable*, *Piggeries*, *Large Barn*, *Implement and Cart Sheds*, *Yard* with *Covered Sheds*, *Cart-horse Stable* (six horses), *Chaff House*, &c.

THE LAND,

Lying in a single fence, with considerable frontage to the main road from Haverhill to Haverborough, is exceedingly rich and fertile, and comprises some very useful *Arable Land*, with several luxuriant embankments of *Pasture*, and is advantageously intersected with thriving young plantations of *Larch* and *Spruce Fir*, is well watered, and is bounded by a *Stream*—the total extent being

183 ACRES.

SCHEDULE.

No. or PLANT.	DESCRIPTION.	CULTIVATION.	QUANTITY.		
			A.	R.	P.
1	Nether Field and Ley	Arable	88	0	0
2	Plantations	Wood	0	1	2
3	New Field and Hog Ground	Arable	42	1	6
4	Plantation	Wood	0	1	16
5	Ditto	Wood	0	1	18
6	Merkham's Wood	Wood	7	2	38
7	Little Merkham's	Grass	2	0	18
8	Hog Field	Arable	2	1	35
9	Frost Pasture	Grass	0	1	21
10	Plantations	Wood	0	1	24
11	Ditto	Wood	0	1	6
12	Perry Field	Arable	10	1	6
13	Garden Croft and Backhouse Field	Arable	46	1	5
14	Farmhouse and Homestead	—	2	0	10
15	Beak Pasture	Grass	4	3	20
16	Barry Field	Arable	16	0	6
			A	0	81

The Farm House, Homestead, and about 175 Acres, are Let to Mr. WILLIAM GOODCHILD, on Lease for a term of Six Years from 20th September, 1879, at the reduced Rent of

PER £227 : 10 : 0 ANN.

The thriving young Plantations and Woods (about Nine Acres) are IN HAND.

The Timber, and all Fixtures belonging to the Vendor, will be included in the Sale.

The undulating character of the land, and the high position of several choice sites, commanding fine and extensive views over the surrounding country, renders the property peculiarly adaptable for the erection of a Gentleman's Residence and the formation of a Residential Estate.

The Plan published with these Particulars is taken from a personal Survey, and is believed to be correct. The Vendor will not however be responsible for any inaccuracies therein.

Matilda have made the switch after William's death? Was Matilda a Montfitchet, adding another layer of complexity to the surname's evolution? Matilda will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

In that same Lay Subsidy record, Matilda's nephew, William, had his surname spelled Hanch. Matilda's son, Thomas, had his surname spelled de Hancht. Over the next fifty years, Hanchach was used more commonly. The transcribing individual occasionally could not distinguish an "n" from a "u" and picked the latter as his best guess, resulting in the surname being de Hauchach.

The first encounter with the surname de Hanchach or its equivalent occurs in the mid-thirteenth century. This is easily explained by the fact that surnames came into common usage after 1200.²² The population density was sparse enough, at least in the countryside, that a person could easily be distinguished by his given name.

We have no concrete evidence of a de Hanchach residing at Hanchet Hall in Suffolk. Even with this absence of proof, scholarly individuals state that our name originated from that place, a theory we should accept unless new data emerges to challenge it.²³

There is an instance where a Hanchett leased Hanchet Hall and its accompanying land, but that did not occur until 1566. Thomas Hanchett of Braughing and his son-in-law,

Thomas Barnardiston, assumed the rights to Hanchet Hall and farm for the balance of a thirty-year lease from then-deceased John Bently.²⁴ Dr. Briggs suggests that this was the mechanism by which the name Haningchec was changed to Hanchet for this location.

The relocation to Shudy Camps, the principal seat of the Hanchett family, does not signify an abandonment of Hanchett Hall in Suffolk. At that time, the eldest son typically inherited the most significant and valuable properties from his father. Younger sons would have to settle for properties of lower value and importance but still useful as a place to earn a living. This aspect of property inheritance was a crucial part of the Hanchett family's history.

William de Hanechech, who inherited Shudy Camps from his father, Henry, had a brother, Alan, whose son, another William, purchased a messuage.²⁵ In Withersfield with eleven acres of land, one and one-half acres of meadowland, twenty acres of pastureland, and twenty-three pence revenue in 1320. It cost William ten pounds sterling to purchase this land with buildings from Walter le Clerk of London.²⁶ At this time, the Hanchett family had been at Shudy Camps for the better part of a century.

On October 7, 1950, the Southwest Echo provided an article describing Hanchet Hall and its surroundings.²⁷

Of the numerous charming places around Haverhill, none is more secluded than Hanchet Hall, and it is surprising how many Haverhillians have never ventured down the leafy lane that leads to the house.

A short way along the lane, and visible from the main road, is Hanchet End Farm, a strange conglomeration of forbidding-looking buildings dominated by a rakish factory chimney - but we can pass it by in peace, for it is nothing more than a well-known chaff factory. Further along is Surridge's Farm, and soon afterward, a pleasant tree-lined avenue leads up to the Hall at the end of the road.

Hanchet is mentioned in *Domesday Book* (1086), where the name is spelt Haningehet. In 1066 it



"Hanchet Hall"

was a manor in Withersfield parish and was the property of a certain Alwine the Freeman, who held 100 acres of ploughland and 2 acres of meadow here valued at 15s. a year.

The Hall is a dignified double-winged building that has been so modernized that little of the old work remains but the timber framing, the small central chimney, and the ground plan. The chimney may be dated about 1600 and has two diagonal shafts built up together. The most striking feature of the interior is the Drawing Room, which was reconstructed by one of the Gurteens at the same time as Haverhill Town Hall was being built, and the decoration style is similar in both cases. The ceiling is of panelled wood, and the side walls are divided into panels, each intended to receive a painted picture. The fireplace is ornamented with Dutch tiles depicting biblical subjects. The exterior is plastered over in Essex fashion, and below one of the wings is a cellar, a common adjunct of old houses hereabouts. There is no doubt that at one time, a wide moat surrounded the house, and part of its southern and western wings remain. A little stream coming down from Shudy Camps once filled its ample moats, now in great part filled in.

The hamlet of Hanchet End is all that is left of a small settlement that grew up in conjunction with the Hall but never attained village status. Here perhaps, better than anywhere else locally, the student of early village history may visualize the once great expanse of the open fields of long ago and recreate in imagination the Communal Cultivation of our forefathers, which for many centuries was the only system of agriculture known until the Enclosure Act of the 17th-19th centuries came to change completely the appearance of the countryside and give us the farms and fields we see today.

Possibly, the first record of the Hanchetts in the area is dated 18 June 1219. We cannot be sure it concerns the Hanchett family, but some points coincide. It is a Fine Roll for Suffolk between Katherine and Alice, Alice's daughters, the plaintiffs, and Henry de Capeles, the defendant. It involved eight acres of land with appurtenances, a moiety (one-half interest), and holdings and appurtenances in Hennenhach. Alice and Katherine paid Henry twenty silver shillings for the purchase.²⁸ Alice de Capeles married Thomas Hanehuth about 1197. The Hanchett family had previously lived at Hanchet Hall in Wethersfield, establishing their right to use de Hanchet as their surname. The village leading up to Hanchet Hall was called Haningehet (now Hanchet End) and was less than two miles from Shudy Camps, where the Hanehuth family was then living.

Chapter Three

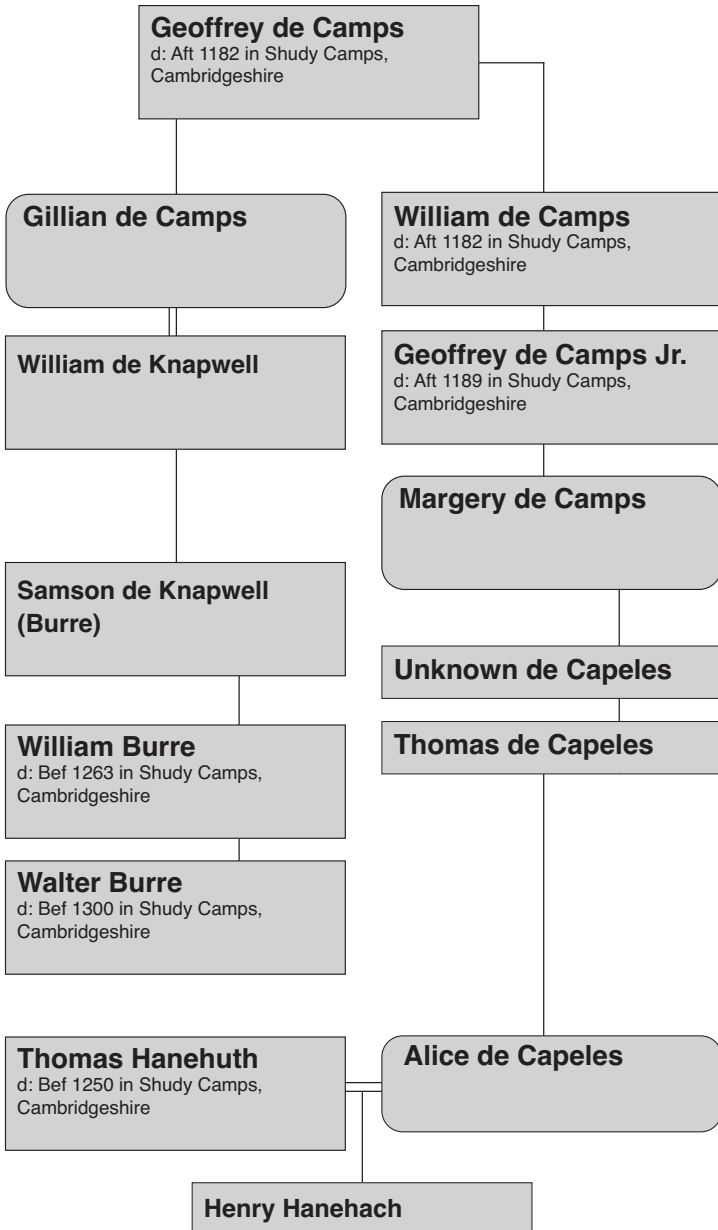
Expanding the Family at Shudy Camps

From the *Victorian History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*, A. P. M. Wright tells us under the heading of Shudy Camps, Manors, and Other Estates.²⁹

In 1086, 2 hides at Camps, which Lepsi had held in 1066 under Earl Harold, were held by Turstin of Robert Gernon. The overlordship of that estate, later the main Shudy Camps manor, passed with Gernon's other lands after 1118 to William de Montfitchet, with whose barony it descended in the male line until his great-grandson Richard de Montfitchet died in 1267. When Richard's estates were divided among his coheirs in 1274, the lordship over Shudy Camps was assigned to his sister Margery's granddaughter Alice Bolbec and her husband Walter of Huntercombe (d. 1313). Circa 1300, however, it had been transferred to the descendants of Richard's other sister, Philippa,

who had married Hugh de Plaiz (d. 1244). Joan, widow of Philippa's grandson Giles de Plaiz, received it as part of her dower in 1302. In 1346, the manor was held by Giles's grandson Richard (d. 1360), whose son John's daughter and heir Margaret (d. 1391) married Sir John Howard (d. 1438). Their granddaughter and eventual heir, Elizabeth Howard, married John, Earl of Oxford (d. 1462), and the overlordship after that descended with Castle Camps manor, to which the owners of Hanchett's manor and other estates in Shudy Camps owed quit rents from the 15th century to the 18th.

In 1166, the manor was held under the Montfitchets by Geoffrey of Camps, who, with his son William, claimed Nosterfield manor in 1179 and died, probably after 1182. His other son, Geoffrey, died under Richard I, whereupon the estate mostly passed to Gillian, the elder Geoffrey's daughter. Gillian married William of Knapwell, by whom she had a son Samson, commonly called Samson Burre (fl. 1202-20). In 1220, Gillian and Samson were sued for ½ fee at Shudy Camps by Thomas de Capeles, who claimed as a grandson of Gillian's sister Margery and possibly obtained a partition, for in 1236 and 1242, the fee was said to be held by William Burre, son of Samson, and his parceners. William



was probably alive in 1257 but dead by 1263 when the manor was held by Walter, son of Samson Burre, and Henry Hanchach, who had succeeded his father Thomas by 1256³⁰ and perhaps held the Capeles share.³¹

By 1279, Henry Hanchach (d. after 1286) held the bulk of the manor, including 160 a. of demesne³², as one knight's fee, while Walter Burre held 1/2 knight's fee with only 40 acres in demesne under Henry. Walter was probably dead by 1300. Part of his land went to Waltham Abbey, and the rest was split among villagers. In 1346, four groups held fractions of a fee by Richard de Plaiz. Henry Hanchach's son William held the main manor, later



***13th Century St. Mary's Church Across the Street from
the Shudy Camps Manor Site³³***

called HANCHETTS, in 1302 and owned Walter's 40 acres at William's death in 1310. His son and heir, Thomas, then aged 15, held Hanchetts in 1316 and 1346, and in 1365, Thomas' son Thomas settled land there, which was then held by Agnes, widow of John Hanchach. The descent of Hanchetts (Manor) then becomes uncertain.

The reason for this uncertainty starts with the plague epidemic of 1348. The rural population of England was decimated with an estimated 60% death rate.³⁴ We do not know how many Hanchaches succumbed, but the scarcity of records indicates that the family was narrowed down to four males. One of those surviving, Thomas Hanchach of Shudy Camps, was killed in 1365 as he tried to arrest John Edwards, a peasant indentured to Thomas' father-in-law, Robert Busteler.³⁵ Based on existing public records, this left Thomas' son, John Hanchach, age seven, Thomas' brother, Robert Hanchach, and Henry Hanchach, a cousin of John's. John was the rightful heir of his father, Thomas, but he was only seven years old at his father's death.³⁶ Thomas Hauteyn purchased the wardship of John Hanchach's lands in 1371.³⁷ Previously, John's wardship and marriage had been in the hands of the King.³⁸

John's Grandfather, Robert Busteler, and John's uncle, Robert Hanchach, jointly purchased land with a house in Magna and Parva Shelford, Cambridgeshire.³⁹ This property was noticeably missing from the lands

bequeathed to John Hanchett by his grandfather, Robert Busteler, on the latter's death in 1366. Robert Hanchach must have retained possession of the Shelford property throughout his lifetime. John was still a minor then, so his uncle, Robert, held on to all the other properties John would have inherited from his grandfather, including properties in Essex, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk. Those properties were transferred to John in 1380 when he reached his majority.⁴⁰

Cambridgeshire

Cambridge, Hildersham, Great Lynton, Little Lynton, Great Abiton, Little Abiton, Dokesworth, Great Camps, Shudy Camps, Nosterfeld, Balsham, Haddenham and Berklowe.

Essex

Ashedon

Norfolk

Badburham

Caston

Suffolk

Withersfield

Haverhill

Santon

At that point, John belonged to the wealthy landed gentry class, or gentry as they were known then. Why would a young man of his status participate actively in the Peasants Revolution in June 1381? Some have suggested that introducing a poll tax at that time was particularly concerning. The poll tax would amount to three groats (an English coin worth four pence) apiece for the whole adult population of England. Two other taxes were suggested at that time in Parliament: a poundage tax on goods sold or a property tax on land owners. Professor Oman tells us:

The Commons took these three proposals into consideration and finally chose the poll tax as the least objectionable of the three. It seems certain that the members were influenced by their own middle-class interests in doing so. They had a strong, and the not altogether groundless, idea that the lower strata of society were not contributing their fair share to the expenses of the realm, or, as they phrased it themselves, that “all the wealth of England has gone into the hands of the laborers and workmen.” The “poundage” would have fallen mainly on the merchants: the tenths and fifteenths on landholders in the shires and householders in the boroughs. The poll tax would hit everyone.⁴¹

This new grievance came at a moment when ancient social problems had reached a boiling

point, leading to the explosion. Of these social grievances, the old strife between the landholder and the peasant, which dated back to the Black Death and the Statute of Laborers of 1351, was the most important since it affected the greatest number of individuals.

But not less bitter was the grudge in the urban communities between the rulers and the ruled, the privileged and the unprivileged, which made the towns as violent in their outburst as the agricultural districts.

The Black Death, by sweeping away in a few months one-third of the population of England, had permanently raised the price of labor, while the prices of agricultural produce, on the other hand, had remained comparatively stationary. The system by which the landowner farmed his acres using the forced labor of his villeins had already begun to disappear before 1348: the commutation of services for rent had begun.

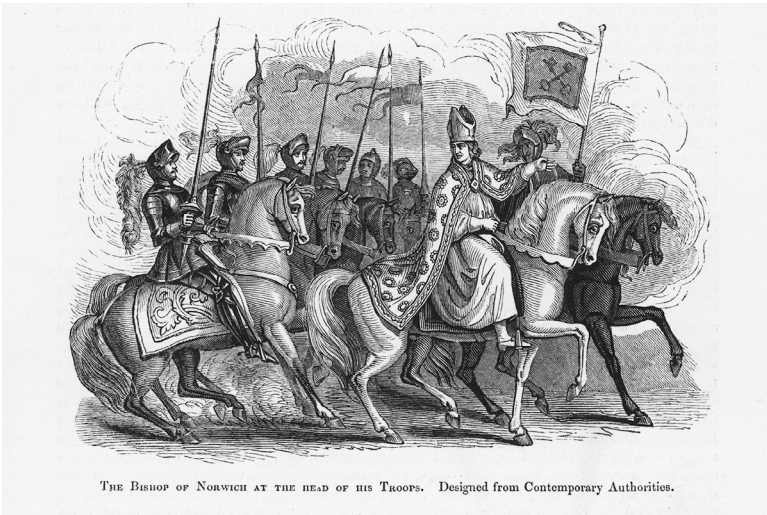
After the pestilence, unfree laborers decreased so much that crofts lay empty on every side because whole families had perished. The lord could not find new tenants who would take up the vacant holdings on the old conditions of servile labor. There was, therefore, a permanent deficit in the total amount of labor that could be obtained from

the peasants of the manor. In the face of this problem, many landlords gave up farming their demesne and let it out on the so-called “stock and land lease” system. Others threw it into sheep farms, an unpopular device. But many strove to keep on with the old services as much as possible, supplementing them with the costly expedient of hiring free labor.

If class legislation on behalf of the landlords had not intervened, the period following the Black Death would have been a sort of golden age for the free peasant, who could demand what he pleased for the hire of his hands. But the governing classes, when confronted with this new and inconvenient development, had caused the enactment of the celebrated Statute of Laborers. Suffice it to say here that employers were prohibited under heavy penalties from offering, or employees from asking, more than the old rates of pay that had prevailed before the pestilence. It was not likely that such legislation would be accepted without resistance by a sturdy and often turbulent peasantry. For a whole generation, the landholding (including John Hanchach) class had endeavored to enforce it spasmodically while the laboring class was setting their wits to find means of evading it.

The Poll Tax alone would not have inspired a wealthy young man to place himself at such risk. A stronger possibility may have been that John feared the revolutionists as much as his peers did, which motivated him to ride with them rather than experience their wrath.⁴² History remembers King Richard II for his arbitrary rule, favoritism towards certain individuals, and a perceived lack of political acumen. Richard stood up in person at age fourteen to Wat Tyler and his rebel associates. From then on, he felt he must have absolute power over his subjects.⁴³

At age 22, John Hanchach met his untimely demise by being beheaded by the King's agent, Bishop Henry Dispenser, in the square at Cambridge.⁴⁴



***John Hanchach's Executioners
on Their Way to Cambridge⁴⁵***

The postmortem trials give the government's perspective.

At trials held in Cambridgeshire:

Trial of John Hanchach July 5, 1381

In Chilford Hundred

Sworn, they declare that John Hauchach of Shudy Camps (on) the day of the Sabbath* [i.e. Saturday,] next before the feast of Saint Bartholomew, (in) the same year was the chief leader and insurgent within the County of Cambridge. And that the same and Edmund Homene of the same, Andrew Mower of Lynton, & other unknown men have entered the close of Robert Crisp at Great Abyton against the will of Robert, & on the same have assaulted the peace of the lord King. And that John Songer of Hyngston (on) the day of [m *] after the same feast in the form aforesaid has made an assault (on) the aforesaid Robert in the field of the same village.

Likewise, they declare that John Peper of Lynton has ridden in the company of the aforesaid John Hauchach, carried one lance with one small banner, and was a malefactor. And that John Whelwryght of Berkelowe was a helper of the said John Hauchach (in) his (own) time against the peace.

In Witlesford Hundred

Likewise sworn, they declare that John Hauchauch was the chief leader of these malefactors and that the same with his company and an assembled force of unknown men (on) the day of the Sabbath next after the feast of Corpus Christi by night has lain low the houses of the Prior of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem in Dokeswurth, and diverse goods & chattels come upon there, at the value of £20, of Richard Masterman, the farmer there, has feloniously taken and carried away, & to the injury of the King.

And by means of diverse inquisitions held of diverse hundreds (it) is found that the same John Hauchach was, during the entire time of the disturbance, riding with an armed power (and) force assembled (to) himself from many counties, that the same was master and leader at the manors of Thomas Hasilden, William Bateman, the Hospital of Shengeye, Edward Walsyngham, Thomas Torell, Roger Glaston, & John Blauncpayn in Cambridge, and at other plunders, abasements of houses, and securities within the said county, to the injury of the lord King, and the great disturbance of the people.⁴⁶



King Richard II⁴⁷

The first Parliament to convene after the end of the Peasant's Revolution declared that any traitor killed in response to his actions should be considered a felon and that any lands taken by the King should not be returned to that person's family.⁴⁸

This ruling was particularly important to the Hanchach family. John's wife, Ann, petitioned the King to restore her dower lands, commenting that she did not know how to sustain her four children without them. Her petition went unanswered.⁴⁹ Certain lands and holdings in Cambridgeshire previously belonging to John Hanchach were given to John Roos, King's yeoman (Member of the King's Guard), on 20 October 1383.⁵⁰ Roos received John's lands in Cambridgeshire, but no mention is made of his lands in Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk.

We have found no mention of Hanchett's Manor in Shudy Camps between 1381 and 1428. The only Hanchett individuals mentioned anywhere early in that period were Robert, John's uncle, and Henry, probably a cousin. Those two were the only adult Hanchetts recorded in the two decades from 1381 to 1400.

By 1428, part of Shudy Camps was back in the family's possession. "John Hancheche held 1/4 Knight's Fee in Shudy Camps as Thomas Hancheche had held it before him."⁵¹ Could Thomas from the Feudal Aid have been the person who reclaimed a part of Shudy Camps? This Thomas could have been the eldest son of John Hanchach, and, therefore, the one who would have inherited Shudy Camps had his father, John, not had his Cambridgeshire lands confiscated by Richard II. The year 1399 was a tumultuous time in England

Henry IV, also known as Henry Bolingbroke, took the kingdom from Richard II by invading England with a small army. He gained widespread support from nobles who were dissatisfied with Richard's rule and ultimately forced Richard to abdicate the throne. This allowed Henry to be crowned king in 1399. Previously, Richard had exiled Henry and blocked his inheritance of his father's (John de Gaunt's) lands, which fueled Henry's rebellion.

If Thomas Hanchach of the Feudal Aids is the same Thomas who received land in Bedfordshire as compensation for

military service in 1401, it would be helpful to know what military effort Thomas participated in. Thomas would have been too young for Richard II's invasion of Ireland in 1395. He would, however, have been old enough for the second invasion in 1399, which resulted in total defeat and Richard II losing the throne to Henry IV. It would make more sense for a portion of Shudy Camps to be restored to the family after Henry IV was crowned King of England in 1399. Parliament would have helped when, in 1399, they changed the law that prevented confiscated lands of traitors from being returned to their family.⁵²

We have yet to find a record suggesting how the Hanchetts regained the Manor at Shudy Camps. How did Ann and her



*King Henry IV*⁵³

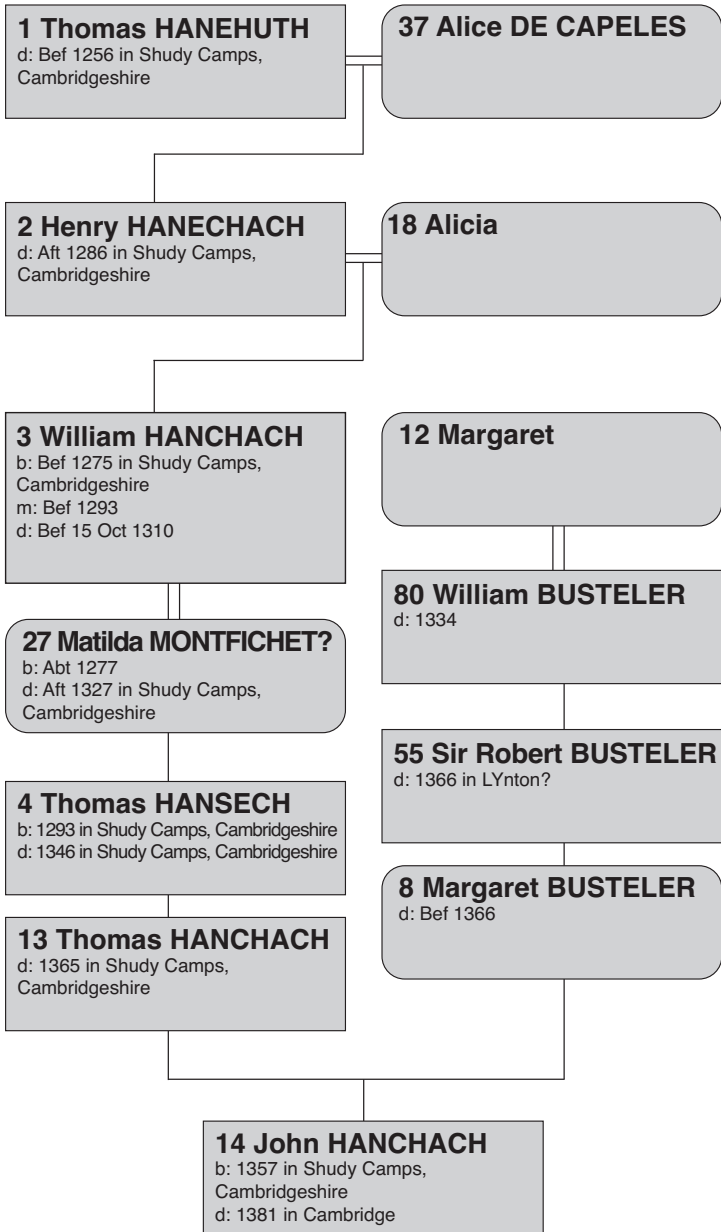
four children survive? John's uncle, Robert, may have played a role in the support of John's wife and four children.

Robert's first appearance in the records occurred in 1356, when he, his brother, Thomas Hanchach, and Robert Busteler broke into the Park at Chesterford to hunt deer.⁵⁴ A decade later, Robert and Robert Busteler jointly purchased a farm in Great and Little Shelford, Cambridgeshire.⁵⁵ This land would remain in the Hanchett family for two hundred years.⁵⁶ Could Ann Hanchach have moved herself and her four children to Great Shelford? We know that her grandson, Thomas Hanchet, a member of Parliament, resided there in 1430.

In 1367, Robert purchased from Hugh de Basingbourne a tenement in London called le Stouples, which contained houses, shops, solars, and cellars.⁵⁷ Robert's home in Cambridgeshire was Linton, where he purchased land in 1376.⁵⁸ That same year, he sold residential and commercial properties in London to Hugh de Bassingbourne.⁵⁹ A year later, Robert was involved in a transaction concerning a group of tenements in Linton.⁶⁰

When John Hanchach, his nephew, turned 21 in 1380, Robert transferred all the properties John had inherited from his maternal grandfather, Robert Busteler, by quitclaim.⁶¹

Robert was appointed a tax collector for Cambridgeshire in 1382, just one and a half years after John was beheaded



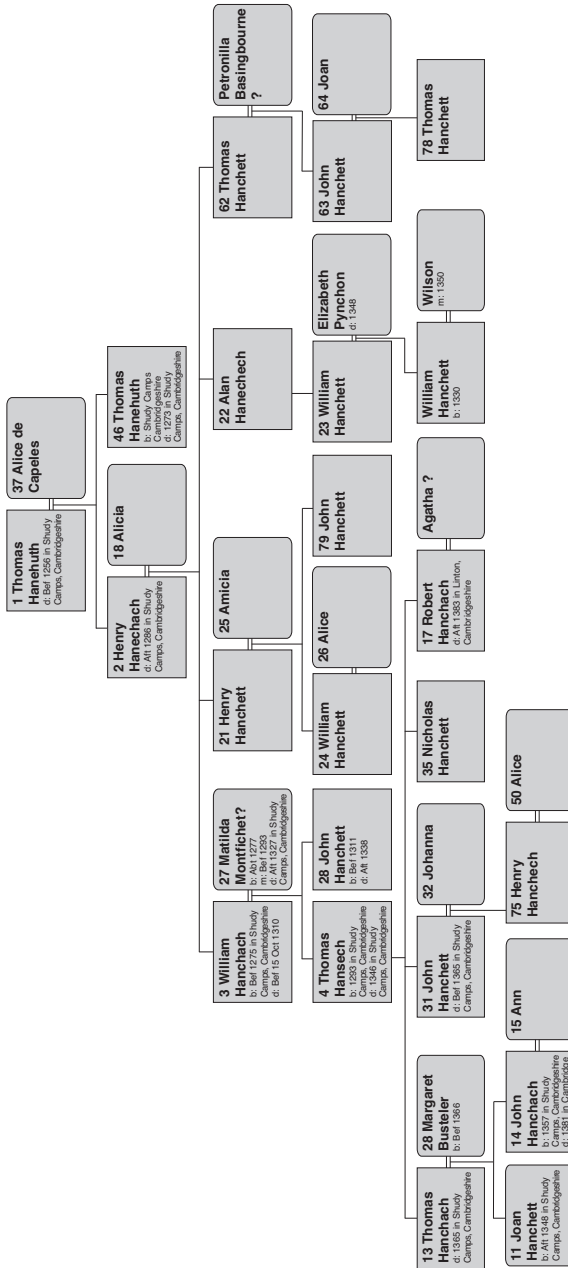
***Ancestors of John Hanchach
Who Died in Peasants Revolt***

in Cambridge.⁶² In 1383, he obtained property in Great Abington and Berkelowe.⁶³

Robert was a man of distinction and could have assisted his nephew's wife, Ann, by providing a home and potential income stream at the farm in the Shelfords. However, we have found no records to consult for verification.

From the above chart, Williams' wife, Matilda, provides our best opportunity for a Hanchett marriage to a Montfitchet. Upon William's death in 1310, Matilda had to pledge to the King that she would not remarry without a license. This meant that the King must approve of any future marriage on her part.⁶⁴ Also, Matilda was the first recorded spelling of the surname as Hanchet. This occurred in the Lay Subsidies for Cambridge in 1327.⁶⁵ Could Matilda have decided to keep part of her surname, Montfitchet? The King only required a license to marry from those widows with significant land holdings.


Permanent conversion to the modern version of Hanchett occurred only after the beheading of John Hanchach. The Hanchaches who landed in Bedford or Essex spelled their name Hanchet. Robert Hanchache and his possible son, Henry Hanchache, appeared in the Husting Rolls for London in the 1380s using the old spelling. Those who stayed at Shudy Camps still used Hanchach or variants until about 1500. By the 17th century, the earlier spellings could not be found.



Six Generations at Study Camps

Chapter Four

The Descendants of John Hanchach of Shudy Camps

 Our only reference to any descendants of John Hanchach is his widow, Ann's petition to King Richard II for restoration of her dower lands. In it, she states that she has four children without indicating the number of males and females.⁶⁶ Here is the full translation of her petition:

To our most excellent lord the King. Petitions Anne, the former wife of John Hanchach, who acknowledges the said John was compelled by the rebels, who of late raised themselves against your peace, to go with them for a time from which company he withdrew himself immediately as soon as he could escape, and when he had returned to his house, being then in your said peace, hither came to him certain (of) his enemies, and as a result of long-standing trouble that was between them, they have cut off the head of the said John; without that, he was convicted first by the said assembly. Giving it out

that he was, of his will, one of the said rebels. Because of which, may it be pleasing to your royal majesty to command that the said Anne might have her dowry of the lands which belonged to her said husband accordingly, since he was killed, that are seized into your hands, considering, most powerful lord, that he was not one belonging to the said rabble through his will during his life, and that the said Anne does not have anything other, nothing to even sustain herself & her four children, except for her said dower land and that she has not committed any single action, nor trespass, through which she should lose her said dowry & sustenance.

This is the only record of John's wife, Anne. It tells us two things. First, she did not believe John to be a rebel, much less a rebel leader. Then, she either experienced all of John's lands being confiscated by the King or was in imminent danger of that happening. The lack of a response from the King is certain, or we would have seen writing on the verso side of the page. The contrast between Anne's statement and that of witnesses in court is startling. We do not know if there were in-person witnesses to the events, but we can be sure Anne knew the facts. The idea that John may have joined the rebels to ensure his home and family were not attacked seems more consistent with Ann's statement. Interestingly, the courts believed other participants in the revolt to have been pressured into

following the rebels, and they were set free. Geoffrey Cobb, another young land-holding gentleman like John Hanchach, who participated with John in several events in Cambridgeshire, was pardoned by Richard II, and his confiscated lands were returned.

Unlike the violence level in other counties, in Cambridgeshire, no one was murdered by John Hanchach's group. On the contrary, the process was slow and methodical. Victims were given time to evacuate their homes.

So, what happened to Shudy Camp's (Hanchett's) Manor between 1381 and 1428? Was it part of the properties given by Richard II to John Roos on 20 October 1383?⁶⁷ We must remember that the King did not give away property to anyone. Since the King was the Lord over all property in England, he would only have let John Roos use the properties to collect rents. There were the Overlords and Lords between the King and the person allowed to use the land. These noblemen and landed gentry were more closely connected to individual properties than the King and could no doubt use their discretion regarding who occupied any land or manor. Between 1386 and 1437, Sir John Howard, husband of Margaret de Plaiz, was overlord for Shudy Camps manor and its associated land.

In 1386, his landed holdings were augmented considerably following the demise of his father-

in-law, Lord Plaiz. Howard's marriage to Lord Plaiz's only daughter had been purchased nine years earlier for 300 marks. Now, besides the Plaiz manors at Toft, Weeting, and Knapton in Norfolk, he acquired properties outside East Anglia, namely 'Benetfield Bury' in Stansted Mountfichet, Oakley and Moze (Essex), Chelsworth (Suffolk) and Fowlmere [and Shudy Camps] (Cambridgeshire). These estates, valued at over £117 a year when his wife died in 1391, he retained for life 'by the courtesy.' Howard's second wife brought him properties on the border of Essex and Suffolk, the most notable being the manor of Stoke Nayland. The estates thus acquired by marriage qualified Sir John for election to Parliament by three shires. In 1404 he was numbered among the few landowners of England whose net incomes amounted to over 500 marks a year.

Sir John's chief interests lay not with his hereditary estates bordering the Wash but rather in the property acquired by his marriages. Thus, he officiated as sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire in 1400-1 (during which term he was summoned to the great council of August 1401), and of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire in 1401-3; and it was as a knight of the shire for Cambridgeshire that he was returned to

Parliament for the second time, in 1407. But his family holdings ensured that at least to some extent he would be active in Norfolk.

With the death of Richard II, the first Parliament of Henry IV had in 1399 decreed: “Also, that it should be ordained that the widows of men who are forejudged or attainted of treason or felony should be endowed with the lands and tenements which belonged to their said husbands, in cases where the said wives were not guilty of the aforesaid treason.”⁶⁸ The court rolls for Shudy Camps do not exist for the 14th or 15th centuries. This declaration, plus a new King on the throne, may have enabled John Howard to restore some of the Hanchett’s property to John Hanchach’s descendants.

The next record for the Hanchetts at Shudy Camps is the Feudal Aids for 1428. According to Family Search, Feudal Aids were taxes demanded by the king from his tenants-in-chief during heavy expenditures, who were also allowed to exact Aids from their free tenants. The record states, “John Hanchach holds 1/4 part in Shudy Camps as Thomas Hanchach held it before him.”⁶⁹ Assuming that Thomas Hanchach was the oldest son of John (who was beheaded) and that the John Hanchach mentioned in the Feudal Aids was Thomas’ oldest son, Thomas must have died before 1428, leaving his son John as heir.

According to Ledgard, for Northill, Bedfordshire, Manorial Court Records exist showing⁷⁰:

On Friday before the feast of St. Denis 3 Hen. IV [October 1401] Thomas Hanchet did fealty and acknowledged that he held one messuage in Thorncote, formerly Jocys, where the gate and 'le Shepine' were situated and certain lands and meadows but pleads he does not know how much. He is granted a day until the next Court to show what lands and tenements he holds by military service and paying 12d. by the year, one boon work, suit of Court, foreign which he had of the demise of Thomas Rygelle rector of the church of Sondeye, Robert Cook parson of the church of Parva Shelford and William Souche of "le Hacche".⁷¹

Why would the parson of the Church at Great Shelford be involved in his property? Possibly, Thomas of Northill, Bedfordshire, grew up on the farm in the Shelfords.

Unfortunately, the next Court Roll is not available. There is an interval of 17 years before the story can be continued, namely after the 25th January 1418, when an order is made to distrain William Souche to do fealty for the messuage in Thorncote, formerly Jocys where the gate and "le Shepene" were formerly situated and for other

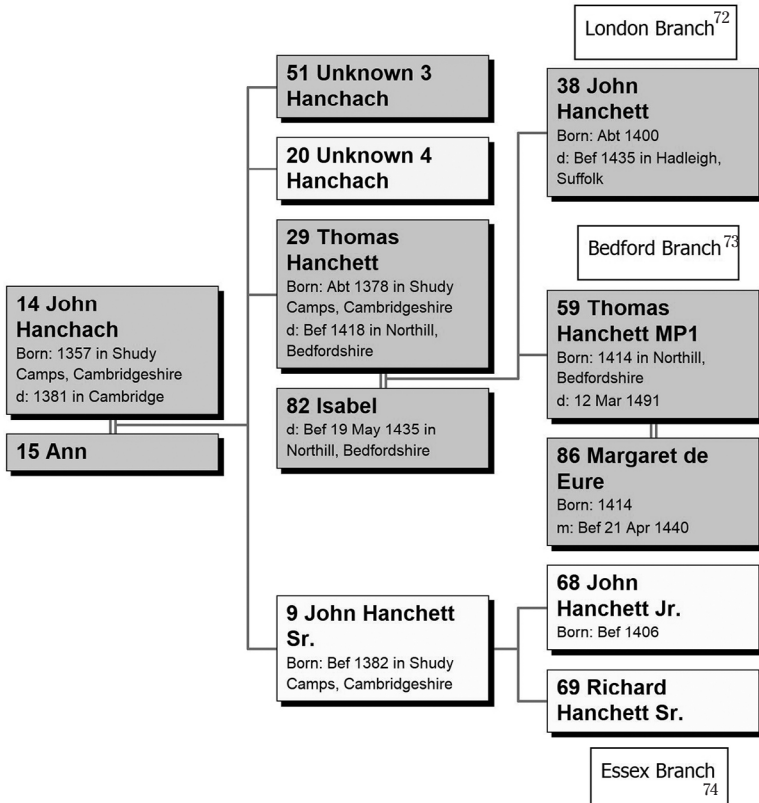
lands in the fields of Beeston which he had of the demise of [membrane torn] Hanchet, for which he pays 12d. by the year and one boonwork and suit of Court, foreign. It is clear that these two entries relate to the same property, and the same entry is again reported at the Court held sometime between 25th January 1418 and 1421, but again, a torn membrane obliterates the date but discloses that the name was John Hanchet. However, the lacunar in the Manorial Records leaves the relationship between Thomas Hanchet and John Hanchet unknown. Probably father and son.

In Northill, Bedfordshire, we have a father, Thomas, and a son, John. Thomas died by 1418, and John held Thomas' lands there by 1421. In Shudy Camps, we have a father, Thomas, and a son, John. Thomas had died by 1428, and his son, John, held 1/4 Knight's fee. For this presentation, we will assume that Thomas and John are the same father and son.

According to Family Tree UK, the English tradition was to name the first son after the father's father. So, Thomas (died 1365) had a son, John (died 1381), who in turn had a son, Thomas (died before 1418). The last Thomas had a son, John (born about 1398).

Sir John Howard had accompanied Richard II to Ireland on his campaigns in 1394 and 1399. On the latter expedition,

Richard and his army were sorely defeated. John Hanchach's son Thomas would have been old enough to have participated in the 1399 excursion. The only other military activity between 1396 and 1401 was when Henry IV defeated Richard II in 1399 and was crowned King of England. Thomas stated he had been given the Northhill property for Military Service. Could Sir John Howard have been the benefactor who restored a part of Shudy Camps to the Hanchett family?



*Proposed Descendants of
John and Anne Hanchach*

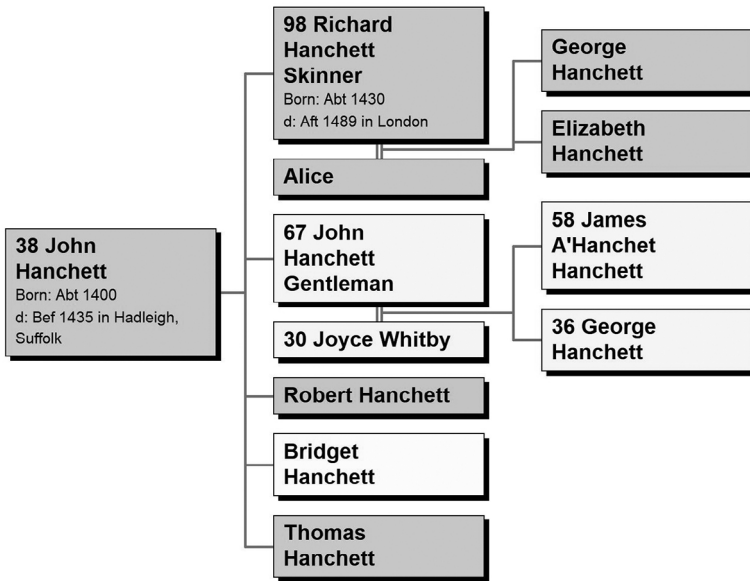
Chapter Five

The London Branch of Hanchetts

John Hanchett (1502-1565), a descendant of the Bedford Branch of Hanchetts, provided a complete connection between the Bedford Branch and the London Branch. He did this not to improve our genealogical understanding of the family but rather as a possible means of collecting the inheritance of a deceased cousin, George Hanchett.⁷⁵

“[He, John, was] son and heir of William Hanchett; son and heir of Thomas Hanchett; son and heir of Thomas Hanchett; son and heir of Thomas Hanchett; father of Edward Hanchett of Hadleigh, Suffolk; father of Richard Hanchett of London, Skinner; father of the said George Hanchett.” In a later Chancery proceeding, Richard’s father is called John, not Edward.⁷⁶

In the following graphic, two of the Hanchetts are of particular interest. The third lends insight into how disagreements resulting in violence were settled in court.



Descendants of John Hanchett, of Hadleigh, Suffolk

First, James A'Hanchett in 1515 completed the sale of Shudy Camps Manor, which his father had begun some years before. James then moved to Sussex, where he bought another Manor House.⁷⁷

Richard Hanchett became a Skinner, a trader in furs. His workplace was in London, where he was well known in the Skinner Trade and no doubt had contact with many nobles and royalty.⁷⁸

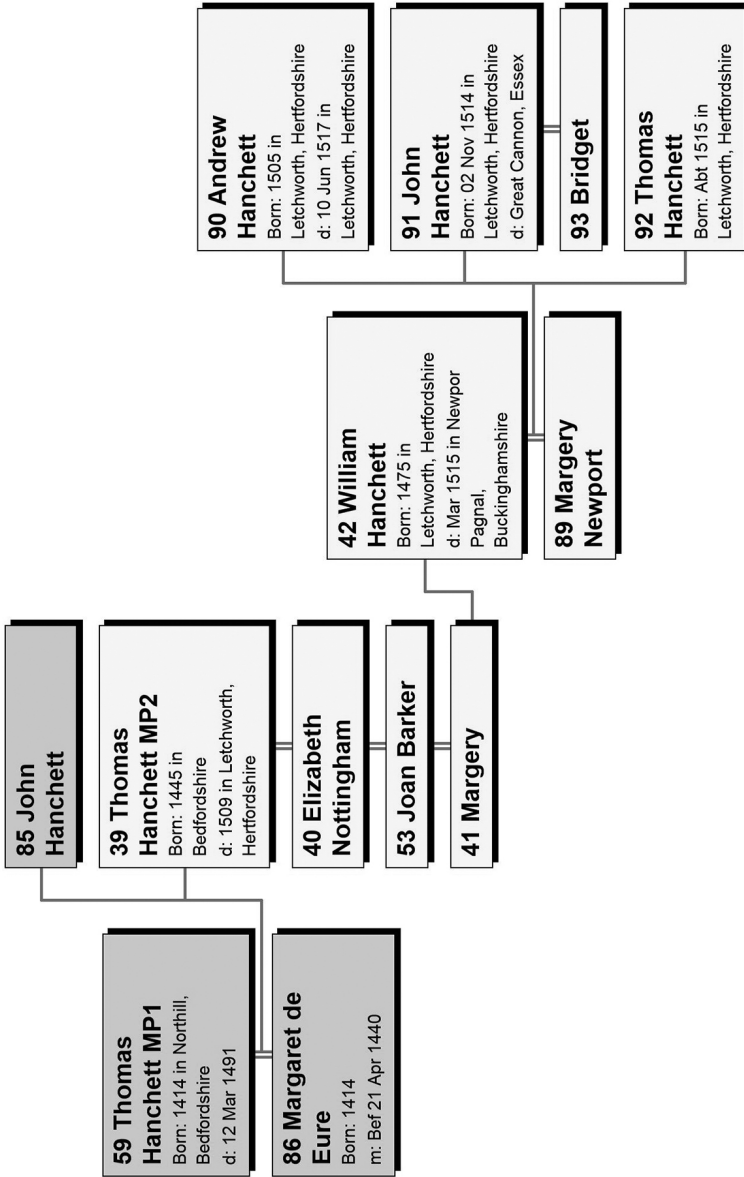
Thomas Hanchett was attacked and injured by William Maycons at Hadleigh in 1429. Thomas brought suit against William, who pleaded innocence. According to Thomas, the injury had been caused by swords and staff.⁷⁹ The case resulted in a trial by jury, but the outcome is unknown.

Chapter Six

The Hanchetts of Bedfordshire

We shall call this branch the Cadet Line of Hanchetts in memory of Kathy Hanchett, an esteemed genealogical researcher who always called them thus. Their accomplishments were outstanding. Two were elected members of Parliament. Several were lawyers, and one became the Sheriff of Hertfordshire. The daughters were married to landed husbands and bore landed children. They were gentlemen in every sense of the word and owned real estate in many English counties.

This branch of the Hanchett family holds proof that they were descended from John Hanchach, who was killed in 1381. Just before Robert Busteler died in 1366, Robert Hanchach, John's uncle, and Sir Robert Busteler, his grandfather, purchased a message (house with land) in Shelford, Cambridgeshire.⁸⁰ The Property could have stayed with Robert until a later date. Somehow, that land and dwelling remained in the family following John Hanchach's execution. The property was finally sold in



Descendants of Thomas Hanchett Member of Parliament and Head of the Hanchet Cadet Line

1547 by brothers John Hanchett and Thomas Hanchett of the Cadet Line.⁸¹ That is the same land where Thomas Hanchett, Member of Parliament, claimed residency in Cambridgeshire County from 1432-1437. The court rolls do not extend during his lifetime beyond 1437.⁸²

The *History of Parliament, House of Commons, 1422-1461*, recently released, tells us:

A lawyer of unknown background, Hancheche found work at Westminster, where he represented a fellow burgess, John Clayver, in the common pleas in 1441. Later that decade, he sued Richard Knesworth, 'of London, gentleman,' in the same court for refusing to return a bond entrusted to him for safekeeping.

There is no evidence of Hancheche's activities before he entered Parliament, save that he, along with John Enderby, Nicholas Caldecote, and others, was one of the trustees to whom John Pykot of Abington by Bassingbourn transferred his goods and chattels in July 1434. After his time in the Commons, from May 1437 he acted as a trustee for William Allington II and his father for at least 15 years. It was perhaps also after sitting in Parliament - although definitely between 1433 and 1443 - that he and Richard Bush of Cambridge acted as pledges in Chancery for Richard Wright

(probably the man who represented the town in the Parliament of November 1449) and his wife, the widow of Thomas Hervey of Ely.

Whatever his interests at Cambridge, Hancheche acquired lands in Buckinghamshire through his marriage. His wife, Margaret, was the kinswoman of William Caldecote, who had become a ward of the Crown following the death of his father, Thomas, the son of her great-aunt Alice de Eure, in late 1425. William himself died, still a minor, in September 1439, whereupon Margaret, then aged '25 and more', succeeded to the manor of Caldecote in Newport Pagnell, along with other holdings at Newport Pagnell and Calverton. Hancheche did homage for these estates in the following April. Although William's inquisition post-mortem had found that Margaret Hancheche was his heir, the Hancheches' possession of Caldecote did not rest unchallenged since they faced a rival claimant in one Alice Loven. While the basis of her claim, probably highly speculative, is unknown, it is worth noting that the 'de Lovent' family had once held an estate at Newport Pagnell. She may have caused the Hancheches some trouble. A decade and a half after the MP's death, the Crown would order an inquisition into Caldecote, at which the jury, apparently contradicting the findings of the

inquisition post mortem held for William Caldecote in 1439, stated that Hancheche had 'intruded' on to the manor after Alice died in February 1462 and had held it until his own death. Whether this means she was in actual physical possession of Caldecote at the end of her life is impossible to say.

There is no evidence of Hancheche's activities after the mid-fifteenth century, even though he lived to a ripe old age. He died on 12 Mar. 1491, just a few months before his son and heir, Thomas Hancheche the younger, entered the Parliament of that year as one of the burgesses for Bedford. The younger Thomas survived until 1509. The manor of Caldecote was in his hands at his death, and it remained in the Hancheche family until 1541.⁸³

Members of the Cadet Line were extremely smart in their choice of wives. The first Thomas Hanchett married Margaret de Eure from a well-landed family.⁸⁴ Their son, another Thomas, and another Member of Parliament carefully chose each of his three wives. The latter Thomas was accredited as one of the few men in England with sufficient wealth to have discretionary funds of over 12 pounds sterling per year.⁸⁵ His Manor was called Letchworth, and it is located in Hertfordshire. Much

earlier, it was called Montfitchets but later became Hanchetts Manor.

The first Thomas was also extremely wise in building his real estate holdings. Instead of waiting until he could afford an entire estate on his own, he would join with a few friends and buy several estates, thus reducing his risk.

In 1541, the John of this line ended up selling almost all of the property he had inherited indirectly from his father, William, but directly from his brother, Andrew. John eventually purchased the Manor House at Great Parndon, Essex, and saw that his daughter married into the well-known Turner family.⁸⁶ His younger brother, Thomas, became an attorney after studying for his vocation at Gray's Inn in London.

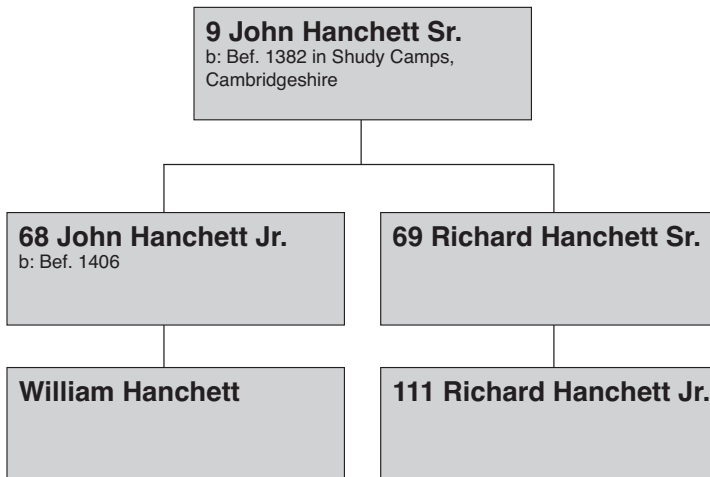
Chapter Seven

The Hanchetts of Clavering, Essex

Clavering, Essex, is just 15 miles Southwest of Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire. John Hanchett, Sr., born before 1382, could have been the younger brother of Thomas Hanchett of Bedfordshire. Interestingly, the family name changed after John Hanchach's death from Hanchach to Hanchet for all branches except for the family of Robert Hanchach of Linton, Cambridgeshire, and London. The Bedfordshire and Clavering branches were undoubtedly trying to escape their father's reputation and start lives anew.

Initially, the Clavering branch were at a different social and financial level than the Bedford or London branches. They were simple farmers who were patient enough to work hard and grow their land holdings slowly. This branch gave rise to the Hanchetts of North America and Australia. By the 18th century, wealthy English Hanchetts had descended from the family at Clavering. Arkesden and Ickelton.

The male lines of the Bedford and London branches ended during or before the Great Migration to America. Although we cannot be certain, all of the Hanchett family's currently living descendants seem to have come from Clavering and spread out from there to Arkesden, Ickleton, and worldwide. We have yet to find living Hanchetts who came from the other Hanchett branches.



Early Clavering Pedigree as Suggested by R. A. Ledgard

The Clavering Hanchett's typical land holdings amounted to less than 10 acres. They did not live in the Manor House but were freemen farming what acreage they could, holding only a croft (a small farm associated with a house.) John Hanchett Sr. first appears in a fragment of a rental document filed under Berden, a town near Clavering. The document mentions some men known to be from Clavering

and John Hanchet Sr., who may also have been from Clavering. The item was undated but thought to have been created near the end of the fourteenth century or the beginning of the fifteenth.⁸⁷ John Hanchett Jr's first recording in the Court Rolls for Clavering Manor occurred in 1426.⁸⁸ The Hanchett name appears repeatedly in the Court Rolls and Parish Registers for Clavering over the next 380 years.

John Hanchet Sr. may have been assisted in his move to Berden/Clavering, Essex, by the same Sir John Howard mentioned at the end of Chapter Four. Sir John was the Sheriff of Essex in 1401 and 1414 and concurrently overlord of Shudy Camps Manor.⁸⁹ John acquired Shudy Camps through marriage to Margaret de Plaiz around 1383. Margaret died in 1391, leaving Shudy Camps entirely in John Howards' hands. John's son, John, died in 1410, leaving a daughter, Elizabeth, to whom her grandfather gave Shudy Camps. Elizabeth married John de Vere c. 1425, and Shudy Camps was combined with de Vere's Castle Camps.

Conclusion

The Hanchett family ancestors came to England from France as farmers around 500 BCE, preceding William the Conqueror. The family's first known location was the Manor of Hanchet Hall in Suffolk, England. Their next location was Shudy Camps Manor (later known as Hanchett's), across the Cambridgeshire County line.

The Place Name Society determined that the name's etymology is Hans Gate, possibly referring to a gate on Hans' farm between Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. The family increased their land holdings at Shudy Camps through purchase and marriage until the Black Plague of 1348 wiped out most of the Hanchett family members. By 1380, the few remaining at Shudy Camps were wealthy Landed Gentry.

In 1381, the wealthiest member, John Hanchach, was a leader in the Cambridge section of the Peasants Revolt. He paid for that act with his life and his Cambridgeshire land holdings. His widow was left with four young children, two

of whom became progenitors of the Hanchett family in Bedfordshire, London, and Essex. The Essex branch provided today's descendants whose ancestors settled in the USA and Australia or remained in England.

End Notes

- ¹ Family Tree DNA, Big Y Test, Leland Hanchett, Kit 480058, June 2024
- ² *Daily Mail* and *Nature Magazine*, December 2021
- ³ Family Tree DNA, Big Y Test, Lindsay Hanchett Kit 1N28579, October 2024
- ⁴ *Daily Mail*, December 2021.
- ⁵ Crispin, M. Jackson, Macary, Leonce, *Falaise Roll*, pp 80, 92 and 117.
- ⁶ Clare Castle. (2024, October 23). In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clare_Castle
- ⁷ Facebook, Mountfitchet Castle.
- ⁸ Hinde, Thomas, Editor. *The Domesday Book*, pp 47, 125, and 256.
- ⁹ Find My Past online, A beginner's guide to using birth, marriage, and death records for family history | Blog | Findmypast.co.uk
- ¹⁰ Hedingham Castle. (2024, October 2). In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedingham_Castle
- ¹¹ A drawing provided by Arthur Hanchett Johnson. Original in author's possession.
- ¹² Six scribes. *The Little Domesday Book*.
- ¹³ Briggs, Keith. *The Place-names of Suffolk*. English Place-Name Society (Nottingham), forthcoming.
- ¹⁴ Hanks, Patrick, Coates, Richard, and McClure, Peter. *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*
- ¹⁵ Horne, Michael. *The History of Haverhill*.
- ¹⁶ Six scribes. *The Little Domesday Book*.
- ¹⁷ Marketing material for Hanchet Hall provided by the Suffolk Historical Society.

- ¹⁸ See the Hinxworth Manor Coat of Arms on page 10.
- ¹⁹ An undated charter for Richard (d.1267), son of Richard Mountfitchet, was witnessed by Ralph and Warin Mountfitchet, possibly brothers of Richard, who held Shudy Camps at his death in 1267.
- ²⁰ Wright, A. P. M. *The Victoria History of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*, p 50
- ²¹ Muskett, J. J. *Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely: Lay Subsidy for the Year 1327*. p 25.
- ²² Wikipedia. "In England, the introduction of family names is generally attributed to the preparation of the Domesday Book in 1086, following the Norman conquest. Evidence indicates that surnames were first adopted among the feudal nobility and gentry and slowly spread to other parts of society."
- ²³ Hanks, Patrick, Coates, Richard, and McClure, Peter. *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*.
- ²⁴ Hare.6113,228x2. An indenture between Leonard Smyth of Sholham, of Norfolk, Esq. and Thomas Bernardiston of Suffolk and Thomas Hanchett of Braughing.
- ²⁵ Webster, Merriam. "A dwelling house with the adjacent buildings and curtilage and other adjoining lands used in connection with the household."
- ²⁶ Rye, Walter. *Suffolk Fines*, p148.
- ²⁷ Dickinson, Philip G. M. F. S. A. *Round About Haverhill*, South-West Suffolk Echo, Saturday, October 7, 1950. P 4.
- ²⁸ Rye, Walter. *Suffolk Fines*, p 20.
- ²⁹ Wright, A. P. M. *The Victoria History of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*, p 50.
- ³⁰ Roberts, Charles. *Excerpta E Rotulis Finium In Turri Londinensi*, p 225.
- ³¹ Alice De Capeles' assumed marriage to Thomas Hanehuth is based on the idea that Henry could have received the De Capeles share from his widowed mother, Alice, who lived in a separate home in Shudy Camps in 1256. See Hundred Rolls for 7/8 Edward I (1256) p 427.
- ³² Land attached to a manor and retained for the owner's own use.
- ³³ Peter Rowlinson photo 2022.
- ³⁴ The information provided from manorial rolls reveals that in some villages, the plague was so severe that the entire village population died.
- ³⁵ Hanchett, Leland J. *The English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett*, p106.
- ³⁶ John was born in 1359 and died in 1381 at the age of 22. Inquisition Post Mortem for Robert Busteler, 1370.

- 37 Calendar of Fine Rolls, Vol. VIII, 44 Edward III, p 96
- 38 Inquisitions Post Mortem, Vol. XIII: 44 Edward III p. 9.
- 39 Rye, Walter, *Cambridgeshire Fines*, p122.
- 40 Close Rolls Richard II 1380. p 476.
- 41 Oman, C. *The History of England*, 1377 to 1485. p.21.
- 42 Vernon, Regan T. *Against God, Good Faith and Reason: The Peasants Revolt in Cambridge*. p 23.
- 43 Google AI answer to the question: "Was Richard II a benevolent ruler?"
- 44 Dobson, R. B., *The Peasants' Revolt* of 1381, p 239.
- 45 Florilegius / Alamy Stock Photo
- 46 Translation of East Anglican's Account of the Peasant's Revolt Trial dated 5 July 1381. Copy in Author's possession.
- 47 King Richard II, Wikipedia.
- 48 Ormrod, W. Mark, *Women and Parliament in Later Medieval England* p.84
- 49 Translation of Anne, Widow of John Hanchach's petition. TNA Citation Ref. SC 8/116/5754. Copy in author's possession.
- 50 Patent Rolls, VI Richard II..1383. p 317.
- 51 *Feudal Aids A.D. 1284-1431* Vol. I, p.181.
- 52 Ormrod, W. Mark, *Women and Parliament in Later Medieval England* p.84.
- 53 King Henry IV, Wikipedia.
- 54 *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward III*, Vol. X, 1356, p 390.
- 55 Rye, Walter, *Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Cambridgeshire*, 1366, p 122.
- 56 Feet of Fines for Cambridgeshire, 1 Edward VI TNA CP 25/2/55/398
- 57 London, Hastings Court of Pleas, 96 No. 66
- 58 Rye, Walter, *Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Cambridgeshire*, 1376. p 130.
- 59 London, Hasting Court of Pleas, 103 No. 215.
- 60 Chief Justice's Roll, 51 Edward III TNA citation CP 40/466 f.135.
- 61 *Calendar of Close Rolls, Richard II*, 1380. P 476.
- 62 *Calendar of Fine Rolls, Richard II*, 1382.
- 63 *A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds: Volume 1*, British History Online Citation C492.
- 64 *Close Rolls, Edward II*, 1311, p 296.

- ⁶⁵ Muskett, J. J. *Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely: Lay Subsidy for the Year 1327*, p 25.
- ⁶⁶ Translation of Anne's petition, Widow of John Hanchach. TNA Citation Ref. SC 8/116/5754. Copy in author's possession.
- ⁶⁷ *Patent Rolls 7 Richard II* p 317
- ⁶⁸ Ormrod, W. Mark, *Women and Parliament in Later Medieval England* p.84.
- ⁶⁹ *Feudal Aids A.D. 1284-1431* Vol. I, p. 181
- ⁷⁰ Ledgard, R. A. *Hanchetts of Northill, Bedford, Letchworth, and Great Parndon*. Manuscript. Copy in author's possession.
- ⁷¹ Sandy and Hacche are just north of Northill, Bedfordshire.
- ⁷² Ledgard, R. A. *The Hanchetts of Great Burstead, Billericay, and London*
- ⁷³ Ledgard, R. A. *The Hanchetts of Northill, Bedford, Letchworth & Great Parndon*, 1935?
- ⁷⁴ Ledgard, R. A. *The Hanchetts of Clavering*, Essex, 1938.
- ⁷⁵ Hanchett, Leland J. *The English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett*, p 160.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷⁷ Hanchett, Leland J. Jr. *The English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett*. p. 239
- ⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 157
- ⁷⁹ Coram Rege Roll for Thomas Hanchet. National Archives Catalog Reference: KB 27/674/22. Translation in Author's possession.
- ⁸⁰ Rye, Walter. *Feet of Fines for Cambridgeshire*, 15 June 1366. p 122.
- ⁸¹ Rye, Walter. *Feet of Fines for Cambridgeshire*, 47 Henry VIII, National Archives Catalog Reference CP (2) SS.
- ⁸² Manor of Bury's Court Rolls for Great Shelford. Translation in author's possession.
- ⁸³ C. Moreton, 'Hancheche, Thomas', in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1422-61*.
- ⁸⁴ Ledgard, R. A. *The Hanchetts of Northill, Bedford, Letchworth & Great Parndon*, 1935.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid
- ⁸⁷ Ledgard, R. A. *Some Records of the Hanchetts of Clavering, Essex*. Manuscript dated 1938.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid
- ⁸⁹ Roskell, J. S., Clark, L. and Rawcliff, C. *The History of Parliament and the House of Commons 1386-1421.*, 1993.

PART II

Two Puritans to America

Introduction

Since the completion of the author's book, *The English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett, Puritan Settler of Connecticut*, in 2016, the work never seemed to be truly finished. The reader was left with three choices for the origin of the American ancestor, Thomas Hanchett. The two most likely were Thomas Hanchett of Brent Pelham, Hertfordshire, or a ghostly Thomas, son of Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden, Essex. The latter seemed "ghostly" as there was only one direct reference to him, and that could have been a mistake by the scribe. The principal argument for choosing a son of Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden was that his father's character and accomplishments matched what we had learned about our Thomas' achievements in New England. Also, we know that Thomas of Arkesden appeared before the Court of High Commission in 1635. That court typically dealt with religious deviations from the church of England. The third, Thomas from Haddenham, Cambridgeshire, was not born

until 1627, thus being too young for Thomas' earliest records in Connecticut.

We never gave our ancestor enough credit for being able to strike out on his own and earn his position as Town Selectman at his last three residences. That he did so without support from any relative speaks highly of his intelligence and determination.

Case Study

Of the Relationship Between and Origins of Thomas and John Hanchett, Early Emigrants to New England

Were John Hanchett of Boston and Thomas Hanchett of Wethersfield and the Connecticut River Valley Closely Related?

As early as 1860, James Savage, in his *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England*, suggested that “Thomas, of Wethersfield, was perhaps brother of John of Boston.”¹ Writing in the early 1900s, Junius T. Hanchett gave his reasons for reaching that same conclusion.

The supposed brothers, John and Thomas, are not connected together by records in any way, John never leaving the vicinity of Boston, and Thomas confining his movements to the Connecticut River Valley. The supposition that they were brothers springs from the fact of the similarity of names in the two families. Both named their two sons alike, John Hanchett of Boston, calling his eldest John and his second son Thomas, and Thomas naming his eldest son Thomas after himself and his second son John. The two families named their

daughters after the respective wives in the case of the eldest daughters. Deacon Thomas had but one daughter (following his first named Deliverance) whom he named Hannah, John of Boston, had two daughters after the first, both named Hannah. The first child of that name dying in infancy before calling the second daughter Hannah. This naming certainly is as striking a similarity as family names can show and is evidence of the relationship between the two families. It may point to the existence of these names further back in the family history. Thus, it seems likely that the father of the two supposed brothers was named John, for we must infer that John Hanchett was the eldest of the two to receive the father's name. The name Thomas must also have been current in the immediate family. The only conjecture permissible as to the mother's name is Hannah, which seems to have been beloved by both brothers. That John was the oldest of the brothers is without doubt as he married at least six years earlier than Thomas and appears on the records much earlier in other connections. Also, his death came three years before that of Deacon Thomas.

If we consider the effect of this conclusion upon the relationship between Deacon Thomas and John Hanchett of Boston, the thing seems probable. If the two were brothers, they probably

came together. John was here as early as 1634, and according to our supposition, Thomas was then but a boy, not more than fourteen, and this would account for our finding no notice of him in the records at Boston along with John, who appears several times. There was no occasion for a record of Deacon Thomas, for as to his birth and baptism, those records were in England. The ship lists do not mention him and, in fact, but a small percentage ever are traceable by this means as those lists have not been preserved to any significant extent. He was too young to bear arms, to be taxed, to be elected to office, or to marry. If, however, he was older than we have supposed and was here with his brother John, we would have surely found him on the Boston records or those of the nearby towns. The best surmise we can offer of the history of Deacon Thomas before 1642 is all hypothetical, but is nevertheless not ungrounded, and is as follows: He was born about 1620 the name of the father and mother being supposed to be John and Hannah respectively. There was an older brother, John, who was born about 1614, who was the John Hanchett of the Boston records. These two brothers came to Boston not long before 1634. Deacon Thomas continued in Boston until maturity when he joined the popular movement to the Connecticut

River Valley, appearing there in 1642 or earlier. As to the probable English birthplace of Deacon Thomas, it rests with the greatest likelihood, perhaps in Essex, although the family was numerous at that time also in Hertford. Cambridge and Suffolk also contained Hanchetts, but aside from these counties, there were few, if any Hanchetts in England.²

Note that Junius made two assumptions, one of which we know now to be in error. He assumed that Judge Sherman W. Adams correctly transcribed the date when Thomas received his house lot in Wethersfield. But Judge Adams was mistaken. We know that the correct year should have been 1647, not 1642. A prominent transcriber and the Town Clerk's Office in Wethersfield have agreed that it reads 1647. Secondly, he used that year to estimate Thomas' birth date probably not knowing that most colonial men did not marry until their late twenties or early thirties. He then assumed Thomas to have been born around 1620. The birth year for John Hanchett comes from a date estimated by James Savage in his book, *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England*. Using these two gentlemen's arguments as a starting point, we can now add material found from 1967 to the present to provide rational, coherent evidence to support Junius Hanchett's observation even though it still cannot be proven by hard data.

The most overwhelming fact we do have is that Thomas, born in Brent Pelham in 1616, did have an older brother, John, who was born in Clavering Essex, two miles away, in 1605³ These two are the only pair of brothers we have found in the surviving Parish Registers of the time that could match up to the two Hanchetts recorded in New England in the 1630-1690 period. John Hanchett of Boston was significantly older than Thomas Hanchett of Wethersfield. John was married by 1639, while Thomas did not marry before 1646⁴ Thomas' first child was born about 1647 while John of Boston's arrived in 1641⁵ Again, the brothers, John and Thomas of Clavering and Brent Pelham respectively, are the only pair of brothers with those names exhibiting the correct birth order and a significant age difference. Finally, John died February 23, 1683, and was noted as an "old man" at the time of his death.⁶ Thomas died June 11, 1686, having been excused from military duty in 1683 due to his "shakiness" which left him physically incapacitated in his later years⁷ From this, we may conclude that although they died but three years apart, if we match the births in Clavering and Brent Pelham to the Hanchetts who arrived in New England, John at his death was considered an older man at age 78 while Thomas was a sick man at age 70 when he died.

Were Either or both John Hanchett of Boston and Thomas Hanchett of Wethersfield related to the Hanchett Family of Clavering, Essex, England

The story begins near Clavering, Essex England, at the beginning of the fifteenth century when John Hanchett is recorded in the tithing records for Berden, Essex.⁸ A few years later, in 1424, the rental rolls for the Manor of Thurocks in Clavering contain the names John Hanchett, Richard Hanchett, and Richard Hanchett Sr. From that time until the early seventeenth century, the Hanchett family was thoroughly established in Clavering. In 1606, with the death of John Hanchett Sr., his sons began an exodus to surrounding areas. Richard, Thomas, and John Jr. all seemed to have left Clavering over a short period, with Richard and John Jr. heading for Brent Pelham while Thomas may have gone to London.⁹ Ten to fifteen years earlier, another John Hanchett from Clavering moved to Arkesden, Essex, just a couple of miles northeast from Clavering. That John was the father of Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden, who was the ancestor of most if not all of the Hanchetts now living in England and Australia.

Our story will focus on John Hanchett Jr. since, according to the parish registers for Clavering and Brent Pelham, he is the father of John and Thomas living in Brent Pelham in the early 1600s. John Jr. was born in 1578 and in 1600 married Rose Mittson/Mitsonne, who was born at



*The Cricketers Clavering, Essex*¹⁰

Babraham, Cambridgeshire, in 1576¹¹ Her parents were John and Agnes Mittsonne. Her father was a cleric and Vicar at Babraham, Cambridge, who died seven months before Rose's birth¹² He had graduated from Clare College, Cambridge in 1546¹³ Clare College was not mainly known for its participation in the Puritan movement. Still, a classmate of John Mitson or Mydson's was Thomas Cartwright from Royston, Hertfordshire, known as "The Father of English Puritanism."¹⁴ Fifteen years before Mydson arrived on the scene at Babraham, John Hullyer, Vicar, was deprived of this parish. Two months later, he was burned at the stake in Cambridge for refusing to denounce the Protestant faith. This event occurred while Queen Mary was trying to re-establish Catholicism in England.¹⁵

Rose's mother, Agnes, died in giving birth to Rose, leaving Rose and Susan, her older sister, without living parents.¹⁶ Since John Mydson and Agnes Rookes were married at Littlebury, adjacent to Saffron Walden, Essex in 1562, it is safe to assume that they were from there.¹⁷ Also, their first child, Elizabeth, was born at Littlebury, Essex.

No doubt, other family members could have raised the girls in Saffron Walden, less than seven miles from Clavering. There were several Mydson and Rookes families in the area. Rose and John Hanchett Jr. were married in Clavering on May 20, 1600.¹⁸

In Clavering, they had their first son, Francis, in 1602 following a daughter, Joan, in 1601. Next came John on August 4, 1605, and then Henry in 1607.¹⁹ Between Henry's birth and a stillborn son in 1609, they moved to Brent Pelham. Agnes was born there in 1611, followed by Thomas on February 9, 1616. Why they picked the name Francis for their first son and Joan for their first daughter is another mystery. Usually, in England, the first son was named for his paternal grandfather and the first daughter for her maternal grandmother.²⁰ Both were unusual names for the Hanchett family of Clavering but may have been the names of those who raised Rose in the absence of her real parents or the names of God-parents of the child.

Interestingly, in all of the Brent Pelham register entries for the John Hanchett Jr. family, their surname was spelled



*Cottages at Brent Pelham, Hertfordshire*²¹

Hanchat. That spelling was true for a 1599 birth of Agnes Hanchat to John Jr.'s brother Richard, and there was even a spelling correction for a 1568 marriage of Joan Hanchett to Thomas Payne where the "ett" had been crossed out and "at" inserted. No doubt, Hanchat was how the name sounded to the Clerk at Brent Pelham.²²

John and Thomas were eleven years apart in age with John being the elder. The next significant event at Brent Pelham was the burial of Rose Hanchat on August 8, 1633. No burial information was recorded for the father, John Hanchat, Jr., or his sons John and Thomas in Brent Pelham.

John Hanchat, Jr. may have accompanied his two sons to New England following the death of Rose in 1633. Almost every ship sailing for New England experienced a few deaths while en route. Few if any of those deaths were

recorded. At the time of Rose's demise, John, the son, would have been 28 years of age and Thomas 17.²³ The next event of significance was the admission of John Hanchett to the church in Boston, Massachusetts Bay Colony, on July 13, 1634. In that record, John is designated as "servant to our Pastor John Wilson."²⁴ We have no recorded English connection between Rev. Wilson and the Hanchett brothers of Brent Pelham. Reverend Wilson did have a brother, Thomas Wilson, DD, also a Reverend. He was Rector at Debden, Essex, less than ten miles from Brent Pelham, beginning in 1629.²⁵

DNA Testing

To better understand the American connection to the English Hanchetts, we implemented extensive yDNA testing using American, English, and Australian Hanchetts. The conclusion was that our Thomas is related to the English Hanchetts, with a better than 90% probability, fourteen generations ago. Family DNA, where the testing was performed, advised us that any match with a greater than 90% probability of a common ancestor at a particular generation was a good starting point for examining existing hard copy records. Thomas, the possible son of Thomas of Arkesden would have required an eleven-generation connection. In contrast, Thomas, the son of John Hanchett, Jr. of Clavering and Brent Pelham would tie into the current English Hanchetts fourteen generations ago.

Genetics can be helpful in genealogy, but we must remember that it only gives a starting point to focus on records more specific to a range of generations within a particular family branch. Genetics does not provide a definitive solution. It can only give us probabilities that individuals had a common ancestor so many generations back, or farther. If we go back far enough, all humans are related. The more important question is, how reliably can we predict that the relationship between two males occurred not more than so many generations ago?

The project started from an advantageous position in that the Hanchetts of America and the Hanchetts of England have been well researched and documented. In the first case to the immigrant ancestor, Thomas Hanchett, and the second case, as examined by Martin Hanchett of England, to the first Hanchett settling at Clavering, Essex, England around 1400. We knew up front that the American ancestor was 11 or 12 generations removed from the Americans tested while the common English ancestor for the English and Australian branches, Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden, was 10 or 11 generations removed from the Englishmen tested. The missing link has been where Thomas Hanchett of New England connects to the Hanchetts of England.

After the beheading of John Hanchett from Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire, during the Peasants Revolt of 1381, two branches popped up elsewhere in England. One was at

Bedfordshire and the other in Clavering, Essex. These two branches seem to have descended from Robert Hanchett, an uncle of the John Hanchett, who was beheaded. The Bedfordshire branch spawned many lawyers who became wealthy landowners. That branch seems to have died out in the late 1600s. The Clavering branch represents the ancestors for most of the Hanchetts who live in England and Australia today. We have not found a Hanchett residing in those two countries who we can prove to have come from any other branch. The earliest Hanchetts from Clavering seemed to be mostly farmers or yeoman who, with careful and thoughtful planning, accumulated enough land over several generations to be styled gentlemen.

In an attempt to get a good sampling of Hanchetts for our yDNA testing, we picked two Americans from each of the two sons of Thomas Hanchett of Wethersfield. We also picked two from each of two sons of Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden, Essex. Thomas of Arkesden was known as a direct descendant of the Clavering Hanchett family and the progenitor of all known Hanchetts in England and Australia. Family DNA advised that we needed to use a yDNA test, including at least 37 markers, to provide any meaningful answers. We were somewhat surprised in the results which revealed one Hanchett from America and one from England matched within two markers of the thirty-seven tested. According to Family Tree DNA, this meant “The two are related, and share a common male ancestor.” There is no

question that Thomas Hanchett of Wethersfield, Connecticut came to America, from England. Although this was previously assumed, it has now, by DNA testing, been verified.

Comparisons of English to English, American to American, and English to American resulted in the following table, which clearly shows Englishmen were firmly related to Englishmen. Likewise, Americans were closely connected to Americans.

The one exception was that English 1 and American 1 were nearly as closely related to each other as to their countrymen. All eight of the above Hanchetts belong to the R M269 Haplogroup.

The next step was to extend the marker sampling from 37 to 111 for the English 1 and American 1 in an attempt to more sharply define the generation at which they had a common ancestor. The 37-marker test indicated that they were related in the 10 to 11 generation range or farther back.

Designation	Closest match	Distance	Generations apart (Est)	Generations apart (Act)
English 1	English 2/ American 1	2	11 or 10	11 or?
English 2	English 4	1	9	8
English 3	English 2	2	7	8
English 4	English 2	1	9	8
American 1	English 1	2	10	?
American 2	American 3	3	10	10
American 3	American 4	2	10	7
American 4	American 3	2	10	7

The more precise 111-marker test showed that we would have to go back 14 generations to have a 90% confidence level in their relationship.

At the very least, the yDNA test results strongly suggest that the Hanchetts from America descend from the Clavering branch, which is well recorded back 18 generations. At that level, there is a 99% probability of a common ancestor, even at the yDNA 111 level. The earliest ancestor for the English and American Hanchetts would occur 14 generations back. That common ancestor would be John Hanchett born before 1488, and died from 1523 to 1529. He would have been the great grandfather of Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden and the great grandfather of John Hanchett Jr of Clavering, Essex, and Brent Pelham, Hertfordshire. As noted, the latter had a son, Thomas, whose christening was recorded in the Brent Pelham parish register in 1616. At 14 generations back, the probability of a common ancestor for yDNA 111 increases to better than 90%. Thomas Hanchett of Brent Pelham does not show up again in any Brent Pelham or other English records. It would seem more practical to pursue the Thomas Hanchett of Brent Pelham whose baptism is recorded than the Thomas Hanchett, possible first son of Thomas of Arkesden, who may never have existed.

Thomas Hanchat of Brent Pelham would have been 31 years of age when Thomas Hanchett of New England

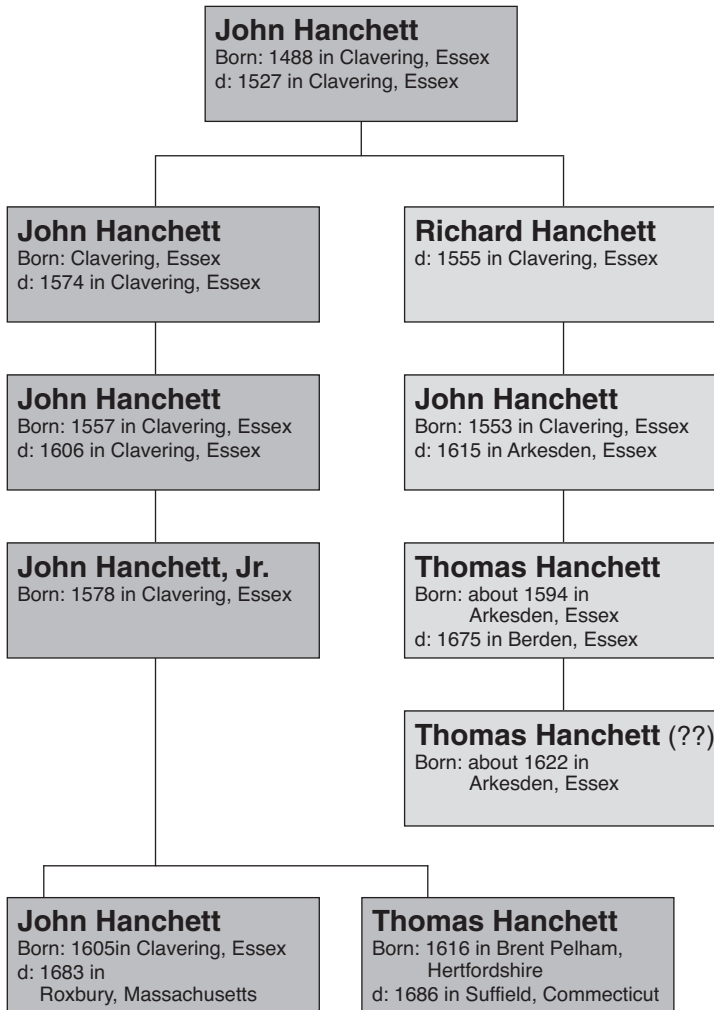
received his house lot from the church at Wethersfield, Connecticut. The house lot received by Thomas Hanchat at Saybrook, Connecticut, might have been granted in the mid-1640s, at which time Thomas of Brent Pelham would have been about 29 and possibly about to be married.

As noted before, Thomas of Brent Pelham had an older brother John Hanchett who was born in Clavering before the family moved to Brent Pelham. This John could have been John Hanchett of Boston, who shows up as a servant to Reverend Wilson in 1634. Since there were no living male descendants of this John, we could not verify his relationship with Thomas of Wethersfield using yDNA.

Further verification

As an additional test to find the generation at which English 1 and American 1 might be related, we used a company called LivingDNA. Instead of testing STR values, they use SNP values. The additional complexity of this approach required an expert from San Diego by the name of Kitty Cooper to interpret the results. Their method uses autosomal matching. While little matching was expected, it turned out that lots of SNPs matched, so many that LivingDNA expected a common ancestor as recently as 8 generations back. Of course, we know that English 1 and American 1 must be a least 10 generations apart based on the hard data we have for each.

The following pedigree is relevant:



Can we learn more about the relationship between John and Thomas Hanchett from their actions in traveling to and living in New England?

In the approximately one-year window between Rose's death and John's admission to the church in Boston, John and Thomas could have traveled by sailing ship to New England. Most ships did not tempt the North Atlantic during the winter months. One of the last ships into Boston in 1633 was the *Griffin* which had departed England in July 1633, before Rose's death. The two which arrived later, the *Bird* and the *James*, had left before the *Griffin*. The most likely ship to have carried John and Thomas to New England was one of the ten vessels detained on the Thames in London in late February 1633/4 or one of the two similarly held up at Ipswich, Suffolk.

Junius T. Hanchett provides an interesting discussion of a ship on which the brothers could have traveled.

The *Mary & John* Story

Descendants of Deacon Thomas frequently stated that he came to this country from England on the ship *Mary & John* in 1630. This idea would be most exciting and essential if true not only because the *Mary & John* was a celebrated ship but because it would give us an early date respecting Deacon Thomas and a clue to his

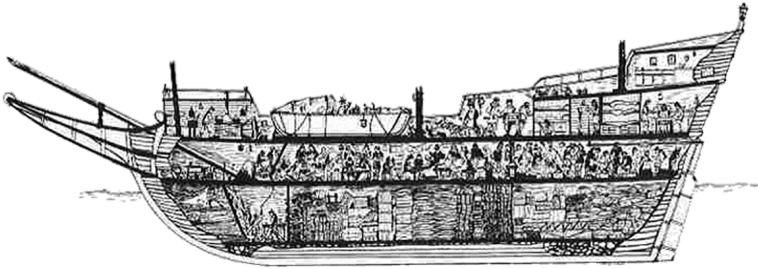
whereabouts in England. The writer first became acquainted with this story by reading *American Ancestry*, Vol. 8 page 84, which gives the line of Capt. Oliver Hanchett back to Deacon Thomas and incidentally a short sketch of the latter. Later the writer examined many records of Boston and vicinity in search of all possible information of Hanchett Genealogy. The facilities of the N. E. Genealogy and Historical Society were at his disposal, and no record of importance he believes escaped his attention. He also examined records at Wethersfield, Suffield, Saybrook. Northampton, New London, Springfield. Hartford, Westfield, and many other less probable places in Western Mass. and Conn. but discovered nothing about Deacon Thomas' coming.

Meanwhile, Hanchett correspondents seemed to be well informed as to this alleged coming, even where they knew scarcely anything else about Deacon Thomas. Finally, the writer examined Hanchett notices in old England and found that the family was numerous there in 1600 and was an ancient family. They were without exception confined to the counties of Hertford, Essex, Cambridge, and a few in Suffolk, with older lines in Bucks and Bedford, all counties north of London and not distant from one another. The Hanchetts seemed to exist in a very compact

nucleus at the junction of the three counties of Hertford, Essex, and Cambridge.

Again, the writer learned that the ship list of the *Mary & John* on her famous voyage had not been preserved and that although many claimed the honor for their immigrant ancestors, few were accepted by competent genealogists. Those genealogists had directed considerable attention to the subject. Also, it appeared that the passengers on the trip were drawn from the counties of Devon, Dorset and Somerset, not at all near the Hanchett counties. Further finding that nobody with whom he communicated among the Hanchetts had studied the problem carefully, he at length concluded that the story about the *Mary and John* was unfounded.²⁶

Junius Hanchett did not realize that the *Mary and John* made more than one trip to New England. Subsequent research has shown that the *Mary and John* made at least four trips to New England during the first half of the 17th century. In 1607 and 1608, it sailed from Falmouth, England to The Popham Colony on Maine's coast. By 1609 that colony had been abandoned. In 1630 it sailed as noted above from Plymouth, England with West-Lander passengers arriving near today's Hull, Massachusetts. The fourth trip in 1633/4 started in London, stopped in either Plymouth or Southampton (or possibly the other way

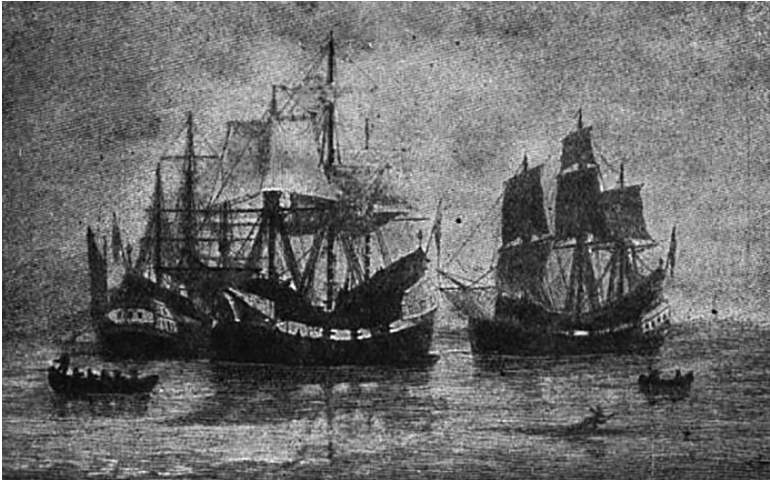


Mary & John - 1633

around), and proceeded to Nantucket, Massachusetts Colony, arriving there around May 15, 1634²⁷ It had been six weeks at sea. John and Thomas could have sailed on the *Mary and John's* second trip to the Bay Colony as some of the passengers were from East Anglia.²⁸

The *Mary and John* was one of a ten-sailing-ship convoy moored in the Thames at London near the end of February 1633/4. These ten ships plus two more in Ipswich Harbor had been detained pending the posting by each captain of a bond for £100 to guarantee that they would enforce a warrant from the Privy Council meeting at Whitehall the last of February 1633/4.

Whereas by a warrant bearing date 22nd of this Present the several ships following bound for New England and now lying in the river of Thames were made to stay off until further order



***Sailing Ships Like Those Which Brought
John and Thomas Hanchett to America***²⁹

from their Lordships. Viz, *The Clement* and *Job*,
The Reformation, *The True Love*, *The Elizabeth
Bonadventure*, *The Sea Flower*, *The Mary and John*,
The Planter, *The Elizabeth and Dorcas*, *The Hercules*
and *The Neptune*.

For as much as the Masters of the said ships were
this day called before the Board and several
particulars were given them in charge to be
performed in their said voyage, amongst which
the said Masters were to enter into several bonds
of 100 pounds apiece to His Majesty's use before
the Clerk of the Council attendant to observe and
cause to be observed and put in Execution these
Articles following viz.

1. That all and every Person aboard their Ships now bound for New England as aforesaid, that shall blaspheme or profane the Holy Name of God be severely punished.
2. That they cause the Prayers contained in the Book of Common Prayers established in the Church of England to be said daily at the usual hours for Morning and Evening Prayers and that they cause all Persons aboard their Ships to be present at the same.
3. That they do not receive aboard or transport any Person that hath not Certificate from the Officers of the Port where he is to embark that he hath taken both the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy.
4. That upon their return into this Kingdom they Certify to the Board the names of all such Persons as they shall transport together with their Proceedings in the Execution of the aforesaid Articles.

Whereunto the said Captains have conformed themselves. It was therefore and for diverse other Reasons best known to their Lordships thought fit that for this time they should be permitted to proceed on their voyage, and it was thereupon Ordered that Gabriel Marsh Esq, Marshall of the Admiralty and all other of His Majesty's Officers

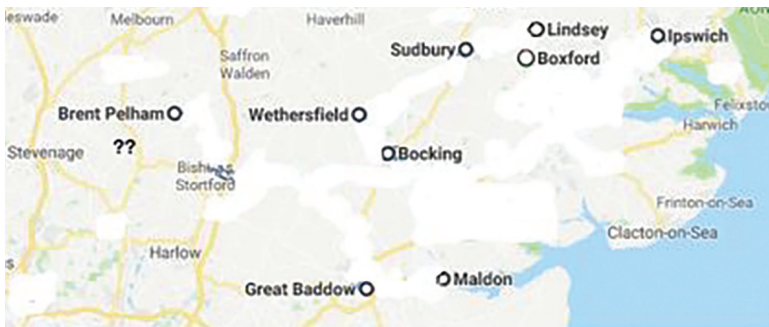
to whom their said Warrant was directed should be required upon Sight hereof to discharge all and every the said Ships and Suffer them to depart on their intended voyage to New England.”³⁰

At the same time, the ships *Elizabeth* and *Francis* were in port at Ipswich, Suffolk, England, waiting for permission to weigh anchor and proceed to New England. For these two, it was after the middle of April before they got underway.³¹ They arrived a month after the previous six ships but in time for John Hanchett’s first notice in Boston. Rowland Stebbins of Bocking, Essex, was on the passenger list for the ship *Francis*. Thomas Hanchett caught up with Rowland in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1660, where Thomas was a witness to Rowland’s will. Earlier, Rowland had been located at Roxbury, Massachusetts, and Springfield, Massachusetts.³² Within a year of his appearance at Wethersfield, Connecticut, Thomas Hanchett was also witness to the will of Leonard Chester of that village. Rowland Stebbins and Leonard Chester were related by marriage. Leonard Chester’s mother, Dorothy Hooker Chester, had been married to John Chester. John Chester’s brother, Sampson Chester, had been the first husband of Frances Tough, whose last husband was Edward Stebbins, Rowland’s brother. It is interesting that a relatively unknown, Thomas Hanchett, would have been witness to the wills of two of the wealthiest men in the colonies. Dorothy Hooker Chester’s brother, Reverend Thomas

Hooker, had been located at Braintree, Essex, and was the founding father of Hartford, Connecticut.³³

The absence of John and Thomas Hanchett's names on the passenger list for any of the ships arriving in Boston in early 1634 should not be discouraging. Most passenger lists were not preserved and many passengers traveled under assumed names. As noted before, the captains did not need to submit the passenger lists until after the ships had returned to England, usually months later. There is no way to confirm all passengers who were actually on the vessels traveling to New England.

It is interesting to note that some of the passengers on the ship *Francis* came from the Sudbury, Suffolk area where John Wilson had built his reputation while Vicar of that parish. Also, while Wilson traveled to Boston in 1630 with John Winthrop, Wilson's wife did not join him in New England until 1632 but stayed in Sudbury until Wilson



***Origins of Passengers on the Ship
Francis from Ipswich 1634***³⁴



*Archbishop William Laud*³⁵

returned to bring her to New England. Passengers on the ship *Elizabeth* were mostly from Suffolk and were destined for Watertown. Passengers on the ship *Francis* were from Essex and Suffolk. Proximity to the port of departure did seem to have a bearing on whether emigrants would embark from London, Ipswich, Southampton or Plymouth.

A noteworthy member of the Council in 1634, was Archbishop Laud. Laud became a nemesis to Puritan ministers in England, forcing many to flee to New England or face prison time. Just three years earlier, the Vicar at Brent Pelham had been deprived of his benefice (paid church position) by the Court of High Commission. Although George Abbot was technically still Archbishop until 1633, Laude was already exerting his influence. Usually, deprivation was used in response to reports of nonconformance or puritanical preaching by the Vicar. The Hanchat family of Brent Pelham had known Reverend William Bishop since his arrival there in 1614.³⁶ Bishop, no doubt, had baptized Thomas Hanchett in 1616. Of course, the year Bishop was deprived coincided with the year the Winthrop Fleet left for New England. In Thompson's book on Watertown, Massachusetts, *Divided We Stand*, the period 1630 to 1632, saw the campaign against Essex Puritans reach its peak.³⁷ Brent Pelham was just over the border from Essex.

Anyone of the ships mentioned above could have carried John and Thomas to Boston. The possibility that some family members said they traveled on the *Mary and John* to Massachusetts Bay is an exciting idea. This is especially true considering that it was a family tradition that family members knew where they had originated from as late as the time of the US Civil War. In his Journal, John Winthrop Sr. states that six ships arrived in the week of May 15, 1634.



*Archbishop George Abbot*³⁸

Sadly, he does not name which of the original ten they were. He does add that the voyage took only six weeks.³⁹

Once John and Thomas arrived in Boston, we know that John was recorded as having joined the Church then pastored by John Wilson with John Cotton as Teacher.

Cotton had come with Thomas Hooker and Samuel Stone on the *Griffin* in the fall of 1633. None of these three were on the passengers' list, but John Winthrop recorded their arrival in his journal. John Hanchett's date of joining the Church was July 13, 1634, and it was noted that he was a servant to John Wilson. John Wilson had just been granted a 200-acre farm on Mystic River at what is now Medford, and no doubt needed a husbandman such as John Hanchett to work on or manage it.⁴⁰

The other servants to John Wilson, as listed in the *Records of the Church at Boston*, were all females.⁴¹ It is certainly possible that Thomas was also a servant to Reverend Wilson but was not mentioned because he was underage and too young to join the Church. At least, there is a very high probability that Thomas would have resided with John until Thomas reached his majority on February 9 of 1637/8 or left the Boston area.

On May 17 1637, John Hanchett was made a freeman. His period of servitude ended three years after he arrived in Boston. That date might reinforce the idea that he did travel on the *Mary and John* or one of the five sister ships. One could not be both a servant and a freeman concurrently. At this point, it is likely Thomas' period of servitude ended as well, but being underage he could not be made a freeman like his brother. Thomas would have been twenty years old when John became a freeman. A



Reverend John Wilson of Boston⁴²

study of servitude at the Plymouth Colony revealed that servants served terms of four months to fourteen years, depending on many factors. Frequently, bondage was a means to repay the cost of transportation from England to New England.⁴³

May 1637 was a notable time for the Bay Colony and the settlements in Connecticut. In May of that year, Connecticut and Massachusetts declared war on the Pequot Indian Nation. The Pequots were centered to the northeast of Saybrook, Connecticut and through a series of attacks on the English settlers at Wethersfield and Saybrook had provoked the English into armed conflict. A contingent of settlers were drawn from Wethersfield, Hartford, and Winsor with a few of the soldiers stationed at Saybrook and placed under the command of Captain John Mason. More than 100 additional soldiers had been assembled from Boston and Plymouth under the command of Captains Stoughton, Patrick and Trask with John Wilson as their company Chaplin. A list of Connecticut soldiers in the Pequot War was created, but no list was ever made for those from the Bay Colony and Plymouth.⁴⁴ Consequently, we know the names of less than a dozen of the recruits from Massachusetts.⁴⁵

Thomas now being free to go where he wished may have chosen to accompany Reverend Wilson as part of the Massachusetts contingent. In any event, we do know from the land records at Saybrook, Connecticut, that Thomas was a landholder there at some point before 1647. His house lot was adjacent to the house lots for Captain John Mason and Thomas Leffingwell on the northeast corner of Saybrook Point and near the fort. Specific dates are not recorded in the land records, but Mason and Leffingwell

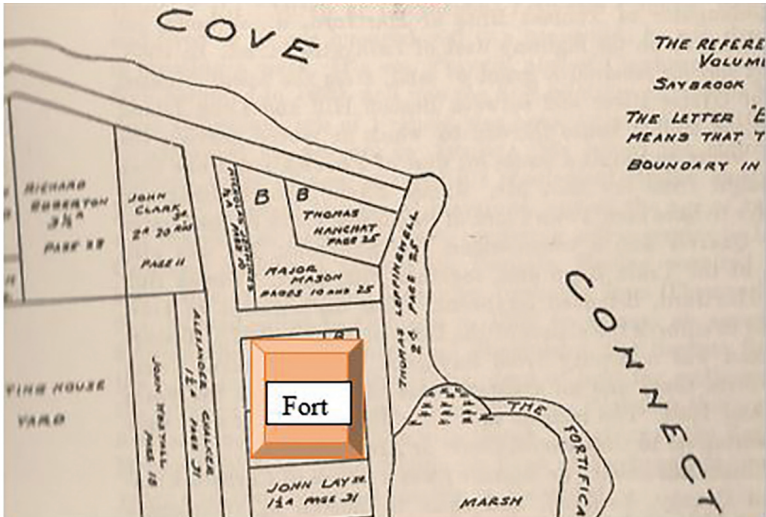
had participated in the Pequot War and were both married and living in Saybrook by 1647.

In his book *Saybrook at the Mouth of the Connecticut (River)*, Gilman C. Gates states That Thomas Hanchat received land on the West side of the Connecticut River adjacent to the lots of Thomas Leffingwell and Major John Mason.⁴⁶

In addition to his house lot in Saybrook, Thomas “Hanchat,” as his surname was spelled in the town records, also had property in East Saybrook on the east side of the Connecticut River. Here he was a neighbor of John Westall at Black Hall Point.⁴⁷ Remember that Hanchat was the spelling exclusively used for the Hanchett family in Brent Pelham, England. Thomas could have been granted land in Saybrook for his participation in the Pequot War as some other participants were.



*Ambush at Saybrook Fort*⁴⁸



*Thomas Hanchat's Land at Old Saybrook*⁴⁹



*The Pequot War by Charles S. Reinhart*⁵⁰

Meanwhile, back in Boston, John Hanchett acquired land in Ipswich in 1638. It is thought possible that his first wife may have been from Ipswich.⁵¹ That wife, Elizabeth, was also admitted to the Church in Boston on August 18, 1639. By this record, we know that John was married before this date. Due to the shortage of eligible women in the colonies, the average marriage age for men was 30. John would have been in his early thirties.⁵² It is not known if he ever lived in Ipswich.

Another reason which might have convinced Thomas Hanchett to move on was the knowledge that his older brother was about to be married. He may not have wanted to be a “third wheel” in his brother’s house. John and Elizabeth Hanchett transferred their church membership to Braintree in 1640. Their first son, John was born there in 1641.⁵³ Their first daughter, Elizabeth, may have been born before their son John.

At Wethersfield, our first notice of Thomas Hanchett does not occur until February 28, 1647/8, when the Church granted him a house lot. It is interesting to note that Saybrook’s original fort was burned down in the winter of 1647/8. Captain John Mason had moved to Saybrook earlier that year and lived so close to the fort that he and his family had to flee the inferno to save their lives.⁵⁴ Although Thomas Hanchett’s lot was adjacent to Mason’s, there is no evidence that a home was built on Hanchett’s lot while

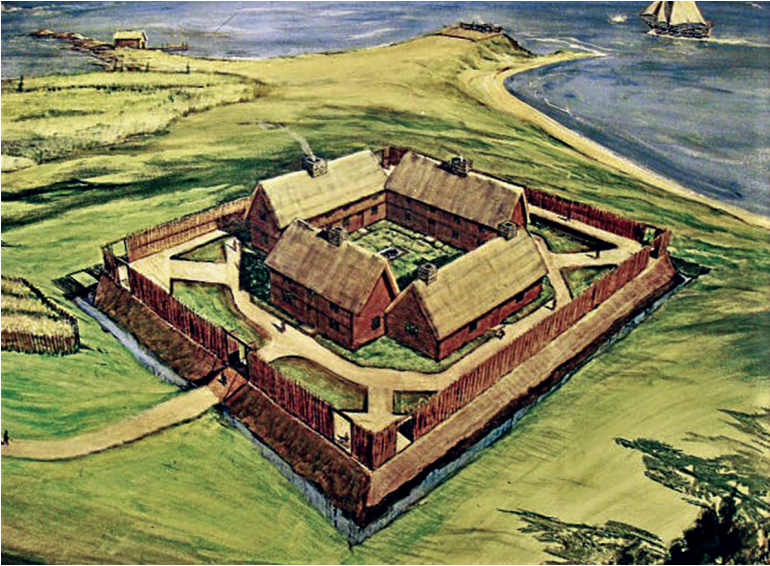
it was still in Thomas' possession. Single soldiers lived in the fort's barracks as was usual in those situations. Thomas may have lived there too while at Saybrook.

When and where Thomas Hanchett married has been another puzzling question. One reference point is that his second child, John Hanchett was born at Wethersfield on September 1, 1649, or about eighteen months after Thomas received his house lot at that location. We also know that his first son, also Thomas Hanchett, was probably born shortly before his father received his lot. Thomas' future wife, Deliverance Langton, daughter of George Langton, lived with her father in Wethersfield. When George moved to Springfield and married his second wife, he gave Wethersfield as his previous place of residence.

A handwritten record on aged paper with a horizontal line. The text is written in cursive and reads: "George Langton of Wethersfield was joined in marriage to ye widow Haynes of Springfield 11th 4th Mon: 29 day 1648."

***George Langton's Marriage at Springfield*⁵⁵**

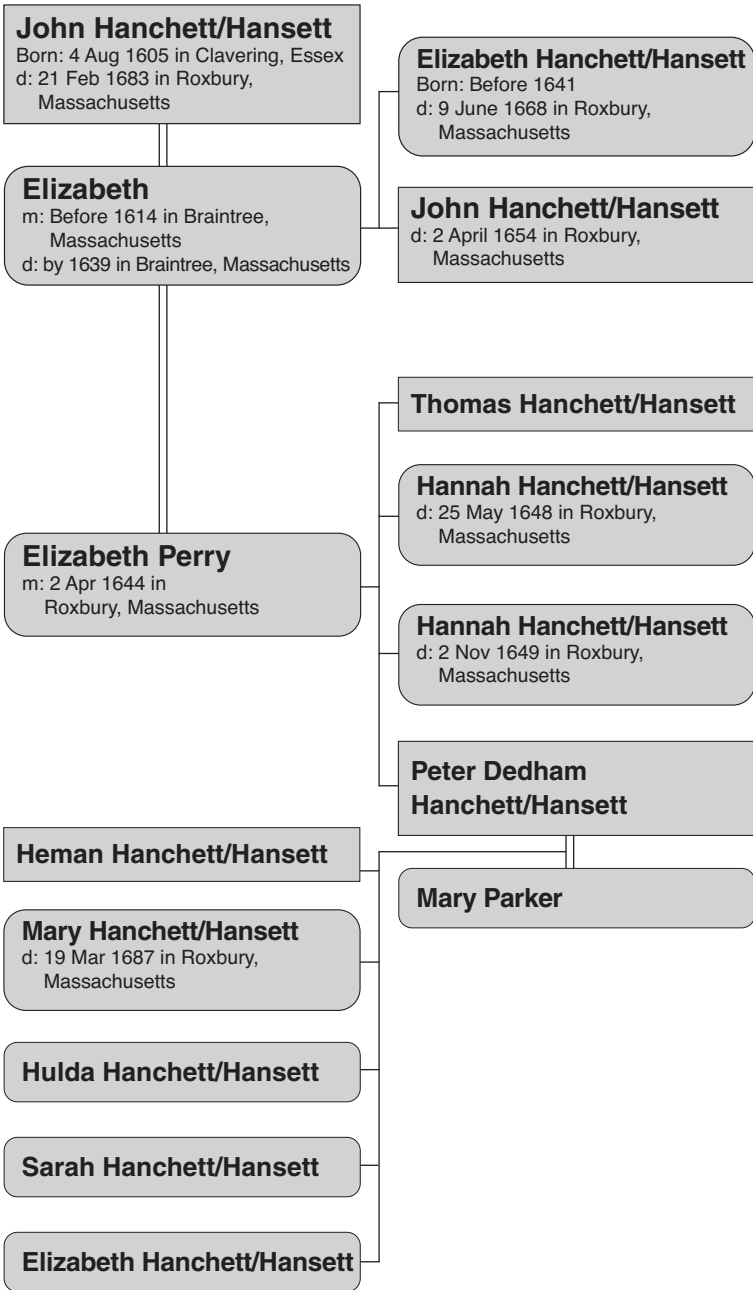
This marriage occurred just two months after Thomas gained his house lot in Wethersfield. It would seem that Thomas and Deliverance would have been married in Wethersfield. Thomas, their first son, must then have been born in Wethersfield as well. Thomas Leffingwell of Saybrook who married at about the same time as Thomas Hanchett cannot be found in the marriage records either.



*The Fort at Saybrook by Epley*⁵⁶

Possibly, the records for Saybrook went up in smoke along with the fort. Wethersfield, like Saybrook, has no vital records which precede 1647.

Records for John Hanchett's family in the Boston area are clear and nearly complete. John's first son, John, died in Braintree at age twelve in 1645. John's first wife, Elizabeth, was deceased by April 2, 1644, when John remarried to Elizabeth Perry, the widow of John Perry in Roxbury. By his second wife, he had Thomas baptized October 19, 1645, followed by Hannah March 28, 1647. The first daughter, Hannah, died May 25, 1648, and was followed by a second Hannah baptized on October 14, 1649, who then died November 2, 1649. Another son,



Descendants of John Hanchett of Roxbury

Peter, was baptized on July 6, 1651, and survived to marry and have children of his own. John's first daughter, Elizabeth, was buried at Roxbury on June 9, 1668. The clerk in recording the Hanchett entries spelled the name Hansett. This was another misspelled version that was used only rarely. By 1638 when John received land in Ipswich, his surname was spelled Hanchett. John's occupation was listed as husbandmen, a person who cultivates the land or a farmer.⁵⁷

Thomas Hanchett's first recorded surname at Wethersfield was spelled Hanset, sounding like John's surname at his first notice in Boston.



*Early Church at Roxbury*⁵⁸

Peter Hanchett's son, Heman, had no male descendants to carry on the name. Although Thomas, John's second son, was said to have no further record, there was a Thomas Hansett who joined up in Boston and fought in King Phillip's War in 1676.⁵⁹ At that time, he was old enough to have been married with children. He died at Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1712. We have no record of this Thomas having children, and no male descendants from John Hanchett of Boston have been located.⁶⁰

Finally, we must ask the question why both John and Thomas named their second daughters Hannah. Of all their children's names, this coincidence would seem to best establish a common link between John and Thomas. The other names were not surprising. One obvious possibility is that Rose's full name was Roseanna. Of course, neither her birth, marriage or death notices use anything more than Rose. It could have been a nickname which her children used in preference to Rose. The equivalence between Anna and Hannah is well documented. Since Anna and Agnes have also been used as equivalents, it could be about Rose's mother, Agnes. The only other option is that Hannah referred to someone they knew in England, admired from their voyage to New England or whom they had known after arriving in New England.



*Early Village of Wethersfield
Showing the Fortification Thereof*^{e61}

Conclusion

In the absence of complete vital records, passenger lists and land records, we will probably never precisely know where in England John and Thomas Hanchett originated. The best we can do is establish a thesis for others to either substantiate or refute. The argument for the supposition that they came from Clavering and Brent Pelham has been presented above. This discussion represents our best estimation at this point. Hopefully, it will pique the interest of following generations enough to continue to research the subject. This mystery will drive some Hanchett descendants to spend a good part of their life looking for the answer. This author and many before him have already done so.

End Notes

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