

The English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett

Puritan Settler of Connecticut

By
Leland J. Hanchett, Jr.

Front Cover

Of all the Hanchetts who have traveled to England in search of their ancestors, most are familiar with Upp Hall in Braughing, the manor house of Thomas Hanchett, sheriff of Hertfordshire, at the turn of the seventeenth century. It is defined as “Country house. Late C16 or C17, restored and extended c1896.” The manor is situated on high ground about a mile southeast of the village of Braughing, with which it is connected by a road. Based on its location and surroundings, it is easy to see why Thomas Hanchett chose this particular spot to call home. The photo was taken by Ed Bethune, a Hanchett descendent on his mother’s side.

Back Cover

Arthur Hanchett Johnson carefully copied armorial bearings for Hanchett and related families. These coat of arms were very popular during the century before the Puritans arrived in New England. The most significant fact learned is that at some point in time the Hanchetts and the noble Mountfitchets intermarried. The Mountfitchet family had vast land holdings in England.

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This book is dedicated to my father, Leland J. Hanchett, MD, and my son, Gregory L. Hanchett, JD, both of whom have taught me much.

Contents

Introduction	v
Part I—In New England	
CH. 1: Thomas Hanchett of Saybrook, Wethersfield, New London, Northampton, Westfield, and Suffield.	3
CH. 2: John Hansett (Hanchett), a Possible Relative.	47
CH. 3: Possible English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett.	53
Part II—The Beginnings in England	
CH. 4: From Domesday to The Peasants' Revolt	89
Part III—Spreading Out Through the Counties	
CH. 5: The Hanchets of Bedfordshire; Letchworth, Hertfordshire; Braughing, Hertfordshire; and Great Parndon, Essex.	127
CH. 6: The Hanchetts of Great Burstead and Billericay	157
CH. 7: The Hanchett Family of Little Hadham, Hertfordshire	167
CH. 8: The Hanchetts of Clavering	175
CH. 9: The Hanchett Family of Arkesden, Essex	189
CH. 10: The Hanchett Family of Buntingford and Royston	231
CH. 11: The Hanchetts of Sussex and Kent	239
CH. 12: The Hanchett Family of Bourn, Cambridgeshire	241
CH. 13: The Hanchett Family in London and Unlinked Hanchett Records	249
Conclusions	259
Bibliography	261
Index	269

Introduction

Knowing one's ancestry is not important to a lot of people. For the rest of us it can be all-consuming. Certainly, we cannot do anything about those, good or bad, who came before us, but sometimes knowing who they were and what they accomplished can give each of us a better feeling about our own identity. They may have been kings or queens or just simple folk who worked hard to get by each day. Whatever they were, just knowing seems to plant our feet more firmly on the ground.

The search for the English ancestry of Thomas Hanchett began over one hundred years ago. Back then, the word was that the Hanchetts knew their English ancestry up until the Civil War. To the best of my knowledge, no one has rediscovered that information. Nevertheless, there is a need to document what we do know in hopes that some aspiring future Hanchett or close relative will uncover the missing piece that clearly points to Thomas' specific English family.

Thomas is important because most of the Hanchetts currently living in this country are his direct descendants. Keith M. Seymour distilled his lifetime of genealogy study into *The Descendants of Thomas Hanchett* in 1986. His work was augmented by John C. Hanchett with his book *The Hanchett Family*. Preceding his work, Junius T. Hanchett, a trained lawyer, had researched the family since the beginning of the twentieth century. Frank E. Hanchett and Jay Bush Hanchett contributed to the early work as well. Finally, Charlotte P. Kent, another Hanchett relative, spent hundreds of hours completing details for Keith Seymour's work, so that we now have a clear

picture of the Hanchetts back to the Great Migration to New England. Sadly, that story stopped on the shores of the Atlantic.

Fortunately, others in England were working on the Hanchetts from that side of the ocean. These able collectors of Hanchett history consisted of R. A. Ledgard, A. H. Johnson, and George Hanchett. Mr. Ledgard was designated C.B.E., which stands for “Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire,” a title granted by the king. Ledgard started his research before World War I and finished up after World War II.

Starting in 1967, in combination with Charlotte P. Kent and Cathy Hanchett, Lee Hanchett, the author of this volume, along with others over here worked off and on through 1990 adding to what the researchers in England had already accomplished. More recently, highly competent researchers in England, Kristina Bedford and Stan Jarvis, spent hundreds of hours transcribing, translating, and advising the author on English history. Consequently, a large amount of material has been amassed.

Since most of the results of that work are in the author’s possession, it is important to document it in some orderly fashion for the generations to come. The following is the author’s best effort to do so. No doubt, new discoveries will provide additions and corrections to what we know, or surmise at this time. Genealogy is rarely a perfect science.

The original spelling has been preserved in all copies of original documents. Pictures have been included where the image is representative of the scene Hanchett family members would have seen in their day. Rather than this representing the end of a long search for the ancestry of the American Hanchetts, let this be the beginning of an ongoing effort to learn more about our family in England.

Part I
In New England

Chapter 1

Thomas Hanchett of Saybrook, Wethersfield, New London, Northampton, Westfield, and Suffield

At Wethersfield

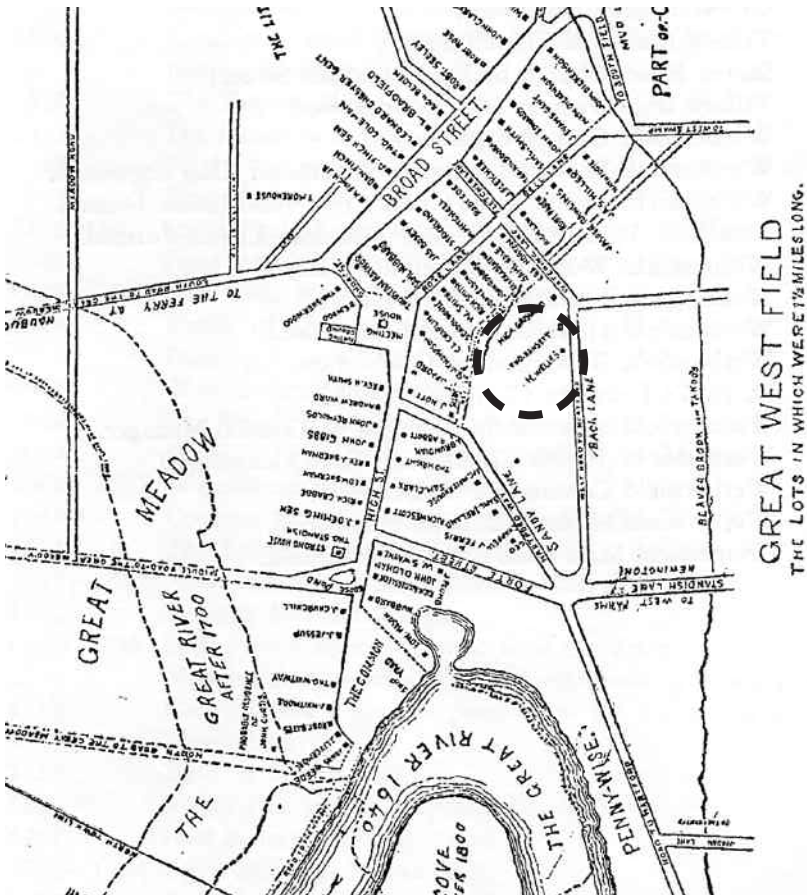
Thomas Hanchett makes his first documented appearance in New England when he is granted, by the church, a house lot in Wethersfield, Connecticut on February 28, 1647, not 1642 as has been stated and repeated for at least the past century. The confusion here comes from the fact that the last number of the year, as shown on the original document, was in the European style of “Z.” This was misread by Sherman W. Adams, Esquire, early recorder of Wethersfield history, as a 2 instead of a 7. The current Official Index to Land Grantees located at the Wethersfield Town Hall correctly lists this entry as 1647. The lot was located on Back Lane consisting of one-and-a-half acres between the holdings of Michael Griswold and Hugh Wells. In 1650 the town gave Thomas twenty more acres of land.¹ Griswold was “landed gentry” in England but he was styled “yeoman” here. Wells was a young carpenter who worked on the building of the first meeting house and was married in 1647 at about the same time as Thomas Hanchett.

If Thomas was on this side of the Atlantic prior to that time, no records have been found to substantiate it. Either Thomas was underage or simply a single man with no land holdings.

¹ Town Records for Wethersfield, Connecticut are located in the town clerk's office in Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Wethersfield was originally founded by John Oldham and nine other adventurers from Watertown, Massachusetts. Francis S. Drake, in his *History of Watertown*², states:

Wethersfield, the oldest town in Connecticut, received from Watertown its first considerable emigrations in 1634. Pyquag, an Indian name, was changed in 1635 to Watertown, and later to Wethersfield, May 29, 1635. The following Watertown men went to Wethersfield:



The Town of Wethersfield by the late 1640s³
Thomas Hanchett's House Lot Area

² As included in *The History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts* (Vol II, 440).

³ Lois M. Wieder: *The Wethersfield Story* vi

Rev. Richard Denton, Robert Reynolds, John Strickland, Amos Weede, Rev. John Sherman, Robert Coe, and Andrew Ward. The two latter afterward settled at Stamford. Leonard Chester, John Finch, Nathaniel Foote, John Oldham, Edward Pearce, John Reynolds, and Robert Rose went before 1642. John Oldham was killed by Indians, while trading with them at Block Island, July 25th, 1636. The Dorchester (Windsor) and Newtown (Hartford) settlements followed in the same year, 1635.

Roger Thompson in his history of Watertown, Massachusetts, 1630–1680, tells us that that town was principally settled by people from the Stour Valley of Southern Suffolk and Northern Essex. Their reason for emigrating ran deeper than just their religion.⁴ He notes:

Between 1614 and 1637, when the emigration to Watertown from the region effectively ended, a series of disasters devastated the Stour Valley:

- 1614–17: Cockayne's project to stop export of unfinished cloth cuts Old Drapery exports.
- 1618: Start of Thirty Years' War. Cloth sales further disrupted. Dunkirk pirates prey on east coast shipping. James I issues Book of Sports for Sunday recreations.
- 1619: London clothier fails. A total of 180 Essex and Suffolk clothiers face losses of 220,000.
- 1621–23: Disastrous harvests.
- 1624: England enters Thirty Years' War, cloth worth 139,000 goes unsold in Suffolk.
- 1625: Fears of Catholic invasion of east coast.

⁴ Roger Thompson: *Divided We Stand: Watertown, Massachusetts, 1630-1680*.

- 1626: Plague in Sudbury and Colchester. Charles is forced loan.
- 1628: Laud appointed bishop of London.
- 1629–30: Further disastrous harvests, complete stop on cloth exports, the depression of 1630 begins.
- 1629: Nadir of Protestant cause in Europe. Charles I dissolves Parliament and begins eleven-year personal rule.
- 1630–32: Campaign against Essex Puritans peaks.
- 1633: Laud becomes archbishop of Canterbury. Book of Sports reissued.
- 1635–36: Bitter winter.
- 1635–39: Ship money demanded from the whole country.
- 1635: Laudian, Matthew Wren, appointed bishop of Norwich (Norfolk and Suffolk).
- 1636–37: Plague returns.
- 1637: Harvest failure.

To get from Watertown to Wethersfield, Oldham and company followed the “Old Connecticut Path.”

The **Old Connecticut Path** was the Native American trail that led westward from the area of Massachusetts Bay to the Connecticut River Valley, the very first of the North American trails that led west from the settlements close to the Atlantic seacoast, towards the interior. The earliest colonists of Massachusetts Bay Colony used it, and rendered it wider by driving cattle along it. The old route is still followed, for part of its length, by Massachusetts Route 9 and Massachusetts Route 126.

In lean years of the early 1630s, when the Massachusetts Bay Colony ran short of grain, Nipmuck

farmers in the valley of the Connecticut River loaded some of their abundant surplus maize into birch-bark backpacks and trod a familiar route to the settlements at the mouth of the Charles River, where they traded food for European goods made of copper and iron and woolen cloth. Fur traders and the exploratory party of John Oldham (1633) penetrated this first of the trails west into the continent's interior. In 1635, some settlers from Watertown took this route when they removed to Wethersfield, Connecticut. Then, in 1636, the outcast Thomas Hooker and a hundred of his congregation, with 160 cattle, whose milk they drank en route, followed the Old Connecticut Path in a two-week journey to the Connecticut River; there, they settled in a place, called from the blackness of its earth, *Suckiaug*, and founded Hartford. By 1643, documents in the village of Sudbury called it the "Old Connecticut Path," and in 1672, with the establishment of a postal system, it became the first colonial post road.⁵

Thomas Hanchett may have come with others from Watertown on the path, or he may have traveled later by sea and then up the Connecticut River. Wethersfield could have been named by settler Thomas Foote as he came from Shalford, Essex, just six miles east of Wethersfield, Essex, England. Both Nathaniel Foote and Leonard Chester, two of the original settlers of Wethersfield, had fathers that came from Royston, Hertfordshire. In fact, many of the early settlers from Watertown and subsequently Wethersfield came from the region in England where Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, and Cambridge counties meet. This seemed to have been one of the hotbeds for Puritan emigration. Another group, Leonard Chester, Henry Smith, and possibly George Langton, came from Leicestershire.

⁵ "The Old Connecticut Path." *Wikipedia*



Early Village of Wethersfield Showing the Fortification Thereof⁶

There may have been a connection between the Reverend Henry Smith, Wethersfield's first resident minister, and Thomas Hanchett. Smith was first documented at Wethersfield in 1639, at which time he was granted land on both sides of the river. He was not installed as official minister there until 1642. The connection may have been as simple as Thomas having constructed the church building, possibly with George Langton and Henry Smith's help, which was built between 1645 and 1647. Thomas' land grant from the church coincides nicely with the completion of the rough finished church. Henry Smith died in 1648, the year following the completion of the church construction at Wethersfield. Smith's widow married John Russell, the father of Wethersfield's second minister, Reverend John Russell.

Henry W. Stiles, in his book *History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut*, provides us with some insight into the construction of Wethersfield's first church or meeting house:

The Meeting House was, as its name indicates, the place where all public meetings were held. Built and

⁶ Henry R. Stiles: *Families of Ancient Wethersfield, Vol II*, Opposite 658.

owned by the town, it was used on Sabbaths and “Lecture Days” for public devotional services; it was the political centre of the community, where they held their town meetings, elections, and other public gatherings; and the “alarm post” to which they rallied when threatened by Indian attack, or when duly warned to appear, fully armed and equipped, to meet some emergency of “His Majesty’s” service.

The meeting house possessed none of that sacredness, in the minds of these men of Wethersfield, which pertained to the consecrated edifices in which they, or their forefathers, had worshipped in Old England. They were dissenters from the established church of the fatherland; their places of worship, both in their own eyes and those of the church from which they had broken away, were only “conventicles,” and as such were simply conveniences for all public town purposes. In Wethersfield, at least, the drum was oftener used to call the people together, whether for worship or secular purposes than the bell; although there was always a bell in the belfry.

The first, second, and even the last meeting house were used for town meetings. The first two undoubtedly belonged to the town; and the last one (the present Congregational Church) though built by the First Ecclesiastical Society, or under its auspices or belonging to it, continued to be used by the town for many years. Indeed, it may be truly said that it did not become a church edifice, as distinguished from a meeting house, until a date within the memory of many people now living.

Whether the present structure is the third or fourth in the series of meeting houses which have stood on or near the same site, is somewhat a matter of doubt. The

first allusion to be found upon Wethersfield's records (and, indeed, the very first record which time has spared to us on those pages) is under date of April 22, 1647, in which we find the townsmen contracting with one Joshua Jennings, to put in what we would nowadays call "the interior or finish" of a new and incomplete meeting house—i. e., wainscoting, seats, pulpit, etc. This vote, together with some subsequent ones, relating to the same "job," we present herewith.

"This two and twentieth day of Aprill, 1647, He, Joshuah Jenings, hath bargained with the Townsmen of Wethersfield [viz: Mr. Rich. (?)] Treat, Mr. [Robert] Parke, John Demon, Tho. Collman, Nath. Dickinson, for [to put] up seats in the Meeting House, with wainscot, according to the seats [in the] Hartford Meeting House, and the said Joshuah is to p'vide [him] self, and is so to get his stufte in season that it be we[ll dried, in order?] that he may set them up betwixt this and the twen[ty of] November [that he must, erased]; he doth ingage himself for to do [the West (?)] end of the house, from the north dore to the south doore, the time aforesaid; and the rest to be done betwixt this and the last of March next insuing. And the Towne hath ingaged themselves for to pay the said Joshuah thre shillings a yard for the said worke, being sufficient and well wrought, and good stufe, acording to the patterne of Harford seats. The Towne is to p'vid plancks for the seats, and he to set them up. And the Towne is to find iron worke that they will have set up. His pay is nine pounds in hand, and the rest when he hath finished his worke; the pay wh the[y] are agreed upon is half wheat and half pease; sound and d[ry] and well drest, exsept thre pounds in Indean; and to be [delivered] at the waterside, or in any house in Wethersfield that the said

Joshuah [shall] apoint, in Wethersfield. In witness [the rest worn off from the foot of the page]”

The foregoing is the earliest vote preserved, relating to the first (or it may have been the second) meeting house in Wethersfield. All the records of town votes, before the page on which the above was written—are wanting. Some of the words are torn off, or are so indistinct, as to make it impossible to read them. Such words are included in brackets.

“The 26 of September, 1647. It is ordered by the Townsmen this present day, that there shal be [a rate] made of five and twenty pounds, to pay for the keping of the W[at]ch and nine pounds to Nath. Dickinson, wh he paid to Joshuay, for the setting up the seats in the Meeting House; and other debts [that is] to say, five and twenty pounds, Mr. Parke is desired to set upon the seing of the Meting House under-daubed & clapboarded; and the Towne hath given him a power [to] call forth such men and carts as he shall see fitt.”

It appears that the town, on the first day of January, 1648-9, voted to pay, among other matters: “To Tho. Kirkham, for two days’ Work on the Meeting House 3s-4d; to John EdWards ‘for his man’s saweing of the planks for the seats, £1-10s; to Joshua Jennings, ‘for the seting up the minister’s desk,’ £1-0s-1d; to Sam. Smith, which he paid [Will?] Palmer, for a day’s work at the Meeting House, 1s-6d; to Will. Belden, for 900 ft. of boards for the Meeting House, £1-12s; ‘for the hingeing for the Meetinghous seats,’ about £2-10s.”

This structure, which they were, in April 1647, just finishing, may have been and probably was, begun some years before; the exigencies of a new and struggling community having prevented its earlier completion.

From the subsequently recorded vote of September 26 of the same year, “desiring that Mr. Parke should attend to the under daubing and clapboarding” of the edifice, we may infer that it had previously been simply a log structure, and that it was not until the seats (called for by the above contract with Jennings) were “set up” that the joints (or interstices between the logs) were filled with clay and (“riven”) clapboards put on over the whole.

Whether this meeting house of 1647 was the first one in Wethersfield is, as we have previously intimated, somewhat doubtful. From the fact that it was in progress of completion, twelve years after the settlement of the town, it would, perhaps, be not assuming too much to suppose that it was the second one, rather than the first. This, at least, was the conclusion arrived at by that very careful investigator, Mr. Nathaniel Goodwin, in his Foote Genealogy. But, to the writer, it seems more probable that, up to 1646 or '47, the people had met in some dwelling house, or other building, not specially designed for the purpose. It is fair to assume, also, that this (1647) meeting house was begun in 1645, or certainly in 1646; that it was, as a building, complete and had been occupied for a season, with only moveable seats.

This first (dedicated) meeting house stood a few (probably not more than four or five) rods south-westerly from the present First Congregational Church. From the later recorded votes of September 26, 1647, and January, 1648-9, relating to the town's repayment to Mr. Nath. Dickinson of money which he had advanced to Jennings “for setting up the seats” and directing the “under daubing” and clapboarding to be forwarded, it is reasonable to suppose that by the winter of 1648-9, the Wethersfield meeting house was made fairly comfortable for the good people of the town, while they

listened to the long Sunday sermons, or weekday “lectures” of their pastor.

“This 28 day of the month of December, 1649.” “It was voted by the whol Towne, this p’sent day, that ther should be chosen 3 men to seat men and Women in the meting house; & the Towne chose Mr. Trat, Sam. Smith Senior & Nath. Dickinson; and they who are plast [placed] by thes[e] doth ingag[e] themselves to sit down contented & duly satisfied whit what these 3 do in this work.”

This “seating the meeting house” was a matter of much importance with our forefathers; and was done with great care and consideration (not to say difficulty) by the “seating” committee—a body usually rather numerous and of the best social standing and acknowledged ability. Our ancestors had not been so long away from their English homes as to have lost all consideration for social rank and distinctions; consequently the estimation in which a man or woman was held in the community wherein he dwelt, was very clearly shown by the seat which was assigned to him or her in the meeting house. The most complete schedule of this process of “dignifying the seats,” as it was sometimes called, which we have found among any old New England town records, is that formulated in the instructions given to a Wethersfield seating committee, in March 1717, wherein they were directed to seat the people according to the following “grounds of advancement, viz.: age; dignity of descent; place of public trust; pious disposition; estate; peculiar serviceableness of any kind.”

Still, the edifice, though in use, was not complete; the work seems to have dragged, for March 8th, 1651-2, the town appointed Samuel Smith, as its agent, “to see that

Hen. Palmer clapboard the meting house, betwixt this and the first of May next; and if he do it not, having clapboard layd by him [i.e., furnished him], the said Smith hath power to take a warrant, and sew him, that he may force him to do the worke.”

From the various scraps of history which we have gleaned from the records, we are able to “piece out” the following idea of the appearance of this second meeting house, viz.: Square in form, one story high, with a hip roof, with a belfry in the middle—agreeing, probably, with the plan and style of the earliest meeting houses of that day. We have reason to believe that it was begun in 1645, and not completed until 1652; that it was originally a log structure; that for several years it had only temporary seats, if any; that, in a few years, plank seats were “set up,” with hinged doors attached; that the building had a north and south door; that finally the original log walls of the building were “daubed,” or filled in, with clay (then commonly used as mortar), and the whole covered with riven, oak clapboards. That it had a bell is certain from the fact that, in 1657, William Palmer was employed to ring it, and in 1658, Hugh Wells succeeded him in that duty; and in 1659-60, the bell and drum were used indifferently, as will be seen from the following town vote.⁷

A letter from Henry’s son Samuel to his son, also found in Stiles’ work, sheds some light on Smith’s activities following his arrival in New England.

Hadley, Massachusetts Colony, Jan. ye Firste, 1698/99

My Dear & Dutiful Son:

I was of so tender an Age at the Death of my beloved Father, that I am possessed of but little of the

⁷ Sherman W. Adams and Henry R. Stiles: *The History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut*.

Information for which you seek. My Revered Father was an ordained Minister of ye Gospelle, educated at Cambridge in England, & came to this Land by reason of Ye Great Persecution by which ye infamous Archbishop Laud and ye Black Tom Tyrante (as Mr. Russell was always wont to call ye Earl of Strafforde) did cause ye reign of his Majestie, Charles ye First, to loose favor in ye sight of ye people of England. My Father & Mother came over in 1636/37, firste to Watertown which is neare Boston, & after a yeare or two to Weathersfield on ye great River, where he became ye firste settled Pastor. Concerning of ye earlie days I can remember but little swe Hardship. My Parents had broughte both Men Servants & Maid Servants from England, but ye Maids tarried not but till they got married, ye wch was shortly, for there was great scarcity of Women in ye Colonies. Ye men did abide better. Onne of em had married onne of my Mother's Maids & they did come with us to Weathersfield, to our grate Comforte for some years, untill they had many littel onnes of their Owne. I do well remember ye Face & Figure of my Honoured Father. He was 5 foote, 10 inches talle & spare of builde, tho not leane. He was as Active as ye Red Skin Men & sinewy. His delighte was in sportes of strengthe, & withe his owne Hands he did helpe to reare bothe our owne House & ye Firste Meetinge House of Weathersfield, wherein he preacht yeares too fewe. He was well Featured & Fresh favoured with faire Skin & longe curling Hair (as neare all of us have had) with a merrie eye & swete smilinge Mouthe, tho he coule frowne sternlie eno' when need was. Ye firste Meeting House was solid mayde to withstande ye wicked onslauts of ye Red Skins. Its foundation was laid in ye feare of ye Lord but its Walls was truly laide in feare of ye Indians; for many and grate was ye Terrors of them. I do mind mey't alle ye able-bodied men did work

thereat, & ye olde & feeble did watch in turns to espie if any Savages was in hiding neare & every man kept his Musket nighe his hande. I do not myself remember any of ye attacks mayde by large bodeys of Indians whilst we did, remayne in Weathersfield, but did ofttimes' hear of them. Several families wch did live back a ways from ye River was either Murdert or Captivated in my Boyhood & we all did live in constant feare of ye like. My Father ever declardt there would not be so much to feare iff ye Red Skins was treated with suche mixture of Justice and Authority as they could understand, but if he was living now he must see that wee can do naught but fight them & that right hewily.

After ye Red Skins ye grate Teror of our lives at Weathersfield & for many yeares after we had moved to Hadley to live, was ye Wolves. Catamounts was bad eno' & so was ye Beares, but it was the Wolves that was ye worst. The noyes of theyre howlings was eno' to curdle ye blood of ye stoutest & I have never seen ye man yt did not shiver at ye sound of a pack of em. What with ye way we hated em & ye gode money that was offered for theyre heads we do not heare em so much, but when I do I feel again ye young hatred rising in my Bloode, & it is not a Sin because God mayde em to be hated. My Mother & Sister did each of them kill more than one of ye gray Howlers and once my old-est Sister shot a Beare yt came too neare the House. He was a goode Fatte onne & kept us all in meate for a goode while. I guess one of her Daughters has got ye skinne. As most of ye Weathersfield Settlers did come afoote throu ye Wilderness & brought with em such Things only as they did nede at ye first, ye other Things was sent round from Boston in Vessels to come up ye River to us. Some of ye shippes did come safe to Weathersfield, but many was lost in a grate storm.

Amongst them was onne weh' held alle our Beste Things.

A goode many yrs later, long after my Father had died of ye grate Fever & my Mother had married Mr. Russel and moved to Hadley, it was found yt somme of our things had been saved & keep in ye fort wch is by ye River's Mouthe, (The Old Fort at Saybrook, Connecticut) and they was brought to us. Most of em was spoiled with Sea Water & Mould, especially ye books. & ye Plate. Of this there was no grate store, only ye Tankard, wch I have, and some spoones divided amongst my Sisters wch was allso black it was long before any could come to its own colors agen, & Mr. Russel did opine yt had it not been so it might not have found us agen, but he was sometimes a littel shorte of ye Charity wch thinketh no Evil, at ye least I was wont to think so when his hand wast too hewy on my Shoulders & I remembered ye sweetnesses and ye Charity of my firste Father, but on ye whole said he was a goode man & did well by my Mother and her children, & no doubt we did often try his wit & his temper, but it was in his house ... *(Rest of page burned.)*

Thomas Hanchett, if by trade a carpenter, would have had to learn his trade either in England or New England. If he was an apprentice to a carpenter, he might just have had such an opportunity. The fact that his lot was granted by the church, just as the church construction was finished, makes sense if that was payment for his services in constructing the church building.

At about the same time, Thomas married Deliverance Langton, probably in Wethersfield, where she bore him two sons, Thomas and John, and two daughters, Deliverance and Hannah. Deliverance Langton Hanchett was the daughter of George Langton who briefly stayed in Wethersfield before moving on to Springfield and then Northampton,

Massachusetts. Deliverance was certainly born in England to have been old enough to marry in the late 1640s. George never owned any property in Wethersfield. He may have been a true journeyman carpenter, as suggested in writeups about him, following the construction needs of the early settlers. George left Wethersfield about the time construction of the rough finished church was completed, moving to Springfield, Massachusetts where he remarried in 1648. His marriage record lists him as being “of Wethersfield.” George settled down there for a decade before he moved on to Northampton.

Thomas Hanchett remained only a few years in Wethersfield but while there he left us with what is possibly a clue pertaining to his relationship to Henry Smith and his standing in the community. He, along with Henry Smith, pastor at Wethersfield, and William Smith, school teacher, witnessed the will of prominent settler Leonard Chester dated 2 August 1648. Leonard’s father, John Chester inherited lands from his father in Royston, Hertfordshire and Blaby, Leicestershire. Leonard’s mother’s maiden name was Dorothy Hooker, sister to Rev. Thomas Hooker of Leicestershire, England and Hartford, Connecticut. Dorothy accompanied Leonard Chester to New England. William Smith was granted a house lot in Wethersfield, by the church and town, one day following Thomas Hanchett’s grant. Stiles notes that in September, 1648, William Smith was paid for beating the drum on “the Lord’s days” for sixteen months then last past (since May or June 1647.) The connection here could be simply that Thomas and William were “available” as two people working closely with Henry completing the construction and operation of the first church edifice in Wethersfield. But the importance of the other two witnesses suggests that Thomas must have been of similar standing in the community.

At Saybrook

The next record of Thomas' presence in Connecticut is found in the land records for Saybrook. According to Gates in his book *Saybrook at the Mouth of the Connecticut*,⁸ there was a town meeting on January 4, 1648 in which "Thomas Hanchat" is recorded, by reference, as having been given a lot at the point where the Connecticut River flows into Long Island Sound. Although the record only shows his name in conjunction with a lot which his lot bordered, the referenced lot was a choice piece of property which today is occupied by a fine home. Half of his one-and-a-half-acre lot contains a home built in the eighteen hundreds which is currently for sale at a price of \$2,700,000. This outstanding location is just to the north of the marsh which separated the village from the Fort at Old Saybrook.

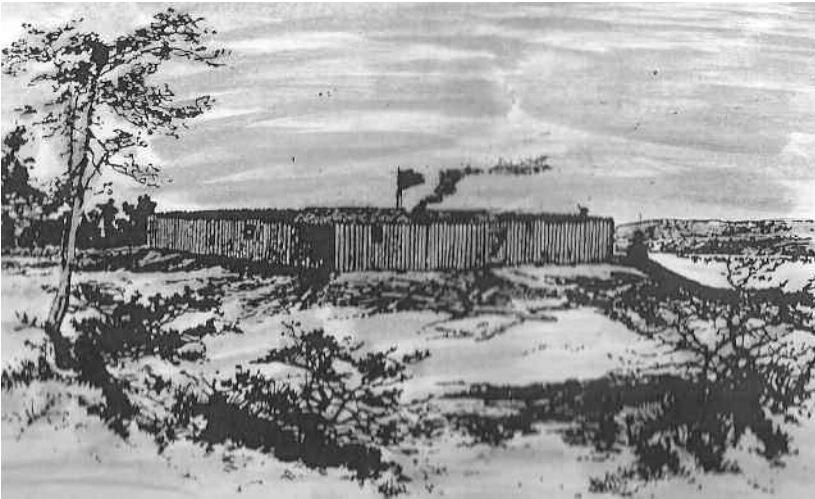
In that day, a home with a view of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound was not nearly as valuable as it would be today, but considering that his immediate neighbors were Captain Mason and Lieutenant Thomas Leffingwell, both major players in the early settlement of Saybrook, one might think that Thomas Hanchat was of some importance as well. Mason was a leader in the Connecticut Colony's retaliation towards the Indians during the Pequot War of 1637. The colony had lost many Englishmen at the hands of the Pequots and felt the need to take action. Leffingwell, when only a teenager, had risked life and limb while rowing a canoe to get provisions to Uncas, Sachem of the Mohicans, when Uncas was under attack from the Narragansetts.

Although he is listed as one of the original settlers of the town, there is no record of Thomas Hanchett living at Saybrook. The existence of his name on a piece of property suggests that he must have contributed in some capacity, prior to 1648, to the settlement of the town and/or building of the fort. Gates tells us that a contract was agreed to in 1645 between

⁸ Gilman C. Gates: *Saybrook at the Mouth of the Connecticut: The First One Hundred Years*.

Mr. Fenwick, Captain Mason, James Boosy, and Mathew Griswold. Recall that Thomas Hanchett's lot in Wethersfield was adjacent to that of Michael Griswold. When Griswold's work was finished, Captain Mason and John Clarke Senior carried on the building of the fort starting 9 September 1647. Using the old dating system where a year started March 25 and ended March 24, it was just six months later that Thomas Hanchett was granted his house lot in Wethersfield. From 1645 to 1647, many of the men then present in Saybrook were either involved in the actual construction of the fort, or were military men manning the fort. His supposed occupation as carpenter would fit perfectly with the activities then in progress at Old Saybrook.

Ten years earlier, the fort had been envisioned as a deterrent to the Dutch who coveted the fur trade on the Connecticut River, just as the English did. That vision came true as the original fort was built and occupied, by the English, a short time before the Dutch attempted landing there to claim the location. With the help of two cannons, the English easily convinced the Dutch that they were too late with their claim.



Saybrook Fort in 1636⁹

⁹ Courtesy: New York Public Library, Manuscript Division, Emmet Collection #2461

At New London

Thomas' next stop was New London, Connecticut where he arrived in 1651 and worked for three years. In Caulkins' book, *History of New London, Connecticut*, he states that Thomas Hanshut was one of forty-two men who worked on the Mill Dam.¹⁰ There too his carpentry skills would have been useful. To this he adds that "Thomas and three others were fluctuating or transient residents who, after remaining a year or two and coming and going several times, left the plantation." Apparently he then returned to Wethersfield, if indeed his family ever really left, until 1660 when he and family moved on to Northampton, then a part of Connecticut. His move may have been prompted in part by the fact that Wethersfield was experiencing its third set of problems with the settled minister. The Reverend John Russell had departed Wethersfield in early 1660 for Hadley, Massachusetts, just across the river from Northampton. The conflict had involved the preference for a Congregational system versus a Presbyterian system as had been preferred by the church in Hartford¹¹.

At Northampton

Thomas' father-in-law George Langton had already moved, first to Springfield in 1647, and then to Northampton in 1658. He divided his house lot at the later place with Thomas around 1660. When the church was first gathered at Northampton on April 4, 1661, Thomas Hanchett was listed as one of those who had begun that work. Again, carpentry work was needed to build the church. Both he and his wife Deliverance signed the church covenant on that date. Thomas was designated one of the Seven Pillars of the church and was named Second Deacon in 1668. From that point on he was always referred to as Deacon Hanchett. On 4 November, of that same year, Thomas Hanchett was made a selectman.

¹⁰ Francis Caulkins: *History of New London, Connecticut*.

¹¹ Eugene M. Bushong: *The Beginnings of the First Church of Christ in Wethersfield*.

At A Towne meeting the fourth of the } 1668
 11th month the Anno Domini

Wth William Clarke }
 Deacon Wth William Holton }
 Deacon Thomas Hanchett }
 Josias Dewey }
 Madab Pomeroy }

Select men for this year ensuing
 chosen by the Towne to see & take
 the particulars of the Towne and to
 make all Rates.

Thomas Hanchett was the third of five men voted to hold the position of selectman for one year. The other four were also prominent men in the community. Trumbull and Pomeroy, in their book on Northampton, Massachusetts,¹² include the following biographical information.

Deacon Thomas Hanchett came to Northampton from Wethersfield in 1660, though his name appears in the records of Saybrook and New London. He was by no means so prominent in town affairs as his colleagues. A modest, retiring man, of blameless life, he was well worthy the distinction of having been elected Second Deacon of the new church, to which position he was chosen in 1668. His home lot was the most southerly on Hawley Street, and was a portion of the lot granted to George Langton, whose daughter he married. In a few years he removed to Westfield, and afterwards to Suffield, where he died in 1680 (sic).

¹² James Russet Trumbull and Seth Pomeroy: *History of Northampton, Massachusetts from Its Settlement in 1654.*



*Oxbow of the Connecticut River near Northampton*¹³

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Hanchett". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'T' at the beginning and a stylized 'H' and 'C' at the end.

First and only known signature for Thomas Hanchett

While in Northampton, Thomas took the Oath of Fidelity in 1661 and in 1662 was made a freeman. In addition to Thomas' good reputation with the church, he proved his standing in the community again by being a witness, in 1669, to the will of Rowland Stebbins who, like Leonard Chester in Wethersfield, was one of the most wealthy men in Northampton. Stebbins was from the town of Bocking, also in northern Essex. The other witness to Stebbins' will was William James, the school teacher at Northampton. Thomas, along with five other prominent men from the area, was appointed to a committee to determine the location of a ferry to cross the Connecticut River near Springfield.

¹³ "The Oxbow," by Thomas Cole, 1836

Junius tells us more about Thomas in Northampton:

He signed the church covenant at the founding as did his wife Deliverance and his father-in-law, George Langton. Also at that time, 1661, three of his children were admitted with him to the church. These must have been Thomas, John, and Deliverance, the tree eldest, for Hannah was then certainly a very small child.

In 1668 Deacon Thomas was chosen selectman of the town of Northampton. In this year also there were several petitions addressed to the General Court from the Western towns, directed against imposts. These petitions were not granted and the matter caused no little resentment in the west. The petition from Northampton is dated the 4th of the 11th month, 1668, and is subscribed among others by Thomas Hantchat Sr., and Thomas Hantchat Jr. John Hanchett, the other son, did not sign. The inference is that being but nineteen years old, his signature was not important.

Junius also has an interesting comment concerning Thomas removing his family to Westfield:

We have some reason to believe that the remove from Northampton to Westfield was not made abruptly, but extended over a couple of years, Deacon Thomas going back and forth as his interests required. It appears on the will of Rowland Stebbins that Thomas Hanchett was overseer "Pers'r" of the will. This will was dated the first of the first month, 1669. Also in a list of contributors to the support of Harvard College from Northampton, 1672-3 (this was in effect tax) we find "Deacon Hanchet toe bushels wheate 4 lbs flax 10 sh." which seems to show that he still had interests in Northampton that required his presence there.

At Westfield

From Northampton the Deacon Thomas Hanchett family, after a couple of years of back and forth, moved on to Westfield about 1670. Westfield represented their farthest departure, about eight miles, from the Connecticut River. To gain some insight into the conditions at that time, the Reverend John Alden provides us with part of a sermon he delivered at Westfield in 1851.¹⁴

“The goodness of God has been richly displayed in the history of this town.” Less than two hundred years ago, this town was a howling wilderness. No voice of the white man broke the silence of the morning. No hum of business, no beautiful works of the artist, no ties of civilized friendship, no true praise to God was here. And yet there was a praise more pure than the contaminated praises of men. It was not the war-whoop of the savage, nor his horrid orgies around the council fire. It was not the howl of the wolf, the growl of the bear, or the scream of the catamount. *It was nature in her solemn wildness.* It was the waving of the primeval forest. It was the whisperings of the breeze, falling into this vale, from the cloud-capped mountains around it. It was the ceaseless murmurings of our streams in nature’s great anthem. But God has purposes to accomplish here, and thither he sends the white man in the midst of dangers to reclaim the wilderness.

Westfield (or *Warronoco*, as the Indians called it), embracing once what is now Southwick and Russell, was the strong-hold of the savage. The great abundance of salmon, bass, shad, and trout, with which our rivers abounded, together with bears, deer, moose, and other game that filled the forest, rendered this perhaps the most desirable spot in New England for the Indians. A

¹⁴ Reverend John Alden: *History of Westfield, Massachusetts.*

little south of this village, in the part now called Squawfield, there is abundance of evidence from the allows and other articles the Indians use, that they cultivated, to some degree, that part of this valley. A number of those relics are preserved, among other curiosities, in our Academy. To leave a home like this was not without a struggle.

The King of England gave all the land embraced in this town and Springfield, to the inhabitants of Springfield, and they gave successive grants to individuals to settle in this place. In 1658, a tract of land was officially granted to Thomas Cooper, on condition he improved it within one year, and continued so to do for the space of five years. This land lay near the county bridge. In 1660 a similar grant was made to Deacon S. Chapman, of land adjoining Cooper's. In 1661 a grant was made to Capt. (John) Pynchon, Robert Ashley, and George Colton, of land lying between the rivers, embracing probably what is now our village. In 1669 this town was incorporated, and called Westfield, from the fact it was then the most westerly plantation in New England. Similar grants were made to Isaac Phelps, Capt. Cook, Mr. Cornish, Thomas Dewey, J. Noble, David Ashley, John Holyoke, John Ponder, and John Ingersol. These men lived near the confluence of Great and Little Rivers. They took up their residence here in 1666.

The first regular meeting on the Sabbath was held in 1667. Tradition has it, that a little previous to all this, three young men set up a trading-house with the Indians on the eastern border of this town, spent one summer here, and were never heard of more. Though each man had a separate tract of land, such were those perilous times, they had to cultivate it in common. Near the junction of Great and Little Rivers they erected a fort in which they lodged by night, and to which they

fled by day in case of alarm. A tract of land about two miles in extent was strongly enclosed. Houses at this time were occupied as forts in different parts of the town. A balustrade was erected upon the roof, from which they could fire upon the enemy.

We, who are situated in our peaceful homes, ought never to forget those dark and trying days of our fathers, and that this beautiful vale was bought with their blood. In those mournful days, never to be forgotten by a grateful posterity, our fathers were only a few families in the all surrounding wilderness, the haunt of the bear and the panther, and men more savage than they. A few habitations of civilized men were found in Northampton, Hadley, Springfield, and in Windsor, Ct. All to the West and the immediate vicinity was a forest, filled, for aught they could know, with thousands of hostile savages. They could not rely on these places for help, almost as helpless as themselves. Surely they could not then say with England's gifted Bard,

"There is a pleasure in the pathless, woods;
There is a rapture on the lonely shore."

No, at every step in the forest there was enough to make the very flesh crawl; for the catamount might be waiting to bound upon them from above, and the savage might be hidden behind the tree, to give the more sure and deadly blow. Even these beautiful streams that then environed them, murmured daily and nightly, danger and death were everywhere. With their fire arms by their side, they felled the forest and tilled the earth, and slept in their log houses, while in truth some were standing as sentinels.

No great harm befell the first settlers until Philip's war in 1673. A more able, artful, and furious warrior than

Philip rarely haunted the forest. He was seldom seen by the white man, except in the distant council-fire, the bloody massacre, and in the conflagration of cottages and forts. Probably there was not a settlement of the English in all New England unknown to him and his warriors, and their purpose was their utter extermination. Near the spot where our paper-mill now stands, our fathers erected a grist-mill and saw-mill. And as the inhabitants of Springfield frequented these mills, many of them were slain on their way. In this town, the houses of Cornish and Sackett, Fowler and Lee, were laid in ashes by the Indians. Loomis and Bentley, and a Miss Sackett, were among captives known to have been taken. A number were killed, but their names are not left us. Grey Lock, by whose consummate subtlety, two of the above captives were taken, is the only Indian that patrolled this region, whose name was known. Now at Pochossuck, then at the Shepard Lane crossing. Around the fort, nay, everywhere hostilities awaited our fathers. Their lives were in danger with no mortal aim to protect them, were on the eve of despair, and about to give up their homes and flee for safety.

In fact, During King Phillip's War at least twenty-five of Thomas Hanchett's previous neighbors from Northampton were slain by Indians. In addition, part of Northampton and part of Springfield had been burned down.

Such was the fact, and a less noble and courageous race would have done it. But He who was the sole stay, of our afflicted sires in those trying days intervened and held back the blood-thirsty savage, sent reinforcements and gave them final success. Some other of the first permanent settlers were Sackett, Ashley, Fowler, Weller, and Neal, from whom some of our valuable citizens have descended.

To the list of early settlers is added Deacon Thomas Hanchett in John Lockwood's *Westfield and Its Historic Influences*.¹⁵ At the two hundredth anniversary of the First Congregational Church of Westfield, Reverend John Hoyt Lockwood delivered a sermon describing how the first settled minister cautiously accepted the position after a messenger to the Boston area was told that his first choice, Reverend Adams of Dedham, was not interested.

Mr. Taylor says: "Their messenger was advised to myself (ye meanest of those that labor in Christ's vineyard) who upon advice did adventure to go with him home, and upon ye Lord's day following, being ye 3d of ye 10m Ano Domi 1672, preached my first sermon amongst them from Matt. 3:2, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" He did not determine for some time to stay, but, there being a prospect of organizing a church, he began to incline to settle with the people, and after serving them two years, he says: "We set up conference meetings at which I went over all the Heads of Divinity unto ye means of ye application of Redemption before we did enter the church state." Their plans were delayed by the desolations and distractions of King Philip's War, which nearly destroyed the settlements at this end of the province. Two houses and barns were burned here, and several men were killed. The terror of the inhabitants was so great that several moved away, among them four of the nine church members of the place, and the record says pathetically: "A sore temptation was thrust in upon us by the adversary that seemed to threaten the overthrow of all proceedings unto a church state by those by whom that interest was before most apparently devolved." But in the spring of 1679 they decided to call a council, to convene in August.¹⁶

¹⁵ John Lockwood: *Westfield and Its Historic Influences, 1669-1919*.

¹⁶ Reverend John H. Lockwood: *A Sermon Commemorative of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary of the First Congregational Church of Westfield, Massachusetts*.

By 1672 Deacon Thomas had been chosen as one of the first selectmen for the village of Westfield. He was not among the seven men mentioned as Pillars of the Church in 1679, possibly due to his upcoming move to Suffield. However, Samuel Loomis, father of the Samuel Loomis who was by then husband of Deacon Thomas' daughter, Hannah, was. Reverend Lockwood goes on to say:

The infant church thus constituted had no other officer than the pastor for many years. The account says: "No ruling elder nor Deacon was elected, only Brother Loomis was desired to look after the preparing wine and bread and to furnish ye Lord's table." He was afterward elected Deacon, but hesitating about accepting the office and waiting for the election of a colleague, he died without being ordained.

Deacon Thomas' older son, also named Thomas Hanchett, participated in King Phillip's War. In September of 1675 he was garrisoned at Mendon, a few miles south of today's Worcester.

At Suffield

About 1680, Deacon Thomas Hanchett with both his sons and their families moved to Suffield which was at that time part of Massachusetts. Sheldon in his book on Suffield lists Deacon Thomas and his sons as proprietors of the town.

Deacon Thomas Hanchet, probably (?) brother of John of Boston, was in Wethersfield 1649, and his son, John, was born there at that time. Deacon Thomas removed to New London 1651, was there three years, was at Northampton 1660, was deacon 1668, removed to Westfield, thence to Suffield, where he died June 11, 1686. He is the ancestor of all of that name who have dwelt in Suffield.

John Hanchet, oldest (sic) son of Deacon Thomas, was at Westfield, and married Esther Pritchett of Suffield, 1677; had two children, then removed to Suffield, 1680, was freeman, and voter at the first town meeting. He held many offices, was deacon for many years. He had six children born at Suffield. His first wife died November 29, 1711. His second wife, widow Mary Harmon, died September 17, 1730. His third wife, widow Sarah Tayler, died January 6, 1733. His fourth wife, widow Mary Southavell survived him. He died October 23, 1744, aged ninety-five. The Suffield Hanchetts are his descendants. His house lot in High Street remains in the family name, by direct descent, that of Betsey Hanchett, fifth generation from Deacon John.

Thomas Hanchet, the second, older brother of John, and son of Deacon Thomas, lived at Westfield; there married Elizabeth Loomis; removed to Suffield, 1679; had children, Thomas, 1681; Mary, 1683; returned to Westfield; there had five children more. He died probably at Roxbury (sic), May 6, 1719. His house lot was nearly opposite his father's on High Street.

Also under Proprietors, a list of land allotments was provided as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Grant</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Location</u>
Dea. Th. Hanchett,	1679	60	High St.
Th. Hanchett, Jr.,	1679	40	
John Hanchett,	1679	40	High St.

THE FIRST TOWN MEETING. Most of the early settled towns were founded under grants from the general court to companies or individuals, with certain conditions, such as those in the Suffield grant, without any more formal act of incorporation. Eleven years had elapsed since the grant was made, and two of the committee had died. The remaining members having

more than fulfilled the conditions of the grant, and desiring to be discharged, procured an order from the general court of Mass., by which a meeting of the inhabitants qualified to vote was ordered to be held March 9, 1682. The first town meeting was held March 9, 1682. There were thirty- four qualified voters, including Maj. John Pynchon. The list of voters, and the record of this meeting in the "old book," is in his handwriting. No moderator was chosen, and he probably served in that capacity. Five selectmen, a town clerk, two highway surveyors, a land measurer, and a sealer of leather were chosen to serve one year. No treasurer was chosen, or needed, as neither taxes, salaries, nor debts were paid in money, but in grain, provisions, etc., the prices current of which were regulated by a vote of the town, and was called "town pay."¹⁷

Junius, after trips by bicycle to each of the early locations for Thomas Hanchett and a thorough reading of the town records, stated the following:

Deacon Thomas Hanchett was one of the founders of the town of Suffield and took a leading part. The first record is just before the organization of the town and is in reference to the building of the parsonage for Mr. Jno. [probably John] Younglove. The record reads, "At a legal meeting of the inhabitants of Suffield, Nov. 1, 1679" there was a committee of five chosen to see the performance of the work, the first named being Deacon Thomas Hanchett. At a town meeting March 5, 1684 "Dea. Tho. Hanchett" was first named of five selectmen chosen for the year, thus having been successively on the executive committee of Northampton, Westfield, and Suffield a sufficient evidence of the esteem in which he was held wherever he went.

¹⁷ Hezekiah Spencer Sheldon; *Documentary History of Suffield, in the Colony and Province of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England, 1660-1749.*

At a court held at Springfield, September 25, 1683, Thomas Hanchett was chosen one of a committee of six prominent colonists to determine the location of a ferry at Springfield in case the town failed to provide comfortable passage. Deacon Jonathan Burt (already referred to) was on this committee. It seems that the town of Springfield had been presented to the court for failure to supply the passage needed for which it seems there was some excuse by reason of the difficulty in determining the passage. The prominence of the membership of this committee is evidence of the importance at which the duty was esteemed.

At this same court "Thomas Hanchet of Suffield, desiring to be freed from military exercises, this court considering his age and his Crazyness doe grant his desired freedom." The "crazyness" referred to is to be taken in the primary signification of the term and evidently means "shake" physically, which did not impair his usefulness upon the ferry committee or as selectman. Deacon Thomas in his will refers to his craziness of body but soundness of mind. It is evident that his end was nearing, and that he was physically incapacitated in his declining years.

April 16, 1684, Thomas Hanchett was one of three to sign his name to the certificate of the laying out of a highway, and September 30 of that year he was juryman at Springfield although the absence of the designation "Deacon" leaves it a possibility that his son, Thomas, is meant.

Deacon Thomas' holdings in Suffield included his home lot granted to him at the laying out of the town, in 1679, and his sons, Thomas Jr. and John had lots very near him. This lot granted to Deacon Thomas remained in the family until 1873, the last possessor being Miss

Betsey Hanchett, who in her will refers to it as follows: Will dated October 15, 1869. "I give, bequeath, and devise to my kinsman Silas Adams, of Home, Oneida County in the State of New York, the home and farm now in my possession and which I inherited from my father Ezra Hanchett, of Suffield, he being the fifth generation from Deacon Thomas Hanchett, the original proprietor of said farm in the settlement of the town of Suffield. If either of the sons or grandsons of said Silas are willing to take the surname of Hanchett and occupy said farm, it is my choice that the title should be vested in him, though I would not make it obligatory upon them to do so." After the death of Miss Betsey, the estate was shortly sold by the devisees. The writer visited Suffield in 1903 and viewed the old estate which is situated on N. Main St. (High St.) in the most attractive part of this beautiful town. Main St. broadens out at this point into a public green, and is shaded by massive primeval trees in astonishing number. The sidewalks are as broad as streets in other towns and the grass upon them is kept scrupulously trimmed all through the town center. The street itself is double, right and left, and very beautiful. The celebrated Suffield Academy is over the way, not far off is also the public library, forming a set of beautiful buildings. Deacon Hanchett's home lot has passed into other hands on the street front and a row of five or six modern residences now adorn it in keeping with the elegance of the neighborhood. Also still stands the neat but old-style dwelling house of Ezra Hanchett and the older inhabitants remember well the two old maiden ladies, Miss Betsey and Miss Cynthia M. Hanchett, who remained true so long to family traditions, and who lived there.

The original grant, except as disposed of in the front as indicated, is given over to the cultivation of tobacco, as indeed is every good piece of arable land. It extends far back from the street but not as far as the original distance which was prodigious. The part on High St., using the ancient name, is indeed high, and the whole street runs along the ridge of land with a valley on each side.

In the course of researching Thomas, the question was asked if he might have grown tobacco on his land. Fortunately, tobacco raising was not introduced to the area until after Thomas' death.

Deacon Thomas died in Suffield, then a part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony but now in Connecticut, June 11, 1686. His widow married at Springfield, December 14, 1686, Deacon Jonathan Burt, a widower and a prominent man of that town, holding among other offices that of town clerk for several years. He was deacon of the first church of Springfield. Burt died at Springfield, in 1715. After his death the widow Deliverance Burt returned to Suffield and passed the few remaining years of her life with her son John although her son Thomas and a step-son Burt also contributed to her support. She died at Suffield, June 10, 1718 at an advanced age. She must have been well over ninety, and it may be remarked in passing that her son Deacon John died at ninety-five and her grandson John at eighty-two. An old account book, which was in the possession of David Hanchett, of La Porte, Iowa, a very old gentleman (1904), dates back to 1705 and gives some account of the support of the Widow Burt.

Keith Seymour, in his book on the descendants of Thomas Hanchett, discloses Thomas Hanchett's will:

Deacon Hanchett's original will is gone but a copy appears in the 2nd book in the Northampton Probate Office which served Suffield at that time. It reads:

"Suffield, May 19, 1686. The last will and testament of Thomas Hanchet, sense being crazie and infirm of body but of sound understanding is as follows:

In the first place, I give my soul to the all blessed and glorious God who gave it to me and secondly I commit my body to the grave in the comfortable belief and hope (through my blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ) at the last day to be quickened again raised unto glorious life with himself in Heaven. Thirdly, I give order for a decent Christian burial, and for that portion of my estate which God hath given me, I order and dispose of it as followeth, vis.,

1st. First my will is that those parcels of my land at Westfield which I formerly (before this last will making) have in any manner of way granted and passed over and disposed of to my children shall be in the several parcels theirs according to the terms upon which I passed them over and disposed of those parcels unto them and as heretofore in their several parcels each of which have been received and possessed by them and that which was formerly done that way by me to stand firm and good without any alteration or change.

2nd. My will is that the rest of my land (in Westfield) that is yet to be disposed of that my wife shall have it at her disposal during her lifetime and at her decease I will the one land to my daughter Deliverance Weller and what of land there shall be left by my wife at her decease (she having by this will a liberty left to her, if her need require, to sell some of it) I give to my two

sons Thomas and John by indifferent men to be equally divided between them.

3rd. As to my land at Suffield, the income of it I give to my wife during her lifetime and at her decease I give it to my two sons Thomas and John to be divided equally between them by judgment of indifferent men but I will that my two sons shall pay a legacy of twenty pounds to my daughter Hannah Loomis when they shall come into the possession of the land but the house I order to be my son John's wholly and therefore I will unto my daughter Hannah Loomis and will my son Thomas to pay the other five remaining.

4th. In this will I give all my movables to my wife during her lifetime and to her disposal at her decease.

In witness of this my last will I have set my hand.”

Thomas Hanchet SEAL

John Younglove, Joseph Harmon, witnesses.

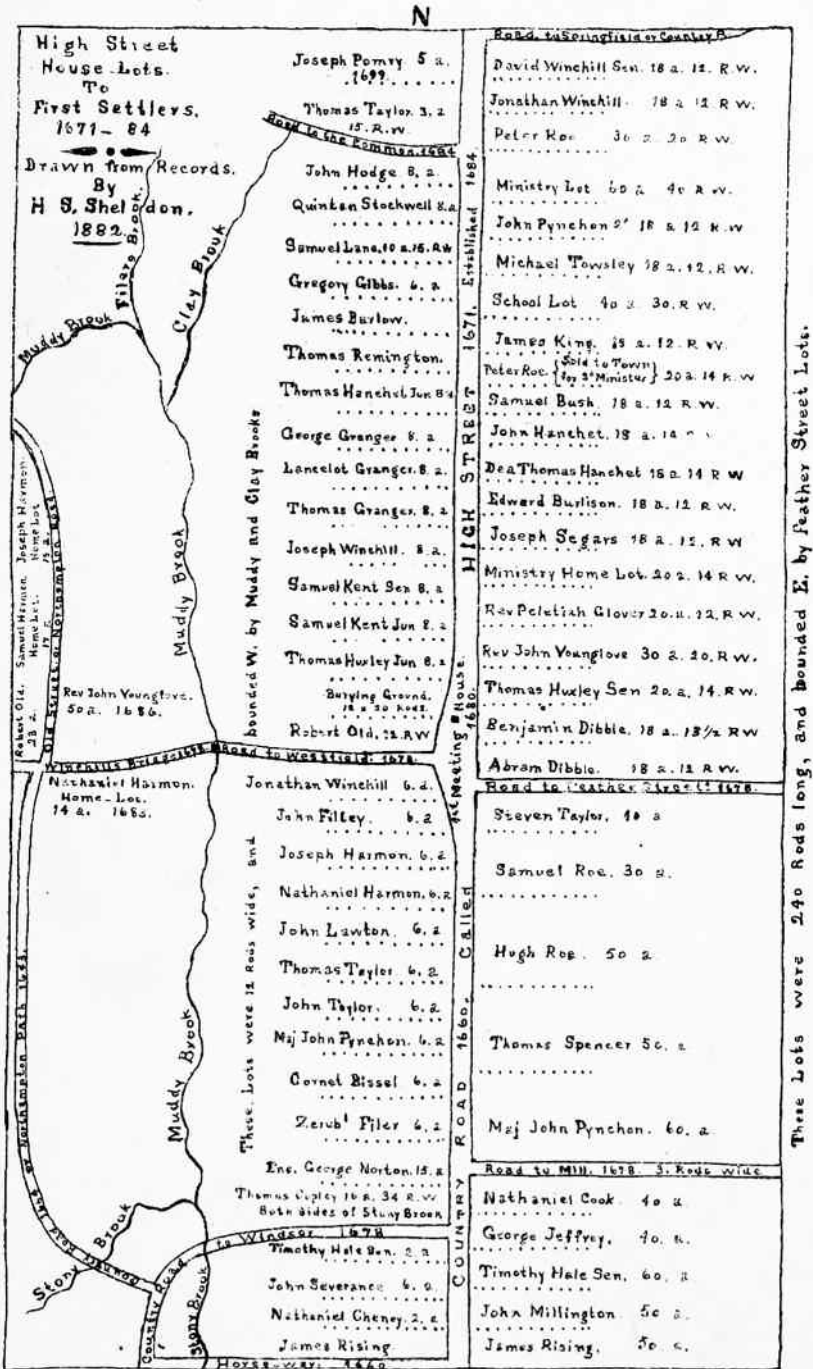
16 November, 1686, allowed before John Pynchon.¹⁸

Deacon Thomas Hanchett's son, Thomas Hanchett, returned to Westfield about 1683 and lived there until his death on 6 May 1719. Deacon John Hanchett, who died in Suffield October 23, 1744, aged ninety-five, was the last survivor of the original “proprietors” of the town of Suffield. He was also the first name recorded in the earliest church records for Suffield.¹⁹

To better understand the significance of being a deacon, consider this: “Second in command to the minister were his deacons, laymen who assisted the minister. An important social role of the deacon was to be part of the seating committee that mapped out the social hierarchy of the congregation: church membership, age, gender, race, wealth,

¹⁸ Keith Seymour; *The Descendants of Thomas Hanchett*

¹⁹ *Connecticut Vital Records Suffield*. Vol. 7, Records of the Congregational Church in Suffield, Conn. 1710 to 1836.



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Suffield Town Layout

public office, education, and reputation were all used to calculate where each congregant would sit. The closer the person sat to the minister, the higher his social (and hopefully spiritual) status.”²⁰

The role of the selectman was similar to today’s town councilman. A position, open only to males in good standing with both the church and the people, the selectman helped write the rules governing social behavior and authorized the raising of taxes where required. In Suffield, being first named, Thomas would have occupied the “chair” position and today would also have been town manager.

So, what more would we like to know about Deacon Thomas? Why did he move as frequently as he did? We can introduce some possibilities.

As to his occupation, some researchers felt he must have been a simple farmer. Of course, everyone farmed at that time. There were no grocery stores as such, and at each location Thomas was provided with farm acreage as well as a house lot. Almost everyone grew the vegetables they needed and, as well, raised cows and pigs for milk and meat. A stronger possibility was that he followed the carpenter’s trade as did his father-in-law, George Langton. Thomas seemed to have been involved in the settlement of new town sites, arriving at about the time churches, parsonages, or mills needed construction

His movements may have had a deeper connection. His residence at Northampton, Westfield, and Suffield seems to follow the opening of those locations by John Pynchon, son of William Pynchon, founder of Springfield. From the book *Colonial Justice in Western Massachusetts*, edited by Joseph H. Smith, we learn that John Pynchon was instrumental in establishing Northampton in 1653, Westfield in 1661, and Suffield in 1670. For each of those towns, John Pynchon advanced the cash, in the form of wampum, to purchase the

²⁰ Reed Digital Collections-Indian Converts Collection-Glossary.



William Pynchon²¹

lands from the Indians. Later on he was reimbursed by the settlers who occupied the land. Pynchon also held lands in New London from an earlier date, and his ill wife was being treated there by the younger John Winthrop and his wife in 1654.²²

John Pynchon was involved in many businesses including farming, furs, cattle, and merchandising of manufactured goods as well as land speculation and town development. Deacon Thomas could have been involved in any one or more of these businesses, but building seems the most likely.

John Pynchon of Springfield, Massachusetts kept an account book which contains a couple of entries for Deacon Thomas Hanchett. Unfortunately, these tell us little, if anything about the relationship between Deacon Thomas Hanchett and John Pynchon. The first entry is dated 24 June 1665 when Deacon

²¹ Mason A., Green: *Springfield 1636-1886*.

²² Joseph H. Smith; *Colonial Justice in Western Massachusetts*.

Thomas was living in Northampton and just concerns an amount paid to Deacon Thomas. The second entry covers dry goods sold to Deacon Thomas.

Any possible connection in New England between Deacon Thomas and John Pynchon would be of great interest, seeing that there was also a family tie some years before in England. Mary Pascall, daughter of Jane Pynchon and Andrew Pascall, married Thomas Hanchett of Braughing, Hertfordshire. Thomas had been admitted to Caius College Cambridge at the age of fifteen and went on to study law at the Inner Temple in London in 1578. He was subsequently justice of the peace and sheriff of Hertfordshire from 1591 to 1600. Jane would have been aunt to William Pynchon and great aunt to John Pynchon.²³

Roger Thompson in his book *Mobility and Migration* makes the following observation: “However powerful mutual clientage or church membership might be, the tie that bound most tightly was kinship, through either blood or marriage. Within the companies of gentlemen or clergymen, or among those traveling independently, there were extended families of sometimes extraordinary complexity.” He then goes on to say:

The presence of community leaders was of the utmost importance. There was a marked shift over the decade from predominantly lay-led companies to clerically inspired groups. The Winthrops, Pynchons, Dudleys, and Johnsons—along with Rossiters, Saltonstalls, Endecotts, Ludlows, or Humphreys from other areas—provided gentry leadership in England, on the voyage, and during the initial wave of mass migration. Used to exerting control in their local districts, investors in the Massachusetts Bay Company, recruiters of craftsmen and specialists as well as kinsfolk and clients, organizers of provisioning, equipment, transport, and

²³ Walter C. Metcalfe, Editor: *Visitations of Essex 1612, by Raven, for Pedigrees of Pynchon and Pascall*, 262 and 266.

embarkation, they naturally assumed command once in the Bay. They chose town sites and supervised their companies; they reached crucial decisions with their peers and prior friends and acquaintances on the Court of Assistants. They behaved much as local justices in Essex or Norfolk were accustomed to, especially in the last two decades of ecological and economic disasters. Thus was a sense of hierarchy transferred. Clients followed and deferred to patrons. Gentlemanly obligations of hospitality and good neighborhood persisted. Winthrop obeyed the same sense of noblesse oblige as generations of lords of the manor of Groton when he shared his flour supply with the hungry during the starving time of 1630-31. The Cambridge Agreement signed by these early gentle and lay leaders must have been a powerful persuasion to yeoman and artisan neighbors or tenants and servants concerned about the way their world was deteriorating.

It was not until the second surge, heralded by the arrival of Cotton, Hooker, and Samuel Stone in the *Griffin* in 1633, that clerical leadership of companies took over. Previous ministerial emigrants had usually been young and little known, but names like Sheppard, Ward, Rogers, Knowles, or Peck enjoyed greater celebrity. Their companies, already formally or informally “gathered” in Greater East Anglia, predated the “wandering congregations” identified in New England. The nature of the cement of these second- and third-wave godly companies was subtly different from that of the earlier lay-led cohorts. This may help explain the marked rise in the evangelical temperature of the Bay after 1633. Religious enthusiasm is explosively released as godly company after godly company arrived to breathe freer and purified New World air.

This breaking free should not be exaggerated. The “wandering congregations” were also carefully graded by rank and often also related by blood or marriage. Kinship networks, the third and most pervasive basis of company travel, would have a restraining as well as a reassuring component. The extended family group under a single patriarch or an oligarchy of clan leaders would transfer the elaborate pecking order of the Old World to the New. It could be expected to nurture the continuance of “English ways” in the new homes. Indeed, home sites might even be chosen because they reminded the group of what had been left behind. The company nature of emigration would tend to dampen eagerness for change or experimentation. It would also discourage mobility in the new environment and encourage a clannishness in individual settlements. This might result in feuding among “mixed multitudes,” as happened between East Anglians and West Countrymen in New Hingham and later at Marblehead and Gloucester. It is possible that other New England conflicts, like the Antinomian Crisis, the Child Remonstrance, the Half-Way Covenant, even Salem witchcraft, had some basis in intra- or interregional rivalries exacerbated by company solidarity.²⁴

Suffield today retains its beauty and charm as a village on a hillside just above the Connecticut River Valley. The original settlement was located on the eastern side of and just below the top of Meeting House Hill. This location looks out over the valley and fertile fields which line each side of the river. At the top of the hill stands the Congregational church and the graveyard which contains many Hanchett graves. It is no wonder that Thomas Hanchett chose this as his final paradise.

²⁴ Roger Thompson: *Mobility and Migration: East Anglian Founders of New England, 1629-1640.*



The Cemetery at the First Congregational Church in Suffield²⁵

²⁵ Photo by author.



Thomas Hanchett's Locations in Connecticut

Chapter 2

John Hansett (Hanchett), a Possible Relative

The first notice of John Hansett comes from the records of the First Church of Boston, dated 13 July 1634. Here he is admitted to church membership and is designated as “a servant to our Pastor, John Wilson.”²⁶

Again, Thompson in his book provides some meaning to the word “servant”:

The third sub-adult group, designated servants, were young agricultural workers or “servants in husbandry.” Some “servants” in lists of emigrant artisan households may have been servants in husbandry responsible for helping craftsmen who also farmed. Unlike apprentices, this group was usually hired by the year. Their verbal contracts were often sealed by payment of a hiring penny and might be formally recorded at a petty sessions or statute sessions. These forerunners of the servant-hiring fairs were usually held around Michaelmas (29 September), and provided a holiday occasion for a whole neighborhood’s youth. Kinship networks were useful sources of information, contacts, and often contracts in these annual redeployments of the agrarian labor force ...²⁷

We may safely assume, based on the forgoing, that John Hansett, later designated as husbandman, learned some of his

²⁶ Church records for the First Church of Boston, Massachusetts

²⁷ Roger Thompson: *Mobility and Migration: East Anglican Founders of New England, 1629-1640*

agricultural skills while assisting on the farm belonging to Pastor John Wilson.

Pastor Wilson was one of the best known and best loved clergymen in the colonies. He was born in Windsor, Berkshire in 1588 and began lecturing at Sudbury, Suffolk in 1620. Wilson was trained as a cleric at King's College Cambridge, graduating in 1609.²⁸

Wilson sailed with John Winthrop and the other early settlers of New England in 1630. Subsequently he made two return voyages to England; the first to convince his wife that she should join him in Boston and the second to settle the estate of his bother, Dr. Edward Wilson. John Wilson returned from his first trip back to England in company with his wife on the ship *Whale* captained by Mr. Graves, departing England early April, 1632. Additional passengers included Richard Dummer and several young men as part of the Company of Husbandmen. One year earlier, the ship *Plough*, also captained by Mr. Graves, brought a dozen or so men who originally intended to occupy the Lagonia Plantation of Southern Maine. Most of the young male passengers on the *Whale* were sons of the merchants who had founded the company or young men who had been sponsored by those merchants.²⁹

Wilson returned from his second return trip to England in the summer of 1635. If he in fact brought his servant John Hanchett with him on one of his voyages, it would have had to be on his original or first return trip, considering that John Hanchett was admitted to Wilson's church in the summer of 1634.³⁰

Wilson brought his wife to New England on his first return trip and that would have been the time for his needing a servant such as John Hanchett. The parish registers for All Saints Church in Sudbury, Suffolk, where John Wilson

²⁸ "John Wilson Minister." *Wikipedia*

²⁹ V. O. Sanborn; *Stephen Bachiler and the Plough Company of 1630: Collections of the Maine Historical Society.*

³⁰ See also Cotton Mather: *Magnalia Christi Americana.*

preached prior to coming to New England were checked for the early sixteen hundreds without finding any Hanchetts listed. John Hanchett could have been a parishioner there without showing up on the parish registers.

Interestingly, Reverend Wilson took on another servant shortly after his return on his 1632 trip. John Smith, the younger, from the Plough Company became Wilson's second servant by court order on 5 July 1632. Smith had also traveled on the *Whale* to Boston with Wilson. By 3 September 1635, the general court ordered that John Smith be sent out of their jurisdiction within six weeks for his "diverse dangerous opinions." John Smith went on to Weymouth, well south of Boston. John Hanchett fared much better, possibly because he had traveled with Wilson from England as a servant and the court did not get involved with John Hanchett's placement.

The next notice of John Hansett comes as he was made freeman 17 May 1637. Here his name was spelled "Hanchet." For the next nine years John moved frequently. On 30 October 1637 he was granted a "Great Lot" at the Mount (Wollaston) which of course was Braintree. On 19 November 1638, the town of Ipswich granted him six acres of planting grounds and on the same day John purchased a dwelling house on one half acre of land in that same town. There is no record that he ever resided at Ipswich but he apparently was at Braintree until October of 1646 at which point he removed to Roxbury.

John married at least twice. His first wife was Elizabeth, surname unknown, who was admitted to the First Church of Boston on 18 August 1639. By her he had a child, John Hansett, born in Braintree, Massachusetts, 15 July 1641. That child died at Roxbury, 2 April 1654. John married his second wife, Elizabeth Perry, the widow of John Perry, at Roxbury on 2 April 1644. By his second wife he had five more children as follows:

- 2) Thomas Hansett, baptized in Roxbury on 19 October 1645, no further record. Obviously, this was not the Thomas

Hanchett of Wethersfield, Connecticut, as has been suggested.

- 3) Hannah Hansett, baptized in Roxbury on 28 March 1647; died in Roxbury 25 May 1648 “of windy convulsions.”
- 4) Hannah Hansett, baptized in Roxbury on 14 October 1649; died in Roxbury 2 November 1649 “of the cough and cold.”
- 5) Peter Hansett, baptized in Roxbury on 6 July 1651; married by 1680.
- 6) Mary Hansett (her eldest known child born in Cambridge 2 May 1680.)
- 7) Elizabeth Hansett, died in Roxbury 9 June 1668.

The final notice of John Hanchett is the inventory of his estate:

The inventory of the estate of “John Hansett of Roxbury deceased,” taken 25 February 1683[/4], totaled £100 16s. 10d., of which £75 9s. was real estate: “the dwelling house, barn, out housing, orchard lands, meadow, being the homestead,” £45; “in the third division of allotments, the 19th allotment, twelve acres,” £12; “in the thousand acres, nineteen acres lying in the ninth hundred,” 9s. 10d.; and “two acres of salt marsh in the island,” £18. On 29 April 1684, administration on the estate of “John Hanset late of Roxbury deceased intestate” was granted to “Elizabeth his relict widow.”³¹

For most of the last one hundred years, it has been suggested that John Hanchett of Boston might have been a brother to Thomas Hanchett of Wethersfield. The argument goes that since both named their first son after themselves, their second son after a possible brother, their first daughter

³¹ Robert Charles Anderson: *The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England* (Series 2), Volume III, G-H.

after their wife and their second daughter Hannah, there must surely have been some connection. Also, their surnames were both spelled Hansett in early legal documents.

On the other side of the argument, there is no record of their ever doing anything jointly. If the name “Hannah” was in memory of their mother, one would think we could find some record of Hannah Hanchett in England prior to 1630, but none has been found. Finally, Thomas might have named his second daughter, Hannah, after his wife’s stepmother, Hannah Langton. Another striking difference between Thomas and John Hanchett is that John signed his legal documents with an X while Thomas wielded an enviable signature. This might indicate that Thomas was better educated than John.



From a Drawing made from Description

THE MUD AND THATCHED HUT WHICH SERVED AS THE ORIGINAL FIRST CHURCH IN BOSTON, MASS.

First Church Boston, Massachusetts³²

³² Albert Christopher Addison: *The Romantic Story of the Puritan Fathers: And Their Founding of New Boston ...*



Reverend John Wilson of Boston³³

³³ A. B. Ellis: *History of the First Church in Boston, 1630-1880*.

Chapter 3

Possible English Ancestry of Thomas Hanchett

Thomas Hanchett left few clues to his English ancestry. That he came from England is nearly certain as the name has not been found in any other country at the time of his arrival.

Thomas' signature alongside Henry Smith's on the will of Leonard Chester, and the fact that Henry's son Samuel Smith followed Thomas to Northampton and Westfield while Henry's grandson, Samuel Smith II, followed Thomas to Suffield are persuasive to indicate that there was a relationship between Thomas Hanchett and Henry Smith. A short introduction to Henry Smith, pastor at Wethersfield, would be useful.

As much as was known about Henry Smith, in 1904, was well documented in Stiles' book on Wethersfield. According to Stiles, Henry sailed from England with his wife and four children. In the century that followed Stiles' work, a few more details have emerged.

Peter Wilson Coldham's book, *The Complete Book of Emigrants*, published in 1986, reveals that in April 1637, one Henry Smith accompanied by his wife, four children, and four men and four women servants set sail from Weymouth on a ship of unknown name captained by Mr. John Driver. Samuel Smith's letter to his son as quoted in Chapter 1 tells us that Henry Smith brought men servants and maid servants with him from England. It is interesting that on that same ship was Richard Smith and two children with one servant. There was a Richard Smith family at Wethersfield, Connecticut for many

years. Of the rest of the passengers, none ended up in Wethersfield.

Among the other passengers aboard that vessel was Henry Webb, a prominent merchant who came to be known as the “Merchant of Boston.” In fact, most of the passengers came with servants and most of the passengers were wealthy merchants. One particular passenger of further interest is Edward Rawson. He happened to become the secretary of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, but of more importance to us is the fact that he was the nephew of Reverend John Wilson, mentioned in Chapter 2 as the person to whom John Hanchett of Boston was a servant. Due to the early demise of Rawson’s father, he probably grew up in the household of his grandparents, the Reverend William Wilson and his wife Isabel, parents of John Wilson.³⁴

Anderson in his *Introduction to the Winthrop Fleet* provides the following insight into emigration from England to New England during the period from 1634 to 1637.³⁵

The Laudian Migration ... began with a trickle in 1632 and 1633 and grew by an order of magnitude in 1634 and the rest of the 1630s ... The differences in organization and structure between the Laudian Migration and the Winthrop Migration are striking. The Laudian Migration did not create Gentlemen’s Companies or Merchant’s Companies. Those participants in the Laudian Migration who were gathered in companies came as members of Clerical Companies or Extended Family Companies.

No corporate office in London organized and provided for these companies. The families generally made their way to the London docks, or less frequently to the docks at one or another of the out ports, and signed on

³⁴ Peter Wilson Coldham; *The Complete Book of Emigrants 1607-1660*

³⁵ Robert Charles Anderson: “Introduction to the Winthrop Fleet” in the Fall 2012 Issue of *American Ancestors*

for passage in vessels designated for that purpose by ship-owners looking for the business, and generally not otherwise devoted to the colonization process. These passengers had to provide or purchase their own provisions for the passage and for their use once on the ground in Massachusetts Bay.

There were large numbers of servants in the Laudian Migration, but they did not migrate as large numbers of unattached individuals with the intention of residing on their own once in New England. Most of the servants who came during these later years of the 1630s were sprinkled about, one or two or three to a nuclear family. Once in Massachusetts Bay they remained as members of these family households, and the authorities there soon developed regulations requiring them to remain in such households. In contrast with the Winthrop Migration, the Laudian Migration was directed from the bottom up, the migrants organizing themselves around those Puritan ministers who chose to make the move to New England. In the typical sequence, a few families might precede the minister across the Atlantic, followed by the minister along with several more families, and then succeeded by a few more families who had been attracted to the group. Interestingly, only in this period of the Laudian Migration, with its explosion of Clerical Companies, did the most prominent of the Puritan ministers finally decide to leave for New England. The Massachusetts Bay Company had tried to lure Hugh Peter, and probably John Cotton and Thomas Hooker, to join the passengers of 1629 and 1630, but they remained in England, or moved to Holland, believing that they should continue the battle against the Laudians on (or near) English ground. As a result, the ministers who were recruited in 1629 and 1630, although of solid Puritan beliefs, were not of the caliber of many

of those who came later. Only when their options had run out did the Cottons and Hookers and their like finally make the move, thus setting in motion eighty percent of the Great Migration.

Although we have a sketchy review of the life of Henry Smith at Cambridge from Venn, it is not known for certain where he might have served as cleric between his ordination at Peterborough in 1623 and his departure for New England in 1637 except for a short stay at Cottingham in 1624. This was proven by a matching of the signature of Henry Smith at Cottingham and Henry's signature as witness to the will of Thomas Hooker of Hartford, Connecticut. The two signatures appear below.³⁶

A handwritten Latin document on aged paper. The text reads: "J Henry Smith Bacchalaureus in Artibus doz willingly & ex animo subscribe to the three Articles agreed upon in the Convocation holden at Westminster in Anno doz 1604. and to all things therein contained." Below the text is a signature that reads "Henry Smith." followed by a flourish.

Henry Smith at Cottingham

A close-up of a handwritten document showing two signatures. The first signature is "Henry Smith" and the second is "Sam. Stone". The paper is heavily stained and the ink is somewhat faded.

Henry Smith in Connecticut

Signatures of the Henry Smith who agreed to the Articles of the Convocation of Westminster of 1604 and Henry Smith of Wethersfield who witnessed the will of Thomas Hooker, pastor at Hartford.

³⁶ J. A. Venn, comp: *Alumni Cantabrigienses*.

It is also interesting to note that Leonard Chester, Henry Smith, and George Langton, Thomas' father-in-law, are all supposed, according to Stiles, to have been from near the town of Blaby in Leicestershire, England. Although there were hundreds of Smiths with common first names such as Henry, John, Thomas, William, etc., Henry Smith's son Peregrine's name was indeed unusual. There was a Peregrine Smith born at Bourough on the Hill, Leicestershire in 1628. That location is just a couple of miles from Withcote, Leicestershire, the home of Ambrose Smith of Leicestershire and London. Further investigation revealed that there was a marriage between Henry Smith and Marie Burroughs at Burrough on the Hill in 1622. We also find a Henricus Smythe born 21 December 1599 at Lubenham, Leicestershire, son of Thome Smyth, and a Mary Burrow born at Billesdon, Leicestershire on 14 December 1600, daughter of George Burrow. It is notable that Henry Smith's first daughter, by his first wife, was said, by Henry's descendents, to have been named Mary.

A birth date of around 1600 fits well with Henry Smith's matriculation at Cambridge in 1618. An earlier birth date as has been suggested in many write-ups on Henry Smith would have put him beyond the usual age to enter Cambridge. Stiles suggests that Henry Smith might be related to the Smith family of Withcote, Leicestershire. No clear connection has been found, but if he was he would have had a perfect example of a Puritan minister in "silver tongued" Henry Smith, a member of the Withcote branch, who lectured for years at Saint Clement Danes in London.

If Thomas Hanchett arrived in Wethersfield around 1645 to work on the church, he would have had to start his apprenticeship not later than 1638. Interestingly, a Thomas Banshott traveled on the ship *Bevis* as servant to William Carpenter Senior and William Carpenter Junior, both of whom were listed on the ship's manifest as carpenters. The ship departed Southampton, England in May 1638. No record of the

surname Banshot has been found in England at any time where records are available nor has it been found in America. Hanshott was an occasional spelling for Hanchett in the seventeenth hundreds and phonetically is certainly close to Banshot.

Another interesting fact about the ship *Bevis* is that it was owned by Richard Dummer, the same person who financed the Company of Husbandmen. Dummer was aboard the *Bevis* when it left Southampton just as he was aboard the *Whale* which sailed with John Wilson in 1632. On arrival at Boston, the Carpenter family proceeded to Weymouth on the South Shore. John Hanchett, servant to John Wilson, moved to Braintree at about that time. Braintree is immediately to the north of Weymouth. The town boundaries actually touch.

John Hanchett's first wife died about 1645 whereupon he remarried and moved to Roxbury. The Carpenter family, in a group with their minister from Weymouth, moved on to settle Rehoboth near Providence, Rhode Island. At about that time construction began on the church building in Wethersfield. William Carpenter Junior was a very successful man, holding significant positions in both towns. He was said to be an excellent writer and actually left his children books in Greek and Hebrew. Young Thomas Hanchett could have learned a lot from him.

What was a "servant" in those times? Thompson in his book *Mobility and Migration* gives us the answer.³⁷

Most servants who emigrated from Greater East Anglia in the 1630s were adolescents. As such they were usually living in the households of their masters and mistresses, undergoing "training unalloyed by the sentiment of family." In Greater East Anglia, England, generally, most adolescents were deemed servants.

³⁷ Roger Thompson: *Mobility and Migration: East Anglian Founders of New England, 1629-1640*.

Service was a normal part of vocational education, even for the sprigs of the aristocracy. In a predominantly agrarian society, farm service deploys physically strong but only partially skilled labor force where it was most needed. It transferred hungry mouths from the cottages and hovels of smallholders and laborers to the farms of the better-off husbandmen, yeomen, or gentlemen who required additional help. Apprenticeship controlled numbers entering crafts and maintained standards of production, pricing, and skill.

Service had an important social and psychological function. It provided a controlled environment for the transition from childhood to adulthood. Servants were still dependents but removed from their emotionally charged parental homes. Their masters were answerable to authority for them, but they also provided board, lodging, and modest wages in kind, thus shielding them from the far more marginal existence of the day laborer. The servant might have little property, but at least he or she would not starve. The period between mid-teens and mid-twenties was also an opportunity for accumulating modest capital or money-earning skills in preparation for marriage. Service provided possibilities for young people to meet but placed a damper on sexual urges by its demand for hard work and obedience to strict discipline ...

Much migration to other colonies, like Virginia or Maryland, was by indentured servants who sold their labor in the New World for a set period in return for their passage.

Parish records from the four county areas where Hanchetts prevailed during that time are far from complete. Many were destroyed over the years while some parishes did not seem to record birth data as well as others. We will never have a complete set of parish records for christenings/baptisms from which to perform an exhaustive search for Thomas Hanchett.

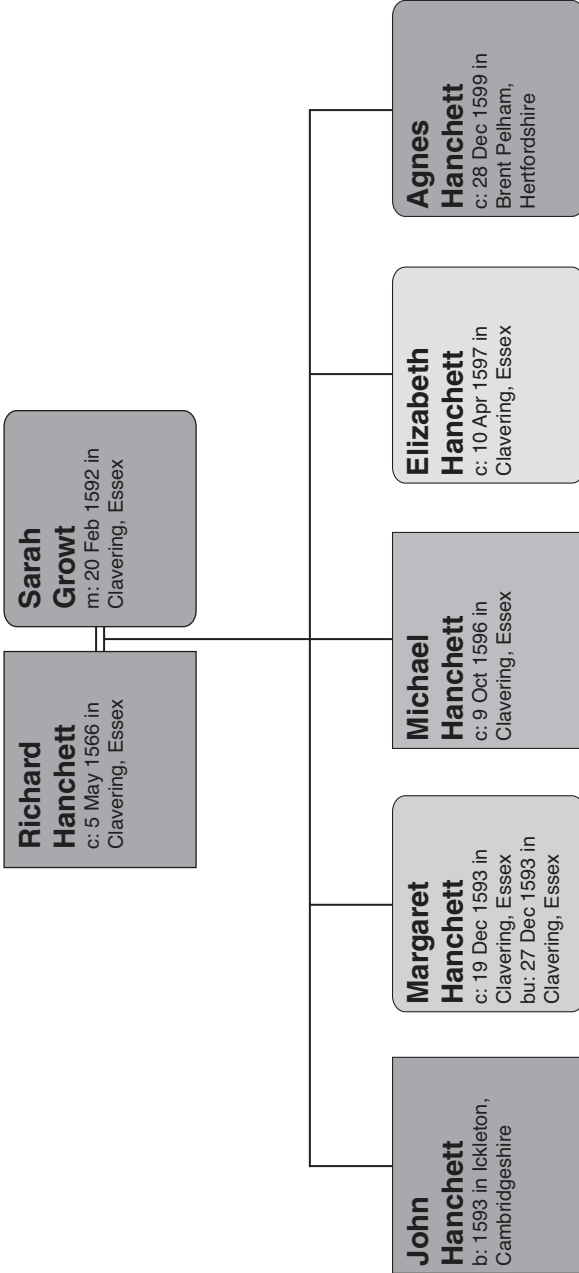
Marriage records are more plentiful, possibly due to the fact that transcription and compilation began earlier in time.

A list of all known marriage records in our period of interest, for males with surname “Hanchett” and acceptable variants, in chronological order, follows. Any one of these couples could have been the parents of the Thomas Hanchett we are looking for. By examining each family for wills, christening records or birth records we can eliminate at least some of the contenders.

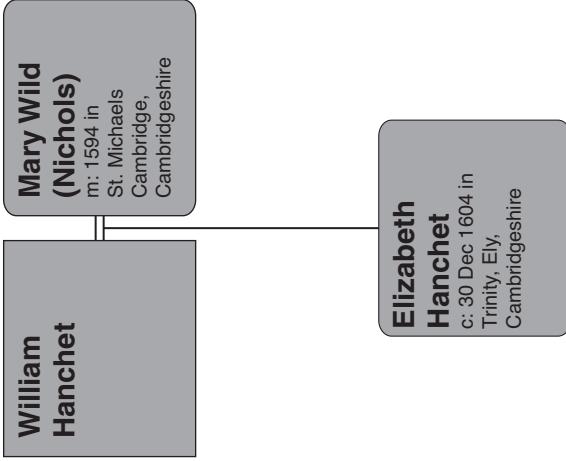
***Marriages of Male Hanchetts in England
from 1590 through 1626***³⁸

1) Richard and Sarah Growt	1592	Clavering, Essex
2) Wilm and Mary Wild (Nichols)	1594	St. Michaels, Cambridge
3) Thomas and Saphira Gillam	1596	Clavering, Essex
4) Michael and Agnes Course	1596	Layston, Herts.
5) John and Constance Haggar	1599	Bourn, Cambs.
6) John and Rose Miltson	1600	Clavering, Essex
7) John and Dorothy Bard	1604	Little Hadham, Herts.
8) Robert and Katherin Haldin	1606	Braughin, Herts.
9) Edward and Eliza. Thurton	1608	Broome, Norfolk
10) James and Margaret Carter	1613	Ganlingay, Cambs.
11) James and Annis Kellet	1613	Bourn, Cambs.
12) Thomas and Alice Carter	1615	Bourn, Cambs.
13) John and Priscilla Calcote	1617	Bourn, Cambs.
14) John and Ann Linsey	1619	Clavering, Essex
15) Thomas and Elizabeth Winn	1620	Messing, Essex
16) John and Barbara Walker	1621	London
17) Thomas and Eliz. Willett	1621-28	Arkesden, Essex
18) James and Margaret Parneby	1622	Bourn, Cambs.
19) Giles and Agnes Gunton	1623	Sutton, Cambs.
20) Nicholas and Frances Blacktop	1626	St. Edward, Cambs.
21) John and Maria Humfry	1626	St. Mary, Bocking, Essex

³⁸ *Boyd's Marriage Index of England, 1st and 2nd Series, 1500-1837.*

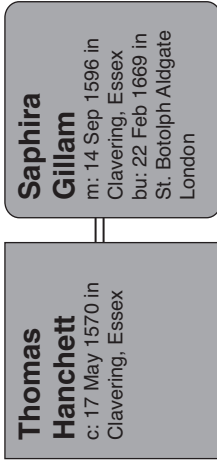


Family of Richard and Sarah Hanchett of Clavering and Brent Pelham



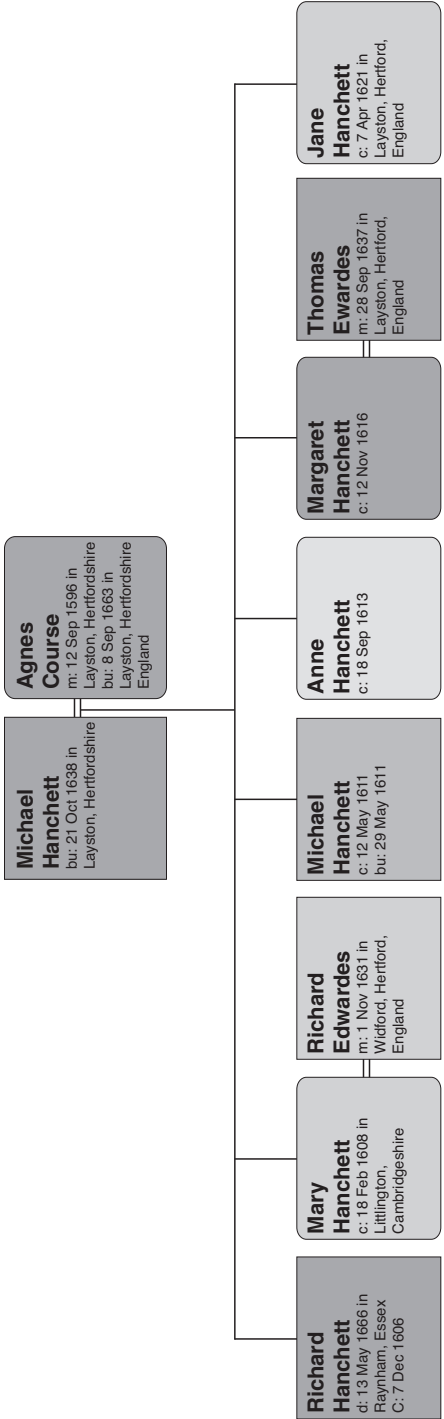
Family of William and Mary Hanchet of Cambridge Cambridgeshire

2) William Hanchet and Mary Wild were married at Saint Michaels church in Cambridge in 1594. She was probably a widow with maiden name Nichols. Elizabeth is a possible child christened at Trinity church in Ely.



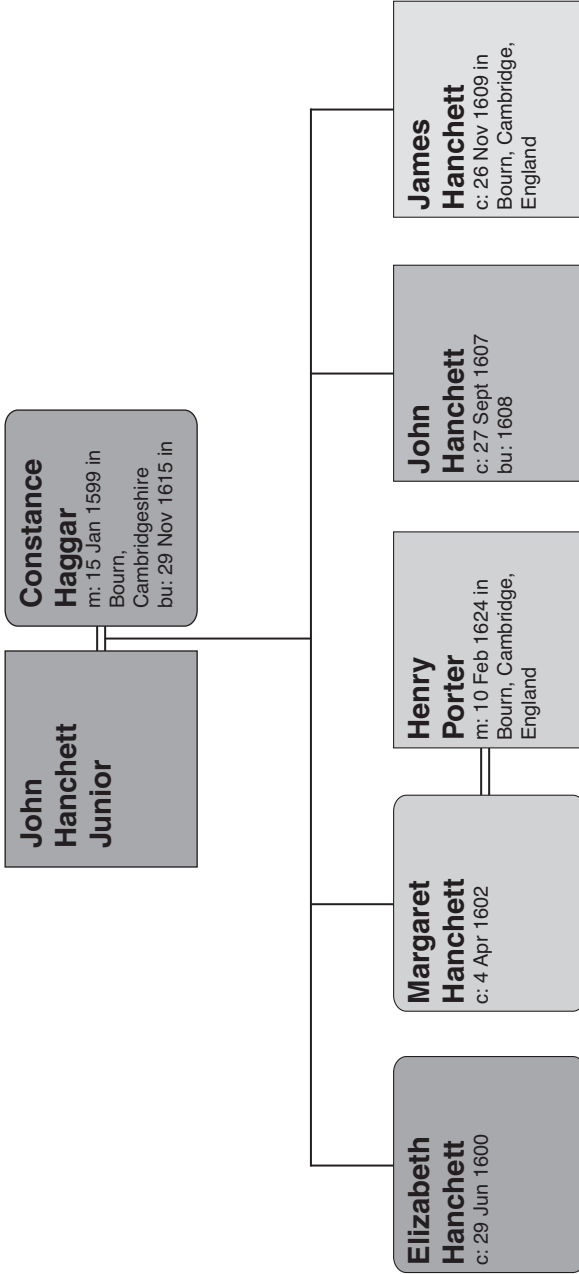
Family of Thomas and Saphira Hanchett in Clavering, Essex, and London

3) Thomas Hanchett and Saphira Gillam were married at Clavering, Essex in 1596. Thomas was born in Clavering and was possibly a brother of Richard 1) and John 6) above. No children have been found from this marriage although the court rolls for Thurocks Manor indicate that Thomas Hanchett stayed in the Clavering area at least until the early 1630s. Saphira died in London in proximity to other Gillam family members, several of whom passed on during the plague epidemic in London in 1667.



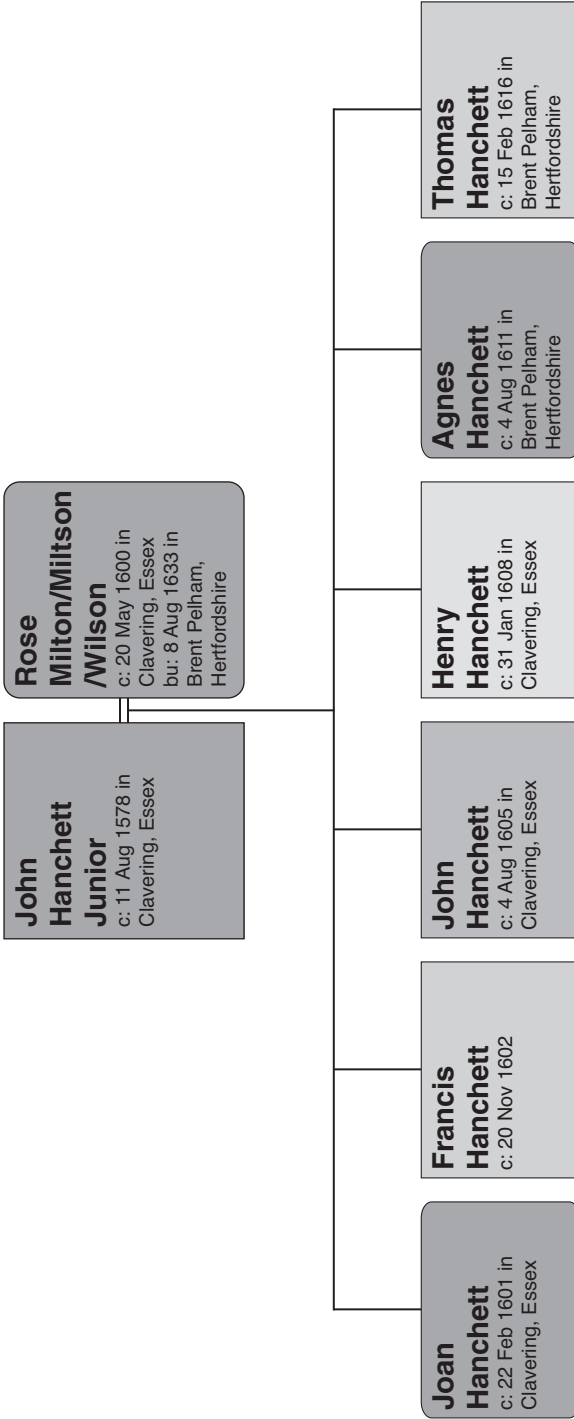
Family of Michael and Agnes Hanchett of Layston, Hertfordshire

4) The next couple which could possibly be the parents of Thomas Hanchett, emigrant, were Michael Hanchett and Agnes Course of Layston, Hertfordshire. The Christian name Michael appears only in the Hanchetts from Clavering, but it is not clear where this Michael came from.



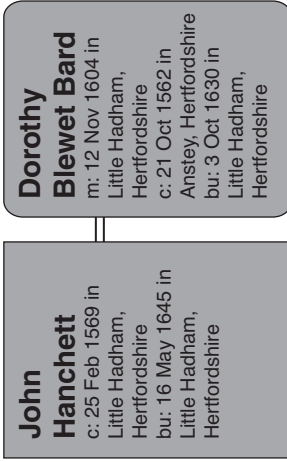
Family of John and Constance Hanchett of Bourn, Cambridgeshire

5) John Hanchett Junior and Constance Haggar were married in Bourn, Cambridgeshire in 1599. The Lord of the Manor of Bourn was John Haggar, but Constance came from another Haggar family branch in Hertfordshire.



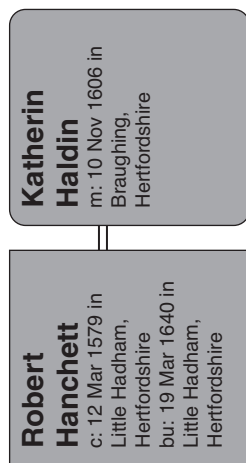
Family of John and Rose Hanchett of Clavering and Brent Pelham

1) and 6). The males of couples 1 and 6 are presumed to be brothers and sons of John Hanchett Senior of Clavering, Essex. Both were born in Clavering and were married there. Richard and Sarah were the first to move to Brent Pelham about 1598 while John and Rose followed about 1610. The charts show the families of each of these individuals.



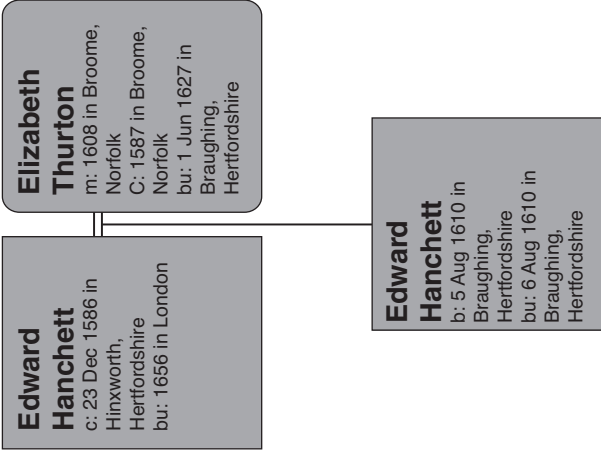
John and Dorothy Hanchett of Little Hadham, Hertfordshire

- 7) John Hanchett of Little Hadham, Hertfordshire married the widow, Dorothy Blewet Bard when Dorothy was forty-two years of age and seven years his senior. Not surprisingly, there were no recorded children from this marriage.



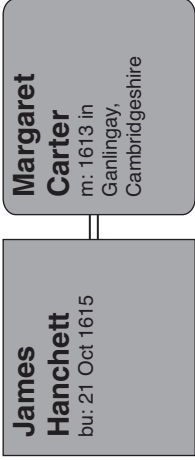
Family of Robert and Katherin Hanchett in Little Hadham, Hertfordshire

8) Robert Hanchett and Katherin Haldin were married at Braughing, Hertfordshire in 1606. They returned to Little Hadham, where they lived out their lives, but there are no recorded children for this family.



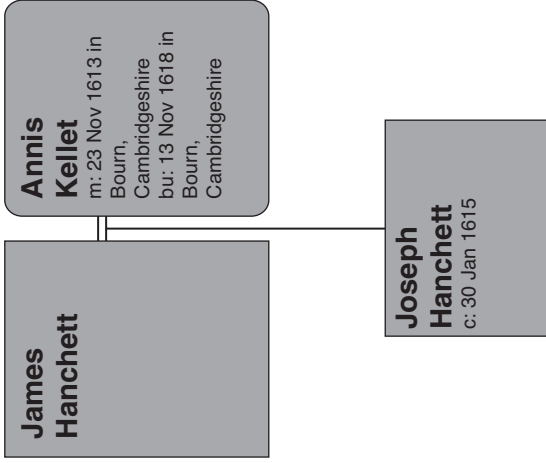
Family of Edward and Elizabeth Hanchett of Braughing, Hertfordshire

9) Edward Hanchett, Esquire of Braughing, Hertfordshire married Elizabeth Thurton at Broome, Norfolk in 1608. They had but one child who lived only a few days. Elizabeth died in 1627 and Edward married second, Jane Garton with whom he might have had another child or two in London. Edward died intestate, but Jane left a will mentioning no children. The Heralds Visitation of 1635 for Hertfordshire indicated at that time Edward had no living children.



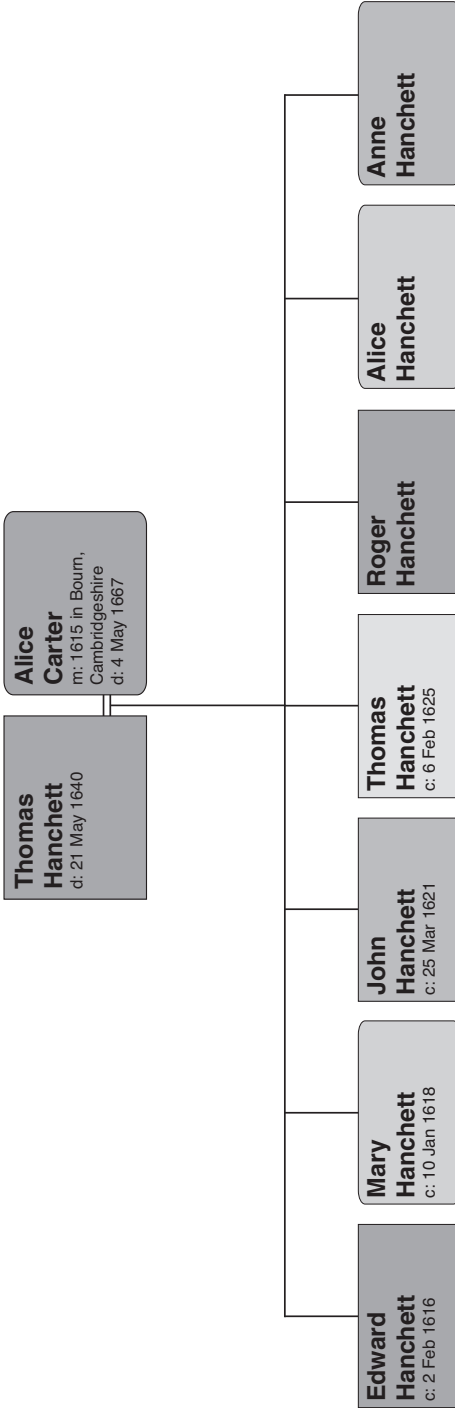
Family of James and Margaret Hanchett of Bourn, Cambridgeshire

10) James Hanchett of Bourn married Margaret Carter as his second wife in Ganlingay, Cambridgeshire, 1613. His first wife, Alice, died in Bourn in 1611. James died intestate in 1615 but his probate mentions his relict Margaret. No children are recorded in Bourn.



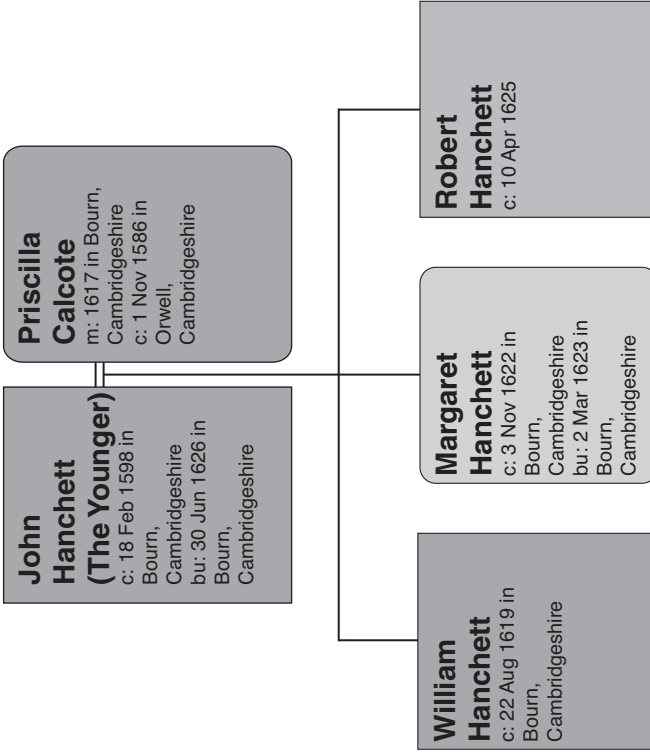
Family of James and Annis Hanchett of Bourn, Cambridgeshire

- 11) James Hanchett and Annis Kellett were married in Bourn, Cambridgeshire in 1613. Annis died in 1618. According to the Bourn parish registers, only one child was born to this couple. After Annis' death in 1618, James married Margaret Parneby [see 16) below].



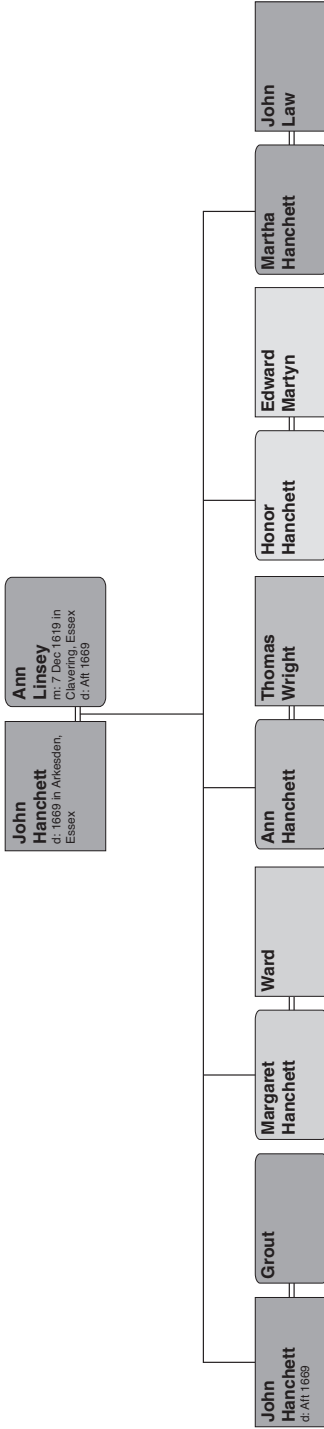
Family of Thomas and Alice Hanchett of Bourn, Cambridgeshire

12) Thomas Hanchett and Alice Carter were married in 1615 in Bourn, Cambridgeshire. Four children are recorded in the Bourn parish register, while three more are mentioned in the wills of both Thomas and Alice. Based on their wills, all of their children seemed to have stayed in England.



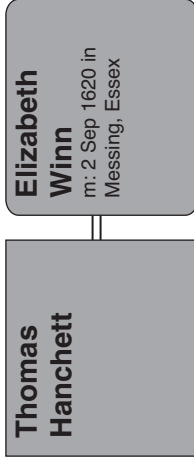
Family of John and Priscilla Hanchett in Bourn, Cambridgeshire

13) John Hanchett and Priscilla Calcote were married in Bourn, Cambridgeshire in 1617.



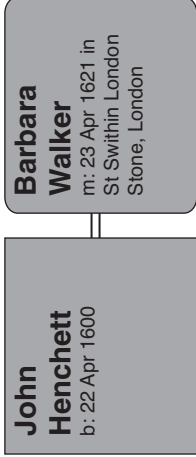
Family of John and Ann Hanchett of Clavering, Essex

14) John Hanchett, who stayed in Clavering after the removal of most of his family to Arkesden, Essex, married Ann Linsey in 1619. John was the son of John Hanchett, the first Hanchett of Arkesden. His will from 1669 mentions only the children noted above.



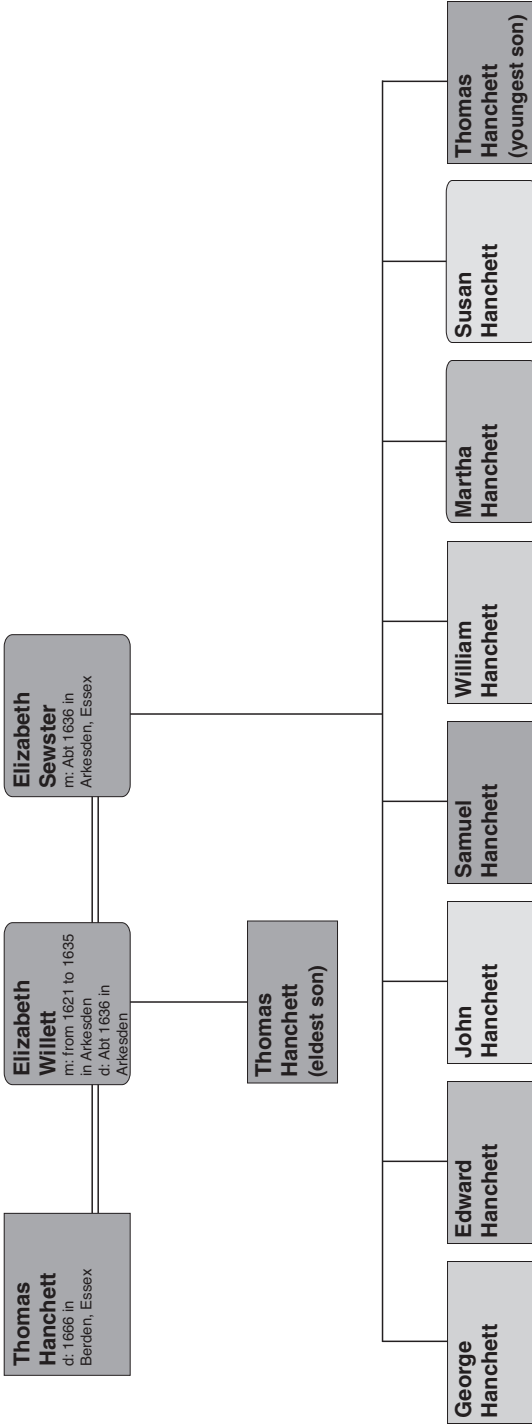
Family of Thomas and Elizabeth Hanchett of Messing, Essex

15) With the gap in parish records during the early seventeenth century for this parish, the possibility of children for this family is ill defined. Could this have been an earlier marriage for either Thomas of Braughing, or Thomas of Arkesden?



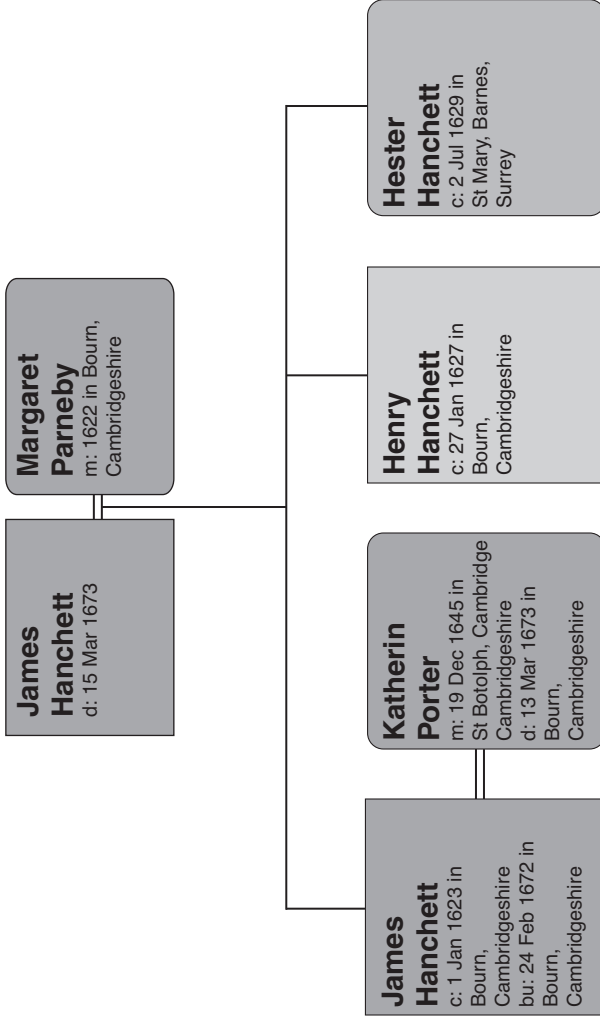
Family of John and Barbara Hanchet of London

16) John Hanchet and Barbara Walker were married at Saint Swithin London Stone, London in 1621. The parish register entry indicates that John became of full age (21) on his wedding day. Although there was a John Hanchet buried at Dry-Drayton, Cambridgeshire in 1623, no connection has been made. No children have been located for this marriage.



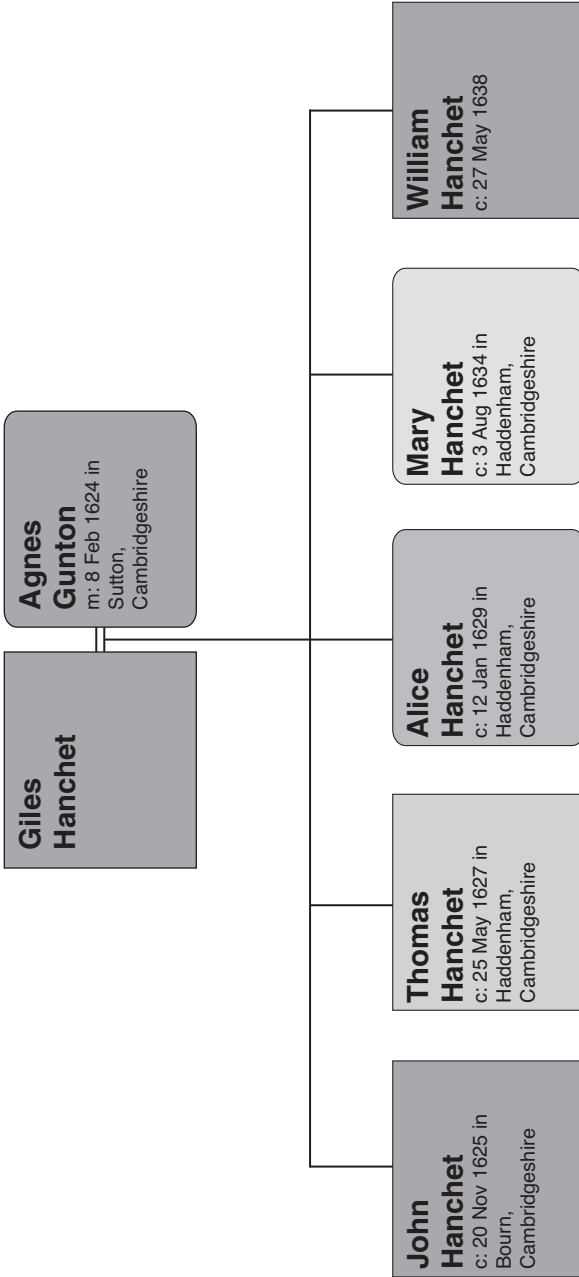
Family of Thomas and Elizabeth Hanchett of Arkesden

17) Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden married Elizabeth Willett between 1621 and 1636. Their child, Thomas Hanchett, was listed in the will of Thomas' brother, Roger, dated 1650 as the oldest son. Elizabeth Willett was not married at the time of her father's will in 1621. Elizabeth Willett is named as Thomas' wife in a suit dated 1635. Their son Thomas was born sometime after their marriage. Elizabeth Willett Hanchett was replaced by Elizabeth Shewster as wife of the father, Thomas, in a suit dated 1637.



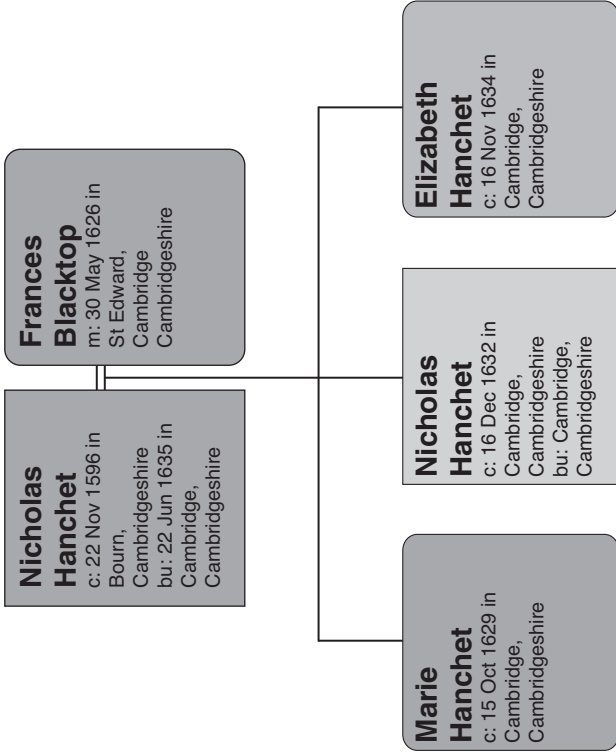
Family of James and Margaret Hanchett from Bourn, Cambridgeshire

18) James Hanchett and Margaret Parneby were married in Bourn, Cambridgeshire in 1622. This was James's second marriage.



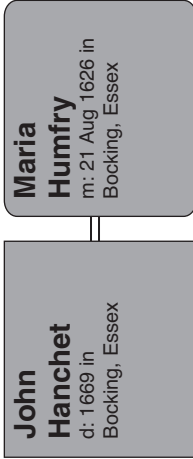
Family of Giles and Agnes Hanchet of Haddenham, Cambridgeshire

19) Giles Hanchet and Agnes Gunton were married in Sutton, Cambridgeshire, moved to Bourn briefly and settled in Haddenham, but no burials are recorded there for the name Hanchet.



The Family of Nicholas and Frances Hanchet of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

20) Nicholas Hanchet and Frances Blacktop were married in 1626 at Saint Edward, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire. Only one son is recorded at Cambridge. All three children were placed in apprenticeships after the death of Nicholas in 1635.



Family of John and Maria Hanchet in Bocking, Essex

21) In 1626 John Hanchett and Maria Humfrey were married at Bocking, Essex. They must have stayed in Bocking as John's will was written there in 1669. No children are recorded for this couple at Bocking, but the baptismal records are missing between 1605 and 1655. John's will mentions neither wife nor children. The wife, Mary, died and was buried at Bocking 11 August 1663. John was buried there 11 March 1669.

Based on the above family groups, we find only three Thomas Hanchetts who are viable candidates for the Thomas Hanchett of New England. The first is Thomas Hanchett, son of John Hanchett, born 1616 in Brent Pelham, Hertfordshire; the second is Thomas Hanchett, the oldest son of Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden, born between 1621 and 1635 (if such a son existed); and the third is Thomas Hanchett, born 1627 in Haddenham, Cambridgeshire to Giles Hanchett who was originally from Bourn. There appear to be gaps between children in some cases which might indicate a child was born somewhere else, or just missed in transcribing the parish register.

Long Shots

Thomas Hanchet, of Braughing, has been the favorite candidate for father of Thomas of New England for nearly a hundred years, simply because Banks in his topographical dictionary of emigrants to New England³⁹ noted Thomas of Braughing in reference to Thomas the emigrant. No one knows on what basis he made that assumption. There is, however, some merit to his conjecture. Thomas of Braughing was born in 1591 and could have married as early as 1612. The first recorded marriage for him was 1629. John Hanchett of Boston joined John Wilson's church in 1634 and therefore must have been born by 1613. Both John and Thomas of New England could have been the children of Thomas of Braughing, son of Thomas the sheriff of Hertfordshire.

We know that in a Chancery case dated 22 October 1622,⁴⁰ dealing with land in Stondon, Hertfordshire, the defendants, Thomas Hanchett and Robert Young "Did Covenant with

³⁹ Charles E. Banks: *Topographical Dictionary of 2885 English Emigrants to New England 1620-1640*.

⁴⁰ TNA C 2/JasI/H6/24: Hanchett v. Hanchett, Court of Chancery: Six Clerks Office: Pleadings, Series 1.

Andrew Younge and Robert Jacobs, complainants, that they, these defendants, and their wives, and the said Edward Hanchett, one of the complainants, should levy a fine of the said land and premises.” Apparently, the land had been acquired by Robert Younge in “consideration of marriage.” This alone should prove that Thomas of Braughing was married by 1622, certainly in time to have been the father of Thomas of New England if not of John of Boston. Thomas of Braughing will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Most Likely Candidates

Certainly, the Thomas of Brent Pelham would have been in his twenties in 1638 and would not be confused as a fourteen-year-old as Thomas Banshot claimed to be. The Thomas of Haddenham would have been eleven to twelve years old, and if mature for his age, could have been passed off as a fourteen-year-old. Our third choice, Thomas of Arkesden, is not well defined due to the lack of parish baptismal records, although he was certainly a wealthy man. Thomas of New England could have originated with a couple not listed due to the lack of parish records for some other English parish. It seems probable that the unknown couple would have been located in Essex, Hertfordshire, or Cambridgeshire. There were, of course, a few stray Hanchetts in Norfolk and London.

It seems that the Bancroft family has adopted this Thomas Banshott anyway, and is welcomed to him. Thomas Hanchett would probably not have started his life in New England as a servant, unless it was to Henry Smith, the cleric.

After much consideration, one would conclude that the Thomas Hanchett born in Brent Pelham in 1616 is our most likely candidate. Based on his birth date, he would have been old enough and mature enough to have been witness to the wills of two important men. Based on his location in Brent Pelham where his mother lived until 1633, he was certainly

close enough to the more prosperous Hanchetts in Braughing, Hertfordshire; Buntingford, Hertfordshire; and Arkesden, Essex to have been influenced, and possibly even educated by them. In addition, the most prominent man of that time in Brent Pelham was Francis Flyer, a member of the Massachusetts Bay Company, but someone who never migrated to New England. Flyer also followed Thomas Hanchett of Braughing as sheriff of Hertfordshire. More information on Francis Flyer is presented in Chapter 8: The Hanchetts of Clavering.

Another interesting possibility is that Thomas may have traveled to New England with Reverend John Wilson on his second return trip to Massachusetts in 1635. According to John Winthrop, Wilson arrived on 6 October in either the *Defense* or the *Abigail*. Several other well known ministers traveled with him.⁴¹ Of course, neither passenger lists for these two ships included Mr. Wilson or the names of the other ministers such as Mr. Peter and Mr. Shepard. At the same time that Wilson's ship set sail, there was detained in the harbor the ship *Transport*, and others headed for Virginia. The *Transport* had recorded the names "John Wilson" and "Thomas Hatchett," age nineteen, as passengers.

The reason for the delay in the *Transport's* sailing date was problems that were being experienced in Virginia, its final destination. On 2 July 1635, the king took immediate power over Virginia and began to manage the council.⁴² Many well known people, especially ministers, sailed under assumed names. Considering the problems in England with Bishop Laud, this is not surprising. Could Hanchett and Wilson have made some arrangement with two passengers on the *Transport* to trade names?

Could Thomas Hanchertt, born 1616 in Brent Pelham, and John Hanchett, born 1605 in Clavering, both children of John

⁴¹ John Winthrop and James Kendall Hosmer: *Winthrop's Journal "History of New England" Vol 1. 1630-1649.*

⁴² Peter Wilson Coldham: *The Complete Book of Emigrants 1607-1660.*

Hanchett Junior and Rose Miltson/Milton/Wilson, be the two emigrants to New England? The issue with Rose's maiden name is that a blob of something covers most of that name in the Clavering parish register.

Part II
The Beginnings
in England

Chapter 4

From Domesday to the Peasants' Revolt

The story of the Hanchett family begins as William of Normandy, France wrestles England from his cousin, Edward the Confessor. Being an astute politician, William knew that he would need cash to maintain his hold on his newly acquired empire and that taxation was the only way to raise that cash. While claiming that all of England ultimately belonged to the king, he did grant his most faithful warriors the use of a good portion of that land while the rest he kept exclusively for his own benefit.

To document which of his closest allies held which piece and to evaluate the worth of each of those parcels, William called for the creation of a record known as Domesday Roll. Cleverly, he asked for a listing of the holder and value of each property at the time of his conquest, 1066, and a follow-up of the same information at the time he requested the accounting, in 1086. One might guess that by knowing the two values, he could be sure that no one could undervalue his asset.

Most, if not all, modern English historians agree that there was a place named Hanchet in southwestern Suffolk prior to the time of the Conquest. In the Domesday book it is spelled Haningehet, but most names were spelled according to the way they were pronounced. An enquiry to the English Place Name Society in Nottingham, England in 1970, concerning Haningehet, yielded the following response:

Again, on the evidence you have supplied there seems no doubt, at least to me, that the name comes from the

place which survives today as Hanchet End in Withersfield, Suffolk. I have checked the late Dr. P. H. Reaney's material for Suffolk and this confirms the variety of spellings you have obtained.

Having said that, we now come to a full stop, for the spellings for the name are so varied that at present one would not attempt an etymology. More material is required and until the Suffolk Collection is much further advanced than it is at the moment, the etymology of that name must remain uncertain. I am sorry I cannot carry it through to a logical conclusion but I think you can take it, without any hesitation that your family name comes from this place in Suffolk.

Signed:

Professor Kenneth Cameron

So, we are able to place a very early date on the existence of the name "Hanchett." Tracking the family back to that time is much more difficult. Surnames did not come into common use until the thirteenth century. The earliest examples of the name "Hanchet" were prefaced by a "de" meaning that the person with that surname came from the place with that name.

The *Online Domesday Book*⁴³ states the following:

Place: Hanchet

- Hundred: Risbridge
- County: Suffolk
- Total population: 1 household (very small).
- Total tax assessed: 0.8 geld units (very small).
- Taxable units: Taxable value 0.8 geld units.
- Value: Value to lord in 1066 £0.5. Value to lord in 1086 £0.8.

⁴³ Place: "Hanchet," *Open Domesday*.

- Households: 1 smallholder.
- Other resources: Meadow 2 acres.
- Lord in 1066: Alwin.
- Overlord in 1066: Wihtgar son of Aelfric.
- Lord in 1086: Richard son of Count Gilbert.⁴⁴
- Tenant-in-chief in 1086: Richard son of Count Gilbert.

It has been suggested that the English version of our surname was Hanchet and that the extra “t” was added in America. When examining the many instances of the written name in England, Hanchett with two “t’s” seems predominant. Could it be that a single “t” version is just shorthand for the two “t” version?

Thus, from humble beginnings we have the start of a family which would make a name for itself in England, and has not done too badly in America either.



Hanchet Hall near Haverhill, Suffolk⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Count Gilbert, ancestor of the family de Clare.

⁴⁵ Photo by Ed Bethune.

The debate about whether Hanchet is Norman or Anglo-Saxon has raged for a long time. It seems most likely, with the close association of the Hanchet family to other prominent Norman families, that the Hanchets were from Normandy as well. That is, although the place name Hanchet existed before the Conquest, occupancy by the family which became de Hanchet occurred after the Conquest.

The next notice we have of the place Hanchet, occurs in a fine for Suffolk dated 18 June 1219, over 150 years after the Conquest. A précis translation follows:

This document represents the Final Agreement made in the court of the lord King at Salisbury Church on the Morrow of St Botolph in the third Year of the Reign of King Henry, son of King John, made Between Katherine and Alice, the daughters of Aleic, plaintiffs, and Henry de Capeles, defendant, regarding eight acres of land, with appurtenances, and a moiety, and holdings, and appurtenances in Hennenhach. From which assize in the Lower World of Ancestors was summonsed between them in the same court. To Wit, that the aforesaid Henry has acknowledged the entire aforesaid holding, with appurtenances, to be the right of the same Katherine and Alice. And for this acknowledgment, fine, and agreement, the same Katherine and Alice have given to the aforesaid Henry twenty shillings of Sterling.⁴⁶

Here Aleic, Katherine, and Alice could be “de Hennenhach.” Supposedly, Henry de Capeles was the person from whom Thomas Hanchach would acquire Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire, the Hanchet principal residence from the mid-thirteenth century until the early sixteenth century. Another

⁴⁶ Walter Rye: *A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Suffolk*, p 20

précis translation of an early fine for Suffolk (3 December 1234) tells us:

This document represents the Final Agreement made in the court of the lord King at Cateshull on the Sabbath following the feast of St Andrew in the Nineteenth Year of the Reign of King Henry, son of King John, made Between Henry Hancepe, plaintiff, and Walter the Constable, [defendant,] Regarding Wayden, and holdings, with appurtenances, in Wivermers [Withersfield?]. From which assize was summonsed between them in the same court. To Wit, that the aforesaid Henry has remitted and quitclaimed of himself and his heirs to the aforesaid Walter and his heirs all right and claim which he has held in the entire aforesaid holding, with appurtenances, in perpetuity. And for this remission, quitclaim, fine, and agreement, the same Walter has given to the aforesaid Henry six and a half marks of silver.⁴⁷

This Henry Hancepe was probably an early Hanchet. We discover yet another fine for Suffolk dated 13 October 1287. Here Henry, son of Henry Hanecheche, and Amicia, his wife, sell two and a half acres of land in Haverhill, Suffolk to Gilbert Hidecock and Agnes his wife.

It would be useful to create a list of acceptable and unacceptable variants for the name “Hanchett.” The only valid criteria for acceptable variants are cases where the same person has different spellings of the name in different documents ultimately leading to the name Hanchett. Over the past fifty years, the author has established what he feels to be a viable list of acceptable variations.

⁴⁷ Walter Rye: *A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Suffolk*, p 33

Table of Acceptable Spellings for the Name Hanchett

Acceptable	Not Acceptable	In Doubt
Hanchet	Hanchurch	Hancket
Hanchach	Hanut	
Hancepe	Hant	
Hancher	Hanekot	
Hanchache	Hannot	
Hauchet	Hanrot	
Hanecheche	Hancraft	
Haningehet	Hanat	
Hancet	Hankot(t)	
Hanshot	Hancott	
Hanchat	Hancroft	
Hancat	Hatchet(t)	
Hanchut		
Hanshet(t)		
Hanchit		
Hanshut		
Hennenhach		
Hanset(t)		
Hanehuth		

The Hanchetts of Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire

As seen in the map of Southwestern Suffolk below, Hanchet (just to the west of Haverhill), Haverhill, Withersfield, Horseheath, and Shudy Camps are within a stone's throw of each other.

The *Online Domesday Book*⁴⁸ records the following for Castle and Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire:

Place: Castle Camps

- Hundred: Chilford
- County: Cambridgeshire
- Total population: 49 households (very large).
- Total tax assessed: 4.5 geld units (quite large).
- Taxable units: Taxable value 2.5 geld units. Payments of 0.4 meadow, pasture, woodland.
- Value: Value to lord in 1066 £12. Value to lord in 1086 £17. Value to lord c. 1070 £12.
- Households: 17 villagers. 4 smallholders. 6 slaves.
- Ploughland: 12 ploughlands (land for). 4 lord's plough teams. 7 men's plough teams.
- Other resources: 1.25 lord's lands. Meadow 3 ploughs. Woodland 500 pigs.
- Lord in 1066: Wulfwin son of Alfwin.
- Overlord in 1066: King Edward.
- Lords in 1086: Aubrey de Vere; Norman of Nosterfield.
- Tenant-in-chief in 1086: Aubrey de Vere.

Place: Shudy Camps

- Taxable units: Taxable value 2 geld units.
- Value: Value to lord in 1066 £2. Value to lord in 1086 £4. Value to lord c. 1070 £1.5.
- Households: 8 villagers. 8 smallholders. 6 slaves.

⁴⁸ "Place: [Castle and Shudy] Camps," *Open Domesday*.

- Ploughland: 6 ploughlands (land for). 2 lord's plough teams. 4 men's plough teams.
- Other resources: Meadow 2 ploughs. Woodland 12 pigs.
- Lord in 1066: Leofsi.
- Overlord in 1066: Earl Harold.
- Lord in 1086: Turstin son of Richard.
- Tenant-in-chief in 1086: Robert Gernon.

It is interesting to note that while it is well known that the de Vere family held Castle Camps, Shudy Camps was held by Robert de Gernon whose descendents took the name Mountfitchet. A sixteenth century coat of arms infers a marriage between Hanchet and Mountfitchet.

This part of the story begins when Henry Hanchach (3), the son of Thomas Hanchach(1), holds the bulk of the Manor at Shudy Camps by 1279.

Henry de Hanechach (of Hanchet Hall) holds 1 (knights) fee of the heirs of Richard Munfitchet who hold of the king-in-chief; the abbot of Waltham holds the church of Shudecamps, in proper use, by the gift of the predecessors of the said Henry. Walter Buree holds of the said Henry ½ fee there and the said Henry holds of the heirs of Munfitchet (as above.) Dated 1279.⁴⁹

From Wikipedia we learn that:

Both “de” and “of” were used simply to show topological origin in the names of people of all classes, so that in England and Wales neither “de” nor “of” should be looked on as in themselves nobiliary.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ William Farrer. *Feudal Cambridgeshire*, 70 and 71

⁵⁰ “Nobiliary particle,” *Wikipedia*.

Prior to that time Henry resided at Shudy Camps from as early as 1256. According to the fine rolls for 40 Henry III:

For Henry of Hanehuth

A Similar writ has Henry de Hanehuth, directed (to) the same Barons, regarding the 21 marks which he owes (to) the King from the debts of Thomas de Hanehuth, his father, of the which he will pay yearly two marks, that is to say, at the Exchequer of Easter thereupon (in) the 40th year one mark, & at the Exchequer of saint Michael [i.e. Michaelmas] next following one mark, & thus from year to year at the same terms two marks, until, etc. Witness as above. And the entire enrolment of this writ can be found in the roll of Liberate of this year, under this date: (on) the 7th day of March, at (Bury) St. Edmund's.⁵¹

From the referenced Calendar of Liberate Rolls:

March 7. St. Edmunds.

Mandate to the barons to enrol and keep the terms of payment by Henry de. Hanehuth of 2 marks yearly till the debt of 21 marks, balance of the fine of Thomas his father, whose heir he is, shall be fully paid off to the king, who has learnt in his passage through the parts of Suffolk, that the whole of Henry's land does not exceed the yearly value of 2 marks.⁵²

Apparently, if you were in good standing with the king, you could pay off your father's debts over time. Because Shudy Camps is so close to Hanchet Hall in Suffolk, the king could probably have learned of Henry's plight while traveling through Suffolk.

⁵¹ Fine Roll TNA C 60/53, Membrane 16, Entry 336.

⁵² William Henry Stevenson: *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office.*

An interesting story is told that in 1264 Henry paid a ransom to free the vicar of Shudy Camps from the hands of the rebel barons who were raiding villages from their headquarters in Ely. That generous deed cost him forty shillings!

We must distinguish these rebel barons from the earlier men by the same descriptive name who forced the agreement called the Magna Carta from King John. In 1265, following the Battle of Evesham in August, where rebel barons under Simon de Montfort had been defeated, rebels who had fought against Henry III and Prince Edward continued to hold out on the Isle of Ely.⁵³



Saint Mary's Church, Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire⁵⁴

⁵³ Rudolf Suntrup and Jan R. Veenstra, Editors: *Shaping the Present and the Future*. Vol. X.

⁵⁴ The web site for Shudy Camps: <http://www.rd29.net/cc/shudycamps/stmarys.htm>

The rebel barons of King John's reign consisted of some of the finest men in England, a few of whom would play roles in the lives of Hanchet family members. The ones of interest to us are set out in bold type.

... the committee's composition is known principally from the list given later in his chronicle by Matthew Paris, the celebrated chronicler of St. Albans Abbey (Herts.). The twenty-five were: **Richard, earl of Clare**; William de Fors, count of Aumale; Geoffrey de Mandeville, earl of Gloucester; Saer de Quincy, earl of Winchester; Henry de Bohun, earl of Hereford; Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk; **Robert de Vere, earl of Oxford**; William Marshal Junior; Robert FitzWalter; **Gilbert de Clare**; Eustace de Vesci; Hugh Bigod; William de Mowbray; the mayor of London; William de Lanvallei; Robert de Ros; John de Lacy, constable of Chester; Richard de Percy; John FitzRobert; William Malet; Geoffrey de Say; Roger de Montbagon; William de Huntingfield; **Richard de Munfichet**; and William d'Aubigny.

It is noteworthy that these men were all lay-folk, and for the most part members of the hard-line baronial opposition to the king. No bishop or other churchman appears, not even, for example, Giles de Braose, bishop of Hereford, who had long been hostile to John. The committee was seen in clear terms as a committee of enforcers, a group whose main responsibilities were to be of a military nature. Their job was to hold the king's feet to the fire and make certain that he complied with the rules set down in the Magna Carta.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ See also:

<http://magnacarta800th.com/schools/biographies/the-25-barons-of-magna-carta/>



1575 Map of the Southwest Corner of Suffolk Showing The Locations of Haverhill, Withersfield of Suffolk, Shudy Camps, and Horseheath of Cambridgeshire⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Christopher Saxon's Map of Suffolk. The first printed map of Suffolk.

In 1302, William Hanchach (4) was holding the Manor of Hanchetts in Shudy Camps for one knight's fee of the king. In other words, there were no other members of royalty or nobility between him and the king. Ever since the days of William the Conqueror, the king basically owned all of England. Any piece of land was his to give or confiscate. It has been suggested by a historian of the early nineteen hundreds that William Hanchach may have accompanied the Earl de Clare into battle with Robert the Bruce of Scotland in 1310 and may have died there.⁵⁷

King Robert the Bruce: 1306-1328

On 10 February 1306, during a meeting between Bruce and Comyn, the two surviving claimants for the Scottish throne, Bruce quarreled with and killed John Comyn at Greyfriars Kirk in Dumfries. At this moment the rebellion was sparked again.

Comyn, it seems, had broken an agreement between the two, and informed King Edward of Bruce's plans to be king. The agreement was that one of the two claimants would renounce his claim on the throne of Scotland, but receive lands from the other and support his claim. Comyn appears to have thought to get both the lands and the throne by betraying Bruce to the English. A messenger carrying documents from Comyn to Edward was captured by Bruce and his party, plainly implicating Comyn. Bruce then rallied the Scottish prelates and nobles behind him and had himself crowned King of Scots at Scone less than five weeks after the killing in Dumfries. He then began a new campaign to free his kingdom. After being defeated in battle he was driven from the Scottish mainland as an outlaw. Bruce later came out of hiding in 1307. The Scots thronged to him, and he defeated the English in a

⁵⁷ George Hanchett note to Junius Hanchett. In possession of the author.

number of battles. His forces continued to grow in strength, encouraged in part by the death of Edward I in July 1307. The Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 was an especially important Scottish victory.⁵⁸

William de Hanchach may have died in one of the battles occurring between 1307 and 1310. Gilbert de Clare, son of Gilbert de Clare, 7th Earl of Gloucester, and descendent of Richard, son of Count Gilbert, holder of the place, Hanchet, in the Domesday Rolls, was killed in the Battle of Bannockburn. He was the last male de Clare.

An inquisition post mortem was held in Bradburham, Cambridge in 1310. At that proceeding, Thomas Hanchach (5) was said to be William's son and heir and that he was fifteen years old. On 28 January 1311, Gilbert Pitche was awarded William's lands as well as the land from the dower of William's wife, Matilda (12), if she should die before Thomas Hanchach reached the age of twenty-one. This was a standard way to ensure proper control over estates belonging to an underage heir. The person awarded the estates would collect rents for his own use but be responsible for efficient handling of the properties until the heir became of age.

A fascinating story comes from the rolls of the coroner in Cambridge concerning an attempt on the life of John Hanchett of Shudy Camps.⁵⁹

Horseheath

It happened in the vill of Horseheath on Sunday next after the feast of St. Barnabas the Apostle in the twelfth year of King Edward the Third (June 14, 1338) that John Harper, son of William Harper of Horseheath, was found dead. And Joan, his wife, first found him; her pledges are William Harper and Adam Walsh. And thereupon John Fitz-John, the king's coroner in

⁵⁸ "Robert the Bruce," *Wikipedia*.

⁵⁹ Charles Gross: Editor. *Select Cases from the Coroners' Rolls, A.D. 1265-1413*.

Cambridgeshire, ordered the bailiff of the hundred of Chilford to summon before the said coroner at Horseheath on the following Wednesday all the freeholders together with the reeve and four [men] of [each of] four neighboring townships in his bailiwick to do whatever [might be commanded] on behalf of the king. On the said Wednesday the said coroner went there and viewed John Harper's body, and the said bailiff made his return, etc. And the four neighboring townships, Great Camps, Shudy Camps, Bartlow, and Wickham did not come; therefore they are in mercy, etc. And the freeholders, namely John of Olmstead, Michael of Bartlow, William Bernard, Peter of Penfield, Robert Clerk, Seaman Squire, William Underwood, William Hammond, Richard of Clopton, Robert of London, Ed[mund] Smith, Seaman Moke, William Tingy, Robert Sabin, William Godfrey, Thomas Lord, Walter Smith, Richard son of Reginald, Thomas Taylor, and Hugh Collin, did not come; therefore they are in mercy. And the aforesaid bailiff was ordered to distrain the said townships and likewise all the said freeholders by all their lands and chattels, etc., and to have their bodies before the said coroner at Horseheath on the following Thursday, and to account for the profits of their lands, etc. And on the said Thursday the bailiff returned his precept; and the aforesaid coroner, etc., came there, and also the aforesaid townships and the freeholders, namely William Godfrey, Thomas Lord, Walter Smith, Richard son of Reginald, Thomas Taylor, and Hugh Collin; but [the other fourteen freeholders] did not appear, and therefore are in mercy. And the bailiff accounted for the profits of the lands, etc., to wit, for John of Olmstead six pence, Michael of Bartlow and the other absent [freeholders] each three pence. And the bailiff was ordered, as for the second time, to distrain John of Olmstead, William Bernard, and the

others who had made default, etc., and to have their bodies before the said coroner at Horseheath on the following Friday, etc., and to account for the profits of their lands, etc. The same day was also given to the said townships and freeholders, to wit, Wilham Godfrey and the others who were then present, to be there, etc. On that Friday the coroner came and the bailiff returned his precept, and the said town-ships then appeared, and also certain freeholders, namely Seaman Squire, John of Olmstead, Michael of Bartlow, Peter of Penfield, William Bernard, Robert Clerk, Richard of Clopton, and William Tingy; but [the other twelve freeholders] did not appear, and therefore are in mercy. And the bailiff accounted for the profits of their lands, etc., to wit, for each person absent six pence, etc. And the bailiff was ordered to distrain as for the third time William Underwood, William Hammond, Robert of London, and the other absentees, by all their lands and chattels, etc., and to have their bodies before the said coroner at Horseheath on the following Monday, and to account for the profits of their lands, etc. And the same day was given to Seaman Squire, John of Olmstead, and the others who were then and there present. On the said Monday the bailiff returned his precept; and the said townships and all the freeholders appeared at Horseheath.

And the aforesaid John Fitz-John, the coroner, etc., there caused diligent inquest to be made concerning the death of John Harper, William Harper's son, by the said four neighboring townships, namely Great Camps, Shudy Camps, Bartlow, and Wickham, together with the vill of Horseheath, and by twelve jurors, namely John of Olmstead, William Hammond, Seaman Squire, William Godfrey, Thomas Lord, Ed[mund] Smith, Robert of London, Richard of Clopton, Walter Smith, Richard son

of Reginald, William Tingy, and Hugh Collin. They say on their oath that on Thursday next before Lady Day in the aforesaid year John of Hanchet, son of William of Hanchet of Shudy Camps, was with his harrow on his land in the field of Shudy Camps called Stonefield. And the said John Harper came there with force and arms, namely with a staff, a bidowe (?), a buckler (small shield), a gambeson (padded defensive jacket), and a palet, (lance) and assaulted John of Hanchet, and wounded him with the said bidowe in the left arm. John of Hanchet, fearing that John Harper would kill him, seized the bidowe near its point and held it, so that it cut the palm of his hand, and he retreated and fell on his back. John Harper then sprang upon him and held him to the earth. Then a certain Ralph Bulteel of Shudy Camps, a servant of John of Hanchet, stood afar off and saw that his master's life was in danger. He came to them, as they lay there, to aid and defend John of Hanchet and to prevent John Harper from killing him, and he broke John Harper's right shin with a staff, and he drove the end of the staff into his back to make him rise from his master, and thus he wounded [John Harper] in the back. Then John of Hanchet rose up and ran away, and Ralph fled. John Harper was at once carried in a cart to the said William Harper's house in Horseheath, where he lay in bed and confessed and received the communion. He lingered until Sunday next after the feast of St. Barnabas the Apostle in the aforesaid year, and on the morning of that day he died of the wound in his back. [The jurors] say that Ralph's staff is worth a halfpenny, and that he had no lands, rents, goods, or chattels on the day on which he wounded John Harper, nor afterwards, etc. And it was ordered that Ralph be arrested, etc.

It is noteworthy that the coroner took longer to describe his attempts to convene a coroner's jury than he took to tell the story of what happened to John Harper. Apparently, Ralph was not acting in "self" defense and therefore was arrested for murder.

William and Matilda had another son, William (11). He married Alice Wyleby Walpole who had first been married to Henry de Walpole. Walpole was a famous knight who had traveled with the king overseas and had accompanied the king on a trip to Scotland. It seems that Hanchett males had a propensity for marrying women of means during the twelfth through the seventeenth centuries.

Son Thomas (5) held a knight's fee for Hanchett's Manor in Shudy Camps from 1316 to 1346. Thomas' son, Thomas (8), succeeded him at Shudy Camps. This Thomas was pardoned for service in the war with France in 1347. This act was typical for the time. Just as today, warriors who had spent years learning how to kill the enemy were frequently involved in extralegal activities after their return to England. Frequently, they would be pardoned for a transgression if they had performed well in battle. In this case, while we do not know specifically what act required a pardon by 1347, we do know that Thomas (8) was involved in breaking (into) a close and house in Claydon belonging to John Mortemer. Then, in 1356 his father-in-law, Robert Busteler, knight, with his brother Robert Hanchach (18) and himself had broken into the park at Great Chesterford while the park was in the king's hand, and took and carried away deer.

An inquisition post mortem reveals that near the end of April 1365, Thomas (8) attempted to arrest one John Edwards, apparently an enemy of Robert Busteler, Thomas' father-in-law, as he passed by on the road to Great (Castle) Camps. Edwards took refuge in a sheep house belonging to the earl of Oxford into which Hanchett followed and attacked Edwards with his baselard (short sword.) Edwards disarmed Hanchett and

wounded him with his own weapon to the head and belly. Hanchett went to his home in Shudy Camps and died there the following Wednesday. Thomas Hanchach was apparently not a timid person, but one who could certainly have used some better judgment.

Thomas' brother, Robert Hanchach (18), was instrumental in conveying Busteler's property to Robert's nephew John Hanchach (9), son of Thomas Hanchach (8). John, being born about 1359, was underage at the death of his father in 1365. Robert apparently lived in Linton, Cambridgeshire but was involved in several transactions relating to land in London in 1367, and 1375. Robert served as a tax collector in Cambridgeshire in 1382. Additionally, he held lands in Great and Little Shelford and Pampesworth, Cambridgeshire. Thomas (8) also had a daughter, Joan (14) who held lands, from Robert Busteler, intended for her younger brother, John, until he became of age in 1380.

Next we come to Saer Hanchacche (13) who owned land in Little Wratting in 1310. He may have been a brother to Henry Hanchach (2), the first owner of Hanchett's Manor in Shudy Camps.

There was also a Nicholas Hanchach (17) who held a knight's fee at Shudy Camps in 1359. No further record has been found as to his role in the family, or why he held this knight's fee when Thomas Hanchett (8) was still alive. He may have been a brother to Thomas (8) and Robert Hanchach (18).

William Hanchach (11) and his wife Alice (23) were probably the parents of John Hanchach (33) who, in turn, was likely the father of Henry Hanchach, Esquire (32). Henry became a lawyer in London and had property dealings there from 1390 to 1400. He may have been the brother of John Hancher, Esquire whose will in London was dated January 20, 1393/4. In that document, his mother Elizabeth Hancher is the chief executrix. In the probate dated February 1393/4, Elizabeth Hancher

refuses her executorship and is replaced by Robert Broom, Chaplin, and Henry Hancher.

The Peasants' Revolt of 1381

The advisors to King Richard II in 1378 devised a poll tax which would prove to be the beginning of the end for feudalism as it was known at that time. Oppressive taxation has led to many revolts over the history of civilized man. Our own country kicked off its Revolutionary War with the notion that we could not tolerate "taxation without representation." Up until the late 1370s, taxes were generally paid by the land owners, from nobles to landed gentry.

Suddenly Parliament discovered that the commoners represented a cash source that had not been previously tapped. Prior to that time, commoners had little if any cash available to them, as most transactions at their level involved bartering. The use of the lord's land was paid for by time worked in his fields. Trading was common between neighbors, and merchants would accept agricultural goods in lieu of cash. The economic picture changed as parts of the country moved from agriculture to cloth and merchandising. Ordinary men discovered the benefits of coin of the realm. With that small measure of freedom, the commoners became the target for the despised poll tax. This tax was needed to continue the wars in France, or at least that was the prevailing talking point.

The uprising began in Kent and Essex but soon moved to London. The targets of the rebels were the higher clergy, lawyers, judges, jurors, and advisors to the king who was then but fourteen years old. Archbishop Sudbury, and Treasurer Hales were the first to be murdered. Had John de Gaunt and his household controller, Thomas Haseldon, not been on the Scottish border arranging peace with the Scots, they too would likely have perished. Young King Richard tried his hardest to

placate the rebels, but his youthful enthusiasm only fanned the fire of revolution.

The *Annual Report of the American Historical Society—1894* summarized the effect of the rebellion:⁶⁰

The movement raged far and wide throughout the country. A certain sort of organization seems to have prevailed; the people arose by counties, each one under a separate captain. This Wat Tyler, also chief captain of all the rebels, was captain in Kent, Jack Straw in Essex, John Wraw in Suffolk, John Littestere in Norfolk, John Hanchach in Cambridge, Robert Phippe in Huntingdon.

The effects of the revolt in 1381 were far-reaching and of great importance. Never was another poll tax attempted in England; this is of importance, as this method of taxation was fast becoming a precedent. A second effect was the scare produced on John of Gaunt, who retired from the field of active politics, where he had been having a prevailing though not a salutary influence. But its greatest result was the terror struck in the hearts of the landlords; they became timid about enforcing labor services. Serfdom received a deathblow.

During the fifteenth century the natural development quietly took its course; a race of sturdy freeholders took the place of the serfs, an age of unprecedented prosperity dawned for the English workingman. Necessaries of life were cheap, rents very low, and wages universally high. It was the golden age of English labor.

Oman gives us a detailed account in his book *The Great Revolt of 1381*.⁶¹

⁶⁰ George Kriehn: "English Popular Uprisings in the Middle Ages." *Annual Report of the American Historical Society—1894*, 158.

⁶¹ Sir Charles William Chadwick Oman: *The Great Revolt of 1381*.

Meanwhile, other firebrands of revolt had entered the county (Cambridgeshire) from its eastern side, John Wraw had now been acting as dictator in West Suffolk for some three days, and was sending his emissaries abroad to spread the insurrection on every side. His chief agents on this side were Robert Twell, who had taken a prominent part in the Bury riots, and a chaplain named John Michel, an Ely man, who had gone off to join the Suffolk rioters a few days before, and returned furnished with Wraw's mandate to raise the people in the Fens.

But though Stanford and Greyston, Twell and Michel, each became the centre of a small focus of disorder on June 15, they were by no means the chief leaders of the Cambridgeshire insurrection. The place of honour must be claimed, for two wealthy local landowners, John Hanchach of Shudy Camps, and Geoffrey Cobbe, of Gazeley, who put themselves at the head of the rising for reasons to us unknown. Their conduct is as great an enigma as that of Sir Roger Bacon or Sir Thomas Cornerd in East Anglia. Hanchach owned property in five townships. Cobbe's yearly income is assessed at £22, which must have placed him high among the landed gentry of the shire. Were they men with a grievance, or merely turbulent fellows who could not resist the opportunity of leading a mob to riot and pillage? Whether they acted from principle or interest they conducted matters with a reckless violence which can only be paralleled from the most mob-ridden corners of Norfolk.

A glance at the details of the havoc committed by the Cambridgeshire bands shows that the programme in this county was exactly the same as that which was carried out in East Anglia. We find the usual outbreak against manorial dues while emissaries rode up and

down the county proclaiming that the king had freed all serfs and that no one for the future owed suit or service to his lord. In a score of villages there were bonfires of charters and documents belonging to unpopular landowners. Some of these burnings were accompanied by the sack or destruction of the manor house, some were not. The classes of people against whom the main ringer of the rebels was directed were, as in East Anglia, justices of the peace, commissioners of the Poll-tax, royal officials in general, and clerical landlords such as the Abbots and Priors of Ely, Ramsey, Thorney, and Barnwell, the Prioress of Icklington and the Knights Hospitallers at Duxford and Chippenham. We naturally find the sheriff of the county, Henry English of Ditton Valence, among the sufferers, as also the justices Roger Harleston and Edmund Walsingham, and the Poll-tax collectors Thomas Toren and John Blanchpayne. A special animosity was displayed against Thomas Haselden, the steward of the household of the Duke of Lancaster. We do not know whether it was because of his own sins, or merely because of his master's unpopularity in the realm, that the two chief rebels of the shire, Hanchach and Cobbe, united their forces for the thorough devastation of his manors of Steeple Morden and Gilden Morden. Haselden himself was absent in Scotland in the train of John of Gaunt, or he would assuredly have come to an evil end.

The only person of note who actually met his death in the Cambridgeshire riots was the wealthy justice Edmund Walsingham, who was seized by local rioters at Ely, whither he had fled from his manor of Eversden, and there decapitated after a mock trial. His head was placed on the town pillory. A lawyer of the name of Galan seems also to have been put to death in the same place, where, says Capgrave, "their intent was to kill all

the men that learned any laws." Murder, however, seems to have been the exception in the shire, though every other form of violence abounded.

A special interest attaches to the doings of the burghers of Cambridge town during the four short days when the insurrection was at its height. To them the rebellion of 1381 was mainly an opportunity for revenging themselves on their two enemies, the university and the suburban monastery of Barnwell. It was at dusk on Saturday, June 15, that the town rose; the people were already aware that tumults had broken out in all the rural villages around, and John Hanchach with some of his followers from Shudy Camps had already come into the town to proffer his assistance. The signal for insurrection was given by the tolling of the bells of Great St. Mary's church, and a mob assembled in front of the Guildhall and elected two brothers, James and Thomas of Grantchester, as their chiefs. After a short debate they resolved to start operations by an attack on the gowns-men, and, with the two Grantchesters and Hanchach at their head, went in a body to visit William Wigmore, the bedel⁶² of the university. He had already fled, but his goods were plundered and the town-crier proclaimed that any one who met him might slay him at sight.

It may be asked why the mob visited their first wrath on the bedel, and not on the chancellor, the official head of the university. The explanation is simple: the chancellor was no less a person than that John de Cavendish, the Chief Justice of England, who on the previous day [June 14] had been murdered by the Suffolk rebels at Lakenheath. This was unknown to the Cambridge townsfolk, who went to his house,

⁶² English university officer who walks at the head of processions of officers and students.

“threatened him with fire and sword,” and finding him not on the premises had to content themselves with wrecking his furniture.

Then, at something past ten o’clock at night, the rioters moved on to Corpus Christi College, a corporation specially obnoxious to them because it owned much house-property in the town: it is said that a sixth of the borough paid rent to it. Hearing of the coming storm, the masters and students fled, and the mob was able to sack the college without resistance. They gutted the buildings from cellar to roof, stole £80 worth of plate, burnt the charter-box, and finally carried off doors and glass windows, and any other parts of the fittings which they could detach and turn to account. The adjacent hospital of Corpus Christi was also wrecked.

This plunder seems to have ended this lively Saturday night: but on Sunday morning the townsfolk resumed their plan of operations against the university. They began by entering St. Mary’s church during mass-time, and seizing the great chests in which the university archives, as also its common-plate and jewels, were kept. Next they moved on to the house of the Carmelites (now represented by Queens’ College), broke into the chapel, and there carried off other chests and boxes, containing the books which formed the university library; its value was afterwards estimated at the modest sum of twenty pounds.

Having got possession of this property, the townsmen proceeded to burn it all in the market square. A certain old woman named Margery Starre is recorded to have flung parchment after parchment into the flames, to the cry of “Away with the learning of clerks. Away with it!” Hence comes the fact that the early history of Cambridge University is very difficult to substantiate.

The archives, from which it might have been written, perished, along with the library, in the smoke of this unholy bonfire.

The evidence of the royal charters and the private gifts on which the wealth of the university rested being thus annihilated, the townsfolk thought that the way was clear for the drawing up of a new *Modus vitteltdi* between town and gown. They prepared a document by which the university was made to surrender all the privileges which it enjoyed under royal donations, and to engage that its members should for the future plead in the borough courts only. For further security the gownsmen were compelled to bind themselves in a bond of £3,000 not to bring any actions against the town, for damages suffered during the last two days. Some sort of congregation of terrified Masters of Arts was got together and forced to assent to and seal this unsatisfactory compact [June 16].

The university having thus been humbled, the men of Cambridge turned to deal with their other local enemy, the Prior of Barnwell. With him they had an old-standing quarrel, concerning the right of free pasturage over certain meadows called Estenhall. The earlier riots had been led by Hanchach, the two Grantchesters, and other unofficial persons; but for the attack on Barnwell, the townsfolk resolved to put themselves under the conduct of their mayor, Edmund Redmeadow (or Lister), who had hitherto stayed in the background. He was evidently a feeble and cautious personage, who wished to keep out of trouble, but on being beset by an angry mob who (according to his own statement) threatened to behead him unless he went forth as their captain, he consented to lead the crusade against the Prior. They marched out over 1,000 strong by Barnwell Causeway, and fell upon the priory, pulling

down walls and felling trees to the value of 400 pounds, draining the fish-ponds, and carrying off the store of turfs for the winter. The enclosures round the Estenhall meadows were, of course, obliterated to the last stake. To buy off personal violence and the destruction of his chapel and other buildings, the Prior was compelled to sign a document binding himself in the sum of £3,000 not to prosecute the town or any individual townsman for the damage that had been done to the monastery. There is no need to speak of other disorders in Cambridge town—the sack of the tenement of Blanchayne, the collector of Poll-tax, and such like details. In these respects, the borough behaved only after the fashion of its rural neighbors.

From Cambridgeshire the tumults, as we have already shown, spread into the neighboring shire of Huntingdon. Here, however, the rebellion was not nearly so acute: the town of Huntingdon held aloof from the movement, closed its gates against rioters, and even repelled by force the attempt of an armed band to enter—an instance of loyalty to the powers of order almost unparalleled during the whole of the rebellion in Eastern England. In the rural districts there was a moderate amount of disturbance—the tenants of the Abbot of Ramsey, for example, refused to pay him their dues—but nothing that could be compared to the troubles of Cambridgeshire. An attempt of a small raiding band from Ely to plunder the Abbey itself met (as we shall see) with no success [June 18].

But a little further to the north the rebellion flamed out much more fiercely in the estates of the wealthy Abbey of Peterborough, in the corner of Northampton that runs up to meet the shire-boundaries of Cambridge and Huntingdon in the heart of the fenland. Here the peasantry found the Abbot a hard master, and were

resolved to free themselves from their manorial grievances, while the townsfolk apparently were not disinclined to join them in an assault on the Abbey of the Golden Borough. There was a general rising on Monday, June 17, a date which shows that the trouble was the result of the successful outburst of Cambridgeshire during the two preceding days. How it was nipped in the bud we shall see. Of all the magnates of England, Bishop Henry of Norwich was the only one who showed real presence of mind and active energy in dealing with the insurrection. While veterans of the old French wars like Warwick and Salisbury seemed to have lost their heads, and made no resolute effort to crush the rising at its commencement, this resolute and narrow-minded churchman showed how much could be accomplished by mere daring and single-hearted perseverance. Despenser was the grandson of the well-known favorite of Edward II and the brother of a famous soldier of fortune, who had served Pope Urban V in Italy, and had used his favor with the pontiff to get his kinsmen put in the way of clerical promotion. It is said that Henry himself had seen service abroad in his brother's band, and felt the helmet sit more naturally on his head than the mitre. This much is certain, that when the nobles of England were tried by the test of sudden insurrection he showed himself the best fighting-man in the whole house of peers.

He was, as it chanced, absent from his diocese when the rebellion broke out, being far from its limits, in the county of Rutland, at "Burleigh House by Stamford Town," when the crisis came. For a few days such rumors of the rising as reached him pointed to nothing more than local tumults in Kent and Essex. But presently came the news, not only that the rebels of the south were marching on London, but that his own East

Anglian had begun to stir. The tale of Wraw's doings near Sudbury on June 12 must have reached him two days later, and almost at the same time he must have heard that not only Suffolk but the nearer shire of Cambridge was on the move, for the first troubles in that region commenced as early as the fifteenth of June, so that the Bishop found that, in order to return to his diocese he would have to cut his way through a countryside that was up in arms. Despenser had been travelling with no more than the ordinary retinue of a great prelate, eight lances, as we are told, and a few archers. But he saw that it was his duty to make his way to his own centre of influence, and set forth without hesitation at the head of this small band.

He was nearing Peterborough, the first stage of his homeward journey, when he received the news that the tenants of the abbey had just risen in arms, and were about to fall upon the monks, demanding the usual grant of charters and abolition of serfdom. The bishop halted a few hours to gather in some recruits from the local gentry and the friends of the monastery, and then dashed into the town. He had taken the enemy by surprise, and, small as was the number of his followers, they beat the rebels out of the abbey just at the moment that they were commencing the sack. Some fell by lance or sword without the minster, some within, some even close to the altar. So those who had come to destroy the church and its ministers perished by the hand of a churchman. For the bishop's sword gave them their absolutions. Despenser tarried in Peterborough long enough to restore order. He saw certain leaders hanged offhand, imprisoned others, and then moved on into the county of Huntingdon.

It was at Ramsey that he first met the insurgents of the Fens [a band from Ely, headed by Robert Twell], a

lieutenant of Wraw, had entered the place, and was blackmailing the monastery. Despenser fell upon them, and took them all prisoners [June 16]. Handing them over to the Abbot of Ramsey, the energetic bishop pushed on next day to Cambridge, which (as we have seen) was a great local centre of disorder. Here, according to his eulogist, Capgrave, he slew some of that wicked mob, imprisoned others, and the rest he sent to their homes, after taking from them an oath that they would never again take part in such assemblies. We know from the rolls of Parliament that he made an example of John Hanchach, the wealthy local landowner who had both led the attack on the estates of John of Gaunt's steward, and also participated in the assault on the university. He was beheaded in Cambridge market-place, and apparently others suffered with him. But the majority of the rebel leaders of the shire were more fortunate. Geoffrey Cobbe, the other squire who had taken a leading part in the troubles; Stanford, who had first come down from London and stirred up the insurrection; Red-meadow, the Mayor of Cambridge, who had (willingly or unwillingly) conducted the attack on the Priory of Barnwell, all escaped with prison or reprimand.

As to Cambridge town, the government, when the pacification of the land was complete, saw that the mayor had been but the tool of his townfolk. He was merely removed from office as notoriously insufficient, and suffered no further penalty. It was the borough itself that was chastised, and the chastisement took the form that was most certain to humble its pride. Not merely were the old privileges of the university restored, but many new ones were granted, to the detriment of the town's autonomy. For the future the gownsmen could not only claim to plead in their own

chancellor's court, but they were entrusted with the charge of many functions that would naturally have fallen to the municipality. They secured the oversight of all victuals in the market, the right to license all lodgings, the privilege of punishing forestallers and regraters, the control of focalia i.e. all fire-stuffs, turf, timber, and coal, and (most offensive of all to the townsfolk) the management of Stourbridge Fair, the great temporary mart in which the most important commercial transactions of the fenland counties were conducted. The riots of June 15-16, 1381, in short, were as fatal to their instigators in the one university town, as those of St. Scholastica's day, 1354, had been in the other. Oxford and Cambridge were now on a level in respect of the abnormal immunities and privileges granted to the gownsmen in dealing with the town-rights that in many cases were destined to last down to our own day.

Why would John Hanchach from Shudy Camps, a wealthy land owner in five villages, lead a band of commoners against the university?

John Hanchach, a leader of the Peasants' Revolt

John (9), son of Thomas (8) lost his father when John was just six years old. Thomas certainly had a reputation for aggressive behavior and John must have inherited a similar personality. Why would he have led a group of men who were beneath his social position on a raid of the University at Cambridge and the total destruction of the home of Thomas Haselden?

Several theories have been presented over the past seven hundred years. First, it was suggested that John was a rejected suitor of Haselden's daughter, or rather that Haselden himself felt John to not be worthy of his daughter's hand in marriage.

We must remember that the king was in complete control of who John would marry, as John was a ward of the king following Thomas Hanchach's death in 1365. John certainly could have resented his position as a wealthy land owner who, nevertheless, had no control over the outcome of his matrimonial intentions. It was common in that day for the rights to marriage to be sold to the highest bidder. Men who got stuck with a wife they did not care for simply went off to war or pursued some other demanding government position which would keep them as far away as possible from home and their wife.

Another possibility was that, as with several other leaders in the Peasants' Revolt, they were just fed up with taxation, unnecessary wars, regal extravagance, and burdensome religious control. Of course, just as today, some just wanted to be on the winning side. For a short time it did look like the peasants would take control. That did not happen and John was beheaded in the square at Cambridge for his part in the rebellion. Most of the other leaders were eventually pardoned, but a few met a similar fate.

It is interesting to note that unlike several other groups of peasants who, with their leaders, terrorized the countryside removing the heads of those in high places, John Hanchach's band killed no one, but did do a lot of physical damage. As Ann Hanchach, John's wife, petitioned the king to allow her to have her lands, which were given to John as part of her dower, returned to her, she noted that John had not wanted to accompany the band of peasants on that day, but was forced to do so. Several other leaders made the same excuse and were ultimately pardoned for their actions.

Ann made her plea in 1385, some four years after the event. It is safe to assume Shudy Camps and Hanchett's Manor were in other hands from 1381 up until at least that time. We do know that John Rose, king's yeoman, on October 20, 1383 was granted, by the king, lands in Cambridgeshire formerly held by

John Hanchach. These were given to him in lieu of offices in Norfolk which he had surrendered.

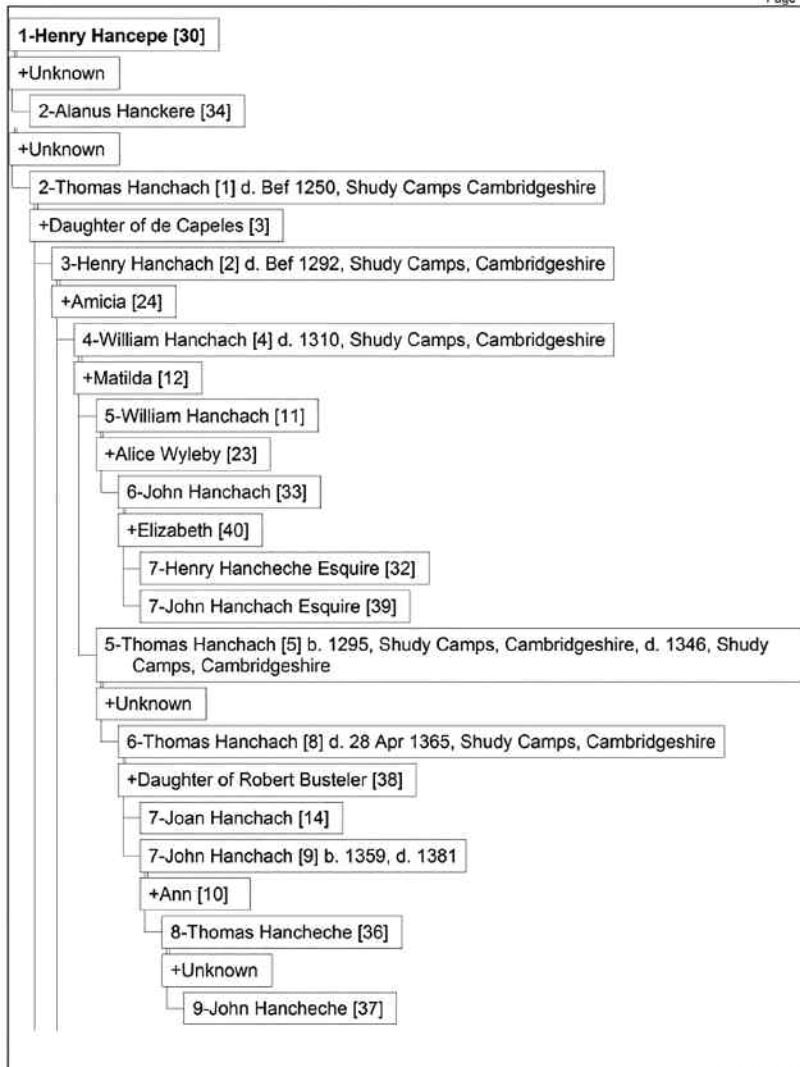
John Hanchach (9) was only twenty-two years old when he was beheaded. He had only been married for a year or two. R. A. Ledgard surmised that, unlike the reports from other researchers who claimed that he had four sons, John had only one son, Thomas (36), during his brief marriage. This Thomas in turn had a son John (37.)

John Hanchach's uncle, Robert, may have had at least two sons, John and Thomas, based on the acquisition of land by Robert in 1366 in Great and Little Shelford which was purchased from Richard and Joan de Imworth and then sold by Thomas and John Hanchett in 1382, following the demise of John Hanchet (9) to John Craitley. Interestingly, there is a John Hanchett who pops up from nowhere in Clavering, Essex in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Likewise, a Thomas Hanchett appears suddenly in Northill, Bedfordshire in the early fifteenth century. Could these two be the sons of Robert Hanchach?

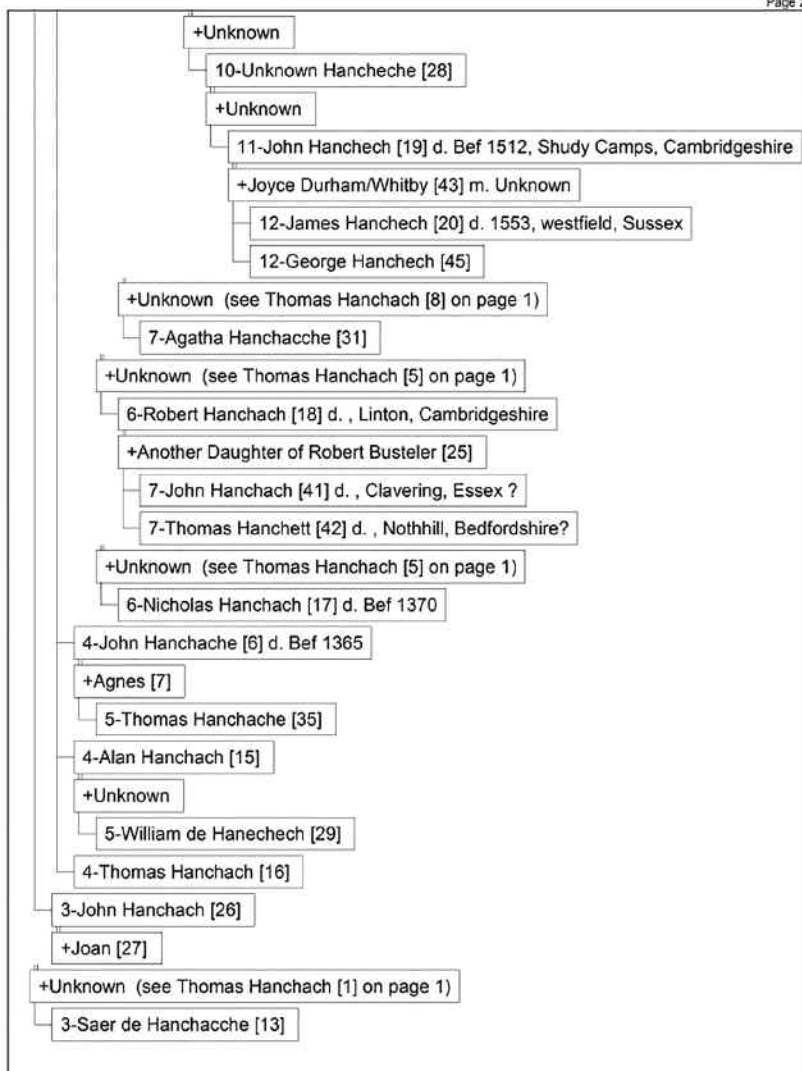
By 1381, the Hanchett family had reached a pinnacle in wealth and importance. The confiscation of John Hanchett's lands could have spelled the end of an era for the family. Instead, the lands were restored within a few years and the family moved on to new successes at new locations. Essex, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and London came to know the name Hanchett.

Descendents Chart-Hanchetts from Suffolk and Cambridgeshire

Page 1



Produced by Legacy



Agnes [7], 2	Hancheche, Henry Esquire [32], 1
Amicia [24], 1	Hancheche, John [37], 1
Ann [10], 1	Hancheche, Thomas [36], 1
Elizabeth [40], 1	Hancheche, Unknown [28], 2
Joan [27], 2	Hanchett, Thomas [42], 2
Joyce Durham/Whitby [43], 2	Hankere, Alanus [34], 1
Matilda [12], 1	Wyleby, Alice [23], 1
Busteler, Another Daughter of Robert [25], 2	
Busteler, Daughter of Robert [38], 1	
de Capeles, Daughter of [3], 1	
de Hanchacche, Saer [13], 2	
de Hanchech, William [29], 2	
Hancepe, Henry [30], 1	
Hanchacche, Agatha [31], 2	
Hanchach, Alan [15], 2	
Hanchach, Henry [2], 1	
Hanchach, Joan [14], 1	
Hanchach, John [26], 2	
Hanchach, John [33], 1	
Hanchach, John [41], 2	
Hanchach, John [9], 1	
Hanchach, John Esquire [39], 1	
Hanchach, Nicholas [17], 2	
Hanchach, Robert [18], 2	
Hanchach, Thomas [1], 1	
Hanchach, Thomas [16], 2	
Hanchach, Thomas [5], 1	
Hanchach, Thomas [8], 1	
Hanchach, William [11], 1	
Hanchach, William [4], 1	
Hanchache, John [6], 2	
Hanchache, Thomas [35], 2	
Hanchech, George [45], 2	
Hanchech, James [20], 2	
Hanchech, John [19], 2	

Part III
Spreading Out
Through the Counties

Chapter 5

The Hanchets of Bedfordshire; Letchworth, Hertfordshire; Braughing, Hertfordshire; and Great Parndon, Essex⁶³

For every family there is always a branch which has excelled, i.e. exhibited success in the areas of wealth, position, community standing, and education. This branch of the Hanchett family led in all of those aspects.

Until the advent of parish records in the mid-sixteenth century, the only way a family's activities were recorded was by legal records. These included fines for the transfer of property, Chancery proceedings, probate of wills, and manorial court rolls. Each manor held court on a somewhat regular basis to allow the lord of the manor to collect rents and handle personal issues for tenants. Family connections can often be traced by progressive land ownership.

Following the peasants' uprising in 1381 and John Hanchach's subsequent beheading, it is not surprising that members of the Hanchet family kept a low profile. As a result, the living members of the family started to spread out to places not formerly associated with the family name.

One such case was that of Thomas Hanchet who appears in October 1401 in the Court Rolls and Rentals for Northill, Bedfordshire, which is near the town of Bedford. At that court session he acknowledges that he holds a messuage (a dwelling

⁶³ Taken from R. A. Ledgard's unpublished manuscripts on file at the Hertfordshire Record Office in Hertford and the Essex Records Office in Chelmsford.

house with outbuildings and land assigned to its use) in Thorncote, formerly Jocys where the gate and “le Shepine” are situated and certain lands and meadows, but he does not know how much. He says he holds these by military service. Thomas may have fought in Scotland under Henry Percy (Hotspurs) or against the Welsh rebels under King Henry IV.⁶⁴



Hanchett Counties in East Anglia

⁶⁴ “1400s in England.” *Wikipedia*.

A gap in the manor rolls until 1418 prevents us from learning more about this Thomas. The next available court record on 25 June of that year indicates that a Hanchet is still in possession of this property, but the first name has been torn away. A subsequent court in 1421 tells us that the new holder of this property is John Hanchet, most likely the son of Thomas Hanchet above.

The next mention of the same property occurs at a court held after May 19, 1435. At this court the death of Isabell Grenlane since the last court is reported and that the premises descended to Thomas Hanchett, son of Isabell, who is of full age. Apparently, Thomas Hanchett died before 1431 as Isabell's second husband, John Grenlane, whose will is dated before 1 February 1431, died before 9 June 1432. John Grenlane left property to Isabell in Cambridge and Hamylden, Buckinghamshire. Thomas Hanchett, Isabell's son by her first marriage, figures prominently in the will as a benefactor and executor.

Thomas stubbornly fails to appear at court over the next five years. Another gap in the record carries us to 1460 at which time Thomas Hanchet's possession of the property is discontinued. His default of court continues from 1461 until 1477 at which time he is recorded as holding a half acre of land in Gannsworth.

By 12 April 1494 William Hanchet is in possession of the same property mentioned in the court roll of 1401, late of Thomas Hanchett, his father. William appears in the court rolls from 1498 to 1517, but is missing in the rolls of 1519 to 1524. The rolls for 1533 state that John Cooper held the land sometimes called Hanchates. Apparently, the Hanchet connection with the Manor of Northhill ends at that point.

From the Rental of the Manor of Beeston cum Calcott, dated 5 July 1442, it is found that Thomas Hanchett is the tenant of a croft (a small rented farm) and two acres of land and that he is

the son and heir of Isabell Grenlane who was mentioned in the Northhill property of 1435. This Thomas was the husband of Margaret de Eure, heiress of the Manor of Caldecote in Buckinghamshire. He was also a member of Parliament for Cambridge Bourough in 1435.⁶⁵

Their son Thomas, “the younger,” went on to become a wealthy lawyer, and a member of Parliament as was his father Thomas before him. Thomas, the lawyer, is well documented in Wedgewood’s book *History of Parliament 1439 to 1509*.⁶⁶



*Caldecote Mill Near Newport Pagnell*⁶⁷

HANCHETE (HANCHITH), Thomas (1445-1509); of Caldecote in Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, and of Bedford. Lawyer. Member of Parliament for Bedford Borough 1491.

⁶⁵ *Members of Parliament: Parliaments of England 1213-1702*.

⁶⁶ Colonel the Right Honorable Josiah C. Wedgewood D.S.O M.P.: *History of Parliament 1439-1509*.

⁶⁷ Newport Pagnell Historical Society.

Son and heir of Thomas Hanchete (d.1488/90) (cf. Thomas “Hanchiche,” Member of Parliament, Cambridge 1435), by Margaret (b.1414), daughter and heiress of Philip De Eure of Calverton, Buckinghamshire, and heiress of Caldecote; married.

- 1) Elizabeth, perhaps a daughter of Sir William Nottingham (q.v.);
- 2) Margery, mother of his heir (possibly a Mountfitchet);
- 3) Joan, widow of John Barker.

He was pardoned 15 Nov. 1484, as executor of the will of Sir William Nottingham (d. 1483) and with all these aliases—late of Letchworth, Cambridge, Caldecote, Bedford, Gloucester, and London, and “the younger” to distinguish him from his father.

He, or his father, was feoffee (a person to whom a grant of freehold property is made) with the bishop of Ely in Gloucestershire, 1487; he was suing for Calverton, Buckinghamshire, as son and heir of Margaret 1490. He became rich, for, by 1489, Robert Broughton held of him Broughton, Hertfordshire, and Wolston, Buckinghamshire. He was on commission for the goal (jail) delivery for Bedford 1492, Bedford county 1493, and nominated in Parliament as a Subsidy Commissioner for the town, 1497.

It is not clear how he came to be included in the select few who were specially denounced by Warbeck in 1497—“caitiffs and villains of simple birth”—perhaps an active and intriguing lawyer.

Died 20 October 1509, when dower was assigned to his widow Joan, and William, aged 40, was his son and heir; lands—Caldecote in Newport Pagnell, held in chief, worth £7.13s.4d. Will of Thomas Hanchete of Bedford,

dated 15 December 1508, probate 15 October 1509. To be buried in St. Paul's, Bedford, next to Elizabeth late his wife. To Trinity altar at St. Paul's, "My best mass books" to pray for his soul and that of Sir William Nottingham (q.v.). Joan his wife residuary legatee and executrix.

Warbeck's story was typical of the court intrigue which constantly plagued England. Wikipedia tells us that⁶⁸:

Perkin Warbeck (circa 1474 – 23 November 1499) was a pretender to the English throne during the reign of King Henry VII of England. By claiming to be Richard of Shrewsbury, 1st Duke of York, the younger son of King Edward IV, one of the "Princes in the Tower," Warbeck was a significant threat to the newly established Tudor dynasty, and gained support outside England.

Henry VII declared Warbeck an impostor and after his capture Warbeck wrote a confession in which he said he was a Fleming born in Tournai around 1474.

Due to uncertainty as to whether Richard of Shrewsbury had died in the Tower of London or had survived, Warbeck's claim gathered some followers, whether due to real belief in his identity or because of desire to overthrow Henry and reclaim the throne. Dealing with Warbeck cost Henry VII over £13,000 putting a strain on Henry's weak state finances.

After repeated attempts and consistent failure to persuade the English people that he was who he claimed to be, Warbeck was captured by King Henry's forces and imprisoned in the Tower of London. Warbeck was initially treated well by Henry. As soon as he confessed to being an impostor, he was released from the Tower of London, and was given

⁶⁸ "Perkin Warbeck." *Wikipedia*.

accommodation at Henry's court. He was even allowed to be present at royal banquets. He was, however, kept under guard and was not allowed to sleep with his wife, who was living under the protection of the queen. After eighteen months at court, Warbeck tried to escape. He was quickly recaptured. He was then held in the Tower, initially in solitary confinement, and later alongside Edward, Earl of Warwick; the two tried to escape in 1499. Captured once again, on 23 November 1499, Warbeck was drawn on a hurdle (cart, frame [as used for dragging traitors to execution]) from the Tower to Tyburn, London, where he read out a confession and was hanged.

Thomas and Margery's son, William, who was aged forty at his father's death, only survived his father by six years, dying 2 March 1515. The inquisition post mortem for William reveals that he was holding Letchworth Manor in Hertfordshire. William's wife was Margery Newport, the daughter of John Newport. Manors held by William at the time of his demise included Letchworth, Hertfordshire, and Wallington, Hertfordshire both of which were called Mountfitchets.

Apparently, the last six years of William's life were not too easy for him as his father's last wife, Joan, sued for possession of all the lands held by Thomas Hanchett during their marriage. Ultimately, William prevailed and Joan was granted only those properties specifically given to her by Thomas while they were married.

Upon William's death all of his properties were passed on to his eldest son and heir, Andrew Hanchet. Andrew died two years after his father, William, 10 June 1517, at age twelve. The next brother, John, was born 3 November 1514 and thus was only two years old when he became heir to and holder of the following properties:

Hertfordshire: Manor of Letchworth with the appurtenances in Letchworth and Wylien. The Manor of Mountfitchet and certain land in

Wellington with the appurtenances. A tenement with the appurtenances in Ashwell.

Buckinghamshire: Manor of Caldecote and Walien by Newport and two virgates of land in Newport and one virgate of land in Calverton. A messuage, four tofts, twenty-four acres of land, meadow, pasture, and woods with the appurtenances in Byerton and Magna Brikhill.

Cambridgeshire: A messuage with appurtenances in Shelford.⁶⁹

Not bad for a two-year-old!



*Letchworth Manor (Now Hotel) in Hertfordshire*⁷⁰

⁶⁹ *Court of Wards Misc. Book* p 578 and f.272, Particulars for leases 27 Henry VIII.

⁷⁰ Image from a postcard purchased at Letchworth Hotel in 1968.

John reached his majority 3 November 1435, his mother, Margery, having held the lands for him until that date. John had a sister, Grace, who married John Gray of Barley according to the Visitation of Bedfordshire in 1560. It seems that he also had a brother, Thomas Hanchett, who became involved with John in several land transactions in Hertfordshire and Essex. Thomas was a lawyer. It is interesting to note that one of the properties held by John Hanchet was in Shelford, Cambridgeshire. The other Hanchett who had held property in that village was Robert Hanchet prior to some of his lands being sold by John and Thomas Hanchet in 1382. Shelford is on the outskirts of the town of Cambridge. This could explain why Thomas Hanchet was a member of Parliament for the town of Cambridge in 1435 and could indicate he was a descendent of Robert of Cambridgeshire.

John Hanchet must have needed to raise a lot of cash because he began selling off his inheritance by 1539 when the Manor of Mountfitchet with land and rents in Wallington went to John Bowles. In 1547 Letchworth went to Thomas Snagge. By that time it was known as Hanchetes Manor.

Another explanation is that he and his wife Bridget were without a son to pass the properties on to. A daughter, Alice, was buried at Great Parndon in 1551. Surviving daughter, Martha, and her husband, Edward Tournier took over the Manor of Canons in Great Parndon, Essex which John and Bridget had purchased in 1548 from Sir Thomas Davy. John Hanchet's will was dated 24 September 1556. John died in 1556.

John and his brother Thomas in 1538 were involved in a sizable real estate transaction with Henry Parker and his wife, Grace involving: the manors of Furneaux Pelham, Thederesham, Waterford and Packyngton and forty messuages, land and rents in the said towns and Brent Pelham, Stocking Pelham, Anstey, Albury, Great Hormead, Little Hormead, Much Hadham, Little Hadham, Braughing, and Standon. The

settlement was in favor of Henry Parker and wife meaning that John and Thomas had sold all these properties to them.⁷¹

John brought suit in the late 1530's in an attempt to show that he should inherit the properties of a distant cousin, George Hanchett, who was then deceased, in Billericay, Orsett, and Laindon, Essex. A detailed genealogy was set out showing the relationship between John and George. That relationship is given at the end of this chapter. John had to go back four generations on his side and three on George's to establish the link.⁷² George's father Richard was another interesting Hanchet. He always had the suffix "Skinner" following his name. The title simply meant that he dealt in furs. Richard will be covered in Chapter 6 on the Hanchetts of Great Burstead and Billericay, Essex. This time John was outmaneuvered by a cousin named James who was a nephew of Richard Hanchet and thus a closer relative.

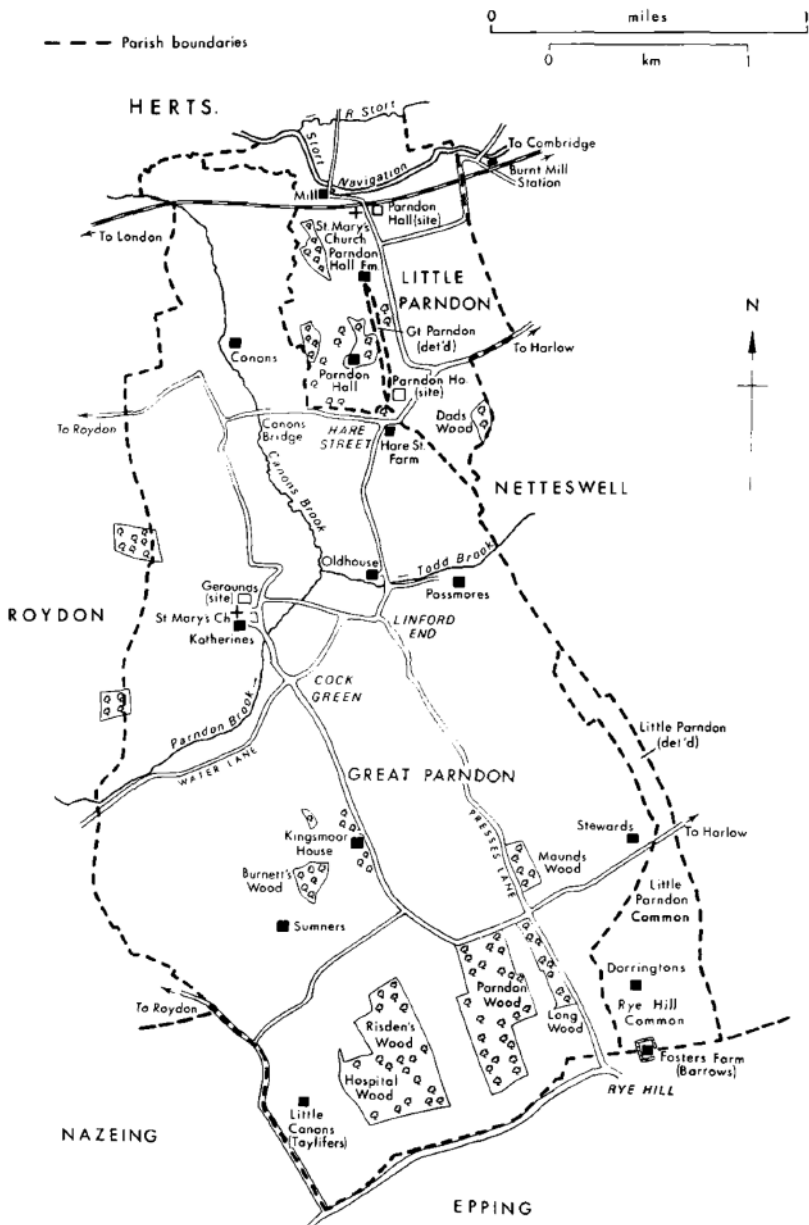
While ample proof of John's marriage to Bridget is available, there has been a strong suggestion that John had an earlier marriage to Grace, daughter of Robert Newport of Furneaux Pelham. The 1634 Heralds' Visitation to Hertford shows, under Moore of Hadham, the marriage of John Hanchett of Gadesbury (Gatesbury), Hertfordshire to Grace Newport. The same Visitation for the family Newport of Pelham shows that Grace became a nun but it may have been that she attended a school run by nuns as was common at that time. The information for Grace, daughter of John and Grace shows the marriage of John Hanchett's aunt Grace who married Gray, and not the marriage shown also in the 1634 visitation which shows that she married Arthur Waterhouse.⁷³ Of course, this could be another John Hanchett. A possible alternative is that this was the John of Berkhamstead who is discussed in Chapter 13.

⁷¹ William Brigg: *The Herts Genealogist and Antiquary*.

⁷² TNA C 1/1000/3: Hanchett v. Broune.

⁷³ *The Visitations of Hertfordshire*: made by Robert Cooke, Esq., Clarendieux, in 1572, and Sir Richard St. George, kt., Clarendieux, in 1634, with Hertfordshire pedigrees from Harleian mss. 6147 and 1546.

GREAT AND LITTLE PARNDON c.1875



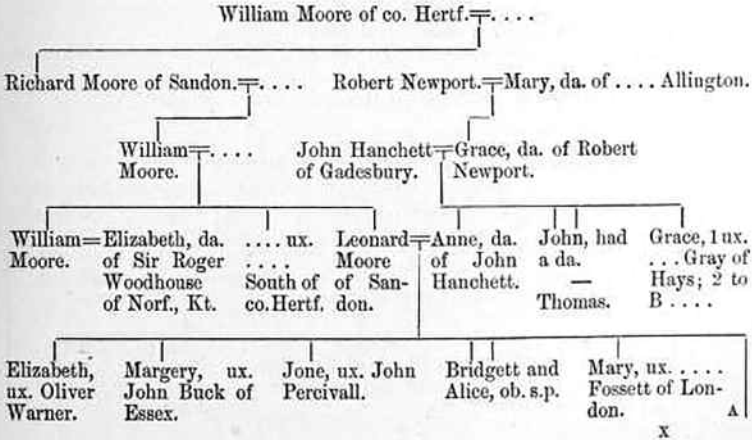
*Cannons Manor at Great Parndon*⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Arthur H. Doubleday: *Victoria County History Essex*.

Moore of Hadham.

ARMS.—*Argent, gullée de sang and two chevrons Gules.*

CREST.—*Out of the top of a mural tower Gules, a lion rampant-gardant Or, supporting a banner Argent gullée de sang, thereon the Arms, the staff Sable.*



1634 Pedigree of Moore of Hadham

John's brother, Thomas, was a lawyer and would prove his capabilities on numerous occasions. Just as this branch of the Hanchet family seemed on a downhill slide, Thomas, who was called "of Albury," Hertfordshire would lift the family up once again.

Thomas was born about 1515, probably at Letchworth, and was married to Barbara Mallory in Albury. He had been admitted to Gray's Inn in London to study law in 1536. Following Barbara's demise, in 1561, he would move to Braughing, Hertfordshire after purchasing the Manor of Uphall and ¼ of the Manor of Gatesbury, at that location, for £700.

Thomas and his son-in-law, Thomas Bernardiston, must have decided that it would be useful, or entertaining for Thomas to acquire the "Manor of Hanchett Hall along with all lands, tenements, meadows, leasures, and pastures belonging to said manor along with all the appurtenances being in the towns and

fields of Wythersfield and Haverhyll (Suffolk) which had been in the possession of John Bentley.” This occurred 8 September 1566, meaning that the original Hanningehet of Suffolk County was back in the hands of the Hanchet family after an absence of some 300 years!⁷⁵ At this time it is not known when the Hanchett family once again disposed of this property.

A beautiful brass to Barbara Hanchet was placed in the floor of the parish church in Braughing and remains to this day. Thomas remarried to Julian Pulter Shewster Cave in 1573, and less than two years later he died at Braughing. Thomas’ will was dated 1566 although he lived until 1574.⁷⁶

In his will, he desires to be buried at Braughing Church next to his wife Barbara under a stone engraved with the “Armes of myne Ancestors and thereupon the day and year of my decease.” He leaves money to the poor of Braughing, Standon, Albury, and Much and Little Hadham. To daughter Mary, wife of Sir Arthur Hevingham 400 marks, the balance of her 1000-mark dower. Daughter Ann to receive 100 marks per year if she marries with the advice of daughters Hevingham and Bernardiston. Other legatees are his son Thomas, sons-in-law Barnardiston and Hevingham, and cousins Andrew and Yvon Gray. Son Thomas is put under charge of Andrew Gray to be educated at Cambridge or Oxford until he is eighteen years old and at one of the Inns of Court until he is twenty-four. Thomas was left the Manor of Fryers in Braughing. Daughter Ann is put under charge of daughter Barnardiston for her education. Testator leaves all of his manors, lands, etc. in Herts to the use of his will. The executors were daughters Barnardiston and Hevingham, cousins Andrew and Yvon Gray, and Andrew Malory.

⁷⁴ Hare 6113, 228 x 2. An Indenture between Leonard Smyth of Shoulham in the County of Norfolk Esq. and Katherine his wife and Thomas Bernardiston of Suffolk and Thomas Hanchett of Braughing.

⁷⁵ Sidelights on Brasses in Hertfordshire Churches. Plate. *East Herts Archaeological Society Transactions* Vol XI part 1, 1940. 26-49.



*Saint Mary's Church in Braughing, Hertfordshire*⁷⁶

An anonymous poem found its way into the Hanchett family collection:

AS
 CONCERNING
 Ye Manor of Pulters

Thomas Hanchett of Braughing by Ware
 The aforesaid Chronicles declare
 Held ye Manor in sixteen hundred and twenty
 And from Braughing to Hinxworth Place
 Pulter's Path you still may trace
 Across Bygrave open fields most evidently.

⁷⁶ John Salmon: Wikimedia Foundation.

The Greys & Hanchetts intermarried,
And Thomas Hanchett here long tarried
For his quarterings in the twelfth of good Queen Bess
Were emblazoned upon the window pane
And to this day do there remain

Fifteen seventy the date which they express.

Thomas Hanchett (son of the above)⁷⁷

With Dame Julia Pulter fell in Love
And married the buxom widow all forlorn (1574)

History plainly has decided
That the worthy couple here resided
In the year fifteen hundred and ninety one.

Previous to and after marriage
Hanchett travelled in his carriage
Full oft twixt Braughing Pulter's Manor
Taking Cotted upon his way,
Where the Pulter Family held sway,
There he met the Charming widow Juliana.

Hanchett needed no exhorting
To venture on a little courting
To the widow it came easy, without fuss;
Thus he very soon got married
And to guard his charmer carried
In the carriage a big brass blunderbuss.

⁷⁷ It was actually the father who married Dame Julian in 1570.

Thomas' children by Barbara married well. Elizabeth Hanchet, born 1545 in Albury married Sir Thomas Barnardiston, grandfather of Nathaniel Bernardiston who would become a major benefactor to the Puritan settlements in New England. Mary Hanchet married Sir Arthur Hevingham. Thomas Hanchet, their only son, married Mary Paschall, daughter of the aunt of William Pynchon, an important early emigrant to New England. A third daughter, Katherine Hanchet has not been tracked beyond her birth. It is likely that Barbara died giving birth to Katherine.

The latter Thomas Hanchet had an illustrious career: as sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1591, and again in 1600. He was a graduate of Caius College Cambridge, 16 April 1575, and admitted to the Inner Temple in London 15 April 1578. Later he was justice of the peace for Hertfordshire, member of Parliament, and contributor of one lance and one light horse to the war against Spain. This was to "help defend against the forces of Spain gathered at Oren, ready to make a sudden descent in the inner parts of our Kingdom nearest our city and navy."

Thomas had attended Walden School before entering college, graduating at age fifteen. At Caius College, Cambridge, Thomas was tutored personally by Mr. Edmund Hounde, president of the college.

Thomas and Mary Hanchett found time to have seven children: Mary, Frances, Edward, Thomas, Penelope, John, and another Mary. Edward became a lawyer, entering the Inner Temple 3 February 1604, while John attended Saint John's College, Cambridge as his father wished him to be a "scholar." A letter from Lord Maynard to Laurence Burnell, Fellow of Saint John's College, dated 24 March 1622/3, states:⁷⁸

Mr. (William) Younge junior, a Fellow of St. John's is willinge at this election to resign his Fellowship to his

⁷⁸ Contained in a letter from F. P. White of Saint John's College to the author dated 8 November 1967.

kinsman and friend, one Mr Hanchett of your College. The reason why I am desirous to be beholding unto my friends for this gentleman is because hee is my wives neere kinsman, his father being brother to her mother's mother, and one unto whome I have in myn one particular been extraordinarily beholding. Hee is a gentleman of very great worth and esteeme in his country, and has bine twice Sheriffe of Hartfordshire, and beeinge in yeares and having divers children hee is desirous to make this sonne a scholler. For the young mans description I can say nothings hee being altogether unknown to mee, but if hee should bee any waies puritanically affected (which is more than I can imagine) hee will much degenerate from his father and his eldest brother, whoe are very free from any such humour and will alwaies be ready to give him good counsell.

John Hanchett died at Cambridge in 1627. The inventory of his goods shows that he was a typical unmarried academic, living sparsely in a rented room with meager furnishings. His father and brother Thomas administered his goods.⁷⁹

It is interesting to note that according to Lord Maynard, John's father, Thomas, and eldest brother, Edward, would be ready to give him good counsel concerning being puritanically affected. Possibly not so with his brother and middle son, Thomas, who in later years became involved with the nephew of Reverend Nathaniel Ward, Puritan minister and author of *The Simple Cobler of Aggawam*.

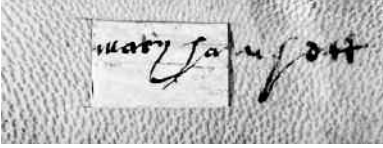
Signatures for Thomas Hanchett, the sheriff, his wife Mary, his sons, and Edward's wife, Elizabeth, appear in a set of documents entitled "Hanchett Family in Braughing" held at the Hertfordshire Record Office in Hertford.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Perogative Court of Canterbury, *Administrative Act Book, 1627*. p146, and Vice Chancellors Court Cambridge, Peterborough Registry.

⁸⁰ Hanchett Family in Braughing (ref: Acc 3785.)



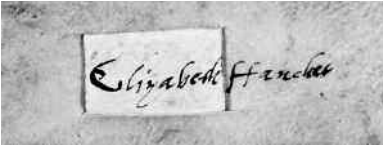
Thomas the father.



Mary the wife.



Edward, son and heir.



Edward's wife.



Thomas Junior.



John the son.

An association between Thomas Hanchett, Junior, and Nathaniel Ward's nephew, also named Nathaniel Ward, is given in the will of Nathaniel Ward, DD, as summarized in *Genealogical Gleanings in England*:⁸¹

NATHANIEL WARDE, of Old Winsor, co. Berks, Doctor in Divinity, 3 December, nineteenth of King Charles, proved 11 February, 1667. He mentions wife Susanna and marriage contract, a bond of one thousand pounds

⁸¹ Henry F. Waters: *Genealogical Gleanings in England* Vol 1 Hene 26

unto Mr. Thomas Hanchett and Mr. Solomon Smith, in trust for said wife. Son Nathaniel to be executor. The witnesses were Robert Aldridge, Elizabeth Reynolds and (the mark of) Edward Stokes.

Ten years earlier, in 1657, there was a conveyance from Abraham Reinolds of Triplow, county Cambridge, gentleman, to Thomas Hanchett of Hinxworth, Hertfordshire and Nathaniel Ward of Stapleford Tawney, Essex of the Manor of Triplow and lands belonging thereto.⁸² The conveyance was witnessed by Thomas Hanchett's daughter, Dorcas.

This would indicate a fairly solid partnership between Thomas and Nathaniel. Thomas Hanchett is usually noted as being a gentleman or with the prefix "Mr." He does not seem to have been a lawyer as was his brother Edward.

It should also be recalled that Thomas Hanchett's father purchased Hanchett Hall which was located on the edge of Haverhill, Suffolk, where Nathaniel Ward and his brother, Samuel Ward, father of this Nathaniel Ward, were born. Ward was three years younger than Thomas Hanchett. Nathaniel Ward's (the uncle), college experience was at Emmanuel in Cambridge, at that time a hotbed of Puritanism. Nathaniel Ward (the nephew) attended Sidney in Cambridge, graduating with a doctor of divinity in 1635. Nathaniel Ward of New England and both his brothers, John and Samuel, were strong Puritans as was their father John Ward. It would be hard to imagine that the nephew, Nathaniel Ward, could be anything but puritanically affected.

It was possibly this same Thomas Hanchett who appeared before the Court of High Commission 6-20 November 1634. Thomas held lands in all of the places mentioned in the court record. This court dealt principally with ecclesiastical matters and was the court before which members of the clergy appeared to defend themselves against charges of being a

⁸² Close Roll 1657 Pt. 2 No. 1 (054/3929) 8 July 1657.

nonconformist or having puritanical leanings. Of course, since this Thomas was styled as neither “Mr.” nor “gentleman,” this court action could pertain to Thomas Hanchett of New England.

ACTS OF THE COURT OF HIGH COMMISSION

During the Month of November 1634,⁸³

In continuation of those for October in that year, published in this Volume, pp. 258-278. They are derived from Vol. cclxi.

Nov. 6. fol.119. Appeared and took oath to answer articles. Thomas Hanchett, John Cock, of Ugley, Essex, Matthew Edwards, of Stanstead, and Peter Vanson, of Haineham [Henham?], Essex.

Nov.13. fol.126 b. Hanchett is examined, and all ordered to answer the articles before any prosecutor is named.

Thomas Hanchett, John Cock, Matthew Edwards, and Peter Vanson, of Henham, Essex.

Nov. 20 fol. 133 b. All except Hanchett to be attached.

Thomas Hanchett, John Cock, Matthew Edwards, and Peter Vanson.

Unfortunately, this scrap is all that remains of this court action. Out of later embarrassment, many of the records of this court were destroyed in the time of the Commonwealth. We may infer that Thomas Hanchett, possibly because of his station in British society, was not held on whatever charges the group was accused of, or he might have been underaged.

Thomas was married at least twice, first to Ann Thompson in Melbourn, Cambridge, 2 July 1629, and second to Mary Harrison at Saint Katherin’s by the Tower, London, 8 August 1637. It is interesting to note that Thomas, born in 1591, would

⁸³ From: “Acts of the Court of High Commission,” Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1634-5. 1864, 314-337. [SP 16/261 f.1141]

have been thirty-eight years old at the time of his first marriage, and that was unusually late for this branch of the Hanchett family. There is at least one additional marriage of a Thomas Hanchett to Elizabeth Winn in Messing, Essex in 1620. This would have been a more usual age for Thomas' first marriage. The parish records for Messing include only the marriage. No Hanchett children occur in those registers. Also, the name Hanchett does not appear in the manorial court records there.

Thomas had three children by his first recorded wife: Penelope, Lucretia, and Mary. His first two daughters died in their teen years following his wife's death in 1635 at Hinxworth, Hertfordshire. By his second recorded wife he added Dorcas, Charles, and Deborah. All of these children were born in Hinxworth, Hertfordshire between the years of 1630 and 1641. Thomas and one of his two recorded wives must have been living there during that period of time.

According to Andrews in his "Sidelights on Brasses in Hertfordshire Churches," Thomas Hanchett of Hinxworth purchased Pulter's Manor there after the death of Andrew Gray in 1614. It seems that Andrew's widow, Thomasin Gray, had to appear before the Court of High Commission in 1617 because she refused to take communion. "The Bill of recusants for Hinxworth states Mrs Thomasyn Gray, widow, cometh neither to church nor to the communion, and is to answer before the High Commissioners in the beginnings of May next. Signed Antony Collop and Thomas Adams, churchwardens." It was common for nonconformists during the Puritan era to refuse to take communion at the altar as prescribed by the Church of England.

Charles was working for the government in 1658 when he was mentioned in his father's letter as stated below. Charles who was born in Hinxworth, Hertfordshire 2 December 1640, died in London 8 April 1693 and is buried at Saint Dunstan in the West. No record of Charles being married or having any

children has been found. In a letter to the secretary of state, John Thurloe, Thomas Hanchett writes:⁸⁴

Sir,

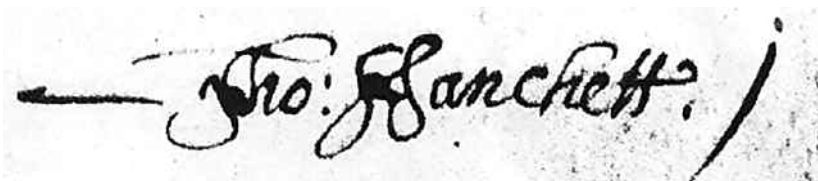
Discoursing with my nephew, he hath assured me, that Clayton knowes the depth and all the secrettes of this horid designe, and all the parties of consequence therein engaged; for Clayton tould my nephew, when he was in London last with him, that he knew the generall agent in this plott, and was with him, from whom he had all his orders. Heereupon my advice is, that, if Mr. Secretary is not fully satisfied in the depthe of this discoverie, that my nephew, being allready discovered to that partie, as mentioned at large in the two paperes lately sent you, that he may appeare face to face with Clayton before Mr. secretary, soe fully to accuse him upon perticulers, as probablie may make him confess much more then yet he hath done. This, in my judgment, uppon hoopes of mercie, may make him acknowledge the truth, which may be much to the vantage of his highness service. Sir, if you have occasion to write any letter to my nephew, Mr. Charles Wheeler, let your man leave it with sonne Charles Hanchett, whoe is a clarke in the registere's office in Chancery-lane, and constantly there every day; and thus it will come safe and speedily to our hands.

26. Ap. 1658.

Youres, Tho. Hanchett

This letter is the last we hear from Thomas during his lifetime. Certainly the Clayton to which he refers is Sir Robert Clayton who introduced the English to the concept of real property mortgage finance. For this alone we may not want to thank him. Additionally, Clayton was involved with an attempt

⁸⁴ Mr. Hanchett's information against Mr. Clayton. Vol. LVIII State Papers, 1658 April (5 of 6) 390.

A black and white photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script. The signature reads "Thos: Hanchett:" followed by a long, sweeping flourish that extends to the right. The ink is dark on a light, slightly textured background.

*Signature of Thomas Hanchett*⁸⁵

to disrupt the government of Richard Cromwell, son of Oliver Cromwell, and restore Charles II. Apparently, Thomas was attempting to help Cromwell and therefore was probably not a Royalist himself.

We do not know when Thomas moved from Hinxworth to Welwyn. The Welwyn parish registers for 1675 tell us that Mrs. Hanchett, an ancient gentlewoman, was buried April 6 of that year and that Mr. Hanchett followed her on April 12. Thomas must have lived to age eighty-four. It is interesting to note his longevity considering the even greater longevity of Deacon John Hanchett, son of Deacon Thomas Hanchett of New England. Unlike his father, Thomas the sheriff, Thomas of Hinxworth seemed to keep a low profile in most of his dealings. It is possible that the male line of this Hanchett branch ended in Welwyn. Another possibility is that Thomas did have a child by an earlier unknown marriage although no previous children are mentioned in the Visitation for Hertfordshire, 1635.

It is fitting that Thomas should end up in the second Garden City of Hertfordshire, especially since the first Garden City was, and is, Letchworth where the family began their adventure into Hertfordshire.

Thomas' older brother, Edward Hanchett, was baptized at Hinxworth, Hertfordshire 23 December 1586 the "son and heir of Thomas Hanchett, Esquire and Mary, his wife," about nine miles from Braughing.⁸⁶ He too became a lawyer, being admitted to the Inner Temple in 1603.

⁸⁵ Rawlinson Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁸⁶ "Hertfordshire Baptisms." *Find My Past*.



Hinxworth Place in Hertfordshire⁸⁷

Before 1 June 1610, Edward married Elizabeth Thurton in Norfolk, daughter and co-heir of John Thurton, deceased. To them was born a son, Edward, who was baptized 5 August 1610 and buried at Braughing the next day. Elizabeth was buried 1 June 1627, also in Braughing. Edward married again in 1633 to Jane Garton, daughter of Sir Peter Garton of Wolavingham, Sussex. Jane was the widow of Thomas Stoughton of West Stoke, Sussex.

Edward and his first wife, Elizabeth, had purchased property in Ditchingham, Norfolk from his brother-in-law Christopher Calthropp, but the couple continued to live in Braughing at least up until the time Elizabeth died. After that Edward and his second wife, Jane, lived in Westminster, London. Thomas Hanchett, the father of Edward, sold the manors of Gatesbury and Uphall in 1609, so apparently Edward did not inherit either of those properties when his father died, which was not until

⁸⁷ Photo by [Magnus Manske](#) Created: June 6, 2000.

1642, in Hinxworth. Thomas, the sheriff, lived to be over eighty years old.

Edward Hanchett left us a copy of his signature as it appeared in a deed selling land in Braughing to Thomas Meade. The deed was dated 1623/4.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward Hanchett". The letters are dark and the ink shows some texture, typical of a historical document.

Signature of Edward Hanchett of Braughing

Edward's aunt, Jane Pascall, who was a sister of his mother, Mary, married Sir John Hayward, a historian, lawyer, and politician. Edward was the executor of Sir John's will, and his brother Thomas was appointed as Edward's assistant. Edward was also the executor of Jane Hayward's will dated 1 September 1641. At that time he was said to be residing in Westminster.

Edward latched on to what he thought might be a good means to ensure his financial independence during his later years. He purchased the right to become the Usher to the Court of Wards and Liveries for £4,000 which was a very large sum of money in those days. Wikipedia tells us that:

The **Court of Wards and Liveries** was a court established during the reign of Henry VIII in England. Its purpose was to administer a system of feudal dues; but as well as the revenue collection, the court was also responsible for wardship and livery issues.

The Court of Wards and Liveries ceased to have a function in the 17th century due to the abolition of feudal tenures by the Long Parliament in February 1646

(New Style date). The Court was formally abolished by the Tenures Abolition Act 1660.⁸⁸

On the death of every tenant-in-chief (next in line to the king in ownership of property) the escheator of the county in which he held land was required to make an “inquest post *mortem*” report to the Chancery which identified the size and location of the holdings, the rents and services due under feudal land tenure, the name and age of the deceased and the name and age of his heir. A copy was sent to the Exchequer, and after 1540 to the Court of Wards and Liveries.

The position of “Usher to the Court” meant that that person would counsel the family of the prospective “ward” and literally bring that heir into court. The usher would typically make £450 per year as compensation or about an 11.25% return on his investment (not taking into account his time.) Edward bought the Office of Usher to the Court, to him and his heirs forever, it being an office of inheritance granted by Letters Patent under the Great Seale of England at some point prior to 1648.

When they decided to discontinue the court, the Committee of Examination felt that Edward should be paid £4,300.⁸⁹ Later, in 1648, Edward revealed his state of utter destitution, admitting that he had borrowed money to purchase the office and that he was now under examination at the king’s bench concerning his inability to repay those debts.⁹⁰ Although payment to Edward was agreed to and authorized, it kept being postponed.

By April 1654, Edward filed a petition for reimbursement to members of the council. At first, neither Edward’s petition nor those of other court officers would be heard.⁹¹ Years later the

⁸⁸ “Court of Wards and Liveries.” *Wikipedia*.

⁸⁹ Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports. Portland MSS I Lord Thomas Fairfax to William Lenthall, 24 March 1648/9. 512.

⁹⁰ Sixth Report of Royal Commission. *House of Lords Calendar*. Historical Manuscript Commission. 216a

⁹¹ *Journals of the House of Commons 1657-1659*. 22 December 1654. 407.

council agreed to a payment of £600, but it is not known if any payment was made.⁹² Edward was buried at Saint Margaret, Westminster, London on 13 June 1556 possibly having spent several of his latter years in debtors' prison. Another Hanchett, John, a child, was buried at the same church on 8 November 1642, possibly a son by his second wife, Jane.

No will, probate, or administration has been found for Edward. It is not surprising, considering his circumstances at that time. His wife, Jane Hanchett, did leave a will dated 23 March 1665/6 which produced a probate on 27 June 1666. There is no mention of any children or other Hanchett relatives. Only small gifts were left for servants, friends, and other relatives.⁹³

⁹² Ibid 21 December 1660. 219b.

⁹³ National Archives Catalog Reference prob/11/321. Image reference 499

1-Thomas Hanchett [1] b. , Cambridgeshire ?, d. 1418, Bedfordshire

+Unknown

2-Thomas Hanchett [2] bur. 1421, Bedfordshire

+Isabell [3] d. 1434-1435, Bedfordshire

3-John Hanchett [85]

+Unknown

4-Richard Hanchett (Skinner) [86] d. 14 Sep 18 HenryVIII, St Anthonin London

+Alice Bulstrode [87]

5-George Hanchett [88]

5-Elizabeth Hanchett [89]

3-Thomas Hanchett [4] b. Abt 1419, Bedfordshire, d. Abt 1497, Bedfordshire

+Margaret de Eure [5] b. 1414, m. Bef 1440, d. 1488-1489

4-John Hanchett [77] b. Abt 1445, d. Abt 1482

4-Thomas Hanchett Esq. [6] b. 1445, Bedfordshire, d. 1509, Bedfordshire

+Elizabeth Montfitchet [7] d. Bef 1509, (St Polls Bedford)

+Margery [8]

5-William Hanchett [10] b. Abt 1469, Bedfordshire, d. 2 Mar 1515, Letchworth Hertfordshire

+Margery Newport [11] d. Abt 1537

6-Andrew Hanchett [12] b. 1505, d. 10 Jul 1516

6-Grace Hanchett [14]

6-John Hanchett [13] b. 2 Nov 1514, d. Jul 1556

+Bridget [15] m. Bef 1532

7-Martha Hanchett [16]

+Edward Turner [17]

+Grace Newport [65]

7-John Hanchett [66]

7-Thomas Hanchett [67]

7-Edward Hanchett [68] c. 4 May 1665, Braughing Hertfordshire

7-Anne Hanchett [69]

+Leonard Moore [72] b. , Sandon Hertfordshire

7-Grace Hanchett [73]

+Arthur Waterhouse [74] b. , Berhamsted Hertfordshire, d. 1558, Berhamsted Hertfordshire

+Margery Newport [11] d. Abt 1537 (see William Hanchett [10] on page 1)

6-Thomas Hanchett Esq. [19] b. Abt 1515, d. 2 Dec 1574, Braughing Hertfordshire

+Barbara Mallory [38] d. 18 May 1561, Albury Hertfordshire

7-Elizabeth Hanchett [45] b. 1545, Albury Hertfordshire, bur. 26 Sep 1584, Ketton Suffolk

+Sir Thomas Bernardiston [46]

7-Mary Hanchett [47] b. , Albury Hertfordshire, bur. 9 Nov 1635, Ketteringham Norfolk

+Sir Arthur Heveningham [48]

7-Anne Hanchett [49]

7-Thomas Hanchett Esq. [20] c. Mar 1559, d. 1642, Hinxworth Hertfordshire England

+Mary Paschall [21]

8-Mary Hanchett [26]

8-Frances Hanchett [27] bur. 26 Apr 1643, St. Margarets Westminster London

+William Devicke [53]

8-Edward Hanchett ESQ. [23] c. 23 Dec 1586, Hertingfordbury Hertfordshire, d. 1656, London

+Elizabeth Thurton [56] c. 1587, Broome Norfolk, m. 1608

9-Edward Hanchett [55] c. 5 Aug 1610, Braughing Hertfordshire, bur. 6 Aug 1610, Braughing Hertfordshire

+Jane Garton [59] d. 1666

8-Thomas Hanchett Esq. [24] b. 1591, Braughing Hertfordshire, d. 1665, Welwyn Hertfordshire

+Ann Thompson [28] m. 2 Jul 1629, Melbourn, Cambridgeshire England, bur. 24 Mar 1635, Hinxworth Hertfordshire England

9-John Hanchett [31] bur. 12 Feb 1651, St Benet's Cambridge

9-Penelope Hanchett [32] c. 23 May 1630, Bygrave Hertfordshire England, d. 1643, Hinxworth Hertfordshire England

9-Lucretia Hanchett [33] c. 20 Jun 1633, Hinxworth Hertfordshire England, d. 19 Jun 1650, Hinxworth Hertfordshire England

9-Mary Hanchett [37] b. 1642

+William Rance [62]

+Mary Harrison [30] d. 1665, Welwyn Hertfordshire England

9-Dorcas Hanchett [35] c. 29 Dec 1638, Hinxworth Hertfordshire England

+George Edwards [63] c. 26 Sep 1633

9-Charles Hanchett [34] c. 2 Dec 1640, Hinxworth Hertfordshire England, bur. 8 Apr 1693, St Dunstan in the West London

9-Deborah Hanchett [36] c. 17 Mar 1642, Hinxworth Hertfordshire England

8-Penelope Hanchett [25] c. 11 Jan 1592, Braughing Hertfordshire

+Ambrose Wheeler [54]

8-Mary Hanchett [51] b. , Braughing Hertfordshire

+Robert Wace [52]

8-John Hanchett [22] b. 1595, Braughing Hertfordshire England, d. 1627, Cambridge

7-Katherine Hanchett [50] c. 17 May 1561, Braughing Hertfordshire

+Julian Pulter Shewster Cave [40] m. 17 Feb 1573, Gl. Wyomondly Hertfordshire, d. 21 Apr 1612 (see Thomas Hanchett Esq. [19] on page 2)

+Joan Barker [9] (see Thomas Hanchett Esq. [6] on page 1)

Chapter 6

The Hanchetts of Great Burstead and Billericay

Great Burstead is an unusual town in the south-central part of Essex, fifteen miles from London. Being pleasantly situated on elevated ground commanding a view of the Thames, and with the river only twelve miles distant, shipping passing on the river can be seen from many points.

Richard Hanchett is the first member of the family to appear in the court rolls for Great Burstead Manor. In 1506, John Buckoo surrendered lands called Gerald's Marchant's to Richard Hanchett. In 1515 Richard is involved in further land transactions with Alice, his wife. By 1524 he was styled Richard Hanchett of London, Skynner. A skinner is simply someone who styles and sells furs.⁹⁴

Richard Hanchett and Alice Bulstrode had but two children, George and Elizabeth. Both were minors at the time of Richard's death. George inherited his father's estate when Richard died in 1527. George then died before 1538, leaving no children.

An interesting problem emerges when studying this Richard Hanchett. According to Junius Hanchett, the attorney, the *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain* lists, under "Wages of Skinners for 1489" one Richard Hanchett. Also, for 1508 it lists one Richard Hanches.⁹⁵ Junius thinks that the earlier entry must be for Richard, the father of the Richard whose will has

⁹⁴ Sixteenth century abstract of the rolls of the Manor of Great Burstead in author's possession.

⁹⁵ *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages*, Vol II.

survived, since as an adult in 1489 he would hardly be leaving minor children thirty-eight years later. The other possible answer is that he married a woman much younger than himself. If he had been born in 1468 and died in 1527, he would only have been fifty-nine at the writing of his will. We shall later show that John Hanchett, a contemporary of Richard's, lays out the ancestry of Richard with no father, Richard, indicated.

Alice his wife is not mentioned in the manor rolls until 1515, at which point in time Richard would have been in his mid-forties, surely young enough to have fathered two children.



*Red Lion, Where the Court for Great Burstead Manor Was Held*⁹⁶

Junius Hanchett summarizes Richard's will as follows:⁹⁷

The will mentions deceased wife, Alice, buried in the Chapel of St. Ann in (near) the Church of St. Anthony (Antonin), London, and Richard asks to be buried under the same stone. He wishes the Gray Friars and the Black Friars to “bring my body to burying.”

⁹⁶ Charles Phillips, *Stock Historian*.

⁹⁷ National Archives Prob 11/22/195.

Gives also to “the fraternity of Corpus Christi of which I am a brother” for their drinking; “also a standing cup, gilt, with a cover, gilt, weighing 52 1/2 ounces. A priest to say Mass every Friday at the Savoy,” Of course, all England was Catholic at this time. Martin Luther had barely begun his Reformation on the Continent.

Leaves money to Alice, his woman servant, and to John Brown his apprentice, and to the apprentice’s brother and sister. Many bequests of cloth, garments and valued articles to relatives and friends, several of the latter, skimmers.

Of the family details he names two children, both underage, son George and daughter Elizabeth, deceased wife Alice, “Cousin James Bulstrode.” The latter name leaves us to suppose the testator had a sister (probably then deceased) who had married a Bulstrode.

Mentions his “brother Robert” who was given Richard’s tenement in Hertford Stoke, Essex, and legacies. Leaves to “sister” Brigitt Warren and Richard Warren, gent., her husband, and gives them custody of his two minor children. They are made executors also along with George Bulstrode, gent., and Robert Warren of London, skinner. Perhaps this George Bulstrode was the father of “Cousin James Bulstrode.”

He gives various bequests to church. Mentions “Mystery of Skimmers” to which he probably belonged. It is an altogether interesting document giving a vivid picture of the man, his associations, and his times. There is no signature but there are five witnesses probably to his mark which must have escaped the notice of the copyist. It was proved by Richard Warren personally and by Brigitt Warren’s proxy Mr. John Heryng with power reserved.

The chapel and church burned down in the Great London Fire of 1666.

Richard's son George had been dead but a short time when relatives, close and distant, began to move in on George's estate. This was actually fortunate for those attempting to study this family. A distant cousin, John Hanchett of Waltham Holy Cross was first to claim to be the closest relative and therefore heir to George Hanchett. This John was the son and heir of William Hanchett of Letchworth, and was the same person who had owned many estates after his father and older brother had died. John presented the court with a family tree which now allows us to connect the family of Richard with those of Bedfordshire and eventually Hertfordshire.

George died 3 April 1539. On 10 October of that same year an inquisition post mortem was held at Chelmsford, Essex with the jurors unable to reach a conclusion before 24 October 1539. John Hanchett, age twenty-seven, wasted no time in letting the jury know that he was George's next of kin and next heir. Reciting his relationship to George as follows:⁹⁸

"[He 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.⁹⁹

Apparently John, who claimed to be heir, battled others' claims to George's holdings and personal property which alone was worth \$400, a sizable sum in that day. Finally, the executors of Richard's will stated that not only had George died, but also his sister Elizabeth was then deceased without heirs. Having

⁹⁸ Chancery Inquisition Post Mortem Series 2, C142, Vol 82, No. 108.

⁹⁹ Chancery Proceedings (Early) File 1000, No. 3.

the lands in their possession, they denied that John had any claim to it.¹⁰⁰

It was not until the first year of Queen Mary, 1553, that James Hanchett, nephew of Richard Hanchett was able to convince the Jury of Assize that he was the true heir of Richard and George Hanchett. James appears regularly in the manor rolls for Great Burstead from 1553 until his death in 1590.¹⁰¹ At that point Elizabeth his wife continued at Great Burstead, and according to Charles Kuypers who was doing research for Ledgard in 1932:

Although it is nowhere definitely stated, I am inclined to believe that the Hanchetts were, for many years before the death of James, living in the mansion house on Burstead Green and that his widow continued to reside there. James' attendances at the courts were very regular and "Jacobus Hanchett generosus" figures usually on the homage.

Elizabeth and James had a daughter, Elizabeth, who had first married William Styleman and secondly George Cramphone. They may have had a second daughter, Friswide, who married Edward Meade. Daughter Elizabeth is mentioned in a court roll for 1594 while daughter Friswide is mentioned in 1598.¹⁰²

James, in typical Hanchett style, along with Anthony Ermington of Stock, Essex and Styleman broke into the deer-park of Lady Anne Peter, widow, and killed and carried away two stags on 24 June 1578. The three confessed to the indictment.¹⁰³

Elizabeth, widow of James Hanchett, left a will dated 8 July 1607 which went through probate 8 August 1607. Elizabeth had been buried 12 July 1607. She mentions her daughter Elizabeth Cramphone, as well as her granddaughters Deborah and Anna

¹⁰⁰ Chancery Proceedings (Early) File 1000, Nos. 1 and 2.

¹⁰¹ Sixteenth century abstract of the rolls of the Manor of Great Burstead.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Extract from Essex Quarter Session Records Calendar Vol VIII Reference 68/29.

Cramphone. She also notes her grandsons Henry and Kittridge Cramphone and her grandchildren Joan, William, Elizabeth, Mary, and Eleanor Styleman from her daughter Elizabeth's first marriage. Lastly, she gives her joined chair and flaxen bed sheets to Edward Meade, son of Edward Mead, without stating a relationship.¹⁰⁴

It would seem that James must have been a son of Richard the skinner's brother, Robert. Robert is also mentioned in the 1524 lay subsidy rolls for Barnstable Hundred, which included Billericay and Great Burstead. Also mentioned is John Hanchett of Billericay.¹⁰⁵ James Hanchett is included in the lay subsidies for Great Burstead in 1566.¹⁰⁶ Elizabeth Hanchett, James' widow, is in the lay subsidies for 1598 and 1600.¹⁰⁷

Although no evidence has been found to support John Hanchett's proposed pedigree for Richard the skinner's ancestry, there is an interesting *coram rege* roll entry for Thomas Hanchett in Hadleigh, Suffolk at the time his brother John, father of Richard, would have been there:¹⁰⁸

To wit, William Maycons of Hadlegh in the County aforesaid, Fuller, was attached to respond (to) Thomas Hanchet regarding the plea wherefore, (by) strength & arms, towards the same Thomas at Hadlegh he had made assault, & the same had struck, wounded, & ill treated, so that of his life it was despaired, and other enormity, etc., to the grave injury, etc., & against the peace, etc., And thereupon the same Thomas, by means of John Gorle, the attorney belonging to him, complains that the aforesaid William (on) the Thursday next after the feast of the apostles Peter & Paul (in) the

¹⁰⁴Will of Elizabeth Hanchett, copy in the author's possession. Transcribed and Translated by Cathy Hanchett.

¹⁰⁵Lay Subsidy (Assessment) 108/151.

¹⁰⁶Lay Subsidy (Assessment) 110/416.

¹⁰⁷Lay Subsidy (Assessment) 111/505.

¹⁰⁸*Coram Regis* Roll, Michaelmas Term Henry VI (1429) National Archives Catalog Reference KB 27/674/22.

year of the reign of King Henry the sixth, after the conquest, the seventh, [i.e. on 30 June 1429], (by) strength & arms, that is to say, (with) swords, staffs, etc., towards the same Thomas at Hadlegh had made assault, & the same had struck, wounded, & ill treated, so that of his life it was despaired, and other enormity (to) him had inflicted, & against the peace of the now lord King, concerning which he says that he is made worse and has damage to the value of twenty pounds, And thereupon brings suit, etc., And the aforesaid William, in his own person, has come, And has defended the strength & injury at any time, etc., And whatsoever, etc., And has said that himself in none is thereupon guilty, And regarding this he puts himself upon the country [i.e. pleads not guilty, opting for trial by jury], And the aforesaid Thomas similarly, Therefore, should come thereupon, called to witness before the lord King, from the day of saint Hillary in 15 days [i.e. in January 1429/30], wheresoever, And as neither, etc., to respond, etc., Whereas, nevertheless, etc., the same a day is given (for) the parties aforesaid, etc.

A further note on Richard Hanchett, skinner, is worth inclusion. In a letter dated 7 July 1925, Mr. J.J. Lambert, clerk to The Skinners Company, at Skinners Hall, London, wrote Mr. Ledgard as follows:

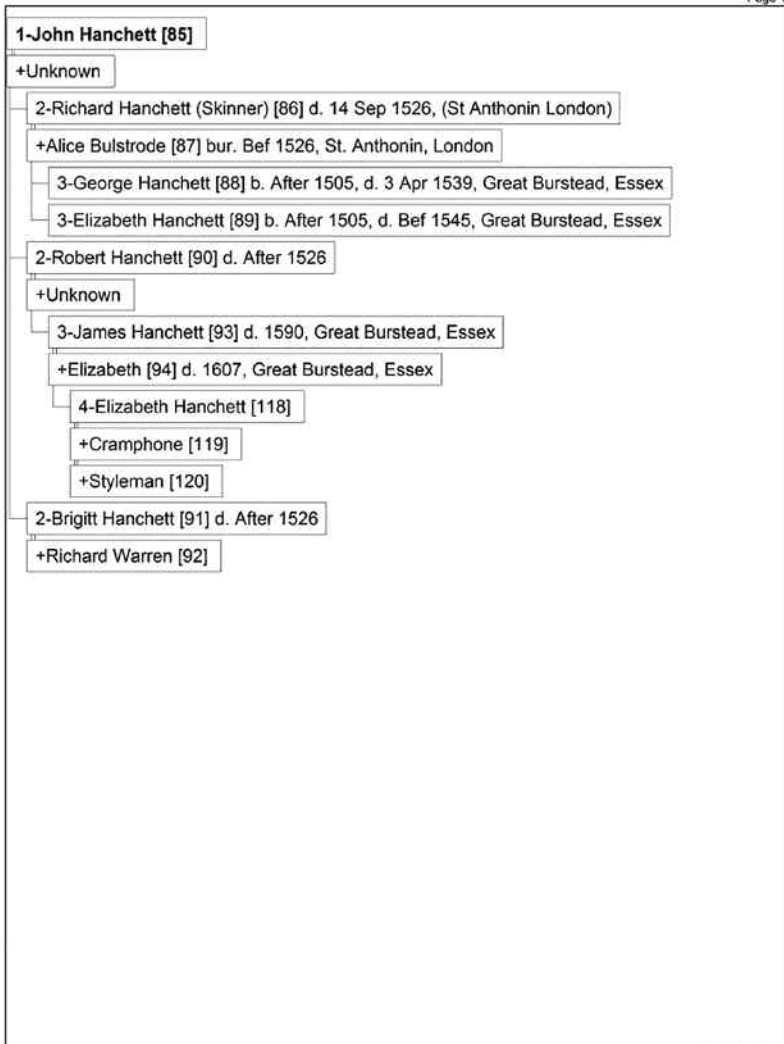
On pages 309 & 310 of a book published in 1902 entitled "Some Account of the Skinners' Company" by Ex. I. P. Wadmore, there is a list of plate in 1627, including a cup and some salts with the name Richard Hanchett or Haunchott engraved on them. He was Renter Warden of the Company in 1518, Assistant in 1519, Second Warden in 1522 and 1523. According to the Company's registers in the 3rd year of King Henry VIII's reign (1511) he had 3 apprentices: John Emirton, Edward Thayre, John

Maylyngherst. He also had an apprentice, Robert Grene, but the date of the apprenticeship is not recorded. John Grene was admitted to the Freedom of the Company in 1512.



*Saint Mary Magdalene Church, Great Burstead, Essex*¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹Great Burstead-church.co.uk.



Chapter 7

The Hanchett Family of Little Hadham, Hertfordshire

Here we will use information collected, analyzed, and recorded by Junius Hanchett to describe this branch of the Hanchett family.¹¹⁰

The Hanchetts of Little Hadham, Hertfordshire

Living at Little Hadham (Hadham Parva in Latin) within easy walking distance of Uphall and Albury was the family of Richard Hanchett, brickmaker. We get an excellent record of him from the register at Little Hadham and from his will, the two records checking perfectly. The date of his marriage, October 26, 1564 to Hellena Whelpson, widow, gives us an idea of his age. His will, made March 17, 1612 and proved May 15, 1612, leaves a legacy of twenty shillings to Thomas Hanchett, “my brother’s son,” this disclosing unnamed brother. A like legacy to John Hanchett, son-in-law, reveals another family of Hanchett, probably near akin to him. As Richard had three daughters, two of whom, Margaret and Mary, still bore the name of Hanchett in the will, it is impossible to tell whether this John Hanchett, son-in-law, married Margaret or Mary. Wife, Hellena, was buried at Little Hadham, September 30, 1601, before the will was made and so is not mentioned in it, but there is a legacy of ten shillings to John Whelpson, perhaps a son by Hellena’s first husband. The cash legacies total

¹¹⁰ Junius T. Hanchett: *The Hanchett Family. A Sketch of the High Spots.* Copy in author’s possession.

about ten and a half pounds but in 1612 that had many times the purchasing power it would have in 1931. Recall that Thomas Hanchett was a wealthy man in Hertford County in the fourteen hundreds and yet had an income of but ten pounds a year and upward.

Richard calls himself “brick maker,” in his will but was quite likely a master workman employing laborers. He names all his children shown to be such on the register save Richard who died several years before his father. The fact that he does not leave legacies to children of son Richard may indicate there were none, though Richard the younger lived to be thirty-nine. The real estate went to Robert and all the residue of the personal estate. The real estate included “my cottage wherein I now dwell” with orchard, garden, etc. He tells further that he surrenders the same premises during his life to Robert on condition that Robert support him for the remainder of his life. Should he fail to do so, son John is to take the estate on like condition. Richard was buried April 2, 1612 which checks with the date of the will and its proof.

Children of Richard and Hellena Hanchett:

Richard, baptized January 4, 1566. Buried September 4, 1603. Richard Hanchet the Ju (Junior). No marriage record found.

John, baptized Feb. 25, 1569. Married, Nov. 12, 1604, Dorothe Bard, widow. He was buried May 16, 1645. And his wife, Dorothe, buried October 3, 1630. No children of this marriage shown. Possibility of an unrecorded earlier marriage, and issue. Joan, baptized January 1, 1572. Married April 20, 1600, John Benet (called Blewet in will.) Bad script might account for copy of name in two spellings. She was living in 1612, being named in

will of that date. Shown as “John” in baptismal record, a like-sounding and much more common name. Children are named in order in will thus, Richard, deceased not being named, John, Joan, Margaret, Mary. Robert took residue which accounts for his being named last. Had the first John of the record died before the next birth we should expect to find a burial notice. There is none.

Margaret, baptized August 5, 1576. Called Margaret Hanchett, daughter, in the will. But there was “John Hanchet, son-in-law” so she might have been Hanchet in name and married to him. Or he might have married the other daughter, Mary Hanchet, so named in the will.

Robert, baptized March 12, 1579. Married (Braughing Register) Robert Hanchet and Kathrin Haldin, 10 November 1606. He died (was buried) March 19, 1639/40. In April 1640, Administration of the goods of Robert Hanchet, of Little Hadham, was granted to Catherine Hanchet, his widow. No children of this marriage recorded at Little Hadham.

An interesting side note on Robert Hanchett is found in the Herts County Records of the Quarter Sessions Books and Rolls. On 2 July 1628, Robert Hanchett of Little Hadham, brickmaker, was presented for digging pits in the highway from Westleden Green towards “Le Foard” and planting a dozen trees which obstructed the highway.¹¹¹

Mary, baptized January 20, 1582. Called Mary Hanchet, daughter, in father’s will, but might have been married to John Hanchet, son-in-law. He might have married Margaret, her sister, by an equally good inference.

¹¹¹ Herbert C. Andrews, “Sidelights on Brasses in Hertfordshire Churches.” *East Herts Archaeological Society Transactions* XI, 45.

Commenting on above it is of course possible that the extra John Hanchet of the baptismal record was John Hanchet, who became “son-in-law” but I think the probabilities are against it. The case for Joan is pretty strong. Of course, John, the son-in-law, could not have been the one who married Dorothie Bard, for she was alive at the time of the will, when he was married to one of the daughters, nor do I think that John the son-in-law was the John who died in 1645.

Grandchildren of Richard and Hellena

None is named in the will but we should expect that save in the case of the son Richard, the only child who was dead at the time of the will (1612). The Little Hadham Register gives but one baptism that could be of this generation: John Hanchet, baptized, July 4, 1602. Who was his father? Perhaps Richard Junior, who was buried next year at the age of thirty-seven, but in that case we should expect the grandson to be named in the will. We have no marriage record of Richard Junior but that is by no means an indication of no marriage, though it does not help matters. The two other sons, John and Robert, were married in 1604 and 1606, too late for this birth. Had they been married before? That does not seem probable of either, for we should expect to find notices of the marriages and of the subsequent deaths of the first wives, as it is very evident they were all the time of Little Hadham. John married a widow and was at the time making a second marriage not of itself so improbable. Robert, marrying at twenty-seven, was much less probably a widower.

Perhaps John Hanchet, born in 1602, was son of John Hanchet, son in-law. We do not know the latter's age but the mother, if Margaret, would have been twenty-eight,

and if Mary, would have been twenty. We do not need to have a marriage record in this case for the will shows there to have been an unrecorded marriage. Still another possibility is the nephew Thomas Hanchet, of the will. He was of the generation to be such a father. But was he of Little Hadham, which records not his birth, his death, nor his marriage or any of his children save possibly this one? Still more vaguely, this John of 1602 might be the child of some other nephew of Richard, the elder. In any case, this John born in 1602 was not the father of Deacon Thomas who came to America. I am very reluctant to set the birth of Deacon Thomas later than 1621 or 1622 on account of the allotment to him of a homestead in Wethersfield, Connecticut in 1642 [sic. 1647]. I think he was then of age, though not married. I admit the possibility of his being the Thomas Hatchet, who came over in 1635 at the age of nineteen, and therefore born in 1616, but would not else have made him so old.¹¹²

Nor could Deacon Thomas have been grandchild of either, John or Robert, sons of Richard, though he might have been the son of either by one of the marriages recorded above, rather improbably of John but not so of Robert, who would have been thirty-seven in 1616, while we should think of Katherine as a fair number of years younger. We must keep these possibilities in mind. Richard Hanchet Junior, dying in 1603, could not be father to Deacon Thomas but is a possible grandfather. He was born in 1566, fifty years before the earliest date we have set for the birth of Deacon Thomas. Against these are the arguments we have advanced against his having left issue. Thomas, nephew of Richard the elder, and John

¹¹² Thomas Hatchet sailed on the ship *Transport* to Virginia in 1635, and has been an intriguing possibility over the last century.

Hanchet, son-in-law are plainly possible ancestors of Deacon Thomas, but the absence of data as to them leaves the possibilities very ill defined.



*Saint Cecilia Church in Little Hadham, Hertfordshire*¹¹³

¹¹³ "St. Cecilia, Little Hadham, Herts - geograph.org.uk - 362902" by John Salmon. Licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

Little Hadham Parish Register. 1559 to 1812—Mr. A. H. Johnson furnished me the following which he told me was given him by a competent and expert searcher.

[Searched for] Hanchet. Hanchit.

Baptisms

1566 January 4	Richard
1569 February 25	John
1572 January 1	Joan
1576 August 5	Margaret
1579 March 12	Rober
1582 January 20	Mary
1602 July 4	John

Burials

1565 January 20	John
1601 September 30	Hellen
1603 September 4	Richard Jr
1612 April 28	Richard
1630 October 3	Dorotheie, wife of John
1639 March 19	Robert
1645 May 16	John

Marriages

1564 October 28	Richard & Whelpson, Hellener, wid.
1600 April 20	Joan & Benet, John
1604 November 12	John & Bard, Dorotheie, wid.
1697 June 3	Sarah & Lucas, William.

The marriage of Robert Hanchet & Kathrin Haldin, 10 November 1606, I took from the Braughing Register furnished by Miss Mary Longman.

1-Richard Hanchett [3] bur. 28 Apr 1612
+Hellena Whelpson Widow [4] m. 26 Oct 1564, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire, bur. 30 Sep 1601
2-Richard Hanchett [5] c. 4 Jan 1566, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire, bur. 4 Sep 1603, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire
2-John Hanchett [1] c. 25 Feb 1569, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire, bur. 16 May 1645, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire
+Dorothy Blewet Bard [2] c. 21 Oct 1562, Anstey, Hertfordshire, m. 12 Nov 1604, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire, bur. 3 Oct 1630, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire
2-Joan Hanchett [8] c. 1 Jan 1572
+John Benet [11] m. 20 Apr 1600, Little Hadham, Hertfordshire
2-Margaret Hanchett [6] c. 5 Aug 1576
2-Mary Hanchett [7] c. 20 Jan 1582
2-Robert Hanchett [9] bur. 19 Mar 1640
+Katherin Haldin [10] m. 10 Nov 1606, Braughing, Hertfordshire

Chapter 8

The Hanchetts of Clavering¹¹⁴

Not all Hanchetts were as fortunate as the “landed gentry” branch of Braughing, but there were other branches who were yeomen. They held property, usually not as tenants-in-chief, but still some were able to live in manor houses. The branch of the family from Clavering, where they dwelt for over two hundred years, wound up a few miles away as gentlemen farmers in Arkesden by the early sixteen hundreds.

Mr. Ledgard tells us that an undated fragment of the papers relating to the tithes of Berden contains the first mention of a Hanchett in the area. His researcher, Lillian Redstone, advised him that that document could be from the late thirteen hundreds. It mentions a John Hanchett Senior. The first continuous notice of the Hanchetts in Clavering occurs in 1424. The rental rolls for the Manor of Thurocks, for 1424, include John and Richard Hanchett as well as Richard Hanchett Senior. From then until the late sixteen hundreds a steady procession of Hanchetts march through the rolls for Thurocks Manor in Clavering.

Because we must rely on the manorial court records to follow the early Hanchetts of Clavering, we are able to learn only a few details of who they were and what they did. Once the parish records begin, in 1558, more information is forthcoming. The most interesting aspect of this branch of the family is that they supply us with two possible candidates for the Thomas Hanchett who came to America.

¹¹⁴ From the unpublished manuscript of R. A. Ledgard, on file at the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford, Essex.

We can only speculate on the origins of John Hanchett Senior who arrived in Clavering around 1400. One possibility is that he was the brother of Thomas Hanchett of Bedford and a son of Robert Hanchett of Cambridgeshire. It is convenient that both Thomas and John appear at their new locations at nearly the same time, which was shortly after the death of John Hanchett who was beheaded during the Peasants' Revolt. The Feet of Fines for Essex, covering the period from 1327 to 1422 does not include the name Hanchett or any of its well known variants.¹¹⁵ This suggests that the Hanchetts were not in Essex, at least as land holders prior to 1422.

By the second half of the sixteenth century, the Hanchetts of Clavering were termed "yeomen." Wikipedia tells us that:¹¹⁶

In the late 14th to 18th centuries, yeomen were farmers who owned land (freehold, leasehold, or copyhold). Their wealth and the size of their landholding varied. Often it was hard to distinguish minor landed gentry from the wealthier yeomen, and wealthier husbandmen from the poorer yeomen.

Sir Anthony Richard Wagner, Garter Principal King of Arms, wrote that "a yeoman would not normally have less than 100 acres [40 hectares] and in social status is one step down from the landed gentry, but above, say, a husbandman."

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* states that a yeoman was "a person qualified by possessing free land of 40/- (shillings) annual [feudal] value, and who can serve on juries and vote for a knight of the shire. He is sometimes described as a small landowner, a farmer of the middle classes."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ R.E.G. Kirk, Editor: *Feet of fines for Essex Vol. III.*

¹¹⁶ "Yeoman." *Wikipedia.*

¹¹⁷ H.W. & F.G. Fowler: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary.* 516.

Ledgard provides us with the following line of descent, based on the Clavering manorial court records, for the Hanchetts:

1st Generation	John Hanchett	Manorial Records 1424 to 1450
2nd Generation	William Hanchett	Manorial Records 1446 to 1489
3rd Generation	Richard Hanchett = Jane	Manorial Records 1476 to 1519 Will dated 1522, Proved 1523
4th Generation	John Hanchett	Manorial Records 1500 to 1529 Named in father's will 1522 Born 1488, Died before 1529
5th Generation	Richard Hanchett	Manorial Records 1529 to 1556/7 Son and heir of John above 1529 Burried at Clavering 27 October 1555
6th Generation	John Hanchett of Arkesden = Alice	Manorial Records 1556/7 to 1616 Will dated 1615
7th Generation	Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden = Elizabeth	Manorial Records 1625 to 1637 Will dated 20 June 1666

Ledgard also introduces us to family members mentioned in the manorial court records, but who do not fall in the line of property succession as shown below:

John Hanchett Senior	Berden Estate Papers
	Probably 1413 to 1427
John Hanchett Junior	Possibly the same John shown in the previous chart, 1st generation
Richard Hanchett Senior	Thurocks Court Rolls 1424
Richard Hanchett Junior	Same
Edmund Hanchett	Thurocks Court Rolls
John Hanchett	Same
John Hanchett Senior	Thurocks 1509 to 1520, possibly son of Richard who died 1522
John Hanchett Junior	Thurocks 1523 to 1542
John Hanchett	Thurocks 1542 to 1557
Thomas Hanchett	Thurocks 1529 to 1551 Possibly brother of 5th generation Richard

Another group of Hanchetts is revealed by the parish registers for the church in Clavering. The registers begin for the Hanchett family in 1555. From these records we can start to realize the extent of this family. All daughters and sons are included, not just the property holders.

Robert Hanchett	Burial	14 November 1556
Joane Hanchett	Burial	22 November 1556
Margaret Hanchett	Burial	13 July 1580
Margaret Hanchett	Burial, Daughter of Richard	27 December 1592
Mother Hanchett, Widow	Burial	4 March 1592/3
Philip (?) Hanchett	Burial, Daughter of John	26 December 1600
William Hanchett	Burial	28 January 1602/3
Joan Hanchett, Widow	Burial	26 August 1604
John Hanchett Sr.	Burial	8 May 1606
Widow Hanchett	Burial	12 March 1609
Richard Hanchett	Baptism, Son of John	16 August 1557
Robert Hanchett	Baptism, Son of John	30 October 1558
James Hanchett	Baptism, Son of John	10 June 1562
Richard Hanchett	Baptism, Son of John	5 May 1566
Mary Hanchett	Baptism, Daughter of John	8 February 1567/8
_____ Hanchett	Baptism	17 May 1570
Mary Hanchett	Baptism	2 February 1571/2
Philip Hanchett	Baptism	4 September 1575
John Hanchett	Baptism	11 August 1578
Margaret Hanchett	Baptism	7 February 1579/80
Richard Hanchett	Baptism	20 February 1585/6
Margaret Hanchett	Baptism	19 December 1593
Michael Hanchett	Baptism, Son of Richard	9 October 1596
Elizabeth Hanchett	Baptism, Daughter of Richard	10 April 1597
Joan Hanchett	Baptism, Daughter of John Junior	22 February 1600/1

Francis Hanchett	Baptism, Son of John Junior	20 November 1602
John Hanchett	Baptism, Son of John Junior	4 August 1605
Henry Hanchett	Baptism, Son of John Junior	31 January 1607/8
Esther Hanchett	Marriage to Alexander Felsted	2 September 1555
Katherin Hanchett	Marriage to John Grigman	6 October 1566
Agnes Hanchett	Marriage to Robert Batho	26 October 1567
Ann Hanchett	Marriage to Nicholas Hages	20 September 1581
Mary Hanchett	Marriage to Gedion Payne	28 April 1587
Richard Hanchett	Marriage to Sara Growte	22 February 1592/3
Joane Hanchett	Marriage to John Sawell	17 September 1592
John Hanchett	Marriage to Rose Miltson/Wiltson	20 May 1600
John Hanchett	Marriage to Ann Linsey	7 December 1619

The Hanchetts from the above registers take us to two possible candidates for the emigrant to America. Sadly, the parish registers for Arkesden, where part of the family relocated, do not start until the late seventeenth century.

We are fortunate that Johns or Richards or Thomases in the same immediate family are distinguished by the suffix “Senior” or “Junior.” However, there could be two or more Johns from separate families living in the same village with no way of

knowing which notice belongs to which John. Such was the case in Clavering where we have the John who moves to Arkesden, who had a son John, who also lived in Arkesden. That John had a son John who lived in Clavering. Then there was John Senior who spent the rest of his life in Clavering, being buried there in 1606, who had a son John Junior who moved to Brent Pelham in Hertfordshire.

Based on land succession, we can trace the family that moved to Arkesden. John Hanchett left a will dated 27 June 1615. Therein he is styled “of Arkesden, County Essex, Yeoman.”

He leaves 30s to each of the poor of Arkesden and the poor of Clavering. Alice, his wife, is left a freehold messuage in Clavering lying in Ford End and all other freehold lands and tenements in Clavering for life, with remainder to Thomas Hanchett his son and his heirs forever. His son Roger is left property called Chadwells in Arkesden containing twenty-two acres. To his son John he leaves an annuity out of Chadwells, a field called Fulwell and one close of pasture called Madeland Croft. John also inherits £60 cash and his daughter Martha £100 cash when she reaches age eighteen. The executors are Alice and son Thomas. Not mentioned in the will are son Richard and daughter Maria.

At this time (early sixteen hundreds) Hanchetts were well established in Arkesden but sparse or nonexistent in Clavering. The other Hanchett family, starting with John Hanchett Senior, who was buried in Clavering, and his sons Thomas, Richard and John Junior, had scattered to the four winds. All three were married in Clavering: Richard to Sara Growt, Thomas to Saphira Gillam, and John to Rose Mittson or Wilson.

Richard, who had moved from Clavering to Brent Pelham about 1598 with his four children, added another daughter in Brent Pelham in 1599. Brother John followed to Brent Pelham about 1608 with his four children. To that group John and Rose



Clavering, Essex Church¹¹⁸

added two more in Brent Pelham and lost one son there. Thomas, who was born in 1616, arrived after the other son, with unrecorded Christian name, died. Little is known about this family except that the mother, Rose, was buried in Brent Pelham 8 August 1633. There was a Francis Hanchett in Bedford appearing at the court of pleas in 1656. Francis was the eldest son of John Junior and Rose. Neither the father nor any of the children are heard from again. The second son, John, was born in Clavering in 1605.

Richard and his family disappear, as do Thomas and his wife and any children they may have had. Thomas' wife Saphira Hanchett was buried at Saint Butolph Algate in London in 1669, a few years after several members of the Gillam family had been buried at the same church, supposedly victims of the plague which swept through London in 1666.

While visiting Clavering in 1968, the author stopped for lunch at the Cricketers Inn. The inn is thought to date back to 1550, but in the more recent past it has been owned by the

¹¹⁸ Saint Mary and Saint Clement, wikiwand.com.



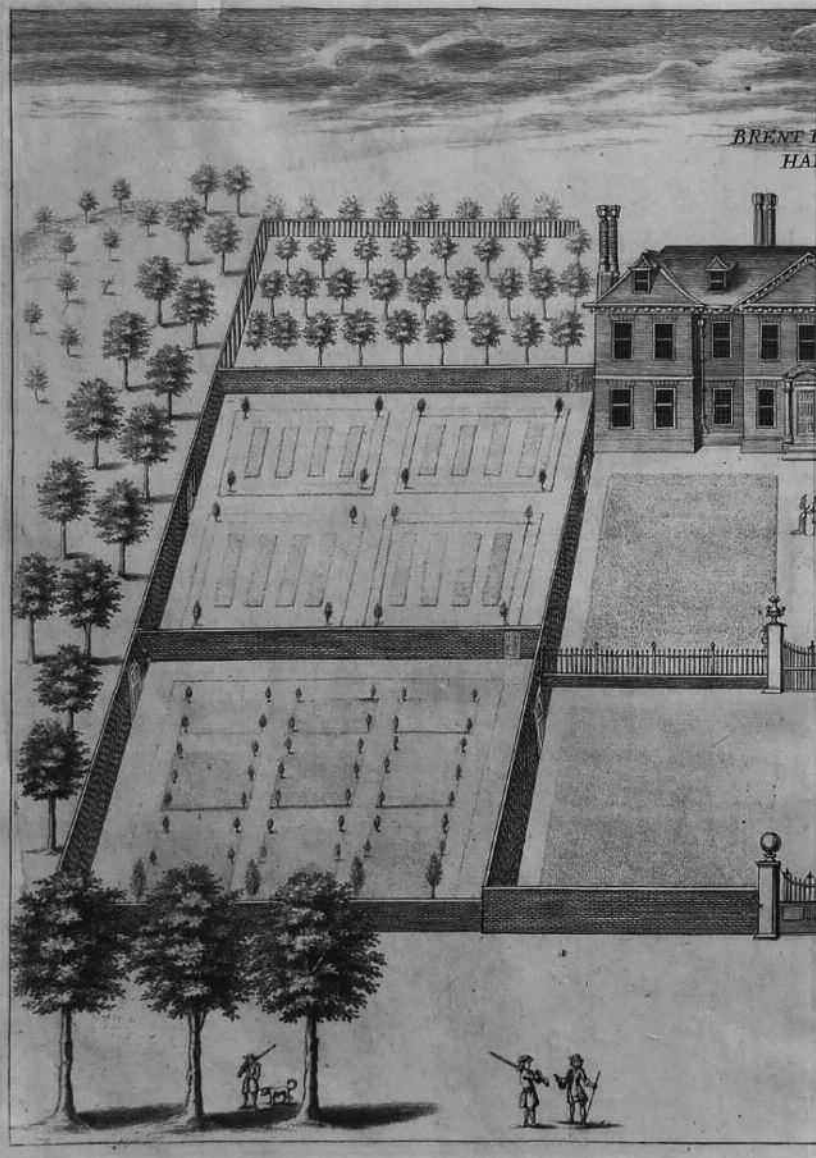
*The Cricketers at Clavering, Essex*¹¹⁹

parents of Jamie Oliver, the famous chef. Jamie recently purchased Clavering Manor which played a role in the history of the Hanchett family in Clavering.

Francis Floyer / Flyer of Brent Pelham

Francis had been a successful merchant in London, following in the footsteps of his stepfather, William Freeman. Francis had twice been the master of the Mercers Company and an alderman and sheriff for London. He and his family were pleased to retire to the countryside in Brent Pelham sometime between 1625 and 1636. His ninth child, Richard, was baptized at Brent Pelham in 1636. At some point before 1636 he had purchased Brent Pelham Hall from John Newport, the son of Edward Newport. Recall that the Newports figured prominently in the Hanchett family of Braughing.

¹¹⁹ *Famous Old Inns of Essex*-a brochure handed out at the inn.



Brent Pelham Hall, Built by Edward Newport in 1608

Francis went on to become the high sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1648. Chauncy in his history of Hertfordshire gives us the following information on Francis Flyer:¹²¹

He was very grave in his deportment, reserved in his discourse, excellent at accounts in merchandise, punctual to his word, and just in his dealings, which gave him a great reputation. He loved hospitality, was noble in entertainments, bountiful to strangers, and liberal to the poor. He was very strict in all his acts of religion, always valuing a clergyman by the severity of his duty and the rules of his life. He observed an excellent method for the government of his family, and kept great order in the parish.

Francis Flyer is listed as an adventurer with the Massachusetts Bay Company and attended a meeting 20 October 1629. Francis' eldest son had as his eldest one Francis Flyer who married Elizabeth Chester, descended from the Chesters of Royston, Hertfordshire. This was the same Chester family that produced Leonard Chester whose will was witnessed by Thomas Hanchett in Wethersfield, Connecticut, New England.

Thomas Hanchett of Brent Pelham lost his mother Rose in 1633, at which time Thomas would have been seventeen years old. Could Francis Flyer have stepped in and assisted Thomas in his move to New England? Francis never left England, dying there in 1678. In the next chapter we will deal with the Hanchett family who moved from Clavering to Arkesden, a short distance away.

Not only are Arkesden and Clavering in close proximity, but note their relationship to Chrishall, Ickleton, Haverhill, and Castle Camps. The early Hanchetts truly lived in a small world where the counties of Hertfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk meet.

¹²¹ Sir Henry Chauncy: *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire*.

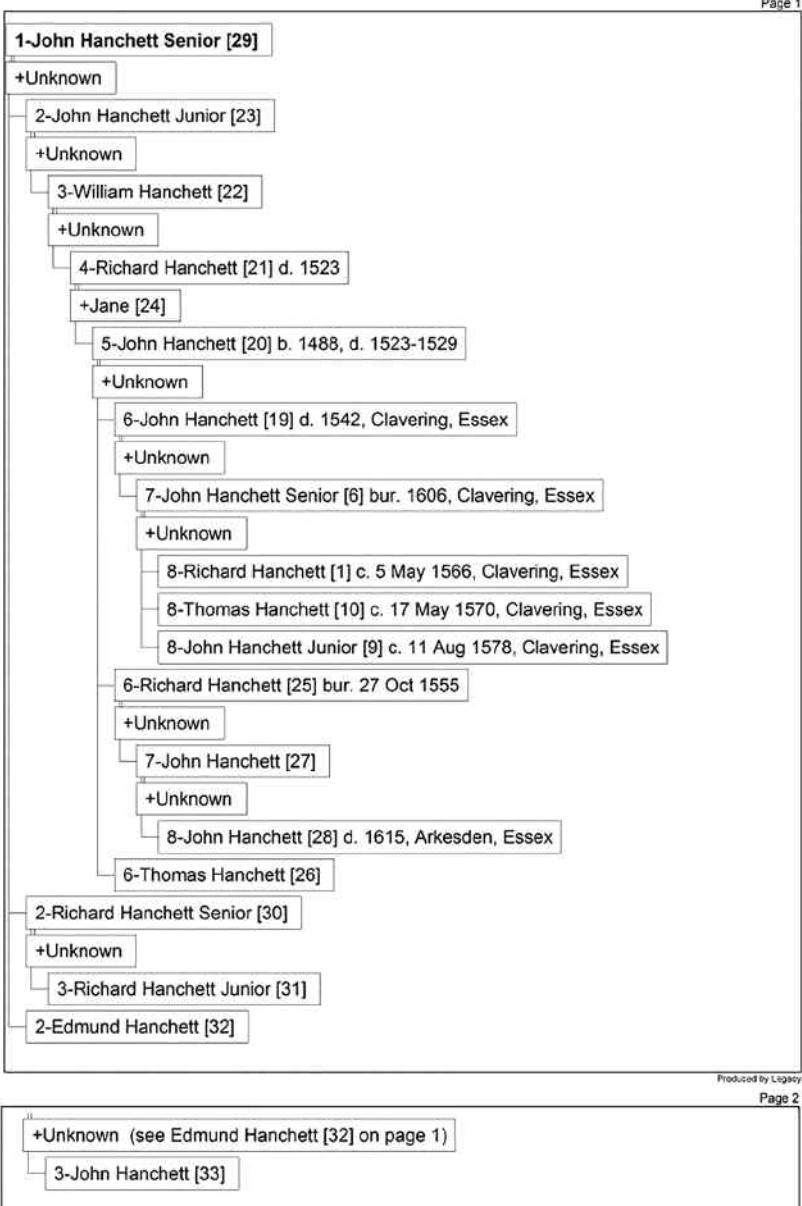


**Map of the Northwest Corner of Essex
Showing Clavering and Arkesden**

A note on the church at Clavering helps to explain why the yeoman branch of the Hanchett family settled in this area:

DEDICATED to St. Mary and St. Clement, Clavering church was built according to Dr. Charles Cox, in the reign of Richard II (1377-1399). Other authorities consider that the chancel and tower date from 1360, the nave and aisles from 1400. There was certainly an earlier church on this site as the list of vicars is complete from 1335 to the present day. The living is in the gift of Christ's Hospital. It is in size and interest one of the four outstanding churches of NW Essex, the others being Saffron Walden, Thaxted, and Newport. It is often thought to have been one of the "wool churches," built with the wealth that the wool-weaving industry brought to the Eastern Counties. But fourteenth century farming prosperity probably was also responsible, for Clavering stands on the edge of the famous East Anglian corn belt. One of the finest farming

sights in England can be seen on a July day from the hill by Hobs Aerie above Arkesden (two miles away) when the corn is ripening over miles of rolling arable land.¹²²



¹²²C. C. J. Simmonds. *Clavering Church and Castle*. A handout to visitors at the church.

Chapter 9

The Hanchett Family of Arkesden, Essex¹²³

Attorney Junius T. Hanchett provides an interesting analysis of this family in his *Sketch of the High Spots of the Hanchett Family*, written in 1931. R. A. Ledgard adds details, including this family's origin, which had eluded Junius.

The Arkesden Hanchetts

Arkesden Hanchetts were by far the largest numerically of the Hanchetts I have found in England. The name is usually spelled with the two tees in my notes of them, though the single tee is not uncommon.

Arkesden is in Essex County, in the Utlesford Hundred, and bounds on the Herts-Essex line. It is about eight miles from Braughin, Hertfordshire in a bee line. Roger Hanchett, as we shall see, held tenements in both Arkesden and Braughing and left legacies to the "poor" in both parishes. This linking of Arkesden and Braughing may or may not be significant to prove a tie between the Hanchett lines in the two places. Arkesden, pronounced "Oggsden," is spelled also Archesdeane with like variants in my notes. In *Morant's History of Essex* (1768) I find under Arkesden, "The manor of Woodhall is now the capital lordship in this Parish."

¹²³ Junius T. Hanchett: *Sketch of the High Spots of the Hanchett Family*. Manuscript in possession of the author.

My information of the Arkesden Hanchetts is derived in the main from four wills of four brothers Hanchett: Roger, Richard, John, and Thomas, and from a chancery over the will of Richard. There were also three sisters: Mary, Martha, and Barbara, making a total of seven certainly known. I have no parish register notices showing births, deaths, or marriages, save the death of Richard and that of one of the sons of Thomas. The register at Arkesden did not begin until 1690, too late to be of service to those seeking the American connection. There is, however, the possibility that the birth of John is that shown in the register at Little Hadham, July 4, 1602, John Hanchett. This would be quite in accord with my idea of the age of John Hanchett of Arkesden, who died in 1669.

No connection has been found between the families at Arkesden and Little Hadham.

It is quite important to gain some idea, even though it be only a rough one, of the birth dates of the four Arkesden brothers. Doing so we find that any one of the four brothers, so far as his age is concerned, would be a possible father of Deacon Thomas of New England. These possibilities are nearly extinguished on further examination. The study of ages is further useful in determining the parentage of the four brothers. The natural attempt is to link them with the Hanchetts of Little Hadham, a closeby town. The analysis shows that to be a high improbability, except as to Thomas, nephew of Richard, the brickmaker.

Discussing ages, it is valuable to note that in raising a family of seven there is bound to be a spread of between fifteen to twenty years between the oldest and the youngest. This difference should be reflected to some extent by the dates of their deaths. We have those

dates. Roger died first in 1651; Richard, August 29, 1652; John in 1669; and Thomas in 1678. The last three were grandfathers at the times of their deaths. Roger left no issue so far as we know. Richard was a grandfather at least as early as 1640 on evidence given in court. That sets his own birth back in the preceding century and by probability as far as 1590. Thomas, outliving Richard by twenty-six years, was certainly the younger, probably by a wide margin. Of his large family of nine we know that one was born in 1625 and another in 1637. I place the birth of Thomas around 1600 and am inclined to place that of Richard even further back than 1590. Further, we find evidence that Richard was the wealthiest of the four brothers clearly suggesting that he was the eldest born and took the largest share. But all four brothers were well endowed with worldly goods clearly above the estate of Richard of Little Hadham. Richard is called "gentleman" and Thomas was called "gentleman" once, but calls himself "yeoman" in his will. His son Thomas was styled "gentleman" also and while a very young man.

Turning to Little Hadham to find the parentage of the four Arkesden brothers, we find the case gravely prejudiced at once by the disparity in fortunes. Richard, the brickmaker, had three sons, Richard, John, and Robert, who fade out as possibilities on their records. Richard, born in 1566 and dying at thirty-seven in 1603 at Little Hadham was hardly the father of seven, and in discussing him we felt sure that he left no issue at all and was probably unmarried. Furthermore we should not expect to find the father of the Arkesden brothers living at Little Hadham. The presence of the brothers at Arkesden indicates that they were raised there. If they left the old home it is improbable that they would have all descended upon Arkesden. Richard, it is

true, was of Harlowe at his death and as he seems to have been the head of the family, the patrimonial estate might have been there, but the will of his brother John discloses the ownership in Arkesden by Richard of a mansion house and holder of the Manor of Woodhall, the capital manor of the parish. I think Richard went from Arkesden to Harlowe and it is certain that brother Thomas went from Arkesden to Berden. We likewise exclude the two younger sons of the brickmaker of Little Hadham as possible parents of the Arkesden line. Both lived and died at Little Hadham and took wives too late for the parentage. Robert is too young on any count and as to John it would have to be assumed that the marriage shown was a second marriage and that the Arkesden family was by a first wife, gratuitous and highly improbable. Likewise, we exclude John Hanchet, son-in-law of Richard on account of the youth of his wife; Thomas Hanchet, nephew of the brickmaker, is a possibility. He could readily be of the proper age and he does not seem to have been of Little Hadham but we think of the father of the Arkesden Hanchetts as being a man of substance and would hardly expect the brickmaker to leave him twenty shillings.

We have seen in examining the Braughing line of Hanchetts that there is no chance of tying any other in with them until we get back to Letchworth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. We may have to look in the direction of Shudy Camps if we are to place the Arkesden line. At any rate, we have no better clues to go upon than in searching for the ancestors of Deacon Thomas himself.

R. A. Ledgard discovered that the Arkesden Hanchetts originated in Clavering, Essex. Their progenitor was John Hanchett, born in Clavering about 1550 and died in Arkesden, 1615. His will was made on 27 June 1615. For more information

on this Hanchett, see Chapter 8: The Hanchett Family of Clavering. In total disagreement with several Internet genealogy sites, this John Hanchett was not the father of Thomas Hanchett of New England, nor did he marry a woman named Hannah.

Was Deacon Thomas Hanchet from Arkesden?

This is the most promising line of English Hanchets we have yet uncovered as regards American ancestry. All four of the Arkesden brothers were of the generation of the father of Deacon Thomas. As against this are the four wills, only one of which reveals a son Thomas and that Thomas appears to have remained in England and to have been much younger than our Thomas. He was the son of Thomas of Arkesden.

The three other brothers named no son Thomas in their wills and that is almost conclusive that there was no son of that name. Roger named no children of his own at all. Richard named only daughters and John named a son John and four daughters. Even if a son Thomas were to be disinherited we should expect him to be named and cut off with a shilling to cover the law. The omission of naming is a very serious difficulty for us. As to the son Thomas who was named we should exclude him entirely as being too young except that there is a discrepancy as to him between the abstracts I have of the will of Roger and the will of Thomas. Roger names him twice, once as Thomas the younger, son of his brother Thomas and again as "Thomas Hanchett, eldest son of Thomas Hanchett." The will of Thomas the father mentions sons George, Samuel, Edward, William, Richard and "my youngest son, Thomas." The two abstracts are flatly contradictory and it makes a world of difference to us which is correct.

The abstract of the will of Roger was furnished by my first English correspondent, whose work I found so unreliable that I was forced to cancel my contract with him. The abstract of the will of Thomas was furnished by A. H. Johnson who never gave his facts in a corrupted form, i.e. showing the influence of his own interpretation. I understand that A. H. Johnson did not make the abstract himself but was furnished it by a source he knew was reliable. It was so in other cases where he states his data were furnished by an expert searcher. I prefer his abstract in this case, decidedly. Roger's will might readily have been written, "Thomas the youngest son of the said Thomas" and been misread "younger." To be sure, my abstract shows a comma after the word "younger" but the early script of that day was probably not punctuated very fully. Of course, Roger knew as well as Thomas, his brother, whether his nephew was eldest or youngest son. We should expect Thomas to be the eldest son on account of taking his father's name. Evidently my first English correspondent thought so. Re-copying his notes for me he might have changed the wording of the second mention from "youngest" to "eldest," in accordance with his own ideas about it. I would not say so ungracious a thing about his work had I not found it replete with mistakes as gross, and were I not paying him for accurate data. Interpreting the two positions of "eldest" and "youngest": If Thomas were eldest son he would be born before his brother Richard, who was born in 1625, but not much older, for the elder Thomas's large family came in the main after Richard, one coming as late as 1637 and for all we know there were others born later. Deacon Thomas we have thought of as being born about 1621, earlier rather than later, for we have thought him of age at the grant to him of the home lot in Wethersfield in 1642 (sic 1647). If we

identify Deacon Thomas with the Thomas Hatchet who went to Virginia in 1635 at the age of nineteen, he is utterly excluded from identity with the Arkesden Thomas. If the Arkesden Thomas was youngest son, as described in his father's will, he was born after 1637 and is excluded on account of discrepancy of ages. If we still know it to be possible that there is no age discrepancy between the American and English Thomases we still have the difficulty of there being no mention in either will that the son Thomas was in New England or America. The omission to refer to him so is not of course fatal, but such mention is what American genealogists look for and often find.

Being in America was an outstanding fact and worthy of mention. Roger, the uncle, leaves the younger Thomas remainder in lands called "Chadwell" in Arkesden. We should hardly expect that, were Thomas in America never to return. Finally, my first English correspondent claimed some time after furnishing me with the abstract of Roger's will that he had found a will clearly showing the English ancestry of Deacon Thomas. I offered to buy that information from him if he would have it properly certified. He was unwilling to give that certification so the bargain was never completed although I had offered him his price. This is mentioned here to show that he was thinking of the will of Roger which he had already furnished me. I have no data of the younger Thomas except from the two wills. I do not believe he was our Deacon Thomas but I prefer to leave the question open for the benefit of future searchers.

Arkesden Pedigrees

The following pedigrees are dependable being based on the four wills of the four Arkesden Hanchett brothers, and on information taken from Chancery suits. I have

already discussed possible origins of this line with negative results. I feel sure however that the father of the four Arkesden brothers was a man of substance and that he raised his large family (seven known and listed) at Arkesden. There are no parish records for Arkesden at this period.

Children of [John] Hanchett of [Clavering and] Arkesden.

- 1) Richard Hanchett, eldest son as supposed, born about 1590. Died August 29, 1652, buried September 1, 1652. Will dated June 11, 1650, proved May 13, 1653. Called in will "Richard Hanchett of Harlowe, Gentleman." See his line beyond.
- 2) Roger Hanchett, probably second son, of Arkesden, Essex, yeoman. Will was dated May 24, 1650 and proved October 23, 1651. Names no children of his own and leaves all his estate to his brother Thomas, to children of Thomas, and John's daughter, Martha. See biographical account of him beyond. I assume he left no issue.
- 3) John Hanchett, of Arkesden, yeoman. Will dated 16 April 1669 and proved 1669. Possibly was the John Hanchett registered at Little Hadham, Hertfordshire, as born July 4, 1602. He names "loving wife Anne" in his will. Left son John and John's sons, Richard and Robert. Left daughters. See his line beyond.
- 4) Thomas Hanchett, of Arkesden and Berden, Essex. Was of Arkesden up to 1661 but calls himself of Berden in his will, dated 1666. He married Elizabeth Willett, who survived him. They had seven sons and two daughters mentioned in three wills and one chancery suit. See his line further.

Based on court documents, Thomas Hanchett was possibly married twice, first to Elizabeth Willet and second to Elizabeth Sewster.¹²⁴

5), 6), & 7)

There were three daughters also of the first Arkesden family named in the will of Richard who calls them sisters. We can only guess their order in the family role. I have named the brothers first but the sisters may come in between. Richard leaves to “my two sisters, Mary and Martha” indicating Mary as the elder of the two. Later he leaves to “sister, Barbara Morris.” Among the plaintiffs in the Chancery suit (1661) were John, Thomas, and Richard Morris, who were perhaps Barbara’s children. Richard made Abraham Lucking, brother-in-law, overseer of his will, without indicating whether he married Mary or Martha. Mary may have been Mary Morris, of Harlowe, aged sixty-six in 1661, who testified as to Richard’s death and his estate in Chancery.

**Family of Richard Hanchett, of Harlowe, gentleman.
Eldest brother.**

Richard Hanchett, of Harlowe, in the county of Essex, gentleman, as he called himself in his will. I have told in preceding pages why I think he was eldest son and chief heir. He was of more property than any of his brothers as is shown by amounts divided in the Chancery suit over his estate, which were directed against his brother, Thomas, sole executor. His will reveals the three sisters and brothers, John and Thomas. Roger is not named, nor any of his children. The will of Richard is dated but a few weeks after that of Roger, and Roger may have died in the interim. Roger

¹²⁴Chancery Proceedings. Charles I Bundle L.21 No. 1. Lucas v Hanchett 23 Apr, 1635
Chancery Proceedings Charles I bundle H.56 No. 23. Hanchett v Gardiner, May 1637

named no children of his own and the fact that Richard did not leave to Roger's children seems to confirm our supposition that Roger left none, for Richard seems to have been mindful of all his nephews and nieces. The naming of Thomas after brother John is some indication that Thomas was the younger of the two, and I have supposed Thomas to be youngest brother for the reason that he so long outlived the others and that his family was younger.

Richard's estate was perhaps sufficient to place him in the landed gentry, but he was certainly not wealthy in the sense that Thomas of Uphall, Braughing was. The wealthy Crishall Grange Hanchetts I think were from Samuel, son of his brother Thomas, but more of that later. Richard directs his executor to sell his real estate in Harlowe and divide it among his kinsmen. The abstract does not state that he left estates in Arkesden but the will of John refers to an orchard adjoining the said mansion house holden of the Manor of Woodhall, "late the land of Richard Hanchett, my brother, deceased." This language is somewhat ambiguous as to what Richard once held but it is certain that he held lands in Arkesden, though not perhaps at the time of his death. Richard left small legacies to the poor of Harlowe, Clavering, and Arkesden showing his interest in Arkesden which is fifteen miles from Harlowe in direct line. I think Richard and his brothers were raised in Arkesden.

My abstract of the Chancery suit over Richard's estate gives only family items. Some of the legates were dissatisfied with the administration by brother Thomas. In the list of plaintiffs I can pick out the children of sister Barbara Morris and one of the married daughters of brother John. It appears that Thomas employed his son Samuel and his daughter Susan to help him in the work.

Samuel testifies to this. The legacies to nephews and nieces appear from this suit to have amounted to ninety-five pounds each which would indicate a large estate. The suit was in 1661, nine years after his death. Richard does not mention a wife in his will, so we suppose he was a widower at its date, June 11, 1650.

Richard's first wife was Ann. She finds notice in a Recognizance dated 1625.¹²⁵ In that document Roger Hanchett, John Hull, yeoman, and Robert Reade, husbandman, all of Harlowe agree to "Keep the peace to Ann, wife of Richard Hanchett." Of course we do not know whose peace was being disturbed or whether it was done by Richard or Ann. There was a release of security by Ann 29 September of that year.

In the parish register of Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, I find the marriage of "Richard Hanchett of Harlowe, Essex and Mrs. Dorotheie _____" under date 1632, August 8. Probably this was a marriage of our Richard but it was certainly not his first marriage, for Richard was a grandfather in 1640, in the suit of 1661. Thomas Simpner of Harlowe, tallow chandler, aged fifty-six, testified that he was son-in-law of Richard Hanchett, deceased, and that he has four children living, John, Thomas, William, and Rose, and that John is the only one who is twenty-one, the rest being younger, and that Simon Simpnor is another of the sons-in-law of Richard Hanchett and has one son, William, who is under twenty-one years of age.

In his will Richard names children of "son-in-law John Sampner." My abstract of the will does not name these two other sons-in-law Thomas Simpner and Simon Simpnor, but doubtless my searcher passed them by as "friends" who were remembered in the will, the family kinship being not stated in their cases. Richard seems

¹²⁵ Seax-Essex Archives Online Reference Q/SR 251/71.

to have had three sons-in-law named Simpner (variously spelled) and we have not the given names of any of the three daughters. We find no mention of other children of Richard.

In the same suit Mary Morris, of Harlowe, widow aged sixty-six, deposes Richard Hanchett (whose estate is being settled) died August 29, 1652 and was buried 1 September 1652 in the Parish Church of Harlowe. He died seized of a farm in Potter Street in Harlowe and of other land there, some of which Thomas Hanchett held after Richard's death. To another question she says Richard Hanchett died possessed of Harlowbury Farm, and after his death Thomas Hanchett entered into possession.

I am tempted to think of this Mary Morris as being the sister of Richard. If this be true then the marriages of the sisters clears up: Mary, eldest sister, born 1595, married to Morris, of Harlowe. Martha, second sister, married to Abraham Lucking, brother-in-law. Barbara, youngest sister, married to another Morris, although we are not so sure that Barbara was younger than the other two. At any rate, Mary, born in 1595, fits into the family group.

Summarizing Richard Hanchett, of Harlowe: he was eldest son and born around 1590. His children were by his first wife and he married second Mrs. Dorothea _____ August 8, 1632. Lived first at Arkesden and then at Harlowe, where he died, August 29, 1652. His children at death were (order uncertain):

- 1) Daughter married to Thomas Simpner, of Harlowe, who was born in 1605. They had John, eldest child, born about 1640, and also Thomas, William, and Rose. Perhaps we may place the marriage in 1639, not later anyway.

- 2) Daughter married to Simon Simpnor. They had one son, William, minor child in 1661.
- 3) Daughter married to John Sampner. They had children at the date of the will in 1650.

If Richard had sons they were dead at the date of his will in 1650.

Abstract of will of Richard Hanchett, of Harlowe, in the county of Essex, gentleman. Made by Hardy & Page, record searchers, London, in 1910:

11 June 1650.¹²⁶ To the poor of Harlowe, 40 s.; to the poor of Clavering, 20 s.; and to the poor of Arkesden, 20s.

Desires his executor to sell all his property, both freehold and copyhold, in Harlowe, and bequeaths the money arising there from to be equally divided between the children of his brother John Hanchett and his brother Thomas Hanchett, and between the children of "my two sisters, Mary and Martha."

Mentions John Hanchett, "son of my brother John."

To sister, Barbara Morris, 20 pounds.

To son-in-law, Icahn Sampner's (?) children, 5 pounds apiece.

Numerous small legacies to friends and servants.

Residue of property to aforesaid nephews and nieces.

Thomas Hanchett, brother, appointed sole executor, and Abraham Lucking, brother-in-law, overseer.

Proved 13 May 1653.

¹²⁶Piles Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Register, Brent 19.

Thomas Hanchett, of Arkesden, his brother, has goods.
Let him be cited.¹²⁷

The above entry is crossed through but marked “stet.”
Stet is Latin for “Let it stand.”

Roger Hanchett, of Arkesden, Essex¹²⁸

Nearly all we know about Roger is taken from the abstract of his will which I give below. It was furnished by my first English correspondent. The discrepancy between the wills of Roger and Thomas as to whether Thomas, son of Thomas, was eldest or youngest son was discussed earlier, preferring the latter interpretation. In the abstract below young Thomas is termed “eldest son” and in his father’s will (abstract) he is termed “my youngest son, Thomas.”

Abstract of the will of Roger Hanchett of Arkesden, Essex, yeoman, dated 24th May 1650.

I give to the poor of Archdeane 20 sh.; to the poor of Braffinn, co. Herts 20 sh.

To my brother, Thomas Hanchett of Arksrdeane, yeoman, all my lands whatsoever, as well free as copy, called Chadwell in Archdeane aforesaid, to hold to the said Thomas for life, with remainder to Thomas Hanchett the younger, son of the said Thomas.

To my said brother I give all my tenements in Braffin aforesaid for his life with remainder to his son George Hanchett.

To Richard Hanchett, son of the said Thomas Hanchett, £5.0.0

¹²⁷ Also Commissary Court of London (Essex and Hertfordshire). Act Book 1660-1661. Administration. 4 December 1661
fo. 114 Dunmowe) Court held in Chapel there.
fo. 117 Harloe) _____ Hanchett, deceased.

¹²⁸ Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Grey 188.

To James Hanchett, son of Richard Hanchett, £5.0.0

To Thomas Hanchett, eldest son of Thomas Hanchett,
£5.0.0

To John Hanchett, son of Thomas Hanchett, £5.0.0

To Samuel, Edward, and William Hanchett, sons of the
said Thomas, £5.0.0 apiece.

To Martha and Susan, daughters of the said Thomas,
£5.00 apiece.

To Martha Hanchett, daughter of my brother John
Hanchett, £5.00

To the four servants dwelling with my brother, 10 sh
apiece

All the rest of my goods I bequeath to my brother
Thomas whom I make my executor.

(signed) Roger Hanchett

Witnesses; Richard Powell, Chrs: Chessell, scr.

Proved 23rd October 1651 by the executor named.

Comparing this with the will of Thomas Hanchett June 20, 1666, shows him clearly to be the brother, while Thomas himself ties in abundantly well with brothers Richard and John. My searchers, Hardy & Page, also found this will of Roger (see their letter to me May 6, 1910, Letter press book 255) but as I had told them I had the abstract they did not send me one of their own. I wish now that they had. They also found an index of a will of "Roger Hanchett, of Arkesden, 1650-2. Archdeaconry of Colchester." but on looking for it could not find it. They think it was returned to local custody and to be the same as the one I have. No doubt of it.

My first English correspondent furnished me with an item under date of January 25, 1636 of a warrant to Thomas Davies, messenger to fetch up Thomas Hanchett and Roger Hanchett of Arkesden, Essex. He says that this relates to ship-money. Ship-money was a tax laid by King Charles I without the sanction of Parliament in his effort to raise money independently and so rule without a parliament. The arrest and trial of Hampden for refusal to pay this tax is one of the high spots in English history and the progress of that country to constitutional government. It had an important part in bringing about the Great Rebellion in which Charles lost both his throne and his head. The arrest of Thomas and Roger was only a small incident of many like it. The Hanchett family may pride itself that it took this part in the resistance to the tyranny of Charles I. I treat this subject again under the biography of Thomas. This period was near the time of the emigration of Deacon Thomas and these troubled times may have led to a surge in the emigration movement.

Family of John Hanchett, of Arkesden, Essex

I have placed John Hanchett as the third of the four brothers on the rather questionable ground that he so long outlived Richard and Roger and was long outlived by Thomas. Richard was certainly older.

In Richard's will John and Thomas are mentioned in that order. I think that in as much as Thomas was given the executorship, he would have been named first in naming the two together unless he were younger. That also is slender reasoning. The two ways of reckoning support each other and have some small weight. We take nearly all our information about John from his will. The will mentions his brother Richard Hanchett and John's daughter Honor was one of the plaintiffs in the

Chancery suit over Richard's will, thereby identifying John Hanchett of the will with the John of the four Arkesden brothers.

This John may be the one whose birth is reported in the register of Little Hadham July 4, 1602. Great weight is not to be attached to this supposition. If he were born then and Thomas his brother were younger, then the latter, born say 1604, and having a son Richard born in 1625, was married rather too young to have had still older children. But query as to baptism of John Hanchet, son of Richard, 1593, at Ickleton, Cambridgeshire. This accords with our theory. That is the only Hanchet entry there prior to 1663.

This record more likely belongs to the Richard Hanchett from Clavering who then moved on to Brent Pelham in Hertfordshire. See Chapter 6: The Hanchett Family of Clavering, Essex.

John's will was dated and proved in 1669 and establishes his death in that year. He left five children, and grandchildren by all five. Two of his daughters had married twice and had children by each marriage. Margaret had a child by her first husband and three by the second. Honor, last named daughter and perhaps the youngest was the other who was twice married. The probable ages of these children and grandchildren accords with our idea of John's birth shortly before 1600.

In 1619, John married Anne who survived him. He mentions her as "my loving wife Anne." He leaves his dwelling to daughter Ann Wright but reserves a chamber for use of his wife, a room for her wood and half the fruit and quinces in the orchard. Each of the four daughters was to pay annuities of 40 sh. to the widow, who is given half the residue.

John's home farm was as stated in Arkesden, but he owned another in Clavering, Essex, which he left to his son John for life and then to John's sons, Richard and Robert. He left also lands in Harlowe, the parish where his brother Richard had died. He left lands in Arkesden other than the home farm, left to daughter Ann, to the three other daughters, and imposed legacies on his devises to them.

Children of John and Ann Hanchett of Arkesden

I give the children in the order named in the will. The four daughters are probably named in the will in order of age. John, the son, would doubtless be named first irrespective of his age. I place him first not knowing whether he was so.

1) John Hanchett, had sons Richard and Robert.

This John was involved in an embarrassing complaint by his mother-in-law, the widow Grace Grout, over John's not providing adequate support for his family. The village of Clavering and the children's grandfather, John of Arkesden, were required to contribute sufficient resources for the children's welfare.¹²⁹

2) Margaret Hanchett, married first _____ Ward and had a son, Edward Ward. Married second, John Trigge of Arshden and had children Thomas, John, and Joan Trigge.

3) Ann Hanchett, married Thomas Wright and had children Thomas, John, and Ann. They took the home farm in Arkesden and the widow of John lived with them.

4) Martha Hanchett, married John Law of Clavering and had daughters, Martha and Mary. John Law was

¹²⁹ Essex Record Office Chelmsford, Reference Q/SO 1/778 and Q/SO 1/756.

made executor of the will jointly with the widow Ann Hanchett.

- 5) Honor Hanchett, married first Edward Martyn and had children Edward and Ann Martyn. She married second _____ Jackson. Elizabeth Jackson, left ten pounds in the will, was probably Honor's daughter by second marriage. Honor and her first husband were plaintiffs in the Chancery suit in 1661 showing that her second marriage to Jackson was later than 1661. If she had a daughter Elizabeth by Jackson as I have supposed, she was perhaps twenty-five at the time of the suit. Margaret, eldest sister, was perhaps thirty-five and born about 1626, which would agree with our estimate of the age of her father.

Abstract of will of John Hanchett of "Arshden" in the county of Essex, yeoman.¹³⁰

16 April 1669. Usual committal.

To John Hanchett, son, "all my messuage or tenement with the barns, stables, etc., belonging, situate in Clavering in the county of Essex, for his life and after his decease to his two sons, Richard and Robert, their heirs and assigns."

Bequeaths land in Arshden to daughter, Margaret Trigge, wife of John Trigge of Arshden, for her life, and after her decease to her children, Thomas, John, and Joan Trigge, they to pay an annuity of forty shillings to "my loving wife Anne" during her life, and an annuity of thirty shillings to "my son John Hanchett."

Bequeaths "my freehold messuage or tenement wherein I now dwell" with barns, stables, etc.,

¹³⁰Transcribed by Hardy and Page from files of Archdeaconry Court of Colchester 55 Piled will.

belonging, situate in Arshden, and an orchard adjoining the said mansion house holden of the Manor of Woodhall, "late the land of Richard Hanchett, my brother, deceased," to Ann Wright, wife of Thomas Wright, "my daughter," for life, with remainder to her children Thomas, John, and Ann, on condition that they permit Anne, "my loving wife" "quietly to have the use of one chamber within the aforesaid messuage" and "one room for her wood," etc. and half the fruit and quinces that shall grow in the orchard; also to pay to the said Ann an annuity of 40s., and to John Hanchett, son, an annuity of 30s.

Leaves other land in Arshden (specified) to Martha Law, wife of John Law of Clavering, daughter, for life, with remainder to her daughters, Martha and Mary Law, they to pay an annuity of 40 s. to Ann, wife, and to John Hanchett, son, an annuity of 30 s.

Further lands in Arshden (specified) to Honor Jackson, daughter, with remainder to her children Edward and Ann Martyn, they to pay the like annuities to Ann and John Hanchett.

To Edward Ward, "son of my daughter Margaret Trigge," 10 pounds.

To Elizabeth Jackson, 10 pounds.

All the remaining lands and tenements, with their appurtenances, situate in Harlowe in the County of Essex, and Arshden, left unbequeathed, to be sold by the executors to pay all debts and legacies, and the overplus, and all the rest and residue of goods, etc. to Anne, wife, and John Law, son-in-law, who are appointed executors.

Proved 1669.

John's daughter Martha was left a legacy by his brother Roger, 1650, and brother Richard of Harlowe bequeathed to all of John's children.

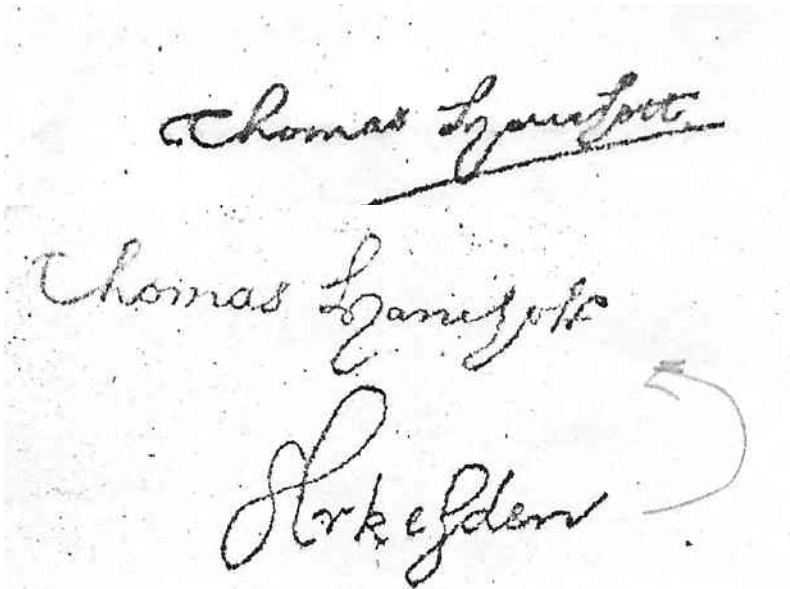
Perhaps John's lands in Harlowe were given him by Richard before his death. John is not himself legatee of Richard. The home farm in Arkesden or at least an orchard was also once of Richard. Query as to whether this home farm was not once the home of the father [John Hanchett of Clavering] of Arkesden line.

Thomas Hanchett, of Arkesden, the youngest of the four brothers, and his family.

We have already had to mention this Thomas repeatedly in discussing his brothers. Roger, his brother, left him the bulk of his estate and Richard made him executor of his will and gave legacies of ninety-five pounds to each of his children, eight of these being alive at that time. In calling him the youngest of the four brothers I have in mind the wide difference in ages existing in the large family of his father, his long survival of them, although they all lived to be grandfathers, and the naming John before Thomas in the will of Richard. Richard and Roger were surely older than John and Thomas. I am inclined to place the birth of Thomas three or four years after 1600 and his marriage at twenty or twenty-one. I think of Richard, his son, as eldest child and know he was born in 1625. It is certain that most of Thomas's large family was born after Richard but it is not certain that Richard was eldest. Our data permits only approximations but does not leave us without any idea at all. In considering Thomas, son of Thomas as being possibly the Deacon Thomas of America, I have endeavored to extract all the information the data contain. My conclusion is that we must look elsewhere for the tie with England.

Thomas, the elder, married Elizabeth Willett. She survived him; for she proved his will in 1678. In Chancery suit *Lucas vs. Hanchett*, 23 April 1635, it is mentioned that Thomas Hanchett, of Arkesden, yeoman, married Elizabeth Willett. In another suit, May 1637, we have the complaint of Thomas Hanchett, of Arkesden, gentleman, against Thomas Gardiner, clerk, vicar of the Parish Church of Elmdon, Essex. It seems that Elizabeth's mother, Katherine Sewster, of Elmdon (adjoining Arkesden), widow, deceased, lent 12 sh to this vicar upon his bond. He forfeited the bond and she sued him and obtained judgment, but before the judgment could be put into execution she died having made her will and making her daughter Elizabeth, (then and now your orator's wife) sole executrix. "Thomas Gardiner, being a turbulent spirit and known to have many frivolous suits in the ecclesiastical courts against his neighbors, thought he might "affright" your orator and his wife from prosecuting him upon the judgment, and therefore commenced a suit against your orator for tithes in respect of the land which he held in Arkesden which lay within the parish of Elmdon. Mr. Gardiner, being in prison upon the judgment before mentioned, begged, at the instigation of his friends, your orator to come to the prison there to compose all suits and difficulties which your orator did about the year 1634." Long dispute as to the debt; complainant prays for a writ of subpoena, etc. No further pedigree details set out in this case. The word "orator" means simply petitioner.

R. A. Ledgard comes to a very different conclusion concerning Thomas Hanchett and his marriage, or marriages. He felt that Thomas married twice, first to Elizabeth Willet and then to Elizabeth Shewster. Junius Hanchett's analysis made sense considering the limited resources available to him.



***Signature and writing samples for Thomas Hanchett
of Arkesden, Essex***

However, considering the ample evidence that Thomas was married twice, it would not be that unusual for there to be two sons named Thomas, an oldest and a youngest.

This gives a lively picture of Thomas and his doings. From this and other adventures of his to be given it will be seen that he was not readily “affrighted.” We learn from this case that Elizabeth’s mother’s name at that time was Sewster, not Willett, indicating that Willett had died and his widow had remarried and again become a widow, dying herself 1634 or earlier. Of course Elizabeth might have taken the name Willett from a first husband but that seems highly improbable.

Reverting to the Lucas suit, it was a complaint of Edward Lucas of London, gentleman, son and heir of Jasper Lucas, gentleman, deceased, and Mercy, his wife, also deceased, against Thomas Hanchett, John Lawe, and Andrewe Payne. The document is very obscure but the dispute appears to be as to title to lands

in Arkesden. Recites the will dated 1 April 1615, of _____ Lawe, which deals with the property in suit. Perhaps John Lawe, co-defendant, was the John Law of Clavinging, husband of Martha Hanchett, daughter of Thomas' brother John. More likely he was the father of that John. The mention of Thomas' marriage to Elizabeth may indicate that he was in the suit on his wife's behalf, as at that time a wife had to have her husband appear in court for her. America has relieved wives of this disability and probably England has also but at a later date. An inquiry might disclose that who made the will was the grandfather of Elizabeth. Elizabeth's mother was dead at the time of this suit.

My first English correspondent who furnishes these state papers items says this refers to ship-money. He continues: Minutes of a similar warrant to Thomas Davis, messenger to fetch up Thomas Hanchett and Roger Hanchett of Arkesden, Essex. I have referred to this item under Roger explaining that ship-money was an illegal and extortionate tax levied by Charles I in his fight to rule without a parliament. This tax was one of the galls that brought on the Great Rebellion and the rule of Cromwell. John Hampden won undying fame and the gratitude of his country (including at that time America also) by his resistance to this tax. We may take pride in one of the Hanchett name doing his bit in a small way in a like case. Probably this later item from the state papers concerns Thomas or Roger and is still concerned with ship-money. Of course Essex County supported the parliament against the king.

About 7 January 1637, Sir Humphrey Mildmay, Sheriff of Essex wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton. I enclose yours of the 6th inst., my man being at Walden with Banson the bailiff of the Hundred, this Hanchett did this wrong to his majesties service and for the mistake in his

Christian name that rascal the Bailiff is to blame and no man else. I have complained of them all in general for a nest of rascals. They have much of his Majesties money in their hands, etc.¹³¹

Evidently, Sir Humphrey was boiling mad. What happened further is not disclosed. A dozen years later, in 1649, Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden refused to take on the position of high constable as the sessions court had ordered him to do. The court dragged him back in to get an explanation for his perversity in midsummer of that year. Thomas was a man who seemed to stand by his principles.¹³²

The Chancery suit against Thomas Hanchett, executor of the will of his brother Richard, of Harlowe, Essex.¹³³

My abstract of the family details of this suit was made by Hardy & Page for me. There are three pages of questions and answers to which I have made some reference already.

January 14, 1660-1 and April 16, 1661.

Interrogatories to be administered to witnesses on behalf of Robert Ingoll and Elizabeth his wife; Dudley Kinge and Margaret his wife; John Rickett and Martha his wife; John, Thomas, and Richard Morris; and Edward Martin and Honor, his wife; complainants against Thomas Hanchett, gentleman, defendant.

Of these complainants, Honor Martin was John's daughter. The Morris complainants were perhaps Barbara's children or perhaps of sister, Mary, who seems to have married a Morris and who testifies for the complainants. How the others were related I cannot

¹³¹ Danbury 34.

¹³² Essex Record Office. Sessions Rolls; Reference Q/SR 341/55.

¹³³ Chancery Depositions before 1714. Hamilton. Bundle 262. No. 15, and Whittington. Bundle 796. No. 16.

say; they were legatees under the will. I shall not give a copy of this abstract but I have quoted or shall quote from it all that is of value to this inquiry.

One of the questions was “Did not complainants, legatees under the will of Richard Hanchett, offer to the defendant to take the goods in the house as part of their share and to give him an acquittance for the same?” This suggests one of the sore points in the dispute. My abstract does not furnish the answer. One of the questions asked on behalf of Thomas was, “Have you been paid ninety-five pounds, the legacy left you by Richard Hanchett?”

I give now in full my abstract of the will of Thomas, a comparison of it with the will of Roger is very convincing that we have here the brother of Roger. The Chancery suits also corroborate. The four wills and the Chancery suits make a very complete proof of the relationship between the members of this large family.

Abstract of will of Thomas Hanchett, of Berden, Essex (formerly of Arkesden, Essex.)¹³⁴

Thomas Hanchet of Berden Co, Essex, yeoman, 20 June 1666. To the poor of Arkesden 40/. Mentions sons George, Samuel, Edward, William, Richard & my youngest son Thomas. To wife Elizabeth my freehold land called Bledlews containing about 24 acres. My grandchildren Thomas & Edward the sons of Edward Hanchett. Mentions other lands including Larkesfield in Arkesden, Elmdon, etc. To my son William copyhold land held of Dodenhoe at Dudnall Grange. My three grandchildren James, Richard, and William, sons of Richard Hanchett. My daughter Susan the wife of William Morrice. Res. & Ex wife.

¹³⁴Furnished by Mr. A. H. Johnson. (Arch Col. Polley 276).

Proved at Henham 1 March 1678 by the ex. named.

It is a fair assumption that Thomas died only a short time before the will was proved. That would be the usual course.

An interesting point in the above will is why Thomas needed to distinguish his son Thomas as his youngest son Thomas if indeed there was no other son Thomas.

Children of Thomas Hanchett of Arkesden and Elizabeth Willett [or Elizabeth Shewster]

As to the order of births we cannot be absolutely sure. We know from the Chancery suit that Richard was born in 1625, Samuel in 1633, and Edward in 1637. Knowing this we know that neither will named the children in the precise order of their ages. Roger's will grouped Samuel, Edward, and William in that order and Thomas' will gives them in the same order. Samuel was four years older than Edward. I think those three are given in the order of age. Martha and Susan are named in that order by Roger. Thomas does not name Martha and she was probably dead then. I think Martha was the elder sister. Susan's husband was born in 1629. She helped her brother Samuel in the settlement of Richard's estate. Samuel was only nineteen when his uncle died. Samuel says that their work commenced shortly after his uncle's death. He was young to be entrusted with so important work. I do not think that Susan was still younger. I therefore place Martha and Susan as older than Samuel, Edward, and William. On account of the age of Susan's husband I place Susan immediately before Samuel. John died January 1650-1. He is not named in his father's will many years later but is named in that of Roger directly before Samuel. He probably left no children as his father names none in his will. He was probably young and unmarried

or recently married at his death. I think he comes just before Susan for the above reasons. Thomas I think was youngest child. I have discussed the discrepancy between the two wills as to that. George is named early in Roger's will and first in his father's, yet I hesitate to place him first knowing Richard's age. To put George, Martha, John, and Susan all in between Richard and Samuel rather crowds those eight years. I am therefore placing George as eldest tentatively, and run the children thus, George, Richard, Martha, John, Susan, Samuel, Edward, William, and Thomas.

- 1) George Hanchett, perhaps eldest son and eldest child. If so he would be born about 1623. Named in will of his uncle Roger in 1650 and in his father's will in 1666. I have no other mention of him. His uncle left him remainder of all his lands in Braughing after a life estate to his father.
- 2) Richard Hanchett. No doubt of his age. He testifies in Chancery suit, 1661, that he is a yeoman and of Widdington, Co. Essex. His birth therefore was 1625 or 1624 for the testimony was April 1661 and he was of course somewhat over thirty-six. He received ninety-five pounds on the division of his uncle Richard's estate. He had three sons: James, Richard, and William named in his father's will. His uncle Roger left five pounds to Richard's son James. James must have been a baby then and probably Richard and William were not then born (1650). I have no further information as to Richard or his line.
- 3) Martha Hanchett. I do not know where she comes in the family role. On the preceding page I tell why I put her here. Roger left her a five-pound legacy in 1550 but she is not named in her father's will in 1666. Probably she was then dead. She must have

participated in her uncle Richard's estate. Richard did not name Thomas' children except as a class. I have no further information as to her.

- 4) John Hanchett. I think he comes in at this point. We have his death accurately. Samuel Harrison of Harlowe, tailor, aged seventy-four, testifies in the Chancery suit of 1661 that he "believes that John Hanchett, son of Thomas Hanchett, was buried at Cambridge 12 January 1650-1, for he was at Cambridge and saw the register book where the death was entered and brought a certificate from the minister of the parish of Bennetts, which is the one produced. Another witness testified to the same effect. Roger Hanchett left five pounds to John, son of Thomas Hanchett, his brother. He dates his will 24 May 1650. That was the May preceding John's death. It looks as if John had left home and established himself in Cambridge. It is not probable that he was still a child or even underage though certainly a very young man. I think he was about twenty-one and born in 1629. I think he was unmarried and am quite sure he left no issue. His father does not name him or his issue in his will made in 1666. John was dead before his uncle Richard and could not therefore participate in the division. His legacy lapsed. The evidence was introduced, of course to prove a lapse.
- 5) Susan Hanchett. I have given my reason for placing her at this point in the family role, and born therefore about 1631, next before Samuel whose age we know. She and Samuel took an account of their uncle Richard's estate. For that see under Samuel. She married William Morris who testifies in 1661 that he is William Morris of Whaddon in the county of Cambridge, yeoman, aged thirty-two years; that he did intermarry with Susan, one of the defendants'

daughters, and that defendant has paid him ninety-five pounds, Susan's share of the money left by Richard Hanchett. In her father's will five years later the mention is "My daughter Susan the wife of William Morris." In her uncle Roger's will, 1650, the mention is, "Martha and Susan, daughters of the said Thomas (Hanchett) £5.0.0 apiece."

- 6) Samuel Hanchett. Born in 1632 or very early in 1633. He tells of this himself in Chancery suit in depositions taken April 15, 1661 at the Red Lion in Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex. He testifies for his father. Samuel Hanchett of Arkesden in the county of Essex, gentleman, aged twenty-eight years. "That defendant did employ him and his sister Susan Hanchett, soon after the death of Richard Hanchett, about the management of the stock of the late Richard Hanchett, and that he continued in said employment two years and his sister one year and a half." John Casse, of Harlowe, yeoman, age fifty-six, testifies that Samuel and Susan Hanchett were employed for a year by the defendant to take an account of the estate of the late Richard Hanchett, and that their maintenance, etc. cost thirty-five pounds. The question put, framed by the defendant or his attorney was whether Thomas and Susan were employed "to take an account and look after the estate of the said Richard Hanchett." Samuel was left five pounds by his uncle Roger and is mentioned in his father's will. I identify this Samuel with the Samuel Hanchett, of Arkesden, who is given in Morant's History of Essex, as ancestor of the wealthy Chrishall Grange Hanchetts. I will therefore give him separate treatment in that role, later.
- 7) Edward Hanchett. He was born 1636 or 1637. He was a witness in the Chancery suit mentioned so often.

Edward Hanchett was of Berdon, in the county of Essex, yeoman, aged twenty-four years. He testified that he had received his legacy, ninety-five pounds left him by his uncle Richard. His uncle Roger left him five pounds in 1650. His father mentions him in his will in 1666 and "My grandchildren Thomas and Edward, the sons of Edward Hanchett." Edward was thirty then and perhaps had later-born children. I do not trace him further.

- 8) William Hanchett. I think of him as younger than Samuel and Edward on account of the order of names in two wills. His father left him his copyhold land held of Dodenhoe, alias Dudnall Grange. If he were born in 1638, as seems probable, he would have been twenty-eight at the time of his father's will and perhaps not yet married. Mr. A. H. Johnson identifies him with the William of Arkesden, yeoman, who made a will in 1681 leaving to wife Grace and to minor children John, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Ann, and a son William who is not called a minor as were the others, and who I place therefore as eldest son. His name, William, after his father, suggests he was eldest. A. H. Johnson traces the son John still further and his son William after him. All this seems clear also to me and I will give this material later, in the form of three wills.
- 9) Thomas Hanchett. Called youngest son in his father's will but eldest son according to my abstract of the will of his uncle Roger. As youngest son he is clearly not to be identified with Deacon Thomas Hanchett, of New England. As eldest son he would not be excluded on account of the age comparison. Neither will speaks of him as being in America. He must have participated in the estate of his uncle Richard also. Richard does not name Thomas' children seriatim

but unites them into a class. Thus if Thomas were the American ancestor he missed three chances of being named in wills as being in America. What did become of this son of Thomas? I do not trace him further in any way. Perhaps he is the Thomas Hanchett whose will or administration is given as of 1692 Pelham. I have only the citation which is of wills and administrations, 1684-1790 Archdeaconry of Middlesex (Essex and Herts division). It would be well to look this up. If he proved the same he would be definitely excluded as the American progenitor.

It is apparent that Thomas Hanchett, the father of the large family just given, left many descendants, and doubtless he has descendants of the name to this day. Richard, Samuel, Edward, and William carried on the line certainly. John it is very certain did not. As to George and Thomas, we have no data. The investigation leaves us still searching for the American ancestor. I have given all I have on sons Richard and Edward. I now give what I have of the lines of Samuel and William.

Line of Samuel Hanchett of Arkesden, son of Thomas

From Morant's history of Essex, 1768, Vol. II, page 605 I find Utlesford Hundred. The Manor of Christ Hall Grange. Sir Thomas Meade, Kt. was also possessed of it at the time of his decease 18 September 1617 and left John his son and heir. James Smith of Upton, Esq. sold it to John Hanchet, of Heydon, Esq.

Samuel Hanchet, of Arkesden, married Joane, daughter of Mr. Crud, of Ickleton, in Cambridgeshire; his son and heir was John Hanchet, Esq. who married Mary, daughter of Mr. John Pauley, of St. Malyn, in Cornwall; he died 30 October 1724. John Hanchet, Esq., his son, departed this life 2 November 1737, leaving John Hanchet, Esq. The arms of Hanchet are described

without informing, except by implication, that they belonged to this branch of the Hanchets. The Letchworth Hanchets are referred to without, however, connecting them definitely with the line of Samuel. The arms described, Sable, three right hands erect cooped at the wrist, argent, 2, 1, are those shown by the Letchworth Hanchetts. My first English correspondent says that the Chrishall Grange Hanchets had no arms on their tombs but that a large number of Hanchetts at Ickleton displayed arms on their tombs.

On page 494 Morant tells us “The Hanchet family is still considerable and hath estates at Heyden and Arkesden.”

On page 590 we are told that James Smith of Upton, Esq. sold the Manor of Woodhall (the capital manor of Arkesden) to John Hanchet, of Heydon, Esq., whose son John was its next possessor.

On page 594, Utesford Hundred. Dodenhall Grange was sold to John Hanchet, Esq., and it is now in his grandson’s possession, John Hanchet, Esq.

On page 599, Same Hundred. Elmdon, Leebury is now capital manor in this parish. Sold by daughters and coheirs of John Meade, Esq. to John Hanchet, Esq., whose son John succeeded him and one of his two daughters. Both brought it in marriage to James Fuller.

We see from the above that this was a wealthy line of Hanchets, far more so than was Richard Hanchett of Arkesden or any of his brothers. Yet I believe that the Samuel mentioned is the founder of this distinguished line.

Samuel is described as “gentleman” in the Chancery suit of 1661 and his father also, though his father Thomas is content to call himself “yeoman” in his will.

Samuel, though not quite of age at his uncle Richard's death, was preferred over his older brothers to assist in important work in settling his uncle's estate. He was only twenty-eight at the time of the suit wherein he is called "gentleman." His uncle Richard had no son and perhaps chose the most promising of his brother's sons to succeed him. He left him no more than the others in his will but he might have favored him in his lifetime.

Samuel may have been twice married. The parish register at Albury Herts contains this item under marriages: "1663 June 4 Samuel Hanchett and Sarah Hull of Clavering." I have nothing beyond the record itself to identify this Samuel with Samuel of Arkesden. It would seem probable.

We know of no other Samuel Hanchett of this period. Against this we must make room for Joan Crud, implied in Morant's Essex to be the mother of Samuel's son John. Joan survived Samuel who died in 1700, Joan being granted administration of his goods. I give this item now, furnished me by Mr. Johnson in the original Latin of which I offer my own translation in which I take no pride:

Twenty-fifth September, 1700 before Henry Newton, Doctor of Laws, Surrogate, etc., administration of the goods, etc. of Samuel Hanchet, late of Arkesden in Co. Essex deceased, to Joanna Hanchet, relict.¹³⁵ Samuel would then be sixty-seven years old, if he were the son of Thomas of Arkesden. When was his son John born? We have some room for speculation as to this. John died in 1724 and his son died thirteen years later leaving a son John (1737). Musgrave's obituary checks this last date and gives further, "John Hanchett, Christal Grange, Essex, 9 May, 1756." This can hardly be other than the third John, although we always must consider the

¹³⁵ Arch. Col. pct Book 3, folio 38.

possibility of a death being that of a child. However, it is quite evident that the second John was a younger man at his death than his father and yet he was himself a father. The third John dying but nineteen years after his father was probably a younger man at his death than his father. If he were a young man of twenty-five and we allow twenty-five years to a generation we reach a birth date for John the first of about 1680. Samuel his father was then forty-eight. This study leaves us free to accept the theory that Samuel married Sarah Hull in 1663 and that she died and he married Joan Crud and had John. Of course John might have been the son of the first marriage if there were one, but Morant's *Essex* was published in 1768 and the information it gives could readily have been obtained from very direct sources. Of course Sarah Hull may not belong in the picture at all. Her marriage notice makes her appear to be of Clavering, a probable place for an Arkesden Hanchett to find a wife. John Law of Clavering married one of John's daughters.

I am not inclined to multiply Samuels in this instance to account for the two marriages. Asking ourselves whence came the great increase in the Hanchett fortune, it may have been won by Samuel or his son, or there may have been one or more fortunate marriages. I think also that the male line of Christhall Grange Hanchetts became extinct. One gets the impression from the data at hand but the case for extinction is not complete. My first English correspondent says the Christhall Grange 1910 estate was tied up in Chancery: that might imply that the male line dying out left collateral claimants.

Line of William Hanchett of Arkesden, Essex, son of Thomas.

My data is contained entirely in the following abstracts of wills furnished me by Mr. Johnson, who supposes

them to be the wills of William, son of Thomas; of John, son of William; and of William, son of John. I think he is correct as to this, irrespective of other reasons than are disclosed in the wills themselves.

Will of William Hanchett of Arkesden:¹³⁶

In the name of God. Amen. 10 Sept 1681. William Hanchett of Arkesden Co., Essex, yeoman. Soul to God. To Grace my loving wife my copyhold ground known as Mill field containing about thirty acres in Elmdon until my son John arrives at the age of 21, then he to have it. To wife for life my messuage wherein I dwell with the two closes adjoining containing about 11 acres and also 7 acres in Elmdon called Dawsfield & 6 acres called Pishenge Croft & 3 acres in Larkesfield; after her death (or marriage if she remarry) to my son William Hanchett.

To my eldest daughter Elizabeth £30 at age 21, ditto to daughter Sarah, ditto to youngest daughter Anne. My son William to have my 9 acres of land in Elmdon and Hendon Lofts on condition he pay the above legacies. Residue to wife for life and after to children equally. Executors wife and son William.

Proved at Walden 24 April 1682 by the Ex. named.

Will of John Hanchett of Arkesden. Dated 1 July 1731¹³⁷

In the name of God. Amen. John Hanchett of Dudenhoe End in the Parish of Arkesden in county Essex, yeoman, infirm in body but of sound mind. My soul to God. To my son William and his heirs all that messuage, etc. wherein I dwell with three pieces of land containing about 11 acres in the parishes of Arkesden and Elmdon. He to pay my wife Agatha £5 per annum for life & she to have a room in the house and a load of wood for firing. To my son John all that messuage, etc. with a close of

¹³⁶Arch. Colchester: 90 Collin.

¹³⁷Arch. Colchester: Pain 358.

land adjoining at Bridge End Elmdon in the occupation of John Burr & also £40. To my two sons George and Thomas my field called Lofts Field containing about 4 1/2 acres, Dawesfield, about 7 acres & Pishedge Croft, about 5 acres. To my youngest son Samuel my messuage, etc. in the occupation of Francis Onyon in Arkesden & my two closes of land in Elmdon commonly called Borleys, purchased of Nathaniel Crackenthorpe. To my daughter Elizabeth Hanchett, £50. Household goods equally between wife & children. Residue to wife and son William, they to be my executors.

Proved 19 August 1732 by Agatha relict & William Hanchett the son.

Note that some of the land is the same as in the previous will, while Dudenhoe End suggests land held of Dodenhoe in the grandfather's will. The next will ties in with the above perfectly, completing the chain:

Will of William Hanchett of Duddenhoe End in the Parish of Arkesden, Essex, yeoman. Dated 24 April 1751.¹³⁸

To my mother Agatha Hanchett for her life all my messuages & four closes of land containing about 11 acres in Duddenhoe and after her death to my well esteemed friend James Watson of Wenden Lofts in the said county, clerk, and his heirs. In trust to sell same three quarters of proceeds to be divided between my brothers, George and Thomas Hanchett and my brother-in-law John Trigge, and the other quarter amongst John, William, and Ann Hanchett, the children of my late brother John Hanchett, deceased.

Residue & Executrix-mother.

Proved 21 October 1767 by George Hanchett the son & next of kin & administrator of Agatha Hanchett,

¹³⁸Arch. Colchester: Ruffen 66.

deceased, when living the lawful mother sole executrix and universal legatee named in the last will of William Hanchett of Arkesden, Deceased.

21 October 1767, Commission issued to George Hanchett son & next of kin of Agatha Hanchett, late of Elmdon, widow deceased to administer her goods, etc.¹³⁹

There is also the abstract of a will of Ann Hanchett of Arkesden, Essex, spinster. Dated 9 June 1751 and proved 18 January 1754 by John Robinson. I do not give particulars as it is beyond the period of interest to the American Hanchetts. Her relationship with the other Arkesden Hanchetts we have mentioned is not clear.

For the Arkesden family, we have the possibility of a Thomas Hanchett as the eldest son of Thomas Hanchett, son of John who moved from Clavering to Arkesden. This information is contained in the will of Thomas' brother Roger Hanchett who, in his will dated 24 May 1650, leaves £5 to Thomas Hanchett, eldest son of Thomas Hanchet whom he elsewhere describes as his brother. Now, this could simply be a mistake as his brother, Thomas, did have a youngest son Thomas who is not mentioned in his uncle Roger's will. There is some confusion about Thomas Hanchett having been married twice, first to Elizabeth Willett as recorded in *Lucas vs. Hanchett* in 1635 and secondly to Elizabeth Sewster as noted in his suit against Thomas Gardiner, dated May 1637.

From the will of Andrew Willett, we know that Elizabeth Willett, his daughter, was not married yet in November 1621. If she was married by 1635, to Thomas Hanchett, she could have borne him a son Thomas who would have been Thomas' eldest son Thomas. It was not uncommon for a man who had more than one wife to give a child from his second wife the same name as a child by the first wife. Admittedly, this is only a remote possibility, but one we should keep in mind.

¹³⁹ Arch Colchester: Act Book No 5.

Thomas of Arkesden made a will wherein he is titled of Berden, County Essex, yeoman. It carries the date 20 June 1666 and clearly demonstrates that he was a wealthy man. In it he mentions sons George, Samuel, Edward, William, Richard, and Thomas. His daughter Susan received £100 while his sons were granted significant property holdings and cash.

Junius Hanchett goes on to say:

The Ickleton Hanchetts

Ickleton is in Cambridge at the southern border of that county, while just over the line from it is Heydon and Grange, the home of the wealthy descendants of Thomas of Arkesden, through his son Samuel. About ten miles east of Ickleton lies Shudy Camps, the original seat of all the Hanchetts. My correspondent, Mr. A. H. Johnson, tells me that he is of this line and that the family appears to have settled there through marriages about 1663. He adds, "There is only one data entry previous to that date in the register, viz., Baptism of John Hanchett, son of Richard, in 1593." It is evident that except for this entry the Ickleton Hanchetts do not promise to solve our problem of the American ties. At any rate, I do not have the data.¹⁴⁰ It might show some interesting burial items, though it is not probable that the parents of Deacon Thomas lived much beyond 1663, if at all. John, born in 1593, might have been one of the Arkesden brothers; we should expect the father to be named Richard.

Actually, the John born in 1593 was the son of Richard Hanchett of Clavering and Brent Pelham (see Chapter 8). The Hanchetts of Ickleton became extremely wealthy, and of course some became lawyers!

¹⁴⁰A full account of the Hanchetts of Ickleton as prepared by R. A. Ledgard is available at the Essex Records Office in Chelmsford, Essex.



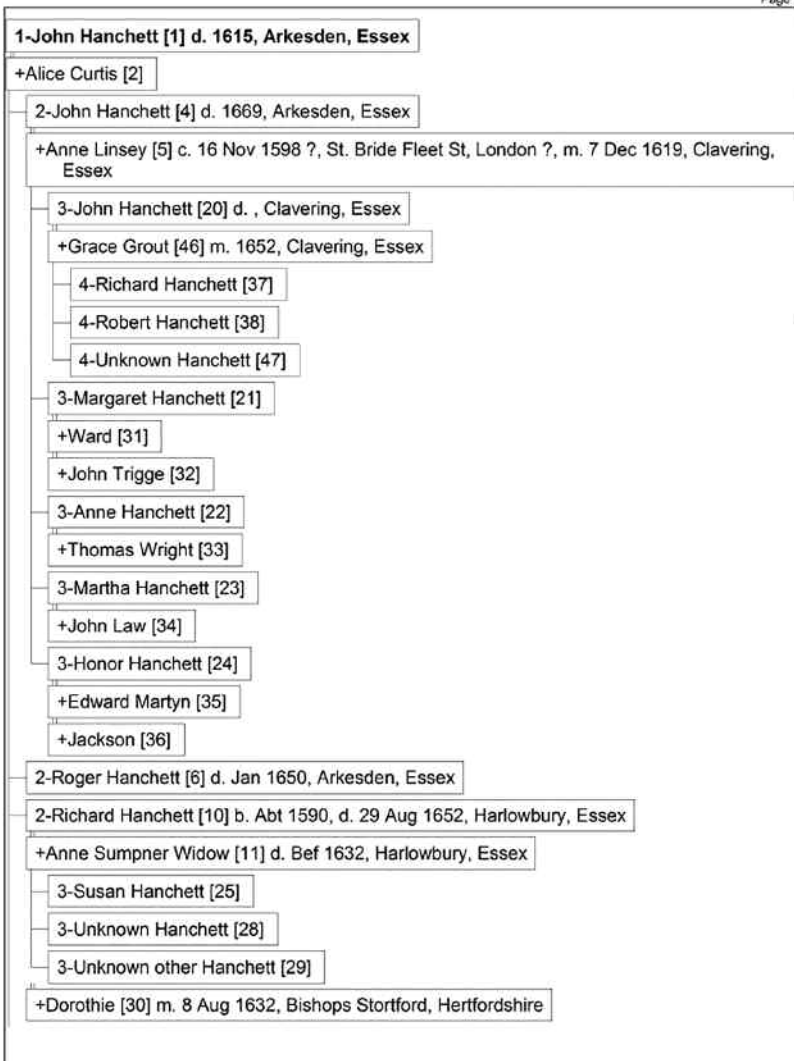
*Saint Mary the Virgin Church in Arkesden, Essex*¹⁴¹



*Saint Mary Magdalene Church in Ickleton, Cambridgeshire*¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Photo taken by Mara French in Jun 2010 for the French Family Association.

¹⁴² Saint Mary Magdalene Church, *Wikipedia*, 2004. <http://www.churches-uk-ireland.org/hertfordshire.html>.



2-Marie Hanchett [8] b. 1595

+William Morris [12] (see Marie Hanchett [8] on page 1)

2-Martha Hanchett [7] b. Bef 1600, Arkesden, Essex

+Abraham Lucking [13] m. 13 Jan 1630, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire

2-Barberie Hanchett [9]

+John Morris [14]

2-Thomas Hanchett [3] b. 1603, Arkesden, Essex, d. Bef 1 Mar 1678, Berden, Essex

+Elizabeth Willet [15] m. Bef 1635, Arkesden, Essex

3-Thomas Hanchett Eldest son (?) [17] b. Bef 1623

3-George Hanchett [26] b. Abt 1623, Arkesden, Essex

3-Richard Hanchett [19] b. 1625, Arkesden, Essex

3-John Hanchett [18] bur. 12 Jan 1651, Bennetts, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

3-Susan Hanchett [44] b. Abt 1631, Arkesden, Essex

+William Morris [45]

3-Samuel Hanchett [27] b. Abt 1633

+Elizabeth Sewster [16] m. Bef 1635, Arkesden, Essex

3-Edward Hanchett [39] b. Abt 1637, Arkesden, Essex

3-Thomas Hanchett Youngest Son [42]

3-Martha Hanchett [43] d. Bef 1666

3-William Hanchett [40]

+Grace [41]

Chapter 10

The Hanchett Family of Buntingford and Royston

This family's story begins in 1596 with the marriage of Michael Hanchett and Agnes Course/Coarse. If Michael was born about twenty-one years before marriage, that would place his birth around 1575, well within the range for many parish registers. Unfortunately, no record of his birth has been located. Agnes Course was from Littleington, Cambridgeshire.¹⁴³



***Saint Bartholomew Church at Layston,
Buntingford, Hertfordshire¹⁴⁴***

¹⁴³R. A. Ledgard, in his material on the Hanchetts of Buntingford. In possession of the author.

¹⁴⁴*The Churches of Britain and Ireland*: <http://www.churches-uk-ireland.org/hertfordshire.html>.

Michael and Agnes were involved in a complex property transaction in 1599. Michael paid £55, for a messuage in Buntingford in the Parish of Layston, to Henry and Johanne King and Moses Wood, all of Claxtonwell, Middlesex County.

In October of 1621, Michael contributed to the repair of the town clock. In 1628 he contributed to the “Looking to the service books and keeping clean the chapel.”

Five children are recorded for this family in the christening records for Saint Bartholomew, pictured above.

Their children were:

	<u>Christened</u>	<u>Buried</u>
Richard	7 December 1606	
Michael	12 May 1611	29 May 1611
Anne	18 September 1613	
Margaret	12 November 1616	
Jane	17 April 1621	

Michael, the son, lived but seventeen days. Michael, the father, died 21 October 1638 with occupation listed as “church clerk.”¹⁴⁵ At the birth of his daughter Jane, he is listed as mercer (merchant). Their daughter, Margaret, married Thomas Edwards 26 September 1637. Ann/Agnes, the mother, was buried 8 September 1663.

The job description for a church clerk, according to eHow is:¹⁴⁶

Church clerks, or church secretaries, are responsible for all administrative functions in their church. They prepare announcements about Sabbath or other celebrations, and maintain records of business and church board meetings. Financial statements, quarterly or annual reports, and most other church documents

¹⁴⁵ Heather Falvey and Steve Hindle: *“This Little Commonwealth”: Layston Parish Memorandum Book, 1607-c1650 & 1704-c1747* .

¹⁴⁶ “Church Clerk.” *eHow*.

are legally required to be available to the public. Church clerks make sure that all records are accurate, copied, and published or posted for church members and the general public.

The eldest son, Richard, attended Cambridge and is mentioned in Venn's *Cambridge University Alumni, 1261-1900*:¹⁴⁷

Matriculated sizar from QUEENS', Easter, 1624. Of Hertfordshire. B.A. 1626-7; M.A. 1631. One of these names Vicar. of Rainham, Essex, 1662. Will (P.C.C.) 1666.

"Sizar" is an undergraduate at Cambridge University receiving financial help from the college and formerly having certain menial duties.

The clergy database, CCED, tells us that Richard's ordination took place at Saint David's Cathedral in Saint David's, Wales where he was made deacon 27 May 1632 and priest thereafter. Of particular interest to those researching Thomas Hanchett of New England, is that Richard was curate at Halstead, Essex, 3 June 1637. Halstead is virtually in the middle of the region that contributed many souls for the journey to New England during the 1630s.

It is of interest to note that Theophilus Field was the Bishop at Saint David's during Richard's time there. Field followed Bishop William Laud who ultimately bore much responsibility for the migration of many good ministers and their flocks to New England.

Following his time at Halstead, Richard became vicar at Willington, Bedfordshire where he worked for twelve years and then moved on to Rainham, Essex from 1663 until 1665. Richard died in 1666 and his will went through probate 23 May 1666. That will mentions property in Littlington, Cambridgeshire; a gift of money to the poor in Willington and Rainham; gifts to sister, Mrs. Ann White of Saffron Walden, her son Ralph

¹⁴⁷ J. A. Venn, comp. *Alumni Cantabrigienses*.

Matthews, and daughters Dorothy Matthews and Mary Smith; gifts to sister (Margaret) Edwards of Buntingford and Jane Ivery, wife of Adam Ivery, of Buntingford. Brother-in-law Thomas Cater of Wade's Mill is residuary legatee and sole executor. No children or wife are mentioned. There must have been another deceased sister, however, for there to have been a brother-in-law Cater. The will was proved at London.

Another Hanchett family that resided at Buntingford in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries bears mentioning, although we have not tied them to Michael's family. Ledgard's material outlines the family of Edward Hanchett, apothecary in Layston and Royston.¹⁴⁸ Edward is first mentioned as a church warden at Layston in 1686. He married Elizabeth Duckfield in 1687. Their children show a high level of achievement for that period.

Edward was immortalized in a poem written by Thomas Wright, a physician at Royston. In it Wright describes persons of note in the town:

Thee first I name, my Glover, fortune's child,
 Beloved of all, but special friend of mine;
 Or Draper, holy man, whose doctrine mild
 The message bears of truth and mercy reconciled!

Or Hanchett true shall subsidize good cheer,
 In Aesculapian (healing) art profoundly versed,
 To whom each herb is known, each symptom clear,
 Nor hope resigns when things are at the worst.¹⁴⁹

Edward, the eldest son, was baptized 3 April 1688 at Buntingford. He was admitted sizar at Christ's College

¹⁴⁸ Manuscript material of R. A. Ledgard in the possession of the author.

¹⁴⁹ Alfred Kingston: *A History of Royston, Hertfordshire*.

Cambridge in 1702, having attended school at Buntingford. He graduated B. A. in 1707 and was noted as Fellow in 1708. Edward died in London of a fever in 1709 and was buried at Aspenden, Hertfordshire where both of his parents were buried. Edward, the father, was buried 12 November 1730 and Elizabeth, the mother, was buried 26 August 1712.

Edward, the father, left a will dated 1726 mentioning his sons, Daniel and John, and his daughters Elizabeth, Joyce, Ann, and Mary as well as his sisters Elizabeth Trim, and Martha Ducksaid.¹⁵⁰

Daniel, the second son, was baptized 18 March 1691 at Royston, Hertfordshire. Daniel followed in his father's footsteps as an apothecary in London. He married first Mary and second Elizabeth Templar, widow, of London, 22 June 1728. His will was dated 10 May 1768 and in it is mentioned his late brother, John Hanchett; sisters, Joyce Willey, and Ann Thornton; niece Elizabeth Morton; cousin, Richard Wilding.¹⁵¹

In an interesting insight to his personality, he states:

Wherein I have been a great sufferer for many years in the loss of rent in the said premises by a too compassionate disposition and have therefore found it necessary to depute my neighbor William Lewis whom I know to be honest and faithful and qualified to receive the rents, let the said premises and order repairs and have agreed to allow him 5% for his trouble therein, I recommend to my said residuary devisees to continue him in the management of the premises.

Daniel also reveals his appreciation for help given him as he states:

(To) my friend Rebecca Wright £100 and my picture, as a grateful acknowledgement of her friendship, wisdom, and prudence in managing my domestic affairs, but

¹⁵⁰PCC Amber 307.

¹⁵¹PCC 450 Secker.

especially for her care of me during my many illnesses, during the many years she has condescended to board with me.

He then goes on to request that his business partner, Thomas Condeleft, “endeavor to collect the debts due to me in trade in my own right as well as in partnership with him.” Daniel leaves him £30 for his effort. Rarely do you find so much feeling in a will. He must have been an exceptional person. Daniel had been one of three officers in the Company of Apothecaries for the years 1760-1761.

Daniel was not the only apothecary in Edward’s family. Son John became one as well and practiced his trade in Layston. John was baptized 17 April 1696 at Layston and practiced as an apothecary there up to his death 12 September 1731. His wife’s Christian name was Ann and she survived until 1738.

The Hanchett families who lived in Layston/Buntingford and Royston were the first in the family to follow the merchant trades which gained great popularity in England about the time the Puritans set sail for New England.

Remembering the role Thomas Hanchett of New England played as witness to the will of Leonard Chester of Wethersfield, Connecticut, *A History of Royston* tells us that:

A collateral branch of the Chester family, claiming common descent with the Royston Chesters from William Chester, of Chipping Barnet, was that of the Chesters of Blaby, Leicestershire, one of whom migrated to New England in 1633, and founded the Chesters in America, who, as appears by the monument to Leonard Chester at Wethersfield, Connecticut, continued to use the same arms as those of Sir Robert Chester of Royston.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Alfred Kingston: *A History of Royston, Hertfordshire*.



Saint David's Cathedral, Wales

1-Michael Hanchett [1] bur. 21 Oct 1638, Layston, Hertfordshire

+Agnes Course [2] m. 12 Sep 1596, Layston, Hertfordshire, bur. 8 Sep 1663, Layston, Hertfordshire, England

2-Richard Hanchett [3] c. 7 Dec 1606, d. 13 May 1666, Raynham, Essex

2-Mary Hanchett [7] c. 18 Feb 1608, Littington, Cambridgeshire

+Richard Edwardes [8] m. 1 November 1631 , Widford, Hertford, England

2-Michael Hanchett [4] c. 12 May 1611, bur. 29 May 1611

2-Anne Hanchett [6] c. 18 Sep 1613

2-Margaret Hanchett [5] c. 12 Nov 1616

+Thomas Edwardes [10] m. 28 Sep 1637, LAYSTON, HERTFORD, ENGLAND

2-Jane Hanchett [9] c. 7 Apr 1621, LAYSTON, HERTFORD, ENGLAND

Chapter 11

The Hanchetts of Sussex and Kent

In 1515, the Manor of Shudy Camps was sold by James Hanchett, son of John Hanchett of that location. Later on, the Manor of Crowham, Westfield, Sussex was obtained by a James Hanchett.



*Crowham or Crougham Manor in Westfield, Sussex*¹⁵³

In the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Henry VIII, 1543, a James Hanchett of Westfield, Sussex attempted to occupy the manor. Apparently, one Thomas Cheny had been in possession of the manor since 1530 by a rental arrangement with William

¹⁵³Property history - Crowham Manor, www.zoopla.co.uk.

Cheny, probably a relative. The transition did not go smoothly, and James Hanchett, described by Thomas Cheny as a “querulous and evil disposed person,” resorted to the use of “staves, swords, and other weapons” to forcibly remove Thomas Cheny as Thomas attempted to hold court at the manor. Thomas took William Cheny and James Hanchett to court over the matter.¹⁵⁴ The manor must have included quite a large piece of land as it had portions in the parishes of Westfield, Ore, Gestlyng, Brede, Bekley, and Rye.

There was also a James Hanchett, brother of George Hanchett and son of Joyce Whitby, who filed two bills of complaint pertaining to lands in Peamarsh, Sussex and Cranbrook, Kent. Joyce Whitby was the daughter of Robert and Margery Whitby, alias Durham. The pledges to the bills were by yeomen from London, so the bills were probably filed in London. Joyce might have been the wife of John Hanchett, father of James Hanchett. Both locations were within fifteen miles of Westfield, Sussex.¹⁵⁵

Another Hanchett, Thomas, appears in the lay subsidy rolls for Sussex under the Hundred of Gestlyng in 1524.¹⁵⁶ James A’Hanchett must have died in early 1553 as an administration of his goods was conducted 13 April 1553 by Robert Brychet and John Aymat. They were both of Sedlescombe, Sussex which is just two miles from Westfield. It is interesting that he uses the A’ before “Hanchett” indicating that he was from Hanchett. In the thirteen hundreds, the Manor at Shudy Camps went by the name Hanchetts.

No further record of the Hanchett family at this location has been found. The parish registers for Westfield show no Hanchett entries.

¹⁵⁴TNA REQ 2/8/315 Court Requests: Pleadings Henry VII-Henry VIII, Cheny v. Cheny, Hanchett and others. TNA date 1492-1545.

¹⁵⁵Chancery Proceedings (Early) Hanchett c. Hasywod and Hanchett c. Parker File 319 Nos. 74,75 and 76 (Undated 1504-1515).

¹⁵⁶Julian Cornwall: *The Lay Subsidy Rolls for the County of Sussex 1524-1525*.

Chapter 12

The Hanchett Family of Bourn, Cambridgeshire



*Bourn Hall in Bourn, Cambridgeshire*¹⁵⁷

The Hanchett family of Bourn was literally the meat-and-potatoes branch of the family. Our first record of Hanchetts in Bourn occurs in 1576 when “James Hanchet and William Meake, tipplers, (ale and wine retailers) are amerced (financial penalty for offending the law or a fine) 6d each for not serving according to the statute.” The record occurs in the court rolls

¹⁵⁷ *Wikipedia*, Bourn Hall Clinic, in the village of Bourn five miles east of Cambridge, was the world’s first ‘test-tube baby’ clinic. The clinic was founded in 1980, by Patrick Steptoe and Robert Edwards following the birth of the first test-tube baby in 1978.

for Bourn Manor.¹⁵⁸ There are also curious records for James Hanshawe starting from 1552 and extending through 1565. In 1552 “Ralph Baldwin surrendered to the use of James Hanshawe and his heirs one messuage with a croft adjacent and two acres of land lying in Bourn. The King had granted this to James to hold to him and his heirs of the Lord King for rent of 7s per annum and service and suit of court.”

By 1587 James Hamshott is marked as being deceased and it is noted that James was a tenant holding one messuage with one croft and two acres of customary arable land in the field of Bourn. Thus it would seem that James Hanshawe and James Hamshott and James Hanchet are all the same person. In that same year Elizabeth Hanshett, widow, a common victualler, is amerced 4d for selling bread and drink against the assize (a ruling of the court that formerly sat at intervals in each county of England and Wales to administer the civil and criminal law).

James left a will dated 18 September 1584 which went through probate 7 November 1584, so apparently James had died between those two dates.¹⁵⁹ James left his wife, Elizabeth, his copyhold premises where he dwelled, during her life and after her decease he willed that his son James, probably his oldest son, should have it. His son John, the elder, (he had two sons named John) received his other copyhold. His third son Thomas received four pounds while his fourth son, John the younger, was to receive forty shillings. The two children of his daughter, Elizabeth Hanchett Newlyn divided the sum of 12s, 3d. James’ wife, Elizabeth, was his executrix.

James’ wife, Elizabeth, created a will without a date which went through probate 4 February 1603/04. She reversed the order of things leaving her son John, the younger, her executor

¹⁵⁸Original provided by Professor Martin at Christ’s College Archive, Cambridge.

Transcription by Diana Spelman of Norwich. David Baxter in his book *Medieval Bourn* transcribed the existing court rolls up to 1515. The rolls between that date and 1542 have not survived.

¹⁵⁹Wills on file at the Cambridgeshire Record Office W1584, WR4:72.

and beneficiary with the proviso that if he should die a single man then all her estate should be divided between her son Thomas and the children of her sons James and John Hanchett.¹⁶⁰

Although we do not know what vocation James, the son of James and Elizabeth, pursued, he must have done fairly well. From 1596 until his death in 1615, James bought and sold property in Bourn even to the extent of paying £175 for all the lands of Nicholas Thorogood, gentleman, consisting of tenements, lands, meadows, and pastures known as Symonds Orchard, in 1606. Following the court held on 28 July 1615, it was reported that James Hanchett transferred much of his property to his children: Thomas, Nicholas, Agnes, Margaret, and James Junior. James Senior subsequently died intestate and his remaining estate went through probate 21 October 1615.

James' younger brother, Thomas, became a butcher. Apparently Thomas made use of the prevailing system in those days of pledging one's property to another person as a security for borrowing cash. On 2 October 1622, Thomas "surrendered one messuage with an enclosure adjoining with appurtenances to the use of Margaret Hanchett, his sister, on condition that if Thomas should pay her £11 on 2 August 1622 at the mansion house of Edward Biggs in Borne then surrender would be void."

On 21 May 1635, Thomas Hanchett made a will leaving his wife Marie as the principal beneficiary and sole executrix. He mentions sons Thomas, William, and Robert.¹⁶¹

Thomas followed his father in death about five years later. His will was dated 12 March 1640/41 and he also gives his occupation as butcher. He left seven children: Edward, Thomas, Roger, John, Alice, Mary, and Anne.¹⁶² His wife Alice

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid* W1603, WR6:157.

¹⁶¹ Wills at Cambridgeshire Record Office W1640, WR(:4.

¹⁶² *Ibid*.

made a will dated 8 August 1657 mentioning sons Thomas, Roger, and John and daughters Alice, Anne Morken, Mary Grant, and Margaret Riding.¹⁶³ Thomas' son Roger was the next to become a butcher, leaving a will dated 7 March 1686/87. He mentions sons Roger and Thomas with daughter Anne and wife Anne.¹⁶⁴

James Senior's son Nicholas also became a butcher. Possibly Bourn had enough butchers at that point as Nicholas moved to Cambridge to practice his trade. Nicholas died at age thirty-nine, while his children were still young, and that occurrence left us with interesting examples of how the apprentice system worked. Apparently, his wife Frances Blacktop Hanchett felt she could not afford to keep her three children so she made arrangements for each to go into an apprenticeship.

The first bond was for Marie Hanchett who was assigned to Andrew White, cooper, and wife, Ann, in making bone lace, dated 12 October 1638. Marie was christened 15 October 1629 so she was just nine years old. The second was for the third child, Elizabeth, who was sent to reside with Bartholomew Draper, laborer. That occurred on 26 October 1638 when Elizabeth was but four years old.

The third is for Nicholas Hanchett, dated 7 August 1639. So, Nicholas was apprenticed to Edward Cooke, laborer, probably as a laborer, at an age of less than seven years, and that apprenticeship was to last until Nicholas turned twenty-one. The important point to remember is that each of these individuals had to post a bond to assure that the child was well cared for during that whole period of time.

Of all the children to come out of the family from Bourn, only one was born within the window of time we have allotted for the birth of Thomas Hanchett of New England. Giles

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

Hanchett, son of John the elder had a son who was christened 25 May in 1627. As were his brothers and sisters, Thomas was born in Haddenham, Cambridgeshire. His younger brother, William, stayed in Haddenham and raised a family there. Thomas just disappears and is not heard of after that.

John Hanchett the elder's son, John Hanchett Junior, married Constance Haggar on 15 January 1599. Constance died just sixteen years later, along with several other Hanchetts. She did have time to bear seven children. Together they had three Elizabeths, John, James, George, and Ann. Constance's last name, Haggar, is of interest because the Haggar family owned Bourn Manor and a great deal of other property in Bourn between 1554 and 1710. It is not clear whether Constance was related to this family, as she may have been from Hertfordshire, from another Haggar family. It is interesting to note that John Haggar was assessed in 1662 for sixteen hearths while the two surviving Hanchetts, James and Alice, were assessed for one each.

1-James Hanchett [4] d. Bef 7 Nov 1584, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Elizabeth [11] d. Bef 4 Feb 1604, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
2-Thomas Hanchett [9] bur. 10 Jun 1635, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Marie [61]
3-Alice Hanchett [14] c. 1 Apr 1593, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
3-Thomas Hanchett [15] c. 22 Nov 1596, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 24 Dec 1640, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Alice Carter [36] m. 30 May 1615, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, d. 4 May 1667, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
4-Roger Hanchett [39] d. Bef 5 Apr 1687
4-Anne Hanchett [42]
4-Margaret Hanchett [44]
4-Alice Hanchett [41] c. 16 Jul 1615, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
4-Edward Hanchett [37] c. 2 Feb 1616, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
4-Mary Hanchett [43] c. 10 Jan 1618
4-John Hanchett [40] c. 25 Mar 1621
4-Robert Hanchett [49] c. 24 Oct 1624, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
4-Thomas Hanchett [38] c. 6 Feb 1625, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
3-John Hanchett [19] c. 8 Oct 1601, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, d. 8 Apr 1621, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
3-William Hanchett [33] c. 28 Jan 1604, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 8 Jul 1640, Hauxton, Cambridgeshire
+Elizabeth [51] m. Abt 1626, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 5 Sep 1638, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
3-Humphrey Hanchett [22] bur. 8 Feb 1616, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Unknown
3-Robert Hanchett [20] c. 1 Jul 1608, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 4 Mar 1624, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
2-Elizabeth Hanchett [12] d. 29 Sep 1639, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

+Newlyn [62] m. Bef 17 Sep 1584
3-Robert Newlyn [63]
3-John Newlyn [64]
2-James Hanchett [13] bur. 21 Oct 1615, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Alice [21] m. Abt 1592, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 10 Apr 1612, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
3-James Hanchett [56] b. Bef 1592, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Annis Kellett [58] m. 23 Nov 1613, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
4-Joseph Hanchett [59] c. 30 Jan 1613, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Jane Wilkinson [70] m. 6 Feb 1639, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Margaret Parneby [65]
4-James Hanchett [68] c. 1 Jan 1623, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
4-Henry Hanchett [67] c. 27 Jan 1627, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
4-Hester Hanchett [69] c. 2 Jul 1629, Barnes St. Mary, Surrey
3-Rhoda Hanchett [27] c. 18 Jan 1593, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
3-Nicholas Hanchett [28] c. 22 Nov 1596, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 22 Jun 1635, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Frances Blacktop [45] m. 30 May 1626, St Edward, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
4-Marie Hanchett [47] c. 15 Oct 1629, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
4-Nicholas Hanchett [46] c. 16 Dec 1632, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
4-Elizabeth Hanchett [48] c. 10 Nov 1634, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
3-John Hanchett [29] c. 16 Feb 1598, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
3-Margaret Hanchett [30] c. 5 Mar 1600, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Margaret Carter [60] c. 2 Feb 1583, Willingham by St. Ives, Cambridgeshire, m. Abt 1612, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
2-John Hanchett The Elder [10] b. Bef 17 Sep 1584
+Unknown
3-Giles Hanchett [17] c. 21 Mar 1595, Bourn, Cambridgeshire
+Agnes Gunton [32] m. 8 Feb 1624, Sutton, Cambridgeshire

4-Thomas Hanchett [52] c. 25 May 1627, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire

4-Alice Hanchett [53] c. 12 Jan 1629, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire

4-Mary Hanchett [54] c. 3 Aug 1634, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire

4-William Hanchett [55] c. 27 May 1638, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire

3-Mary Hanchett [18] c. 3 Sep 1598

3-Margaret Hanchett [16] c. 15 Mar 1600, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

3-John Hanchett Junior [23]

+Constance Haggard [25] m. 15 Jan 1599, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 29 Nov 1615, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

4-Elizabeth Hanchett [31] c. 29 Jun 1600, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

4-Elizabeth Hanchett [26] c. 20 Jan 1604

4-John Hanchett [24] c. 27 Sep 1607, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 26 Jan 1608, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

4-Elizabeth Hanchett [34] c. 26 Jan 1608, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

4-James Hanchett [35] c. 29 Nov 1609, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

4-George Hanchett [50] c. 13 Apr 1612, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

4-Ann Hanchett [57] c. 12 Feb 1614, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

2-John Hanchett The younger [1] c. 18 Feb 1598, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 30 Jun 1626, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

+Priscilla Calcote [2] c. 1 Nov 1586, Orwell, Cambridgeshire, m. 1617, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

3-William Hanchett [5] c. 22 Aug 1619, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

3-Margaret Hanchett [6] c. 3 Nov 1622, Bourn, Cambridgeshire, bur. 2 Mar 1623, Bourn, Cambridgeshire

3-Robert Hanchett [3] c. 10 Apr 1625

Chapter 13

The Hanchett Family in London and Unlinked Hanchett Records

Many Hanchetts found their way to London over the years. The wealthy went there to practice their professions or to complete land dealings. The regular Hanchetts went there for apprenticeships or in an attempt to find work. Few stayed and most returned to their county of origin. Some came just to get married but then usually left for their home in the country.

The earliest records, from the fourteenth century, are examples of Hanchetts from Cambridgeshire having dealings in London.

- William de Hansech was witness to a deed granting the Manor of Wrating (in Suffolk) from Richard de Talworth to Margery de Wyleghby, John de Heiden, Walter Crapinel, and Richard de Schenefeld in 1315.
- Sir Gilbert Pecche, William de Goldyngton, Baldwin de Maniers, Robert de Aspal, and Robert de Lacy, knights; Walter de Clopton, William de Hansech, William de Gretton, John son of Philip. Dated at London, on Saturday after the Epiphany, 9 Edward II. (1315)
- Robert Hanchech was listed on the Hustings rolls for 1367 and 1376.
- Agatha Hanchache was mentioned in a close roll for 1388.
- Henry Hanchech was listed in the Hustings rolls for 1389 and 1390.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw Richard Hanchett, the skinner, practicing his trade in London.

By the seventeenth century Thomas and his brother Edward Hanchet, from Braughing, worked in London. Edward was buried there in 1658, but Thomas retired to Hinxworth and then Welwyn, Hertfordshire, taking with him their father Thomas the sheriff of Hertfordshire.

Depositions - 1608¹⁶⁵

Witnesses on behalf of [Brian] Asheton and [Jane] Asheton Def Robert Hanchet; Allhallows London Wall Weaver; 28 1154. DL/C/218/231 2-11-1608 John Bun c William Foster Tithe William Foster; Vicarage South Mimms (Midd) Vicar 1155. DL/C/218/232-3 2-11-1608 Elizabeth Crowder c Witnesses on behalf of [Brian]

The parish records for London and surrounds mention several Hanchetts:¹⁶⁶

- 1) Margery Hanchet, on 11 June 1609, at Saint Giles, Cripplegate, London married Richard _____.
- 2) John Hanchet, on 23 April 1621, at Saint Swithin London Stone, London married Barbara Walker.
- 3) Mr. Thomas Hanchett on 8 August 1637, at Collegiate Church of Saint Katherine by the Tower, London, married Marye Harrison.
- 4) Francis Hanchet was buried on 1 June 1601, at Saint Lawrence Jewry, London.
- 5) Robert Hanshott was buried 29 December 1654, at Saint Dunstan, Stepney, Middlesex.

¹⁶⁵ London Consistory Court Depositions, 1586-1611: List and Indexes.

¹⁶⁶ Digitized and Transcribed Parish Registers for London." *Ancestry*.

- 6) John Hanchett was buried 19 October 1584, at Saint Clement Eastcheap, London.
- 7) Thomas Hancat was buried 10 January 1628, at Saint Lawrence Little Stanmore, Middlesex, Harrow.
- 8) Robert Hanchett was buried 13 April 1608, at Saint Saviour, Denmark Park, Surrey, Southwark.
- 9) William Hansett married Mary Buster 4 December 1651, Saint Mary, Stratford Bow, Middlesex, Tower Hamlets.
- 10) Mrs. Jane Hanchett was buried 31 March 1666, at Saint Mary Colechurch, London.
- 11) Ann Hanchett married Richard _____, 24 September 1647, at Holy Trinity Minories, London.
- 12) Richard Hanset was buried 26 December 1653, at Saint Mary Abchurch, London. Parents John and Frances.
- 13) William Hanset married Mary _____, 4 December 1651, at Saint Mary, Stratford Bow, Middlesex.

We know that some of these entries relate to known Hanchetts such as 3) and 10) which were the Hanchetts of Braughing. Many of the rest have no known relationship to any of the families mentioned in the foregoing chapters.

London was not the only place where stray Hanchett families showed up. The following contains the records which have found no certain home in the previous chapters. Ware in Hertfordshire, and Safron Walden and Great Parndon in Essex each contained a Hanchett family unit in the mid-sixteenth century. The stray Hanchett families which were included in Chapter 3 are not listed here.

Ware, Hertfordshire:

The family of Robert Hanchett and Joan Byce, married 1562:

Grace, died 5 March 1563

John, baptized 15 April 1565

William, baptized 22 August 1568

Joan Hanchett, buried 23 July 1590

Safron Walden, Essex

The family of Thomas Hanchett and Joan Churchman, married 1563:

Agnes, buried 1 August 1565

Margaret, buried 30 March 1594

Thomas, the father, buried 24 July 1592

Joan, the wife, buried 27 December 1603

Margaret, possibly the mother of Thomas, buried 24 September 1561

Great Parndon, Essex

The family of Robert Hanchett and Elizabeth _____, married before 1554:

Thomas, baptized 30 March 1554

Grace, baptized 25 November 1555

Ursula, baptized 3 February 1558

Thomas, baptized 7 April 1560

Richard, baptized 3 January 1568

Elizabeth, the wife, buried 11 April 1569

Individual entries for unlinked Hanchetts exist from parish registers, court records, and tax rolls. Even the records from the University at Cambridge contain an intriguing notice:

Chishall, Essex

Ellis, Edward; son of John Ellis, gent. Of Milton, Cambs. At Kings College School under Mr. Hammond, two years; and at Chishall, Essex under Mr. Hanchett, about a year. Age 16. Admitted scholar, June 14, 1647. Surety, Mr. Bradshaw.¹⁶⁷

Venn also tells us that young Mr. Ellis was admitted at Gray's Inn 4 September 1649. The Hanchetts were all around Chishall, Essex at that time, but who was the Mr. Hanchett who was qualified to prepare Ellis to study law? Edward of Braughing was a lawyer, but was living in London at that time.

Another item from the Essex Record Office may apply: 16 January 1622, under the Manor of Rickling Hall. A piece of land in Great Chishall is assigned by William Pittye to Francis Baker, both of Great Chishall. The property was demised in 1594 from Robert Chester of Royston, co. Herts, to Richard Dale of Great Chishall, and then to William Pittye. A later endorsement states "This estate belongs to Mr. Hanchett and relates to freehold lands in Bunditch Field of Chissel Farm." It may show a connection between the Hanchett family and the Chester family.¹⁶⁸ Could this be Thomas the sheriff of Hertfordshire, or possibly his son Thomas, as the "Esq." is missing?

¹⁶⁷ John Venn and Susanna Carnegie Venn: *Admissions to Gonville and Caius College in the University of Cambridge*.

¹⁶⁸ ERO D/DQ 51/97.

Bungay, Suffolk

An interesting entry occurs in Bungay, Suffolk under date of 25 August 1616. A daughter, Alyce, is born to John Hanchett. This is the only entry for that parish under the name Hanchett. The father's name, John, and the date of birth, 1616, are intriguing as Alyce would be of the same generation as Thomas and John of New England.

Newport, Essex

In 1482 and again in 1483, a John Hanchett is involved as a witness to a charitable contribution and along with Richard Hanchett in a feoffment dated 12 December 1483. This same John Hanchett, gentleman, may have been the person who on 1 June 1461 granted lands, tenements, rents, and services which lie in Helion Bumpstead, and Shudy Camps.¹⁶⁹

Colchester, Essex

At Saint Botolph, Thomas Hancitt married Mary Went, 2 February 1640. No baptisms are listed for these parents in Colchester.

Norwich, Norfolk

Nicholas Hanchett was a witness to the reading by Pastor William Batho of the articles of agreement from the archbishops and bishops in 1562 and revised in 1571, and his consent unto them on 30 November 1601 at Saint Miles Church.

¹⁶⁹ ERO D/P 15/23/34, D/P 15/25/36 and D/DQ 61/93.

Standon, Hertfordshire

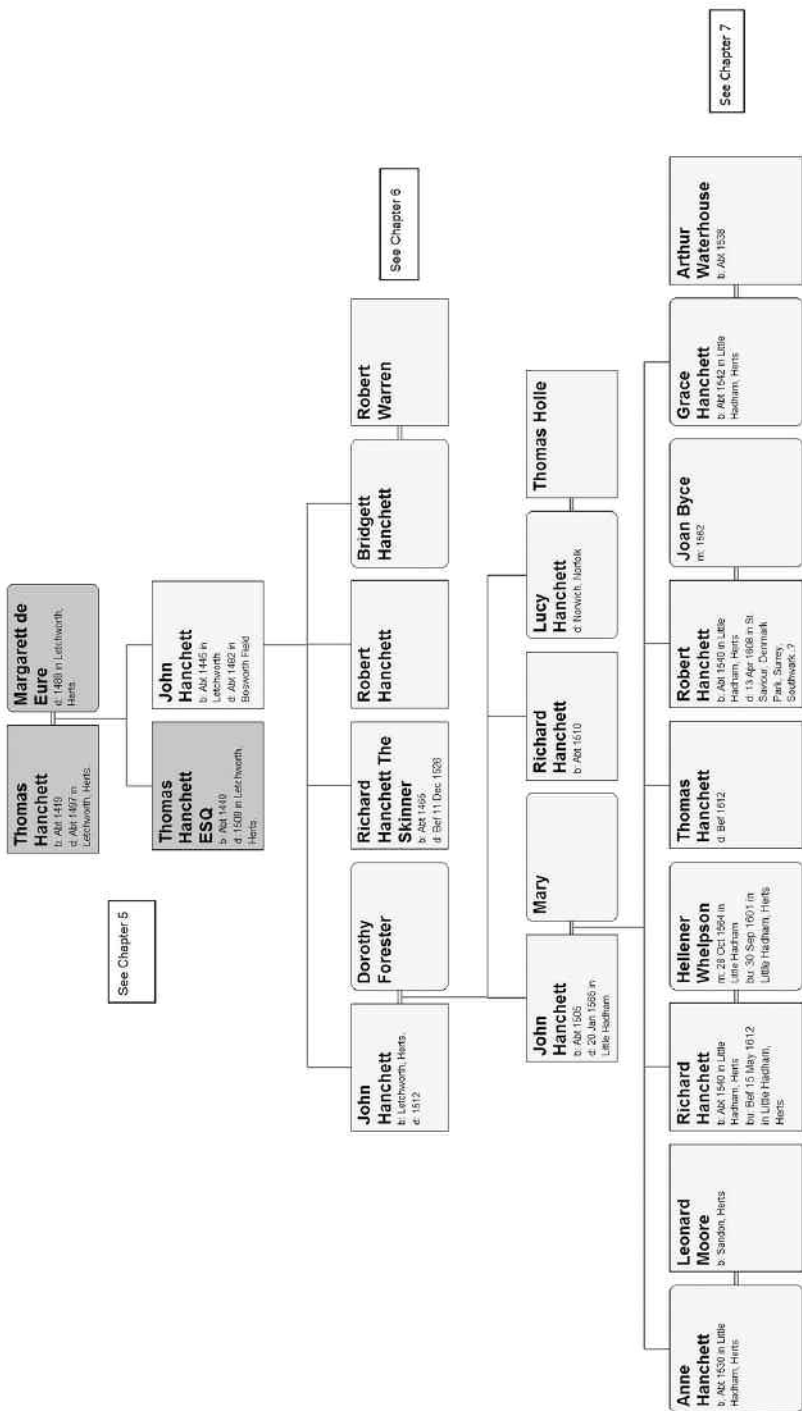
Robert Hanchett was a witness to the will of Thomas Haynes 10 March, 1574. Two decades earlier, Mr. Thomas Hanchett was named as supervisor in the will of John Haynes of Much Hadham and was paid a Royal of gold for his effort. This was probably the father of Thomas the Sheriff as he was an attorney.

George Haynes purchased the manor of Cailes in Much and Little Hadham from Thomas and Barbara Hanchett in 1560. George Haynes was probably the grandfather of John Haynes who came to New England on the *Griffin* in 1633. George's son, John the elder, made his will at Codicote Hertfordshire in 1605. Apparently he had leased property in Codicote while his land holdings were at Much Hadham and the manor of Old Holt in Essex. Govenor John Haynes of Connecticut was born November 1594 in Messing, Essex, one of the parishes containing Old Holt Manor. Recall that Thomas Hanchett and Elizabeth Winn were married at Messing in 1620. It seems that the Hanchett and Haynes families were closely connected in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁷⁰

A speculation on the Hanchett families of Clavering and Braughing

In 1968, Cathy Hanchett made a valiant effort at tying together some of these unlinked Hanchetts with the Hanchetts of Letchworth, Great Bursted and Little Hadham. The results of her efforts are shown on the following page. Twenty months later she proceeded to tie in the Hanchetts of Clavering to the unlinked Hanchetts living nearby. That result is shown on the succeeding page. Cathy was the only person I have ever known who could manage large data bases in her head and interconnect the bits and pieces into some plausible configuration.

¹⁷⁰ Lionel Mumby: *Hertfordshire in History*.



Conclusions

The question remaining is, what are the possibilities for obtaining hard evidence as to the real parents of Thomas Hanchett, the emigrant? A lot depends on the ongoing efforts in England to make more records available through digitizing, transcribing, translating from the Latin and, most importantly, indexing the resulting data.

We have come a long way since the early twentieth century when Junius Hanchett hired searchers in England to find whatever they could about the Hanchetts in English history. In those days a question and its answer were separated by months as communication traveled by ship across the Atlantic. R. A. Ledgard began his research in England shortly before the First World War, but that war and the next proved costly in time to his work. By the 1960s we had air mail communication which shortened the response time to weeks instead of months.

Today, with the Internet, a question asked can be answered within hours or a few days. We can only hope that Yankee curiosity (and dollars) will spur the English on to more releases of vital records. Some groups in England are working to provide searchable master databases of parish records and legal documents. It may take many years for those efforts to see completion.

Deliverance Hanchett is a striking example of a Puritan girl's name. During the late 16th and early 17th centuries Hanchetts used the name Dorcas, meaning gentle or doe, and Honor, meaning honored or honorable. To what degree this might be an indication of Puritan leanings is unknown.

Thomas Hanchett of Brent Pelham was born 15 February 1616. Whether he was our Thomas, or not, we can celebrate his 400th birthday next year. My wish, and I suspect Charlotte Kent, Cathy Hanchett, Junius Hanchett, and Mr. Ledgard would agree, is for some ambitious Hanchett or other relative to continue this work until we find the answer to the question “Where did we come from?”

Whichever Hanchett family was the source for our first American ancestor, we at least can know that the Hanchetts of England were basically good people with a strong spirit and a love of freedom.

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Index

A

A'Hanchett, James	234
Adams, Sherman W.	1, 12
Adams, Reverend	27
Adams, Silas	32
Adams, Thomas	141
Alden, Reverend John	23
Aldridge, Robert	139
Asheton, Brian	244
Asheton, Jane	244
Ashley, Robert	24, 26
Ashley, David	24
Aspal, Robert de	243
Aymat, John	234

B

Bacon, Sir Roger	106
Baker, Francis	247
Baldwin, Ralph	236
Banshot, Thomas	82
Banshott, Thomas	55, 82
Bard, Dorotheie	162, 164
Bard, Dorothy Blewet	59, 66
Barker, John	125
Barker, Joan	125–127
Barnardiston, Sir Thomas	136
Barnwell, Prior of	110, 114
Bartlow, Michael of	99, 100
Batho, Robert	174

Batho, William	248
Bedford, Kristina	vi
Belden, Will.	9
Benet, John	162
Bentley, John	133
Bernard, William	99, 100
Bernardiston, Thomas	132, 133
Bernardiston, Nathaniel	136
Bess, Queen	135
Bethune, Ed	ii, 87
Biggs, Edward	237
Bigod, Roger	95
Bigod, Hugh	95
Blacktop, Frances	59, 79
Blanchpayne, John	107
Bohun, Henry de	95
Boosy, James	18
Bowles, John	129
Bradshaw, Mr.	247
Braose, Giles de	95
Broom, Robert	104
Broughton, Robert	125
Brown, John	153
Brychet, Robert	234
Bulstrode, Alice	151
Bulstrode, George	153
Bulstrode, James	153
Bulteel, Ralph	101
Bun, John	244
Buree, Walter	92
Burnell, Laurence	136
Burr, John	219
Burroughs, Marie	55
Burrow, Mary	55
Burrow, George	55
Burt, Jonathan	31, 33
Burt, Deliverance	33
Busteler, Robert	102, 103
Buster, Mary	245
Byce, Joan	246

C

Calcote, Priscilla	59, 72
Calthropp, Christopher	144
Cameron, Kenneth	86
Carleton, Sir Dudley	206
Carpenter, William Junior	55, 56
Carpenter, William Senior	55, 56
Carter, Alice	59, 71
Carter, Margaret	59, 69
Casse, John	212
Cater, Thomas	228
Caulkins, Francis	19
Cave, Julian Pulter Shewster	133
Cavendish, John de	108
Chapman, S.	24
Charles I, King	198, 206
Charles II, King	138, 143
Cheny, Thomas	233, 234
Cheny, William	233, 234
Chester, Elizabeth	180
Chester, John	16
Chester, Leonard	3, 5, 16, 21, 51, 55, 180, 230
Chester, Sir Robert	230, 247
Churchman, Joan	246
Clare, Gilbert de	95, 98
Clarke, John Senior	18
Clayton, Robert	142
Clerk, Robert	99, 100
Clopton, Richard of	99, 100
Clopton, Walter de	243
Cobbe, Geoffrey	106, 114
Cock, John	140
Coe, Robert	3
Coldham, Peter Wilson	51, 52, 83
Collin, Hugh	99, 101
Collman, Tho.	8
Collop, Antony	141
Colton, George	24
Comyn, John	97

Condleft, Thomas	230
Cook, Capt.	24
Cooke, Edward	238
Cooper, Thomas	24
Cooper, John	123
Cornerd, Sir Thomas	106
Cornish, Mr.	24, 26
Cotton, John	40, 53, 54
Course, Agnes	59, 63, 225
Cox, Dr. Charles	181
Crackenthorpe, Nathaniel	219
Craitley, John	117
Cramphone, Anna	155
Cramphone, Deborah	155
Cramphone, Elizabeth	155
Cramphone, George	155
Cramphone, Henry	156
Cramphone, Kittridge	156
Crapinel, Walter	243
Cromwell, Oliver	143
Cromwell, Richard	143
Crowder, Elizabeth	244
Crud, Joane	214
Crud, Joan	216, 217
Crud, Mr.	214

D

d'Aubigny, William	95
Dale, Richard	247
Davies, Thomas	198
Davis, Thomas	206
Davy, Sir Thomas	129
Demon, John	8
Denton, Rev. Richard	3
Dispenser	112–114
Dewey, Thomas	24
Dickinson, Nath.	8–11
Drake, Francis S.	2
Draper, Bartholomew	238

Driver, John	51
Duckfield, Elizabeth	228
Ducksaid, Martha	229
Dudley	39
Dummer, Richard	46, 56

E

Edward, Prince	94
Edward, King	91, 97, 98
Edward II, King	112
Edward IV, King	126
Edwards, Margaret	228
Edwards, Matthew	140
Edwards, Thomas	226
Edwards, John	9, 102
Ellis, Edward	247
Ellis, John	247
Emirton, John	157
Endecott	39
English, Henry	107
Ermington, Anthony	155
Eure, Margaret de	124, 125
Eure, Philip De	125

F

Felsted, Alexander	174
Fenwick, Mr.	18
Finch, John	3
Fitz-John, John	98, 100
FitzRobert, John	95
FitzWalter, Robert	95
Floyer, Francis	177, 179, 185
Floyer, Richard	177
Flyer, Francis	83, 180
Foote, Nathaniel	3, 5, 10
Foote, Thomas	5
Fors, William de	95
Foster, William	244

Fowler	26
Freeman, William	177
Fuller, James	215

G

Gardiner, Thomas	204, 220
Garton, Jane	68, 144
Garton, Sir Peter	144
C. Gates, Gilman	17
Gaunt, John de	104
Gaunt, John of	105, 107, 114
Gernon, Robert	92
Gernon, Robert de	92
Gillam, Saphira	59, 62, 175
Godfrey, William	99, 100
Godfrey, Wilham	100
Goldyngton, William de	243
Goodwin, Nathaniel	10
Gorle, John	156
Grant, Mary	238
Grantchester	110
Graves, Mr.	46
Gray, Andrew	133, 141
Gray, John	129, 130
Gray, Thomasin	141
Gray, Yvon	133
Grene, John	158
Grene, Robert	158
Grenlane, Isabell	123, 124
Grenlane, John	123
Gretton, William de	243
Grigman, John	174
Griswold, Michael	1, 18
Griswold, Mathew	18
Grout, Grace	200
Growt, Sara	175
Growt, Sarah	59
Growte, Sara	174
Gunton, Agnes	59, 78

H

Hages, Nicholas	174
Haggar, Constance	59, 64, 239
Haggar, John	64, 239
Haldin, Katherin	59, 67
Haldin, Kathrin	163, 167
Hales, Treasurer	104
Hammond, Mr.	247
Hammond, William	99, 100
Hampden, John	206
Hamshott, James	236
Hancat, Thomas	245
Hancepe, Henry	89
Hanchacche, Saer	103
Hanchach	110
Hanchach, Ann	116
Hanchach, Henry	92, 103
Hanchach, John	103, 105, 106, 108, 114–117, 121
Hanchach, Matilda	98
Hanchach, Nicholas	103
Hanchach, Robert	102, 103, 117
Hanchach, Thomas	88, 92, 98, 103, 115–117
Hanchach, William de	98
Hanchach, William	97, 98, 103
Hanchache, Agatha	243
Hanchat, Thomas	17
Hanche, Robert	244
Hanchech, Henry	243
Hanchech, Robert	243
Hancher, Elizabeth	103
Hancher, Henry	104
Hanches, Richard	151
Hanchet, Agnes	78
Hanchet, Alice	129
Hanchet, Andrew	127
Hanchet, Ann	133
Hanchet, Barbara	133, 136
Hanchet, Bridget	129, 130
Hanchet, Catherine	163

- Hanchet, Dorotheie 167
- Hanchet, Edward 208, 244
- Hanchet, Elizabeth 136, 208
- Hanchet, Frances 79
- Hanchet, Francis 244
- Hanchet, George 208
- Hanchet, Giles 78
- Hanchet, Grace 129, 130
- Hanchet, Hellen 167
- Hanchet, James 130, 235, 236
- Hanchet, Joan 163, 164, 167
- Hanchet, John of 101
- Hanchet, John
 . . . 28, 29, 117, 123, 127, 129, 130, 132, 162–165, 167, 186, 199, 214–216, 236
- Hanchet, Katherine 136, 165
- Hanchet, Margaret 163, 167
- Hanchet, Margery 127, 129, 244
- Hanchet, Maria 80
- Hanchet, Martha 129
- Hanchet, Mary 61, 136, 163, 167
- Hanchet, Nicholas 79
- Hanchet, Richard 130, 162, 163, 165, 167, 208
- Hanchet, Richard Junior 165, 167
- Hanchet, Robert 129, 163, 165, 167
- Hanchet, Samuel 208, 214–216
- Hanchet, Thomas 20, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 81, 121–124, 127, 129,
 130, 132, 133, 136, 141, 156, 157, 165, 186, 208, 216, 236, 244
- Hanchet, William of 101
- Hanchet, William 61, 123, 127, 208
- Hanchete, Thomas 124, 125
- Hanchett, Mr. 247
- Hanchett, Agatha 218–220
- Hanchett, Agnes 63, 174, 226, 237, 246
- Hanchett, Alice 71, 151–153, 171, 175, 237–239
- Hanchett, Alyce 248
- Hanchett, Ann 73, 174, 193, 200, 201, 213, 219, 220, 229, 230, 238, 239, 245
- Hanchett, Anne 190, 199, 201, 202, 218, 226, 237, 238
- Hanchett, Annis 70
- Hanchett, Barbara 184, 207, 249
- Hanchett, Betsey 29, 32

Hanchett, Cathy	vi, 249, 254
Hanchett, Charles	141, 142
Hanchett, Constance	64
Hanchett, Cynthia M.	32
Hanchett, Daniel	229, 230
Hanchett, David	33
Hanchett, Deborah	141
Hanchett, Deliverance	15, 16, 19, 22, 253
Hanchett, Dorcas	139, 141, 253
Hanchett, Dorothie	193, 194
Hanchett, Dorothy	66
Hanchett, Edmund	172
Hanchett, Edward	59, 68, .. 82, 136-139, 143-147, 154, 187, 197, 208-210, 212-214, 221, 228-230, 237
Hanchett, Elizabeth	68, 74, 76, 137, 138, 151, 153-156, 171, 173, 213, 218, 219, 229, 237-239, 246
Hanchett, Esther	174
Hanchett, Ezra	32
Hanchett, Frances	136
Hanchett, Frances Blacktop	238
Hanchett, Francis	174, 176
Hanchett, Frank E.	v
Hanchett, George	vi, 97, 130, 151, 153-155, 187, 196, 210, 214, 219-221, 234, 239
Hanchett, Giles	59, 81, 238
Hanchett, Grace	213, 218, 246
Hanchett, Hannah	15, 22, 28, 49, 187
Hanchett, Hellena	161, 162, 164
Hanchett, Henry	174
Hanchett, Honor	199, 201, 253
Hanchett, Jacobus	155
Hanchett, James	59, 69, 70, 77, 155, 156, 173, 197, 208, 210, 233, 234, 237, 239
Hanchett, James Junior	237
Hanchett, James Senior	238
Hanchett, Jane	147, 171, 226, 245
Hanchett, Jay Bush	v
Hanchett, Joan	173, 246
Hanchett, Joane	173, 174

- Hanchett, John 15, 22, 29, 35,
. 46-49, 52, 56, 59, 64-66, 72, 73, 80, 81, 83, 98, 117, 130, 136-138, 143, 147,
. 152, 154-156, 161, 162, 171, 172, 174, 175, 184-187, 190-192, 195, 197-203,
. 206, 207, 209-211, 213, 214, 216-221, 229, 230, 233, 237-239, 245, 246, 248
- Hanchett, John C. v, 35
- Hanchett, John Junior 172-176, 239
- Hanchett, John Senior 169, 170, 172, 173, 175
- Hanchett, Joyce 229
- Hanchett, Junius T. v, 22, 30, 151, 152, 161, 183, 204, 221, 253, 254
- Hanchett, Katherin 67, 174
- Hanchett, Lee vi
- Hanchett, Lucretia 141
- Hanchett, Margaret 69, 77, 161, 163, 164, 173, 199-201, 226, 237, 246
- Hanchett, Maria 175
- Hanchett, Marie 237, 238
- Hanchett, Martha 175, 184, 190, 191, 195, 197, 200, 206, 209, 210, 212
- Hanchett, Mary
. 136-138, 141, 143, 145, 161, 165, 173, 174, 184, 191, 195, 207, 229, 237
- Hanchett, Matilda 102
- Hanchett, Michael 59, 63, 173, 225, 226, 228
- Hanchett, Mother 173
- Hanchett, Nicholas 59, 237, 238, 248
- Hanchett, Penelope 136, 141
- Hanchett, Philip 173
- Hanchett, Priscilla 72
- Hanchett, Richard 59, 60, 65, 151, 152, 154-157, 161, 162, 164,
. 169, 171, 173-176, 184-188, 190-203, 207-216, 221, 226, 227, 244, 246, 248
- Hanchett, Richard Junior 164, 172
- Hanchett, Richard Senior 169, 172
- Hanchett, Robert
. . . 59, 67, 156, 162-164, 170, 173, 185, 186, 190, 200, 201, 237, 245, 246, 249
- Hanchett, Roger
. 76, 175, 183-185, 187-193, 196-198, 203, 206, 208-213, 220, 237, 238
- Hanchett, Rose 65, 175, 176, 180, 193
- Hanchett, Samuel 187, 192, 193, 197, 209-214, 216, 217, 219, 221
- Hanchett, Saphira 62, 176
- Hanchett, Sarah 60, 65, 213, 218
- Hanchett, Susan 192, 197, 209-212, 221
- Hanchett, Th. 29
- Hanchett, Th. Jr. 29
- Hanchett, Tho. 142

Hanchett, Thomas	ii, v, 1, 2, 5, 6, 15–23, 26–35, 37–39, 41, 43, 47, 49, 51, 55–59, 62, 71, 76, 81–83, 102, 103, 117, 123, . 127, 129, 135–145, 154, 156, 161, 162, 166, 169–172, 175, 176, 180, 184–199, 203–215, 217–221, 227, 230, 234, 237–239, 244, 246, 248, 249, 253, 254
Hanchett, Ursula	246
Hanchett, Wilm	59
Hanchett, William	102, 154, 171, 173, 187, 193, 197, 208, 210, 213, 214, 217–221, 237, 239, 246
Hancitt, Thomas	248
Hanechach, Henry de	92
Hanecheche, Amicia	89
Hanecheche, Henry	89
Hanehuth, Henry de	93
Hanehuth, Thomas de	93
Hansech, William de	243
Hanset, Frances	245
Hanset, John	245
Hanset, Mary	245
Hanset, Richard	245
Hanset, William	245
Hansett, Elizabeth	47, 48
Hansett, Hannah	48, 49
Hansett, John	45–48, 50
Hansett, Mary	48
Hansett, Peter	48
Hansett, Thomas	47
Hansett, William	245
Hanshawe, James	236
Hanshett, Elizabeth	236
Hanshott, Robert	244
Hanshut, Thomas	19
Hantchat, Thomas Jr.	22
Hantchat, Thomas Sr.	22
Harleston, Roger	107
Harmon, Joseph	35
Harmon, Mary	29
Harold, Earl	92
Harper, Joan	98
Harper, John	98–102
Harper, William	98, 100, 101

Harrison, Mary	140
Harrison, Marye	244
Harrison, Samuel	211
Haselden, Thomas	107, 115
Haseldon, Thomas	104
Hatchet, Thomas	189
Haynes, George	249
Haynes, John	249
Haynes, Thomas	249
Hayward, Jane	145
Hayward, Sir John	145
Heiden, John de	243
Henchet, Barbara	75
Henchet, John	75, 244
Henry III, King	93, 94
Henry IV, King	122
Henry VI, King	157
Henry VII, King	126, 127
Henry VIII, King	145, 157, 233
Heryng, John	153
Hevingham, Sir Arthur	133, 136
Hevingham, Mary	133
Hidecock, Agnes	89
Hidecock, Gilbert	89
Holyoke, John	24
Hooker	40
Hooker, Dorothy	16
Hooker, Thomas	5, 16, 53, 54
Hounde, Edmund	136
Hull, John	193
Hull, Sarah	216, 217
Humfrey, Maria	80
Humfry, Maria	59
Humphrey	39
Huntingfield, William de	95

I

Imworth, Joan de	117
Imworth, Richard	117

Ingersol, John	24
Ingoll, Elizabeth	207
Ingoll, Robert	207
Ivery, Adam	228
Ivery, Jane	228

J

Jackson	201
Jackson, Elizabeth	201, 202
Jackson, Honor	202
Jacobs, Robert	82
James, William	21
Jarvis, Stan	vi
Jenings, Joshua	8–10
Jennings, Joshua	8, 9
John, King	88, 89, 94, 95
Johnson	39
Johnson, Arthur Hanchett	ii
Johnson, A. H.	vi, 167, 188, 208, 213, 221
Johnson, Mr.	216, 217

K

Kellet, Annis	59
Kellett, Annis	70
Kent, Charlotte P.	v, vi
Kent, Charlotte	254
King, Henry	226
King, Johanne	226
Kinge, Dudley	207
Kinge, Margaret	207
Kirkham, Tho.	9
Knowles	40
Kuypers, Charles	155

L

Lacy, John de	95
Lacy, Robert de	243

Lambert, J.J.	157
Lancaster, Duke of	107
Langton, Deliverance	15
Langton, George	5, 6, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, 37, 55
Langton, Hannah	49
Lanvallei, William de	95
Laud, Archbishop	13
Laud, Bishop William	227
Laud, Bishop	83
Law, John	200, 202, 206, 217
Law, Martha	200–203
Law, Mary	200, 202
Lawe, John	205, 206
Ledgard, R. A.	vi, 117, 157, 169, 183, 186, 204, 221, 225, 228, 253, 254
Lee	vi, 26
Leffingwell, Lieutenant Thomas	17
Lewis, William	229
Linsey, Ann	59, 73, 174
Littestere, John	105
Lock, Grey	26
Lockwood, John	27
Lockwood, Reverend John Hoyt	27, 28
London, Robert of	99, 100
Longman, Mary	167
Loomis, Elizabeth	29
Loomis, Hannah	35
Loomis, Samuel	28
Lord, Thomas	99, 100
Lucas, Edward	205
Lucas, Jasper	205
Lucas, Mercy	205
Lucking, Abraham	191, 194, 195
Lucking, Martha	194
Ludlow	39

M

Malet, William	95
Mallory, Barbara	132
Malory, Andrew	133

Mandeville, Geoffrey de	95
Maniers, Baldwin de	243
Marshal, William Junior	95
Martin, Edward	207
Martin, Honor	207
Martyn, Ann	201, 202
Martyn, Edward	201, 202
Mason, Captain	17, 18
Matthews, Dorothy	228
Matthews, Ralph	227
Maycons, William	156, 157
Maylyngherst, John	157
Maynard, Lord	136, 137
Mead, Edward	156
Meade, Edward	155, 156
Meade, John	215
Meade, Thomas	145
Meade, Sir Thomas	214
Meake, William	235
Michel, John	106
Mildmay, Sir Humphrey	206, 207
Miltson, Rose	59, 84, 174
Mittson, Rose	175
Moke, Seaman	99
Montbegon, Roger de	95
Montfort, Simon de	94
Morden, Gilden	107
Morden, Steeple	107
Morken, Anne	238
Morrice, Susan	208
Morrice, William	208
Morris, Barbara	191, 192, 194, 195
Morris, John	191, 207
Morris, Mary	191, 194
Morris, Richard	191, 207
Morris, Thomas	191, 207
Morris, William	211, 212
Mortemer, John	102
Morton, Elizabeth	229
Mountfitchet, Margery	125

Mountfitchet	ii
Mowbray, William de	95
Munfichet, Richard de	95
Munfitchet, Richard	92

N

Neal	26
Newlyn, Elizabeth Hanchett	236
Newport, Grace	130
Newport, Edward	177, 178
Newport, John	127, 177
Newport, Margery	127
Newport, Robert	130
Newton, Henry	216
Noble, J.	24
Norwich, Bishop Henry of	112
Nottingham, Elizabeth	125, 126
Nottingham, Sir William	125, 126

O

Oldham, John	2–5
Oliver, Jamie	177
Olmstead, John of	99, 100

P

Palmer, Hen.	12
Palmer, Will	9
Palmer, William	12
Paris, Matthew	95
Parke, Robert	8–10
Parker, Grace	129
Parker, Henry	129, 130
Parneby, Margaret	59, 70, 77
Pascall, Andrew	39
Pascall, Jane	145
Pascall, Mary	39
Paschall, Mary	136

Pauley, John	214
Pauley, Mary	214
Payne, Andrewe	205
Payne, Gedion	174
Pearce, Edward	3
Pecche, Sir Gilbert	243
Peck	40
Penfield, Peter of	99, 100
Percy, Henry	122
Percy, Richard de	95
Perry, Elizabeth	47
Perry, John	47
Peter, Mr.	83
Peter, Lady Anne	155
Peter, Hugh	53
Phelps, Isaac	24
Philip	25, 26
Phillip, King	26-28
Phippe, Robert	105
Pitche, Gilbert	98
Pittye, William	247
Pomeroy, Seth	20
Ponder, John	24
Powell, Richard	197
Pritchett, Esther	29
Pulter, Julia	135
Pynchon	39
Pynchon, Jane	39
Pynchon, John	24, 30, 35, 37-39
Pynchon, William	37-39, 136

Q

Quincy, Saer de	95
-----------------	----

R

Rawson, Edward	52
Reade, Robert	193
Reaney, Dr. P. H.	86

Red-meadow	114
Redmeadow, Edmund	110
Redstone, Lillian	169
Reinolds, Abraham	139
Reynolds, Elizabeth	139
Reynolds, John	3
Reynolds, Robert	3
Rich, Mr.	8
Richard, King	104
Richard II, King	104, 181
Reginald, Richard son of	99, 100
Richard, earl of Clare	95
Rickett, John	207
Rickett, Martha	207
Riding, Margaret	238
Robert, King	97
Robinson, John	220
Rogers	40
Ros, Robert de	95
Rose, Robert	3
Rossiter	39
Russel, Mr.	15
Russell, John	6, 19
Russell, Mr.	13

S

Sabin, Robert	99
Sackett	26
Saltonstall	39
Sam	9
Sampner, Icahn	195
Sampner, John	193, 195
Sawell, John	174
Say, Geoffrey de	95
Schenefeld, Richard de	243
Sewster, Elizabeth	191, 220
Sewster, Katherine	204
Seymour, Keith M.	v, 34, 35
Sheldon, Hezekiah Spencer	28, 30

Shepard, Mr.	83
Sheppard	40
Sherman, Rev. John	3
Shewster, Elizabeth	204, 209
Shrewsbury, Richard of	126
Simpner, John	194
Simpner, Rose	194
Simpner, Thomas	193, 194
Simpner, William	194
Simpnor, Simon	193, 195
Simpnor, William	193, 195
Smith, Ambrose	55
Smith, Ed[mund]	99, 100
Smith, Henry	5, 6, 9, 16, 51, 54, 55, 82
Smith, James	214, 215
Smith, John	47
Smith, Joseph H.	37, 38
Smith, Mary	55, 228
Smith, Peregrine	55
Smith, Richard	51
Smith, Samuel	11, 51
Smith, Sam. Senior	11
Smith, Solomon	139
Smith, Walter	99, 100
Smith, William	16
Smyth, Thome	55
Smythe, Henricus	55
Snagge, Thomas	129
Southavell, Mary	29
Squire, Seaman	99, 100
Stebbins, Rowland	21, 22
Stiles, Henry W.	6, 12, 16, 51, 55
Stokes, Edward	139
Stone, Samuel	40
Straw, Jack	105
Strickland, John	3
Styleman, Eleanor	156
Styleman, Elizabeth	156
Styleman, Joan	156
Styleman, Mary	156

Styleman, William	155, 156
Sudbury, Archbishop	104

T

Talworth, Richard de	243
Taylor, Sarah	29
Taylor, Mr.	27
Taylor, Thomas	99
Templar, Elizabeth	229
Thayre, Edward	157
Thomas	74
Thompson, Ann	140
Thompson, Roger	3, 39, 41, 45, 56
Thornton, Ann	229
Thorogood, Nicholas	237
Thurloe, John	142
Thurton, Eliza	59
Thurton, Elizabeth	68, 144
Thurton, John	144
Tingy, William	99–101
Toren, Thomas	107
Tourner, Edward	129
Trat, Mr.	11
Trigge, Joan	200, 201
Trigge, John	200, 201, 219
Trigge, Margaret	201, 202
Trigge, Thomas	200, 201
Trim, Elizabeth	229
Trumbull, James Russet	20
Twell, Robert	106, 113
Tyler, Wat	105
Tyrante, Tom	13

U

Underwood, William	99, 100
Urban V, Pope	112

V

Vanson, Peter	140
Vere, Robert de	95
Vesci, Eustace de	95

W

Wagner, Sir Anthony Richard	170
Walker, Barbara	59, 75, 244
Walpole, Alice Wyleby	102
Walpole, Henry de	102
Walsh, Adam	98
Walsingham, Edmund	107
Warbeck, Perkin	125–127
Ward	40, 200
Ward, Andrew	3
Ward, Edward	200, 202
Ward, John	139
Ward, Reverend Nathaniel	137–139
Ward, Samuel	139
Warde, Nathaniel	138, 139
Warde, Susanna	138
Warren, Brigitt	153
Warren, Richard	153
Warren, Robert	153
Warwick, Edward, Earl of	127
Waterhouse, Arthur	130
Watson, James	219
Webb, Henry	52
Weede, Amos	3
Weller	26
Weller, Deliverance	34
Wells, Hugh	1, 12
Went, Mary	248
Wheeler, Charles	142
Whelpson, Hellena	161
Whelpson, John	161
Whitby, Joyce	234
Whitby, Margery	234

Whitby, Robert	234
White, Andrew	238
White, Ann	227
Wigmore, William	108
Wild, Mary (Nichols)	59, 61
Wilding, Richard	229
Willet, Elizabeth	191, 204, 206
Willett, Andrew	220
Willett, Eliz.	59
Willett, Elizabeth	76, 190, 204, 205, 209, 220
Willey, Joyce	229
William the Conqueror	97
Wilson, Dr. Edward	46
Wilson, Isabel	52
Wilson, John	45, 46, 50, 52, 56, 81, 83
Wilson, William	52
Wilson, Reverend	47
Winn, Elizabeth	59, 141, 249
Winthrop, John	38-40, 46, 83
Wood, Moses	226
Wraw, John	105, 106
Wright, Ann	199, 200, 202
Wright, John	200, 202
Wright, Rebecca	229
Wright, Thomas	200, 202, 228
Wyleghby, Margery de	243

Y

Young, Robert	81
Younge, Andrew	82
Younge, Robert	82
Younge, William	136
Younglove, John	30, 35