



















To

James Ransom Branch

As the lineal male representative of  
Richard Branch of Abingdon  
in the twelfth generation



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## The Compiler's Foreword



## The Compiler's Foreword

A book so brief must by its mere externals postulate no gigantic prologue. So that you are forthwith entreated to regard this tiny volume as being just a newer version—fattened somewhat by the more recent familiar gleanings of its compiler—and as being, in fine, an enlargement of the present compiler's first chapter of *Branchiana*, of which a portion is, in consequence, now reproduced quite shamelessly.

So much for equitable warning.

To turn to the most pleasant of themes, the compiler wishes to acknowledge, very humbly and very gratefully, the assistance of all co-adjutors in the preparation of this little book, whether they chanced to render aid as an official of Abingdon St. Helen's, or of innumerable Oxford colleges, or of the British Museum, or of the New Record Office, or of Somerset House, or of divers other ancient and eminently British institutions—in each of which old offices the present compiler has found the incumbents to be no whit less uniform in courtesy than they were prodigal in assistance.

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES,  
*August 13, 1911.*









































Consideration of the above list makes it fairly apparent that the Branch home during the latter part of the fifteenth century was Lavenham in Suffolk, from which one or more members of the family removed to London prior to 1500. It was about this period that other scions of the family settled in Berkshire, the first mention of the name in Berkshire records occurring in 1533, and afterward appearing frequently.

### *Branch Wills in Berkshire*

Among the Branch wills recorded at the Archdeaconry of Berks are:

1536.d	JOHN BRANCH of Frilford	A; 309
1544.d	RICHARD BRANCH of Abingdon	C; 164
1554	THOMAS BRANCH of Newbury	D; 57
1556	ELIZABETH BRANCH of Kingston Bagpuze	Dand.; 53
1561	THOMAS BRANCH of Frilford, buried Marcham	D; 381
1595	RICHARD BRANCH, rector of Hinton, administration	I; 394
1596	CHRISTOPHER BRANCH of Kingston Bagpuze	J; 78
1602.d	THOMAS BRANCH of Abingdon	J; 1023
1606	WILLIAM BRANCH of Frilford, administration	I7; II
1607	CHRISTIAN BRANCH of Kingston Bagpuze	K; 368
1619	ISAAC BRANCH of Fifeild	
1622	JOHN BRANCH of Kingston Bagpuze	
1649	JOHN BRANCH of Kingston Bagpuze	

It is fairly deducible that these testators were of the same family. Kingston Bagpuze, Marcham, Fifeild and

Abingdon, in any event stand huddled within an hour's walk of one another; and Newbury, Hinton and Frilford lie at no great distance.

Of Richard Branch of Abingdon



## Of Richard Branch of Abingdon

THE BRANCH FAMILY of Virginia, as previously recorded, traces in the direct male line, through its founder Christopher Branch of "Arrowhattocks" and "Kingsland," from

RICHARD BRANCH of Abingdon in the County of Berkshire in England. This Richard Branch was born ante 1500. The probabilities point to his having been the first Branch to settle in Abingdon, inasmuch as the name of Branch does not occur in the Abingdon records until 1533, when the will of Thomas Tonks of Abingdon, chandler, dated 29 August, 1533, and witnessed by Richard Branch was recorded at the Archdeaconry of Berks. (ARCHDEACONRY OF BERKS: A; 259).

For the next hundred years the Branch family as represented by Richard Branch and his descendants play a prominent part in the civic life of Abingdon. The male line, however, had sadly dwindled by the conclusion of this period; and it is a curious fact that of all the many descendants of Richard Branch living in 1620, when Christopher Branch emigrated to Virginia, the emigrant was, so far as is known, the only living male representative of the name of Branch.

The town of Abingdon, so intimately connected with the history of the Branch family, lies some ten miles south, directly south, of Oxford. Its foundation is veiled in the mists of antiquity; but beginning with 675, its

history is for more than eight centuries the story of its Benedictine Abbey, the ruins of which edifice still exist. The town's original name, indeed, has been variously supposed to have been Abbot's town or Abbey town, but there is no accepted derivation.

Here Richard Branch, by nominal profession (as his will states) a woollen-draper, appears to have settled in the earlier half of the sixteenth century. But his main interests would seem to have been less identified with the woollen-trade than with the work of an important civic fraternity of which he was a head; and in passing, that Richard Branch was a man of wealth and prominence is fully attested by the fact that he was for so many years a Master of this Fraternity of the Holy Cross, and occupied that position up to the time of his death in 1544.

The Fraternity of the Holy Cross deserves more than a mere mention, since Richard Branch was for many years one of its Masters, and—after the Guild's suppression in 1547 and its reorganization as Christ Hospital in 1553—his son William Branch (from whom the Branches of Virginia descend) served as a Governor of the Hospital for no less a period than forty-four consecutive years.

The name of the Fraternity alone is very significant of its primal kinship with St. Helen's Church in Abingdon—still standing and generally esteemed the finest Perpendicular parish church in Berkshire—since St. Helen, according to hagiology (RUFINUS, I, 7; SOCRATES, I, 13; THEODORET, I, 18; *and* SOZOMEN, II, 1) was the discoverer of the True Cross, in 326 A. D.

The Incorporation of the Guild by Letters Patent dates from 1441 (20 October, 20 Henry VI), but it had long been in active existence and in possession of considerable property. Mr. G. W. Wallace (CHARITY COMMISSION REPORT, 1908, PAGE 77) finds indications of its existence



RUINS OF THE BENEDICTINE ABBEY AT ABINGDON-ON THAMES.





in the cartulary and the original deeds at the Hall of Christ Hospital as far back as the reign of Edward III, and states that the rental shows the Fraternity was, in the year 1383-4, 7 Richard II, in possession of a considerable extent of land about Abingdon, including the site of some of the Almshouses of Christ Hospital. However this may have been, the Guild, originally founded only for the dispensation of charity, rapidly became the centre of the civic life of Abingdon, and was liberally enriched by numerous benefactors.

Thus, it was this Fraternity which in 1416 set on foot the building of the bridges at Burford and Culham Hithe with the connecting causeway, which placed Abingdon on a main route from London. This work was at once the result and the cause of a great development of the town's importance and of its trade, particularly of the cloth-trade, in which a majority of the Masters were engaged.

The Guild erected many almshouses; and besides the stately rood which they set up in St. Helen's Church in Abingdon, they built in the time of Henry VI the celebrated Cross in Abingdon Market-place—described by John Leland (*King's Antiquary to Henry VIII*) as "a right goodly cross of stone with faire degrees and imagerie"—which was destroyed in 1643 by the Puritans as "a superstitious edifice."

Richard Branch was thus at the head of no unimportant organization. The historian of the Guild—Francis Little, whose manuscript history, brought down to 1627, is still preserved among the archives of Christ Hospital in Abingdon—has given an interesting account of the routine of the Guild during the period that Richard Branch was at its head, which the compiler ventures to summarize.

Their place of meeting for business was the Exchequer, a small chamber over the second north porch of St.

Helen's Church in Abingdon, where the Master and Governors of the Hospital of Christ afterward kept their charter, common seal and deeds, and continued in the seventeenth century to meet from time to time.

The allowance to paupers—men and women—was one penny apiece weekly. They were enjoined to pray for the Fraternity, for the souls of departed Brothers and Sisters, and for all Benefactors of the Guild.

Two priests who sang mass daily at St. Helen's received a yearly pension from the Fraternity each of £6 13s. 4d.

Upon the third day of May, the day of Invention of the Holy Cross, was held a feast. In anticipation of this feast the Guild provided by ordinary six calves, 2s. 2d. apiece, sixteen lambs, 12d. apiece, eighty capons, 3d. apiece, eight hundred eggs, 5d. the hundred, many marrow-bones, much fruit and spice, great quantities of milk, cream and flour—wheat was cheap, being sold for 12d. a quarter—besides many voluntary gifts from tenants of the Fraternity's lands and from the various Brethren and Sisters.

At these feasts they had twelve priests to sing a dirge, to whom they paid 4d. apiece "for their pains." They had also twelve minstrels, some from Coventry and some from Maydenhyth, "to make them merry," to whom they gave 2s. 3d. besides "their diet and their horse-meat." They held likewise "in the tyme of Poperie" a solemn procession, pageants, plays and May-games.

These festivals were at this time held at Banbery Court in West St. Helen's.

### Death of Richard Branch

Such then was the nature of the important civic guild of which Richard Branch was head for many years, until his death in the latter September of 1544.

His will is dated 27 August, 1544, and the records of St. Helen's Church state that he was buried in that edifice 16 September, 1544—in the north or Jesus Aisle.

It is to be deplored that in the restoration of this handsome church—whose foundation dates at least from 995, in which year the Chronicle of Abingdon Abbey mentions it as a place of sanctuary—the tombs in Jesus Aisle have been covered with new flooring and pews built above them, so that the grave of Richard Branch is no longer visible.

### *Elizabeth Beauforest Branch*

Richard Branch of Abingdon married

ELIZABETH BEAUFORST, who is named as the executrix of her husband's estate. Elizabeth Beauforest Branch survived her husband by some twelve years, being buried at St. Helen's, 20 June, 1556.

The Heralds' Visitation of Oxford taken in 1566 records of her ancestry under "Beauforest of Dorchester" that

THOMAS BEAUFORST OF DEANE in the County of Gloucester had issue

THOMAS BEAUFORST of the County of Cornwall, who married Margaret, daughter of ——— Bassett, and had, with other issue,

ELIZABETH BEAUFORST, who married Richard Branch of Abingdon. (*Compare Note C*).

### *Will of Richard Branch*

The will of Richard Branch of Abingdon is appended:

"WILL OF RICHARD BRANCHE OF ABENTON, (CO. BERKS), WOOLENDRAPER, DATED 27 AUGUST, 36 HENRY VIII.

"To the high altar of St. Elen's church 21s. to be prayed for.

"To Thomas Branche my eldest son a feather bed, a covering with a mitre upon it, and 10s.

"To my son William Branche my gown that I had of Mr. Wodword and 10s.

"To Thomas Branche my youngest son 20s.

"To my son John Branche a black gown lined with St. Thomas wolsted and 10s.

"To Margery my daughter a girdle with a dymycent of silver and gilt, a silver spoon, all her grandfather's bequests unto her, a saucer of the new fashion and 20s.

"To Marion my daughter a pair of jet beads with silver gawds, a silver spoon, beside the one that Mr. Wodword gave her, and 20s.

"If any of my forenamed children die before they come to years of discretion, their parts shall be distributed amongst those that shall then be on live.

"Residuary legatee and executrix, my wife Elizabeth. Overseers, Humfrey Bostock and Thomas (*blank*).

"Witnesses: Sir William Druett, brotherhood priest, Richard Maiot, Humfrey Bostoke, Thomas Erle. No Probate."—ARCHDEACONRY OF BERKS: REGISTER C; 164.

The "Mr. Wodword" mentioned in the preceding will was Lionel Wodward of Abingdon, who, with Humphrey Bostock, Thomas Earle and Richard Mayott also mentioned, was a Master of the Fraternity of the Holy Cross during Richard Branch's incumbency. Richard Mayott was afterward the first Mayor of Abingdon after the incorporation of the Borough of Abingdon in 1555, at which

time Humphrey Bostock was named as one of the first principal burgesses.

### *Collateral Mention of Richard Branch*

Among the mentions of Richard Branch in other wills probated at the Archdeaconry of Berks are:

- A; 259 Will of Thomas Tonks of Abingdon, chandler, dated 29 August 1533, witnessed by RICHARD BRANCH.
- A; 206a Inventory of the goods of Thomas Loder of Harweil, taken 11 May, 1541: "Item (owing) to BRANCHE of Abynton, vjs. ijd. ob."



Of Richard Branch's Children





## Of Richard Branch's Children

RICHARD BRANCH of Abingdon and Elizabeth Beauforest Branch had issue:

Thomas Branch of London; William Branch of Abingdon; John Branch of Kent; Thomas Branch; Amy Branch; Margery Branch; and Marian Branch.

I. THOMAS BRANCH, the oldest son of Richard Branch and Elizabeth Beauforest Branch, on reaching manhood removed to London, where he embarked in business as a draper, and with evident success from a monetary standpoint. He was the first member of the family to figure in the Courts of Chancery, by bringing suit (*compare Note D*) to recover possession of the Manor of Widford in Hertfordshire.

No decree relating to this suit has been discovered, but it was probably lost by Thomas Branch, as otherwise the estate would almost certainly have been listed among his possessions when he came to make his will.

Thomas Branch of London married ELIZABETH (?NORTH), who is named as executrix of her husband's will. The will of Thomas North of Marcham, dated 15 March, 1557-8, (ARCHDEACONRY OF BERKS: REGISTER C; 37), names "my brother Thomas Branche" as overseer. Thomas Branch of London left no issue.

Thomas Branch of London died in 1565. His will, dated 18 April, 1565, was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury 20 October, 1565. From at least a genealogical point of view, this is an important document. It

may be said, indeed, without exaggeration that but for the ambiguous wording of the sentence in which the Bull Inn is bequeathed there would probably never have been a Branch family of Virginia.

The will of Thomas Branch of London is appended:

"WILL OF THOMAS BRAUNCHE OF THE CITIE OF LONDON, DRAPER, DATED 18 APRIL, 1565.

"I bequeath to the poor in Abindon, where I was born, £6, to be delivered unto them at the discretion of my brother William Braunche or two other substantial dwellers there.

"I bequeath unto eight poor folks in London eight gowns made with good frieze, which (eight) shall bring me to church; also 20s. to twenty poor folks within my parish.

"To the hospital in London 20s.

"To the yeomanry of my Company 40s. to drink, and to Robert Ames our beadle, for calling of them together, 10s.

"Also I bequeath 20s. to be given to a learned man to make a sermon to the edifying of all such as shall be present at my burial.

"I give to all my servants 20s. each and a gown.

"To Thomas Bollman's children £20.

"To John, Thomas and George Lowen, Elizabeth Scherington and Jane Lowen, £25 amongst them, in token I loved them in Christ.

"To my brother William Braunche my howse called the Bolle ynde in Abindon, and to Thomas Braunche his son and heir after his decease, and so unto his heirs males forever; and for lack of heirs males, unto his daughters; also £20 with all my apparel and my ring of gold.

"To my brother's children, vizt., Thomas, Richard, Mary, Elizabeth, Anne and Ellen Braunche, £20 apiece.

"To my cosen John Bostoke's children 40s. apiece.

"To my cosen Matthew Bostoke, and to Alice and Ellen Rotter, 40s. apiece.

"The rest of my goods unbequeathed I give unto my wife Elizabeth Branche, whom I ordain executrix, provided always that if she go about to alter any part or parcel of this my will, or do not pay my debts honestly, then it shall be lawful for my brother William to take upon him the full administration of my goods. Also my wife shall have the occupying of all the orfines' goods till they come of age, putting in surety to my brother and my friend Thomas Bollman, whom I desire to be overseer hereof.

"Per me, (*signed*) THOMAS BRANCH, draper. Sealed with my own seal.

"Witness: John Tattyng.

"Proved 20 October, 1565, by the relict and executrix named."—PREROGATIVE COURT OF CANTERBURY: MORRISON; 28.

Among the mentions of Thomas Branch in the wills probated at the Archdeaconry of Berks are:

B; 90 Will of Matthew Child of Newbury, dated 10 January, 1547-8, witnessed by THOMAS BRANCHE.

C; 37 Will of Thomas North of Marcham, dated 15 March 1557-8, names "my brother THOMAS BRANCHE" as overseer.

II. WILLIAM BRANCH of Abingdon, the second son of Richard Branch and Elizabeth Beauforest Branch, was the lineal ancestor of the Branches of Virginia.

An account of him will be given hereafter.

III. JOHN BRANCH, the fourth son of Richard Branch

and Elizabeth Beauforest Branch, appears to have removed to Kent County, some time after 1578.

He had married in Abingdon and had at least one son, another John Branch, who was baptised at St. Helen's 3 November, 1578. (*Compare Note B*).

The older John Branch also figures in a Chancery suit, which he brought against Thomas Brudenell, William Brudenell and Francis Brudenell (LONDON CHANCERY PLEADINGS: REIGN OF ELIZABETH; BUNDLE 20, No. 59) over the possession of land at Hedcorn Mortimer in Kent.

The younger John Branch (born in 1578), according to a tradition which all known facts support, was the father of the Peter Branch who emigrated from Kent to Massachusetts in 1638 and founded the Branch family of New England. (*Compare Note E*).

Among the mentions of John Branch in wills probated at the Archdeaconry of Berks are:

- B: 12 Will of Elizabeth King of Fyfield, dated 25 May, 1545, witnessed by JOHN BRANCHE.
- B: 22 Will of John Shorebuck of Fyfield, dated 14 July, 1545, witnessed by JOHN BRANCHE.
- D: 180 Will of John Blackgrove of Watchfield, dated 8 April, 1557, bequeaths to JOHN BRANCHE, who signs as a witness.

IV. THOMAS BRANCH, the fourth son of Richard Branch and Elizabeth Beauforest Branch—for the will of Richard Branch shows that, oddly enough, he had two sons named Thomas—died unmarried in the February of 1545-6. (*Compare Note B*).

V. AMY BRANCH, the oldest daughter of Richard



ALMHOUSES OF CHRIST HOSPITAL, WITH ST. HELEN'S IN THE BACKGROUND.



Branch and Elizabeth Beauforest Branch, died unmarried in the March of 1540-1. (*Compare Note B*).

VI. MARGERY BRANCH, the second daughter of Richard Branch and Elizabeth Beauforest Branch, died unmarried in the March of 1545-6. (*Compare Note B*).

VII. MARIAN BRANCH, the third daughter of Richard Branch and Elizabeth Beauforest Branch, died unmarried in the February of 1545-6. (*Compare Note B*).





Of William Branch of Abingdon



## Of William Branch of Abingdon

WILLIAM BRANCH, the second son of Richard Branch and Elizabeth Beauforest Branch, from whom the Branches of Virginia descend, was born post 1524 and was the only one of the three sons of Richard Branch who grew to manhood to remain in Abingdon.

He married, 2 August, 1553, Elizabeth, the daughter of John Waltham, by whom he had, so far as is known, no issue. (*Compare Note B*).

In worldly affairs he seems to have prospered. William Branch served as Mayor of Abingdon before 1566, as is shown by the Herald's Visitation of Berkshire taken in that year (*compare Note F*), and held the same office again in 1572,—the will of Richard Bratwell of Abingdon, joiner, dated 28 March, 1572, naming as overseers William Branch, gent., Mayor of Abingdon, and John Wyse.

The Fraternity of the Holy Cross, of which Richard Branch was so long at the head, was dissolved in 1547 by Edward VI and the possessions of the Guild were confiscated. The income at that time from the Fraternity's lands was certified by the Chantry Commissioners to be £81 13s. 10d. a year—equivalent to about \$3,600 in modern money.

The Benedictine Abbey of Abingdon having been similarly treated by Henry VIII in 1538, there followed in Abingdon what Little describes as "a period of great distress." But under the reign of Mary—"Bloody Mary"—affairs began, for Abingdon at least, to brighten. By a charter granted in 1555 Abingdon became a free borough, and William Branch, as has been recorded, was among the first mayors chosen; and the extinct Fraternity of the Holy Cross was revived in 1553 in a somewhat altered

form and under a different name by the foundation of Christ Hospital, which still continues in Abingdon the charitable and civic work begun by the older organization.

All save four of the former Masters of the Guild had died before 1553, but all the survivors were made Governors of the new Christ Hospital, to which position William Branch also was appointed in 1557.

He retained this office for no less a period than forty-four years,—in fact, until his death. There were now two civic authorities enthroned in Abingdon, for by the side of the Mayor and Corporation, the Governors of Christ Hospital retained large temporal powers; but, as the Borough Records attest, the Mayor and Principal Burgesses were ordinarily chosen from the Governors of the Hospital, so that control of this part of Berkshire was practically vested in some dozen men, of which William Branch was one.

Among the most important works of the Governors of Christ Hospital during the incumbency of William Branch was the foundation, with the assistance of John Roysse, a wealthy mercer of London, of Abingdon School. It is not known what was the connection of this John Roysse with Abingdon; but, according to his will, proved 31 July, 1571, his not unlaudable reasons for disinheriting an only son and the devotion of his money to the establishment of a school was

“For that my son hath marryed against my will another man’s wife, as doth appear in the spiritual court of record here in London; and further, for that he hath been associated and accompanied with theives and pyrates.”

Now the charter granted to Christ Hospital in 1553 had directed the Governors to apply a part of their rents “*ad sustentationem scholæ grammaticæ ibidem*”—“to the sus-

tentation of a grammar school there." They accordingly fell in very willingly with John Royssse's proposals, which must have been broached at least as early as 1562, since in that year the Governors of Christ Hospital laid out various moneys "upon mayster Serjaunt Southcott when he came to vewe the house for the free skoole which Mr. Royse mynded to erecte within this Borough."

The project throve, and the Abingdon School—"the Free Schole of the Blessed Trinitie"—was founded in 1563, to continue its work, with varying fortunes, until the present day.

Abingdon School may, then, be viewed as in a sense a relic of William Branch's personal achievements in life; but an even more intimate relic of the man exists in the form of a list, in his extremely Elizabethan hand, of the Masters of the Fraternity of the Holy Cross at the time of its suppression.

This list is now preserved in the Hall of Christ Hospital at Abingdon; and a copy is appended:

"The names off the Twelwe maysters off the fraternitie off the hollye Cross lyvyng Att the Tyme off Suppreston of ye Same

"Thomas Read Esquier  
Lyonell Wodward gent  
Thomas Hyde gent  
Nicholas Hewatt gent  
Rycds Braynche  
Gilbert Freman  
Humffray Bostock  
Wyllm Kelynge  
Rycds Mayott  
Jhon Shene  
Adam Pope  
& Thomas Earle

"who wear for the most pt  
deceased before the last  
Erecon only these Mr.  
Thomas Read Rycds May-  
ott Hmfray Bostock, Jhon  
Shene and Wyllm Kelynge  
who also deseaced before  
the same was fullye con-  
fermyd.  
Wyllm Braunche."

The wording of this list would certainly convey the impression that Richard Branch was alive at the time of the formal suppression of the Fraternity of the Holy Cross in 1547, and one would hardly suspect William Branch of erring by no less than three years as to the death of his own father. But, as has already been recorded, the date of Richard Branch's will supports, and the records of St. Helen's prove, the fact that he died in 1544.

The most probable solution, as it seems to the compiler, is that after the dissolution of the Abbey of Abingdon in 1538 an inevitable dissolution of the Fraternity became so imminent and its power was so weakened that William Branch estimates the actual extinction of the Guild to have considerably preceded its formal death-knell.

### *Katherine Jennings Branch*

William Branch married (2nd) ante 1556

KATHERINE JENNINGS, daughter of Thomas Jennings of Abingdon and Alice, daughter of Richard Bright of Collen.

Katherine Jennings Branch died before her husband, being buried 25 August, 1597 at St. Helen's Church in Abingdon. (*Compare Note B*).

It is of interest to note that the mother of this Thomas Jennings was a Bostock, a family that traces an unquestionable descent not only from the Conquest, but from the older Dukes of Normandy in a legitimate line such as William the Conqueror notoriously could not boast. And it is apparent from the will of Thomas Branch of London that an antecedent kinship between the Branches and the Bostocks already existed.

(*An account of the Bostock lineage is given in Note G*).

In any event, Thomas Jennings, the father-in-law of William Branch, appears to have been a man of prominence in Abingdon, since the charter of the borough names him among the first principal burgesses.

The will of Thomas "Jenens" of the Borough of Abingdon, county Berks, draper, dated 8 April, 1561, was recorded 6 May, 1561 (ARCHDEACONRY OF BERKS: E; 194). It bequeaths to his sons William Jennings, Thomas Jennings and Richard Jennings; his daughters, names not given; his sons-in-law William Branch and Thomas Smith; and his grandchildren Thomas Branch and Elizabeth Branch.

*(A brief account as to some of the descendants of this Thomas Jennings is given in Note H).*

#### Death of William Branch

William Branch of Abingdon died in the April of 1602. It is to be regretted that the Parish registers of St. Helen's afford no legible record of his burial.

But in these earlier registers, consisting as they do of the two original books dating from 1538, the edges of the paper leaves, from age and use, have become badly frayed; pieces have been broken from the page in many instances; and a number of entries are either missing or undecipherable. For tracing paper has been pasted over the frayed portions, on both sides of the book page, in a misguided attempt to preserve the original records, with the result that the paste has so acted upon the ink as to blot out a host of entries.

There can be little doubt, however, that William Branch was buried in the north, or Jesus aisle of St. Helen's.

In any event, his will, undated strictly speaking, but apparently drawn up on 1 March, 1601, was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 24 April, 1602.

*Will of William Branch*

The will of William Branch of Abingdon is appended :

"BE IT KNOWN BY THESE PRESENTS THAT I, WILLIAM BRAUNCHE, OF THE BOROUGH OF ABINGDON, GENT, HAVE GIVEN UNTO MY SON THOMAS BRAUNCHE ALL MY GOODS AND CHATTELS WHATSOEVER, AS APPEARETH BY A DEED OF GUILTE DATED 1 MARCH, 43 ELIZ.

"And that from thenceforth it shall not be lawful for (me) the said William to give or sell or waste anie of the said goods other than upon the sustentation of his (my) son William Braunche by good will of the said Thomas, but onlie such bequests as here followeth, reserving unto me the said William the proper use of the same during (my) life, and one convenient chamber to lodge in, with half the yearly profits of the garden and also (from) the yearly rent of £10 payable by the said Thomas 40s. yearly, and his (my) dyett.

"And that the said Thomas shall upon my decease enter bond unto my son Robert Payne and Robert Eyars to perform these legacies as specified.

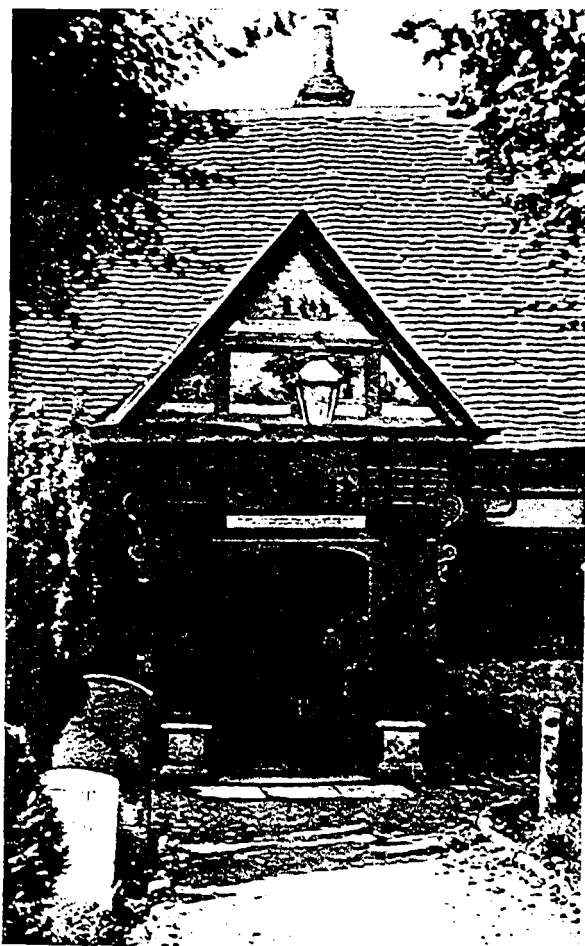
"Item I give unto William Braunche my son, for his better maintenance in Oxford, £40, the two feather bedds I have in the shop, and my cruse footed and covered with silver and guilte.

"To my daughter Anne Fowler, to bestow upon her three children, £3.

"To my son John Right my gold ring that I had from my cozen Mr. Lionell Bostock—unto his daughters, begotten on my daughter Marie, each one guilt spoon.

"To my son Robert Paine my halbert, and to Martha his wife my best bason, and to his four sons each a guilt spoon.





DOORWAY OF ALMSHOUSES, TAKEN FROM THE BURIAL  
GROUNDS OF ST. HELEN'S.



"To my vnthrifty and disobedient son Houell— (*"Houell" or "Honell" in the registered copy of the will, but in the original "Lyonell;" in copying the will the scrivener has mistaken "Ly" for the ancient capital H, which was written below the line*)—my black gowne, and to his firstborn son, at eighteen years of age, five marks.

"To Catherine my wife 20s.

"To Fraunces Braunche, during the lease of Lockwood's Close, 20s. yearly, requesting that my son may obtain more years (*?grace*), the better to maintain the daughter of Richard Smith, her unnatural father.

"To William Jenene my best jirkin and hatt.

"To Catherine Whiting my servant the bed she lyeth on.

"To my beloved friend Robert Eyars my other weapon a poleax and in money three and fourpence in consideration that he, with my son Paine, shall see these legacies performed.

"(*Signed:*) WILLIAM BRAUNCHE.

"Witnesses: None.

'24 April, 1602, commission to Thomas Braunche, son of deceased, to administer."—PREROGATIVE COURT OF CHANCERY: MONTAGUE; 24.

The Lionel Bostock mentioned in this will, presumably the godfather of William Branch's third son Lionel Branch—from whom the Branches of Virginia descend—was one of the most prominent and wealthy men of his day and neighborhood. Fitzharris Farm, his former residence near Abingdon, is still standing, containing some fine oak panelling with the quartered arms of the Bostocks.

At the Guildhall are to be seen two handsome silver goblets, Lionel Bostock's gift to the corporation; and in the Hall of Christ Hospital is his portrait. He died in

1600. On 18 July, 1600, commission was granted to William Bostock, son of Lionel Bostock, late of Abingdon, county Berks, deceased, to administer his father's estate. (PREROGATIVE COURT OF CANTERRURY, ADMON ACT BOOK, 1600, FOLIO 55.)

The Richard Smith mentioned in William Branch's will was his wife's nephew; (*compare Note H*); and Thomas Jennings was his brother-in-law.

### Collateral Mention of William Branch

Among the mentions of William Branch in other wills probated at the Archdeaconry of Berks are:

- B; 116 Will of Richard Doo of Hanny, dated 19 March, 1550-51, mentions debt owed by testator to WILLIAM BRANCH.
- D; 302 Will of Ellen Yate of Long Wittenham, widow, dated 19 February, 1558-59, names WILLIAM BRANCHE and Richard Tiesdale overseers. This Richard Tesdale, a sadler at Abingdon, was the uncle and foster-father of the Thomas Tesdale who founded Pembroke College at Oxford.
- E; 145 Will of John Carye of Abingdon, mercer, dated 21 June, 1559, names WILLIAM BRANCHE as overseer.
- E; 194 Will of Isabell Bright of Abingdon, widow, dated 7 May, 1561, bequeaths to the children of "Thomas Jenens my son in law late deceased," and names James Fisher and WILLIAM BRANCHE as overseers.
- E; 194 Will of Thomas Jenens (Jennings) of Abingdon, woollendraper, dated 8 April, 1561, proved May, 1561, names "my sons in law WILLIAM BRANCHE and Thomas Smith" as overseers.

- F; 227 Will of Anthony Robson of Abingdon, dated 20 May, 1570, names "my good masters and neighbours Mr. William Blacknoll, Mr. WILLIAM BRANCHE, Mr. Richard Quelche and Mr. Thomas Mayott." The William Blacknall mentioned was the same who purchased from the Crown the site and buildings of the dissolved Abbey of Abingdon after the Reformation. He was at the incorporation of Abingdon one of the first bailiffs and a principal burgess, and afterward twice mayor.
- G; 233 Will of Richard Bratwell of Abingdon, joiner, dated 28 March, 1572, names as overseers "WILLIAM BRANCHE, gent, Mayor of Abingdon, and John Wyse."



Of William Branch's Children





## Of William Branch's Children

WILLIAM BRANCH of Abingdon and Katherine Jennings Branch, his second wife, had issue:

Thomas Branch; Elizabeth Branch; Richard Branch; Mary Branch; Anne Branch; Elinor Branch; Lionel Branch; Martha Branch; Barbara Branch; William Branch, and Katherine Branch.

I. THOMAS BRANCH of Abingdon, the oldest son of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, was born in the July of 1557, and died in the February of 1602-3. At his father's death in 1602 he inherited, according to the terms of his uncle Thomas Branch of London's will, as already recorded, the Bull Inn at Abingdon.

In consonance with the stipulations of this will, the property was to go at Thomas Branch of Abingdon's death to his sons, or in default of male heirs to his daughters. But this Thomas Branch did not consider apparently that a brother or a nephew might be reasonably ranked among one's male heirs, and so devised the Bull Inn to his brother-in-law Robert Payne.

The will of Thomas Branch is dated 22 January, 1602-3, and was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury 22 April, 1603. Thomas Branch was buried 2 February, 1602-3, at St. Helen's Church in Abingdon.

Thomas Branch had married (1st) 21 May, 1583, MARGARET CONWELL (*compare Note B*), and by her had issue: Katherine Branch, baptised 8 February, 1583-4, buried 27 February, 1583-4; and Thomas Branch, buried 19 September, 1585.

Thomas Branch married (2nd) DOROTHY ———, who survived him. By this second marriage he had no issue.

The will of Thomas Branch is appended:

"WILL OF THOMAS BRAUNCHE OF THE BOROUGH OF ABINGDON, CO. BERKS, GENT, DATED 22 JAN., 45 ELIZ. (1602-3).

"Eeing sicke of body, I give and bequeath to my brother in law Robert Paine and to his heirs my house wherein I now dwell, sometimes called the Bull Inn, lying in the Burie of the said Borough.

"And whereas the said Robert Paine standeth bound with me unto Sir Francis Stoner, Kt., in four several obligations for the payment of fourscore pounds, and for a copyhold lying within the Manor of Drayton, co. Berks, which copyhold Dorothy my wife is to have after my decease, and doubting that my wife will not discharge the said sum according to the true meaning of the said obligations, I do therefore make my said brother Robert my only executor; but if my wife shall put in security for the discharge of the said sum, then she shall have all my goods and the occupation of my said house during her life.

"I make Mr. Robert Orpwood overseer and do give him for his pains one cruse cupp covered with silver and guilt.

"Signed: THOMAS BRAUNCHE.

"Witness: William Lee, Francis Lytle, John Mayott, Thomas Reade.

"Proved 22 April, 1603, by Thomas Warde, proctor for Robert Payne the executor.

"Definitive Sentence for the validity of the above will, in a cause between Robert Paine, the executor, and William Branche, brother of the said deceased, pronounced 13 Feb., 1603-4. (*Hartc; 12*)" —PREROGATIVE COURT OF CANTERBURY: DOLEIN; 25.

A portrait of the Robert Orpwood whom this will appoints as executor may still be seen in the Hall of Christ Hospital; and the Thomas Read who is one of the witnesses—a son of the Thomas Read who was a fellow Master with Richard Branch of the Fraternity of the Holy Cross—was three times High Sheriff of Berkshire and died in 1604.

Francis Little was, of course, the historian of the Fraternity already alluded to. He was, for thirty-eight years, a Governor of Christ Hospital; three times Mayor of Abingdon; and in 1597 Member of Parliament for the borough. He died in the January of 1630.

II. ELIZABETH BRANCH, the oldest daughter of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, is mentioned only in the will of her grandfather Thomas Jennings, dated April, 1560, and in the will of her uncle Thomas Branch, dated April, 1565.

She apparently died in childhood.

III. RICHARD BRANCH, the second son of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, was baptised at St. Helen's, 16 September, 1560, and at his decease, ante 1602, left no children—"dying without issue in the life tyme of the said William Braunche his father," according to Christopher Branch's Bill of Complaint in Chancery hereinafter cited.

IV. MARY BRANCH, the second daughter of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, married John Wright, and by him left issue.

V. ANNE BRANCH, the third daughter of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, was baptised at St. Helen's, 19 September, 1562.

She married ——— Fowler, and by him left issue.

VI. ELINOR BRANCH, the fourth daughter of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, was baptised at St. Helen's, 20 October, 1564.

The will of John Ellis of Barton, in the parish of Abingdon, dated 26 February, 1581-2, mentions this Elinor Branch among the legatees (ARCHDEACONRY OF BERKS: G; 308).

She appears to have died unmarried.

VII. LIONEL BRANCH, the third son of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, was the lineal ancestor of the Branches of Virginia.

An account of him will be given hereafter.

VIII. MARTHA BRANCH, the fifth daughter of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, was baptised 1 May, 1568.

She married Robert Payne of Abingdon, to whom, as previously recorded, her brother Thomas Branch of Abingdon willed the Bull Inn in 1603. She died 5 December, 1626.

A tablet to the memory of Martha Branch Payne and her husband may still be seen in Our Lady's aisle of St. Helen's (*compare Note I*).

Robert Payne died in 1628. His will, dated 5 February, 1627-8, was proved 3 May, 1628. He left issue: John Payne (*compare Note I*); Robert Payne, Head Master of Abingdon School, 1656-57, Rector of St. Nicholas 1663-1676; Richard Payne, to whom Robert Payne, senior, deeded the Bull Inn property upon the latter's marriage in 1624; Thomas Payne; Francis Payne; Joan Payne, who married John Mayott; and Martha Payne, who married William Castle.

The will of Robert Payne, senior, is appended:

"WILL OF ROBERT PAINE OF ABINGDON, CO. BERKS, GENT, DATED 5 FEB., 1627-8.

"I desire to be buried in the churchyard of St. Helen's in Abingdon.

"I give to the mother church of Sarum 5s.

"I bequeath to my eldest son John Paine all my free land in Wickfield, lately bought of Henry Weale.

"To my son Robert £120, whereof £40 is in the hands of my son in law William Castle, and £40 in the hands of my son Richard.

"To my son Thomas £180, to be paid within two years of my decease, my son John providing him with meat, drink and apparel in the meantime.

"I give to my son Francis 200 quarters of malt and the lease of my house lately bought of Richard Yateman, which is holden of the Corporation of Abingdon, lying in Broad-streete.

"To my son Richard all the years yet to come of the messuage in the tenure of Mr. Thomas Clemlon, holden of the church of St. Nicholas in Abingdon.

"To my son William my term of years yet to come of a messuage called the Armitage, which I hold of the Hospital of Christ in Abingdon; and £20 loaned out to John Fysher of Abingdon; he my said son William paying £40 apiece to the said Castle and my sons Richard, Robert, Thomas and Francis.

"To my oldest daughter Joan Mayott my best silver and gilt salt.

"To my daughter Martha Castle my other silver and gilt salt.

"To my son John my silver and gilt pot, as his mother desired.

"To the three children of William Castle a silver spoon apiece.

"I hereby ratify all estates given to my children by my late wife.

"I give to my son William's wife my wife's best petticoat.

"To my son William my mourning gown, with one piece of satin now in the hands of William Castle.

"To the Masters and Governors of the Hospital of Christ in Abingdon £20 to be laid out in land for the putting forth of two poor children a year to be apprentices.

"To Martha Branch my wife's god-daughter, £5 to her marriage.

"To my son in law John Mayott the great seal gold ring which is in my study.

"To my sister Herne 20s. a year for life.

"To my son John Mayott a bond wherein one Franklin of Standford and his son stand bound to me.

"Residuary legatees and executors, my sons John and Richard Payne.

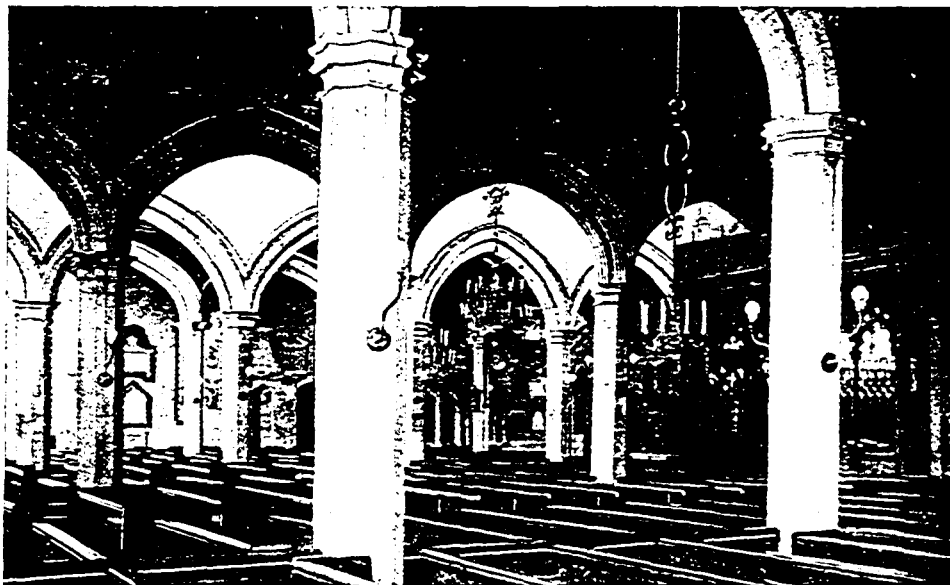
"Witnesses: John Mayott, Edward Tompkins, Nicholas Penbrooke.

"Proved 3 May 1628, by Richard Payne, one of the executors, power being reserved to the other."—ARCH-DEACONRY OF BERKS: M; 127.

IX. BARBARA BRANCH, the sixth daughter of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, was baptised at St. Helen's, 10 July, 1569.

She appears to have died unmarried.

X. WILLIAM BRANCH, the fourth son of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, was born in 1578. He matriculated at New College in Oxford in 1598 at the age of twenty, for one finds in Forster's *Alumni Oxoniensis*:



INTERIOR OF ST. HELEN'S, SHOWING TABLET TO ROBERT AND MARTHA PAYNE.





"2102. a. Branche, William, of Berks, pleb., New Coll., matric. 13 Oct., 1598, aged 20; B. A. 15 April 1602; M. A. 31 Jan., 1605-6."

Also there is the provision in the will of William Branch, senior. "for his better maintenance at Oxford" made in 1601 to prove that this was the same William Branch.

Nothing is known concerning his descendants if he, indeed, left any. To the present compiler at least the wording of his father's will, already cited, would suggest that the younger William Branch had married his cousin Frances Smith before 1602; and that a result of this marriage may quite possibly have been the Martha Branch mentioned in the will of Robert Payne.

Also he may conceivably have been the William Branch who died at Frilford, in Berkshire, in 1606, as previously recorded.

XI. KATHERINE BRANCH, the seventh daughter of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, was baptised at St. Helen's, 21 September, 1582.

She appears to have died unmarried.



Of Lionel Branch of London



## Of Lionel Branch of London

LIONEL BRANCH, the third son of William Branch and Katherine Jennings Branch, from whom the Branches of Virginia descend, was baptised at St. Helen's, 18 August, 1566. It is useless to attempt to disguise the fact that, on reaching manhood, he proved himself, or, at least in the eyes of his immediate kindred, the black sheep of the family.

His father's will attests as much.

To Lionel, "my vnthrifty and disobedient son," is therein bequeathed merely "my black gown"; albeit, even to the more obtuse it will be apparent upon consideration of William Branch's will that the testator had so far fallen into his dotage as to permit himself to surrender all his earthly belongings in favor of the testator's oldest son.

No overwhelming love, one speedily imagines, was lost between Thomas Branch of Abingdon and Lionel Branch, his brother. Thus when the former came to make his will in 1603 he bequeathed nothing to Lionel Branch, and willed the valuable Bull Inn property to his brother-in-law Robert Payne.

There was at least a reasonable doubt if this property was not, according to the terms of Thomas Branch of London's will, entailed to the natural male heirs of Thomas Branch of Abingdon. And accordingly William Branch, the younger brother, still at Oxford, brought suit to upset the will, the cause being decided in favor of Robert Payne in the February of 1603-4.

That William Branch should have brought this suit alone would certainly go to show that Lionel Branch was no longer in touch with his family, since as the older of the surviving brothers his claim upon the property, if entailed, was immensely the stronger, and any action to upset the will would most naturally have been brought by him, as the heir at law.

But Lionel Branch had removed to London at least seven years before these events, and there is nothing to suggest that he ever returned to Abingdon.

It may reasonably be questioned if the London of Queen Elizabeth's day was the most desirable of environments for "vnthrifty and disobedient" persons. As Harrison, a contemporary of Lionel Branch's, writes

"It is a world to see the costlinesse and the curiositie; the excesse and the vanite; the pompe and the braverie; the change and the varietie; and finallie, the ficklenesse and the follie that is in all degrees."—NATHAN DRAKE, SHAKESPEARE AND HIS TITLES, II. 6, 87. And Georges Duval records some curious statistics (LONDRES AU TEMPS DE SHAKESPEARE, PAGE 56)—"*Alors Londres va appartenir aux prostituées et aux voleurs. Nous avons sous les yeux une édifiante statistique. Sur 180,000 habitants on compte 6,000 filles publiques et 42,000 filous.*"

In short, it may not be entirely lamentable that the main events of Lionel Branch's existence have never been honored by any authenticated record. Of his life in London one solitary detail has been preserved—that he married there in 1596.

### Valentia Sparke Branch

The entry as to this event was made in the Bishop of London's Office:



EAST ST. HELEN STREET, SHOWING TOWER WHEREIN THE MASTERS  
OF THE FRATERNITY WERE USED TO MEET IN COUNCIL.





"Leonell Branch, of London, gent., and Valentia Sparke, of St. Martin, Ludgate, said city, spinster, daughter of — Sparke, late of said city, draper, deceased, gen. lic., 7 July, 1596."—LONDON MARRIAGE LICENSES, 1521-1869, EDITED BY JOSEPH FORSTER, PAGE 174.

Lionel Branch and Valentia Sparke Branch had issue apparently only one child:

CHRISTOPHER BRANCH of "Arrowhattocks" and "Kingsland" in Virginia.

### *Death of Lionel Branch*

Lionel Branch, according to Christopher Branch's Bill of Complaint in the Chancery suit hereinafter cited, died in 1605, very shortly after the death of his brother Thomas Branch of Abingdon.

The wording of this document, in passing, would certainly convey the impression that, after the death of Thomas Branch, Lionel Branch returned to Abingdon and entered into possession of the Bull Inn property, retaining it until his death; but this most certainly could not have been the case, since as has already been recorded, the validity of Thomas Branch's will had been approved in 1604 and the Bull Inn property secured to Robert Payne.

And, strictly viewed, this Bill of Complaint states, after all, merely that Lionel Branch acquired in 1602 not necessarily an actual but simply a lawful possession of the disputed property.

There is, in any event, no record of Lionel Branch's death or burial at Abingdon, and nothing whatever to support the supposition that he ever revisited his birthplace after 1596.

It is probable that he died in London in 1605.

There is no record that Lionel Branch left a will, at his death about 1605. It is, in fact, deducible from the wording of Christopher Branch's Bill of Complaint, hereinafter quoted, that Lionel Branch died intestate, as otherwise this document would have inevitably been introduced.

Of Christopher Branch of  
“Kingsland”



## Of Christopher Branch of "Kingsland"

CHRISTOPHER BRANCH of "Arrowhattocks" and "Kingsland" in Virginia was born about 1602, according to his own statement. It is probable that the "vnthrifty and disobedient" Lionel Branch at his death, circa 1605, left to his widow and only child a very small estate, and that poverty was the cause of Christopher Branch's emigration to the New World in the hope of bettering his fortunes.

### Mary Addie Branch

CHRISTOPHER BRANCH married at seventeen and shortly before leaving England

MARY ADDIE, daughter of Francis Addie of Darton in Yorkshire. She accompanied Christopher Branch on the voyage to Virginia, sailing in the March of 1619-20, as is shown in *Branchiana*, pages 26 and 105.

The preserved notice as to their marriage reads:

"September 2, 1619—CHRISTOPHER BRANCHE, Gentleman, and Mary Addie, spinster, daughter of Francis Addie of Darton, County York. husbandman; at St. Peter's, Westcheap, London."—MARRIAGE LICENSES, LONDON, HARLEIAN PUBLICATIONS, VOLUME XXVI, PART 2ND, PAGE 78.

For what is known concerning Christopher Branch's life in Virginia consult *Branchiana*, pages 25-37.

In 1632 Christopher Branch returned to England and brought suit to obtain possession of the Bull Inn estate in Abingdon.

This valuable property, as already recorded, had been willed in 1565 by Thomas Branch of London to his brother William Branch of Abingdon, with the proviso that at William Branch's death it was to go to Thomas Branch of Abingdon, the eldest son of William Branch; and at the death of Thomas Branch of Abingdon to the sons of this Thomas Branch, or in default of male heirs, to his daughters.

Thomas Branch of Abingdon, as already recorded, died in 1602-3 without children of either sex, and leaving a will by which he bequeathed the Bull Inn to his brother-in-law Robert Payne of Abingdon.

Robert Payne had succeeded to the property and in 1624 had deeded it to his son Richard Payne of Abingdon, the first cousin of Christopher Branch; and it is against this Richard Payne that Christopher Branch brings suit.

For at the death of Thomas Branch of Abingdon in 1602-3 his heir at law was his brother Lionel Branch, the second brother Richard Branch being then dead without issue.

Lionel Branch's death about 1605 left his son Christopher Branch as the heir at law.

The Bull Inn had been bequeathed "to William Braunche . . . and to Thomas Braunche his son and heir after his decease, and so unto his heirs males forever; and for lack of heirs males, unto his daughters."

The question, therefore, was whether, according to the wording of Thomas Branch of London's will, the Bull Inn was entailed to the heirs males of Thomas Branch of Abingdon? in which event, Thomas Branch of Abingdon

had not the power to will the property to Robert Payne, Lionel Branch being his legal heir.

William Branch, the fourth brother, had already brought suit to test the validity of this will, and the case had been decided in Payne's favor, 13 February, 1603-4. It is possible that William Branch brought this suit as the guardian of Christopher Branch, since William Branch had never the shadow of any personal claim during this nephew's life.

The pleadings in Christopher Branch's suit are appended.

CHANCERY PROCEEDINGS, REIGN OF CHARLES I: B; 31;  
34, BRANCH VERSUS PAYNE:

*'Bill of Complaint of CHRISTOPHER BRAUNCHE of Harrihattocks in Virginia, planter there, which Christopher Braunche is sonne and heire of Lyonell Braunche third son of William Braunche, while he lived of Abingdon in the countie of Berks, gent, deceased, and wch said William Braunche was natural brother and heyre of Thomas Braunche, late while he lived Citizen and Draper of London, sworn 26 October 1632:*

"The said THOMAS BRAUNCHE was in his life tyme lawfully seised in his demeazne as of free of and in all that messuage or tenement scituate in the borough of Abingdon, sometymes an Inne, called or known by the name of the bull Inne, and being so seised did, in or about the moneth of Aprill, in the year 1555. make and ordayne his last will and testament in these words following, vizt:

*"I allso will and bequeath unto my natural brother William Braunche my howse called the bull Inne in Abingdon, and unto Thomas Braunche his son and heyre after*

*his decease, and soe unto his heyres males for ever, and for lack of heyres males unto his daughters.*

"And shortly after the said William (*the scrivener's error; it should of course be Thomas*) Braunche the testator died, and his said last will was in due form proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, by virtue of which said legacy and devise hee the said WILLIAM BRAUNCHE, by and after the decease of the said Thomas Braunche, did enter into the said messuage and thereof was lawfully seised in his demeanne as of freehold for the term of his natural life, with the reversion or remainder thereof expectant in fee tayle general in and upon the said Thomas Braunche his sonne; and hee the said William Braunche shortly after died soe thereof seised.

"By and after whose decease the said THOMAS BRAUNCHE, by virtue of the said devise, into the said tenement entered and was thereof lawfully seised in his demeanne as of fee tayle general, that is to say, to him and the heirs males of his boddie lawfully begotten, and for default of such issue to the heirs females of his boddy lawfully begotten; and the said Thomas Braunche about three and thirtie years sithence died soe thereof seised, by and after whose decease one Richard Braunche, being the middle brother of the said Thomas Braunche the tenaunte in tayle and of your orator's father, dying without issue in the life tyme of the said William Braunche his father, the reversion in fee of the said messuage reverted and came unto Lyonnell Braunche your orator's father, as right heyre at the Common Law unto the said Thomas the testator.

"By virtue whereof the said LYONNELL BRAUNCHE into the said tenement entered and was thereof lawfully seised in his demeanne as of fee; and shortly after, vizt., about



seaven and twentie years since, as your orator thinketh, the said Lyonnell died.

"By and after whose decease the said tenement descended and came, as of right the same ought, unto your orator and his heyres as sonne and heyre of the said Lyonnell his said father.

"But now soe it is, may it please your good Lordshipp, *(the Right Honorable Thomas, Lord Coventry, Keeper of the Great Seal, to whom the Bill is addressed)* that the said Lyonnell dying when your orator was of but tender years, about two or three years olde, *(this would fix 1602 as the date of the birth of Christopher Branch, but it must be remembered, he has every reason to make himself appear as young and helpless at the time of his father's death as may be possible)* and your orator being transported over into Virginia in his infancy *(this, any how, is most adroitly put; he was, it is true, a minor at the period alluded to, but the wording certainly would not suggest that he was a married man traveling in the company of his wife)*, where he hath lived by the space of twelve or thirteen years, and never cold make retorne into England till now very lately, one RICHARD PAYNE of Abingdon, gentleman, *(compare Note I)*, and one WILLIAM BANNISTER of the said towne, mercer, by combinacon have since the death of your orator's said late father, entered into the said tenement and have ever since received the rents, yssues and proffitts thereof to their owne use, and have gotten into their hands and possession all the ancient deeds, minuments and writtings touching and concerning the said tenement, and have made divers and sondry secrett conveyances thereof.

"By reason whereof they, the said Payne and Bannister, doe now utterly deny and refuse to deliver unto your

orator the said deeds, etc., neither will they suffer him to enter into the said premisses or to injoy the same.

"May it therefore please your good Lordshipp to grant his Maties most gracious writt of Subpa to be directed unto the said Richard Payne and William Bannister, commanding them at a certain day and under a certain payne personally to appear before your good Lordshipp in his Maties High Court of Chancery, then and there upon their corporal oathes to answer to the premises; and your poore orator shall ever pray for your good Lordshipp's long life and increase of much honor."

"THE PLEA AND DEMURRER OF RICHARD PAYNE, ONE OF THE DEFENDANTS, UNTO THE BILL OF COMPLAINT OF CHRISTOPHER BRAUNCHE, SWORN 16 NOVEMBER, 1632:

"This defendant sayeth that Robert Payne, his father, was lawfully seised in his demesne as of fee of and in the said messuage, and being so seised in consideration of a marriage had and solemnized between this defendant and Suzanna his wife, and for the provision of a joynture for this defendant his said wife, he the said Robert Payne and Martha his wife, and one John Mayott of Abingdon, (*who had married Joan, the eldest daughter of Robert Payne; compare the latter's will as already recorded*) in the term of St. Michael, in the two and twentieth year of the reign of our sovereign Lord King James, (*that is, in October, 1624*) in the Court of Common Pleas at Westminster, did acknowledge and levie one Fine of ye said messuage, by the name of one messuage and one garden in Abingdon in ye countie of Berk:

"By which Fine they the said Robert Payne and Martha his wife and John Mayott did acknowledge the said premises to be ye right of this defendant, as yt which this



INTERIOR OF THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOWING PORTRAITS, AT ABINGDON-ON-THAMES.



defendant had of the guift of the said Robert, Martha and John, to the use of this defendant for term of his life, then to the use of the said Susanna for term of her life, then to the use of this defendant and his heirs for ever."

"ANSWER OF WILLIAM BANNISTER, SWORN 16 Nov., 1632:

"This defendant sayeth that about the feast of the Annunciation, 1631, the other defendant, Richard Payne, did demise and let unto him one shop and other rooms, parcel of the said messuage, for the term of five years."

No decree relating to this suit has been discovered, but it is probable that it was decided against Christopher Branch, as he returned to Virginia shortly afterward, taking out his first land patent there in 1634. It is not known that he ever revisited England. The only link, between the year 1631 and the death of Christopher Branch in 1682, (*compare Note K*) which connects him, in however remote fashion, with England is found in the

Will of JOHN BLY, dated 3 January, 1662-3, proved 16 May, 1664, which bequeaths:

"To Master Christopher Branch, senior, for writing my will one good Hogshead of Tobacco. To Christopher Branch, junior, (*the third son of Christopher Branch of "Kingsland"*) for care in sickness ditto in such goods as he like of this yeare." Thomas Branch (the oldest son of Christopher Branch of "Kingsland") is one of the witnesses.

This will was proved in Virginia "before the councill and the Governor" 23 March, 1662-3, and an attested copy was forwarded to England. (VIRGINIA HISTORICAL MAGAZINE, PAGE 56, VOLUME XIII).

And indeed had Christopher Branch been successful in this Chancery suit and obtained possession of the evidently valuable English property involved, it is more than unlikely that he would have returned to the discomforts and dangers of a life in the Virginia of his day. The Branch family owes its existence in Virginia in part to the negligent wording of Thomas Branch of London's will, but mainly to the "vnthriftiness and disobedience" of Lionel Branch, which caused him, and his son after him, to be disinherited of a competence in England.

## Collateral Notes





## Note A

EXTRACT FROM "THE HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE COUNTY OF SURREY," BY REV. OWEN MANNING, S. T. B., AND WM. BRAY, VOL. II.—*Concerning the former owner of Peper Harow, Godalming, Surrey. In Godelminge Hundred, Domesday Tab. XII.*

"The same Walter (Fitz-Other) and Gerard of Heim holds Pipereherge (it was once so written). Alward held it of King Edward. Then it was taxed for five Hides (five hundred acres); now for three Hides. The arable land consists of three Carrucates (three hundred acres) in demesne, and four Villans and three Cotars, with one Carrucate. In the time of King Edward and afterwards it was worth 30s. (£90), now 100s. (£300).

"Oher, or Otho, was living in England in the reign of Edward, the Confessor, and probably had a grant of this Manor. Walter, his son, was Governor of Windsor Castle and took his surname from thence, which he transmitted to his posterity, the Lords Windsor.

"William de Windsor accompanied Richard I into Normandy in 1194, and seems to have died there, as his son Walter, who went with him, was possessed of his inheritance in the next year. Two years after, Walter having no issue male, by fine levied in Easter term, divided with his brother William the whole Barony of their father.

"At what time and to whom this Manor was alienated by the family of Windsor is uncertain, but in the reign of Henry III we find WILLIAM DE BRANCHE in possession, holding it of the Honor of Windsor, by the service of one Knight's fee. And as appears by subsequent records, the annual payment of 6s. 8d. in lieu of every twenty-four weeks' service on guard of the Castle of Windsor, was the quit-rent or firm reserved to themselves by that family on their alienation of the fee.

"In right of this reservation we find it said in an Inquisition taken on the death of Sir Miles Windsor, 10 Richard II, 1388 n. 46, that he died seised of this Manor (as well as of others in this County), leaving Brian, his son and heir by Alice, his wife, daughter of Adam de Wymondham, Co. Norfolk, then fifteen years of age. This Brian died in 22 Richard II, 1399, so seised, leaving Miles, his son and heir, who died unmarried, and was succeeded by his brother Richard.

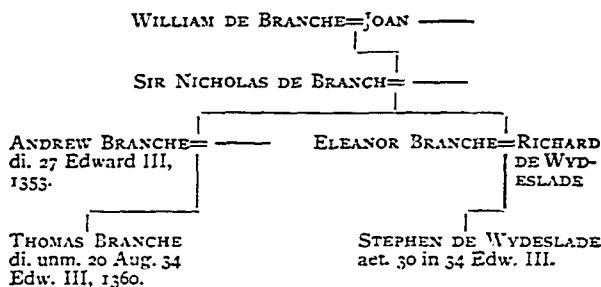
"Richard died 6 Henry VI, 1428, leaving Miles, his only son and heir. After this we find no mention of it in this family, but BRANCH and his posterity enjoyed the estate.

"WILLIAM DE BRANCHE and Joan, his wife, had a grant of King Henry III of free Warren throughout this Manor, which the said Joan pleaded to a writ of Quo Warrants brought against her in 7 Edward I, 1279, being then a widow. In the same year the Inquest of the Hundred presented that Peter de Boxted had free Warren in this Manor, viz. in right of the aforesaid Joan, whom about this time he took to wife.

"In 26 Edward I, Henry de Gildford, Lord Mareschal, recovered this Manor by writ of novel disseizin against Sir NICHOLAS DE BRANCH, who released all his right therein. This Henry in 31 Edward I, 1303, obtained a new charter of free Warren throughout the same.

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*Then follows an account of other families, ending with: "The interest of these families of Gildford, Stoughton and Stanton though apparently absolute, seems to have been as Trustees, or perhaps Mortgages, as the Estate reverted to the family of BRANCHE.*

*"ANDREW BRANCHE died seised thereof in 27 Edward III, 1353. leaving Thomas, his son and heir, a minor, by reason whereof the King became entitled to the custody of the Manor.*

*"This BRANCHE died unmarried, 20 August 34 Edward III, 1360. leaving Stephen son of Richard de Wydeslade and Eleanor his wife, deceased, sister of ANDREW BRANCHE his cousin and heir, and at that time thirty years of age and upwards."*



### Note B

THE PARISH REGISTERS of the two churches in Abingdon which antedate the sixteenth century have been ransacked in search of any item which might bear upon the history of the Branch family.

The registers of St. Nicholas' Church at Abingdon, from 1558, their earliest date, to 1630, afford no entries containing the name of Branch.

The registers of St. Helen's are, however, a different matter. For the convenience of the reader their various mentions of the name of Branch are herewith briefly collated.

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(a) The earlier Parish Registers of St. Helen's include among the marriages:

1553: WILLIAM BRANCHE and Elizabeth, daughter of John Waltham, 2 August.

1583: THOMAS BRANCHE and Margaret Coxwell, 21 May.

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(b) The earlier Parish Registers of St. Helen's include among the baptisms:

1557: Thomas, son of WILLIAM BRANCHE, 29 July.

1560: Richard, son of WILLIAM BRANCHE, 16 September.

- 1562: Anne, daughter of WILLIAM BRANCHE, 19 September.  
 1564: Elinor, daughter of WILLIAM BRANCHE, 20 October.  
 1566: Lionell, son of WILLIAM BRANCHE, 18 August.  
 1568: Martha, daughter of WILLIAM BRANCHE, 1 May.  
 1569: Barbara, daughter of WILLIAM BRANCHE, 10 July.  
 1578: John, son of JOHN BRANCHE, 3 November.  
 1582: Katherine, daughter of Mr. BRANCHE, 21 September.  
 1583-4: Katherine, daughter of THOMAS BRANCHE, 8 February.
- 

(c) The earlier Parish Registers of St. Helen's include among the burials:

- 1540-1: ANY BRANCHE, 22 March.  
 1544: RICHARD BRAUNC, 16 September.  
 1545-6: Thomas, son of ELIZABETH BRAUNCH, 12 February.  
 1545-6: Marian, daughter of ELSABETH BRAUNCH, 27 February.  
 1545-6: Margery, daughter of ELIZABETH BRAUNCHE, 16 March.  
 1556: ELIZABETH BRANCH, widow, 20 June.  
 1580: Jone, wife of Lionell Bostock, high burgess, 24 June.  
 1583-4: Katherine (*torn*) of THOMAS BRAUNCHE, 27 February.  
 1585: Thomas, son of THOMAS BRAUNCHE, 19 September.

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1587-8: Alice, servant to Master BRAUNCHE, 14  
January.

1597: Katherine, wife of Mr. WILLIAM BRAUNCHE,  
25 August.

1602-3: THOMAS BRAUNCHE, 2 February.





## Note C

EXTRACT FROM THE HERALDS' VISITATION OF OXFORD,  
TAKEN 1566.—BEAUFORST OF DORCHESTER.

"THO. BEAUFORST of Deane in com. Glouc. gent. had  
issue:

"THO. BEAUFORST of . . . in com. Cornwall, sonne &  
heire, who m. Margaret d. to . . . Bassett, and had, with  
other issue:

"A DAUGHTER (ELIZABETH,) who m. Richard Braunch  
of Abington in com. Barks."



## Note B

EXTRACT FROM LONDON CHANCERY PLEADINGS, REIGN OF ELIZABETH, BUNDLE 8, NUMBER 20, PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE: BRANCHE VERSUS ADAMS.

*"In most humble wyse complayning shewethe unto your good Lordship your poor & daylie Orator THOMAS BRANCHE.*

"That where (*whercas*) one MARY LECHE wydowe, late wyef of Robert Leche Cytizen & Alderman of the Citey of Norwich deceased, was seised of and in the Manor of Widford, alias Widfordburie, in the county of Hertford in her demeane as of fee of, which message or manor & six acres of land (lieinge next unto Haddam Mill within the same Manor of Widford called Branches) in & by all the time whereof the memorie of man is not to the contrarie have been p'ceel customarie & copyhold land, & by all the said tyme have been used & accustomed to be letten by the Lord of the same Manor or by the Steward of the same by coppie of Court Roll to such person or persons as would take the same in fee simple free taile for terme of life or for term of yeres to hold at will of the Lord of the said Manor.

"And the said Marie Leach so being seased of the said Manor, at a Court holden at the same Manor about 20 yeares now past, by her Steward of the same Manor for that time being did demise & grant the sayd messuages & six acres of land unto your sayd Orator To have the same p'misses with the appurts unto the same (for) your sayd

Orator & his heires at the Lords will, after the custome of the sayd Manor.

"By force whereof your Orator paid his fine for the same, & was thereunto admitted tenant, and was thereof seased in his demean as of fee, according to the custome of the sayd Manor, & the issues & profitts thereof did lawfully perceive & take accordinglie.

"So it is if it shall please your good lordship that one ROBERT ADAMES yeoman have (*has*) purchased the fee simple of the said Manor of Widford & is thereof seased in his demean as of fee, & that your sayd Orator hath casuallye lost his copy of the said Court Rolle whereby it maye or might appear at what Court & time the said demise & grant of the p'misses were made unto him.

"And also the Court Roll out of which the said Coppie was taken is likewise come into the hands & possession of the said Robert Adams, & thereupon the sayd Robert Adams & one WILLIAM ADAMES (being his kinsman) & one ROBERT WALSTON preceiving that your sayd Orator had not his coppie to show for the maintenance of his title, of their extort power & might, without any manner of cause or forfryture done by your sayd Orator, & contrarie to any custome heretofore used in the same Manor, have wrongfullie entred into the said customarie p'misses as (*of*) your said Orators, & have not only unjustly expelled him thereof, but also do wrongfully detayn & kepe the possession of the same from your said Orator contrarie to all right equitie & consiens.

"And for as much as your said Orator is but tenent by Coppie of Court Roll unto the sayd Robert Adams, he hath no ordinarie remedie for redresse of the same p'misses by the order of the Common Lawe of this realme, & so shall be disinherited of the said p'misses to the utter undoinge of your said Orator for ever unlesse

your good lordshipes favor be showed to him in this behalfe.

"In tender consideracon whereof yt may please your good Lordship, the p'misses considered, to grant the Queens Maiesties writt of subpena to be directed to the sayd Robt. Adams & Wm. Adames & Robert Walston, comanding them & cyther of them by the same personaly to appeare before the Queene our Sovereigne Ladie in her most honorable Court of Chauncerie at a certain day & upon a payne certeine by your Lordshipp to be limited, & then and there to make answer to the sayd p'misses, & to stand & obey all such orders & direcons in the same p'myssees as by your good Lordshippe shal be thought most reasonable according to right equitie & justice.

"And your said Orator shall dayly pray to Almighty God for the prosperity & estate of your Lordshipp long to endure."

THE ANSWER of ROBERT ADAMS & ROBERT WALSTON  
*defts to the bill of complaint of Thomas Branche compl.*

"The saide defendants sayin (*say*) & every of them saieth that the said bill of complt is exhibited against them of malice & evill will to the intent to put them to gret expences, costs & charges in the lawe and grounded upon no juste cause or matter.

"As he this—(*Thomas Branche of course, but a blank in the original*) hathe done heretofore by sorving of the same Robert Adams & others with a subpena, & never putt in any bill for the same, whereupon they had 30/ costs awarded them, but could gett no penny thereof for that this Comp. is noughte worthe.

"Wche thes defendants prayen (*pray*) may be considered by this honorable Courte before they be putt further to answer.

"& if the matters therein containd were true, as they are not, yett are they merely determinable at the common law, & not in this Honorable Courte.

"Whereunto this (*these*) debt, praye & every of them preieth to be remitted either with their resonable costs, charges & expences by them sustained in this wrongfully (brought) suet.

"Nevertheless, if by order of this Honorable Courte they shall be compelled to answer them the advantages of exception to their sufficiency of the said bill, now & at all times hereafter saved & refired (*referred*) for answer and playne declaracon of the trothe, they saye that

"If the same Mary Leche, seised of the saide Mannor of Widford menconed in the saide bill of complt., at a courte holden at the said Mannor about 20 yeares paste, did demise & grant the said messuage & sixe acres of lande unto this Compt. in suche manner & forme as in the said bill of complaint is alleged, & that by force thereof this Compt. paide his fyne for the same, & was thereunto admitted tenant, & was thereof seised in his demesne as of fee, according unto the custome of the said Mannor, & tooke the issues & proffittes thereof accordinglie,

"Yett hathe this compt. no cause of complaint in this Honourable Court nor else where, for that longe after (that is aboute 11 years past) this Compt. for the some of £22 to him lawfullie paide by the same William Adams one of these defts, wch was more than the same was worthe or than any other wolde give for the same, surrendered the same messuage & other p'misses into the hands (of) one John Eliatt & Harry Waighte, two of the copie-holders tenants of the said Mannor, to that entente that they at the nexte courte then to be holden

within the saide Mannor should surrender the same to the use of the same William Adams & his heires accordinge unto the custome of the same Mannor: wch was done & prosecuted accordinglie. & the same William Adams admitted tenant accordinge unto the custome of the same Manor.

"& afterwards the same William Adams upon good & grete consideracon surrendered the same unto the same Robert Adams one other of these defts., by force whereof he the said Robert Adams entred thereunto, & the issues & proffitts thereof hathe received & taken, as well & lawfull (it) is for him to doe bothe by law & conscience.

"Without that (*The defendants deny*) that this deft. or any of them of their extort power or might without any manner or forfeiture done by this complt. have wrongfullie entred unto the said messuages & other premisses or have unjustly explused him thereof or wrongfullie deteyne & keepe the same from this complt., for this complt. upon his said surrender & bargaine—(*a blank here*; "with" *probably omitted*) the same William Adams willinglie departed from the same as resone & conscience would.

"And without that (*And the defendants deny*) that any other thing or matter materiall or effecteual contained in the said bill of complainte worthie to be answered unto (laid) to (the) charge (of) this deft. or any of them & here in this answer not fully confessed & avoided, traversed or denied is trewe; all wch matters thes deft. & every (one) of them are & will be redie to averr & prove as this Honorable Court shall award, & preyen as before, etc."

"THE REPLICATION of THOMAS BRANCHE complainant to the answer of Robert Adams & Robert Walston defts.

"The said Compl. for replication saithe in all & every thinge as he before in his said bill of complaint hath said.

"And further doth averre & maintaine his said bill of complaint in all & everything (of) matter & cause therein contayned to be good, just & true in suche manner & forme as the same been (*are*) therein already sett forth & declared.

"Without that (*The complainant denies*) that ye said bill of complaint is exhibited against the said deft. of malice or evill will or without any good cause or that ye matters therein contayned are determinable at the Common law or that the said deft. ought to be dismissed.

"& without that (*And the complainant denies that*) the said Compt. in consideracon of £22 did surrender the said pmisses unto the hands of the said JOHN ELLIOTT & HENRY WRIGHT or (*for*) any such use, entent or purpose as in the answer is untruely alleged.

"Or that the said Wm. Adams was admitted ten't thereunto according to the custome of the said Mannor or that the said William Adams did or lawfully could surrender the same unto the said Robert Adams one of the said defts.

"Or that the said Robert Adams did or lawfully could lett the same to the said Robert Walston or that the said complt. dep't. from the same willingly, as in the said answer is untrewly suggested.

"And without that (*And the complainant denies*) that any other matter or thing material or effectuall in the said answer contayned to be replied unto, & (in) this replication before not sufficiently confessed & avoyded, or else traversed & denied, is true; all wch matters the said complr. is redely to avver & prove as this Honorable Court shall awarde, & prayeth as he before in his said bill hath prayed."



"THE REMAYNDER of ROBERT ADAMES & ROBT. WALSTON to the replication of Thomas Branche, compt.

"The said defts. for rejoynder saien (*say*) & every (one) of them saicth as before in their answere they have saide, that is, that this compt. did surrender the premisses in such manner & forme as in the said answer is truly sett forth & declared.

"Whereby if he hadd any righte or title at all the same was lawfullie conveyed away from him, & that upon good consideracon, for that ther was more money paide to this Compt. for the same than the p'misses were worthe.

"& further sayen (*say*) that the said p'misess were & are lawfullie conveyed unto this deft. in such manner & forme as is in the said answer declared.

"Without that (*The defendants deny*) that any thinge or matter materiall or effectuall to be rejoyned unto in the said bill or replication & here in this rejoynder not before sufficiently confessed & avoided, either else traversed or denied, is trewe; all wch matters, *etc.*"



## Note F

EXTRACT FROM "BRANCH FAMILY HISTORY," BY A. E. PAULSON, PAGES 1 AND 2.

"More than two centuries ago . . . England was growing jealous of her colonies, and decided to stop emigration. Therefore, in 1638, when eight ships were preparing to sail for America, laden with supplies and passengers, it was reported that they were to be detained. The captain of one of these ships, called the "Castle," hearing the report, hastened his passengers aboard and set sail before being officially detained.

"Among the passengers on board this ship was PETER BRANCH of Holden, Kent county, England, a carpenter, born there in 1601; his wife, Elizabeth Gillame, whom he married January 13, 1623, and their son John. On the journey from England Peter Branch died on shipboard, leaving the son, John, to the care of his mother. He also made his will, it is recorded, in Boston, Mass., first book of Suffolk wills, page 16; dated June 16, 1638. It is supposed they landed, on reaching the shores of the New World, at Scituate, Mass.

"JOHN BRANCH, son of Peter and Elizabeth, who was left an orphan by the death of his father on shipboard, was born in 1628, probably in High Holden, Kent, England. (*It is noteworthy that High Holden stands within seven miles of Headcorn, where his supposed great-grandfather, another John Branch, as already recorded, had*

*settled.*) He died at Marshfield, Mass., 17 May, 1711. He had married, 6 December, 1652, Mary Speed, the daughter of ——— Speed, of Marshfield, Mass.

"To them were born six children:

"JOHN, b. 1654; killed at Rehoboth, Mass., in 1676, in King Philip's War.

"ELIZABETH, p. Oct. 14, 1655; married June 22, 1677, Abel Cook of Preston, Conn.

"PETER, b. May 28, 1659; married Hannah Lincoln.

"THOMAS, b. Feb. 18, 1661-2; died 1683-4 at Boston, Mass.

"MERCY, b. Nov. 28, 1664; married Ebenezer Spooner.

"EXPERIENCE, died Nov. 28, 1669; married Lydia —, who died Nov., 1699."

"PETER BRANCH, fourth child of John and Mary, born May 28, 1659; died Dec. 27, 1713. He was born on Branch Island, eight miles north of Plymouth Rock. Occupation, farmer. When 21 years of age, he went to Taunton, Mass., where, in about 1681, he married Hannah daughter of Thomas Lincoln, born in Taunton, March 15, 1665; died in Preston, Conn., Jan. 16, 1742; buried there. They went from Taunton, Mass., about 1682, to Norwich, Conn., where he bought the Branch Hill property of Oraneco, Sachem of the Mohegan Indians.

"A copy of the original deed is in the possession of the family of Mrs. R. Branch Follett of Hartford, Conn. It has the signature of the chief; his mark was a drawing of a turkey. In this deed the property is described as 'Skunk hung amuck hill.'"

PETER BRANCH and HANNAH LINCOLN BRANCH (a great-aunt to the President of the United States dur-



ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH AND GATEWAY TO THE BENEDICTINE  
ABBEY OF ABINGDON.



ing the war between the United States and the Confederacy) had issue:

MARY BRANCH, born 28 June, 1685.

HANNAH BRANCH, born 12 July, 1688.

ELIZABETH BRANCH, born 15 March, 1591-2.

JOHN BRANCH, born 31 March, 1694, who married Martha Williams.

THOMAS BRANCH, born 25 December, 1698, died 1 November, 1778, at Preston, Connecticut, who married Zipporah Kinnie.

SAMUEL BRANCH, born 2 September, 1701, who married Anne Lamb.

SARAH BRANCH, born 16 September, 1704.

JOSEPH BRANCH, born 20 September, 1707, who married Zerviah Tracy.

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From Peter Branch and Hannah Lincoln the Branches of New England trace their descent. It is reputed, also, that an Arthur Branch emigrated to Connecticut, and a William Branch settled in Springfield, Massachusetts, before 1640.





## Note II

EXTRACT FROM "THE VISITATION OF BERKSHIRE, ANNO 1566, MADE BY WILLIAM HARVEY, ESQR., ALIAS CLARENCEULX, KING AT ARMS—1566, TOWN OF ABINGDON.

*"Arms—Vert, a cross patoncée between four crosses pattées or.*

"These are the Armes apperteynyng and belonging to the Mayor Bayllyffs and Burgesses of the Towne and Boroughe of Abendon in the countie of Berks.

"And at this my psent vysycacon was Jeames Ffysher Mayor, Robert Erle Leyceter knyghte of the moste honorable order of the garter, Mr. of her Maiesties horsse, and one of her highnes pryve Councell, highe Stewarde of the saide towne and boroughe of Abendon.

"John Yate Esquire Recorder, Rycharde Mayott, Rycharde Smythe, Humfrey Bostoke, Thomas Orponde and WILLIAM BRAUNCHE burgesses and late Mayors.

"John ffysher and Leonell Bostoke Bayllyffs John Mayo Chambleyne and John Pudsey town Clarke.

"In wytnes whereof, &c."

*Compare HARLEIAN MS. 5867, FOLIO 123.*



## Note 6

ABRIDGEMENT FROM SMITH'S COPY OF THE 1566 VISITATION OF BERKSHIRE: MS ASHMOLE 852, PAGES 22-23.

SIR OLIVER DE BOSTOCK, anno 1066, had issue:

HUGH BOSTOCK, who had issue:

RICHARD BOSTOCK, who had issue:

ROGER BOSTOCK, who had issue:

SIR GILBERT BOSTOCK, who had issue:

RANULPH DE BOSTOCK, who married Margaret, daughter and heir to Warren de Vernon, Baron of Shipbroke, and had issue:

SIR WARREN BOSTOCK, who married Hawise, sister and co-heir to Randolph, third Earl of Chester and Lincoln, and widow of Robert de Quinci, Earl of Lincoln, and had issue:

SIR RALPH, ALIAS SIR HENRY, DE BOSTOCK, who married Eleanor, daughter and heir to ——— Poole of Cheshire, and had issue:

SIR WILLIAM DE BOSTOCK, who married Elizabeth, daughter to Hugh, Lord Audley, and had issue:

SIR EDWARD BOSTOCK, who had issue:

SIR ADAM BOSTOCK—"Sir Adam Bostock was knighted by King Edw. I at the Conquest of Scotland"—who married Jane, daughter of Sir William Brereton of Brereton, and had issue:

SR WILLIAM BOSTOCK—"Sr William Bostock was knighted at the Conquest of France by King Edw: 3"—who married the daughter and heir of Sr Richard Winton, and had issue:

SR ADAM BOSTOCK—"knighted at the Battle of Nazareth in Spain by the Black Prince"—who married Margery, daughter and heir to John Whetnall, alias Kingsley, and had issue:

SR ADAM BOSTOCK—"knighted by King Richard 2nd, and after at his own House King Hen. 4 gave him the Antelope to his Crest"—who married Jenet, daughter of Sr Henry Bradshaw, and had issue:

SR RALPH BOSTOCK—"knighted at the Battle of Agincourt by King Hen: 5"—who married Isabel, daughter and heir to William Lawton, and had issue:

SR ADAM BOSTOCK, killed at the Battle of Blore Heath, anno 1459, time Henry VI, who married Elizabeth, daughter and heir to Hugh Venables, Baron of Kinderton, and had issue:

NICHOLAS BOSTOCK of Modburley in Com: Cestriae, (*of Mobberley in Cheshire*), who married Katherine, daughter and co-heir to Sr William Moburley, and had issue:

HUGH BOSTOCK of Edgarley in Cheshire, who married Jone, daughter and co-heir to John Del heath of Churton heath in Com: Cestr: (*in the County of Chester*), and had issue:

GEORGE BOSTOCK of Childs Arcoll in Com: Salop, who married Jone, daughter to John Horne of Childs Arcoll, and had issue:

JONE BOSTOCK, who married William Jennings, and had issue:

THOMAS JENNINGS, who married Alice, daughter of (Richard) Bright of Collen, and had issue:

KATHERINE JENNINGS, who married William Branch of Abingdon.

It is interesting to note that the Bostocks of Berkshire had two coats of arms, sometimes used separately and sometimes quartered. As thus:

*Quarterly 1st and 4th, sable, a helmet argent; 2nd and 3rd, sable, a fesse humettée argent. Crest, an antelope argent, attired or.*

Branches of this distinguished family settled in Cheshire at Barton, Belgrave, Churton, Mobberley, Moulton and Tattenhall; and in Surrey at Tandridge.

The Hawise de Quinci, mentioned in the preceding pedigree, who married (2nd) Sir Warren Bostock, was a descendant of

ROGNWALD, Earl of More in Norway (circa 890), who had issue:

ROLF GANGER, or ROLLO, first Duke of Normandy, who had issue:

WILLIAM OF THE LONG SWORD, Duke of Normandy, who had issue:

RICHARD THE FEARLESS, Duke of Normandy, who had issue:

RICHARD THE GOOD, Duke of Normandy, who had issue:

ROBERT THE DEVIL, Duke of Normandy, who had issue:

MARGARET, who married Richard-goz, Viscount of Auveranche, and had, with other issue:

MAUD, who married Ralph de Meschines, and had issue:

RANULPH DE MESCHINES, Vicomte Bayeux in Normandy, created Earl of Chester at the decease of his first cousin Richard de Abrincis, second Earl of Chester, who married Lucia, widow of Roger de Romera, and daughter of Algar, Earl of Chester, and had issue:

RANULPH DE MESCHINES, Earl of Chester, died 1153, who married Maud, daughter of Robert, Earl of Gloucester, natural son of King Henry I, and had issue:

HUGH KEVELIOK, (born in Merionethshire), who married Bertred, daughter of Simon, Earl of Evreux, in Normandy, and had issue:

HAWISE DE MESCHINES, who married (1st) Robert de Quinci, Earl of Lincoln, and (2nd) Sir Warren Bostock.

*Compare Burke's "EXTINCT PEERAGES," page 1; pages 346-350.*

The Lucia de Romera, mentioned in the preceding pedigree, was a descendant of

ALFRED THE GREAT, who married Elswitha, daughter of Ethelred, Ealderman of Mercia, and had issue:

ETHELFLEDA, died 920, who married Ethelred, Duke of Mercia, and had issue:

ELFWINA, who, after being dispossessed of her territories, married a West Saxon nobleman, and had issue:

ALGAR, Earl of Mercia, who had issue:

LUCIA, who married (1st) Roger de Romera, Earl of Lincoln, and (2nd) Ranulph de Meschines.

*Compare "AMERICANS OF ROYAL DESCENT," page 253.*

### Note II

THOMAS JENNINGS and Alice Bright Jennings had issue:

JOANE JENNINGS, who married Thomas Smith, who was Mayor of Abingdon in 1584.

THOMAS JENNINGS.

WILLIAM JENNINGS.

RICHARD JENNINGS.

KATHERINE JENNINGS, who married William Branch of Abingdon.

A DAUGHTER, who married (1st) ——— Stilman, and (2nd) ——— Cokswell.

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THOMAS SMITH and Joane Jennings Smith had issue:

SIR THOMAS SMITH, who graduated from Christ Church, Oxford, becoming Public Orator in 1582, Proctor in 1584; then secretary to the second Earl of Essex, and clerk to the Privy Council in 1587; member for Parliament for Cricklade in 1588-9, for Tamworth in 1593, for Aylesbury in 1597-8; in 1597 clerk of Parliament, in place of Anthony Wyckes, alias Mason; in 1599 sent to summon the Earl of Essex before the Privy Council; knighted by James I and made Latin secretary, master of requests, &c.; buried at Fulham, where there is a monument of him; and left bequests to the Bodleian Library

and to Abingdon. He married Frances, daughter of William Bruges, Lord Bruges.

RICHARD SMITH, "a capitaine", and presumably the "unnatural father" alluded to in the will of William Branch of Abingdon,

WILLIAM SMITH.

JOHN SMITH, reader at Abingdon St. Nicholas, No. 1583.

ELEANOR SMITH.

ALICE SMITH.



## Note J

This tablet, of black slate framed in marble, is affixed to a pillar in St. Helen's aisle to the right of St. Helen's main altar. It displays two clasped hands with the motto "*Nec morti divisi*"; and for the rest reads:

*"Depositum sui in spem resurrectionis.*

*Huic terrae crediderunt*

<i>"Robertus Payne</i>	<i>"Martha, uxor eius,</i>
<i>De villa de Wanting</i>	<i>filia Guliel Branch</i>
<i>Orizndus</i>	<i>de Abindun</i>
<i>Vir</i>	<i>Foemina</i>
<i>Religione, fide, Probitate</i>	<i>Pietate, Pudicitia cultu</i>
<i>Antiquis</i>	<i>Ingenuis</i>
<i>Ob vitiae integritate (?m) &amp;</i>	<i>Animo (?Dilecta)</i>
<i>Candidos Morcs Bonis</i>	<i>In Virgum Obsequenti</i>
<i>Omnibus Multum</i>	<i>In Prolem, Provido</i>
<i>Dilectus</i>	<i>In Egenos, Fragili</i>
<i>Practoris Officia, in Hoc</i>	<i>In Omnes</i>
<i>Oppido Quater Funct.</i>	<i>Benigno</i>
<i>Vixit Ann LXXV</i>	<i>Vixit Ann. LVII</i>
<i>Obiit IIII ID Febr.</i>	<i>Obiit V. ID Decemb.</i>
<i>Anno, A Partu Virg</i>	<i>Anno, A Partu Virg.</i>
<i>MDCXXVII</i>	<i>MDCXXVI.</i>

*Robertus Payne, filius*

*P. M. P.*

The circumstance of the tablet's displaying no armorial bearings, in the light of later events, is fairly significant.

For some years later Robert Payne, erector of the tablet, and the oldest son of Robert Payne and Martha Branch Payne, claimed the privilege of bearing arms—a symbol in those days of gentility—but, his right to this honor being evidently contested, was put to the necessity of entering a disclaimer of this privilege at the Heralds' Visitation of Berkshire in 1665.

It would seem apparent that Martha Branch married somewhat beneath her.

## Note J

WILL OF JOHN PAYNE OF ABINGDON, CO. BERKS, WOOL-  
LENDRAPER, DATED 25 JULY, 7 CHARLES I. (1631.)

"To be buried in the parish church of St. Helen's.

"To the poor of Abingdon £5.

"To my wife my house in Abingdon and my freehold land in weekfield or elsewhere in said county, with my leasehold land in county Oxon, and at her decease to my son John.

"To my son John and my daughter Joan £100 and £200 respectively, to be put forth by my executors for the increase of their portions; and my wife shall have £15 yearly for four years for the bringing up of my said two youngest children.

"My wife shall procure a certain bond wherein I stand bound to Mr. Jonas Hill my father in law, conditioned to make my wife a jointure, to the effect it may be cancelled. And if my wife or father in law go about to take any benefit of the said bond, then I declare the legacies above made to my said son and daughter to be void, and I give my house and land to my daughters Martha and Elizabeth Paine.

"To my said daughters £300 apiece at 18.

"I desire my brother Robert Paine to take upon himself the bringing up of my said daughters, and I will they shall have all the silver spoons given them by their godfathers and godmothers.

"To my goddaughter Anne Mayott two silver spoons.

"To my father in law Mr. William Lee, my brother in law Mr. John Mayott and his wife, and to William Castle and his wife, 20s. apiece to buy them rings, and the like to my brothers Robert, Richard, William, Thomas and Francis.

"Executors, my brothers Robert, Richard and William Paine.

"To my servants George Bartholomew and William Willis £8 apiece.

"To my maid Agnes Hauks £3.

"To my cousin Joan Cake £4.

"Overseers, my father in law Mr. William Lee and my brother in law John Mayott.

"Witnesses: James Heron, John Richardson, George Bartholomew, William Willis.

"Proved 12 Oct., 1631, by the executors named."—  
ARCHDEACONRY OF BERKS: M; 255.

## Note K

Since the interesting will of Christopher Branch of "Kingsland" has never, so far as the compiler's knowledge extends, been printed in its entirety, it appears not unadvisable to reproduce the document herewith:

*"In the name of God, Amen; the twentieth of June 1678, I, Christopher Branch of Kingsland in the county of Henrico, being in yeares & memory, praises be to god, doe make this my last will and testament as followeth:*

"Item, I give my body unto the earth from whence it came and my soule unto my saviour Jesus Christ, who hath bought it with his most pretious Blood.

"Item, I give unto my sonne Thomas Branch my great Copper Caetell and a Book called Ursinis Catucis (? "*De Ursinis Catulis*" = "*Concerning Bear Cubs*," a treatise which, if still existent, is unknown to the present compiler; yet compare OVID, METAMORPHOSEON, LIBER XV, LINE 379), and I doe confirme the two hundred and forty acres of land that I have given him by deed of gift formerly.

"Item, I give unto my granson Christopher Branch all the land betweene the River and the long slash, begining at procters Creeke mouth, and run upward on the river to the pine tree that parts my land and my sonn Thomas, and from proctor Creek at the lower end of (the) long slash on the inside of the slash runing upward to my sonne Thomases land, unto him and his heirs males forever; provided that he shall help to build for his Brother Sam-

uell (a house of) four lengths of boards, every length to be five foot, with the help of the Negroe and Joab, if they live till Samuell be of ability to help and to seat it, and to help him to clear a corne field sufficiently fenced to keep out hoggs and Cattle.

"Item, I give unto my gransonne Samuell Branch, all the land that lyes betweene the long slash and the bottome called by the name of Jackes bottome, begining at proctors Creek and runing upwards to my sonne Thomas land, to him and his heirs forever; provided that he with the help of Christopher and the Negroe and Jobe, if it please god they live, doe build Benjamine one house of four lengths of board, every length of boards to be five foot long, & Clear and fense him a corne feild as much as they doe for Samuell, wth his help when he shall be able to seate it.

"It: (*Item*) I give unto my gransonne Benjamin Branch all the land that lyes between Jackes bottome and proctor Creek and runing upwards to my sonne Thomas land, to him and his heirs Males forever.

"It is my will that Christop. doe give unto Samuell and Benjamine six locus (*locust*) posts and two im (*elm*) posts when they shall build them their dwelling houses if they can find non on their owne ground.

"It is my will that if any of these Christop., Samuell and ("*and*" *deleted*) or Benjamine, doe dye before they come to the age of one-antwenty years then they (*their*) land shall returne to the next Brother and the goods that they shall have out of my Estate after my decease.

"It is my will that, after my descase, my sonne Thomas shall pay unto Christop. the rent that shall be due unto his Matie yearly for his two hundred and forty acres of land when it shall be demanded, likewise Mr. Gower, and Samuell and Benjamine when they shall seat their land.



VIEW FROM THE FRATERNITY'S COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOWING BRIDGE BUILT BY THE FRATERNITY IN 1416.





"It is my will that neither Samuell nor Benjamine go of the plantacon, but (they are) to live with xthopher and to have housing and ground, and to Worke together till they be able to seate their owne land, unless they be willing to goe of themselves.

"It is my will that my part of Jobes labour soe long as he hath to serve shall goe to maintaine Samuell, Benjamine and Sarah, and (that) the halfe of the Negroes labr goe to maintaine them.

"It is my will that the Cartway be not stopt up nor altered that now is to goe into the Woods for Timber or for fire Woode, but to have a Clear passage.

"It is my will that William and John Branch shall have liberty to fish or fowle in the Creekes or swamp. If Christop. shall refuse to help to build and clear for Samuell and Benjamine as I have set downe in this my will, then he shall pay six hundred pounds of tobaccoe to Each of them; and if Samuell shall refuse to help Benjamine to built (*sic*) and Clear, as I have set downe in this my will, then he shall pay to Benjamine six hundred pounds of tobaccoe.

"It: (*Item*) I give unto Thomas Jefferson one hogshead of tobaccoe of four hundred pounds Weight, whome I make wth my gransonne Christop. Branch my full and sole Exetrs of this my last will and testamt, and I desire them to see my will truly pformed.

"My debts and legacies being paid and buriall discharged, all the rest of my Estate I give unto my gransonne Christop. Branch, and Samuell and Benjamine and Sarah and Mary Branch, the Wife of Tho: Jefferson, to be equally divided among them.

"Witnesse my hand and seale the day and year above written. *Signed*, CHRISTOP. BRANCH. (Sealed with red wax.)

"Signed & sealed and delivered in the presents of us:  
Abell Gower, Richard Ward. Proved in Court by the  
oath of Mr. Abell Gower & Mr. Richard Ward, Witnesses  
to the Same, this twentieth day february, at Varina (for the  
County of Henrico) and in the year 1681-2. *Test. Wm.  
Randolph.*"

## Note II

FACSIMILE PAGE FROM THE CARTULARY OF THE FRATERNITY OF THE HOLY CROSS: FRONTISPIECE.

A transcript of this, with the abbreviations expanded, is given here for the reader's convenience.

*Transcriptum ac de verbo in verbum verum exemplare omnium et singulorum libertatum cartarum scriptorum et munimentorum omnium maneriarum terrarum et tenementorum pratorum pascuorum pasturarum Redditiuum seruitorum et prouentuum ffraternitatis siue gilde sancte crucis Abendonie in Comitatu Berks fundate Incipit cum dei laude Amen et primo de manerio de Scintelenes....*

*Sciunt presentes et futuri quod ego Philippus filius et heres Willelmi de Seynt Elcyme dedi concessi et hac presentii carta mea confirmaui Willelmo de Medebourn perpetuo vicario ecclesie sancte Elene de Abendon Ricardo Belle presbytero parochiali ecclesie sancti Nicholai et Johanni Buschup omnes terras et tenementa mea que habui iure hereditario in Villa de Suttone Suttone Wyk Dreykem Wyk et in Villa de Abendon vnam redditibus molendinis homagijs libetatis liberorum hominum seruitijs Wardis releuijs escaetis villenagijs villanis villenagia illa tenentibus cum eorum catallis et sequelis pratis pascuis pasturis moris haijs separalibus et comunibus et omnibus vbiq; pertinentijs suis sine aliquo retenemento quo mihi et heredibus meis accidere poterint quoquomodo Dedi etiam et concessi predictis Willelmo Ricardo et Johanni eum denarium annui redditus percipiendum de*

*manerio de fryleforde unacum reuersione eiusdem manerij et cum omnibus pertinentijs suis quando acciderit quod quidem manerium Edmundus de Seynt Eleyne frater meus tenet de me ad terminum vite sue tantum et unde reuersio ad me spectat post mortem dicti Edmundi Habendum et tenendum predictis Willclmo Ricardo et Johanni eorum heredibus et assignatis omnes terras et tenementa predicta cum omnibus pertinentijs suis predictis libere quiete iure hereditario imperpetuum ffaciendis inde capitalibus dominis feodi illius omnia seruitia que ad terras et tenementa illa pertinent pro omni seruicio seculari exactione et demanda Et ego dictus Philippus et heredes mei omnes terras et tenementa predicta unacum redditibus homagijs libertatibus seruitijs reuersionibus et omnibus alijs pertinentijs. . . .*

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