

MARY CHILTON'S TITLE  
TO CELEBRITY

BY  
CHARLES THORTON LIBBY



The declaration of Ann Winslow of Milton in the Province  
of the Massachusetts Bay widow. aged Ninety two years or  
thereabouts.

This Declarant testifies & says that she well  
knew Peter Sanford & William Sanford both of New Port in  
the Colony of Rhode Island & that they were the reputed Sur-  
viving Sons of Colonel Peter Sanford of said New Port dec'd.  
& that the Declarant always understood that the said Peter  
Sanford the son died about Sixty years ago in Boston &  
undec'd & never married leaving his Brother William  
Sanford Surviving. which said William Sanford died near  
fifty years ago leaving as this Declarant always understood  
& verily believes three daughters & which, Mary Margaret  
& Elizabeth. that the said Mary is the present wife of Andrew  
Oliver Esq<sup>r</sup> of Boston aforesd that the said Margaret married  
Thomas Hutchinson of said Boston Esq<sup>r</sup> & died leaving three  
sons & two daughters & the said Elizabeth is now living in  
Boston aforesd & unmarried. The Declarant further saith  
that the said Colonel Peter Sanford was Cousin German to  
the declarant's Mother & that this relation was the means  
of the declarant's having a more intimate acquaintance  
with the family of the said Colonel Peter Sanford.

Ann - Mrs Winslow  
her signing

Suffolk Co / April the 5<sup>th</sup> 1770  
Milton



# MARY CHILTON'S TITLE TO CELEBRITY

INVESTIGATED IN BEHALF OF  
A DESCENDANT OF  
JOHN HAWARD *Minimus*

BY  
CHARLES THORNTON LIBBY

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1926



The line of descent of

JOSIAH COLBY BASSETT,

OF BOSTON, MASS.,

whose personal interest in the Mary Chilton "story"  
was the occasion of this monograph, is as follows:

MARY (CHILTON) WINSLOW

SUSANNAH (WINSLOW) LATHAM

SARAH OR SUSANNAH (LATHAM) HAWARD

ROBERT HOWARD

DANIEL HOWARD

AMBROSE HOWARD

SIBYL (HOWARD) BASSETT

JOSIAH WILLIAMS BASSETT

of Winslow, Maine





## MARY CHILTON'S TITLE TO CELEBRITY

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The Mary Chilton story is usually stated with qualifying language, "said to have been," etc. Mitchell's Bridgewater gives it three times:

Under Winslow: Mary Chilton "was said to have been the first lady who came on shore."

Under Latham: Robert Latham's wife's mother was "the famous Mary Chilton, who is said to have been the first female who set foot on the Plymouth shore, 1620."

Under Howard: "John m. Sarah, dau. of Robert Latham. . . . Susannah, the eldest child, was probably named for her grandmother, Susannah Latham, who was dau. of John Winslow . . . and whose mother, Mary Chilton, is said to have been the first lady who came on shore at the landing of our forefathers at Plymouth in 1620."

Theoretically, two toes might have touched terra firma at one instant of time. Of course it would have been possible, if necessary or desirable, to have been so planned that the passengers came off the Mayflower as the animals boarded the ark, two by two. But the imagination rejects such a parade. After lingering weeks, tossed in a little craft on a weird journey across a vast ocean to a destiny known only to God, the moment for everybody to go ashore must have been awaited with some excitement, especially on the part of the children. Men had been ashore at different points, and encountered sundry adventures. At length they were making preparations for the women and children to land, whose eager faces watched the approaching minute. That minute grew nearer and nearer — to go ashore. There was quick breathing, shiftings of position, standing-room in the first row was at a premium. The fractions of a second until the stern voice of male authority should relax and indicate — Now!

No, this was no time for ceremony, no two-by-two's. Somebody, the one tugging hardest at the leash, did get ashore first. It has never been said that this was anybody but Mary Chilton.

Of course it is an attribute of tradition that it lives, and being alive, grows; and the new growths are lies, down to the time that it

is reduced to writing. The Mary Chilton tradition has been told in many forms, which, as they differ, cannot all be right. Some forms have been attacked by persons who have studied the circumstances of the landing of the Mayflower passengers until they feel themselves fully conversant therewith, and by them pronounced false to history and the whole tradition condemned as unfounded in fact. As a matter of course, some forms of the tradition must contain untrue details, or it would not sustain the essential characteristic of tradition.

The most authoritative although not the earliest form in which I have found it is as follows:

"Mary Chilton was the first European Female that landed on the North American shore; she came over with her father and mother and other adventurers to this new settlement. One thing worthy of notice is that her curiosity of being first on the American Strand prompted her, like a young Heroine, to leap out of the Boat and wade ashore."

She was a twelve-year-old girl at that time.

These words were written by a young man in 1769, by dictation of his aged grandmother, who was Mary Chilton's granddaughter. This paper is headed: "Memorials of my Progenitors taken by Winslow Taylor as related by my Grandmother, Madam Ann Winslow, September 1769." In the text is the further explanation: "John Winslow, another early adventurer, married the said Mary Chilton, from whom have descended a numerous and respectable posterity. My Grandmother, now living, and who affords me these memoirs, is their last surviving grandchild in the ninety-second year of her age."

The original manuscript is lost; but a copy made in 1790 by Col. Nathaniel Gilman is still preserved, and reads, *verbatim et literatim*, as follows:

Memorials of my Progenitors taken by Winslow Taylor as related by my Grandmother, Madam Ann Winslow, September 1769.\*

Mary Chilton was the first European Female that landed on the North American shore; she came over with her father & mother and other adventurers to this new settlement. One thing worthy of notice is that her curiosity of being first on the American Strand, prompted her, like a young Heroine, to leap out of the Boat & wade ashore. John

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\* Photographed and printed by permission of Mrs. Elizabeth K. Hills of Marblehead, Mass.

Winslow, another early adventurer, married the said Mary Chilton, from whom have descended a numerous and respectable posterity. My Grandmother, now living, and who affords me these memoirs, is the last surviving Grandchild in the ninety second year of her age.

Edward Winslow remained in England, his sons, who came over to New England, were Edward, John, Kenelm, Gilbert & Josiah. Edward Winslow, the son\* of Edward of Old England was my Grandmother Ann's father. The maiden name of my Grandmother's Grandmother was Katherine Hanly from Old England & died in New England. My Grandmother's Grandfather Edward Hutchinson was killed by the Indians at Albany. My Great Grandmother Winslow, the wife of Edward, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Hutchinson, died aged 89. Edward Winslow's first wife was Mary Hilton, by whom was John, Sarah & Mary. Edward Winslow's second wife was Elizabeth Hutchinson, by whom was Edward, Katherine, Elizabeth, Susannah & Ann, all of whom survived their Mother.

Thomas Taylor was born in the middle of Wales and Mrs. Ann Winslow believes he was a Minister there. Richard Taylor his son came over to New England and died here he left no other child than John Taylor my Grandfather. Mr. Richard Taylor having sustained a good character in life was lamented in Death. He bequeathed two handsome legacies to the Old Brick & old South Church in Boston. John Taylor my Grandfather son of said Richard died in Jamaica. My Grandfather John Taylor married my Grandmother Ann Winslow, the Youngest Daughter of Edward, by whom was John Taylor, afterwards Minister at Milton he died aged 45. His death is lamented as a Gentleman, Scholar & Christian. Elizabeth, William, (my father), Rebecca and Nancy, children of John & Ann Taylor, were born in Jamaica. My Great Grandmother Elizabeth Winslow was just 30 years of age the day after the birth of her first child Edward my Great Uncle.

Kenelm Winslow one of the first adventurers was the father of Nathaniel & Nathaniel was father of Kenelm (my Grandfather by my Mother. He married Abigail Waterman by whom was Sarah, Abigail, Nathaniel, Faith, Kenelm, Joseph. My Grandmother Taylor whose maiden name was Ann Winslow, after her return from Jamaica, married Kenelm Winslow, son of Nathaniel. William Taylor, my father, the son of John & Ann, married Faith, my Mother, the Daughter of Kenelm & Abigail, by whom was William, John, Abigail, Elizabeth, Winslow, Joseph and Joshua.

The foregoing is taken from a paper said to  
be written by Winslow Taylor, son to William  
Taylor of Milton, who was Uncle to my Mother.

July 25, 1790.

N. G.

A deposition in the York County, Maine, court files, given by this aged lady six months later, at Milton, Mass., 5 April 1770, and

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\* This should be *grandson*. Evidently the generations were too many for the young author to grasp. He had already stated them correctly.

bearing her autograph, corroborates her age and family connections. It reads as follows:

The declaration of Ann Winslow of Milton in the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, widow, aged Ninety two years or thereabouts.

This Declarant testifies & says that she well knew Peleg Sanford & William Sanford both of New Port in the Colony of Rhode Island & that they were the reputed surviving sons of Colonel Peleg Sanford of said New Port dec<sup>d</sup> & that the declarant always understood that the said Peleg Sanford the son died about Sixty years ago in Boston & under Age & never married, Leaving his Brother William Sanford surviving, which said William Sanford died near fifty years ago Leaving as this declarant always understood & verily Believes three daughters & coheirs, Mary, Margaret & Grizzell. that the said Mary is the present wife of Andrew Oliver Esq<sup>r</sup> of Boston afores<sup>d</sup> that the said Margaret married Thomas Hutchinson of said Boston Esq<sup>r</sup> & died Leaving three sons & two daughters, & the said Grizzell is now Living in Boston afores<sup>d</sup> & unmarried. The Declarant further saith that the said Colonel Peleg Sanford was Cousin German to the declarants Mother, & that this Relation was the means of the declarants having a more intimate acquaintance with the family of the said Colonel Peleg Sanford.\*

Ann Winslow, daughter of Edward and Elizabeth (Hutchinson) Winslow, was born 7 Aug. 1678. — Boston Rec. Com. Reports, 1883, p. 147. Mary (Chilton) Winslow died shortly before 1 May 1679. — Suffolk Probate Records, vol. 6, pp. 300-1. These two lived contemporaries for a half-year. Grandmother and grandchild saw each other, without conversing. But Ann Winslow's brothers and sisters were amply old enough to remember their grandmother and to have heard the gay boast of being the first ashore from her own lips. The younger sister must have heard the story repeated many times.

After Ann Winslow had herself grown old, and was imparting the "memoirs" to her grandson, at the age of nearly 92, her memory was such that she knew one of her great-grandparents, all of her grandparents, and her first husband's grandfather, Thomas Taylor, who never came to this country. Herself and her second husband

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\* A facsimile of this deposition is used as a frontispiece for this monograph. Madam Ann Winslow, who married (1) John Taylor, (2) Kenelm Winslow, was the youngest sister of Sheriff Edward Winslow of Boston. Their grandfather, Capt. Edward Hutchinson, who lost his life in King Philip's War, and Mrs. Bridget (Hutchinson) Sanford-Phillips, mother of Col. Peleg Sanford, were children of the famous Mrs. Anne Hutchinson — yet Madam Winslow in her memoirs mentioned not her name.

both Winslows, she knew the Winslow genealogy for seven generations.

So here we have the fullest opportunities for knowledge and the impartment of it. We have one old lady telling an interesting anecdote of her own girlhood to her grandchildren, and another old lady telling a story of her grandmother to her grandson. Both old ladies were eminently proper and highly respected — none more so. We must either accept the narration as true, at least the pith of it, or believe that one or the other of these old ladies blandly lied in order to deceive their own grandchildren into making false boasts to no purpose!

If Mary Chilton was not the first ashore, what occasion ever was there for saying anything about it?

On this evidence alone, and in the absence of counter evidence, what antiquary can feel so insecure in his historical judgment as to shrink from the unqualified statement, as matter of history: The first woman or girl of the Mayflower passengers to get ashore at Plymouth was Mary Chilton.

The earlier reduction of the tradition to writing is under date of Boston, Feb. 4, 1744/5. It was written by a young man on his twenty-third birthday, Edward, afterwards Deacon, Paine. Born 4 Feb. 1721/2, he was only four when his grandmother died, but thirteen when his father died, who was the William Paine called grandson in Mr. John Winslow's will. William Paine was son of Sarah (Winslow) Standish-Paine-Middlecott, born 22 Jan. 1669/70. He was nine years old when his grandmother, Mary Chilton, died, an age at which his mind would readily be impressed by such a narrative of her exploit.

Besides what Edward Paine was told by his father that his grandmother told him, there were his numerous Winslow relations to impart family lore, which as regards the genealogy he sadly bungled. Of Mr. John Winslow the writing says:

"Son of Edward, Gov. of Plymouth; he married Miss Chilton, the first European Woman that landed in this Coast. Gov. Winslow had 3 sons, John, Kenelm, and Edwd. General Winslow was son of Edward.\*

This form of the anecdote is in full accord with what his father's

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\* *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 13, p. 411.

first cousin, Ann (Winslow) Taylor-Winslow, told her grandson 24 years later.

The tradition also traces back to Mrs. Ann (Winslow) Taylor-Winslow through other channels. In the enlarged edition of Thacher's Plymouth, Boston, 1835, is an extended footnote on the Boston Winslows, furnished by a descendant. This says:

"The tradition of the family, confirmed by a writing at the death of Ann Taylor, in 1773, is, that Mary Chilton "was the first female who set her foot on the American shore."\*

A third channel leads back both to Madam Ann Winslow and to her cousins, the Lathams, but was not reduced to writing, as far as I have found, until 1853.

Hon. Beza Hayward, H. C. 1772, teaching school in Milton, became acquainted with the widow Ann Taylor, then ninety-four years old, and claiming, like himself, a descent from Mary Chilton. This old lady communicated to him the following family tradition, which he often related in our presence and hearing, and, as nearly as I can now recollect, in the following words: "Mary Chilton, when going ashore in the boat, said she would be the first to land—jumped out, and, wetting her feet, ran to the shore."†

Beza Hayward of Bridgewater, born there 20 Jan. 1752, was a grandson of Charles Latham, son of Chilton Latham. Hayward's sister's husband, Dr. James Thacher, in 1832, printed a distorted version of the Latham tradition, as follows:

"The following traditional anecdote has ever been regarded as correct among the Chilton descendants. The Mayflower having arrived in the harbor from Cape Cod, Mary Chilton entered the first landing boat, and, looking forward, exclaimed, "I will be the first to step on that Rock." Accordingly, when the boat approached, Mary Chilton was permitted to be the first from that boat who appeared on the Rock, and thus her claim was established."‡

The earliest I have found the story in print is in 1815, in "Notes on Plymouth," attributed to Samuel Davis:

"There is a tradition as to the person who first leaped upon this rock, when the families came on shore, Dec. 11, 1620: it is said to have been a young woman, Mary Chilton. This information comes from a source so correct as induces us to admit it; and it is a very probable circumstance,

\* Page 95.

† Russell's Pilgrim Memorials, third edition, 1864, p. 26, copied from a communication to a newspaper, the *Old Colony Memorial*, in 1853.

‡ History of the Town of Plymouth, Boston, 1832.

from the natural impatience of a young person, or any other, after a long confinement on ship-board, to reach the land, and to escape from the crowded boat.\* We leave it, therefore, as we find it, in the hands of history and the fine arts.

“\*Among those who came in the May Flower were Richard [*sic*] Chilton (who died the first winter), Mary, and Susannah Chilton. Mary, it is said, married Mr. John Winslow; and Susannah, Mr. Latham. The descendants of Mrs. Winslow are in Boston; and of Mrs. Latham in Bridgewater. The tradition, we have reason to believe, is in both families. We are disposed, however, to generalize the anecdote. The first generation doubtless knew who came on shore in the first boats; the second generation related it with less identity. . . .”†

This footnote bristles with the earmarks of genuine, untutored tradition.

By all these paths the tradition traces back, some of them to those who heard the boast from the lips of Mary Chilton herself, naturally the best informed witness, and one whose truthfulness under such circumstances it would be revolting to question. That she was “the first European Female” is beyond the shadow of reasonable doubt.

#### THE EVIDENCES OF THE LATHAM-HOWARD DESCENT

Mary Chilton's children, except one or more that died early, are clearly disclosed in the records. Herself born about 1608, the venerable Bradford summed up her genealogy in 1650-1:

“James Chilton and his wife also dyed in the first Infection, but their daughter Mary is still living and hath 9 children; and one daughter is married & hath a child, so their increase is 10.”

Both her husband and herself left wills naming children and grandchildren; and her oldest son, John, left a will in which he remembered the children of some of his brothers and sisters.‡ The father's and mother's wills show nine children. Mr. Bradford's census of the Mayflower's “increase,” made in December, 1650, or very soon after, gives to Mary Chilton nine children. Benjamin

† *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, second series, vol. 3, p. 174.

‡ The Winslow wills are printed in *The Mayflower Descendent*, vol. 1, p. 65; vol. 3, p. 129; vol. 10, p. 54.

was born 12 Aug. 1653, making ten. Thacher's list, furnished by the Boston Winslows, reckons two granddaughters as daughters, Mercy Harris, daughter of Susannah (Winslow) Latham, and Ann Leblond, daughter of Mary (Winslow) Gray. Edward Paine's list of his grandmother's brothers and sisters places Ann Leblond correctly as his father's first-cousin, yet reckons two of Mrs. Leblond's sisters, Mrs. Southworth and Mrs. Little, as his grandmother's sisters. Desire Gray was married to Nathaniel Southworth 10 Jan. 1671/2; Sarah Gray to Samuel Little 18 May 1682. Mary Chilton had but three daughters, unless the child that died early was a daughter.

Little can be added to the list of the children of John and Mary (Chilton) Winslow given in the latest edition of Winthrop's "History of Plymouth Plantation,"\* which may perhaps be varied as follows:

Susannah, m. about 1649 Robert Latham.

Mary, (1630-1663), m. 1651 Edward Gray.)

John, ( —1683), m. (1) Elizabeth —; (2) Judith —.

Edward, (1634-1682), m. (1) Sarah Hilton; (2) Elizabeth Hutchinson.

Sarah, m. (1) 1660 Myles Standish, Jun.; (2) Tobias Paine; (3) Richard Middlecott.

Joseph, ( —1679); m. Sarah —.

Samuel, (1641-1680); m. Hannah Briggs.

Isaac, (1644-1670); m. 1666 Mary Nowell.

——, living 1651; died early s. p.

Benjamin, (1653-1676); died s. p.

In the absence of a residuary clause in Mrs. Mary Winslow's will, the Suffolk County Court, 7 Aug. 1679, ordered a division into seven parts "among her five children now living and the children of her son Joseph Winslow, deceased," the eldest son to have a double portion. The record does not disclose why the children of Mary Gray and the young daughter of Isaac Winslow were not allowed to share. The court had authority to cut off children who had received their full portions in a parent's lifetime.

Susannah Latham, daughter of John and Mary (Chilton) Winslow, is named in her father's will, her mother's will and her brother John's will, but with her children comes mistiness. The Lathams'

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\* History of Plymouth Plantation, Massachusetts Historical Society edition, vol. 2, p. 409, note.



genealogy is as cloudy as the Winslows' is clear. There are circumstances which might indicate that Robert Latham had three wives, one before Susannah Winslow and one after. Her brother John Winslow's will, dated 3 Oct. 1683, left land to "the two sons of my sister Susannah Latham deceased." Robert Latham had *three* sons then living, and 14 Nov. 1685 Robert Latham and wife Susannah acknowledged a deed two years later than John Winslow's will describes his sister as "deceased." \*

Robert Latham died intestate, and his estate was not probated. He left lands. Of course there was no inventory, but his page in the Bridgewater Proprietors' records partly answers as an inventory, and several recorded deeds show that he left lands. By the colony laws in this case a share of his lands fell to his daughters, if he had any. Of the four daughters ascribed to him by Judge Mitchell, only one had any of his lands, so far as I have found, and I think I pursued the search as far as is worth while. On this state of facts, and under normal conditions, the most explicit and clearly unmistakable proofs would be necessary to justify us in regarding as a daughter one who inherited nothing, Judge Mitchell's authority to the contrary notwithstanding.

But there are several indications in the records that the conditions involving the settlement of Robert Latham's estate, far from being normal, were extraordinary for abnormalcy.

The problem turns on the idiosyncrasies of James Latham. He unmistakably had some, and it is unmistakable from the records that after the death of Robert Latham, intestate, the settlement of his affairs was assumed by his son James, independent of the Probate Court and without any recorded agreement of heirs, or recorded papers of any kind, until more than 27 years had passed, when one most peculiar paper was recorded:

"Forasmuch as our father Robert Latham late of said Bridgewater was in his lifetime seized and possessed of certain lands both in the town of Bridgewater and elsewhere and Dyed Intestate, and my brother Chilton Latham being settled on and possessed of some part of ye lands of our said Father, I the said James Latham do quitclaim . . ." (said land, with several other lots, including half a purchaser's right in the undivided lands,) . . . "only with this condition that if there shall at any time hereafter appear any conveyance of any part of the abovemen-

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\* Plymouth County Deeds, vol. 5, p. 28.

tioned lands given before the date of these presents and such as shall be deemed good and sufficient in law. . . ." (such lands to be excepted from this conveyance).\*

This discloses a previous "conveyance" concerning which the younger brother, now grown to mature years, had his fears. A further point to note is that such had been the prevailing family view under James's influence that Chilton was even now content with a quitclaim from James alone, without quitclaims from his other brother and his sisters. Obviously the effect of this deed was to make Chilton the owner of his own and James's shares in such of their father's lands as were described in the deed, but had no effect on the shares of the other children.

A similar disclosure is made in a deed dated 28 Feb. 1688/9, from Joseph Latham of Bridgewater to John Thompson of Middleboro, conveying:

"Part of a certain tract of meadow which my honored father Robert Latham late of Bridgewater deceased formerly bought of Mr. Edward Gray of Plymouth. . . . which said five acres of meadow I had of my brother by agreement, as may appear by deed bearing date February 13, 1688/9." \*\*

What might have been an heirship deed if properly drawn is a deed of *full warranty* by James Latham to Joseph Washburn, 1708, of three lots in Titicut purchase, "which were my father Latham's right in said purchase." † Here again a sister's husband rested content with a deed, (of full warranty, it is true) from one of her brothers, with no conveyance from her other brothers and sisters.

James Latham's recorded deeds show two other instances where he deeded his father's lands, so stated in the deeds, as if they had been his own — not his share with his brothers and sisters, but the whole. These deeds were given as early as 1690.‡ His sales of lands in which he did not recite his title, and which may have been his father's, were numerous.

If at this late day we assume to invade the secrecy in which James Latham seems to have loved to shroud his and his relations'

\* James Latham to Chilton Latham, 18 Apr. 1715, Plymouth County Deeds, vol. 12, p. 521.

\*\* Plymouth County Deeds, vol. 2, p. 26.

† Plymouth County Deeds, vol. 12, p. 118.

‡ Plymouth County Deeds, vol. 25, p. 2; vol. 24, p. 4.

affairs, it would explain much if we should suppose the father to have made a nuncupative will giving everything to James, but which James did not think necessary to prove in court. Such a will could have charged him to turn over certain lands and make certain payments to his brothers and sisters, and James's disposition may have been so imperious that his brothers and sisters acquiesced in his course with greater or lesser willingness.

A different explanation, if James was the oldest son, might be that Robert Latham's own choice adhered to the English law of primogeniture; that he did not want his estate split up among all his children, according to New England laws; and that they, or some of them, acquiesced. A still different explanation is that James settled with his brothers and sisters, and took releases from them, but chose to save the fees rather than have the documents recorded, either in the Probate Court or the Registry of Deeds, except from his brother Joseph.

It also has a practical bearing on the situation that Robert Latham died during the evil régime of Governor Andros, when the extortionate fees exacted by his satellites afforded strong inducement for heirs to carry out the provisions of a father's will without probate or guardianship proceedings. On the other hand, the wording of no deed mentions a will, James Latham's deed states there was no will, and Joseph Latham's deed speaks of an "agreement." Of course the son Chilton, a minor with no guardian, could not join in a legal agreement.

Plymouth County deeds, vol. 10, pp. 147, 150, are two deeds from Joseph Latham of Providence to James Latham of Bridgewater, one conveying 56 acres on the East side of Satucket River measuring 160 x 35 rods, the other 50 acres on the Northeast side of Satucket Pond. One of these lots was the land laid out to Joseph by his father's orders in 1679. The other lot I did not fully identify as formerly their father's land. If it was such, this would show that Joseph's attitude, in demanding his rights from his brother, was different from the way the other brethren treated him; and therefore James not only bought his share but recorded the deed.

I did go into the subject of the Titicut lands far enough to say flatly that James Latham had no rights there of his own. Mitchell's treatment of the "young men's" grants is somewhat confusing, or

at least not clarifying. There were two sets of them; those "male children from 20 years old and upwards" 17 June 1675 shared in the Titicut lands; and those 21 years old by 25 July 1682 received the young men's shares in the Northern division.

In the town meeting at which it was determined who should have an interest in the land northward of the town of Bridgewater, between the Four Mile and the Bay line, this meeting held 25 July 1682, a motion was first put and lost that they should be those who were in town when the land was granted. Then another motion was put and lost that they should be those in town at present. Finally a motion was put and carried that those who had an interest in the Titicut lands should have six miles at the Westerly end, and the remainder at the Eastern end "to be distributed among those that were one-and-twenty years old and upwards that have had no interest in any other lands." \* Under this vote twenty names were listed, mostly young sons of the Bridgewater families, including two younger brothers of John Hayward *Minimus*, James and Jonathan, and *James Latham*. The young men of 1675 were numbered among the "old men" by 1682, the six miles to the north and northwest being known as the "old men's shares," the land to the northeast as the "young men's shares."

Although it is certain that James Latham had no interest in the Titicut lands, except as one of the heirs of his father, yet he handled them as his own, and his name appears in two or more lists of Titicut lot owners paying assessments on their lots.

If the principles that dominated the settlement of James Latham's father's estate had been permitted to apply to his own, we of the later centuries might be more favorably impressed; but he reversed them. The same purpose to keep things within his own arbitrary control marks his life throughout, whether as a son towards his father's children or as a father towards his own children. Both ends and the middle seem to have run together somewhere in the rear of James Latham's two eyes as he looked out on the world.

Something stronger than circumstantial evidence fortifies me in this criticism of a man long dead and not in position to reply. The treatment of his estate, once his dominating personality had

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\* Bridgewater Town Records, vol. 1, p. 80.

been lain away, disclosed the man. It is hard not to conclude that both his children and his neighbors, and also the court, all participated in disapproval of his ideas on how estates ought to be settled. His oldest son promptly put his estate within the jurisdiction of the Judge of Probate, which evidently the father never intended should happen. The neighbors who appraised the estate, acting, it must be, by wish of most or all of the children, headed their inventory thus:

Inventory 8 Feb. 1738/9 of the estate of Mr. James Latham  
*"and of all he did settle upon his children in his lifetime."*

To Daniel Johnson and wife fifty pounds in cash.

Two acres of land laid out to Nicholas Wade upon Latham's purchase right.

Three acres laid out to Col. Holman  
 advanced by the estate in his lifetime 3:15:0

Two acres granted and not yet laid out.

20 acres on the back side of Snell meadow.

Real estate by Deed of Gift settled by the intestate in his lifetime = Homestead to son Joseph, &c., &c., &c.\*

The court ruled that in view of the situation the entire estate left by James Latham should be divided among his three daughters. Thus quickly were his peculiar ideas of the fitness of things shattered, once his personal insistence passed out of touch in the course of nature. It may be remarked in his favor that his treatment of his sisters was in some measure duplicated towards his own daughters.

Fortunately for historical truth, although James Latham's methods would have left everything in darkness, these circumstances gleanable from existing records seem more than ample to reverse the inference which would normally be drawn from an alleged daughter's not sharing in her supposed father's estate. There was nothing normal about James Latham's ideas of heirship; rather was he a law of descent unto himself.

It is hard to believe but that the course of John Haward *Minimus* in handling his own father's estate was consciously or unconsciously prompted and quickened in a way to give his recalcitrant brother-in-law an object lesson. The date of Lieut. John Haward's death is not known, but in July Session, 1701, his innkeeper's license was renewed, although his son was principal in the innkeeper's bond.

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\* Plymouth County Probate Records, vol. 8, p. 4.

On Sept. 24 the inventory of his estate was taken. Oct. 16, an agreement of the heirs to a division of the estate was executed, and Oct. 24 this was recorded. July 29, 1702, John Haward appeared before the judge with his vouchers, and was discharged from his administrator's bond.\* Such extraordinary punctiliousness is almost unparalleled in the records.

There is a case in the Sessions Court, September Term, 1705, which does not seem like the always proper John Haward:

"Benjamin Leach now appearing to answer ye complaint of John Hayward for stealing a considerable quantity of boards of his from Setuckett Sawmills pleaded that he was Employed to do what he did by James Latham. Thereupon James Latham came into Court and plead that the boards which Benjamin Leach carried to ye Landing place from Setucket mill were his boards and carried by his order, and put himself upon tryall by a Jury who were sworn to try ye same and brought In their verdict viz. not guilty." †

There can be no doubt that "John Hayward" in 1705 was John Haward, formerly Minimus, and the record, so far as we may understand it, the evidence in the case not being preserved, warrants the suggestion that he was trying to realize something on his wife's portion without taking his brother-in-law into court.

Also the town record of 11 June 1680, appointing ten men to build a horse bridge "near the place where the three rivers meet," bears testimony. Two names together in the list are Isaac Harris and John Hayward *Mini.*, two of Robert Latham's sons-in-law. This was some four miles from John Haward's boyhood home, and indicates that he had married and settled in that neighborhood.‡

By the practice of the Bridgewater Proprietors each one of them was given a separate portion of the record book, where in some families five or more generations inherited before the rights of their ancestor in the common lands had been all laid out. Under Robert Latham's name appear: Joseph Washburn, son Joseph Latham, James Latham, Chilton Latham, Nicholas Wade, Thomas Latham.

The names of the children of Robert and Susannah (Winslow) Latham, as given by Judge Mitchell, with the addition of Susannah

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\* Plymouth County Probate Records, vol. 1, pp. 353-6, 365.

† Plymouth County Sessions Records, vol. 1, p. 222.

‡ Bridgewater Town Records, vol. 1, p. 77.

who was repeatedly remembered in the wills of her Winslow relations, are as follows:

Mercy, 1650, at Plymouth, m. Isaac Harris.

James,

Chilton, m. Susannah 1699; d. 1751 ae. 80.

Joseph was at Providence 1690 and 1703, whose wife Phebe signed a deed in 1688.

Elizabeth, m. Francis Cook, 1687.

Hannah, m. Joseph Washburn, Jr.

Sarah, m. John Haward, Jr.

Susannah, thrice named in Winslow wills.

Of these eight names, the birth of one was recorded, four had Latham lands, three were named in Winslow wills, five are disclosed in various county records. All of these entries are silent regarding Elizabeth or Sarah, Francis Cook or John Haward.

Judge Mitchell evidently made no attempt to list the children in the order of their ages. John Haward's wife could not have been one of the younger children. My own tentative rearrangement would be as follows:

Mercy, b. 2 June 1650, at Plymouth; m. Isaac Harris.

Joseph, given land by his father, 1679.

Susannah, m. John Haward.

James, aged 21 or over 25 July 1682.

Hannah, m. Joseph Washburn.

Elizabeth, b. 1665; m. Francis Cook, 1687; d. 16 Nov. 1730  
in 66th year — gravestone.

Chilton, b. 1671; d. 6 Aug. 1751 in 80th year — gravestone.

In this arrangement I have not made James the oldest son, although his treatment of his father's lands would thus be better explained. His age, according to the modern monument now standing, was supplied by tradition. There is no record of his death. Reckoning his age at death as 80, as given by tradition, he was 24 years old when his name first appears in any way in the records.

Joseph, on the other hand, had lands laid out to him under his father's right in 1679, which ordinarily, although not certainly under these circumstances, would carry his birth back to 1658. Allowing a moderate overstatement of James's age at death makes him younger than Joseph. Still further, if we regard Joseph's mother as an earlier wife of Robert Latham than we know anything about, this would make him 31 when he received his land.

By making Joseph younger than Mercy, we make him a son of

Susannah (Winslow) Latham, and come in conflict with her brother John's will, made in 1683, in which he leaves land to "the *two* sons of my sister, Susannah Latham *deceased*." Chilton Latham was certainly her son, remembered in his Grandmother Mary (Chilton) Winslow's will. James, too, was, as he was certainly younger than Mercy and older than Chilton. If Joseph also was her son, this makes *three* sons of Susannah Latham living on the date of the will. Of course there were blundering scriveners in the 17th century, as there are in the 20th; if we suppose two blunders of one blunderer, there is no other reason for thinking that Robert Latham had more than one wife. Perhaps the words *two* (instead of three) and *deceased* were scrivener's errors. As only nine days elapsed between the date and the probate of the will, it may have been made under distressing circumstances.

Possibly a more protracted search than I made would disclose who received the land devised by this will. I did not find that any of the Lathams had it. The land lay at Nemasket River in Middleboro. Part at least of the rights of John Winslow, Jun., deceased, were laid out before 1706 to his nephew Nathaniel Southworth, part to Elkanah Leonard.\*

It will be noticed that I drop "Sarah" from the list of children and make Susannah the wife of John Haward. We at least know with explicit certainty that there was a daughter Susannah. Judge Mitchell wrote without referring to the Winslow wills in Boston. If all the information he had was the ancient family knowledge that one of the Latham aunts was grandmother to the Hawards, and that the name of John Haward's wife was Sarah in a deed of 1703; his course was plain to set her down as Sarah. He might even have done this while "family traditions and recollections" were telling him her name was Susannah. An extended search has failed to disclose any other than this single mention of John Haward's wife or wives.†

There can be no reasonable doubt that on 28 June 1703 the wife of John Haward was Sarah. In the record of the deed it was written Sara, like other records by the same recorder: *Jeremia*,

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\* Middleboro Proprietors' Records, pp. 333, 334, 568; Plymouth County Deeds, vol. 7, p. 94.

† Plymouth County Deeds, vol. 5, p. 159.



*Debora, Micaja, Lydia, Lydiah.*\* But his children had apparently all been born several years before that date. After I had concluded as more probable that it was the daughter Susannah who married John Haward, I found in William Latham's manuscript additions to Mitchell's History the following: "Qu. His D. Sarah should be *Susannah*." Whether Esq. Latham was led to this by some such reasoning as myself, or whether in his youth he had heard aged people say that her name was Susannah, this unexplained query does not disclose; but it does reveal that he did not fully accept Judge Mitchell's authority in calling her Sarah.

I spent time enough on the numerous John Haywards and John Hawards to enable myself to interpret the different records with certainty. I am able to state that John Hayward who deposited 19 Dec. 1693, aged about 40,† was our John Haward *Minimus*. While the Haywards were almost always thus spelt, the family of Lieut. John appeared indifferently as Haward or Hayward. After the death of Lieut. John Haward in 1701, John Hayward of the Plains, formerly called Junior, whose children were born 1663-1687, now was termed "Senior," while plain John Haward or Hayward was the one formerly *Minimus*.‡ The John who married Susannah Edson and died in 1705 and the John who married Sarah Willis and died 23 June 1713 were much younger men.

Born therefore about 1653, John Haward *Minimus* was a young man of from 21 to 23 when her grandparents were naming Susannah Latham in their wills. This is consistent with her being 3 or 5 years younger than her husband, and mother of the daughter Martha who was married 1 Feb. 1698/9. The children, as shown in probate papers and heirship deeds, were:

- Martha, m. David Perkins, Jun., 1 Feb. 1698/9.
- Susannah, m. Nathaniel Ames, 2 Dec. 1702.
- Edward, b. 1687; d. 14 July 1771 in 85th year — gravestone.
- Bethia, m. Jonathan Randall 12 Aug. 1712, (2) John Hays, of Providence, 21 Apr. 1726.
- Sarah, b. ; m. Rev. David Turner, 4 May 1721; youngest child recorded at Rehoboth, 19 Feb. 1739/40.
- Robert, b. 1700; d. 17 Aug. 1779 in 80th year — gravestone.

Six surviving children were not a normal family in those days,

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\* Plymouth County Deeds, vol. 5, *passim*.

† Plymouth County Files, p. 73.

‡ Plymouth County Sessions Records, vol. 1, pp. 168, 199, 237.

but were consistent with Susannah (Latham) Haward having died in middle age, if the wife Sarah in 1703 was a second wife.

The marriage records at Bridgewater are so incomplete that it does no violence to them to consider as the truth two unrecorded marriages of John Haward *Minimus*. There are no early church records of marriages. No record was made of intentions of marriage in Bridgewater until 1742. The regular recording of marriages was not begun until 1704. The plan of the earlier town clerks was to assign to each head of a family a page in the town book, like a leaf in the family Bible, head it with the record of the marriage and enter the expected children as time and tide served. Page 153 is an entire page blank except one marriage record at the head. A vast number of Bridgewater marriages are unrecorded. Of Robert Latham's children only two marriage records are found, one of these at Plymouth. Of Lieut. John Haward's children not a marriage record is found, although one filed the marriage bond required by Governor Andros's bloodsuckers in Boston. With so many unrecorded marriages positively known to have occurred, we may feel sure there were many other such quite unknown to us.

Sentimentally the most satisfactory evidence for the Latham children is the Winslow wills, as these were in the direct line of the Mary Chilton descent. These disclose that Susannah (Winslow) Latham had two sons, of whom one, Chilton, was mentioned by name, and several daughters, of whom two, Mercy and Susannah, were mentioned by name. The reason for the favoritism shown to Susannah may be that she had visited her grandparents in Boston, or that she was her mother's namesake. It could hardly be that she was a cripple, as her grandfather expected her to marry.

The evidence that Mercy was a daughter is her birth record in Plymouth, her grandfather's will, her grandmother's will, and a court record, each record proving that she married Isaac Harris.

The evidence that Joseph was Robert Latham's son is his three deeds and the Proprietors' records.

The evidence that James was a son is his deed to Chilton, Joseph's deed to John Thompson, and the Proprietors' records, besides many passages in the records which show that he succeeded to Robert Latham's lands.

The evidence that Hannah, the wife of Joseph Washburn, Jr.,

was a daughter is the recitals in his own two deeds, and the Proprietors' records.

The evidence that Chilton was a son is his name, his grandmother's will, and James's deed.

All the foregoing proofs, except the evidence of Chilton Latham's name, which is almost equally strong, are explicit, to which may be added Judge Mitchell's authority. There is no explicit contemporary evidence that John Haward's wife and Francis Cooke's wife were daughters. There is exceedingly explicit evidence that there was a daughter Susannah, with no explicit evidence what end she made, and there is explicit evidence that Francis Cooke's wife was a Latham, the marriage record at Plymouth, yet with nothing to connect her with Bridgewater. Beyond this is the fact that they both named children Susannah and Robert, and the authority of Judge Mitchell's flat statement.

The fact that the tradition now prevails in the Howard family can hardly be reckoned on unless it can be found reduced to writing at an earlier date than Judge Mitchell's book. It seems certain that he must have heard it from them, his treatment clearly indicating as much; but if by any possibility he did not, we must then bear in mind that his history was printed so long ago that it has had time to become itself the source of such traditions.

The question therefore takes the form, or the two aspects: What negative evidence or unlikely circumstances are discoverable to discredit Judge Mitchell's authority? And what weight should be given to his authority in this instance, in view of his sources of information, methods of treatment, etc.?

To sum up the considerations that throw doubt on the Mitchell statement regarding Sarah (or Susannah) Howard and Elizabeth Cooke:

Besides what has been already presented to meet the strong negative inference arising from the fact that they are not shown to have shared as heirs in Robert Latham's intestate estate, it should be borne in mind that this inference bears with equal strength on the eldest daughter, Mercy, whose father and mother are both abundantly proved by explicit records.

As regards the inference from the fact that nothing showing intimate relations has been found, there is indeed some evidence of

personal uncongeniality between John Haward and James Latham, and the Cookes lived at a distance.

As regards the withholding hand of Mr. Joseph W. Porter and Mr. Fisher Ames, in not claiming what might have been claimed of descent from Mary Chilton through John Haward's wife, there are no indications that either of them investigated the question. As their main objects were in other directions, and as they did not come upon explicit evidence, they merely passed this matter by on the safe side. Such course on their part hardly needs attention as constituting them authorities against Judge Mitchell, although an affirmative course would indeed have been more comfortable.

An extended, rather thorough, and distinctly critical search of available contemporary records fails to reveal any other grounds for looking with doubt or suspicion on the statements of Judge Mitchell regarding John Haward's wife.

As for the weight of Judge Mitchell's authority, it is quite impossible to rate it good for all the statements in his book. Numerous errors have been found, of commission as well as omission. A close search of almost any of the Bridgewater families reveals some errors; even mere typographical errors are not few.

This does not mean that he is to be classed among historical writers who have spun into print with indifference to truth, nor that his historical acumen was defective. His characteristics were the opposite in both these regards. In his day, born 1769, there must have been rampant and unharnessed family traditions enough in Bridgewater to have filled ten such books. Least to be relied on of all sources, he said in his preface, were "family traditions and recollections." His general attitude was rejective. If he printed matter not clearly supported by the records, it was often with qualifying language. As an instance, he qualified the statement that his own ancestor married a daughter of Francis Cooke of the Mayflower, thereby retreating from his flat statement in his account of Bridgewater, written in 1818.\* One cannot turn over the pages of the book without continually running on evidences of his alert and unwavering carefulness for the truth. Also he was an educated man, accustomed to interpret documents, and specially trained to

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\* *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, second series, vol. 7, p. 147.

weigh evidence. As an historical writer, taking into account the ground covered and the time spent in doing it, his authority stands among the highest.

He was a busy man of affairs, and evidently only yielded time to this task as his natural tangent perforce compelled him. He was plainly tarred with the genealogical stick. Judged as a whole, his work is badly unbalanced on the side of genealogy. His natural bent and aptitude for genealogy is unmistakable.

Once his mind was determined to print a "Family Register" of the whole town, he faced a hard task. Years before, while the elders were still living, he had written out the families in which he took a personal interest. He must now add many other families of which he knew nothing, personally cared nothing, and whose sources of early information had passed away. All must be included, and without time to attend to it. Judge Mitchell spent some time on the county records, not nearly enough to learn what could be there learned, but enough to draw him into over-hasty deductions. This constitutes one class of his errors. By oral enquiry he endeavored to learn about families living in distant parts of the town. In this he was subject to many other people's misinformation concerning their own or their neighbors' families. This was his largest source of error. Then no doubt he made some errors when depending on his own knowledge and memory regarding his own schoolmates and other townspeople with whom he was acquainted. With due allowance for these conditions, his work was remarkably correct, and well deserves the high reputation for authority generally credited to it. None of these sources of error touches his enumeration of Robert Latham's children, which with his natural bent for family relationships he must have learned in his early days by the known connections of elderly people who dwelt near or frequented his own part of the town.

It is obvious from passages in his book that Judge Mitchell took an acute interest in the founders of Plymouth. He was truly a forerunner of the Society of Mayflower Descendants, although he spelt the name of the ship "*May Flower*" and included among the "Old Comers" those who came in the first three ships — the same as did in fact the Forefathers themselves. Himself a descendant of Governor Bradford, of Mr. Alden and other Mayflower pas-

sengers and Old Comers, he misses no chance to point out such ancestry either for himself or others. The Mary Chilton story was most interesting to him. We would know this if he had not printed it three times in his preciously guarded space.

We may say with absolute assurance that Judge Mitchell's interest was wide awake when he included in his account of the family of John Haward *Minimus* the statement that they came from Mary Chilton. It would have been so easy to omit this here, having it under Winslow and Latham anyway. We may feel confident that the Howards themselves had told him of this ornament to their escutcheon, which he accepted outright so far as concerned their ancestry. Growing up as a boy a near neighbor to James Latham's and Capt. Chilton Latham's families, he must have known them well. Major Edward Haward, whose mother he said was a Latham, only died two years before his own birth. Major Haward was born next to the Mitchell farm, before his father sold out to the Mitchells. Judge Mitchell was 32 years old when his grandfather, Col. Edward Mitchell, died in 1801.

No less than four of his grandfather's children married Latham-Chilton descendants. His uncle Edward married a granddaughter of Capt. Chilton Latham, who lived until 1839. His uncle John married a grand-niece of Major Edward Haward. Two of his father's sisters married Harrises. Thus was young Nahum confronted by four different sets of own cousins, all entitled to make the boast which he could not, — and with Grandsir and Granny to back them up. Such a boast appeals strongly to the childish mind, and Nahum's cousins must have made him familiar with Mary Chilton's distinction at an early age.

Judge Mitchell records intimate early accounts of the Mitchells which he could only have received from his grandfather, who was personally acquainted with all the Hawards and Lathams and must have been familiar with their intermarriages, and the grandson had up to his 33rd year to acquire this information without looking beyond his own family circle.

In his preface he says: "As most of this work was prepared many years ago, the descent is not generally brought down much within the present century." At the time and place when Mr. Mitchell was gathering his information, the relations of the Hawards and

the Lathams were common knowledge. Where his sources of information were good, Mitchell's authority stands unimpeached. In the matter under consideration, his sources of information were evidently of the best.

Whatever uncertainty may remain about the Christian name of Robert Latham's daughter who was John Haward's wife, the relationship itself was so fully within Judge Mitchell's sources of information that rather strong circumstantial evidence would be necessary to throw doubt on the pith of what he says, that the children of John Haward *Minimus* were grandchildren of Susannah Winslow, Mary Chilton's daughter. A fair summary of a rather thorough examination of existing evidences is that there are not any explicit records tending to contradict his statement, and that the circumstances which appear unfavorable are on a full view capable of explanation.

Though outside my province, I will venture a further opinion, that if that small girl could have known beforehand how much interest how many thousands of her posterity and others would take in her getting her feet wet on that particular day, she would have done just the same.

Yarmouth, Maine, April, 1923.

