

Appendix A

The Probable Ancestry of William¹ Hartwell

At some point after publishing the 1887 *Handbook of Hartwell Genealogy*, Lyman Densmore obtained, from a gentleman in Kentucky, a descendency chart purporting to show William's descent from a Sir Simon Hartwell of Wold Hartwell in 1066. It is said that Densmore lamented that he was unable to go to England to research the statements on this chart for himself. Despite this lack of verification, the chart was published in the front of the 1956 genealogy, and some descendants have accepted it as gospel.

After publication of the 1956 genealogy, the Hartwells of America Association, evidently feeling that there was no more research to be done on the family in this country, turned their attention to England. The "English Project," was instituted to try to discover the origins of the immigrant, William Hartwell, and to authenticate statements on the descendency chart. While there was controversy over the value of this project, and some reluctance to fund it fully, English genealogists were hired to search British records for Hartwells. Several editions of "The Beetle Gazette" were published by then family genealogist, Rodney Hartwell, explaining some of the results of this search, and the Hartwell Association even toyed with the idea of publishing a genealogy of all the Hartwells in England.

After much research, the English genealogists came to the conclusion that while some of the statements on the descendency chart were correct, many were taken out of context or totally fabricated. Their conclusion was that someone had sold Mr. Densmore "a pup."

While no proof positive was found concerning William's parentage and birth, several interesting leads were discovered. The most promising would seem to be records found in the area of Cranfield, Bedfordshire. Much has been made in the past of statements that William came from Kent, and this information appears on the IGI and several different web sites. However, Cranfield was the home of the numerous Wheelers who arrived in Concord, Massachusetts about the same time as William, and it seems likely that he may have come from the same area.

The "Beetle Gazette" Vol. 1, No. 1 presented extracts from Cranfield Parish records that indicated that "our" William was most likely the son of Francis Hartwell by his first wife, Mary. William was the second of the three sons baptized by Francis and Mary at Cranfield.

Appendices

This same edition of the “Beetle Gazette” abstracted the following probate record, without commenting on its apparent relevance:

17 September 1576, William Hartwell of Leighton Buzzard, Co. Bedfordshire. Gives to son Francis Hartwell a black cow of 20 pounds, 3 shillings, 4 pence. Unborn child to have a bullock of the said cow. Further bequests to each of his children. If one of them die before the other is 12 years old, the living one to be the heir of the other. Wife Agnes to bring up the children, and use their legacies till they be 12. She is to have residue and be exor. Landlord Robert Thornback and Nicolas Felfe his neighbour to be overseers. Witnesses, Robert Thornback, Nicholas Felfe, Robert Felde, Thomas Burack, Anthony Slater. Proved 23 March 1578.

This probate record seems to indicate that Francis was still a relatively young (or at least newly married) man, with a young child named Francis and another child on the way. If we assume that Francis was approximately two years old at the time his father wrote his will, that makes him a good age to be the father of the immigrant William, who was obviously named for his grandfather. A marriage record exists for William Hartwell to Annetta Gillett at Leighton Buzzard Parish on 26 June 1574. Since the names Agnes and Annetta could be interchangeable, this could well be the marriage of our William’s grandparents.

SUMMARY

WILLIAM^B HARTWELL, born England ca. 1550; buried Leighton Buzzard Parish, 1 October 1576; m. there, 26 June 1574, **ANNETTA (AGNES) GILLET**. His will, written 17 September 1576 is abstracted above.

Children, baptized at Leighton Buzzard:

- + i. FRANCIS^A HARTWELL, bap. 4 Nov. 1574; m. (1) MARY (--), (2) ANN BARNWELL.
- ii. ANN HARTWELL, bap. posthumously, 16 Feb 1576/7; n.f.r. unless she is the Agnes Hartwell who m. at Leighton Buzzard, 6 May 1594, RICHARD FISHE.

FRANCIS^A HARTWELL (*William^B*), bap. Leighton Buzzard Parish, 4 November 1574; m. (1) ca. 1610, **MARY (--)**, who was buried at Cranfield, 22 August 1616; m. (2) Cranfield, 19 November 1616, **ANN BARNWELL**.

Descendants of William¹ Hartwell

Children by first wife, baptized at Cranfield, Bedfordshire:

- i. RICHARD¹ HARTWELL (Thomas on Bishop's Transcript), bap. 20 Jan 1610/1.
- + 1. ii. WILLIAM HARTWELL, bap. 21 Dec. 1613; m. JEZAN (--);
immigrated to America ca. 1636.
- iii. ROBERT HARTWELL, bap. 22 Aug 1616; n.f.r.

The major problems with this lineage would seem to be that there are no further records of William's purported father, Francis, or his stepmother Ann, or of his purported brothers, Richard (Thomas?) and Robert. With the exception of Mary, the name of William's purported mother, none of these names were used by William and Jezan in naming their children. Perhaps further research in and around Cranfield and Leighton Buzzard would yield more information on this family.