

THOMAS HARVEY (abt. 1585-before 1647)

(1)

(2) AGNES CLARK

Thomas Harvey, the son of William Harvey of Bridgwater (a town in Somersetshire, England) was born about 1585.

"This town is a municipal borough and seaport town, situated on both banks of the Parret River, twenty-nine miles S.W. of Bristol and eleven miles N.W. of Taunton, England. William the Conqueror granted the manor to one Walter do Douay, and its name thereupon became Burgh-Walter, of which Bridgwater is a mere corruption. . . The place had been large and populous in ancient times but by 1538 it had fallen to ruin and only 200 houses remained. A castle built about the year 1202 and a bridge over the Parret was completed in the time of Edward I (1272-1307). William Briwere, one of the castles many benefactors, died in 1227, was succeeded by his son William. Many years later the castle of Bridgwater passed to the crown, King Charles I, who in 1626 granted the same to Sir William Witmore, Knight, and his heirs and assigns. In 1630 the Whitmores sold the manor and castle to Henry Harvey, son of William Harvey and brother of our Thomas Harvey. In 1638 Henry Harvey converted the castle into a mansion that he leased to King Charles for the installed Governor. At this time the Civil War between the King and the Long Parliament was in progress. The castle was bravely defended for a considerable time but finally in 1643 the greater portion of the castle was leveled to the ground. The walls were 15 feet thick, and all the fortifications were regular and strong. The moat was thirty feet wide and of great depth, and every tide filled it with water . . .

"The town was delivered up on July 23, 1645 and about 1,000 officers and soldiers, besides gentlemen and clergy, were made prisoners. In the town the victors captured 44 barrels of gunpowder, 1,500 arms, 44 pieces of ordnance, jewels, plate and goods of much value which had been sent thither from all the adjacent parts of the country for security - the Governor having declared that the castle was impregnable against all the force that could be brought against it." <sup>1</sup>

Henry Harvey's losses were sustained by the Governor and arrests were made to many who took advantage by great pillaging of properties. A copy of the document, presented by Henry to the Parliament, is preserved by the memorialists. In 1791 the owner of the manor and ruined castle of Bridgwater was Robert Harvey, M.D. fellow of Sidney College, Cambridge, and a descendant of Henry Harvey aforementioned.

"Thomas Harvey was a younger brother of Henry, and great-grandson of the famous Turner Harvey, who had died not many years before Thomas' birth, having lived to a great age (approximately 125 years).

"The home of Thomas was at Ashill, a village pleasantly situated on rising ground three miles west of Llinminster and nine miles east of Taunton, in Somersetshire . . . The locality had been obtained by William the Conqueror for his brother Robert, Earl of Morton. In 1791 the parish of Ashill contained one church, 55 houses and 320 inhabitants. . ." <sup>2</sup>

"Ashill Church Registers begin 1558; unfortunately the register of births, marriages and burials from 1628 to 1653 has been lost. The entries for 1625-1628 are almost illegible." <sup>3</sup>

Were it not for this loss it may have been possible to have recorded much needed data on Thomas Harvey's family.

"Thomas Harvey died in Somersetshire prior to 1647, as is shown by the Will of Agnes Clarke of Ashill, Somersetshire, widow . . .

(Agnes is thought to be the second wife of Thomas, and not the mother of his four children mentioned here. The name of the children's mother is unknown. Agnes outlived her husband and her Will was made at Ashill, Somersetshire, England dated Oct. 20, 1647, proved May 10, 1648. Son William (7-18), emigrated to America in 1636. In this Will William Harvey, the son of Thomas Harvey, deceased, is mentioned.)

"I give and bequeath unto William Harvey son of Thomas Harvey deceased, my kinsman, now in New England . . . all my household stuff during his life, if he come to claim it, and after his decease to remain in the house to the use of James Harvey, his brother, and the said James to make use of it until William shall come to claim it . . ." 4

This wording sounds more like a bribe for William's return to England than a legacy. It stands to reason that William never claimed such a bequest.

Thomas Harvey's children, according to both Oscar Jewell Harvey and Rev. Wm. Knappenberger, were as follows:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Harvey, a dau., b. abt. 1610; md. Anthony Slocum
2. James Harvey, b. abt. 1612
3. William Harvey, b. abt. 1614; died 1691 in Taunton, Mass.; md. Joanna Hucker (7-18)
4. Thomas Harvey, b. 1617; died 1651 5

There were many circumstances leading to America's colonization and especially to the early settlements of New England. The above author, Oscar Jewell Harvey, 1899, writes:

"About the time of the birth of Thomas Harvey's first child, King James gave his declaration that he would make all men conform to the established Church, or drive them out of England. This edict began having its due effect. Some of the King's subjects, known as Dissenters and Puritans, were not long in coming to the conclusion that each body of Christians had a right to form a religious society of its own wholly independent of the State. To those who thus thought, the names Independents and Separatists were applied; and as early as 1608 a body of these Independents, under the spiritual leader John Robinson, resolved to leave England for Holland, where all men were, at that time, free to worship God in their own manner. With much difficulty and danger they managed to escape to Holland, and after remaining there upwards of twelve years a part of them succeeded in obtaining from King James the privilege of emigrating to America. A London trading company, which was sending out an expedition for fish and furs, agreed to furnish the Pilgrims passage by the Mayflower, though on terms so hard that the exiles said 'the conditions were fitter for thieves and bond-slaves than honest men.'

"In 1620 these wanderers, or Pilgrims, set forth for this New World beyond the sea which they hoped would redress the wrongs of the Old. They came to find a home where they might enjoy that toleration and freedom denied them in the land of their birth. They landed in

Plymouth and established a colony . . . Ten years later John Winthrop, a Puritan gentleman of wealth, followed with a small company and settled Salem and Dorchester (now Boston)." 6.

Thomas Harvey, the subject of this written feature, did not leave England, himself, but before his death he saw his daughter with her husband, Anthony Slocum, and two of his sons, William and Thomas, embark for America, directly from England in 1636, sixteen years after the Pilgrims settled in Plymouth (see 7-18).

1. #46 pp. 19, 20
2. ibid p. 21
3. #47 p. 4
4. #46 p. 29, also #48 p. 12
5. ibid p. 25 also ibid p. 10
6. #46 pp. 25, 26