

THE POSSIBLE IDENTITY OF JOHN WILLIAMS, "GRANDSON" OF JAMES PERCIVAL OF SANDWICH AND FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

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An interesting problem of identification has arisen in the family of James¹ Percival of Sandwich and Falmouth. The object of our attention is the will of James Percival, excerpted as follows:

"James Parsivall of Suckenessit [Falmouth] in ye County of Barnstable" made his will 19 January 1691/2. Bequests included the following: "And ye other one third of both sd necks (Nomenecent & Pason-tacoy Neckes) I will and bequeath unto my grandson John williams that dwells with me Son of mary Bassett deceased . . . I also will and bequeath unto him ye sd John williams ye mare that he usually Rids on and Calls his mare and one Cow and five goats" (Barnstable County Probate, 1:57).

In order to understand the meaning of this portion of the will it is necessary to recount the story of James Percival and his family. James¹ Percival from Virginia settled in Sandwich, Mass., by 1670, then in the Ashumet section of Falmouth by 1681. He married by 1671 Mary (Rainsford) Bassett, daughter of Edward¹ Rainsford of Boston and the widow of William² Bassett of Sandwich, who had died 29 May 1670 ("The Percival Family," Benton P. Crocker, M.D. [1938], typescript at the Society; *Register* 139[1985]:299). On 5 July 1670, the Court set the date for Widow Bassett to appear to prove the will and inventory of the late William Bassett (Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, *Records of The Colony of New Plymouth in New England*, hereinafter *PCR* [Boston, 1856], 5:43), and the inventory of "William Bassett of Sandwich late Deceased" was taken 9 August, 1670 and presented 11 August, 1670 (*ibid.*, 5:47). William left four children as follows: Mary Bassett, born 21 November 1654, (Sandwich Vital Records, 1:217); and three unlisted in the vital records: William Bassett, born about 1653; Nathan Bassett, born about 1657; and Sarah Bassett. Mary (Rainsford) Bassett had four more children by her second husband, James Percival, as follows: James Percival, born 18 January 1671/2; John Percival, Mary Percival, and Elizabeth Percival, born 10 September 1675 (*ibid.*, 1:172).

Thus, we see that Mary Bassett was the step-daughter of James Percival, and was deceased when James made his will in January of 1692. He called her by her maiden name, although she had married and had two or possibly three children by her husband John Redding. Those step-grandchildren were not named in the Percival will, as they were living with their father and his second wife. The "grandson" John Williams,