

## THOMAS AND MARY (ROBINSON) BIRCHARD

## THEIR ORIGIN, ANCESTRY AND FAMILY

BY PRENTISS GLAZIER

*[Note: the discovery of pertinent English records on both the Birchard and Robinson families was made only two days before the departure from London. Further research, notably in the Essex County archives, was not possible at this point.]*

A detailed and perceptive account of the earliest colonial Birchards, distaff ancestors of President Ruth-erford Birchard Hayes, was posthumously published in TAG, *supra*, 16:157-163, 221-228; 17:35-49, 177-190, the work of the late Mrs. Edna Minot Rogers. She found them in John Camden Hotten's *Original Lists* as immigrants in 1635, and traced them to Hartford, Saybrook, Martha's Vineyard and Norwich, concurring with Frank Farnsworth Starr's excellent *Goodwin-Morgan Ancestral Lines*. There seemed no clue to exact English origin.

Hotten noted the departure of the Truelove from London, 19 Sept. 1635, with, among others, the family of Thomas Burchard aged 40; Mary aged 38; Elizabeth aged 13; Mary aged 12, Sara aged 9; Suzanna aged 8; John aged 7, and Ann aged 18 months. The ages roughly coincide with those of the family previously associated with the contiguous parishes of Fairsted, Terling and Great Leighs, in the county of Essex, England.

William Bircher married Catherine Finch at Great Leighs in 1595 (according to Boyd's Marriage Index; parish registers not available in London). Boyd also revealed the 1561 marriage of a James Bircher to Elizabeth Wulsey at Chelmsford, about ten miles from Great Leighs.

William and Catherine Byrhard settled just over the parish line, in Fairsted, where five children were christened:

- i. Thomas, bapt. 12 Aug. 1595; m. Mary Robinson.
- ii. William, bapt. 28 May 1598; wife Faith bur. 10 Oct. 1625.
- iii. Richard, bapt. 13 July 1600.
- iv. Mary, bapt. 29 June 1606; as daughter of William and Catherine, m. 15 April 1628, Robert Crokstone, widower.
- v. Katherine, bapt. 26 May 1608.

Widow Catherine Birchard, presumably the mother, was buried at Terling, adjoining both Fairsted and Great Leighs, 7 Feb. 1635 [presumably 1635/6]. Thomas Fynche Sr., perhaps the father of said Catherine, was interred at Fairsted 30 July 1606. Students of the Finch family of Connecticut now have a clue for their

further research.

Terling was also the home parish of other Byrcharde, notably John, with children Robert, Mary, John and Richard christened there between 1587 and 1596, and Christopher who married Annis Frank 20 Nov. 1603. Burial records show Margery Byrcharde *alias* Dyer, widow, interred there 16 July 1541, perhaps grandmother of John, William and others. Joan Byrcharde, widow, was buried 27 Feb. 1602 leaving a will, and John Byrcharde, householder, 20 Jan. 1614, also testate. Chelmsford parish registers might reveal more--a transcript is believed to be in the town library or in the Essex County Records office.

Thomas Birchard, head of the American family, was christened at Fairsted 12 Aug. 1595, married there, 23 Oct. 1620, Mary Robinson, born 18 March 1596, christened the same day by her father, the rector of Fairsted. She was the daughter of the Rev. Henry and Elizabeth (Orvice) Robinson and granddaughter of the Rev. John Orvyce, rector of Terling until his death.

The young Birchards had eight children christened at Terling, as follows:

- i. Elizabeth. bapt. 1 Nov. 1621; aged 13 in 1635.
- ii. Mary, bapt. 2 April 1623; aged 12 in 1635. Dr. Claude W. Barlow informs me that the late Miss Bertha W. Clarke, a careful genealogist, propounded a theory that this Mary might have become the wife of Jonathan Rudd at "Bride Brook," as she thought only Thomas Birchard was sufficiently influential to persuade Governor John Winthrop to come down to perform the ceremony.
- iii. Sara, bapt. 22 Aug. 1624; aged 9 in 1635; m. at Hartford, Conn., 25 Oct. 1647, Bartholomew Barnard.
- iv. Susanna, bapt. 26 June 1626; aged 8 in 1635; almost certainly the Susanna who was wife of Robert Wade. They were next-door to the Birchards at Hartford, followed them to Saybrook and to Martha's Vineyard, and their homestead at Norwich adjoined that of John<sup>2</sup> Birchard.
- v. John, bapt. 31 Jan. 1627/8; aged 7 in 1635; m. (1) Christian Andrews; (2) Jane (Lee) Hyde.
- vi. Thomas, bapt. 24 Sept. 1629, bur. 19 Feb. 1631/2.
- vii. Deborah, bapt. 18 April 1632, bur. 6 April 1633.
- viii. Hannah, bapt. 17 Oct. 1633; called Ann aged 18 months in 1635; m. 12 April 1653, John Baldwin.

Thomas Birchard lost his first wife Mary Robinson on 24 March 1655, the death being recorded at the Roxbury church; whether the death occurred there or not is not quite certain. By 21 July 1659 Thomas Birchard had married (2) a widow Katherine Andrews,

and, presumably, (3) Deborah -----, who died 10 May 1680. He himself died in 1683 or 1684, leaving a will subsequently lost.

To return now to the Robinsons of Fairsted, the Rev. Henry Robinson, rector of Fairsted, was born ca. 1550 and was buried at Fairsted on 6 Nov. 1625, as the parish record clearly states. Thus he must not be confused, as has been done by the editor of *Alumni Oxonienses* (p. 1267) and a writer in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (s.v. "Robinson, Henry"), with the Rt. Rev. Henry Robinson, born ca. 1553, at Carlisle, created Bishop of Carlisle in 1598, died of the plague at Rose Castle, 19 June 1616, buried, with understandable haste, that same day, in the cathedral. Though this was a day when pluralism had not been stamped out, the recital of the busy and laudable activity of the bishop in northern England for many years when Thomas Birchard's father-in-law was ministering to the good people of Fairsted makes it clear that there were two men of the name.

The rector's father has not been identified but his mother was the "Anne Robinson, widow, aged 90, buried Oct. 29, 1614, daughter of Sir Lawrence Withers, alderman of London, and mother of Henry Robinson, parson of this parish." Boyd's Marriage Index places the marriage of the Rev. Henry Robinson to Elizabeth Orvice at Terling in 1580. She had been baptized there 23 Nov. 1561 as daughter of John Orvyce. The Terling registers reported "Mr. Orvyce late vicar of Tearling buried Jan. 16, 1582, died Jan. 11." In the Fairsted registers we have Jane Orvice "buried June 20, 1592, wid. sometye of John Orvice of Tearlinge (vicar) and her will proved before the byshops officers the 7 of Sept." Elizabeth Robinson, "wife of Henry, parson to this parish," was buried at Fairsted 11 Dec. 1621.

Among the many Robinsons who left wills now on file at the County Records Office in Chelmsford, we noted, but had no time to check, (a) Henry Robinson, Layston, co. Herts 1589; (b) Margery Robinson, Chelmsford 1585; (c) William Robynson, Terling 1508.

The thirteen children of the Rev. Henry and Elizabeth (Orvice) Robinson were all christened by their father at Fairsted, and in all but one instance he supplied the date of birth, in two even the hour:

- i. Jane, b. Oct. 17, bapt. Oct. 21, 1582; m. 3 March 1606, John Simpson.
- ii. William, b. Dec. 25, bapt. Dec. 29, 1583.
- iii. Elias, b. and bapt. Feb. 2, 1585.
- iv. Michael, bapt. May 12, 1586.
- v. Elizabeth, b. March 9, 1589/90.
- vi. Margery, b. May 12, bapt. May 16, 1592; m. 23 Oct.

- 1620, William Chapman of Sturmer. This was the same day as the wedding of her sister Mary.
- vii. Reuben, b. April 14, bapt. April 21, 1594 (m. Anne Hill of Lea, according to Visitations of Essex 1664-8, p. 75).
  - viii. Anne, b. Sept. 28, bapt. Oct. 5, 1595.
  - ix. Mary, b. March 18, bapt. March 27, 1596/7; m. Thomas Birchard as noted above.
  - x. Henry, b. May 8, bapt. May 14, 1598; bur. June 16, 1620.
  - xi. Deborah, b. Aug. 18, bapt. Sept. 2, 1600.
  - xii. Priscilla, b. April 12, bapt. April 29, 1602.
  - xiii. Martha, b. April 5, bapt. April 15, 1605.

Except for Mary, none of these has been traced further. Boyd's Marriage Index might produce more marriages. An Edmund Orvis, laborer of Ramsey, left a 1596 will and a John Orvis of Burnham, house-carpenter, left one in 1585, but these were not examined. An attempt to find Withers data in London failed. At the Society of Genealogists there are seven folios of Withers material in manuscript form but they seem to relate to people of the name in the region of Gloucestershire or Somerset.

The Rev. James Robinson, who succeeded the Rev. John Orvis at Terling, was at Oxford ca, 1570, at the time when a Henry Robinson was also there, whether the rector of Fairsted or the Bishop of Carlisle would be hard to tell. The Rev. James was buried at Terling, 6 Oct. 1603, and between September and November of that year there were also buried five sons and two daughters of his in tragic sequence.

Additional Birchard data from Terling parish registers:

Robert, s. of John Byrcharde, bapt. Sept. 24, 1587  
 Mary, d. of " " bapt. May 3, 1590  
 John, s. of " " bapt. April 1, 1593  
 Richard s. of " " bapt. Sept. 12, 1596, bur, 17 Feb. 1604  
 Mary Byrcharde m. Richard Sach, Sept. 30, 1611  
 Joan " m. John Tabor on same day  
 John, s. of Christopher, bapt. March 17, 1605  
 John, m. Mary Shach at Fairsted, Nov. 30, 1620  
 Stillborn son of John buried May 23, 1623  
 Robert, s. of John Byrcharde, bapt. June 2, 1624  
 Thomas & John, twins of John Byrcharde, bapt. Dec. 24, 1626  
 Mary, wife of John, and John, son of John, bur. together 4 Jan. 1627  
 Robert, s. of John, buried April 9, 1629  
 Annis, wife of John, buried Aug. 29, 1631  
 Sarah, dau. of John & Anna, bapt. April 18, 1642  
 Robert, s. of Robert & Grace, bapt. April 21, 1629.  
 Mary dau. of " " " bapt. April 23, 1633.

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## Additions from the Fairsted registers

Robert, s. of Christopher, bapt. March 6, 1608  
 John, s. of John Burcharde, bapt. Aug. 1, 1630.  
 Richard, s. of John & Amie, bapt. April 5, 1632.  
 Amie, dau. of John & Ann, bapt. Feb. 23, 1634.  
 Robert Birchwood, s. of John & Anne, bapt. Dec. 18, 1636.

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## SHEPARD ADDENDA

The following family records have been contributed by Mr. John A. Bilow, 22 St. Charles Street, Plattsburg, N.Y. 12901. The first group consist of records taken from four family record blanks of two columns each. The blanks may have been taken from a Bible. The records pertain to the family of a Jonathan Shepard who is R490 in Gerald Faulkner Shepard, compiler, Donald Lines Jacobus, editor, *The Shepard Families of New England* (New Haven: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1971), 1:74, 171.

## BIRTHS

Sophia Shepherd was born September  
 Jonathan Shepherd was born April 23 1764  
 Louisa Shepherd was born October 18 1766  
 Sophia Shepherd was born September 3<sup>d</sup>, 1787  
 Betsy Shepherd was born December 24, 1788  
 Clarinda Shepherd was born May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1790  
 Hannah B. Shepherd was born November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1791  
 Matilda Shepherd was born February 9<sup>th</sup> 1792 [sic]  
 Anna M. Shepherd was born September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1794  
 Esther Ann Shepherd was born Febuary 8<sup>th</sup>, 1797  
 Anna Shepherd was born November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1800  
 Hiram H. Shepherd was born January 10<sup>th</sup> 1804  
 Smith Shepherd was born August 23<sup>d</sup> 1806  
 Mary Shepherd was born May 28<sup>th</sup> 1808  
 Adela D. Shepherd was born December 14<sup>th</sup> 1810  
 Achsah E. Shepherd born Apr. 12 - 1824 [a new hand]  
 Phebe Douglas was born July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1841 [still another hand]  
 Ellen & Helen Douglas was born July 24<sup>th</sup> 1846 [same hand]  
 Charles Carroll Douglas was born Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> 1861  
 Nathan Aruna Douglas was born July 10 1865  
 Ellen D. McClanathan was born Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> 1858

## DEATHS

Anna Shepherd died December 1<sup>st</sup> 1803  
 Hiram H Shepherd died August 29, 1805  
 Smith Shepherd died December 31<sup>st</sup> 1814  
 Betsey Morehouse died Febuary 20<sup>th</sup>, 1821  
 Four small Children that died and were buried in Vermont