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A GENEALOGICAL QUEST

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In A. D. 1908 I printed a pamphlet called "A Genealogical Quest." It took up the question of whether the first *Thomas Low* in Ipswich, Mass., the progenitor of numerous descendants, was the son of John Lowe, captain of the ship *Ambrose*, of Winthrop's fleet. Copies of the pamphlet have been filed with the Ipswich Historical Society, Yale University Library, Columbia University Library, New York Public Library and the Long Island Historical Society.

The above-mentioned pamphlet having shown, in the estimation of some competent judges, that Thomas Low (or Loe, or Lowe,) was *probably not* the son of Capt. John Lowe of the *Ambrose*, I proceeded to search farther, to determine the paternal origin of Thomas Low (1) of Ipswich.

While I do not claim to have established this, it seems to me desirable to put in printed form what I have found. I may not be able to discover anything more, while some one else, at some other time, may find my contribution useful in making further searches.

Two points of departure have been adopted as a basis of investigation. These are:

1. That Thomas Low came to America in connection with the immigration of Rev. Nathaniel Rogers, who sailed from Gravesend, England, June 1, 1636, and arrived in Massachusetts Bay in the following November. Vide Palmer's edition of Calamy's History of Nonconformity, sub nomine *Richard Jennings*, of Ipswich, county Suffolk, afterwards rector of Combes, county Suffolk, Vol. II

p. 416. The ship may have been the *Rebecca*, which sailed on the above date.

2. That the *Susannah*, mentioned in the Will of Thomas Low (1) was a second wife.

The first point is suggested by the records of the Town of Ipswich. In Schofield's volume of such records, on page 23, we find as follows:

"Granted to *Thomas Low*, ten acres of upland at Chebacco, next his ten acres there, in exchange for ten acres *due to him by grant unto Mr. Rogers company* near the three miles brook by Mr. Appleton's farme." In another part of said records, also. "First September 1638. By the consent of the seven. There was reserved for three of Mr. Roggers his friends to come three six acre lotts, adjoining to Mr. Roggers his twenty acres near Heartbreak hill."

Nathaniel Ward was the first minister of Ipswich and, on his resignation, Rev. John Norton was elected his successor in 1636 and two years after (1638) chose Mr. Rogers for his colleague.

Before coming to this country Rev. Nathaniel Rogers had been the rector at Assington, county Suffolk, and of much repute thereabouts. His company, or companions, in the immigration are supposed to have come from that region.

In Winthrop's Journal, as published by Babcock of Hartford in 1790 at page 114, under date of Nov. 17th, 1636, is written "Two ships arrived here from London, and one a week before. They were full of passengers, men women and children. One of them had been from London twenty-six weeks, and between land and land sixteen weeks, the other two something less time, their beer all spent and leaked

out a month before their arrival, so as they were forced to stinking water (and that very little) mixed with sacke or vinegar, and their other provisions very short and bad, yet through the great providence of the Lord they came all safe on shore, and most of them sound and well liking. They had continual tempests, and when they were near the shore (being brought two or three days with a strong East wind) the weather was so thick all that time that they could not make land, and the seamen were in great perplexity when on a sudden the fog cleared, so as they saw Cape Anne fair on their star-board bow, and presently grew thick again, yet by their compass they made their harbour. There were aboard that ship two godly ministers, Mr. Nathaniel Rogers and Mr. Partridge, and many good people in that and the other ship, and we had prayed earnestly for them for a small pinnace of 30 tons which came out with them, and was come in three weeks before, brought us news of their coming. In one of the other ships the passengers had had but $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of drink for a day fourteen days together, yet through the Lord's mercy did all well. One of the ships was overset in the night by a sudden gust, and lay so half an hour, yet righted of herself."

The second point is suggested by Thomas Low's Will and the fact that neither of his daughters bears Susannah's name, but are named Margaret and Sarah. It was customary to name the eldest daughter after her mother, as is illustrated by the fact that such was the case with the daughters of Margaret and Sarah and those of Thomas and John, their brothers.

Margaret Low married Daniel Davison and had a daughter named *Margaret*, mentioned in Thomas Low's (1) Will.

Sarah Low married Joseph Safford and had a daughter *Sarah*, mentioned in said Will. *Thomas Low* (2) married Martha Boreman and had eldest daughter *Martha*. Her brother was mentioned in the Will rather than she.

John Low married Sarah Thorndike and had daughter *Sarah*, mentioned in said Will.

Moreover, the Will gives to Susannah "what goods she brought with her" and later says "and my will is That in case my wife shall think meete to remove from my son John, Then my will is" &c. The testator does not say *our son*, nor from John, but from *my son* John.

The Will was made in 1677 and John was born as early as 1634-35. If Susannah was his mother, neither of the above expressions seems natural or probable.

Having mentioned these preliminary points, I will set out what seems to bear upon our question gathered on this side of the Atlantic and then what has been discovered on the other side of it, in England.

Thomas Low (1) was born about 1605, as is indicated by a deposition made by him in complaint of Fuller *v.* Lee, Essex Court Files, book 5, leaf 80, and was sworn in court held at Ipswich the 25th of September 1660, in which his age is given as about 55.

His daughter Sarah deposed at the same time that she was about 23.

Thomas Low (2) was born about 1631-32 as he was eighty years old when he died 12 April 1712. His tombstone in Essex churchyard says 80 years of age. There is no mention of additional months and days. The New England Historical and

Genealogical Register, volume 7 page 83 says "Thomas Low aged 37 in 1668."

Margaret, daughter of Thomas Low (1) is supposed to come after Thomas (2) in the family although she was married before him, 8 April 1657. Thomas did not marry until 4 July 1660, when he was twenty-nine.

John Low made a deposition, Sept. 24, 1678; Vide Book 29 leaf 75 and Book 31 leaf 75, the deposition being recorded in duplicate; giving his age as about 43 years, making the year of his birth about 1635.

Sarah Low, as stated above, seems to have been born in 1637.

The use of the word "about" in connection with all the above, except Thomas (2), leaves room for some divergence from perfect accuracy, but it is fair to assume a more or less approximate degree of correctness.

The first *John Choate* in America according to the book "Choates in America," page XI, is said to have been "brought over by Mr. Low."—The same book is of the opinion that he was the John Choate baptized at Groton Church, county Suffolk, England, 6 June 1624. This date conforms to his known age in 1664. Vide Probate Court files in Salem, Mass. He probably came from the same neighborhood in England as Thomas Low, who brought him over.

The above information was gathered on this side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Now I will set forth some facts gathered in England, with the assistance of Mr. Vincent B. Redstone, F. R. Hist. Soc. and Vice President of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History, of Woodbridge, county Suffolk, who has made

a special study of the families of Suffolk, having also completed a transcript of the Register Bills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, Eng. for the years 1580-1637. These bills are the annual returns made by incumbents of the entries to be found in their parish registers.

1. The register of Polstead, county Suffolk, contains the following suggestive entry—*Thos. Lowe & Margaret Tod* married 22 June 1630. This seems to have significance from the place, the name of the bride and the date.

a. The place, Polstead, is in Southern Suffolk about three miles E. by S. from Assington, where Rev. Nathaniel Rogers was rector, 1630-35.

From a Little Guide to Suffolk by Wm. A. Dutt, published by Methuen & Co. of London in 1904, I extract a few notes, pp. 276, 277.

“Polstead is a scattered village in the valley of the Box. The church contains some good Norman work” &c.

“The register contains the surnames of several of the original emigrants to America, including those of some persons who went over in the Mayflower. Near the church is an ancient tree known as the Gospel Oak, believed to be thirteen hundred years old, and probably the oldest in the county.”

b. The name of the bride “Margaret” is that of the eldest daughter of our Thomas Low (1) in America.

c. The date of the marriage is suitable with reference to the birth of our Thomas Low in 1631.

2. The register of *Groton church*, county Suffolk, where *John Choate* was baptized, 6 June 1624, gives

Thomas Lowe, son of Thomas & Margaret Lowe bapt. 8 May, 1631.

Groton is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles North West of *Polstead* and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from *Boxford*, which lies between them. Mr. Redstone informs me that *Boxford* was the home of the *Tod* family.

3. The *Boxford* register gives

Margaret, daughter of *John* & *Margaret* *Lowe* bap. 17 June 1632

John, son of *Thomas* & *Margaret* *Lowe* bap. 2 Mar. 1633. The rector of *Boxford* parish told Mr. Redstone that "John" in the 1632 entry is a probable mistake, similar to others which appear to have been made by a Mr. Beale, who was paid to make a copy of a former register of paper upon parchment of that period. No other mention is made in the register of a *John* *Lowe* with wife *Margaret*. These are the latest *Lowe* entries in the register. *Thomas* and *Margaret* disappear after the last entry. If *Thomas* and his family went to *Mass.* in 1636, *Sarah*, born in 1637, must have been American born.

So we find that a *Thomas* *Lowe* in England had children, *Thomas*, *Margaret*, *John*, born 1631, 1632 and 1633. The correspondence with *Thomas* *Low*, (or *Loe*, or *Lowe*,) in America with children, *Thomas*, *Margaret* and *John*, *Thomas* born in 1631, *Margaret*, between that date and *John*, and *John* about 1635, is striking. It is quite possible that *John* was somewhat incorrect as to his age. This has been found to be so in the case of another immigrant, to the extent of two years.

It is also probable, I learn, that 1633 includes the part of 1634 up to Easter, when the annual parish returns were made for the archdeaconry records at *Sudbury*. There is also to be considered the lack of perfect accuracy on the part of Mr.

Beale, the copyist above-mentioned, who may have written 1633 instead of 1635.

Altogether, both Mr. Redstone and I incline to the opinion that the *Thomas Lowe*, who married *Margaret Tod* at Polstead, is probably the Thomas Low (1) of Mass., with children Thomas, Margaret, John and Sarah. Of course, it is not a certainty, but rather a probability. The loss of early records in Chebacco makes a demonstration extremely difficult, if not impossible.

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