

# The Brett Genealogy

“Velis id Quod Possis”

— *The Brett Motto*

COMPILED BY

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Captain Roger Clap in his Memoirs says:

“I do not remember that I ever did wish in my heart that I had not come into this country, or that I ever did wish myself back again to my father’s house.”

To his children he writes: “You have better food and raiment than was in former times, but have you better hearts than your forefathers had? If so, rejoice in that mercy, and let New England then shout for joy.”

Our forefathers were men whose love of mercy and justice, whose humanity and nobility of character have hallowed the places of their dwelling, and made their names revered wherever they are known. They held themselves steadfast to their high ideals of religious freedom, and government for the best good of all.

Hardy, temperate and manly, the lives of these resolute hearts, self-exiled for conscience’s sake, stand before us like holy temples wherein we may seek the strength and power which enabled them to encounter dangers, overcome obstacles and endure hardships. May we be guided by their example, and may they live in our memories as those who fought the good fight and kept the faith.

#### **FROM THE MONUMENT AT MARSHFIELD**

“The weary Pilgrim slumbers —His resting place unknown;  
His hands were crossed, his lids were dosed —The dust was o’er him  
strewn;  
The drifting soil, the mouldering leaf,  
Along the sod were blown;  
His mound has melted into earth  
His memory lives alone.”

**B**ETWEEN the years 1630 and 1640 there landed in America from England two men by the name of William Brett. One went to Virginia, the other to New England. The first was, without doubt, a near relative of Mary, daughter of William Brett of Toddington, and sister of Sir Edward Brett. Mary Brett and William Isham were married August 15, 1625, and they were the progenitors of many of the "First Families of Virginia," as is related elsewhere. Our William Brett of Massachusetts came from Kent, England, and appears to have been of the same lineage as the Virginia Mary and William. The latter probably returned to England, or died early, as I cannot find any trace of him in the Virginia Records.

William Brett came from Kent, England, to Duxbury about 1638-39, and he appears as a purchaser of land early in 1640. Alarm Orders, 1643; Freeman, 1646. In searching for his parentage I am obliged to conclude that for reasons of grave importance he did not wish it known. The religious persecutions in England were no doubt the cause for this concealment. He left home soon after becoming of age, and the inference is that he feared further persecution, even here. He undoubtedly came with the Haywards, his kinsmen, possibly under another name, as there is no record of his arrival here. Many of the early colonists came under assumed names or as servants, to avoid arrest for their religious acts and views in the mother country, and said as little as possible about their lives and surroundings at home.

His descent, given elsewhere, is compiled from English records and many different English publications.

WILLIAM BRETT was born 1618, as he was 63 at the time of his death, December 17, 1681. Although not more than 921 years of age at the time we first know of him here, he at once became a leading man in the Colony, his name being often associated with those of John Alden, the Winslows, Constant Southworth and others. He is called "of Duxburrow" in deeds of lands, until he became one of the Original Proprietors of Bridge-water, where he lived and died. His home was in what is now West Bridgewater, near where the Soldiers' Monument stands, although he owned much land in different parts of the town.

It is said of the "men of Kent" who came to New England at this time, that they were "of distinguished education and easy fortune, who had left English homes altogether enviable save in the matter of religious toleration. They were celebrated in English History as men of gallantry, loyalty, and courtly manners, and had been accustomed to the elegancies of life in the Mother Country." William Brett came from a family of wealth and refinement, and surely he could have had no reasons for leaving England. except to obtain that religious freedom which was denied him at home. From the Garden of England, as Kent is well designated, to the barren shores of New England, he brought his sturdy youth, dignified presence, and education beyond that of the most of his contemporaries. He early became an Elder in the church, and is called a "Grave and Godly man," by one of the writers of the time. When he removed to Bridgewater "they lived without a minister for ten or twelve years. Elder Brett was a leading man in that affair, and they kept up the public worship of God all that time, Elder Brett leading the exercises." It is greatly to be regretted that the letters of William Brett to Governor Winslow, which were said by Mitchell

to be “still extant,” have disappeared, so far as I can ascertain. That he was “a well educated and intelli-gent man” was shown by these letters, according to Mitchell, although they are not needed to prove that fact.

In the town records of Bridgewater he is often spoken of merely as “The Elder,” as in the case where “it was voted that the Elder’s• wife, and old Goodman Hayward’s wife and the Deacon’s wife, should sit in the fore seat by the pulpit.” The Elder was William Brett, and the Deacon, Samuel Edson; and this was the highest honor that could be conferred upon them.

Of tall and athletic build, and possessed of much energy, judging from the many enterprises in which his name appears, his duties in the church did not interfere with his secular activities. He evidently had learned surveying before coming to this country, and it is recorded that he urged upon the town the necessity for the purchase of a compass to assist him in laying out lands through the woods, so that he “might do the work properly.” Almost every house lot, meadow lot, highway or other improvement laid out or projected, for many years in Bridgewater, had his name first on the list’ of those chosen by the town to do the work. In 1643 he was enrolled in the Duxbury Company under Miles Standish, and later saw military service in Bridge-water. He was one of the Town Council, a constable, a member of the Council of War, and Representative to the General Court at Plymouth from June 3, 1656, the date of the incorporation of the town of Bridgewater, to 1661. His interest in Harvard College was active, and he, with Mr. Keith, in the very infancy of the settlement procured a subscription of 12 pounds, “to be paid in Indian Corn for the use of the Colledge in Cambridge.” The contributions made by “divers christians in Ireland for the distresses of the Indian wars” were given into the hands of Elder Brett, Deacon Willis

and Mr. Samuel Edson for distribution, and the money which was obtained from the sale of some captive Indians was likewise turned over to them to be given to the rightful owners, who seem to have been the soldiers who had suffered through these same Indians.

Bridgewater, in England, was originally a domain granted to Walter Brito, Knight, by William the Conqueror. It was called at that time Burgie Walter, or Walter's Bridge, which finally became Bridgewater. William Brett was related to the Countess of Bridgewater, and although the Estates of Walter Brito, or Brett, had gone out of the name, it appears that the family still had an interest in them when William came to Duxbury. This fact seems to render it highly probable that he had much to do with the naming of the town of which he was an Original Proprietor, and leading citizen.

The Grant to the Original Proprietors of Bridgewater was made in the year 1645, and was as follows: "The inhabitants of the town of Duxbury are granted a competent proportion of lands about Saughttuchquett (Satucket), towards the west, for a plantation for them, and to have it four miles every way from the place where they shall set up their center; provided it intrench not upon Winnytuckquett, formerly granted to Plymouth. And we have nominated Capt. Miles Standish, Mr. John Alden, George Soule, Constant Southworth, John Rogers and William Brett, to be feofees in trust for the equal dividing and laying forth the said lands to the inhabitants." As William Brett was at this time but 27 years of age, he was, no doubt, the youngest of the men to whom this important trust was given, and his knowledge of surveying may have had something to do with his appointment. After our forefathers had decided that they would take this land for their new town, they proceeded to purchase it of the owners, the Indians, whose chief was Ousamequin. The tract which was

seven miles north, south, east and west from the center was paid for by “7 Coats, a yard and a half in a coat, 9 Hatchets, 8 Hoes, 20 Knives, 4 Moose Skins, 10 Yards and a half of Cotton.” A handsome payment, surely, and poor old Massasoit who had adopted the name which he signed to the deed, late in life, must have been in his second childhood, or else felt that he might as well get the Coats, etc., as to give away his lands. The ceremony of the transfer was very impressive, being executed and made on a hill anciently called Sachem’s Rock. Later, Pomponoho, or Peter the Indian, sells to Nicholas Byram, Samuel Edson, Sr., and William Brett, Sr., more land, which is made mention of in the will of the latter. William Brett’s name stands as the first freeman of Bridgewater, with John Cary, Josiah Standish and others of our forefathers following on the list.

Mitchell, in his History of Bridgewater, says: That there were among the early settlers few who laid claim to great scholarship is true, but there were none who lacked that general intelligence and practical good sense so much more useful to men in their condition. There was, in this respect, a wonderful uniformity among them, and scarcely less remarkable was the identity of their religious faith. The observance of their moral duties was held as of paramount importance, and as evidence of this, it is believed by those who have made it a subject of investigation, that drunkenness and its kindred vices were unknown among them, and not a single conviction of an inhabitant of the town for, any crime involving moral turpitude was had while Plymouth existed as a colony. We find among these men not only those who were competent to guide in the affairs of the town, but leading spirits in the colony. Hayward, a military leader, the Bretts, honored in Church and State, and others whose services are well known.

From the four books of Proprietors’ Records of the Bridgewaters, North, South, East and West, it appears

that the Bretts owned a great deal of land, more, perhaps, than any other family, unless it was the Washburns. As their boundaries were mostly indicated by stakes, stones, trees and bushes, it would be useless to try to locate the several "parcells," as the different lots were called in the records. "The brook that runs through Deacon Brett's Meadow" helped to establish a disputed right, and the Devil's Hop Yard, Cutting Cove and the Bay Path probably meant to the settlers of the early days what Main Street or Broadway does to us.

William Brett's wife was probably daughter of William and Alice (Booth) Ford, who were married in England, 1601. Alice was daughter of William and Elizabeth Warburton (daughter of Sir John Warburton) Booth, being their sixth child. Andrew Ford of Weymouth may have been a son of William and Alice and brother to Margaret Brett. William Ford of Marshfield in his will mentions his daughter Margaret, who might have been Margaret Brett, but he does not name her husband, except to say that if she dies before he does, her twenty pounds which he gives her is to go to her sister Millicent. He, more probably, was brother to Margaret and Andrew. There was a connection between the Bretts and Fords in England, and Millicent Nethersole who married a Brett may have been the one for whom Millicent Ford was named. Ford Brett was buried Dec. 2, 1618, aged 24, "son in law to Mr. Oven-den." The name Margaret occurs eleven times, Lydia nineteen, and Hannah twenty-two times early in the Ford family records, with many Alices. Alice Ford was born in Marshfield, 1668, and the Hannah Booth who married Josiah Winslow may have been the cousin of the Bretts and Fords. Elihu Brett<sup>2</sup> names a daughter Elizabeth, and son John, who may have taken the Warburton names. \* The family on both sides was of

\*Perhaps they were named for his great-grandparents, John and Eliaabeth (Andrews) Brett.

noble ancestry, one of Royal descent. A search carried on for many years has invariably resulted in disappointment when it came to positive records, but the compiler of this book had the information several years ago from a member of the family now dead, that Margaret Brett was born Margaret Ford. He added that probably they were married before leaving England, which cannot have been correct, as their first child was born after 1647, and William Brett was Proprietor. April 4, 1640. There are many intermarriages between the Bretts and Fords recorded in this book, another proof of a family connection and consequent intimacy.

Nov. 17, 1620, Robert Brett of Tenterden and Mary Ford of St. Peters, Canterbury, daughter of William Ford of Bridge, were married, both aged "about 24."  
Edward Brett of Elham and Millicent Nethersole of Kingstone were married Dec. 17, 1608.

#### FORD PEDIGREE

- (1) **JOHN FORD** married \_\_\_\_\_ Claverton, daughter and heir of \_\_\_\_\_ Claverton.
- (2) **JOHN FORD**, their son, married \_\_\_\_\_ Appleton, or Apleton.
- (8) **JOHN FORD**, their son, married Magdalene, daughter and one of the heirs of Edmund Ford of Hastings, who was the son of Erasmus Ford of Sussex. Arms on both sides. Their son was
- (4) **WILLIAM FORD** (Miles) married Anna, daughter of Edward Carrell, Sussex.
- (5) **EDWARD FORD**, their son, married Sara Irton, Arms. Also they had son
- (5) **JOHN FORD**, married first, Anne Smith of London; second, Elizabeth Kemp of Hampshire, and they had son.
- (6) **WILLIAM FORD**, born 1562, married Margaret Wilson, widow of Christopher Wilson of Lamberhurst, Kent. Their son was
- (7) **WILLIAM FORD**, married Jan. 8, 1601, Alice Booth.

There were many Williams in the Ford families. The Kent branch is the one followed out here, they having come from Hastings in Sussex, the adjoining county. where the Bretts also dwelt from the Battle of Hastings, 1066, when they received large grants from William the Conqueror.

The children of William and Margaret Brett are not recorded, so far as I can find. They certainly are not in the Bridgewater Records. From his will and other sources are gathered the following names and probable dates of their births:

- (1) **WILLIAM**, born about 1648; married Elizabeth Cary.
- (2) **ELIHU**, born before 1650; married Ann Turner.
- (3) **ALCE**, born about 1652; married Joseph Hayward.
- (4) **LYDIA**, born
- (5) **HANNAH**, born about 1658; married 1676, Francis Gary.
- (6) **NATHANIEL**, born 1661; married Sarah Hayward.
- (7) **MARGARET**, date of birth unknown.

The Last Will and Testament of Mr. William Brett, Elder of the Church of Christ at Bridgewater, exhibited to the Court held at Plymouth the 12th of March, 1681—2. He died December 17, 1681, aged 63 years.

This will has a large piece gone from the most important part, and this is indicated by lines , in this copy, which is made from the original document, by L.B. G.:

These are to publish and declare to all whom it may concern; that I, William Brett Senior of Bridgewater in the collonie of New Plymouth, being through the mercy of God of sound judgment and memory, doe ordain and make my last Will and Testament in maner and forme as followeth; viz. Into the hands of God I commend my speritt, alsoe resigning up my soul into the everlasting arms of God's mercy, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, my body to be decently interred at the discretion of my Executrix hereafter nominated and for my

outward Estate I doe will that after all my just debts and funeral expenses be paid my lands and other moveables I dispose of as followeth.

Imprimis; I give to my son William twenty acres of land on which he hath built, lying on Matfield River and joyning to the land of Joseph Bassett; more, twenty acres lying down the Great river on the east side joyning to the land of John Washburne Juner; also I give unto him thirty acres of land, a part of the first division which is agreed upon by the Towne to be fifty acres; further, I give unto him one lot of meddow lying on West Meddow brook, between West Meddow and Flagy Meddow. These and every part I give to him to pay to him and to his heirs. Item; I give to my son Elihew fifty acres of land lying on the west side of the Town river and joyning to the land of John Leonard; more twenty acres land as part of the next division before mentioned. Further, I give unto him one lot of land lying in Middleboro' usually called Slashing Cove, and joyning to the land of Samuel Leonard. These and every part I say to him and to his heirs and I give unto him to pay him and his heirs \_\_\_\_\_.

Item; I give unto my two daughters Lydia and Hannah sixty acres of Great River below Titicut, which land was given my by the County

\_\_\_\_\_ to be equally divided betwixt them. I give to my dear wife Margaret all my moveables of all sorts \_\_\_\_\_ comfort and to dispose of as in her wisdom and prudence she may see

\_\_\_\_\_ my children with due respect to their dutifull carriage toward her

\_\_\_\_\_ Also to my wife during her life do I give the use and improvement of my dwelling house and outhouses with the land adjoining thereunto thirteen \_\_\_\_\_ with ten acres lying by the Bay Path \_\_\_\_\_. One lott of Meddow in Cutting Cove and \_\_\_\_\_ meddow in

Slashing Meddow. After my wife's decease I bequeath  
 Unto \_\_\_\_\_ son Nathaniel \_\_\_\_\_ dwelling house and  
 all outhouses, with the land adjoining thereto, thirteen acres more or  
 less alsoe I give to him tenn acres of land lying by the Bay Path and  
 the lott of meddow in Cuting Cove before mentioned and my part of  
 the land which the Town purchased from Peter the Indian. Further my  
 will is that after my wife's decease the lott of meddow lying in Flaggy  
 meddow before mentioned be equally divided between my two sonnes  
 William and Elihew; and whatsoever doth belong to my Purchase  
 Right my will is that it be equally divided between my three sonnes,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I give to my grandchild Joseph Hayward a Carbine  
 \_\_\_\_\_.

Finally I appoint and make Margaret my wife sole executrix of this  
 my last Will and Testament revoking all other Wills and Testaments,  
 whatsoever.

In witnes whereof I have hereunto sett my Hand and Seale, this 25th  
 of November 1681. One thousand six hundred eighty and one.

Witness William Brett (Seal.)  
 Thomas Haward  
 John Howard.

An inventory of the estate of Mr. William Brett Senr. being deceased  
 made by Lieft. Thomas Haward and Ensigne John Howard on the  
 29th day of December anno 1681.

Imp. In Books	03=14=00
In beding and linnine	12=10=00
In wearing clothes	06= 06=00
Item In Armes	03=05=00
Item In Iron vessells brasse and pewter	03=05=00
Item In chests, chaires, spinning wheels and other wooden vessells	03=09=00
Item In linnine and cotton yarn, a saddle and pornmell	03=00=00

In a plow — and husbandry tools	02=07=00
Item A colt, neat cattle and swine	32=00=00
One old horse not prized, naught	00=00=00
Total sum 69 Pounds, 16 shillings.	
Thomas Haward. John Howard.	

It will be noticed that no land is included in this inventory, which is of the “moveables” only.

William Brett left to his descendants the goodly heritage of an unblemished character, and a godly and industrious life. He was always foremost in good works of all kinds, and while he felt it his duty to oppose the Quakers and their influence, he but followed the dictates of his conscience. Having exiled themselves for their religion, our forefathers were resolved to worship God in their own way, and intended that to be the way for others to follow, whether they liked it or not. We cannot realize the difficulties by which these few earnest souls were surrounded, nor how important they considered their forms of worship. Irregularities of any kind were not to be tolerated, and Indians, Quakers, and “all other ungodly folk” were severely punished whenever an opportunity presented.

Although he had but two sons who had male descendants to perpetuate the name, their descendants as well as those of his daughters are to be found in nearly every State in the Union, and all are, as far as I have been able to ascertain, honest and worthy people, carrying with them certain traits which have come down to them from their ancestor. First of all, the majority are devout and God-fearing. Second, there is a strongly marked artistic temperament, musicians and artists of various kinds being found in every branch of the family. Some have attained signal success in the commercial world, and there are many in the professions of law and medicine, especially the descendants of Judge Elihu. While all were good fighters, few attained eminence as commanders. One Rear Admiral, a few Generals,

Colonels and Captains complete the list, but the private soldiers far outnumbered these. Of clergymen there were many, both of the name, and from the female lines. It seems strange that the early settlers paid so little attention to their burial places, coming as they did from homes in England where the churchyards were carefully tended and cared for. In West Bridgewater, where William Brett and his wife were buried, no trace of the spot is to be found, unless it is where some bones were discovered on excavating for a cellar, about fifty years ago. This was not far from his home and near the old church site. Joseph Alden, son of John, was probably buried near the same place.

From the many documents in which his name appears I have selected the following: "The towns of Bridge-water and Taunton had a difference in regard to boundary lines, and it was agreed upon at Town Meeting that the Elder (Brett), and others 'are to issue the difference between the town of Taunton and us, if it may be either by coming to an agreement with them and not going to the Court, or else putting it to an end at the Court, as they shall see cause, having an opportunity so to doe.' In 1670 Elder Brett was chosen to act in the 'Towne's Behalf in reference to Titicut lands with Taunton. It was agreed upon at the June Court (1669) that the town made choice of The Elder and Goodman Edson to go to June Court to issue the business between our neighbor of Taunton and our town, &c. and also the two above were named to goe down to the Governor, to treat with His Worship about the Town's affairs, which they did, and the town promised to pay them.' Meanwhile the lands laid out for Mr. Keith at 'the other sid of Bul's Hole' were surveyed by Elder Brett and Goodman Edson and others, 'a line stretched or drawn from the Center towards Weymouth, by the same, as well as other surveys made. A pc'll of land lying between Titacutt and Taunton is to be

viewed by Constant Southworth and William Peabody, and if it shall not be found within the bounds of Taun-ton, nor to neare Titacutt, that then William Brett, John Willis, Thomas Haward Sr. and Arthur Harris have a competency graunted and confirmed unto them, if it bee there to bee found; if not they have libertie to look out for further supply, with what conveniency they can.”

This soon led to a grant by the Court (1665) unto William Brett, Thos. Hayward, Sr., Arthur Harris, Richard Williams, John Willis and John Cary, to each of them threescore acres of land lying betwixt the lands of Taunton and Titicut; “but in case these lands shall any of them fall within the last grant of Taunton, these lands being before granted to these men, notwithstanding, it shall not make the former grant void, but that the said lands shall be and remain with all and singular the appurtenances belonging to them, to the said William Brett, Thomas Haward, Sr., Arthur Harris, Richard Williams, and John Cary, to them and their heirs and assigns forever.” (*Plymouth Colony Records*, vol. 4, p. 45.)

“It is agreed upon by the Towne the last of May 1669~ that these men heare named that is to say Goodman Brett Goodman Byrum John Willis Sen. and Goodman Edson are chosen to draw up a petition in behalf of the Towne to the Court and to draw it up according to their discretion for the Towne’s good and to write a letter to Goodman Southworth and Goodman Paybody to be helpful to them in this respect.”

1665: The Common meadows were to be laid out, and the men who were chosen for the laying of them out were William Brett, John Cary, Joseph Bassett, Thomas Snell \_\_\_\_ “and they are to have half a hundred of boards for their pains and these meadows are to be laid out 15 days after Michaelmas or October, and they are to have their pay a month after on demand.”

Rev. James Keith was ordained 1664, and after that

time William Brett “often supplied the pulpit when Mr. Keith was sick.”

“The Town being met together the 18th of November 1678 did joyntly agree and concur together that in consideration of Mr. Keith’s weakness and inability for the present to carry on the Lord’s Day exercise, they did freely and willingly chuse Elder Brett to assist him in the work and worship of God and in consideration thereof the Lord inabling him to the performance of the work between this and the 1st of May insuing the date thereof the Towne did freely ingage and we are willing to give him ten Pounds in Corne between this and May day.” (*Proprietors’ Records of Bridgewater.*)

#### DEED FROM WILLIAM BRETT TO SAMUEL EDSON

December 10, 1652.

Know all men by. these Presents, that I, William Brett of Bridgewater, Planter, in the Patent of New Plymouth in New England, do, with the free and full consent of my wife, Margaret, sell, make over and fully confirm unto Samuel Edson sometime inhabitant of the town of Salem in the Massachusetts Government, now inhabitant of the town of Bridgewater, all my right and interest in full and complete purchase of land purchased by me the aforesaid William Brett of Constant Southworth of Duxbury in the Patent of New Plimouth; the house lot containing about five acres only excepted and remaining still my own proper lands, I say, all the rest of the land, upland and meadow lands and with the rest undivided in the township of Bridgewater, with all the immunities and privileges belonging thereunto, and do by these presents discharge myself, heirs, inheritors and assigns or any of them from having any right interest or title thereunto, and engage myself to defend the sale of it in support of the afore named and his heirs, and do wholly make over and confirm the said lands

unto Samuel Edson him his heirs inheritors and assigns forever. In witness whereof I have set to my hand and seal the day, month and year above written.

Witness hereunto	William	Brett
Arthur Harris	Margaret	Brett.
William Brett.		

23 July 1660 this deed of sale was acknowledged before me.

Constant	Soufhworth,
Assistant.	

May 7, 1642. Robert Hicks of Plymouth deeds to William Brett for 7 pounds, 7 acres of upland lying in the nook towards the sea, next to the land of Mrs. Elizabeth Kemp. June 23, 1643, William Brett for 12 pounds deeds to Mr. Ralph Partridge the above described land, transferred May 7, 1652, from Robert Hicks to William Brett. Reverend Partridge seems to have left the most of his property to Mrs. Elizabeth Kemp, widow, except this piece of land which he left to her second son Ralph Thacher.

Will of Ralph Partridge, probated 4 May, 1658; dated 29 September, 1655, bequeaths "to William Brett now dwelling att the New Plantation my black yearling heifer."

Having searched through all the English records I have been able to obtain, my conclusion is that William Brett was son of John and Elizabeth (Andrews) Brett. The father and uncle of Elizabeth left her property in 1610. He was grandson of William and Johanna (Hayward) Brett, whose line is given in the Bassett-Brett Pedigree.

**TABLET IN THE WEST BRIDGEWATER HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY'S BUILDING**

**WILLIAM BRETT**

Presiding Elder of the Church of Christ in Bridgewater under the  
ministry of Rev. James Keith.

Born in England in 1618.

A Settler in Duxbury 1640.

And an Original Proprietor of Bridgewater.

A Deputy to the Old Colony Court 1661-1666.

Died December 17, 1681.

A Grave and Godly Man.

What have we Lord to bind us

To the Land where Pilgrims trod? Their memory and their ashes

Be Thou their guard oh God.

Erected by Mary M. and Anna K. Brett Sixth in descent from William  
Brett.

## Second Generation

(1) **WILLIAM BRETT**<sup>2</sup> (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born about 1648, probably in Bridgewater. He married about 1671 Elizabeth, daughter of John and Elizabeth (Godfrey) Cary, who was born at Duxbury, December 20, 1649. John Cary being the Town Clerk, took pains to record the births of his own children, but was not so careful regarding those of his neighbors, for which reason it is impossible to state exactly when or where William Brett<sup>2</sup> was born. It may be that he being the eldest was born in Duxbury, but the records are not found. There is no doubt as to the approximate time. He died 1723, and his wife survived him, as she presented his will for probate. Both were buried in East Bridgewater.

Without doubt he was one of the leading men of his time in this section of the county. Moses Cary speaks of him as "the famous William Brett," and like his father he was prominent in all church work, being early made a deacon in the church. In 1689 and 1690, and from 1702 to 1707 he was a member of the House of Representatives, and was made Justice of the reace, 1700. He took an active part in the war against the Indians, being a non-commissioned officer. In 1685 he, in common with his neighbors Thomas Whitman, Samuel Allen and others, petitioned for a bridge over the Matfield River, and his name often appears in the town records during his life.

The only child was

(6) **BETHIA**, born about 1684, in what is now East Bridgewater.

## Second Generation

Deacon William Brett<sup>2</sup> by his will probated October 5, 1724, gives all his real and personal estate to be divided between his “Wife Elizabeth and only daughter Bethia Hayward, wife of Thomas.” Josiah Snell and Israel Packard made oath that they “saw ye above named William Brett sign seal and heard him declare ye above written Instrument to be his last will and testament and at ye same time they together with Seth Brett (deceased) set to their hands as witnesses,” etc., etc. Before me

Isaac WINSLOW, *Judge of Probate.*

(2) **ELIHU BRETT<sup>2</sup>** (*William<sup>1</sup>*) was born in Bridgewater, probably before 1650. He was the second son, and early became prominent in town and colony. Married before 1679 Ann. sometimes written Hannah, daughter of George and Mary (Robbins) Turner. A deed dated May 15, 1679, but not recorded till October 24, 1765 (in *Plymouth Deeds*, Vol. 51, page 163), is as follows:

“George Turner, Planter, by free and voluntary gift to my son-in-law Elihu Brett from me the aforesaid George Turner, a piece of land bounded on the westerly by land of Deacon Willis,” etc.: A 20-acre lot of upland, etc., to be holden according to the manner of East Greenwich in the County of Kent in the Realm of England. Mary Turner, wife of George Turner gives her full consent in the presence of Samuel Edson, Sen. and James Keith. (Mary Turner was daughter of Nicholas Robbins of Duxbury and wife Ann.) He was Justice of the Peace and solemnized marriages in Bridgewater and surrounding towns for many years. He was Representative to the General Court from 1691 to 1700. Was the next Magistrate after Hayward, and appointed Judge •of the Court of Common Pleas and Sessions, 1700. It is well known that only those holding high office and those upon whom the greatest honor was to be conferred sat nearest the pulpit, and that Judge

## Second Generation

Elihu Brett is mentioned in the records as one of those who were entitled to “the Front Seat” shows the esteem in which he was held.

He died January 13, 1712, “very suddenly, while sitting in his chair.” Judge Sewall in his Diary thus notices the event: “February 8; I read of the death of Pious Mr. Brett, Bridgewater Jan’y 14, 1711-12. Last Sabbath, yesterday, we had a solemn breach made upon us here. Our Justice Brett got up well, by what appear’d, early in the morning, and having been at his barn, came into his dwelling house, sat down in a chair, being about to take some repast, fell down dead, dead in an instant.”

“O that this very sudden and awfull death may be sanctified to this people and to me in particular, who have so many warnings of the near approach of *death*.”—*James Keith*.

He owned much property in the shape of land, but the boundaries were of such a character as to render it impossible to locate any at the present time. The *Pro priators’ Records* give this among other “parcells” belonging to him:— “Justice Brett. January 13, 1703; Land Grant. 8

Acres laid out on the westernmost branch of East Meadow brook beginning at grate white oke marked on 4 sides and running north north west on 100 rods to A rede oke sapling from thence running east south east 3 rods to A swamp white oke from thence to A maple marked on 4 sides and from thence in a strait line to A walnut marked and from thence to ye bounds first mentioned. More. 8 acres for Justice Brett being on the southerly side of his 40 acres that he had of Francis Cary.” Etc.

Goodman George Turner whose daughter Judge Elihu Brett afterwards married, had a great deal of trouble about his “in-laws,” the Robbins family, and he “made choice of the Elder (William Brett) and Goodman

## Second Generation

Packard to help him consider and agree about the keeping of John Robbins his brother-in-law." Later, Elihu had some of the family on his hands. This George Turner must have come from England, as he does not seem to have been of the Plymouth, Taunton or Scituate families directly, although he may have been related to them.

From *Proprietors' Records* of Bridgewater:

"The lands of Nicholas Robbins, bottom and upland and meadow lands which he hath bequeathed or given to his children. The 10 acres above mentioned fell to Elihu Brett by a division between Jeduthun Robbins and Elihu Brett, the division being made between them the last of Feb. 1689-90."

"An agreement touching the Division of the Estate of Elihu Brett, Esq. late of Bridgewater in the County of Plimouth who dyed intestate January ye 13th Anno Domini 1711, made Betwixt the Widdow and children of the Deceased, April ye 11th 1719. Imprimis; that Mary the wife of John Willis and Margaret the wife of Samuel Willis shall have for their part out of the Lands of the Dec'd the home Land and houseing apprizd at 95 Pounds in equall proportion betwixt them and in consideration that the said John Willis and Mary his wife come to dwell with and take care of the widdow their mother. The s'd John Willis is to have 11 acres of land on the East side of the River by Comfort Willis, appraised at 22 Pounds, and 2 acres and a half on the West side of Taunton Road apprizd at 4 Founds, he paying unto his brother Elihu Brett the sum of 24 Pounds and to his brother Samuel Willis and Margaret his wife the sum of 20 shillings in money or Bills of Credit currant in this Province at the expiration of one year and a half after the date of their agreement and all the Remaining land of the Deceased shall be to the said Elihu Brett and his heirs forever. And as for the debts goods and moveable effects of right belonging to the

## Second Generation

said deceased in his life time and at the time of his death the widow is to have her thirds out of it, and the remainder thereof to be equally divided one half to the said Elihu Brett, and the other half to be equally divided betwixt the two daughters Mary Willis and Margaret Willis above named.” Signed by Anna Brett (the widow).

Elihu Brett

John Willis

Mary Willis

Samuel Willis

Margaret Willis.

—*Plymouth Records.*

The death of Judge Brett was the occasion of much elegiac poetry by his friend the Rev. James Keith, according to Savage, but I have been unable to find it.

Children all born in Bridgewater, but births not recorded. The dates are reckoned from their gravestones.

(7) i. **MARY**, born 1678-79; married John Willis.

(8) ii. **MARGARET**, born 1680-81; married Samuel Willis.

(9) iii. **ELIHU**, born 1681-82; married widow Susanna (Edson) Hayward.

(3) **ALICE BRETT**<sup>2</sup> (*William*<sup>1</sup>), born about 1652; married 1672 Dea. Joseph Hayward, and died soon after the birth of her only child. Dea. Joseph, her husband, was the fourth son of Thomas Hayward who came from England with his wife Susanna and settled in Duxbury before 1638, made freeman 1646, and was one of the earliest proprietors of Bridgewater. The will of Thomas, dated 1678, was proved 1681, the year of his death, and his wife Susanna died before 1678. The Haywards are said to have been of Castle Hayward in Wales in their early history. Richard, a descendant of Michael of Castle Hayward, had son Thomas, who may have been

## Second Generation

the emigrant. He was of Ockley, or Ocle Court, where the Bretts lived, and they were related, as is shown elsewhere. The husband of Alice married twice afterwards, the name of the second wife not found, the third was Hannah, daughter of Experience Mitchell.

Child:

(10) **JOSEPH HAYWARD**, born Dec. 15, 1673, married Sarah Crossman.

(5) **HANNAH BRETT**<sup>2</sup> (*William*<sup>1</sup>), born about 1658; married, 1676, Francis Cary, son of John Cary the emigrant, who was first Town Clerk of Bridgewater, and held many other offices. Elizabeth, the mother of Francis, was the only child of Francis Godfrey, one of the early Proprietors of Bridgewater. Francis Cary was brought up by Samuel Tompkins of Bridgewater and was to take care of him, in return for which Tompkins gave him his estate. This property, which was quite valuable and extensive, is still in the possession of the Carys. Francis was a prominent man in the town. He was born January 10, 1647, and died 1718. Buried in Bridgewater. Hannah's death is not found.

In 1785 one Moses Cary wrote an interesting story of the Carys, which is worthy of preservation. He begins with John Cary, the founder of the family, who came to Duxbury about 1634, and says: "When he first landed it gave him a dreadful shock, for he was brought up delicately, and left a delightful country, and here he found himself not only in a strange land, but in a frightful wilderness and destitute of any of the comforts of life — saw no way to get a living but to go to work, though he was not brought up to any kind of labor. He was so full of trouble that he shed tears bountifully, which so moved the captain of the vessel that he offered to carry him back again, but he said, 'No, I will never go back.'"

52

## Second Generation

“They all moved to Bridgewater, where they lived without a minister for ten or twelve years. Elder Brett was a leading man in that affair, and they kept up the public worship of God all that time. Elder Brett was, by the account I have of him, a great man — as ever came to New England. John Cary did the writing for the company who settled at Bridgewater, for a number of years, free from cost. His daughters I never heard much about. One of them married a Howard, and one with the famous William Brett (son of the Elder), and one of them with Samuel Alden; one of them married a Thurston of Rehoboth, and two of them to Standishes. They went to the westward.”

“The above-named Francis Cary had two sons and three daughters. The sons’ names are as follows:

Ephraim and Samuel. Ephraim settled on the home place, and Samuel moved out of town. Ephraim had five sons and two daughters; viz., Ezra, Zechariah, Ephraim, Daniel and Benjamin. Ezra and Daniel moved to the Jerseys, Zechariah settled in the North Precinct, Ephraim lived on the home place, and Benjamin moved to Windsor, Conn.”

Children (Cary):

- (11) i. SAMUEL, born 1677; married Mary Pool.
- (12) ii. EPHRAIM, born 1678; married Hannah Waldo.
- iii. MARY, born 1681; married Nicholas Whitman.
- iv. LYDIA, born 1683; married Joseph Edson.
- v. MELETIAH, born 1685; married Joseph Lucas. No children; died 1729.

(5) **NATHANAEL BRETT**<sup>2</sup> (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was the youngest son of William and Margaret, and spelled his name as above, although later the spelling was usually Nathaniel. The date of his birth, 1661, is taken from manuscripts, and is undoubtedly correct. He married November 21, 1683, Sarah Hayward, born October 25, 1663, and

## Second Generation

through her their descendants are of *Mayflower* ancestry. She was daughter of Sarah (Mitchell), whose father Experience Mitchell married Jane Cooke, daughter of Francis and Hester (Maiheu) Cooke. Sarah Mitchell married John Hayward, called John of the Plains, to distinguish him from John Howard, their names being pronounced alike. Nathanael was Town Clerk in Bridgewater from 1702 to 1736, when his son Nathaniel took his place. He also held minor offices in the town, was surveyor, school teacher, and probably took his turn at keeping off the Indians, if not in their capture. He was one of the Titicut Proprietors, and it is stated in the Records that "having been employed by the Purchasers for several years to take the several pitches of the several Grants of land, the Purchasers have given him ten acres of land to take up in the undivided lands for a recompense for his pains." His inheritance from his father carried with it the stipulation that he should take care of his mother, which he did.

"Lands which Nathaniel Brett inherited from his father William Brett, the Elder. 2 houselots, being 12 acres more or less butting on the north side of the Town river being bounded by the lands of John Cary Sen. on the eastward side, and running by from the river and brook against the butt end of Thos. Haywards Sen. and the rest of the length running by the westward side of Thos. Haywards. More; — 10 acres in 2 lots, etc. More; — A 10 acre lot on the westerly side of the cart way, etc. More; — One lot of meadow lying in Cutting cove, etc.; — More; 7 acres and a quarter. More; 3 acres. More, 16 acres. More lands of Nathaniel Brett 3 acres. Feb. 1, 1693 One acre for Nathaniel Brett, running on the south side of his land lying on the Bay Road beyond Edge Hill, etc. till it meet with his father Hayward's land." (*Proprietors' Records.*)

## Second Generation

Sarah (Hayward) Brett died July 11, 1737; Nathaniel died November 17, 1740, and both probably were buried in the first burying ground in West Bridgewater, although this is not known positively.

Children (births recorded in his handwriting, *Bridge-water Records*):

- i. A son, born Jan. 2, 1684-5; died at birth.
- ii. ALICE, born Jan. 29, 1685-6; died Mar. 7, same year.
- iii. A son, born Dec. 9, 1686; died same day.
- (15) iv. SETH, born Feb. 24, 1687-8; married Sarah Alden.
- v. A son, born June 9, 1690; died the 11th of the same month.
- vi. A son, born June 15, 1691; died the same day.
- (16) vii. MEHITABLE, born Aug. 12, 1692; married 1721 Samuel Edson.
- viii. SARAH, born Jan. 28, 1694-5; died Dec. 28, 1774.
- ix. A son, born Feb. 4, 1697-8; died on the 15th of the same month.
- (17) x. HANNAH, born Oct. 18, 1699; married Joseph Gannett.
- (18) xi. WILLIAM, born April 26, 1702; married Bethia Kinsley.
- (19) xii. NATHANIEL, born Nov. 3, 1704; married (1) Rebecca Searles, (2) widow Mary (Barnes) Dyer.

## Second Generation

(6) **BETHIA BRETT**<sup>3</sup> (*William*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born at Bridgewater about 1684; married at Bridgewater June 5, 1706, by Elihu Brett, Esq. Thomas Hayward, who was born January 10, 1674; son of John and Sarah (Mitchell) Hayward. He was brother of Sarah, who married Nathaniel<sup>2</sup> Brett, but was nearly ten years younger than she. They lived on the southerly side of the Matfield River, where the father of Bethia lived before them. She died August 14, 1745; he died March 20, 1741. Their estate was divided as follows:

“This Covenant and Agreement made the 20th of June, in the twentieth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George ye Second of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, etc. Anno Domini 1746; Witnesseth, that we, Seth Hayward, Jr., Arthur Harris and Bethia his wife, Samuel Dunbar and Mary his wife, Alice Hayward and Phebe Hayward all of Bridgewater in the County of Plymouth within the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England; Heirs of the estate of Deacon William Brett of said Bridgewater, Deceased, have agreed upon a division of said Estate in form and manner following:

“To Seth Hayward certain pieces and parcels of land lying within the Township of Bridgewater, which is his part and proportion of the Estate of the above Deceased.

“To Arthur Harris and his wife Bethia 45 acres of land, also a ten-acre lot, etc., etc., out of which he has paid to Alice Hayward 8 Pounds, 9 shillings, the value

## Second Generation

being 405 Pounds old tenor, and this being his share of the estate of the said Deceased.

“To Samuel Dunbar’s wife Mary, the Homestead of the said William Brett Deceased; etc. [She bought additional land from her **sisters Alice** and Phebe Hayward.]

“To Alice Hayward certain pieces of land, her part and proportion of the estate of William Brett Deceased.

“To Phebe Hayward certain lands and her part and proportion of the Estate of the said Deceased.

“Dated June 25, 1746.”

To this were set the seals of Seth Hayward, Arthur Harris, Alice Hayward, Phebe Hayward, Bethia Harris, Mary Dunbar.

Children (*Hayward*):

- (20) i. ALICE, born April 7, 1707; married (1) Thomas Cushman, (2) Joseph Pratt.
  - ii. A son, born Sept. 22. 1709; deceased same day.
  - iii. A son, born May 22, 1712; died June 23, same year.
- (21) iv. BETHIA, born Sept. 22. 1715; married (1) Arthur Harris, (2) Robert Latham.
- (22) v. MARY, born Jan. 4, 1718-19; married Samuel Dunbar.
- (23) vi. SETH, born Dec. 3, 1721; married Tal Taloitha Pratt.
- (24) vii. PHEBE, born April 26, 1725; married Josiah Washburn.

(7) **MARY BRETT**<sup>3</sup> (*Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1678-79; married 1698 John Willis<sup>3</sup>, born 1671-72. He was son of John<sup>2</sup> and Experience (Byram), and grandson son of John<sup>1</sup> and Elizabeth (Hodgkins) Palmer Willis She died January 14, 1756, “in the 78th year of her age,” and John died November 1, 1732, “in the 61st year of his age,” by their gravestones, which are in the Old Graveyard at West Bridgewater.

## Second Generation

Children (*Willis*):

- (25) i. MARY, b. Nov. 27, 1699; m. Joseph Packard.
- (26) ii. JOHN, b. Dec. 24, 1701; m. Patience Hayward.
- (27) iii. MARGARET, b. Sept. 15, 1704; m. Nathaniel Harvey.
- (28) iv. EXPERIENCE, b. about 1706; m. John Randall of Easton.
- (29) v. MARTHA, b. 1708 m. 1733 James Pratt of Easton.
- (30) vi. MEHITABLE, b. 1715; m. Apr. 21, 1743, James Stacey of Easton.

(8) **MARGARET BRETT**<sup>3</sup> (*Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1679-80; married March 8, 1705-6 by her father Judge Brett, Samuel Willis, brother to John who married her sister Mary. She died October 6, 1763; he died June 19, 1767.

Children (*Willis*). All were baptized in 1786:

- i. MARGARET, married 1745 John Whitman of Easton. No children.
- ii. SOLOMAN, died unmarried 1745, aged 32.
- (31) iii. ANNA, born 1715; married 1746 Terah Whitman.
- (32) iv. ZERVIAH, born 1718; married 1747 Abishai Willis.

(9) **ELIHU BRETT**<sup>3</sup> (*Elihu*<sup>2</sup> *William*<sup>1</sup>), born about 1681-82; married 1706 Widow Susannah Hayward, daughter of Samuel and Susanna (daughter of Nicholas Byram) Edson, born 1679. She married (1) John Hayward, Jr., and they had two daughters, Susannah, married Joshua Howard and had daughter Thankful, who married Rev. Silas Brett; and Sarah, who married Josiah Winslow of Freetown. John Hayward died 1705, and she married Elihu the following year. To those who are not aware of the former existence of slavery in Massachusetts except that of the Indians held in Captivity, this document which is copied from the *Plymouth Records* may prove of interest. It is called, "The Manumission of Pheebe the Slave Girl."

## Second Generation

“April 23, 1734: To all people to whom these presents shall come or concern: Susanna Edson, widow (relect) of Mr. Samuel Edson late of Bridgewater, deceased, sendeth greeting. — Know yee that whereas I the said Susanna Edson have given my Negroe girl named Pheebe unto my daughter Susanna Brett till she shall come to ye age of thirty *years*, and it being my mind and will that the said Negroe girl shall after that age be manumitted and enjoy her freedom — therefore I, the said Susanna Edson do order and appoint that the said Negroe girl named Pheebe, shall, after she shall arrive to ye age of thirty years be manumitted and sett free forever, and I do hereby manumitt and sett free the said Pheebe, from the age of thirty years forever. In witness thereof I have hereunto sett my hand and seal this 23d day of April Ano Do mini 1734.

“Elihu Brett and his wife Susanna do freely consent to the above within instrument of Freedom, as witness their hands and Seals.”

Elihu died April 29, 1745, date of will 1744. Susanna died in Easton, January 29, 1778, “in her 93d year,” and is buried in the oldest cemetery there .

Children (all baptized 1724, West Bridgewater):

- (33) i. JOHN, born Oct. 23, 1707; (1) Freelove Fenno, (2) Ann Cady.
- (34) ii. ANN, born Aug. 14, 1710; married Joseph Cary.
- (35) iii. BETHIA, born Mar. 31, 1714; married d Joseph Drake.
- (36) v. ELIZABETH, born Jan. 6, 1716; married Thomas Drake, Easton.

(10) **JOSEPH HAYWARD**<sup>3</sup> (*Alice Brett*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born Bridgewater, December 15, 1673; married September 9, 1703, Sarah, daughter of Joseph and Sarah (Alden) Crossman. His grandfather, William Brett, gave him by his will “a Carbine,” although he was scarcely eight years old. The family lived in Bridgewater and Rayn-

## Third Generation

(20) **ALICE HAYWARD**<sup>4</sup> (*Bethia Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *William*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born Bridgewater, April 7, 1707; married first, Thomas Cushman. (She was his second wife; his first, Mehitable Faunce.) Thomas died and she married second, 1749, Joseph Pratt, who died 1753. She died October 13, 1803, aged 96.  
Child (*Cushman*):

(56) **Thomas**, born June 25, 1736; married Bethia Thompson.

(21) **BETHIA HAYWARD**<sup>4</sup> (*Bethia Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *William*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born September 22, 1715; married, 1741, Arthur Harris, son of Isaac and Jane (Cook) Harris, born 1708. They had child, Mehitable Harris, born 1747, and there seems to be no further record of her. The husband died and Bethia married second, Robert Latham whose first wife was Mary, daughter of David Johnson and aunt of Susanna who married Lieut. Samuel Cony. They had no children, and she died 1778, aged 63. He married the same year Jerusha Hooper, his third wife. He died 1788 and Jerusha married Jacob Mitchell and died 1829.

(22) **MARY HAYWARD**<sup>4</sup> (*Bethia Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *William*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born Bridgewater, September 22, 1715; married, February 11, 1745, Samuel Dunbar. She was his second wife, his first being Meletiah, daughter of Joseph and Mehitable (Dunham) Hayward. The descent of Samuel Dunbar from Richard Warren of the *Mayflower* is:

## Third Generation

- (1) Richard Warren.
- (2) Elizabeth Warren, married Richard Church.
- (3) Abigail Church, married Samuel Thaxter.
- (4) Sarah Thaxter, married Peter Dunbar of Hingham, Mass.
- (5) Samuel Dunbar, born May 11, 1704, in Hingham, lived and died in Bridgewater.

There was another Samuel Dunbar born the same year, a minister, with whom the Bridgewater Samuel has been confused, but they were of different families, and not related, as far as I am able to discover. Lincoln in his *History of Hingham*. has mixed them up, as well as Mitchell in the Bridgewater *History*. Samuel, the minister, was son of a Scotchman, was born in Boston, October 2, 1704, and was called to the church in Stoughton, where he remained fifty-six years, until his death in 1783. Many of the marriages recorded during this long time were by Rev. Samuel Dunbar, who left but one son, Elijah.

The *Mayflower* descent of Mary Hayward is as follows:

- (1) *FRANCIS COOK of the Mayflower and wife Hester (Maihew)*
- (2) *JANE COOK, married Experience Mitchell.*
- (3) *SARAH MITCHELL, married John Hayward.*
- (4) *THOMAS HAYWARD, married Bethia Brett.*
- (5) *MARY HAYWARD, married Samuel Dunbar.*

Children (*Dunbar*):

(For convenience, the children of the first wife are given.)

By Meletiah:

- i. **SARAH**, married Elijah Snow.
- ii. **MEHITABLE**, married Jonathan Copeland.
- iii. **SAMUEL**, married Mary Snow.
- iv. **MELETIAH**, married Capt. Jesse Howard.
- v. **HANNAH**, married Daniel Snow.

## Third Generation

Children by Mary Hayward:

- vi. **ASA**, born 1745; grad. H. U. 1767, was minister at Salem, lawyer at Keene, N. H.; died 1788, Keene.
- (57) vii. **ROBERT**, born 1746; married Betty Kingman.
- (58) viii. **DANIEL**, born 1748; married 1771 Abigail Kingman; went to Warren, Me.
- (59) ix. **PETER**, born 1750; married Alice Alger.
- (60) x. **SIMEON**, born 1752; married Abigail Packard.
- (61) xi. **BARNABAS**, born 1756; married (1) Silence Alger, and (2) Molly Hayward.
- (62) xii. **THAXTER**, born 1758; married Phebe Alger.
- (68) xiii. **CALEB**, born 1760; married Hannah Drake.

(23) **SETH HAYWARD**<sup>4</sup> (Bethia Brett<sup>3</sup>, William<sup>2</sup>, William<sup>1</sup>), born Bridgewater, 1721; married September 6, 1748, Tabitha, daughter of Joseph Pratt, Jr. He died September 11, 1778; she died March 15, 1789.

Children:

- (64) i. **AZARIAH**, born June 14, 1749; married May 28, 1768, Ann Pratt.
- ii. **LYDIA**, born Sept. 28, 1750.
- iii. **SARAH**, born May 16, 1752; married 1774 (his second wife) Noah Whitman. Children: 1. Lydia Whitman, married 1779 Zenas Washburn. 2. Freelove Whitman, married 1804 Davis Hayward.
- (65) iv. **SOLOMON**, born June 27, 1754; married Apr. 16, 1782, Zerviah Washburn.
- v. **BETHIA**, born June 21, 1757.
- (66) vi. **CHARITY**, born Feb. 20, 1760; married David Benson.
- vii. **MALASON**, born Mar. 1, 1762; died Aug. 12, 1775. viii. **RUTH**, born Oct. 30, 1764.

(24) **PHEBE HAYWARD**<sup>4</sup> (Bethia Brett<sup>3</sup>, William<sup>2</sup>, William<sup>1</sup>), born 1725; married May 3, 1753, Josiah Wash-

## Third Generation

burn, born 1724, son of Josiah and Elizabeth (Davenport) Washburn. Phebe died 1772.

Children (*Washburn*):

- (67) i. **SOLOMON**, born Oct. 24, 1754; married Mar. 17, 1773, Anne Mitchell.
- ii. **SETH**, born June 11, 1756; died young.
- iii. **THOMAS**, born Oct. 16, 1758; died Nov. 23, 1758.
- iv. **BETHIA**, born Mar. 9, 1760.
- v. **MARY**, born Nov. 4, 1762.
- vi. **HANNAH**, born July 22, 1766.
- vii. **BETTY**, born July 22, 1766.
- viii. **JONATHAN**, born Nov. 12, 1768.

(25) **MARY WILLIS**<sup>4</sup> (*Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born November 27, 1699; married, 1723, Joseph Packard<sup>3</sup> (*Samuel*<sup>2</sup>, *Samuel*<sup>1</sup>).

Children (Packard):

- (68) i. **JOSEPH**, born 1725; married Sarah, daughter of Capt. David Johnson.  
**MARY**, born 1729.
- (69) iii. **JOHN**, born 1731; married Rachel Niles.
- iv. **PARNEL**, born 1733; married David Johnson, Jr.

(26) **JOHN WILLIS**<sup>4</sup> (*Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born December 24, 1701; married May 6, 1724, or December 9, Patience, daughter of Samuel<sup>3</sup> (*Nathaniel*<sup>2</sup>, *Thomas*<sup>1</sup>) Hayward and Elizabeth, daughter of James and Elizabeth Barbour of Dorchester. The marriage of Samuel and Elizabeth is recorded as follows:

Samuel Haward of Bridgewater was married unto Elizabeth Barbour of Dorchester by Rev. Danforth, December 27, 1699.

Elizabeth was born August 4, 1681, death not recorded. Patience was born February 1, 1703, and died December 28, 1784. John died July 18, 1776. He was called Esquire

## Third Generation

Willis, and a part of the inscription on his gravestone reads:

*“Not honest wealth nor grace did save  
This man of justice from the grave.”*

Children, born Bridgewater:

- (70) i. **SUSANNA**, b. Jan. 26, 1727; m. David Johnson, Jr.
- (71) ii. **DANIEL**, b. 1732; m. Keziah Willis.

(27) **MARGARET WILLIS**<sup>4</sup> (*Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born Bridgewater September 15, 1704; married July 4, 1733, Nathaniel<sup>5</sup> Harvey, son of Nathaniel<sup>4</sup> (Thomas<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Thomas<sup>1</sup>) Harvey, who was born in Taunton about 1673, and was member of the First Military Company of Taunton in 1700. Nathaniel<sup>5</sup> was born 1705-06, and died 1801, “aged 94.” Elizabeth Willis married a Thomas Harvey, but conflicting records make it impossible to tell which Thomas it was. Probably she was grandmother of this Nathaniel. They lived in Bridgewater where their children were born.

Children (*Harvey*):

- (72) i. **DAVID**, born 1735; married Content Byram.
- (73) ii. **NATHANIEL**, born 1744; married Bethia Hayward.

(28) **EXPERIENCE WILLIS**<sup>4</sup> (*Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born about 1706 (her birth is not recorded with those of the three older children); married May 4, 1732, John Randall of Easton, his second wife. He died November 16, 1765.

Children (*Randall*):

- (74) i. **EPHRAIM**, born April 12, 1735; married (1) Mary Blake, (2) Louise Stone.
- (75) ii. **JOHN**, born July 16, 1738; married Tamar Phillips.
- iii. **DAVID**, born Oct. 20, 1742; married Lucy Bruce, lived in Easton, was a soldier in the Revolution and had a large family. He died Jan. 21, 1780.

## Third Generation

- iv. **JONATHAN**, born May, 1745; married (1) Amity Morse of Stoughton, (2) 1789, Lucy Waters. Had 13 children and was a soldier in the Revolution. Many descendants. He died Nov. 11, 1805.
- v. **SOLOMON**, born April 1, 1748; married Jerusha Sumner, was a Revolutionary soldier and saw much hard service. Three children.
- vi. **KEZIAH**, born Oct., 1750; married James Fales and lived in Walpole and Spencer. They had 6 children some of whom married other Brett descendants.

Widow Experience married second, October 27, 1768, Josiah Allen, whose wife had died a trifle over four months before. No children are recorded by this marriage, however.

(“*Robert Randall and his Descendants*,” by Rev. W.L. Chaffin, has these families in full, and the compiler of this book acknowledges her obligation to Mr. Chaffin for much assistance on the Randall lines.)

(29) **MARTHA WILLIS**<sup>4</sup> (*Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1707; married first Samuel Harding (Harden in old records), and second, James Pratt in 1733. By her first husband she had a son, whose son Willis Harding married Elizabeth Hobart. By her second husband she had several children, records not found. A descendant is a clergyman of note in the South.

(30) **MEHITABLE WILLIS**<sup>4</sup> (*Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1708; married, 1743, James Stacy of Easton. Their descendants included several clergymen.

(81) **ANNA WILLIS**<sup>4</sup> (*Margaret Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1715; married, 1746, Terah Whitman. Terah and John were brothers, came from Easton, and were sons

## Fourth Generation

Children:

- (128) i. **HANNAH**, born 1764; married Feb. 7, 1789, Joel Edson.
- ii. **MARY**, born 1767.
- iii. **JOHN**, born 1769.
- iv. **GALEN** (twin), born 1771; married March 18, 1809, Mary Horton.
- v. **MERCY** (twin), born 1771.
- vi. **JAZAEL**, born 1774.

(70) **SUSANNA WILLIS** (*John Willis, Mary Brett, Elihu, William*), born Bridgewater January 26, 1727; married May 26, 1743, David Johnson, Jr., born August 8, 1724.

The line of Johnson descent is:

- (1) Capt. John Johnson of Roxbury and wife Margery. He is said to have "suffered grievously at the hands of the Indians," and died 1659.
- (2) Humphrey Johnson, who gives a deed with his father, 1643. He married Ellen, or Eleanor, daughter of William and Margaret Cheney of Roxbury, and they moved to Hingham where was born February 18, 1667-68,
- (3) Isaac Johnson, Esq., who went to Bridgewater and married about 1691 Abial, daughter of John and Sarah Leavitt, (who were immigrants to Dorchester, 1634), and widow of Isaac Lazell. She had two children, Isaac and Abial, by her first husband, and brought them to Bridgewater where they married. Isaac married Mary Hudson, Abial married Samuel Lathrop, and they were the progenitors of many distinguished and wealthy families. Isaac and Abial Johnson had a son born October 16, 1692,
- (4) Capt. David Johnson, who married January 7, 1719, Rebecca, daughter of John and Rebecca (Lapham) Washburn (fifth from Francis Cooke).

## Fourth Generation

Children (*Johnson*):

- i. WILLIS, born 1744.
- ii. DANIEL, born 1746.

- (120) iii. SUSANNA, born Dec. 22, 1747; married (1) Samuel Cony. (2) James Howard. (3) William Brooks.
- iv. LUSANNA, born May 31, 1750; died aged 7 days, and was buried with her mother, who died Aug. 6, 1750, in the 24th year of her age.

David Johnson, Jr., married (2) Parnel, daughter of Joseph and Mary (Willis) Packard, fifth from William Brett, and his sister Sarah Johnson married Joseph Packard, Jr., brother to Parnel.

(71) **DANIEL WILLIS**<sup>5</sup> (*John*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born Bridgewater 1732; married November 11, 1756, Keziah Willis, daughter of Ebenezer. He died 1814, she died 1816.

Children:

- (130) i. **DANIEL**, born 1758; married Zilpha Edson.
- (131) ii. **JOHN**, twin to Daniel; married Sarah Rickard.
- (132) iii. **JONAH**, born 1764; married Abigail Hayward.
- (133) iv. **EBENEZER**, born 1766; married **Joanna Atwood**.

(72) **DAVID HARVEY**<sup>5</sup> (*Margaret Willis*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1735; married 1756 Content, daughter of Nicholas and Elizabeth (Gannett) Byram, born 1740. She was sixth from Nicholas<sup>1</sup>.

Children:

- (134) i. **NATHAN**, born 1757; married Mehitabel Harvey.
- ii. **MARY**, born 1759; married 1782 Edmund Harvey, Woodstock, Conn.
- (135) iii. **MARTHA**, born 1761; married Daniel Ripley 1783.
- iv. **OLIVER**, died young.
- v. **HANNAH**, born 1765; died May, 1786.
- (136) vi. **OLIVER**, born 1768; married Desire Turner.

## Fourth Generation

- (137) vii. DAVID, born 1770; married (1) Olive Dunbar, (2) Phebe Dunbar, (3) Ruhama or Susanna Hart-well.  
viii. CONTENT, born 1773; married Josiah Winslow.  
(138) ix. **BYRAM, born 1775; married Parnell Keith.**  
x. SUSANNA, born 1777; married Isaiah Macomber.

(73) **NATHANIEL HARVEY**<sup>5</sup> (*Margaret Willis*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1744; married 1766 Bethia Hayward, daughter of Samuel, who was brother of Patience Hayward, who married John Willis. Bethia's mother was Susanna, daughter of Samuel Edson, and she was born in Taunton about 1746.

Children:

- (139) i. **DANIEL**, born 1767; married Mehitable Ames.  
(140) ii. **BEZA**, born 1769; married Ruth Carver.

(74) **EPHRAIM RANDALL**<sup>5</sup> (*Experience Willis*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born Easton, April 19, 1735; married first, 1759, Mary, daughter of Moses and Hannah (Horton) Blake of Milton, born December 24, 1740. She died May 10, 1776, and he married second, Louise Stone, who died 1819. He was in the "Lexington Alarm" April, 1775, afterwards corporal, 1777; served in 1778, and in 1780. He owned a grist mill, was constable, clerk of the Baptist Society, selectman, and had for his regular business that of shoemaker combined with storekeeping. He died October 8, 1806.

Children:

- i. ZIBA, born July 11, 1760; died March 23, 1835.  
ii. ELIJAH, born Oct. 14, 1762; died Oct. 10, 1766.  
iii. JOHN, born April 11, 1765; married (1) Hannah Puffer, (2) Keziah, daughter of Seth and Keziali (Ames) Littlefield. He had 14 children, most of whom married and had many descendants, and died Aug. 13, 1837.

## Fourth Generation

- iv. HANNAH, born Aug. 14, 1767; married 1789 John Packard of Stoughton and had 5 children.
- v. MARY, born May 16, 1770; married Sept. 1, 1793, Isaac Stokes, Jr., and went to Maine. They had many children.
- vi. ELIJAH, born Nov. 25, 1772; married (1) Bathsheba Shepard, (2) Betsey Smith. He died June 30, 1850; had 5 children and many descendants.
- vii. MOSES, born July 16, 1775; married Unity Shepard of Stoughton, and went to Chittenden, Vt., where he was a prominent man and held many public offices. They had 8 children, and he died Nov. 11, 1843.

By second wife:

- viii. A child; died young.
- ix. LEMUEL, born Oct. 1, 1779; died Oct. 11, 1802.
- x. ZEPHANIAH, born Sept. 24, 1783; married Betsey Bullard; no children. A physician in Easton.
- xi. MINDWELL, born Feb. 8, 1786; died June 23, 1870.
- xii. CALEB, born April 8, 1788; was in the War of 1812, and died in camp 1813.

(75) JOHN RANDALL<sup>5</sup> (*Experience Willis*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born Easton July 16, 1738; married April 30, 1761, Tamar Phillips. He was in the French and Indian War, Capt. Samuel Glover's company, and saw hard fighting at the siege of Louisburg. Was in the "Lexington Alarm" and enlisted for other service in the Revolution. He died July 23, 1814. With his brother Epliraim he owned a mill in Easton, and was an honest and hard-working man, as well as a good fighter and patriot.

Children:

- i. OLIVER, born Aug. 2, 1761; married Sarah Nor-cross, and died in Bangor, Me., Sept. 24, 1846.

## Fifth Generation

- v. **CLEMENT**, born 1801.
- vi. **HENRY WILLIAMS**, born 1803.
- vii. **NATHAN**, born 1806..
- viii. **EMELINE FRANCES**, born 1808.
- ix. **AUGUSTUS**, born 1811.
- x. **BENJAMIN**, born 1815.

The wife Hannah then died, and he married third, 1816, Freelove (French) Forbes, widow of William Forbes.

(133) **EBENEZER WILLIS**<sup>6</sup> (*Daniel*<sup>5</sup>, *John*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1767; married 1785 Joanna Atwood. They lived in Taunton, where he was drowned in a well, date not found.

Children:

- i. **EBENEZER**, lived in Middleboro and died 1840.
- ii. **GEORGE**, married and had 92 sons, George and William.
- iii. **HULDAH**, married Benjamin Warren of Middleboro.
- iv. **OLIVE**, married Dr. Vaughan of Middleboro.
- v. **JOANNA**, unmarried.

(134) **NATHAN HARVEY**<sup>6</sup> (*David*<sup>5</sup>, *Margaret Willis*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born Bridgewater 1757; married 1788 his cousin, Mehitable Harvey. He died 1815.

Children:

- i. **OTIS**, born 1789; married Eunice, daughter of Benjamin Leach.
- ii. **GALEN**, born 1791; married 1817 Anna Leach, sister to Eunice.
- iii. **SETH BRETT**, born 1794.
- iv. **BETTY HAYWARD**, born 1796.
- v. **CONTENT R.**, born 1799.
- vi. **NATHAN**, born 1803.
- vii. **MEHITABLE A.**, born 1810.

(135) **MARTHA HARVEY**<sup>6</sup> (*David*<sup>5</sup>, *Margaret Willis*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary, Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born Bridgewater 1761; married

## Fifth Generation

1783 Capt. Daniel Ripley<sup>6</sup> (Solomon<sup>4</sup>, Christopher<sup>3</sup>, William<sup>2</sup>, William Ripley<sup>1</sup>), who died 1819.

Children (*Ripley*):

- i. **MARY**, born 1783.
- ii. **MARTHA**, born 1787.
- iii. **DANIEL**, born 1791.
- iv. **SUSANNA**, born 1792; died 1822.
- v. **ORRA**, born 1795; married 1820 Ansel Field.
- vi. **DAVID HARVEY**, born 1798.
- vii. **DEBORAH**, born 1801.

(136) **OLIVER HARVEY**<sup>6</sup> (*David*<sup>6</sup>, *Margaret Willis*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1768; married 1793 Desire, daughter of George Turner by his second wife Jane.

Children:

- i. **OLIVER**, born 1794.
- ii. **ABIEZER TURNER** born 1798.

(137) **DAVID HARVEY**<sup>6</sup> (*David*<sup>5</sup>, *Margaret Willis*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1770; married (1), Olive, daughter of Jesse Dunbar; (2), Phebe, daughter of Thaxter Dunbar. Children were all by his second wife, who died 1820, and he married (3), 1821, Ruhama, daughter of Isaac Hartwell.

Children:

- i. **THAXTER**, born 1811.
- ii. **DAVID** born 1815.
- iii. **LORENZO** Dow, born 1817.
- iv. **OLIVER B.**, born 1820.

(138) **BYRAM HARVEY**<sup>6</sup> (*David*<sup>5</sup>, *Margaret Willis*<sup>4</sup>, *Mary Brett*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born 1775; married 1800 Parnell<sup>6</sup>, daughter of Calvin Keith<sup>5</sup> (*Ebenezer*<sup>3</sup>, *Samuel*<sup>2</sup>, *James Keith*<sup>1</sup>).

## Fifth Generation

### Children:

- i. **CHARLES MILLER**, born 1801.
- ii. **JAMES KEITH**, born 1804.
- iii. **CALVIN**, born 1806.
- iv. **PATTY ALGER**, born 1809.
- v. **SALLY**, born 1811.
- vi. **WILLARD**, born 1815.

(139) **DANIEL HARVEY**<sup>6</sup> (Nathaniel<sup>5</sup>, Margaret Willis<sup>4</sup>, Mary Brett<sup>3</sup>, Elihu<sup>2</sup>, William<sup>1</sup>), born 1767; married 1795 Mehitable Ames, daughter of Simeon and Experience (Standish) Ames, born 1770. The Standish line is: Experience<sup>5</sup>, daughter of Miles<sup>4</sup> and Mehitable (Robbins), Miles<sup>3</sup>, Alexander<sup>2</sup>, Capt. Miles<sup>1</sup> Standish. They lived in Bridgewater. Children:

- i. **EXPERIENCE**, born 1796; married Elisha Hayward.
- ii. **BARZILLAI**, born 1798.
- iii. **LYDIA**, born 1800.

He died and the widow married (2), 1804, Parmenas Ames.

(140) **BEZA HARVEY**<sup>6</sup> (Nathaniel<sup>5</sup>, Margaret Willis<sup>4</sup>, Mary Brett<sup>3</sup>, Elihu<sup>2</sup>, William<sup>1</sup>), born Bridgewater 1769; married 1795, Ruth, daughter of John<sup>5</sup> and Bathsheba (Edson) Carver. John<sup>5</sup> was son of John<sup>4</sup> (Eleazer<sup>3</sup>, William<sup>2</sup>, Robert<sup>1</sup>) Carver. Bathsheba Edson was daughter of Samuel and Mehitable (Hayward) Edson, and was born 1744. Although not recorded in the *Town Records*, family documents show that she was born in Bridgewater and was married 1762. She died April 9, 1836, aged ninety-two years, three months; buried North Leeds, Me. Beza lived in Bridgewater, Woodstock, Vt., and Leeds, Me. He made the machinery for and set up the first mills at Winthrop and Lewiston, Me. He was also a seafaring man, and went on several long voyages, being absent for three years at one time. He was a goldsmith, went West with a valuable

## Fifth Generation

stock of watches to sell, and was never heard from. It has been surmised that he met with foul play at the hands of rogues who desired his wares, valued at a thousand dollars. His sons sought for some trace of him for many years.

Children:

- i. **BETHIA**, born 1796; married her cousin, Caleb Carver, and died within a few months.
- (261) ii. **JEANETTE**, born 1797; married John, brother of Caleb Carver above.
- (262) iii. **DANIEL**, born Aug. 9, 1800; married Mehitable Gott.
- (263) iv. **COLUMBUS**, born Aug. 4, 1805; married Esther Stafford.
- v. **STILLMAN**, date of birth not known. Married and had two sons, one a governor of a Western State.

(141) **JOHN BRETT THURSTON**<sup>6</sup> (*Mary Brett*<sup>5</sup>, *John*<sup>4</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born in Providence 1769; married about 1790 Elizabeth, daughter of Andrew and Mary (Tattersaw) Allen, who came from Falkirk in Scotland. They lived in Freeport, L. I., at the time of his death, and his estate was settled there.

Children:

- i. **NANCY**, born June 18, 1792; married Oliver Dorlan and died May 19, 1867.
- ii. **JOHN** and
- iii. **FANNIE**, twins, d. y.
- iv. **ELIZABETH**, born Aug. 18, 1798; married John Carman and died Aug. 15, 1828.
- (263a) v. **GEORGE ALLEN**, born Apr. 3, 1802; married Ellen, daughter of John and Ellen (Thompson) Fenton, and died Sept. 26, 1853. He was connected with railroads in New York State.

(141a) **DANIEL THURSTON**<sup>6</sup> (*Mary Brett*<sup>5</sup>, *John*<sup>4</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>3</sup>, *Elihu*<sup>2</sup>, *William*<sup>1</sup>), born in Providence 1770; married 1791 Prudence Crossman, born in New Bedford, 1776. She was