

GENEALOGY OF THOMAS FISH OF PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND.

(See New York Gen., and Biog., Record, Vol., 53.)

In the early settlement of the English colonies in America, there were at least eight individual immigrants, bearing the name of Fish, who settled themselves during the seventeenth century, in different localities and became the progenitors of the numerous families of that name which at the present time are widely scattered through many states of the Union.

These eight were Jonathan, John and Nathaniel Fish, among the first comers in 1637, to Sandwich on Cape Cod, and who received grants of land there, in the first distribution in 1640; THOMAS FISH, who received a grant of land in Portsmouth, R.I., in 1643 and who died there in 1687; William Fish who was of Windsor, Conn., in 1642 and as late as 1675; John Fish who was living in Connecticut in 1651, probably at Wethersfield or Stratford, and was afterwards of Mystic, in the town of Stonington, where he died about 1689; Joseph Fish of Stamford, Conn., as early as 1651, and a soldier in the Great Swamp fight at Kingston, R.I., in 1676; and Edward Fish of Talbot County, Md., prior to 1669, and who died in 1696.

There was also a Gabriel Fish of Exeter and Boston, Mass., between 1639 and 1646, engaged temporarily in the fisheries. But, it is believed that he did not take root in this soil. Several children were born to him in this country, who died at an early age, and he returned to his native land.

The three earliest comers of the above, Jonathan, John and Nathaniel were brothers and scarcely more than boys. Jonathan, the eldest, was only about twenty-one years of age in 1637. They were sons of Thomas Fish of Wedgenock Park in Warwickshire, and grandsons of John and Margaret Fish of Great Bowden in Leicestershire. William Fish of Windsor, Conn., was a cousin of the three above named, being a grandson of John and Margaret through their eldest son, Augustine. He was of about the same age as Jonathan but seems to have come to this land at a later date. The other cousins, grandsons of the same John and Margaret, of Great Bowden, through their daughter Alice, who had married Robert Fish of Market Harborough, probably of a nearly related collateral branch of the family, were THOMAS FISH, who settled at Portsmouth, R.I., and John Fish of Mystic, Conn., (Stonington). These six cousins were of a family which for several generations had lived in the parish of Great Bowden in Leicestershire, and in other near by parishes in that county and Northamptonshire.

Although the records of consecutive generations are lacking previous to the introduction of the parish registers, it would seem that the Fish family were numerous in Yorkshire for three and a half centuries, at least, prior thereto.

(One member of the Fish family in Ohio said he did not care to trace the family further back than the time when they lost their fins and tails and began to live on dry land!)

The earliest record we have of a person of the name of Fish, in England is that of Yvo Fisch, about the year 1300, when he was a tenant of lands and meadow "in the territory of Huntwick", in Yorkshire, &c. (Here follows history of different men by the name of Fyshe, Fische, Fish, &c)

We are now brought down to the beginning of the sixteenth century, at which time we find Edward Fyshe, of Harborow, the first member of the family residing in the parish of Great Bowden, of whom we have record. He was contemporary with Richard Fysh and Rutland Fysh of Baybrook and only four miles distant. In September 1508, the location of the tenement

of Edward Fyshe is mentioned in the parish record as lying on the north-
erly side of a message in Haverburgh belonging to William Marchall.

Here comes a gap of two or perhaps three generations, between "Edward Fysh of Harborow" and the earliest known and identified ancestor of the early immigrants to New England, "John Fyshe of Great Bowden". But there were, doubtless, dwelling in the parish in the interim, some of Edward's children and grandchildren, who constituted the missing links. As a rule in the old Catholic days, the Fishes were loyal and faithful supporters of the Roman Church, and many of them entered the Priesthood and became members of the religious houses. After the establishment of the English Church on the protestant basis by King Henry VIII, the Fishes easily adjusted their religious life to the new conditions, and in the parish of Great Bowden every generation furnished its due share of Church wardens and officials. The parish registers began in the year 1559, and contain more than two hundred entries of Baptisms, marriages and burials, relating to more than six generations of the family, coming down to the latter half of the nineteenth century. The present vicar of Great Bowden church told recent visitors (1901) that he had never been acquainted with any of the family, as the last one bearing the name had died a few years before he came to the parish in 1888.

The ancestral line as now certainly known begins with John Fyshe of Great Bowden, who was born, probably, not far from 1555. (There is a surmise that John's father, Augustine, buried Jan. 26 1579/80.)

He was of the yeoman class and he married Margaret, whose maiden name may have been Cradock. The record of their marriage is not found in the parish, but their children were baptized there, most of the children married, and their families are accounted for in the wills of John and Margaret. Thomas, the third son of John, was the father of Jonathan, John and Nathaniel, of Cape Cod.

Baptisms of John and Margaret Fyshe.

1578, Augustyne, 11 June	1589, Mary, 20 Dec.
1580/1 William, 9 March.	1591, Elizabeth, 15 Nov.
1582, Katheryn, 15 April.	1593, Francis, 29 Oct.
1584, Thomas, 8 May.	1596, Anne, 2 June.
1597, ALICE, 6 Nov.	1599, Mary, 8 Dec.
1601/2, John, 26 Jan.	

In the more populous section of the parish of Great Bowden, and contemporary with the first named John Fyshe, was Thomas Fish of Market Harborough. He was also probably a descendant of Edward Fysh of Harborow &c. He may have been a brother of John of Great Bowden, or perhaps a cousin. These relationships are suggested by the fact that the name Austin was given to one of Thomas's sons, a name so often used in the family in its other form, Augustine.

Another son of Thomas, ROBERT, sometimes styled "mercier", married ALICE FISH, a daughter of John and Margaret of Great Bowden.

The registers of Market Harborough give the records of two generations of this branch of the family. The children of Robert and Alice were also the grand-children of John and Margaret and these records may therefore be appropriately introduced at this point.

Baptisms Market Harborough.

1585/6, Thomas, son of Thomas Fische, 10 March.
1590, Austin (all sons of Thomas, 22 April.
1593, ROBERT 12 August.
1595, William, 16 Nov.
1597, William 27 March.
1599, Jeffrey, 28 Oct.

Baptisms of children of Robert and Alice Fish.

(G.B means Great Bowden. M.H. means Market Harborough.)

1618/19, Jan. 1 at G.B. THOMAS. 1629/30, 7 March, M.H., Nathan.
1620/21, M.H., 21 Jan. John. 1630, 8 May M.H. Tabitha.
1622, 1 Sept. M.H. Ruth. 1633, 24 Nov. M.H. Hannah.
1623/4 Jan., G.B. Mary. 1625, 24 April, M.H. Mary.
1626, 17 Sept, M.H. Joseph. 1637, 10 Dec. G.B. Christian.
1639 11 Aug, G.B. Benjamin.

The tradition handed down in the Rhode Island family (Thomas), put in writing one hundred years ago, confirms the close relationship between the Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut families, even making the claim that the three progenitors thereof were brothers. In this connection it is to be noted that Thomas gave to two of his children born at Portsmouth the names of Robert and Alice, in remembrance of his father and mother. Moreover the will of John of Mystic mentions his daughter Alice. The name Alice was an uncommon one in New England in those days, but the remembrance of and love for, a mother, explain its use by these two men in their new, far-away homes.

The most distinguished and the ablest member of the family who has appeared in public life in the United States was the Hon. Hamilton Fish, of New York. He was a member of Congress, Lieutenant Governor and Governor of the State, and also represented it as Senator of the United States at Washington, afterwards for eight years, with great honor, he filled the office of Secretary of State of the United States in the cabinet of President Grant. (Hamilton Fish, Jr., is also a public character, 1940.)

Hamilton Fish's immigrant ancestor in this country was Jonathan Fish, the eldest of the three brothers who settled in Sandwich on Cape Cod. In Sandwich he was married, there his children were born and there he lived for about seventeen years until in 1654 he joined the company which removed with Rev. Mr. Leverick to Long Island, N.Y. Jonathan settled in the town of Newtown and his descendants remained there for several generations, absorbing in the meantime the best blood of some of the old Dutch families. He died in 1663.

"Scattered throughout all quarters of our broad land there are thousands of individuals whose lines can be traced back to John and Margaret Fish of Great Bowden. As a rule they are diligent and conscientious citizens, content to fill the duty lying before them, whether it be in business or professional life, in public service, or, as it has been in perhaps a majority of cases, in living the quiet life of an humble and industrious farmer."

The line of Hon. Hamilton Fish is 1 Jonathan, 2 Nathan, 3 Jonathan, 4 Samuel, 5 Jonathan, 6 Nicholas, 7 Hon. Hamilton.

In 1898 there was published in Harper's Monthly, a document, "The Last Will", supposedly written by Charles Lounsbury. This document attracted much attention. The word went out that the supposed author was an insane man in the Cook County Asylum in Cook County, Illinois. He was said to have been a prominent member of the Chicago bar.

Now for the truth of the authorship.

The Chicago Tribune sought out the author, and admitted that he was Williston Fish, living in the last years of his life in Western Springs, Chicago. Mr. Fish wrote; "It was one of 500 or 600 short sketches I wrote at the time." "For 'The Last Will' I was paid \$10. Mr. Lounsbury was an ancestor of mine, a strong, vigorous man, filled with the joy of living. I used his name to perpetuate his memory."

Mr. Fish, born in 1858, in Erie county, Ohio, in 1858, died Dec. 19, 1939.

His descent from Thomas Fish, of Portsmouth, R.I., follows;

1 Thomas and Mary --. 2 Thomas and Grizzel Strange. 3 Preserved and Ruth Cook
4 Thomas and Mercy Coggeshall, 5 Joshua and Phebe Wright, 6 Job and Rachel
Lounsbury, 7 Elias Hicks Fish and Betsy Van Wagner, 8 Job and Anne Peabody,
9 Williston (and twin sister Josephine.) There are yet living in Ohio his
brother and his twin sister, Ann.

A LAST WILL.

I, Charles Lounsbury, being of sound and disposing mind and memory, do hereby make and publish this my last will and testament, in order, as justly as may be, to distribute my interest in the world among succeeding men.

That part of my interest which is known in law and recognized in the sheep-bound volumes as my property, being inconsiderable and of no account, I make no disposition of in this my last will. My right to live, being but a life estate, is not at my disposal, but these things excepted, all else in the world I now proceed to devise and bequeath.

Item; I give to good fathers and mothers, in trust for their children, all good little words of praise and encouragement, and all Quaint pet names and endearments, and I charge said parents to use them justly, but generously, as the needs of their children shall require.

Item; I leave to children exclusively, but only for the term of their childhood, all and every, the flowers of the field and the blossoms of the woods, with the right to play among them freely according to the customs of children, warning them at the same time against thistles and thorns. And I devise to children the banks of the brooks and the golden sands beneath the waters thereof, and the odors of the willows that dip therein, and the white clouds that float high over the giant trees.

And I leave the children the long, long days to be merry in, in a thousand ways, and the nights and the train of the Milky Way to wonder at, but subject, nevertheless, to the rights hereinafter given to lovers.

Item; I devise to boys jointly, all the useful, idle fields and commons where ball may be played, all pleasant waters where one may swim, all snow-clad hills where one may coast, and all streams and ponds where one may fish, or where, when grim winter comes, one may skate, to hold the same for the period of their boyhood. And all meadows with the clover blossoms and butterflies thereof; and echoes and strange noises, and all distant places which may be visited, together with the adventures there found. And I give to said boys each his own place at the fireside at night, with all pictures that may be seen in the burning wood, to enjoy without let or hindrance and without any incumbrance of care.

Item; To lovers I devise their imaginary world, with whatever they may need, as the stars of the sky, the red roses by the wall, the bloom of the

hawthorne, the sweet strains of music, and aught else by which they may desire to figure to each other the lastingness and beauty of their love.

Item; To young men jointly, I Bequeath and devise all boisterous, inspiring sports and rivalry and I give to them the disdain of weakness, and undaunted confidence in their own strength. Though they are rude, I leave to them the power to make lasting friendships and of possessing companions, and to them exclusively I give all merry songs and brave choruses to sing with lusty voices.

Item; And to those who are no longer children or youths or lovers, I leave memory; and bequeath to them the volumes of the poems of Burns and Shakespeare and of other poets, if there be others, to the end that they may live the old days over again, freely and fully without tithe or diminution.

Item; To our loved ones with snowy crowns, I bequeath the happiness of old age, the love and gratitude of their children until they fall asleep."

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FLOUNDERS

Mr. Fish wrote the following introduction to the Will.

"He was stronger and cleverer, no doubt, than other men, and in many broad lines of business he had grown rich, until his wealth exceeded exaggeration. One morning in his office, he directed a request to his confidential lawyer to come to him in the afternoon. He intended to have his will drawn. A will is a solemn matter, even with a man whose life is given up to business, and who is by habit mindful of the future. After giving this direction he took up no other matter, but sat at his desk alone and in silence.

It was a day when summer was first new. The pale leaves upon the tree were starting forth upon the yet unbending branches. The grass in the parks had a freshness in its green like the freshness of the blue in the sky, and of the yellow of the sun -- a freshness to make one wish that life might renew its youth. The clear breezes from the South wanted about, and then were still, as if loath to go finally away. Half idly, half thoughtfully, the rich man wrote upon the white paper before him, beginning what he wrote with capital letters, such as he had not made since, as a boy in school, he had taken pride in his skill with the pen;

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John Wanamaker, in Philadelphia, once had this Will printed on leaflets, giving the author as the crazy Charles Lounsbury, and distributed them among his employee. Mr. Fish's sister was teaching school near Philadelphia and saw one of the leaflets. She immediately interviewed one of the officials of the Wanamaker company and convinced him that her brother was the real author. Then a new set of leaflets was printed with Williston Fish as the author.

(The above Fish History was compiled and copied by Dr. F. E. Weeks, Kipton, O.)

1885, Sep. 8 - High Town, Texas
1885, Feb. 17 - High Town, Texas
1885, Feb. 27 - High Town, Texas
1885, Feb. 27 - High Town, Texas