

MEAD

(1) **Thomas Meade** was born about 1450 in Somersetshire, England, died 1504 in Clavering, Essex Co., England. He migrated from Somersetshire during the reign of Henry VI, probably before 1470, and settled in Clavering, Essex. He left a will dated 1504 in the Canterbury Probate Court. His descendants lived in Clavering, Elmdon, Berden, Great Easton, and Chrishall, which are all within 10 miles of each other in northwest Essex. His descendant, William Mead, migrated to America in 1635. In 1780 William's descendant Enoch Mead built a house and named it Elmdon.

Children:

1. William, born about 1480.
2. Richard, born 1483.
3. **Thomas**, mentioned below
4. John, born about 1490 in Great Easton, Essex Co., England, died 1566 in Great Easton, Essex Co., England.
5. Margaret, born 1492

(2) **Thomas Meade**, born about 1484 in Clavering, Essex Co., England, died in Great Easton, Essex Co., England. He is probably the Thomas Meade of Great Easton recorded in the Fleet of Fines for 1515.

Children:

1. **Thomas**, mentioned below
2. John, born about 1515, died 1602 in Great Easton, Essex Co., England.

(3) **Thomas Meade**, born about 1510 in Great Easton, Essex Co., England, died 20 May 1585 in Wendon Lofts, Essex Co., England; married **Johanna**. The inscription on Thomas' tombstone reads:

THOME MEADE ARMIGERO SECVNDQ IVSTICIARIO DE BANCO HIC HVMATO FIDELISSIMA SVA CONIVX IOHANNA POSVIT OBIT 20 MAII 1585

Translated, it says: "To Thomas Meade Esquire, Second Justiciar of the Bench, buried here. His most faithful wife Jo(h)an(na) placed (this monument). He died 20th May 1585." His title, "Second Justiciar of the Bench," suggests that Meade was a man of considerable power and status. "Justiciar" is, apparently, not a run of the mill magistrate but someone who presides over, or belongs to, one of the King or Queen's superior courts and who exercises a special judicial function. Up until the 13th century, "Justiciar" referred to the Chief Political Officer for the King -- someone who often represented the King at important meetings or travelled abroad on behalf of the King. In the 15th century, it still appears to have been a significant post; therefore it is likely that Thomas was a fairly important state official.

Children:

1. Thomas, born about 1530, died 1585 in Wendon Lofts, Essex Co., England.
2. **Reynold**, mentioned below
3. Thomas, born about 1540, died 1598 in Chrishall, Essex Co., England.

(4) **Reynold Meade**, born about 1535 in Elmdon, Essex Co., England, died 1590 in Elmdon, Essex Co., England; married **Barbara**. His will was dated 1589.

Children:

1. Thomas
2. **Richard**, mentioned below
3. John
4. Edward
5. Martha
6. Agnes
7. Mary
8. Frances; married Edward Wise

(5) **Richard Meade**, born about 1562 in Essex, England; married Francis of Cambridgeshire. In his generation, the spelling of the surname changed from 'Meade' to 'Mead'.

Children:

1. Richard, born 1586
2. Gabriel, born 1587.
3. John, born 1591.
4. **William**, mentioned below

(6) **William Mead**, born about 1600 in England, died about 1663 in Stamford, Fairfield Co., Connecticut; married about 1625 in England, **Martha Barker**, died in Stamford 16 September 1657. They emigrated from England in the Elizabeth to Massachusetts in April 1635. From there removed to Hempstead, Long Island, then to Wetherfield, Hartford Co., Connecticut, and finally settled in Stamford, Connecticut, part of the New Haven Colony.

Children:

1. Joseph, born in 1630, died 3 May 1690 in Greenwich, litchfield Co., Connecticut; married 4 December 1654, Mary Brown, and was the ancestor of the Norwalk, Ridgefield, and North Fairfield County, Connecticut, Meads. On 15 March 1692/1693, letters of administration on his estate were granted to his widow Mary Mead and their son Joseph Mead. The same day, there was filed an inventory of his estate, taken by Joseph Ferris and John Mead, Jr
2. **Martha**, born in 1632, died about 1695; married first about 1653 **John Richardson**; married second Capt. Williams, of Westchester, New York. Martha was said to have been epileptic and had a scandalous pregnancy, she claimed came about during one of her "fits." Parents of:
 1. **Bethia Richardson**, who on 26 February 1676/1677 married **John Ketcham**, baptized 8 September 1622 at St. Andrew the Great in Cambridge, England.
3. **John**, mentioned below
4. a son, died in 1658





(7) **John Mead**, born about 1634 in England, died 5 February 1699 in Greenwich, Litchfield Co., Connecticut; married about 1657 **Hannah Potter**, thought to be the daughter of **William** and **Frances Potter**. John removed from Hempstead, Long Island, to old Greenwich, now Sound Beach, in 1600 and purchased land from Richard Crab on 26 October of the same year.

Children:

1. John, born about 1658, died 12 May 1693 in Greenwich, Connecticut; married in 1681 Ruth Hardy.
2. Joseph, born 2 May 1660, died in 1725 in Greenwich, Connecticut; married Mary.
3. Hannah, born about 1661; married 12 July 1677 John Scofield.
4. **Ebenezer**, mentioned below
5. Jonathan, born about 1665, died 1727; married Martha.
6. David, born about 1665, died February 1727; married 16 December 1707 Abigail Leane.
7. Benjamin, born in May 1666, died 27 February 1746; married first on 10 May 1700 Sarah **Waterbury**; married second about 1716 Racheal Brown.
8. Nathaniel, born about 1669, died 1703; married Rachel, who married second before 1709 James Ferris, Jr.
9. Samuel, born about 1673, died in 1711/1713; married in 1695 Hannah.
10. Abigail, born about 1675
11. Elizabeth, born about 1678, died before 16 March 1695/1696, was mentioned in her grandfathers will in 1684. She was sometimes called Mary.

(8) **Ebenezer Mead**, born about 1663 in Greenwich, Fairfield Co., Connecticut, and died 1728; married in 1691 **Sarah Knapp**.

Children:

1. Ebenezer, born 25 October 1692, died 3 May 1775; married first Hannah Brown; married second Naomi
2. Calib, born 1694, died in 1733; married in February 1716, Mary Holms
3. Sarah, born 1696; married Jonathan Hobby
4. Hannah, born 1698; married 16 March 1716, John Hobby
5. Jabez, born 1700, died unmarried
6. David, born 1702, died September 1766; married Sarah Close
7. Abigail, born 1704; married Isaac Holms
8. Susanna, born 1706; married 5 September 1726, Moses Husted
9. **Jemima**, born in 1708; married 5 November 1731 her mother's nephew, **Moses Knapp**, born 6 August 1709 in Stamford, Fairfield Co., Connecticut, and died 9 June 1789 in Litchfield, Litchfield Co., Connecticut

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Will of **Reginald (Reynold) Meade** (dated 1589)

PROBATUM (Prologue in Latin)

Memorandum the second: December one thousand five hundred eighty nine and in the two and thirtieth year of the reign of our sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Sir Reynold Meade of Elmdon, in the county of Essex, Gent., being sick in body but perfect in his mind and memory, by word in the presence and hearing of Barbara his wife, Thomas Cloughe clerk of Elmdon aforesaid, Thomas Meade, Richard Meade, John Meade and of Mary wife to the said Thomas, did declare and publish and express his last will and testament to be and stand as if the same had been set down in writing in manner and form, or to the true effect, following that it to say,

Emprimis he did commend his soul into the most merciful hand of Almighty God and his body to be buried in the church of Elmdon aforesaid, and concerning all his lands, goods and chattels as he then had he willed, disposed and devised them in manner and form or to the effect following, that is to say he gave and devised to Barbara his wife all his household stuff and movables he then had in his then dwelling house in Elmdon aforesaid, half his keep at Chrishall, and four of his horses, and he willed and devised all the profit and commodities of Elmdonbery farm and of the keepness (?) and the commodities to it unto the said Barbara his wife for and during the term of three years next after his decease to the end and intent that during the said term she do keep and bring up Edward Meade his fourth son, and yearly during the said term at the _____ feast the said Barbara of the farm's profit do content and satisfy unto the Lord thereof the rent due out of the same and also yearly during the said term of three years the said Barbara or her assignee do content and pay the yearly annuity or sum of twenty pounds in good and lawful English money unto John Meade his third son at the feasts of the Annunciation of our Lady Saint Mary the virgin and Saint Michael the Archangel by even and equal portions. And from and after the said three years expire he willed and devised the profit and commodities of the said Elmdonberry farm and keepness and commodities to it unto the said Edward Meade his fourth son for and during the natural life of the said Barbara and from and after her death it then the remainder thereof unto the said John Meade for and during the years then to come in the same. And he devised an annuity or yearly rent of seven pounds of good and lawful English money unto the said Barbara for and during her natural life to be yearly issuing and payable out of the quitrents of the manors of Mounteneys and Daqworths in Elmdon aforesaid at the feasts of the

Annunciation of our Lady Saint Mary the virgin and Saint Michael the Archangel by even portions to be paid by the hand of Thomas Meade his son and heir, his heirs or assignees. Item he devised also that the messuage wherein he then dwelt in Elmdon and the lands to it called Coyce (?) and the lands that were Streates and Cosins. All the rest of his free lands in the corn fields of Elmdon being no part of the Manor of Mounteneys and Dagworths; the croft called Pillcroft, the profit of the pigeon house at the Bury, half an acre of wood yearly to be taken out of his fellable wood for her fuel, his free land in Chrishall fields and three acres of crop land called Taylors adjoining to the said messuage unto the said Barbara for and during her natural life. And the said Thomas Meade should surrender the said crop hold accordingly. And he expressed he dealt the more liberally with the said Barbara because she should be good to her children and should not trouble her children. And he then willed from and after her death the said messuage and lands called Cories (?) and of the said Chrishall fields should go and remain unto the said John Meade, his heirs and assignees for ever. And that after the death of the said Barbara the said Cosin Streates and the said other lands being in the cornfields of Elmdon after her decease as is aforesaid (Bury Land excepted) should go and remain unto the said Edward Meade, his heirs and assignees for ever. All and every which legacy and bequest disposed unto the said John he expressed for his better maintenance and preferment in study and learning at the Inns of the Court. Item he willed and devised all the profits of all the woods and grounds of the woods and lands in Chrishall, Chisall magna and Chisall parua which he held of the lease or grant of Mr Penruddof (?) unto the said Thomas Meade and unto Richard Meade his second son and to their assignees to the end and intent that with the same they should well and truly content and satisfy and pay unto Martha Meade, Agnes Meade and Mary Meade his daughters the several sums of one hundred pounds of good and lawful English money within one year next after their several marriages or sooner if his said sons should gain it of the wood sales of the said woods. Item he devised and bequeathed the sum of forty pounds of like English money unto Frances Wise the daughter to the said Reginald and wife of Edward Wise to be paid unto her by the said Thomas Meade and Richard Meade out of the rest of the profit of the said _____ woods and grounds. Item he willed and devised unto the said Thomas Meade all the profit and felling of all the wood belonging to the said Manor Dagworths and Mounteneys to the end and intent by the discretion of the said Thomas he do give one part thereof to Frances Wise daughter of the said Edward and Frances Wise, and the rest of that land he do satisfy unto Barbara Meade daughter of the said Thomas Meade toward her better preferment in marriage. Item he gave and bequeathed all his interest he then had of and in the moiety or half part of the said Manor of Dagworths and Mounteneys which he held by leases of Mr Cutter (?) except certain parcels thereof he had devised to the said Barbara his wife for her life and seven acres thereof called Berry garden unto the said Edward Meade and to his assignees for all the years then to come in the same. Item he willed and bequeathed unto the said Richard four of his plough horses and sufficient corn to sow his lands. Item he gave and devised the other moiety or rest of the said Manors of Dagworths and Mounteneys that he had purchased in fee simple (?) and the Manor place S___ and all other edifices thereunto belonging and all the pastures thereunto adjoining lying severally and the said Bury garden to the said Thomas Meade his heirs and assignees for ever. The rest and remainder of all his goods and chattels whatsoever bequeathed or disposed as the aforesaid he gave and devised unto the said Thomas Meade and Richard Meade his sons and did constitute them the said Thomas and Richard his executors of his said last will and testament, requiring and charging them effectually and truly they should perform the same.

Probatum etcetera

The Scandalous Pregnancy of Martha Mead

Martha, sister of John and Joseph Mead was said to have been an epileptic. In 1653 she married John Richardson, about whom there is practically nothing in the records. He knew that she was pregnant before their marriage, and when the time came for her to give birth, he took her away to Roxbury, Massachusetts, to avoid scandal. The baby died a month thereafter. Who was the sneaky one who found out and leaked the news in Stamford? This wrong doing was considered serious enough for New Haven to handle. Joseph Mead explained about her fits, and Martha herself said that when she was at her master's house, she happened to have a fit and came to find only Joseph Garnsey in the room. There was also a John Ross in the house. Martha claimed that she was taken advantage of while unconscious and therefore did not know the father's name. Several goodwives-- Knapp, Stuckey, Buxton, Webb, and Emory--testified about her fits. They also admitted that she lied about ever having had the baby.

The court didn't buy Martha's story. They considered it nonsense. The men concurred that a sexual act involved some reaction, particularly a reaction of pleasure. Punishment should have been a severe whipping, but since Martha was pregnant yet again, she was fined ten pounds, which, of course, her brother and husband were responsible for. The death of the baby in Roxbury aroused suspicion, but Joseph said he would present proper documents to prove that the death was a natural one. Though this case is handled or at least written about, in a very cut-and-dried fashion, one can draw inferences from it. Martha was evidently a servant as she refers to being in her masters house. Were many girls so employed? Both her family and her husband wholeheartedly supported her. Was it to protect themselves also from being charged with murder? Did they know the true facts or did they honestly believe her? The full weight of the Puritan Law stands on this case, but the court members seem ready to be lenient. The case also provides a glimpse of Martha's lady supporters, how they defended her, and how they may have enjoyed their moment in an almost gossipy way.

Source unknown