

Robert Bills

293

**COMMENTS:** On 23 July 1635, "Robert Bills," husbandman, aged 32, was enrolled at London as a passenger for New England on the *Pied Cow* [Hotten 110].

### THOMAS BIRCHARD

**ORIGIN:** Terling, Essex

**MIGRATION:** 1635 on the *Truelove*

**FIRST RESIDENCE:** Roxbury

**REMOVES:** Hartford by 1639, Saybrook by 1648, Edgartown by 1653, Norwich 1682

**OCCUPATION:** Laborer [Hotten 131]. (Given his later prominence in New England, this occupational designation entered in the London port book must be regarded with some skepticism; however, no other evidence of his occupation has been found.)

**CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:** "Thomas Bircharde" was admitted in 1635 to the Roxbury Church as member #137 [RChR 81].

**FREEMAN:** 17 May 1637 (as "Thom[as] Bircher," first in a sequence of three Roxbury men) [MBCR 1:373].

**EDUCATION:** Thomas Birchard and his second wife signed their deed of 6 June 1667.

**OFFICES:** Connecticut juror, sometime between 11 April and 1 August 1639 [CCCR 1:29]. Deputy for Saybrook to Connecticut General Court, 16 May 1650 (marked "absent"), 15 May 1651 [CCCR 1:207, 218, 220].

Edgartown committee to divide lands [Edgartown TR 1:131]. Town clerk (as "Thomas Burchard the elder"), 8 June 1653 [Edgartown TR 1:121]. Commissioner to end small causes, 1654, 1655, 1656 [Edgartown TR 1:119, 120, 121].

**ESTATE:** In the Hartford land inventory in February 1639[/40], "Thomas Birchwo[od]" held five parcels, along with a sixth parcel acquired at a later date: "one parcel on which his dwelling house now standeth with other outhouses, yards or gardens therein being part whereof is lying in the Westfield & containeth by estimation five acres"; "one parcel lying in the North Meadow of meadow & swamp containing by estimation five acres one rood & eleven perches (more or less) viz: two acres three roods & thirty-five perches of meadow & two acres one rood & thirty-six perches of swamp"; "one parcel more lying in the North Meadow

containing by estimation eight acres"; "one parcel lying in the Cowpasture containing by estimation nine acres"; "one parcel lying in the little oxpasture containing by estimation eight acres"; and "one parcel of land with a messuage or tenement standing thereon which he bought of Zachariah Field containing by estimation four acres" (annotated "October the 4th 1650, it was when this parcel of land was bought but not recorded before the 21th of February 1652") [HaBOP 124-25].

In 1640 "Thomas Birchwood" was granted twenty-six acres of "upland on the east side of the Great River" [HaTR 23, 52].

On 4 January 1648[9], Thomas Birchard held a £300 interest in the Eight Mile Meadow in Saybrook [Goodwin Anc 1:56, citing Potopogue Proprietors' Records 1:1]. On 31 October 1656, "Thomas Birchard of Martins Vineyard" sold to William Pratt of Saybrook his interest, and that of his son, John, in the upland and meadow in "Potopouge Quarter" [SayLR 2:99]. On 1 November 1656, Thomas Birchard sold to John Clark Sr. of Saybrook "two pieces of land in that town, one of nine acres in the planting field, and the other of six acres in the North Meadow which belonged to his son John" [Goodwin Anc 1:58, citing a deed in private hands].

In 1663 Thomas Birchard deeded "to my cousin Thomas Trapp" certain lands on Martha's Vineyard, the deed being signed by Thomas Birchard and also by "Katiren Burchard" [Edgartown TR 1:19]. On 6 June 1667, "Thomas Birchard of Martha's Vineyard" sold to Robert Codman of Martha's Vineyard "my ten-acre lot, more or less, which I bought of Richard Smith ... and also half a share of fish and whales which was my son John Birchard's"; "Tho[mas] Birchard" and "Katrine Birchard" signed the deed [Dukes LR 1:320].

A 1669 list of Thomas Birchard's lands on Martha's Vineyard comprised "my houselot with addition the town gave me in changing some of my lots and five acres I had of John Pease in all I judge eighteen acres"; "my dividend lot with my pond lot lying together, my pond lot I part of it of old John Folger and part of it I changed with Bland and his wife, a third part I took out of my dividend lot, both parcels I judge to be about thirty acres"; "thirdly at Crackatuxett two lots the third and fifteen with my thatch lot without side the fence that was containing three acres"; "my land [at] Mashakett containing I judge sixty-three acres"; "fifthly one ten-acre lot within the general fence"; "sixthly my meadow two acres more or less which I bought of Richard Smith lying at Poche on Chappaquidick Island"; and share in the fishweirs, whales and grazing rights" [Edgartown TR 1:74-75]. On 13 June 1676, "Thomas Burchard" deeded to

*Thomas Birchard*

295

"my kinsman Thomas Trapp ... my thatch lot lying in Mr. Mayhew's dividend near Cracketuxett being in the number of thatch lots the ninth and also my two lots lying in a place called Cracketuxett one being in number the third, the other the fifteenth" [Edgartown TR 1:7].

On 2 May 1682, "Thomas Birchard of Edgartown upon Martha's Vineyard" sold to Joseph Norton of Edgartown "all my right, title & interest in the neck which is called Aquampacher Neck near Pahoggannot" [Dukes LR 4:36]. On 24 March 1682/3, "Thomas Birchard of Norwich" sold to "Nicolas Marson of Say-Brook ... a hundred-pound right in the Oxpasture of Say-Brook" [SayLR 2:237]. On 9 May 1683, "Thomas Birchard late inhabitant upon Martha's Vineyard" sold to "Thomas Wollin resident upon Martha's Vineyard ... one share and half share of land lately purchased by Mr. Sarson lying and being near Sanchacantackitt" [Dukes LR 1:209].

On 16 September 1684, "[t]here being presented unto this Court a writing of Mr. Thomas Birchard deceased as an addition to his will this Court approves the same & orders it to be recorded. And that the executor or administrator to that estate pay those legacies according to the true meaning & intent of the deceased as is expressed in the said writing under his hand and witnessed by Morgan Bowers & John Reed" [NLCR 4:87].

On 25 November 1684, "John Birchard petitioning this Court and presenting some reasons against the probation of the Court of the addition to Mr. Thomas Birchard's addition to his last will although John Birchard had notice that the codicil was to be presented & the said John Birchard would not appear in the season to make his objections and this Court seeing it their duty & could do no otherwise but approve the said addition to Thomas Birchard's will yet this Court grants liberty to John Birchard to appear to the next Court of Assistants in May next or else that John Birchard pay the ten pounds given by Mr. Thomas Birchard to some of his children" [NLCR 4:96].

**BIRTH:** Baptized Fairsted, Essex, 12 October 1595, son of "W[illia]m Byrcharde."

**DEATH:** Between 9 May 1683 [Dukes LR 1:209] and 16 September 1684 (court order on codicil to will).

**MARRIAGE:** (1) Fairsted, Essex, 23 October 1620, Mary Robinson [TAG 51:18]. "[blank] Birchard, the wife of Thomas Birchard," was admitted in late 1635 or early 1636 to the Roxbury Church as member number #146

[RChR 81], and it was presumably she who died in Roxbury as "Goodwife Birchard" on 24 March 1654/5 [RChR 176; see also TAG 16:162-63].

(2) By 1659, widow Catherine Andrews (on 22 September 1659, "administration to the estate of Lewis Martine was given 21th July 59 to Thomas Trapp in behalf of Mr. John Andrewes, to whom it was given, & the said Thomas Trapp failing in giving security to the recorder who understanding & finding the said Thomas Trapp to be conveying himself & the said goods out of this jurisdiction to Martin's Vineyard to Thomas Burchard who married the said Thomas [sic] Andrewes mother" [SPR 3:192-93; TAG 64:88-89]), living on 6 June 1667 [Dukes LR 1:320].

(3) By 1680 Deborah \_\_\_\_\_ ("Deborah, wife of Thomas Burcham of Martin's Viniarde, d. in Charlestowne, May 10, 1680" [ChVR 1:110]).

**CHILDREN:**

- i ELIZABETH, bp. Terling, Essex, 1 November 1621 [Terling PR]; no further record.
- ii MARY, bp. Terling, Essex, 2 April 1623 [Terling PR]; no further record.
- iii SARAH, bp. Terling, Essex, 22 August 1624 [Terling PR]; m. Hartford 25 October 1647 Bartholomew Barnard [HaVR 608].
- iv SUSANNAH, bp. Terling, Essex, 22 June 1626 [Terling PR]; no further record.
- v JOHN, bp. Terling, Essex, 31 January 1627/8 [Terling PR]; m. (1) (recorded at Norwich but probably at Hartford or Saybrook) 22 July 1653 Christian Andrews [NoVR 22-23; TAG 64:85, 89]; m. (2) by 1680 Jane (Lee) Hyde, daughter of Thomas Lee and widow of Samuel Hyde [TAG 16:227-28, and sources cited there].
- vi THOMAS, bp. Terling, Essex, 24 September 1629 [Terling PR]; bur. there 19 February 1630/1 [Terling PR].
- vii DEBORAH, bp. Terling, Essex, 18 April 1632 [Terling PR]; bur. there 6 April 1633 [Terling PR].
- viii HANNAH, bp. Terling, Essex, 17 October 1633 [Terling PR]; m. (as "Hanna Burchet") Guilford 12 April 1653 John Baldwin "both of Guilford" [GuilVR Barbour 4; see also TAG 64:86].

**ASSOCIATIONS:** On 14 March 1681, in an order relating to the disposition of the estates of Richard Webb and his wife Elizabeth, "Mr. Bartholemu Barnard in the right of his wife and in the right of all that are related to his father Burcher [claimed] a right to a proportion out of the

estate of both the above deceased by virtue of kindred" [Fairfield PR 3:86-87]. "Attempts to prove how Birchard and Webb were related have proved unavailing" [Goodwin Anc 61-62].

Thomas Birchard and his second wife, "Katherine," were witnesses on 4 March 1674 to the will of John Pease of Martha's Vineyard who, in his will, gave to his son, John Pease, all the land that had been given to him at Mohegan [now Norwich, Connecticut]. This was the place to which John Birchard, Thomas's son, had removed. Thomas Trapp, the relative of Mrs. Birchard, also witnessed the will. Perhaps this indicates some connection between John Pease, or his wife, and either Thomas Birchard or his wife.

COMMENTS: On 19 September 1635, "Thomas Burchard," aged 40 years, "laboring man," "Mary Burchard," aged 38, "Elizabeth Burchard," aged 13, "Marie Burchard," aged 12, "Sara Burchard," aged 9, "Suzan Burchard," aged 8, "Jo[hn] Burchard," aged 7, and "Ann Burchard," aged 18 months, were enrolled at London for passage to New England on the *Truelove* [Hotten 131].

A suggestion has been made that Thomas Birchard lived briefly at Guilford, Connecticut, because his daughter Hannah was described as being of Guilford at the time she married [Goodwin Anc 1:57]. This suggestion is not supported by other evidence, and Hannah was probably there on her own.

"Tho[mas] Birchard" was apparently a principal instigator of the "rebellion" of some of the inhabitants of Martha's Vineyard who favored annexation to the government of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and was the first signatory on the petition dated 15 October 1673, which petition also contained the signature of "Thomas Trappe" [Goodwin Anc 1:59-60; MA Arch 48:138].

The claim has been made for some years in various secondary sources that Mary Birchard, daughter of Thomas Birchard, was the famous, unnamed "bride of Bride's Brook." John Winthrop Jr., magistrate of New London, was called upon to marry Jonathan Rudd of Saybrook to an unnamed bride, but Saybrook not being within Winthrop's jurisdiction, and there having fallen a heavy snow, the young couple and their attendants met Winthrop part way at his suggestion, and the marriage was performed in the forest on the New London side of the brook which served as the boundary line between New London and the Colony of Connecticut. Winthrop deposed some years later concerning this event, but gave neither the date nor the name of the bride. However, he

affirmed that this event was the source of the name Bride's Brook for this particular stream [CCCR 2:558-59]. Unfortunately, without some evidence that the bride was Mary Birchard, we cannot expediently assume that it was she who married Jonathan Rudd. Those who have made this claim say that only Thomas Birchard was influential enough to cause Winthrop to travel out in the snow to perform this marriage. Winthrop says nothing about this courtesy, and says that he himself suggested such a meeting; moreover, the suggestion that only Birchard was prominent enough to cause Winthrop to leave home is absurd since there were many men in the area more prominent and influential than Thomas Birchard.

Suggestions have also been made in secondary sources of marriages made by two other daughters of Thomas Birchard, Elizabeth and Susanna, but no evidence supports these suggestions.

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE:** In 1915 Frank Farnsworth Starr prepared a good treatment of Thomas Birchard and his family, utilizing primary sources [Goodwin Anc 1:55-62]. While not every item of biographical information appeared therein, valuable verbatim quotations from original documents, and footnotes showing full references, make this a critical and reliable source.

Though she did not know the English home of Thomas Birchard and his family, or have data from the parish registers there, Edna M. Rogers compiled a comprehensive genealogy of Thomas Birchard and his descendants to the children of the third generation [TAG 16:157-63, 221-28, 17:35-49, 177-90]. While this has details not mentioned by Starr, both have to be used together to provide a full picture of Thomas Birchard's peregrinations.

Prentiss Glazier discovered the English origin of Thomas and Mary (Robinson) Birchard and a full list of their children which, with additional data from the parish registers and wills concerning the Robinson ancestry, was published in 1975 [TAG 51:17-21].

## SIMON BIRD

**ORIGIN:** Unknown

**MIGRATION:** 1635 on the *Susan & Ellen*

**FIRST RESIDENCE:** Boston

**REMOVES:** Billerica