

Brockett Family of England

(John Brockett and Mary Blackwell)

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by Raymond W. Madsen A.G. © 2000

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Introduction

In the fall of 1983 I published an article called the “*A Case Study of the Brockett Family in Colonial America and England*”. This study began with John Brockett who sailed from England aboard the ship “Hector” arriving in Boston 26 June 1637 with the Rev. John Davenport, Theophilus Eaton and Edward Bannister. They were Puritan’s. John was active in the religious settlement of New Haven with Davenport and others. The goal of the study was to determine the ancestral parentage of John Brockett in England. In the case study I wrote “little has been known concerning the life of John Brockett before his arrival in America. Yet tradition has existed for two hundred years that John Brockett was the eldest son of Sir John Brockett of Brockett Hall, Hertford, England.” Descendants and genealogists for decades have generally accepted that connection. One writer wrote “On account of his Puritanical ideas, his father (who had been knighted by Queen Elizabeth) disinherited him, and that John Brockett then gave up all claims to the title and estates of the Brocketts in England, in order to join the Puritan Band which came with Rev. Davenport to America. Another tradition is that John Brockett fell in love with a Puritan maiden, that for her sake he gave up his right to the paternal estate, came to this country, established himself, provided a home for a wife, returned to England, married her and brought her to this country [America].

In the Case Study I used a variety of primary and secondary sources with the goal of identifying the ancestral parentage, then extending the Brockett line using medieval records. As such I came to a conclusion as to who John Brockett married (Mary

Blackwell). In addition it was determined that he was born in Wheathampstead parish, Hertfordshire about 1612 the son of John Brockett based on the Cambridge University Records: ***BROCKETT, JOHN. Adm. Fell. Com (age 21) at CHRIST'S, Apr. 23, 1634. S. of John, of Wheathampstead, Herts. B(orn) there. School, Watford. Matric. 1634.*** It was this University Record that lead to the assumption the christening in Wheathampstead on 20 May 1611, son of John Brockett, Esquire was ancestral. Mary Bannister was the wife of John Brockett, Esquire. As the immigrant John came to the America with Edward Bannister, all things seem to fit in place.

The False Connection - (to many John Brockets)

Over time others either came to the same conclusion, or they found my pedigree with this connection in the *Ancestral File*, a collection of lineage link data submitted by patrons and available in *FamilySearch* and accepted it. This false connection has now been widely accepted and can be found in many electronic databases and on the Internet. However in September 1999 I made a pilgrimage to the ancient parish of Wheathampstead. With great admiration I took in the church with it's remarkable lead covered "broach" spire crowning the tower. The six bells rang out in beautiful melody as we approached the church. The grounds were exceptionally well kept. What a beautiful building. As one enters the church through the porch to the south aisle and turns right, they approach the south transept called Brocket or Lady Chapel. In the Chapel is the effigy of Sir John Brocket and Margaret (Benstede) his wife. The tomb bearing the date of 1558. Sir John is portrayed in a suit of armor with long hair and beard. This Sir John and wife Margaret were the parents of ten sons and three daughters including Sir John Brocket of Brocket Hall, friend of Queen Elizabeth.

***MARY BROCKETT SECOND WIFE OF
JOHN BROCKETT LATE OF
WHEATHAMSTEAD IN***

YE HERE LYETH INTERREDY BODY OF

***COVNTY OF HERT ESQ & DAUGHTER OF
GEORGE BANISTER LATE OF DRAYTON IN
Ye COUNTY OF MIDDX GEN & HAD ISSVE
BY HIM 6 SONNES & 2 DAUGHTERS VIZ
GEORGE THOMAS MARY JOHN WILLIAM
ELIZABETH BANISTER & HENRY. SHE
DEPARTED THIS LIFE YE DAY***

OF ANNO DOMINI 1669

AGED 77 YEARS.

Standing at the feet of Sir John and turning around you see on the stone floor the monumental inscription for Mary Banister, wife of John Brockett, Esquire. It was this John and Mary who was assumed to be the parents of the John who attended Cambridge University, matriculated there in 1634, married Mary Blackwell in 1635 and came to America in 1637 on board the ship Hector with Edward Bannister. However the memorial provides a flaw in this assumption. This Mary did have a son named John, but she is the second wife of John Brockett, Esquire. In 1983 the marriage place and date of John Brockett to Mary Bannister was not known. But we now know they were married at St. Bride Fleet Street, London on the 29th of December 1623^[1] Any child of this

couple after 1623 could not be the one found at Cambridge or married to Elizabeth Blackwell 16 August 1635 at Sandbridge.

The first wife of John Brockett, Esquire was also to a Mary. Her surname was Gerywaie (Garway). They were married 13 December 1600 in St. Mary Abchurch, London^[2]. It was

to this wife that John Brocket, Esquire had the son John Brockett christened in Wheathampsted on 20 May 1611 and assumed to be the ancestral, American Immigrant. In the parish registers of Wheathampstead, John Brocket, Esquire is often noted as “*the street*”. The Brocketts lived at Wheathampstead Place just across the river from the church. However there were *two* John Brocketts having children christened in Wheathampsted the same time. The other John is usually noted as “*Mackrey End*”.

John Brocket, Esq. *of the Street* and Mary Gerywaie had five children:

William christened 20 July 1608, buried 7 November 1609.
John christened 20 May 1611, buried 4 November 1628
Charles, christened 1 July 1613, buried 9 January 1616
Thomas, christened 15 January 1614, buried 9 August 1619
Garway, christened 6 June 1616, buried 19 April 1619

All five children died either as infants or at an early age including John of 1611 -***buried 4 November 1628, Jn s. Jn esq. the Street.*** Mary (Gerywaie) probably died from childbirth with Garway, dying in 1619. She was buried 29 July 1619 at Wheathampstead. Thus they had no surviving children to adulthood. So John in 1611 can not be the ancestral immigrant.

John Brockett, Esquire “*of the Street*” with Mary Bannister had several children as noted from her memorial. They were all christened at Wheathampstead.

George, christened 4 January 1624
Mary, christened 19 June 1627
Thomas, christened 4 May 1628, buried 6 July 1671
Elizabeth, 3 August 1628, buried 18 July 1632
John, christened 20 October 1629
William, christened 23 October 1631, buried 1 Jan 1675
Bannister, christened 20 January 1632
Henry, christened 22 July 1634

John Brockett, Esquire of Wheathampstead was buried there 5 November 1649. His will was proved in 1649[3]. He mentions his sons Edward, George, Thomas, William, Bannister, Henry and a daughter.

The Correct Connection

So who are the parents of the immigrant John Brockett? Actually the answer was there all the time, in fact the source is the same that caused us to point to Wheathampstead in the first place, the Cambridge University Record say he was 21 in 1634, son of John Brocket of Wheathampstead. His age in 1634 would calculate his birth year to be either 1612 or 1613. Already the 1611 christening has been proven wrong. That leaves the following christening -***baptized 29 July 1612, Jn s. Mr. Jn Brocket, Mackrey End.*** There are no other John Brocket christenings until the 1629 entry mentioned above. Again the right place, the right names and exactly the right time period. So who is this Mr. John Brocket of Mackrey End?

The Ancient Brocket Family

(updated 4 Nov 2001 with acknowledgement to contributions from Adrian Brockett)

Extensive research was done to ensure that there are no other possible John son of John Brocket's. In fact, research was taken back 300 years to **Thomas Brocket** who born about **1363**, builder of the original **Brocket Hall in Yorkshire** and married to **Dionice Sampson**. From him down, the various Brocket lines have been traced where possible to the mid -1600's, past the point where the immigrant John Brocket left for America.

Thomas and Dionice Brocket of Brocket Hall had a two sons, **Thomas**, of Brocket Hall who married **Elizabeth Ashe** and **Edward** who married **Elizabeth Thwaytes**. **Dame Elizabeth** as she was known, wife of Thomas was heir to the manor of **Symonds Hide at Bishops Hatfield** which became the **Brocket Hall in Hertfordshire**. They had no children. The rights to the manor passed to his brother **Edward** and continued in the family through his descendants until it came to **Sir John Brocket** who married **Helen**, daughter of **Sir Robert Lytton** of Knebworth Place.

Edward Brocket and **Elizabeth** had several children. **John Brocket**, Esquire and Sheriff of Hertfordshire was their eldest son. He married **Lucy Pulter** by whom they had children, **John, Edward Lucy, Elizabeth** and **Alice**. Their son **Edward** married **Margaret Mikleford**. This Edward resided at **Letchworth**, Hertfordshire. From Edward and Margaret were the Brocket descendants at **Codicot**, Hertfordshire and the 'Rector' of **Graveley** parish who during the Civil War, 1642-51, was one of large numbers of the clergy ejected from their livings. **Edmund Brocket**, "had been a priest for over 50 years was ejected in 1643/4 as scandalous in life and unsound doctrine." From **William**, the youngest son of **Edward Brocket** and **Elizabeth** (Thwaytes) probably descends the "cadet line" the **Brocket's** of **Campton** and **Dunton**, Bedfordshire and **Guilden Morden**, Cambridgeshire.

John Brocket, Esquire, son of **John** and **Lucy** was born about **1490**. He was Sheriff of Hertfordshire and Essex. He married **Dorothy Hughson**, From them the Brocket's of Wheathampstead and Brocket Hall descend. John and Dorothy Brocket had several sons and daughters:

Sir John Brocket, knighted by Queen Elizabeth

Luce Brocket, married to Thomas HOO

Nicholas Brocket of Wheathampstead, a great land owner married Margaret HOO

Robert Brocket, married Margaret Farrow and Margaret Gilbert

Edward Brocket, Willingalle, Essex and by his wife Elizabeth Barley came the Brocket of Willingalle.

Also daughters **Jane** and **Alice Brocket**

Sir John Brocket and Queen Elizabeth

Great stories are told of their son Sir John Brockett of Brocket Hall, husband of Helena Lytton and Dame Elizabeth Moore. The great Brocket Hall was situated at the extreme northern corner of Hatfield parish. This Sir John Brocket was a doughty knight, twice Sheriff for the

county like his ancestors. He was “entrusted with the training and inspection of the men levied in this part of Hertfordshire at he time of the Armada.” It was “whilst Mary was on the throne, Elizabeth was kept under ‘house arrest’ at Hatfield House. She used to walk along the banks of the River Lea to visit John Brocket, probably plotting to raise an artillery to overthrow Mary. In 1558 Elizabeth was sitting under an oak tree on the far side of the lake when a horseman galloped from London bringing the news that she was the new Queen. In 1558, in recognition of their friendship, Elizabeth bestowed a knighthood on Sir John Brocket.” Sir John was buried at Hatfield in the year 1598. Sir John by his wife Helena, daughter of Sir Robert Lytton, had daughters Margaret, Anne, Elizabeth, Helen and Mary. All who married well. By Dame Elizabeth, his second wife he had Frances who married Dudley, third Lord North. Having no male issue, the estate of Brocket Hall was passed to descendants of Mary, youngest daughter of John and Helena, who married Thomas Reade.

Edward, son of John Brocket and Margaret Benstede was born about 1540. He married Etheldred Frodsham. They were the parents of John Brocket, Esquire of *the Street* in Wheathampsted, who married 1) Mary Gerywaie and 2) Mary Bannister. John is the only known child of Edward Brocket, Esquire, who was buried at Wheathampstead in 1598. Of John Brocket, Esquire of *the Street* we have already acknowledged.



Figure 1 Wheathampstead parish church

In the Wheathampstead church there is “on the east wall, an incised white marble tablet in memory of John Heyworth, his wife Joan, and their three children all of whom died in their infancy. Dated, 1558, it tells how the bereaved parents adopted Margaret Hoo as their sole heir, this lady making an interesting second marriage to one Nicholas Brocket, Esquire. Thus we learn how two great land-owning families in the neighbourhood joined forces in marriage.”^[4] Nicolas

Brocket died in 1585 and was buried at Wheathampstead, his will being proved that year. Nicholas and Margret had two known children, Johanna who was buried at Wheathampsted 15 February 1566 and John Brocket, who christened at in the same church 14 January 1562. This John was known as Mr. John Brocket of Mackrey End.

Mr. John Brocket of Mackery End married Mary Snagg (of Mackery End). They had three children:

Thomas Brocket (Mackery End) christened 8 October 1584

Ann Brocket (Mackery End) christened 2 March 1585 and buried 22 March 1586

John Brocket was the eldest child, christened 24 July 1583 at Wheathampsted and married twice, 1) to Joan Lacon about 1608. Joan died in 1621 and 2) Elizabeth Mordant on 8 July 1624 at Oakely, Bedfordshire.

Of Elizabeth Mordant, John had a son Edward in 1625 and a daughter Elizabeth in 1626. Mr. John Brocket of Mackery End by his wife Joan Lacon had Lacon in 1609 and John who was

christened at Wheathampstead 29 July 1612. It is this John who attended Cambridge and married Mary Blackwell 14 August 1635 at Sandridge. It is this John Brockett who sailed to the American colonies to throw his lot with the Reverend John Davenport and Theophilus Eaton, Puritans from England.

New Haven City

The following history of New Haven came from the New Haven City Web Site

On April 24, 1638, a company of five-hundred English Puritans led by the Reverend John Davenport and Theophilus Eaton, a wealthy London merchant, sailed into the harbor. They soon discovered that the Quinnipiacks and other local tribes were much distressed by raiding bands of Pequots and Mohawks from surrounding areas. It was for this reason that Momauguin, the sachem of the Quinnipiacks, and other tribe members agreed to sell the tribe's land to the Puritans. In return, the settlers pledged to protect the natives and to allow them the use of the lands on the east side of the harbor.

New Haven's founders not only hoped to create a Christian utopia, they also saw in New Haven's spacious harbor an opportunity to establish a commercial empire that would control Long Island Sound and possibly the coastline as far south as Delaware Bay.

By 1640 a complete government had been established and the settlement, originally called Quinnipiac, was renamed Newhaven. The town plan was based on a grid of nine squares. In accordance with old English custom, the central square, now the Green, was designated a public common. By 1641 New Haven had grown into a community of approximately 800. *The survey map of 1641 was laid out by John Brockett*



A copy of the 1641 Brockett map as shown in "Three Centuries of New Haven, 1638-1938" by Rollin G. Osterweis, published in 1953 by Yale Univ. Press

Over the next few years, however, the flow of newcomers began to weaken and trade with the outside world shifted more and more to Boston. In an attempt to establish direct trade with England, the settlers managed to assemble enough produce to fill a vessel which would become known as the "Great Shippe." However, after setting sail in January, 1646, the ship and its crew were never heard from again. This disaster ended the dream of creating an economic empire and over the years New Haven became overshadowed by New Amsterdam and Boston.

“In 1660 when difference arose between the Connecticut colony at Hartford and the New Have Colony, as to boundary lines, John Brockett was appointed one of the commission to settle the troubles.”^[5] He was an educated man with a reputation as a civil engineer and surveyor. In 1639 he laid out the large square, the center of the city of New Haven. A few years later the Governor of New Jersey deputed John to lay out Elizabeth Towne. “The First General Assembly of New Jersey convened in Elizabeth Towne and was constituted 26 May 1667.” John was one of the two who was chosen to represent them in the House of Burgesses.

“In June 1654, the General Court appointed its proportions of soldiers to cooperate with a fleet sent by Cromwell, against the hostile intentions of the Dutch on the Hudson River, and appointed John Brockett as Surgeon.” And twenty years later, “from June 1675 to June 1676, the bloody war against the Connecticut Troops called King Philip’s War” raged. During this war John Brockett was (again) under appointment as surgeon^[6]. He served as Deputy to the General Court of Connecticut during the years 1671, 1678, 1680-82, and 1685. He died in Wallingford, Connecticut 12 March 1690 aged eighty years. He had ten children, the eldest being John born 1642 who married Elizabeth Doolittle.

Footnotes

^[1] St. Bride Fleet Street, London: parish register FHL#380154

^[2] St. Mary Abchurch, London: parish record FHL#374483

^[3] Prerogative Court of Canterbury (P.C.C.) 1 Crumbroke, 1649/50

^[4] St. Helen’s Church Wheathampstead: A brief history and guide. Revised edition, Ruth Jeavons.

^[5] Eugene L.Oberly, *Phelps-Brockett-Perkins and Allied Families* (1948), page 65

^[6] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

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