

# NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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### NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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ENGLISH ANCESTRY OF ROBERT PENNOYER  
AND WALTER BUTLER OF CONNECTICUT

By PETER WILSON COLDHAM

The Pennoyer name is probably best known in America from the William Pennoyer bequest to Cambridge College (now Harvard University), the first hereditary scholarship in America. In his will dated 25 May 1670, William Pennoyer of London provided the sum of £10 so that "two scholars for ever shall be educated, brought up and maintained in the College called Cambridge College in New England, of which I desire one of them so often as occasion may present may be of the line and posterity of the said Pennoyer, if they be capable of it."<sup>1</sup> The "said Pennoyer" was Robert Pennoyer of Stamford, Connecticut, who arrived in America 8 September 1635, aged 21, on the *Hopewell*, Captain Babb, accompanied by Thomas Pennoyer, aged 10.<sup>2</sup> The most complete account of Robert Pennoyer in New England appears to be that prepared by Winifred Lovering Holman Dodge,<sup>3</sup> which is readily available and need not be repeated here. It is now demonstrable that *the Pennoyer surname was an alias* adopted by one branch of a large *Butler* family from the Welsh border region.

The only clue to William Pennoyer's family origin in what might be called the "standard" genealogical sources comes from his will, in which he refers to a number of Butlers (including Walter of New England, son of Evan of Cusop, Herefordshire) as being "all my kindred."<sup>4</sup> Attempts to draw up any sort of pedigree have previously been frustrated by the lack of parish registers for towns on the Herefordshire-Wales border. The Bishop's Transcripts beginning in the 1660s do not cover many of the nonconformist baptisms and marriages. Those few Butler wills proved in the Herefordshire Court give no clue to a relationship with *the Pennoyer* family of the Moor, for whom a pedigree has existed at least since the 1683 Visitation of Herefordshire.<sup>5</sup>

The following account of the methods used to overcome the barriers to the tracing of Robert Pennoyer's and Walter Butler's ancestry may offer some en-

couragement to the increased use of what are often regarded as secondary genealogical sources.

The knowledge that William Pennoyer was a merchant of substance with relatives in New England suggested that further information about him might be forthcoming from the High Court of Admiralty papers lodged in the Public Record Office, because this Court dealt extensively with maritime affairs as they affected English merchants. Witnesses appearing before it, unlike those giving evidence in the Chancery Courts, were often required to state their birthplace. The HCA papers were found to contain a number of references to William Pennoyer. The deposition of principal interest was that taken 27 February 1668/9 in which he described himself as aged 63, living in Spittle Yard, Bishopsgate Street, London, and *native of Bristol*.<sup>6</sup> At this point the Bristol Archives Office was able to provide the information that Robert Pennoyer, citizen and glover of Bristol, married Alice—at St. Thomas's, Bristol, 13 February 1613/14, and that his third son, also Robert, was baptised at St. Nicholas, Bristol, 21 November 1614. These facts corroborated those already ascertained and gave us the birthplace and parentage of Robert Pennoyer the emigrant to New England, but no further clues towards building up a pedigree.

In the hope that William Pennoyer's will might have been disputed in the English courts, a frequent occurrence when large sums of money were involved, an extensive search was made of the so-called Six Clerks series of Chancery papers which cover the period of interest. The search yielded a rich prize in the shape of three suits: *Eedes vs. Loton*,<sup>7</sup> *Cheese vs. Loton*,<sup>8</sup> and *Loton vs. Watkins*<sup>9</sup> with their associated depositions.

In 1685 Isabell Eedes of Ullenhall, Warwickshire, and her children (Thomas Eedes; Mary, the wife of Humphrey Osberson; Margaret Bennett, widow; Joane, the wife of William Cloves; Samuel Eedes; and Richard Eedes) presented their Bill against Richard Loton, an executor of William Pennoyer's will. Isabell Eedes claimed to be the only daughter and heir-at-law of Samuel Chambers, deceased, who had no brothers and an only sister, also deceased, who married Robert Pennoyer by whom she had two sons, William Pennoyer the testator, and Samuel Pennoyer, both of whom died without issue. In his lifetime William Pennoyer had been "much wrought upon by Martha, his wife, and by her acquaintance" who were disaffected from the Church of England. During their frequent visits to him these people had persuaded William Pennoyer to leave a substantial sum to be divided amongst the poorest of his relations in England. But some of the claimants lived in Wales and were not in any case as poor or as closely related to the testator as were the plaintiffs. Richard Loton and other overseers of William Pennoyer's will say in their Answer that the testator had relations nearer than Isabell Eedes, including Katherine Butler alias Roberts who was the daughter of John, the brother of Robert who was the father of William Pennoyer. Anne Croyse and others were first and second cousins on the father's side. There was no bar to claimants from Wales since the testator's intention in specifying his relations in England was merely to

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distinguish them from his relatives in New England for whom he had made separate provision.

In the same year Samuel Cheese, the brother of Pennoyer Cheese (so named at William Pennoyer's wish and mentioned in his will), claimed to benefit as the son of John Cheese of Ashford Bowdler, Shropshire, who was the son of Joan Chambers, the sister of Samuel Chambers and of Elizabeth Chambers who married Robert, father of the testator. To establish the basis of the plaintiff's claims, depositions were taken 24 January 1684/5 at the house of William Lloyd, innholder of Ludlow, Shropshire. The deponents were: Richard Higgons of Steventon near Ludlow, esquire, aged 65; John Higgons of the Inner Temple, London, gentleman, aged 25; Richard Cole of Ludlow, saddler, aged 52, late High Bailiff of Ludlow; Samuel Jordan of Ludlow, mercer, aged 33; Samuel Bowdler of Ludlow, haberdasher, aged 26; Edward Brookes of Ludlow, aged 60, whose grandmother was Joane Chambers; and Thomas Chambers of Ashford, aged 65, who also claimed relationship to the testator. An additional deposition was taken at the house of Margaret Powis, widow, at Ludlow 26 January 1684/5 from Elizabeth Cheese, widow, aged 61. The deponents confirmed the relationship to William Pennoyer claimed by Samuel Cheese, whose children were named as Elizabeth, John, and Edmund. Samuel Cheese, with the help of money from William Pennoyer, had set up in business as a feltmaker, but he failed, and when his creditors pressed upon him, had absconded. He had been able to re-establish himself when he received part of the legacy left by William Pennoyer to Samuel's brother, Pennoyer Cheese, who had predeceased the testator.

In *Loton vs. Watkins*, the surviving executor of William Pennoyer, Richard Loton, sought the direction of the courts in respect to the payments to be made to claimants William and Edward Watkins and "other remote kindred of William Pennoyer." Of the defendants, William Watkins claimed that Watkins Procer, his father, was first cousin to the testator, i.e. the children of a brother and sister; Edward Watkins claimed that he is the only son of William Watkins and "hath wife and four children and nothing to maintain them but his own labour"; Thomas Allen claimed that he married Martha Butler, the daughter of Evan Butler who was a first cousin to the testator; and John Hiatt claimed that he married Elizabeth, the daughter of Thomas Butler, also a first cousin to William Pennoyer.

The depositions in this case provide the key to many of the problems of relationships and are, therefore, given at greater length than the other documents cited. The membrane is entitled "Depositions and Sayings of Witnesses taken at the Town Hall of Hay, Brecon, 11th April 1687." *Ann Croys* "by her husband's name, but by her maiden name Anne Butler, relict of Richard Croys, late of Dorstone and now of Cusoppe, Herefordshire," aged 80, deposes that she lived with William Pennoyer, her first cousin, for some years in London. She saw Robert Pennoyer of Bristol, the father of William Pennoyer, in his lifetime at the house of Richard Butler, her father. Robert Pennoyer was her father's older brother and was then known as Robert Butler,

but later changed his name. The reason was that "he happened to be present where a man was killed" and fled to Bristol where, to conceal his real identity, he altered his name to Pennoyer. This Robert had two brothers in Dorston, Richard and John, and all were the sons of Thomas Butler of Dorston, the deponent's grandfather. Robert Butler was of a mind to sell his lands in Dorston to a stranger, but "by meditation and persuasion of his relations, he waved the first bargain and sold it absolutely to his brother, Richard Butler . . . the fittest to have it." Before fleeing to Bristol he placed one of his sons, Samuel Pennoyer, "att Table and Dyett" with his brother Richard Butler. Robert Butler "was never reputed or taken to be the son of Thomas Penoyre gent. of the Moore but the son of Thomas Butler, weaver. . . ."

*Johan Butler* of Cusop, "widow of Evan Butler late of Cusoppe deceased, aged 86 next August," says she knew William Pennoyer for 50 years and knew his father, Robert Pennoyer of Bristol. Her father-in-law was John Butler, brother of Robert Pennoyer. William Pennoyer had maintained her children and provided for the education of one [?]some] at the University of Cambridge, and set others up as apprentices. He had also given an annuity to her late husband whom she married 70 years ago. Some 24 years ago William Pennoyer had come to Hereford to discover their situation and, finding Evan Butler in debt, had paid his creditors and given money to Samuel, one of their sons. *Howell John* of Dorston, "aged 88 next Trinity Sunday," had several times visited William Pennoyer's house in London and knew his family's history from what he had been told by his father. *William Hay* of the parish of Hay, gentleman, "aged 71 on St. Matthew's Day next," knew John Butler of Cusop 50 years ago when they were neighbors. *Samuel Butler* of Cusop, yeoman, aged 48 next mid-summer, was also several times at William Pennoyer's house in London. He had learned the story of Robert Butler's flight to Bristol from his [deponent's] grandfather, John Butler of Cusop. The lands sold by Robert Butler to his brother, Richard, were now in the hands of James Mady of Dorston. *Simon Brace* of Clifford, gentleman, aged 70, says he was a close neighbor of Thomas Pennoyer of the Moor and had heard him angrily deny any relationship between himself and William Pennoyer.<sup>10</sup> *James Hughes* of Hay, gentleman, aged 73, claims to have known William Pennoyer before 1666, who told him that Richard and John Butler of Dorston and Cusop, and Davis Butler of Dorston, the son of Richard Butler, were his relations and that he had other relations in the City of Bristol. William Pennoyer had made payments to his Butler relations through the deponent. *Evan Phillips* of Clifford, yeoman, aged 70, confirms the story given by previous deponents. *William Butler* of Bredwardine, gentleman, aged 46, deposes that he is the son of John Butler and the grandson of Richard Butler. He knew William Pennoyer 23 years ago.

Some further family details are provided by the will of Thomas Butler of Cusop dated 3 May 1651 and proved in Hereford in 1662.<sup>11</sup> In this he bequeathed a house and land to his father and mother, John and Anne Butler, and a house and land to Jane, his wife, until his son, James, reached the age of 21, on condition that certain sums of money were paid to his

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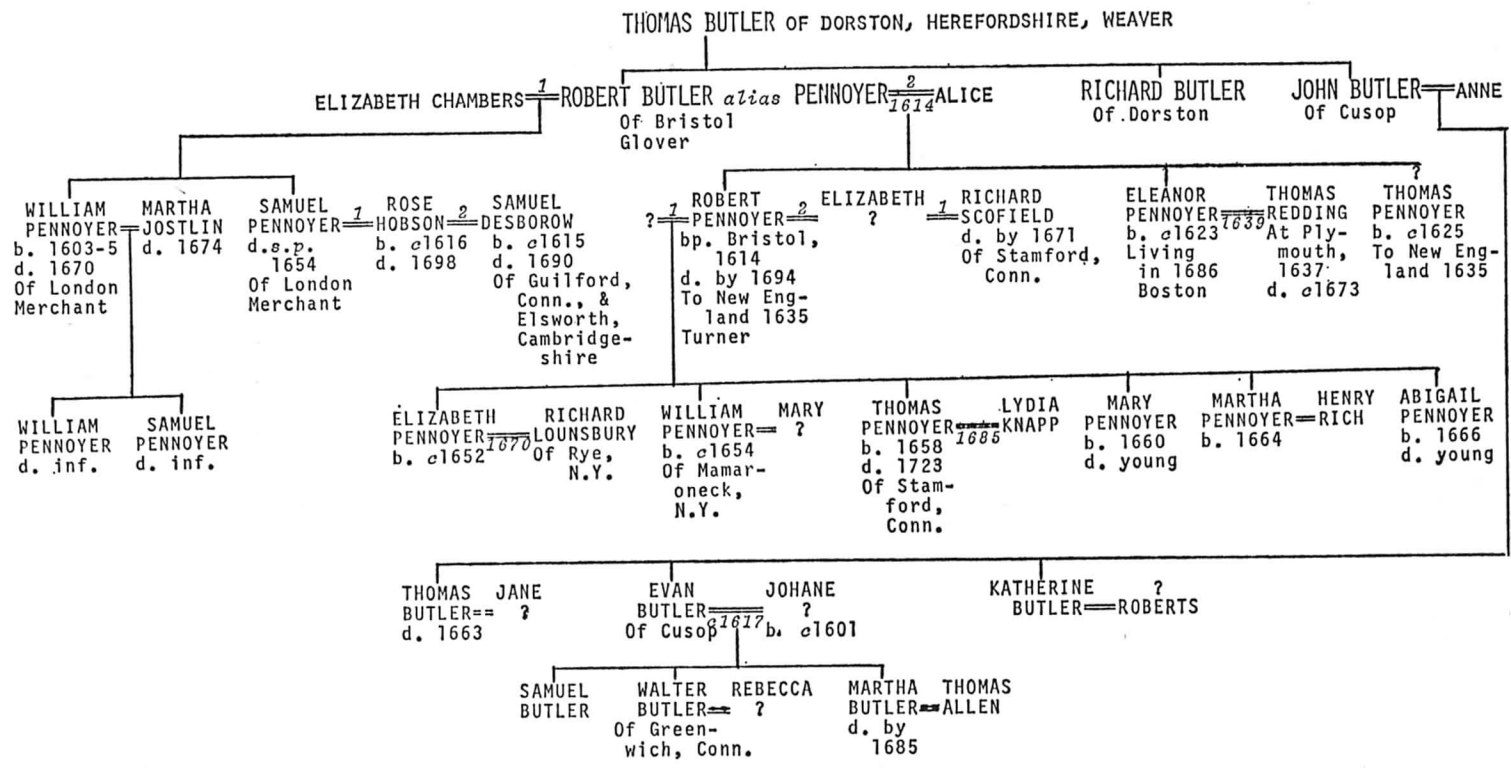
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daughters Elizabeth, Marie, and Jane. David Tho. Madock, Watkine Tranter, Evan Butler, and Roger Robert were appointed executors; witnesses were John Rawlins, Thomas Lewis, Katherine Butler, Evan Butler, Sibble Pugh, George Tranter, Roger Robert, Rees David, and William Hay. It will be noted that the testator does not name his son Thomas; the evidence for his existence comes from the will of William Pennoyer.

A study of Herefordshire diocesan records<sup>12</sup> for the period after 1660 covering the Weobley Deanery (into which the parishes of Cusop, Dorston, and Clifford fall), and particularly the Visitation Citations show that in this fairly remote border area nonconformity and avoidance of the forms of Church of England registration were rife. Thus in 1667 at Dorston, Tobias Butler and Blanch his wife, James Maddy (see previous depositions) and Elianor his wife, John Richards and Joane his wife were required to certify where, by whom, and by what license they were married, and William Jenkins was presented for being married without either license or banns. Two years later in Cusop, Anne Arnold was presented for permitting a clandestine marriage to take place in her house, while in neighboring Clifford, four couples were presented on a charge of being Anabaptists, all this in a thinly populated area. In 1665 John Dennis, a Congregational teacher, had been ejected from Hay Vicarage for nonsubscription and left the diocese; and in September 1672 a license was issued to Sam. Tracy of the Priory, Clifford, to be a Baptist preacher.<sup>13</sup> Here are all the characteristics of a background from which so many New England settlers were drawn.

William Pennoyer seems to have begun his business life in London as a silkweaver and, in 1624 when he was 20, had his own warehouse in Duke's Place and occupied a garret in the house of Thomas Gittens,<sup>14</sup> to whom he was related.<sup>15</sup> By 1637 he had become a dealer in tobacco<sup>16</sup> and, two years later, a shipowner and a member of the Clothworkers' Company.<sup>17</sup> He truly reflected the adventurous spirit of the age in the variety of his enterprises. Not surprisingly his friends and business partners were themselves leading figures in the development of the New England, Virginia, and West Indian Colonies: Sir Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick and Admiral of the Parliamentary Fleet;<sup>18</sup> Captain William Jackson whose expedition in 1642 to Barbados<sup>19</sup> helped to sustain the infant sugar industry there largely owned by Pennoyer<sup>20</sup> at whose house in London he lodged while being pursued by his creditors;<sup>21</sup> Edward Parks, merchant taylor of London who owned estates in New England inherited by his son, Henry;<sup>22</sup> and Maurice Thompson,<sup>23</sup> a rich and influential merchant who financed many ventures in the New World. William Pennoyer added to his property and riches during the Civil War in England largely by acting as a munitions manufacturer and shipping agent for the Parliamentary cause.<sup>23</sup> His brother Samuel was apprenticed in 1638 to Matthew Cradock, the first Governor of the Massachusetts Company<sup>24</sup> and, after a period as his agent in Turkey, settled in London as his brother's partner,<sup>25</sup> purchased the Manor of Thurfield in Hertfordshire,<sup>26</sup> and died a rich man. His widow, Rose, then married Samuel Desborow of Guilford, Connecticut.<sup>27</sup>





1. England in 1770 Butler  
 2. I. Butler  
 3. " " 108:2 (1928)  
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 4. H. a ticket  
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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A transcript of William Pennoyer's will appears in Waters, *Genealogical Gleanings in England*, 1:304. The significance of the Pennoyer and Butler bequests was discussed by Jacobus in *The American Genealogist* 33:50-52, where Jacobus erroneously suggested that Walter Butler's mother was a Pennoyer.

2. Hotten, *Original Lists of Emigrants*, p. 144, where the surname is rendered as Pennaird.

3. "Pennoyer and Lounsbury Notes," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 108:287-290. Also see Lilliam L. Selleck, *One Branch of the Miner Family* (New Haven, 1928), pp. 144-146; Noel C. Stevenson, "Hereditary Scholarships," *The American Genealogist* 36:96; Elijah B. Huntington, *History of Stamford, Conn.* (1868); and "Stamford Town Records," *The American Genealogist*, vols. 10-11. For an account of Thomas Redding and Eleanor Pennoyer, married at Plymouth, Mass., 20 July 1639, see Sybil Noyes et al, *Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire* (1928-39), p. 578.

4. Hotten, *Original Lists*, p. 355, includes a Walter Butler who, on 20 Oct. 1679, obtained a ticket from Barbadoes to sail to New York in the ketch *John and Sarah*, Commander James Shoare. For a full account of Walter Butler of Greenwich, Conn., and his children, see Jacobus' article in *The American Genealogist* 32:145-146.

5. C. J. Robinson, *History of the Manors of Herefordshire*. Dannett Pennoyr of the Visitation family, noticed in the *Quarterly* 59:176, and who died in America, was clearly the son of Thomas Pennoyer of the Moor, Clifford. His will of 1727 describes Dannett as "long beyond the seas and probably dead."

6. PRO: HCA 13/76

7. PRO: C8/375/47, C8/416/76, C9/432/40

8. PRO: C5/82/14, C22/540/15

9. PRO: C10/268/5, C22/903/35

10. Nevertheless some degree of relationship may have existed, for in 1633 William Pennoyer lent money to "loving cuzen Mr. Thomas Pennoyer of the Moor." (Bristol Archives Office Deeds)

11. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth

12. Herefordshire Record Office, Hereford

13. G. Lyon Turner, *Original Records of Early Non-Conformity*.

14. PRO: C24/501/54: Depositions in Gittens vs. Owdarte.

15. PCC: Will of Thomas Gittens proved 1632.

16. PRO: C24/645/12: Depositions in Ballard vs. Abbott.

17. PRO: C2/Chas. 1/P24/24: Pennoyer vs. Gough.

18. British Museum Add. Mss. 5501 f. 88 contains an interesting letter from Warwick to Pennoyer and Thompson about a shipment of arms from Holland, dated 18 May 1644.

19. V. T. Harlow, *Voyages of Captain William Jackson 1642-45*, Camden Society Misc. vol. 13.

20. Hist. Mss. Com. 6th Report: 14 October 1647, a petition from William Pennoyer and other planters at Barbados engaged in erecting a sugar works there.

21. Ship Money Returns 1644/5

22. PCC: Will of Edward Parks proved 1651

23. State Papers Domestic 1642-1655, *passim*.

24. PRO: C2/Chas 1/A17/29 and A13/69, Andrewes vs. Pennoyer

25. PRO: C2/Chas 1/G18/11, Glover vs. Pennoyer

26. Herefordshire Record Office

27. Savage, *Genealogical Dictionary*

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SAMUEL BUTLER  
WALTER BUTLER  
of Greenwich,  
Conn.  
MARTHA BUTLER  
THOMAS ALLEN  
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1685