The English Ancestry of Brothers
William Fellows of Ipswich, Mass., and
Richard Fellows of Hartford, Conn.,

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The will of widow Elizabeth Morricke of Roxbury, Massachusetts, dated 14 March 1649[/50?], has long provoked speculation about the relationship and origins of three Seventeenth-century New England immigrants mentioned therein — William Fellows of Ipswich, Richard Fellows of Connecticut, and Samuel Fellows of Salisbury.[1] Although Elizabeth did not mention her relationship to the Fellows family, she provided several useful clues. William, Richard, and Samuel each received £10, “my sister” Grace Allan of Lincolnshire received £5, and Robert Hull of Boston and Leonard Fellows of Great Bowden “in old England” were made executors. Great Bowden is a parish in southern Leicestershire. Robert Hull originated in Market Harborough, a small parish surrounded on three sides by Great Bowden.[2] The ancestral Fellows family undoubtedly had roots in this area, where the surname is plentiful.

Birth years for William, Richard, and Samuel Fellows can be reasonably estimated from other sources. William appeared as a shoemaker, aged 24, when he embarked on the Planter from London to New England in 1635, suggesting a birth year of about 1611. Samuel Fellows of Salisbury deposed at age “about” 61 in Essex County Quarterly Court of 11 November 1679, giving him a birth year of about 1618.[3]

There is no known record of Richard’s age. Robert Charles Anderson estimated his birth year as “perhaps” about 1621, based on the baptism of his first child in Hartford in 1646.[4] However, there is strong evidence that Richard had three children prior to 1646 — Richard, Samuel, and Sarah — significantly altering his estimated birth year. As young men, Richard and Samuel Fellows had some difficulties with the law. On 29 March 1670, Richard was presented to the Hampshire County (Mass.) Court with his accomplice Benjamin Allen, charged with “at unreasonable tyme of night . . . coming

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1 Elizabeth Morricke will and inventory, Suffolk County, Massachusetts, probate, N.S., 1:494–95, case 99 [FHL 594,359; DGS 7703883].
3 Records and files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts, 8 vols. (Salem, Mass.: Essex Institute, 1911–21), 2:279.
into the yard of Thomas Mekins Junr: and abusing his horse by cutting off the hair of his mane.” For this prank, Richard was fined 30 shillings. Samuel Fellows was also fined 30 shillings as an abettor to the crime. Samuel was again presented to the court on 28 March 1671 with Joseph Leonard, a son-in-law of Richard and Ursula Fellows, this time charged with “selling of strong liquors to ye Indians & for buying beaver of the Indians without license.” When Samuel failed to appear in court, Samuel Billing, another son-in-law of Richard Fellows, forfeited his bond. Samuel’s later history is unknown, but he was almost certainly a son of Richard and Ursula. Richard was killed during King Philip’s war at Sugar-Loaf Hill, about 10 miles north of Hatfield, 25 August 1675. His Hatfield death record identifies him as a son of Richard and Ursula Fellows.

Richard and Ursula’s daughter Sarah was mentioned in her mother’s will. She was probably born about 1640 and was likely their eldest child. She married first to Samuel Billing at Hadley about 1661 and second to Samuel Belding at Hatfield on 9 October 1678. The will of widow Ursula Fellows, dated Hatfield 4 September 1688, proved 30 September 1690, mentions her daughter Sarah Belding, son-in-law Samuel Belding, and several Billing grandchildren. Now assuming that the first child of Richard and Ursula was born near 1640, a more accurate estimate of Richard’s birth is about 1615.

To summarize, the three Fellows immigrants had strong connections to southern Leicester with birth years deduced as follows: William the shoemaker ca. 1611, Richard ca. 1615, and Samuel ca. 1618. They were connected in some way to Elizabeth Morricke, her sister Grace Allan, and a Leonard Fellows, shoemaker of Great Bowden.

In a 1984 article in this journal, Erwin W. Fellows presented the important will of William Fellows of Foxton made in 1630 and suggested that the testator was probably the grandfather of the immigrants based on onomastic evidence and the proximity of Foxton to Great Bowden. But he did not follow up on his hypothesis. Recent research in Leicestershire parish registers and probate records in the vicinity of Great Bowden has discovered a family that closely matches the immigrant family. This family includes William Fellows, a shoemaker and grandson of William Fellows of Foxton. He was christened in the parish of Gumley (near Foxton and Great Bowden) in 1612/3. William had a brother Richard christened in Gumley in 1615, an uncle (or cousin) Leonard Fellows, shoemaker of Great Bowden, and aunts Elizabeth and Grace, presumably Elizabeth Morricke, and Grace

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5 Hampshire Co. Court and Probate records, 1:115, 123, 128 [FHL 879,184; DGS 7705549].
6 "Births, Marriages, and Deaths, [Hampshire] County Court," entries for Hatfield, p. 110 [FHL 760,648; DGS 4325917]. Entry indicates he was “slain by the Indians” in Aug 1675. The exact date and circumstances of his death are found in original documents published in George M. Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip’s War (Boston, 1906; reprint Genealogical Publishing Co: Baltimore, 1991), 129–30.
7 "Births, Marriages, and Deaths, [Hampshire] County Court," entries for Hadley, p. 70. This undated marriage entry is recorded in a list of Hadley marriages between entries dated in 1661. Their first known child, Samuel, was born 8 January. 1665/6 (Ibid., 40).
8 Births, Marriages, and Deaths, [Hampshire] County Court," entries for Hatfield, Mass., p. 105.
9 Hampshire County probate records, 2:64–65 [FHL 879,184; DGS 7705549].
Allan. William and Richard Fellows of Gumley are believed to be the New England immigrants of those names. They had a brother Samuel who was christened in Gumley in 1628, but he was too young to have been Samuel of Salisbury, Massachusetts. The most likely explanation for Samuel is that he was a first cousin of William and Richard, making him yet another nephew of Elizabeth Morricke, who provided each of them with equal portions of £10 in her will. If this analysis is correct, Samuel was another grandson of William Fellows, probably through his sons Richard or Luke, whose families are not fully identified.

Tracing this family is burdened by the loss of pre-1653 parish registers of Foxton, a key parish that borders Gumley and Great Bowden. Fortunately, part of the gap is filled by Foxton bishop’s transcripts, which exist for 1563, 1583/4, 1604, 1606–09, 1612–13, 1617–18, 1621–22, 1626–28, 1630, 1632–25, 1636–38. It should be understood that the surnames Fellow and Fellows were used interchangeably in English records, with a pronounced bias for Fellow in the earliest records, especially in Foxton. The name settled as Fellows and Fellowes in American records during the first generation. In the following summary, the Fellows orthography is consistently used except in direct quotations.

**Genealogical Summary**

1. **Thomas** Fellows of Foxton, Leicestershire, was born say 1516. He was buried in Foxton on 9 August 1564. Thomas was probably married more than once. The name of his supposed first wife is not known. He probably married second to **Alice _____**, who was mentioned in his will. Alice may not have been the mother of all of Thomas’s children. Four of the six children named in his will were under age 18, and their later history suggests some of them were well under 18 in 1564. The language of the will, too, suggests that Alice might not be William’s mother. Thomas wrote his will on 2 August 1564, and it was proved the following 2 October. The following are excerpts:

   
   . . . I Thomas fellowe of foxton being sicke in bodye but god being praysed in p[er]fecte memorye make this my Last will and Testament. . . . 

   Item I give unto Johan my daughter — iiij li

   Item I give unto Thomas my sonne at xviij yeres of age iii li

   Item I give unto Robert my sonne at age xviij yers of age iii li and two yewes & two lambes & thes yewes & lambes to be set furthe after my decease to his owne behoste. Item I jyve unto Edward fellowe my sonne at xviij yeres of age iii li

   Item I give unto John fellowe my sonne at xviiij yeres of age ii li

   Item I will that yf any of my children dye or anye of them come [not?] to the age of xviiij yeres that his p[ar]te shall Remaine amongst his other brtherne. Item I will th[a]t willm fellow my sone shall occupye w’ alice my wyfe so

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10 Foxton bishop’s transcripts [FHL DGS 103432003] are the source of all Foxton christenings, marriages, and burials cited in this article.

11 Archdeaconry Court of Leicester, reg. wills, 6:32 [FHL 194,414; DGS 8077858]. Records of this court are held in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. Images of all cited documents from the Archdeaconry Court of Leicester are also available in the record set “Leicestershire Wills and Probate Records, 1500–1939” on findmypast.com.
longe as she & he can agre together & yf they can not agre together william
my sonne then to par
to his wyfe & to go his way All the rest of
my goods moveable and unmoveable unbequethed I give unto alice my
wife & willm my sonne whome I make my full executors and I will that
Thomas ylyfe to be the supervysor of th
to se
me brought to the ground & my detts payd and he to have for his paines

The original will of Thomas Fellows was inserted in the register after the
registered copy. The two wills are identical in content except that a list of debts
on the overleaf of the original will shows that Thomas had a brother Edward
"Fello" to whom he owed £5 16s 4d. [12]

Children of Thomas Fellows and his supposed unknown first wife (order uncertain):

1. Joan Fellows, b. say 1542.

2. William Fellows, b. say 1544.

Children of Thomas Fellows, probably by wife Alice (order uncertain):

3. Thomas Fellows, b. say 1552 (rough estimate based on the probable age
of his son Robert). He was perhaps the Thomas “Fellow” bur. Fox-
ton, 20 Aug. 1609, but he was possibly living in 1628, when another
Thomas executed a will mentioning his living (but unnamed) father,
shown on an appended list of debts as Thomas. Thomas was listed as
a husbandman of Foxton on his son Robert’s apprenticeship record,
cited below.

Child(ren) of Thomas Fellows:

1. Robert Fellows, b. say 1582 (based on probable age at apprentice-
ship); d. before Jan. 1635/6, when his will was proved. He m.
Goodith _____, who was mentioned in his will. The will allowed
Goodith to claim a bedstead “shee brought w[i]th her,” a phrase
often applied to the property of a second or later wife. As the son
of “Thomas ‘Fellowes of Foxton, husbandman,” Robert was ap-
1596. [13] “Robert Fellowe thelder” of Foxton wrote his will on
20 Sept. 1634, proved Jan. 1636, naming his wife Goodith, sons
Robert and Edward “Fellow” and daughter Elizabeth Pratt and
her three children. Robert appointed his cousin Luke “Fellowes”
overseer. Robert also provided that his sons suffer Goodith “to
syty by their fire & to dresse her meate where they dress theirs,”
evoking Robert’s occupation of a butcher. [14]

3. (prob.) *William Fellows*, a woodmonger of St. Martin Vintry, London, was appointed to administer the estate of his sister-in-law widow Elizabeth Fellows of Gumley in 1635. There is evidence of William in St. Martin Vintry parish registers as early as 1625.[19] He or perhaps a son was doubtless the William “Fellowes” of St. Martin Vintry who died in Virginia with administration to his son William Fellows Jr., 15 Apr. 1682.[20]

iv. *Robert Fellows*, b. say 1563 (rough estimate based on the probable age of his son William). He was a husbandman of Foxton on son’s apprenticeship record, below.

**Children of Robert Fellows:**

1. *William Fellows*, b. say 1592 (based on probable age at apprenticeship). As a son of Robert “Fellowe,” husbandman of Foxton, William was apprenticed in London to his cousin Robert Fellowe, butcher, 24 June 1607.[21]

2. (prob.) *Robert Fellows*, b. say 1594 (based on probable age at marriage); m. Foxton, 20 Nov. 1618, *Joan Chapman*. She was named as a sister in the will of Richard Chapman, weaver, of Kibworth Harcourt, Leics., dated 1653 (incomplete date), proved 14 June 1654. Joan and her son Robert were Chapman’s residuary legatees. The will mentions several Fellows relatives.[22] Joane “Fellowes,” widow, was bur. in Kibworth Beauchamp, 16 Feb. 1665/6.[23]
v. Edward Fellows, b. 1546–1564 (under 18 in 1564).
vi. John Fellows, b. 1546–1564 (under 18 in 1564).

2. William Fellows (Thomas) of Foxton was born say 1544 and was buried there on 17 August 1630. He was the only son of Thomas not described as under 18 years old in his father’s 1564 will, of which he was named executor. The name of his wife is unknown. William's own will was executed at Foxton on 19 March 16[29]/30 and proved on 19 October 1630. The following is the salient portion:[24]

... I bequethe my bodie to be buried within the church yearde of Foxon
first I give my dafter margrett all the furnitude for toow bedes with the
bedstedes and also one kowe one pot of brase one barill one toule[?] one pale one cheare toow weeles one reele one candelstike one cubbord one litill pane [pan]
Item I five to Thomas Chapman one kowe and to his wyfe one bord clothe
Item I give to my dafter eles [Alice] one towele
Item I give to my dafter grace one sheete
Item I give to my dafter elizabeth one sheete
Item I give to Annis Fellow the dafter of Thomas Fellow one puter Flagin
Item I give to katheryne Fellow one candilstike
Item I give to Ainis [Annis] Fellow one towele
Item I give to my sonne willyames toowe darters toow of the beast peces
of pewter
Item I give to my sonne Rychard children xxs
Item I give to my sonne John one oulde rode of pease of goldinges wringe
and rode of beane land one thirtifall of mill furlong and if I live till I sowe
my barlie I will give him one halfe aker of barlie
Item I give to marie Fello the dafter of John Fellow one ewe and a lame and
one towele
Item I give to william Fellow the son of willyam Fellow iis
— I give Leonard toow strike of malt
Item I do make my sonne luke my full executor of all the rest of my goodes
to bring my bodie to the grondne and all other charges whatsoever. . . .

Witnesses to the will were John, William, and Thomas “Fellow,” apparently his sons. The terms of the will suggest he was a husbandman or yeoman farmer. With several grandchildren mentioned, he was clearly not a young man in 1630. William’s children named in the will were Margaret, Alice, Grace, Elizabeth, Richard, John, William, and Luke. Others mentioned in the will without stating relationships were Thomas, Leonard, Katherine, and Annis Fellows, and the unnamed wife of Thomas Chapman, whose marriage to Marie “Fellow” occurred in Foxton on 22 October 1621. Thomas Fellows’s will, quoted

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24 Archdeaconry Court of Leicester, reg. wills, 34:87 [FHL 194,422; DGS 8409870].
below, confirms that he was in fact William’s son. But Leonard’s relationship remains unsettled. Similarly, Katherine and Annis may be granddaughters of William Sr. Thomas had a daughter Agnes (Annis) christened in Foxton on 16 November 1618; Luke had a daughter Katherine christened there on 29 September 1613.

Children of William Fellows named in his will (order uncertain):

i. **William Fellows,** b. say 1575; d. at Laughton, Leics., 1635, as shown by his will. William’s two unnamed daughters and a son William were mentioned in the will of their grandfather William Fellows in 1630. The will of William “Fellow” of Laughton written 7 June 1635, proved 18 Nov. 1635, mentions no wife but identifies, among others, two daughters and a son William, matching the clues in his father’s will. The witnesses included Luke Fellows [his brother] and Thomas Chapman [his son-in-law].

Children of William Fellows, all but Elizabeth mentioned in their father’s will (order uncertain):

1. **Mary Fellows,** b. ca. 1600, apparently one of the two unnamed daughters of William mentioned in the will of her grandfather in 1630. She m. Foxton, 22 Oct. 1621, **Thomas Chapman,** one of the witnesses to her father’s will.
2. **Agnes Fellows,** apparently one of the two unnamed daughters of William mentioned in the will of her grandfather in 1630.
5. **William Fellows,** mentioned in the will of his grandfather in 1630.
6. **Joseph Fellows,** b. say 1610. He was a husbandman. With his wife **Mary _____,** they had a dau. Anne bp. Laughton, 30 Apr. 1637.

ii. **Thomas Fellows,** b. say 1582; bur. Foxton 26 June 1630. He m. (1) by license, 1609 (date incomplete), **Alice Chapman;** (2) **Grace _____,** who was mentioned in his will. Thomas “Fellow” of Foxton, husbandman, executed his will on 15 July 1630, proved the following 8 Sept. The following are excerpts:

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25 Archdeaconry Court of Leicester, orig. wills, 1635, #137 [FHL 234,165; DGS 844160].
28 Archdeaconry Court of Leicester, reg. wills, 1628, 1630–1631, fo. 441 [FHL DGS 102548859].
... my wife Grace Fellow shall have & enjoye dureing her widdowhod and after the decease of Willia[m] my father three roodes of arable land. ... I given unto Willia[m] Fellow my youngest sonne Five pounds to be paide out of my lands tenements & hereditaments by my sonne Thomas Fellow his heires of assignes w[th]in three years after the decease of his grandfather William Fellow and I give further unto my sonne Willm Fellow my sonne ... one little house and yards now in the tenure and occupation of George Gray and one cow pasture sometimes belonging unto a cottage ... after the decease of his mother or after her widdowhod. ... Item in consideration of Thomas Fellow my eldest son ... shall pay & discharge all my debts ... and also pay or cause to be paide unto Willia[m] Fellow my youngest sonne the said somme of Five pounds as is before expressed I give and bequeath unto the said Thomas Fellow my eldest sonne all the rest of my lands tenements and hereditaments v lying & being in Foxton & great Bouden. ... 

The will was witnessed by two of Thomas's brothers, William and John. It is clear that William, the youngest son, was the son of Grace, who was called his mother. Chronologically, Thomas, the elder son, was almost certainly from his father's first marriage.

Children of Thomas and Alice (Chapman) Fellows:
2. Elizabeth Fellows, b. Foxton, 4 Oct. 1612; bur. there 17 Dec 1612.

Children of Thomas and Grace (_____) Fellows:
3. William Fellows, b. say 1616; d. Gumley, 1653–54, as shown by his will. He was a husbandman of Gumley when he m. Willoughby Waterless, Leics., 13 Feb 1643/4, Anne Willy, dau. of Thomas Willy. William “Fellowes” of Gumley executed his will 30 Jan. 1653/[4?], proved 4 July 1654, naming a minor son Luke and daughters Liddia and Hannah. The will fails to mention his wife Anne, but she was granted administration on 4 July 1654 during the minority of her son Luke, whom William named executor. William appointed his cousin James Fellows and Richard Chapman of Kibworth Harcourt to be overseers of the will. The three children of William Fellows were mentioned, but not named, in Richard Chapman's will made the same year.

4. Agnes Fellows, bp. Foxton, 16 Nov. 1618; prob d. before 1630.

iii. Grace Fellows, m. _____ Allan and was living in Lincolnshire in 1649.

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29 Willoughby Waterless parish register (image: findmypast.co.uk).
32 There are no extant bishop's transcripts for 1619 or 1620.

v. Richard Fellows, the father of unnamed children mentioned in the will of their grandfather in 1630.

vi. Margaret Fellows, bp. Foxton, 30 May 1584; living unmarried 19 March 16[9]/30 (from father's will).


viii. Luke Fellows, b. say 1588 (based on probable age at marriage); m. Foxton, 30 April 1612, Agnes Crane. She was bur. Foxton, 1 Aug. 1638.

Only known child of Luke and Agnes (Crane) Fellows; others possible:
1. Katherine Fellows, bp. Foxton, 29 Sept. 1613; bur. there 21 May 1636. She was possibly the Katherine Fellows mentioned in William Fellows's will in 1630.

ix. Alice Fellows, b. say 1592 (based on probable age at marriage); m. Foxton, 13 Nov. 1613, John Colman.

x. (prob.) Leonard Fellows, b. say 1598 (based on probable age at marriage), named without relationship in the will of William Fellows of Foxton, 1630;[35] bur. Great Bowden, 4 Apr. 1654.[36] He m. Aylestone, Leics., 3 Nov. 1624, Jane Morbey.[37] Leonard Fellows of Great Bowden, shoemaker, was joint executor with Robert Hull of the will of Elizabeth Morricke of Roxbury, Mass., in 1649/50.

Children of Leonard and Jane (Morbey) Fellows, all but child no. 5 were bp. in Great Bowden:
1. Nathaniel Fellows, bp. 30 April 1626; bur. Great Bowden 27 Nov. 1673. He m. (1) Great Bowden, 12 Oct. 1644, Mary Darlo. She was bur. there 2 Feb. 1658/9. He m. (2) Great Bowden, 8 Feb. 1659/60, Elizabeth Hill of Lubenham. He was a shoemaker.
2. Samuel Fellows, bp. 15 March 1628/9; bur. 23 July 1629.
3. Anice Fellows, bp. 8 Aug. 1630.
4. Elizabeth Fellows, bp. 4 Aug. 1633; m. Great Bowden, 3 Nov. 1662, Robert Homan, butcher.

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35 Leonard could possibly be a grandson of William Fellows through his son Richard. Nothing is known of Richard's age or family except that he was a father in 1630. William's other sons can be tentatively disqualified.
36 Great Bowden parish register (image: findmypast.co.uk). All references to Great Bowden christenings, marriages, and burials herein cited were derived from this source.
37 Aylestone parish register, Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland, DE3437/1 (image: findmypast.co.uk).

6. Mary Fellows, bp. 24 March 1638/9, her father called shoemaker.


3. John A Fellows (William B, Thomas C) of Foxton and Gumley was born say 1586. He was buried in Gumley on 24 April 1634. John married Alice _____, who renounced administration of his estate on 24 July 1634. John’s creditors briefly administered the estate until it devolved upon his son William Fellows, the shoemaker, on 13 August 1634. John’s estate inventory, taken the same day, suggests he was a relatively poor man. His few possessions were valued at a mere £16 1s 2d. John probably derived his income from a “halfe yard land Crop of Barly & pease rented of Mr Glover of Laughton Minister.”

Children of John Fellows:


ii. Thomas Fellows, bp. Kibworth Beauchamp, Leics., 8 Nov. 1610. He was possibly the Thomas Fellow, farmer, who had a wife Elizabeth and children chr. in Foxton in 1633 and 1638.

iii. William 1 Fellows, bp. Gumley 14 Feb. 1612/3; d. Ipswich, Mass., between 29 Dec. and 21 Dec. 1676. He m. ca. 1637 Mary _____. William was a shoemaker when appointed to administer his father’s estate on 13 Aug. 1634, and was listed as a 24-year-old shoemaker when he enrolled for passage to New England on the Planter in 1635.


v. Abigail Fellows, bp. Gumley, 15 Mar. 1617/8; m. prob. Great Bowden, 12 Oct. 1644, Thomas Harper. Abigail Harper and her children were

38 Aylestone parish register.
39 Archdeaconry Court of Leicester, Administration Act Book, 1604–1634, 24 July 1634 [FHL 102756852].
40 Archdeaconry Court of Leicester, Administrations, 1634, John Fellows, folios 55 and 56 [FHL 288,893; DGS 8442161].
41 Archdeaconry Court of Leicester, inventories, 1634, PR/I/36 #259 [FHL DGS 102370360].
42 Kibworth Beauchamp parish register (image: findmypast.co.uk).
43 Anderson, Great Migration: 1634–1635, [note 2], 3:510. William’s original will and inventory are in Essex County probate file #9367 [FHL DGS 4481792; images will 76, 78, 163].
45 Hampshire Co. probate records, 1:28, 32, 42–44 [FHL 879,184; DGS 7705549], including administration, 29 September 1663, inventory 10 September 1663.
mentioned in the will of Richard Chapman of Kibworth Harcourt in 1653, proved 14 June 1654.[47]

vi. Mary Fellows, bp. Gumley, 22 Jan 1619/20. She was given a ewe, a lamb, and a towel in the will of her grandfather William Fellows in 1630.


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