

The English Origin of Thomas¹ Carter of Charlestown, Massachusetts

Randy A. West

Thomas¹ Carter of Charlestown, Massachusetts, and his family have been treated in several genealogical publications.^[1] He immigrated to New England by 1636 and his English origin has remained unknown.^[2] Thomas had a wife named Mary, and had at least six children that were all born in England: Thomas (1607), Samuel (1612), Joseph (1614), Mary (1618), John (1620), and Hannah (1625).^[3]

A search of English records has found the baptisms for all of Thomas's children, except his eldest son Thomas, in the parish of Hitchin, Hertfordshire, as well as for a son Abraham who died young. A transcription of these records is as follows:

1 November 1610	Baptism	Samuell the sonne of Thomas Carter
11 October 1612	Baptism	Joseph the sonne of Thomas Carter
15 January 1614/5	Baptism	Marie the daughter of Thomas Carter
24 February 1618/9	Baptism	John the sonne of Thomas Carter
2 February 1621/2	Baptism	Anne the daughter of Thomas Carter
20 September 1627	Baptism	Abraham the sonne of Thom. Carter
15 December 1628	Burial	Abrah'm the sonne of Thom. Carter ^[4]

The immigrant's marriage and the baptism of his son Thomas were not found in Hitchin. A search of parish registers in the same area has located these two records in the parish of Sundon, Bedfordshire (about ten miles west of Hitchin), as follows:

<i>Marriage</i>	
11 April 1608	Thomas Carter and Mary Pepiat
<i>Baptism</i>	
19 March 1608/9	Thomas sonne of Thomas Carter ^[5]

No baptismal record was found in Sundon or in parishes within a ten mile radius for this Mary Pepiat. The following will was found for a Thomas Pepiat

¹ Thomas Bellows Wyman, *The Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown, in the County of Middlesex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1629–1818*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1879), 1:186–189. Mary Walton Ferris, *Dawes-Gates Ancestral Lines*, 2 vols. (Milwaukee, 1931, 1943), 1:141–153. Mary Lovering Holman, *Ancestry of Colonel John Harrington Stevens and His Wife Frances Helen Miller*, 2 vols. (Concord, N.H., 1948, 1952) [hereafter *Stevens-Miller*], 1:112–115.

² Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration Directory: Immigrants to New England, 1620–1640, A Concise Compendium* (Boston, 2015), 58.

³ *Stevens-Miller*, 1:112, 114–115. Some of these years of birth are approximations and others are estimations.

⁴ St. Mary, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, parish register, 1562–1665 (*Hertfordshire, Parish Registers Browse, 1538–1988*, FindMyPast.com), images 75 (Samuel), 78 (Joseph), 82 (Mary), 94 (John), 102 (Anne/Hannah), 115 (Abraham's baptism) and 118 (Abraham's burial).

⁵ Sundon, Bedfordshire, bishop's transcripts, 1602–1853 (FSL DGS 8070644, image 11).

of Tilsworth, Bedfordshire, a nearby parish, who is probably the father of Mary: will of “Thomas pepiate of Tilesworth in the Countie of Bedfforde y[e]oman” dated 10 November 1616 and proved 21 January 1616/7 made a bequest to “marye Carter my daughter.”^[6]

The above information is used in the following updated genealogical summary for the family of Thomas¹ Carter.

Genealogical Summary

THOMAS¹ CARTER was born say 1583 (assuming age 25 at marriage). He married in Sundon, Bedfordshire, 11 April 1608, **MARY PEPIAT**, probably the daughter of Thomas Pepiat. By 1610 he and his wife were residing in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. Thomas immigrated to New England by 1636, as he was admitted a member of the Charlestown, Massachusetts, church on 8 January 1636/7.^[7] He died between 5 May 1652 (his will) and 25 June 1652 (his inventory). The will of “Thomas Carter of Charlstowne,” dated 5 May 1652 and proved 5 October 1652, gave to “my beloved wife Mary Cartar ... my eldest son Thomas Cartar ... my son Samuella Cartar ... my son Joseph Cartar ... my son John Cartar ... my daughter Mary Brinsmead and ... my daughter Hanna Greene ... my beloved grand children Caleb Cartar, Joseph Cartar, John Greene, and John Brinsmead.” He named his wife and eldest son Thomas the executors of his will. The inventory of the estate of “Thomas Cartar of Charlstowne late deseased” was taken 25 June 1652 and totaled £286 1s. 6d.^[8] His wife died in Charlestown on 6 March 1664/5 as “Marie, the widow Carter.”^[9]

Children of Thomas¹ and Mary (Pepiat) Carter (ii–vii baptized in Hitchin):

- i. THOMAS² CARTER, bp. Sundon 19 March 1608/9,^[10] d. Charlestown 30 Dec. 1694,^[11] m. (1) by 1639 (birth of eldest known child)^[12]

⁶ Archdeaconry Court of Bedford, original wills, 1616–1617, no. 31 (FSL DGS 8481429, images 73–74). Tilsworth is about six miles southwest of Sundon. The extant parish registers for Tilsworth begin in 1649 and the bishop’s transcripts for this parish start in 1602.

⁷ James Frothingham Hunnewell, *Records of the First Church in Charlestown, Massachusetts, 1632–1789* (Boston, 1880) [hereafter *Charlestown First Church*], 9.

⁸ Robert H. Rodgers, *Middlesex County in the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay in New England: Records of Probate and Administration, October 1649 – December 1660* (Boston, 1999), 93–95.

⁹ Roger D. Joslyn, *Vital Records of Charlestown, Massachusetts to the Year 1850*, vol. 1 (Boston, 1984) [hereafter *Charlestown VRs*], 48.

¹⁰ There are five records that state Thomas’s age: (1) deposition dated 17 Dec. 1662 of “Thomas Carter aged about fifty tow yers” (Middlesex County, Mass., court papers, folio 32; FSL DGS 7902664, image 212); (2) deposition dated 4 Sept. 1682 of “Thomas Carter Senior aged 74 yeares or therabouts” (Middlesex County, Mass., court papers, folio 100; FSL DGS 8131117, image 645); (3) deposition dated 3 Oct. 1682 of “Thomas Carter Seni[o]r Aged Seventy five years or therabouts” (Middlesex County, Mass., court papers, folio 100; FSL DGS 8131117, image 655); (4) his death gives an age of 88 (see above); and (5) his gravestone in Phipps Street Burial Ground, Charlestown, which reads “Here Lyes Y^e Body Of Thomas Carter Who Died Y^e 30 Of December 1694 And In Y^e 88 Year Of His Age” (photo at FindaGrave.com, memorial no. 51148561). All five of these records correspond very closely with his date of baptism.

¹¹ *Charlestown VRs*, 163: “Thomas Carter, Senr., aged man, about 88.”

¹² *Charlestown VRs*, 2: on 10 March 16[39/40] “Anne, dau. of Thomas Carter & Anne his wife.”

- ANNA WILLIAMS,^[13] b. about 1607 (gravestone),^[14] d. Charlestown, 6 May 1679.^[15] Thomas m. (2) Charlestown 24 Oct. 1679 ELIZABETH (BUNKER) JOHNSON,^[16] b. about 1607, d. Charlestown 6 Oct. 1684, age 77,^[17] widow of William¹ Johnson.^[18]
- ii. SAMUEL CARTER, bp. 1 Nov. 1610, d. Charlestown 29 Aug. 1681;^[19] m. by 1638 WINIFRED (____) HARWOOD, widow of Henry¹ Harwood,^[20] d. Charlestown [20?] Jan. 1675[/6].^[21]
- iii. JOSEPH CARTER, bp. 11 Oct. 1612, d. Charlestown 30 Dec. 1676;^[22] m. by about 1642 SUSANNA CHAMBERLAIN,^[23] b. about 1616,^[24] dau. of Henry¹ Chamberlain, blacksmith.^[25] She m. (2) Cambridge 4 June 1677 Richard Eccles.^[26]
- iv. MARY CARTER, bp. 15 Jan. 1614/5, living 4 Nov. 1673 (settlement of her husband's estate);^[27] m. by 24 Oct. 1639 JOHN¹ BRINSMEAD,^[28] d. by 1 Nov. 1673 (his inventory).^[29]

¹³ Essex County, Massachusetts, deeds, 2 (transcript):187, citing original p. 62 (FSL DGS 7462653, image 294) on 9 Dec. 1662 "Thomas Carter of Charlestowne, Atorney for my brother Mr. Mathew Williams."

¹⁴ Gravestone in Phipps Street Burying Ground, Charlestown, reads "Here Lyes Y^e Body Of Ann Carter Wife to Thomas Carter Aged 72 Years Died The 6 Of May 1679" (photo at FindAGrave.com, memorial no. 51148548).

¹⁵ *Charlestown VRs*, 105: "Ann, wife of Thomas Carter, senior."

¹⁶ *Charlestown VRs*, 107: "Thomas Carter, senior, & Elizabeth Johnson, widow."

¹⁷ *Charlestown VRs*, 124: "Elizabeth, wife of Tho. Carter, Senr., 77."

¹⁸ Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England, 1634–1635*, Volume IV, I–L (Boston, 2005):84–90 (sketch of William Johnson), at 88.

¹⁹ *Charlestown VRs*, 66: "Samuell Carter, shoemaker of Charltown."

²⁰ Robert Charles Anderson, *The Winthrop Fleet: Massachusetts Bay Company Immigrants to New England, 1629–1630* (Boston, 2012), 366–368 (sketch of Henry Harwood), at 367.

²¹ *Charlestown VRs*, 97: "Winifred Carter, wife of Samuell Carter."

²² *Charlestown VRs*, 97: "Joseph Carter, senior, late of Woborne."

²³ Massachusetts Supreme Court of Judicature, court papers ("Suffolk Files"), no. 1011 (FSL DGS 8204663, image 551): deposition of their eldest known child on 1 Feb. 1670[/1] as "Susana Carter aged about Twenty Eight years."

²⁴ Middlesex County, Massachusetts, court papers, folio 30 (FSL DGS 7902664, image 162): deposed in 1662 as "Susana Carter aged 46."

²⁵ David Conrad Chamberlin, "The Two Henry Chamberlins of Hingham, Massachusetts" *Register* 139 (1985):126–138, at 137.

²⁶ *Vital Records of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1914–1915), 2:68.

²⁷ Fairfield Probate District, Connecticut, register books, 2:79–80 (FSL DGS 7627300, image 107): on 4 Nov. 1673 "John Brinsmead of Stratford dying Intestate The widow and her Children ... haue come to this agreement ..."

²⁸ *Charlestown First Church*, 10: admission on 24 Oct. 1639 to Charlestown church of "Mary Brimsmead."

²⁹ Fairfield Probate District, Connecticut, register books, 2:79 (FSL DGS 7627300, image 107): on 1 Nov. 1673 the inventory of "John Brinsmead of Strat[f]ord in the County of ffairfield" was taken and on 7 Oct. [sic] 1673 "Mary Brinsmead wife to the deceased John Brinsmead hath taken her oath that this is a true Inuenty."

- v. JOHN CARTER, bp. 24 Feb. 1618/9,^[30] d. Woburn, Mass. 14 Sept. 1692,^[31] m. (1) by 1643 ELIZABETH ____ (birth of eldest known child),^[32] b. about 1613 (her gravestone),^[33] d. Woburn 7 May 1691.^[34] John m. (2) Woburn [blank] 1691, ELIZABETH GROSS.^[35]
- vi. HANNAH CARTER, bp. 2 Feb. 1621/2, d. by 15 June 1658,^[36] m. (1) by 1644 WILLIAM GREEN (birth of eldest known child),^[37] d. Woburn 7 Jan. 1653[4].^[38] Hannah m. (2) by 1658 THOMAS BROWN.^[39]
- vii. ABRAHAM CARTER, bp. 20 Sept. 1627; bur. Hitchin 15 Dec. 1628.

Randy A. West, FASG (746west@comcast.net) has an interest in discovering the English origins of seventeenth-century immigrants to New England.

³⁰ There are two records that state John's age: (1) deposition dated 4 April 1660 of "John Carter Aged 40 yeares or thereabouts" (Middlesex County, Mass., court papers, folio 25; FSL DGS 7831263, image 703); and (2) gravestone in First Burial Ground, Woburn, which reads "Here Lyes Y^e Body Of Cap^t John Carter Aged about 76 Years Deceased Y^e 14 of September 1692" (photo at FindaGrave.com, memorial no. 7725618; also in William R. Cutter and Edward F. Johnson, *Transcript of Epitaphs: Woburn First and Second Burial-Grounds* [Woburn, 1890], 9). Both of these records correspond closely with his date of baptism.

³¹ Woburn, Massachusetts, vital records, 1641–1767 (FSL DGS 7011120, image 338): "Cap^{tn} John Carter." Edward F. Johnson, *Woburn Records of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, From 1640 to 1873*, Part II, Deaths (Woburn, 1890) [hereafter *Woburn Deaths*], 30.

³² Woburn, Massachusetts, vital records, 1641–1767 (FSL DGS 7011120, image 287): birth on 8 Aug. 1643 of "Elizabeth daughter of Jn^o Carter." Edward F. Johnson, *Woburn Records of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, From 1640 to 1873*, Part I, Births (Woburn, 1890), 43.

³³ Gravestone in First Burial Ground, Woburn, reads "Here Lies Y^e Body of Elizabeth Carter Wife Of Capt John Carter Aged 78 Years Died Y^e 6 Of May 1691" (photo at FindaGrave.com, memorial no. 7849468).

³⁴ Woburn, Massachusetts, vital records, 1641–1767 (FSL DGS 7011120, image 337): "Elizabeth y^e wife of Cap^{tn} John Carter." *Woburn Deaths*, 30.

³⁵ Woburn, Massachusetts, vital records, 1641–1767 (FSL DGS 7011120, image 337): "Cap^{tn} John Carter & Elizabeth Grose." Edward F. Johnson, *Woburn Records of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, From 1640 to 1873*, Part III, Marriages (Boston, 1891), 48.

³⁶ Middlesex County, Mass., court papers, folio 17 (FSL DGS 7831263, image 428): on 15 June 1658 deposed "Anna gardener aged about thurty two yers ... that the wife of Thomas browne the night beefore [she] departed this life tould mee that the greatest part of har brother Carters new howse ..."

³⁷ *Charlestown VRs*, 8: birth on 20 Jan. 1644[5] of "Mary, dau. of William & Hannah Greene."

³⁸ Woburn, Massachusetts, vital records, 1641–1767 (FSL DGS 7011120, image 297): "William Green." *Woburn Deaths*, 83.

³⁹ Middlesex County, Mass., court papers, folio 17 (FSL DGS 7831263, image 428): on 15 June 1658 deposed "Thomas browne aged about thurty yers ... that the greatest part of that land one which the new [torn]d of John Cartors howse standeth ap[p]ertaineth to the land of william greene d[e] seced and was occupied by mee [T]homas brown as a husband to the widow of william greene deseced ..."