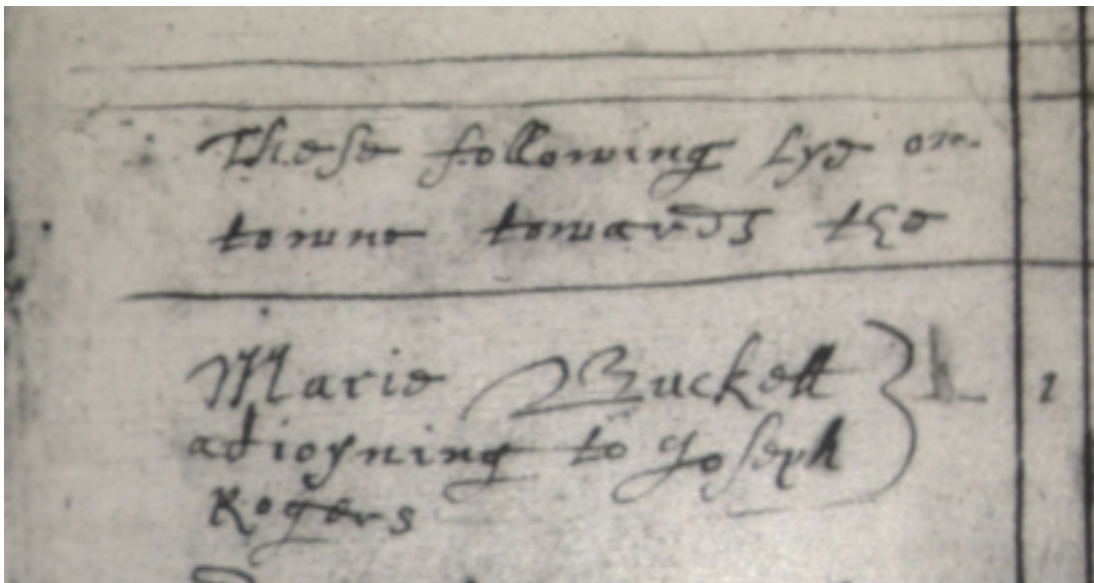


Research into the Possible English Origins of Mary Buckett, Wife of *Mayflower* Passenger George Soule

By Caleb H. Johnson

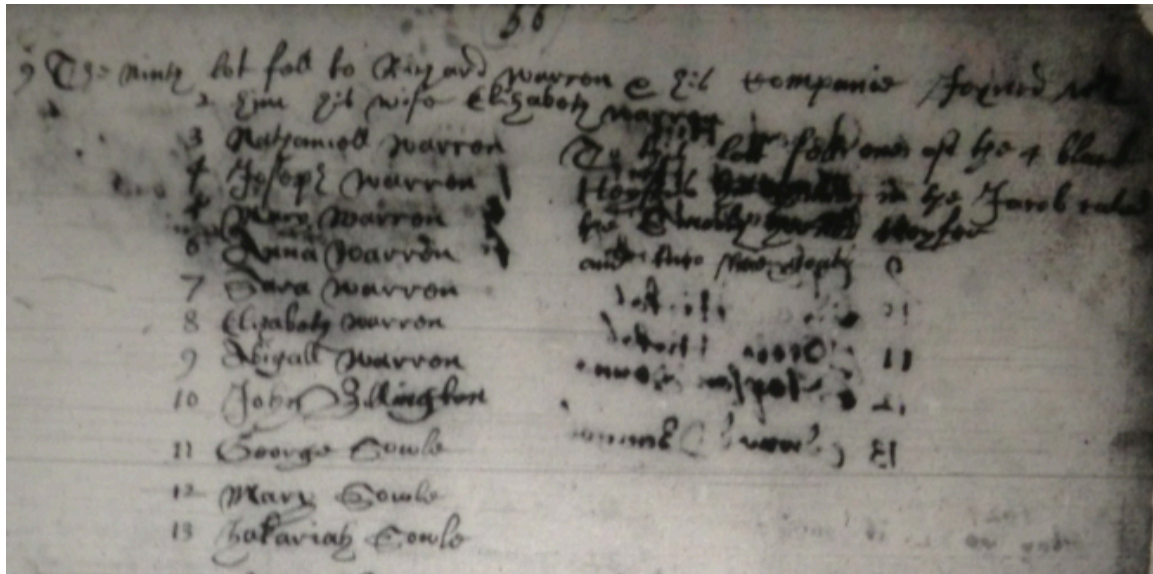
The purpose of this research is to systematically examine English records to see if any reasonable candidates for Plymouth Colony's Mary Buckett can be found. To kick off this task, we must necessarily summarize what we know about Mary. She first appears in Plymouth Colony records in the 1623 Division of Land, in the section entitled "The fales of their grounds which came over in the shipe called the Anne according as their [lots] were cast 1623." This is the only historical record known that mentions her maiden name. Here is the original entry:



From this record we can glean several important facts. First, she came to Plymouth on the ship *Anne*, which arrived in July 1623. Second, her name was spelled in this particular document as "Marie Buckett," although as anyone who works with documents from this time period knows, seventeenth century spelling is in the hand of the writer and will differ from document to document. Third, she received one acre (that's what the number "1" represents in the margin) in her own name—which indicates she was unmarried and was not in the company of her parents. Her land placement—adjoining Joseph Rogers and the Oldham family

down towards the Eel River—is not really indicative of anything: the Division of Land plots were assigned out by a random drawing.

The next record that mentions Mary is Plymouth Colony's Division of Cattle in 1627. Here is the original section:



It reads, “The ninth lot fell to Richard Warren & his companie Joyned with him,” and they received “one of the 4 black Heyfers that came in the *Jacob* caled the smooth horned Heyfer and two shee goats.” The family of Richard Warren then consisted of Richard Warren’s wife Elizabeth, his sons Nathaniel and Joseph, and daughters Mary, Anna, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Abigail. Richard Warren appears to have taken on an apprentice or manservant, John² Billington, son of John¹ Billington, as was a common practice. Also included with the Warrens are George Soule, Mary Soule, and Zakariah Soule (numbers 11-13 in the list). From this we can deduce that George and Mary Soule had been recently married, presumably about 1625 or 1626, and by May 1627 they had their first child, Zachariah. If we assume Mary Buckett married George Soule at the average marrying age for a woman during this period—about 21—then we can roughly estimate that she was born around 1605. Because Mary had her last child, Benjamin, about 1651, we cannot push her birth year too much earlier than 1605 without bumping into some biological improbabilities.

The Division of Cattle occurred in May 1627, and was essentially a complete census of Plymouth Colony—including women and children. The twelve “companies” were groups that were joined together for dividing up the Colony’s cattle—groups consisting of neighbors and relatives. The Hopkins family, for example, included the Snows and Palmers. The Palmers appear to have been related

to the Hopkins' back in England,¹ and the Snows by marriage. The Bradford family included the Mortons—they appear to go back together in England as well.² The Allertons, Godbertsons and Priests were grouped together, and were all related through marriages. Interestingly, Francis and Hester (Mahieu) Cooke's group included Philip Delano and Moses Simmon(son)—all the Leiden group of French and Dutch church members enumerated by Edward Winslow in his *Hypocrisy Unmasked* (London, 1646), are grouped together in the same company.

Could it be, perhaps, that George and Mary (Buckett) Soule were in some way associated with the Richard Warren family, with whom they were grouped? An unmarried girl would not have travelled to America unaccompanied, so Mary Buckett must have come on the *Anne* in the care of an established family. Onboard the *Anne*, traveling to America, were Richard Warren's wife Elizabeth and his five daughters. Nathaniel Morton, recalling the 1628 death of Richard Warren, noted he was "an useful instrument; and during his life bore a deep share in the difficulties and troubles of the first settlement of the plantation of New Plimoth," a comment that suggests Warren had a greater involvement than is generally known.³ It seems entirely possible that Mary Buckett emigrated on the *Anne* in the care of Richard Warren's family, perhaps a maidservant accompanying Mrs. Warren.

Naming conventions can also sometimes be a clue into the origins of a family, since names are often inherited from an ancestor, sibling, or other close relative. The children of George and Mary (Buckett) Soule were: Zachariah, John, Nathaniel, George, Susanna, Mary, Elizabeth, Patience, and Benjamin. When trying to use distinctive names of a woman's children to clue in on her parentage, we need to toss out the most common names (John, Elizabeth, Mary), as well as the name of her husband (George). That leaves us with Zachariah, Nathaniel, Susanna, Patience, and Benjamin. When these names turn up in potential candidate families in England, it could be a useful clue.

It has been previously conjectured that Mary Buckett, the wife of *Mayflower* passenger George Soule, might be a daughter of the Walloon⁴ family of Jan Bucque "whose widow and heirs were residing for 1622 in Leiden near the old Haarlem gate (or Rijnsburgerpoort)."⁵ It is further reported that Jan Bucquet married Marye de

¹ Caleb Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore* (Vancouver, 2007), 17. See also Caleb Johnson, "Possible English Origins of *Fortune* Passenger William Palmer," *Mayflower Descendant* 62(2013):66-68.

² There are a number of Morton entries in the Austerfield parish registers. See also John Hunt's speculative piece in NEHGR 111:68 for a proposed distant Bradford/Morton family connection.

³ Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial* (Plymouth, 1669).

⁴ People who lived in southern and eastern Belgium and bordering areas in France, and spoke a dialect of French.

⁵ Louise Walsh Throop, *Mayflower Families in Progress: George Soule of the Mayflower and His Descendants for Four Generations* (6th Edition, 2011), 1, citing Jeremy Bangs' reference to the name Jan Bucquet in *Strangers and Pilgrims, Travellers and Sojourners* (Plymouth, 2009), 339, and further his article "Pilgrim

Roucheau at the Walloon Church in Leiden on 21 December 1604.⁶ If this hypothesis were to hold true, this couple would have had a child, named Mary, likely sometime in 1605; and that hypothetical daughter Mary would then have gone to Plymouth on the *Anne* and ultimately married *Mayflower* passenger George Soule.

Unfortunately, no record of a daughter Mary has been found for Jan and Marye Bucquet of Leiden. The only distinctive names being used by the Bucquets were Peter and Margaret, and neither of those occur within the family of George and Mary (Buckett) Soule.

The idea that George Soule, himself, was of Walloon/French origin and living in Leiden is also an unproven hypothesis, although certainly not unreasonable. However, if George were Walloon or French Huguenot, the question might be asked: why was he not enumerated by his former master, Edward Winslow, when he listed the Plymouth congregation's French and Dutch members in his 1646 book, *Hypocrisy Unmasked*? Winslow (in trying to argue the Plymouth church was open to members of other reformed churches) listed off those members who came from the Dutch Reformed and French/Walloon churches:⁷

As for the Dutch [Reformed Church], I could instance also divers of their members that understood the English tongue, and betook themselves to the communion of our church, went with us to New England, as Godbert Godbertson, etc. Yea, at this very instant, another called Moses Simonson, because a child of one that was in communion with the Dutch Church at Leiden, is admitted into church fellowship at Plymouth. ... And for the French churches that we held, and do hold communion with them, take notice of our practice at Leiden, viz. that one Samuel Terry was received from the French Church there, into communion with us; also the wife of Francis Cooke being a Walloon, holds communion with the Church at Plymouth, as she came from the French, ... there is also one Philip Delano born of French parents, came to us from Leiden to New Plymouth, who coming to age of discerning, demanded also communion with us, and proving himself to be come of such parents as were in full communion with the French churches, was hereupon admitted by the Church of Plymouth. And for the Church of Scotland, however we have had least occasion offered to hold communion with them.

The identification of George and Mary (Buckett) Soule as Walloon or French Huguenot is certainly not conclusive, which leaves open the very real possibility that Mary Buckett may have originated from elsewhere—namely England, where the vast majority of early Plymouth colonists trace their roots.

Homes in Leiden," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 154(2000):434.

⁶ Louise Walsh Throop, "Possible Parents of Marie Bucquet aka Mary Buckett, wife of Pilgrim George Soule: Jan Bucquet and Marye de Roucheau," *Mayflower Quarterly* (2012):378-380.

⁷ Edward Winslow, *Hypocrisy Unmasked* (London, 1646).

We now have a few bare facts established:

- Her name was Mary Buckett, a surname whose reasonable seventeenth century phonetic variants would include Beckett, Bockett, Bouquet, and a number of other minor variations.
- She was born about 1605, plus or minus a couple years.
- She came in 1623 on the *Anne* to Plymouth Colony.
- She married by about 1626 to George Soule (surprisingly, this is actually an assumption, not a hard fact—she was the only unmarried ‘Mary’ in pre-1627 Plymouth, thus by process of elimination must be assumed to have been the wife of George, whose wife by 1627 was named Mary).
- She and husband George Soule were enumerated in the company of Richard Warren and his family in the Division of Cattle in 1627.
- She had children named Zachariah, John, Nathaniel, George, Susanna, Mary, Elizabeth, Patience and Benjamin, born from about 1625 through 1651.

We can also make a few additional educated suppositions:

- Mary Buckett came on the *Anne* in the care of someone, as girls and single women during this time period did not travel unaccompanied. A single woman also wouldn’t have been accompanied solely by a man, married or unmarried, so we can assume she either traveled with an adult woman (married or widowed), or with a family that consisted of a husband and wife traveling together.
- We might see names like Zachariah, Nathaniel, Susanna, Patience, or Benjamin in Mary Buckett’s ancestors, siblings, or close relatives in England. Some of those names could have come from George Soule’s side, and some could have been inspired by the religious and cultural environment of their new colony (Puritans, for example, tended to utilize names of virtues, like Patience.)
- George and/or Mary Buckett might be allied in some way with Richard Warren, since they belonged to the company of Richard Warren in the 1627 Division of Cattle. Since George Soule came on the *Mayflower* as a servant to Edward Winslow, if there is a family relationship with the Warrens, it is more likely on the Buckett side.

Armed with this information, the next step is to survey English records. Since Mary Buckett married and died in America, the only English parish record she herself might appear in would be a baptism. The first step of this research project was therefore to index every Mary Buckett baptism that occurred in and around the year 1605. Choosing a date range of 1602 through 1607⁸, the following Mary

⁸ If she were born prior to 1602, she would have had a child in her 50s (Benjamin, born 1651). If she were born after 1607, she would have had her first child, Zachariah, at under the age of 18. So 1602-1607 seems like a good range to use.

Buckett/Becketts were found in the International Genealogical Index, which is the most complete index of English parish register baptisms currently available:

- 15 February 1605, St. Andrew, Plymouth, Devonshire, dau. George
- 30 October 1603, Boxley, Kent, dau. Johannis
- 27 January 1604, Boxley, Kent, dau. Richardi
- 24 February 1605, St. Mary, Watford, Hertfordshire, dau. John
- 8 February 1602, Ackworth, Yorkshire
- 31 August 1606, St. Mary, Bedford, Bedfordshire, dau. Simon

Systematically examining each, I found the following:

- **Mary Beckett of Plymouth, Devonshire.** Her siblings were named Judith, Anselme, Anne, Elizabeth, and Honor. These names don't sound vaguely similar to those of the Plymouth family. No other early Plymouth colonist is known to have come from Devonshire (with the possible unproven exception of Degory Priest), so geographically this seems less probable as well.
- **The two Mary Becketts of Boxley, Kent** (one the daughter of John, the other of Richard), had various siblings named Stephen, Joanna, Margareta, Johannes, Richard, Isaac, William, and John. These family names do not sound even remotely familiar to those found in the Plymouth family. One of the two Marys married Thomas Cranmer there in 1628, and the other married in 1626 in neighboring Maidstone, Kent. These two Mary's can therefore be scratched off the probable candidate list.
- **The Mary Beckett of Ackworth, Yorkshire** seems a little more geographically promising—that's only 10 miles from William Bradford's home and in the general vicinity of the development of the church congregation that would ultimately remove to Leiden. However, the records here are scant: only two other Beckett's are found, Elizabeth and Margaret, apparently siblings. No further records of this family were found.
- **The Mary Beckett of St. Mary, Bedford, Bedfordshire,** was the daughter of Simon, and had siblings Elizabeth, Robert, Simon, and Richard—again, unfamiliar family names. She married Oliver Payne at St. Paul, Bedford, Bedfordshire, on 2 May 1631, so she can be removed from consideration.

The last remaining Mary Beckett on the list is the one baptized 24 February 1605 at St. Mary, Watford, Hertfordshire, the daughter of John Beckett. The baptism is right in the sweet spot of the estimated date range for her birth: 1605. The location is in Hertfordshire, which is the county where Richard and Elizabeth (Walker) Warren resided. She had a younger brother distinctively named Nathaniel, baptized at Watford on 1 January 1612. And her mother, intriguingly, was named Ann Alden. I could not tie Ann Alden to *Mayflower* passenger John Alden (whose origins have also not been conclusively proven, although Harwich, Essex, seems to be the leading

candidate);⁹ but there has been some previously published speculation that Henry Alden of Billerica, Massachusetts, might have come from this same Alden family of Watford and its neighboring parish, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire.¹⁰

With the best Mary Beckett candidate now identified, I performed some additional research to reconstruct the genealogical details of her parents, John and Ann (Alden) Beckett of Watford, and their family:

John Beckett was baptized on 24 December 1581 at St. Marys, Watford, Hertfordshire, England, the son of John Beckett. His father John Beckett, tailor, made out a will on 20 July 1590, naming wife Mary, sons John and William, and daughter Elizabeth, and mentions a house at Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.¹¹ He was buried 24 July 1590, four days after making out his will.¹²

He married Ann Alden on 27 November 1603 at St. Mary's, Watford. I briefly searched for the possible parentage of Ann Alden. The only candidate I noted was Ann Alden, daughter of John Alden, baptized 14 February 1587 at Chalfont St. Giles, Buckinghamshire, England.¹³ This parish is actually just two parishes away, less than ten miles, from Watford. However, this Ann Alden appears too young—she would have been a few months shy of 16 years old at the time of her marriage. From parish, probate and manorial records, it is clear that the surname Alden (Aldin, Aldyn) is being used interchangeably with the spelling "Aldwyn." So another important clue is the baptism of Nathanel Aldwyn on 7 April 1588, son of John Aldwyn¹⁴—presumably this is a close relation to Ann, and may explain how the name Nathaniel entered into the Beckett family.

John and Ann (Alden) Beckett had five children recorded in the baptism records of Watford.¹⁵

- i. Mary, bp. 25 February 1605. The candidate under consideration here to have possibly been the *Anne* passenger and future wife of George Soule.
- ii. John, bp. 31 January 1607.
- iii. James, bp. 24 August 1610; buried 16 November 1622.
- iv. Nathaniel, bp. 1 January 1612.
- v. Jeremy, bp. 10 January 1618.

⁹ Alicia Crane Williams, "John Alden: Theories on English Ancestry," *Mayflower Descendant*, 39(1989):111-122 and 40(1990):133-136.

¹⁰ Esther Littleford Woodworth-Barnes and Alicia Crane Williams, "Henry, the Non-Mayflower Alden," *Mayflower Descendant* 43(1993):21-30, at 24. Article online at: <http://www.massmayflower.org/publications/md/md43/MD43-021-030.pdf>

¹¹ Will of John Beckett, Hertfordshire Record Office, 7AR138, 20 July 1590.

¹² Parish Registers of St. Mary, Watford, Hertfordshire, England.

¹³ For what it is worth, also found in this parish is the marriage of Henry Goulde to Marie Becket on 8 May 1593.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Nathan Alden, son of John, was buried 11 October 1595.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*



The church of St. Mary's, Watford. Source: Nigel Cox, 2008, Wikimedia Commons.

Watford has a very large number of surviving manorial records, available only at the Hertfordshire Records Office (with a few others located at the National Archives in London, the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and the Surrey History Centre). Simon Neal, a very experienced genealogical records researcher in England and contributing editor of the *Mayflower Descendant*, looked through some of them to get an idea of what kinds of things would turn up—examining perhaps 5% of the available manorial records. He found John Beckett listed as a freeholder and inhabitant of manor of Watford in an undated record from about 1608.¹⁶ During that court session, John Beckett surrendered a cottage and a little strip of ground near Kings Head, Watford, to Joan Ewer, wife of Ralph Ewer, and after her decease to Jane Seere, wife of Alexander Seere. He also surrendered 6 poles of ground called Little Androwes to Anthony Watson. During that same session, a Thomas Allden was admitted, and a John Alldwin (of Case hamlet) was essoined [excused from appearing].

On 20 April 1610, John Beckett was listed as a homage juror on a manorial court case where a group of men were fined for maintaining gates and stiles out of their backsides into the west Watford field contrary to order; and another group of men

¹⁶ Watford Manorial Records, Court Orders, 1608-1628, Hertfordshire Records Office, Doc. Ref. 9932.

were fined for fishing at night.¹⁷ On 18 April 5 James 1 [1607], John Buckett was fined “for offering butter in Watford Market to sell, being of less weight than it ought.”¹⁸ Going much further back in time, in the View of Frankpledge that occurred on 20 June 1560, John Beckett, William Warren, and John Aldwyn “owe suit of court and have made default.” It is interesting to see the Alden, Warren, and Beckett surnames all occurring together.¹⁹

John Beckett, draper ²⁰of Watford, made out his will on 15 January 1618, “being sicke of bodie but of good and pfect remembrance thanks be Given to God.” He was buried two days later.²¹ In his will, he bequeathed his body to the churchyard at Watford, and his soul to God. He gave two messuages and £20 to his son James when he turned 21 years old. He gave £20 to his son Nathaniel, also with the 21-year old provision. He gave his daughter Mary £10 when she turned twenty-one. And he bequeathed to Jeremy “my youngest sonn” £10 when he turned 21. He gave £10 more to the poor of the parish of Watford to be distributed at the time of his burial. All the remainder of his estate he gave to “Anne Beckett my loving wife whome I make sole executrix of this my testament and last will.”²²

He appointed his “brother” Raph Beckford as overseer of his will. The marriage of Raphe Bicford to Elizabeth Beckett on 6 April 1608 at Watford explains that relationship. Ralph and Elizabeth (Beckett) Beckford named a son Nathaniel Beckford, baptized at Watford on 29 August 1630, so the name Nathaniel was being passed down that line as well.²³

The estate inventory of John Beckett was taken on 19 February 1619, appraised by Henry Twitchatt, Alexander Aldwin (a variant of Alden), and Ralph Beckford. His house included a hall, great chamber, chamber over the kitchen, chamber over the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Doc. Ref. 9932.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Doc. Ref. 9933. This document also mentions Thomas Aldwin was fined for placing dung on the highway in 1581, and that John Aldwin didn’t cut the overhang of the highway in 1582. Also in 1582, Ralph Warren was fined for placing dung in Watford Street.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Doc. Ref. 9916-9924, at 20 June 2 Elizabeth [1560].

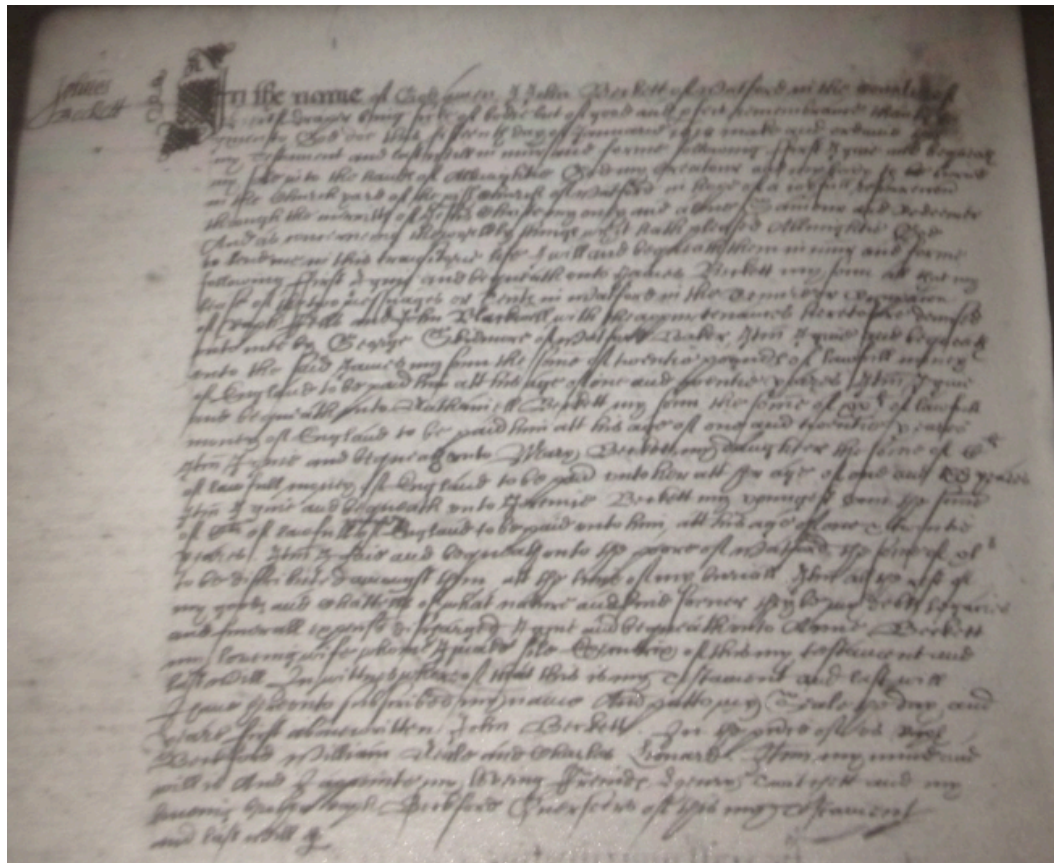
²⁰ A draper was a seller of cloth and other dry goods.

²¹ Parish Registers of St. Mary, Watford, Hertfordshire, England.

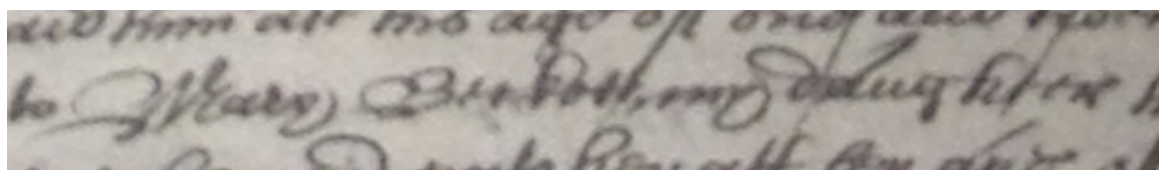
²² Will of John Beckett, draper (1619), Hertfordshire Records Office, 8AR100 (FHL #91752).

²³ The name Nathaniel is fairly distinctive in the parish of Watford. From 1539 through 1620 (a period of 81 years) the name is only found 18 times in the baptism records, and only within the following 14 families: Aldwyn, Atkins, Becket, Bingham, Cock, Hicman, Kentish, King, Marnol, Neel, Nicolloss, Peck, Pryce, and Twitchet. There were 3640 baptisms during that period, so about 0.5% of children were named Nathaniel. The earliest Nathaniel recorded in the parish is Nathaniel Aldwyn, son of John, baptized 7 April 1588. Interestingly, the Hicman, King and Nicoloss families are also the only ones in the parish using the name Zachariah between 1539-1620.

shop, and a buttery, and he had an unusually large estate for a draper: just over £660. The inventory was exhibited by widow Anne Beckett on 30 March 1619.²⁴



The 1619 Will of John Beckett, draper, of Watford, Herts.



"Mary Beckett, my daughter," from the 1619 will of John Beckett

I searched the parish registers of Watford for a marriage, or a burial, for Mary Beckett, but no such record was found. I did find the burial of her brother James in 1622. So it would appear that Mary left the parish, and did not marry there.

What happened to Mary's other siblings, John, Jeremy, and Nathaniel? John and Jeremy appear to have some London connections later in life. In an entry in the records of the Company of Clothworkers, 8 June 1658, it is stated that John Beckett,

²⁴ Estate Inventory of John Beckett, Hertfordshire Record Office, A25/2619, 19 February 1618/9.

son of John Beckett, draper of Watford, Herts., was apprenticed to Nathaniel Beckford, silk stocking maker in Shoreditch [London] for seven years.²⁵ The master in this apprenticeship arrangement appears to be Nathaniel Beckford, son of Ralph and Elizabeth (Beckett) Beckford, and the apprentice appears to be the son of Mary Beckett's brother John. In March 1667, Jeremy Beckett, citizen and merchant tailor of London, made out a will, mentioning sons Samuel, Jeremy and James.²⁶ His sons Samuel and Jeremy filed a Chancery lawsuit against one another in 1670, concerning lands in Harpenden, Wheat Hampstead and Kimpton²⁷—lands that are all within about five to seven miles of Watford.

Summary

The origin of Mary Buckett, wife of *Mayflower* passenger George Soule, has not been conclusively determined with this, or any previous research. What has been presented here is only a reasonable hypothesis. We have, in the parish of Watford, Hertfordshire, a Mary Beckett, of the right age to have been the *Anne* passenger and George Soule's future wife (born about 1605), in a family using a distinctive name (Nathaniel) found in her own children. Her mother has a suspiciously *Mayflower*-sounding surname, Alden.²⁸ She and her husband were grouped with the Warrens in the Division of Land, and Richard and Elizabeth (Walker) Warren also hailed from Hertfordshire. Mary Beckett's home parish register of St. Mary's, Watford, has a number of Warren family entries from the 1560s through the 1580s: a Warren family that is using the names Richard, Sarah, Ann, Mary, and Elizabeth—all which also occur within the *Mayflower* Warren family.²⁹ The Plymouth Colony Warren family also named a son Nathaniel.

²⁵ Records of London's Livery Companies Online: Apprentices and Freemen, 1400-1900, http://www.londonroll.org/event/?company=clw&event_id=CLLL30574

²⁶ Public Records Office, Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 11/326/509.

²⁷ Public Records Office, London, Chancery Proceedings, C6/187/9, Beckett vs. Beckett, 1670.

²⁸ It should be noted that *Mayflower* passenger John Alden's origins have not been conclusively determined; his assumed origin at Harwich is only a reasonable hypothesis at this time. There are a number of men named John Alden living in Watford. None were an obvious candidate to have been the *Mayflower* passenger, but it is worth noting as it could make a good subject for future research.

²⁹ Although Richard Warren's marriage record at Great Amwell, Hertfordshire, has been identified, nothing has yet been conclusively determined about his earlier ancestry or parentage in Hertfordshire. Perhaps he came from the vicinity of Watford. Here are some occurrences of the family names Richard, Sarah, Ann, Mary and Elizabeth, at Watford, to back up this statement: **Mary** Warren, bp. 26 March 1545, daughter of John; **Elizabeth** Warren, bp. 21 June 1584, daughter of Ralph; **Mary** Warren, bp. 3 February 1556, daughter of William; Dorethey Warren bp. 7 June 1562, daughter of **Richard Warren**; **Ann** Warren m. 31 January 1547 to John Enance; **Ann** Warren m. 9 September 1566, John R[*illegible*]; **Sara** Warren m. 27 October 1588, Anthony [*surname illegible*].

Lastly, but perhaps most significant: Mary Beckett's father John died in 1619 when she was only fourteen years old. As was the custom at the time, she and her siblings likely would have been apprenticed out to relatives, neighbors, church-members and acquaintances. We know that the widow Ann (Alden) Beckett did not remarry right away, because she is still referred to as "widow Buckett" in the burial entry of her son James in 1622—further increasing the probability her children were sent out to other families. Indeed, siblings Jeremy and John are referenced in some London records later in their lives. So not only is Mary Beckett of Watford the right age, associated with families of *Mayflower* surnames, within a family using the distinctive name Nathaniel; but she also has the opportunity, as a teenager, to have been transferred to another family that could have ultimately headed off to America on the ship *Anne*. She does not appear again in Watford records.

Future Research Possibilities

There are several openings through which additional research could be undertaken, and such research is certainly warranted. With a large number of manorial records of Watford still unexamined, additional Beckett, Warren and Alden family details could be obtained. Manorial records provide an insight into the day-to-day activities in a way that many other record classes do not. However, it is a slow and laborious process: the records are only accessible in England and spread across several records offices, and most are in Latin. Disproof of this hypothesis could also be obtained through manorial records as well, if references to Mary Beckett can be found post-1623 that can be tied to the girl who was baptized in 1605.

Important to this hypothesis is the family associations with Alden and Warren. Further research into these families of Watford could lead to a better understanding of how, or if, these families are related to the *Mayflower* passengers of the same name. The more closely allied with the settlers of Plymouth these families are, the more probable this identification.

Caleb Johnson is the author of several Mayflower-related books including Here Shall I Die Ashore (a biography of Stephen Hopkins) and The Mayflower and Her Passengers. He is the current editor of the scholarly genealogical journal, The Mayflower Descendant, and is credited with discovering the English origins of Stephen Hopkins and Peter Brown, among others. More information about him can be found on his website, <http://www.mayflowerhistory.com>.