

THE ENGLISH ORIGINS OF THOMASINE (KELLETT) (SCOTTOW) SANFORD OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY

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This article shows the identity of the birth family of Thomasine, the wife of Thomas Scottow of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, England, and Richard Sanford of Boston, Massachusetts Bay Colony. She immigrated to New England about 1634 and settled in Boston with her children Thomas, Joshua, John and Rebecca Scottow. About 1641 she married Richard Sanford. She evidently came from Hellington, Norfolk, where a marriage is recorded between Thomas Scottow and Thomazine Killett on 12 July 1613.¹ While no documentary evidence was found connecting this couple to the one in Great Yarmouth, the names Thomas with Scottow and Thomasine are uncommon enough that such a marriage in the region around Great Yarmouth makes the connection very likely. Hellington and Great Yarmouth are about twenty miles apart by land and less so by the River Yare. Thomas's origins haven't been found, nor his occupation, but Great Yarmouth to the east and Norwich to the west would have been a draw to anyone looking to leave a small village looking for work. It's possible, for instance, that Thomas came from Hellington's neighboring medieval parishes of Ashby St. Mary, for which the parish register doesn't start until 1620, or Claxton, where parish records start much later.

Thomasine's ancestry can only be traced certainly to her parents, John and Mary (Seaman) Kylllett. She was baptized in Hellington, Norfolk, on 19 December 1594, the parish clerk calling her "Thomazine Kylllett."² This surname is spelled with a number of phonetic variations. Since they are the only presence of anyone with that surname in Hellington, it's likely that John originated in Bedingham, about nine miles away, where there was a notable presence of the name. Unfortunately, there were at least two Johns with that surname baptized in Bedingham who could have been Thomasine's father. The two that were certainly the right generation were brothers, one born in 1561 and the other in 1564. Neither has a will. Their father was John and two other Johns who were roughly the same generation aren't clearly distinguished in the Bedingham parish register. The suffixes "elder," "Sr.," and "Jr." are used occasionally to refer to these various Johns, but not consistently enough to compose distinct family groups. That Thomasine's grandfather was one of the two brothers named John is likely. A lack of marriage records makes identifying Thomasine's maternal ancestry impossible unless more obscure records can be located that might help. Not even the parents of her mother, Mary Seaman, were identified.

¹ Parish register of Hellington, Norfolk, England.

² Parish register of Hellington, Norfolk, England.

Thomas "Scotteway," joiner, was buried in Great Yarmouth on 1 January 1626[/7].³ His estate administration is recorded in 1626.⁴ Thomasine and her children Thomas, Joshua and Rebecca immigrated to Boston perhaps in 1634. This estimate is based on Thomasine joining the Boston church on 7 September 1634.⁵ "Thomasyn Scottua, widow" was granted sixteen acres at Muddy River on 14 December 1635,⁶ six of which she sold to her son Thomas. On 6 March 1636[/7],⁷ he was given permission from the Boston selectmen to build a house on that property, which was then sold to Thomas Grub on 18 February 1638[/9].⁸ "Scottua" and "Scottaway" are name spellings also used for her son Joshua in his baptism record,⁹ a colonial court record,¹⁰ and a deed.¹¹ This helps establish the identity of the Thomas Scotteway buried in Great Yarmouth in 1626.

Thomasine's three children were still minors when they immigrated. There is no record of her being granted or buying a house lot, so they likely rented a home. Thomas and Joshua would have their own homesteads in Boston within the next six years, but it isn't on record when they were built. The available land transactions in Boston imply that both had established their own households by the time Thomasine married Richard Sanford, and she surely was living with one of them. Her daughter Rebecca married about this time, but her husband evidently didn't meet the requirements to become a townsman and receive land grants and was reliant on the Rebecca's family for support.¹² This makes it unlikely Thomasine was with her.

There is no documentary proof that Thomasine married Richard Sanford. Their connection is based on the will of her son Thomas Scottow of Boston, written on 9 May 1660, which says "I do further give and bequeath to my aged Mother Sunford to be paid unto her as her necessity may call for it ten pounds."¹³ "Sunford" isn't a name found in Boston records at the time, and Richard Sanford, the only so-named person of his generation in Boston, was a perfect candidate. Thomasine's son Thomas was an abutting landowner with Richard in what is now downtown Boston and Richard evidently bought land that was or had been Thomasine's grant in the Muddy River neighborhood, now the city of Brookline. Richard became a widower probably in the winter of 1640-41, and he

³ Parish registers of Great Yarmouth. Thomas "Scotteway." The record is indexed as "Scottsday." The supposed second "s" in "Scottsday" is a less-used form of "e," which can be found elsewhere on the register page. The "w" appears to be a "d," but close examination reveals a "w" with perhaps a wear mark through it. Otherwise, there was no instance found in indexed English records of the name "Scottsday."

⁴ Thomas of Great Yarmouth 1626 ANW 22/3/47.

⁵ 7 Sep. 1634. Records of the First Church in Boston 1630-1868 [hereafter RFCB], vol. 1 (Boston, MA: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1961), 19.

⁶ Recorded at an 8 January 1637[/8] town meeting. *Second Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston, 1877*, "Boston Town Records" [hereafter BTR] (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, City Printers, 1877), 23.

⁷ BTR, 16.

⁸ BTR, 38.

⁹ Parish records of Great Yarmouth.

¹⁰ 1 Oct. 1645, Massachusetts Bay Colony General Court, 2:137.

¹¹ *York Deeds*, 12:210.

¹² Alicia Crane Williams, *Early New England Families, 1641-1700*, Americanancestors.org database online, entry for Robert Winsor. Thomas Scottow supposedly transferred land to Winsor for the family's support, but Williams doesn't cite a source for this statement.

¹³ Suffolk Co., MA, probate records 1:176-7.

had young children to look after. It's likely he and Thomasine married some time in 1641.¹⁴

GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY

1. **JOHN^A "KILLIAT"** was possibly baptized on 1 May 1561 or 24 Jan 1563[/4] in Bedingham, Norfolk, England,¹⁵ one of two sons of John and perhaps Elizabeth, who was his wife when he wrote his will in 1579.¹⁶ John^A was buried in Hellington, Norfolk, on 27 May 1610. Since John was of Hellington when his children were baptized and where he died, he surely was the one who married in Hellington on 29 September 1589 **MARY SEAMAN**. She or her daughter Mary were very likely the "Marie Killett" who married Gregory Waters in Hellington on 21 November 1611. No plausible baptism record was found for Mary. Administration of John's estate was given to Mary on 28 May 1610.¹⁷ There was an Anne Killett buried in Hellington on 11 May 1610. She stands out as the only unidentified Killett in the Hellington register. The parish register doesn't name parents in the burial records, only the name of a husband, if any.

Children of John and Mary (Seaman) Kellett/Kyllett:

- i. "ELIZABETH KELLETT," bap. 15 Nov. 1590, bur. 13 March 1611/12.
- ii. "MARYE KELLETT," bap. 7 Sep. 1592, no further record found unless she m. Gregory Waters.
- iii. "THOMAZINE KYLLETT," bap. 19 Dec. 1594.
- iv "ALYCE KYLLETT," bap. 16 Jan. 1596/7, no further record found.
- v. "JOANE KILLETT," bap. 18 Aug. 1605, no further record found.

2. **THOMASINE¹ KYLLET** (*John^A*) was baptized in Hellington on 19 December 1594. She married 1. in Hellington on 12 July 1613 **THOMAS SCOTTOW**. Thomas was buried in Great Yarmouth on 1 January 1626/7.¹⁸ She married 2. probably in Boston about 1641 **RICHARD SANFORD**.

It's possible Thomasine moved from Great Yarmouth before she immigrated to New England by 1634, at which place her children Sarah and John died and were buried. Her children Thomas, Joshua and Rebecca immigrated with her. Thomasine was admitted to the church in Boston on 21 September 1634 as "Thomasyn Scottoe widow."¹⁹ Her sons Thomas and Joshua were admitted on 19 May 1639.²⁰

¹⁴ For more information about the Sanfords, see Doug Sinclair, *A New Look at the Richard Sanford Family of Boston, Massachusetts Bay Colony* (2025), <https://dougsinclairsarchives.com/articles/sanfordfamily.pdf>.

¹⁵ Parish register of Bedingham, Norfolk, England.

¹⁶ John Kylliyatt will, Archdeaconry of Norwich, Consistory Court, will register Woodstocke 396, FHL film .

¹⁷ Archdeaconry of Norfolk, administration act book 2, FHL film 173451, image 483 (DGS 7904822)

¹⁸ Parish registers of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, England.

¹⁹ *Records of the First Church in Boston 1630-1868* [hereafter *RFCB*], vol. 1 (Boston, MA: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1961), 19.

²⁰ *RFCB*, 24.

Children of Thomas and Thomasine (Killet) Scottow (Great Yarmouth records):

- i. Thomas Scottow, bap. 30 Apr 1615
- ii. Joshua "Scottaway," bap. 8 June 1617. The name appears as "Scottua" in a Massachusetts Bay Colony court record.²¹
- iii. Mary, bap. 22 Aug. 1619, bur. 16 Jan. 1624/5.²²
- iv. Sarah Scottow, bap. 7 Oct. 1621, no further record.
- v. John Scottow, bap. 2 May 1624, no further record.
- vi. Rebecca, bap. 28 May 1626

Scottow

Variations of this surname are mostly phonetic, such as Scotto, Scottoe, and Scottowe. The spelling "Scottaway" also appears, although rarely.

THOMAS^A SCOTTOW was born probably in Norfolk, England, say 1590. He married in Hellington on 12 July 1613 THOMASINE KYLLET/KILLET. Thomasine was baptized on 19 December 1594. She married 2. probably in Boston in 1641 Richard Sanford. Thomas was buried in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, England, on 1 January 1626/7 and in that record he was called "joyner."²³

Thomas's estate administration was granted to Thomasine in 1626.²⁴ There are other Scottows who appear contemporaneously in the Great Yarmouth parish registers, but no connection was found to the family of Thomas and Thomasine.

Children of Thomas and Thomasine (Killet) Scottow (Great Yarmouth records):

- i. THOMAS SCOTTOW, bap. 30 Apr 1615
- ii. JOSHUA "SCOTTAWAY," bap. 8 June 1617. The name appears as "Scottaway" again in a Massachusetts Bay Colony court record.²⁵
- iii. MARY SCOTTOW, bap. 22 Aug. 1619, bur. 16 Jan. 1624/5.²⁶
- iv. SARAH SCOTTOW, bap. 7 Oct. 1621, no further record.
- v. JOHN SCOTTOW, bap. 2 May 1624, no further record.
- vi. REBECCA SCOTTOW, bap. 28 May 1626

²¹ 1 Oct. 1645, Massachusetts Bay Colony General Court, 2:137.

²² She was the only Mary or Marie Scottow with a baptism in Great Yarmouth before 1625 and she is called a "puella." (Latin for girl child, rather than "infans" meaning infant).

²³ Parish registers of Great Yarmouth. Thomas "Scotteway." The record is indexed as "Scottsday." The supposed second "s" in "Scottsday" is a less-used form of "e," which can be found elsewhere on the register page. The "w" appears to be a "d," but close examination reveals a "w" with perhaps a wear mark through it. Otherwise, there was no instance found in indexed English records of the name "Scottsday."

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