

Fact or Fiction: the ship *James*, Capt. Cooper, sailing to New England in April 1635

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This article is about the ship *James* that sailed from London to Southampton, England, then to New England "in & about" 6 April 1635. There have been misconceptions about this voyage and the passenger list for it.

Which *James* and when

It is assumed that this is the same ship *James*, 300 tons, referred to by Winthrop as being captained by "Mr. Graves" (Thomas Graves) and arriving in Boston on 3 June 1635 from Southampton. He said Graves had made that same voyage yearly for seven years.¹ He also says that other ships that arrived that day had been at sea for about five weeks and three days and that the *James* was at sea within the same time. Graves's *James* has no extant passenger list.

The passenger list for the *James* that it sailed about 6 April 1635, also 300 tons, was generated after the ship sailed, and the captain of record was William Cooper. This contradiction seems to have been overlooked. It isn't reasonable to think Cooper was removed from his position after the ship left Southampton and replaced by Graves. Another problem with the 3 June arrival supposition is that a sail time of about five and a half weeks would put the departure of Graves's *James* toward the end of April, not the beginning, when Cooper's *James* sailed. Both discrepancies are enough to make the latter ship's arrival in Boston Harbor on 3 June 1635 dubious.

Was there an oath taken on 12 June 1635?

There seems to be a misconception that the above passengers took some sort of oath on 12 June 1635. It may originate with packrat-pro.com (see below for more about mistakes at websites). This is incorrect. The English government requested an account of these passengers on 12 June 1635, and it was the April list that was sent.² An abstract entry for 12 June 1635 in the "Calendar of State Papers" says this:

¹ Winthrop's Journal, (<https://archive.org/details/winthroppsjournal00wint/page/152/mode/2up> 152).

² Calendar of State Papers, British History Online (<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol1/pp209-210>).

"June 12.

Southampton. [folio] 67. Officers of the Custom House to the Privy Council.
Send list of passengers who took shipping at Southampton for New England
in April last. Inclose

67. I. List of 53 passengers, besides women and female children, who left
Southampton for New England about 6 April 1635, in the James of London,
of 300 tons, William Cooper, master."³

The following is evidently a transcription of the document referred to
above, the header for which is "Gatherings at her Majesty's State Paper
Office, transcribed 9 Sept. 1842. From Vol. XI of Papers relating to Trade
and Plantations fol. 69." The "Calendar of State Papers" doesn't refer to such
manuscript volumes under that name, so exactly where it was found
couldn't be determined for this article. It isn't the folio 69 that follows folio
67 mentioned above, but "69" may be a mistake and "67" was intended.

*"To the right Honble The Lords of his Ma^{ts} hon. privie Counsell, this at
White Hall London. Right hon^{bles}*

*After the performance of our most humble duties May it please yo^r good lo^{rds}
to receive here inclosed a list of the names of such passengers as took
shippinge at this porte for New England & that outly in April last in the
good ship called the James of London whereof W^m Coop^r went Mr And in
Due obedience and observance of yo^r hone^{rs} Ire Dated the last of December
past. Thus wee humbly take leave. Southampton xii day of June 1635*

Y^r lo^{rds} Most humble ser^{vts}

Tho. Wurfris Coll^r N. Dingley Comp^r John Knapp Search^r"

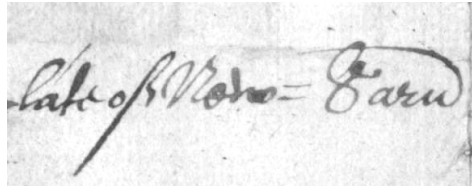
Passenger list orthography

The ship list below has an randomly used orthography that is open to
interpretation. It appears in other lists for Southampton departures as well,
such as the ship *Confidence* in 1638, and used by at least two different clerks.
It was also found serendipidously in the clerk's copy of a 1626 will.⁴ O the

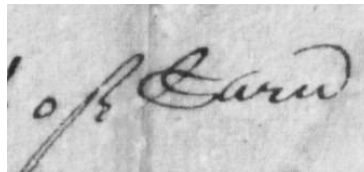
³ "Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 1, 1574-1660,"
National Archives, as abstracted online at British History Online.)

⁴ Will of Nicholas Atwood, 1626, "England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills,
1384-1858," Ancestry.com image database, image 957 of PROB 11: Will Registers>1624-
1643>Piece 153: Barrington, Quire Numbers 1-63 (1628),

passenger lists it is most evident in how they wrote "Sarum" as it refers to "New Sarum" (Salisbury, Wiltshire).



"late of New=Sar[-]"

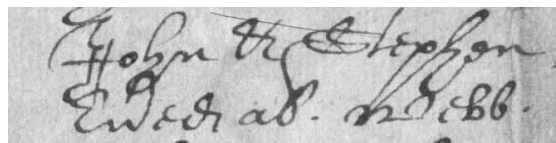


"of Sar[-]"

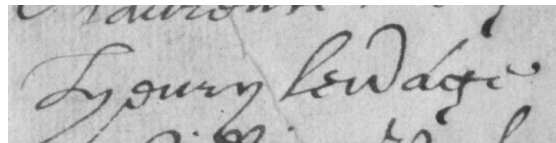
It appears that the "m" is left off and replaced with an upward and back-curving stroke of the pen, but judging by the other instances, the orthography is what looks like a "u" plus the upward stroke.

It was commonplace for writers to have the last letters in words rendered with a quick scribble in superscript, especially words that end in "r." Sometimes the last letter is formed in some recognizable way, sometimes not. In the latter case, context must be used to know what it is. In the case of "New Sarum" it seems obvious.

This orthography was also used to indicate "ver," found in both the *James* and the *Confidence* lists. The following *James* names have it: "John and Stephen E[-]ed" and "Henry Le[-]age."

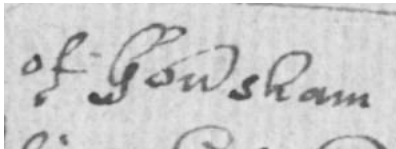


"John & Stephen
E[ed] als Webb"

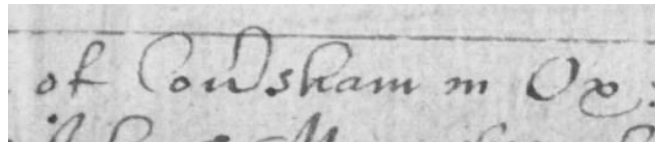


"Henry Le[-]age"

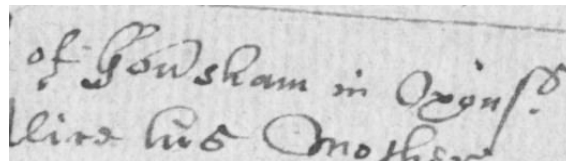
John and Stephen Evered are identifiable settlers in New England. Henry Leverage is not, but "Leverage" and its spelling variants represent a fairly common surname, more so than other interpretations of "Lev[-]age." The *Confidence* list seems to corroborate "er." Several passengers came from either "Go[-]sham" or "Co[-]sham" in Oxfordshire. The only parish this could be is Caversham.



"of Go[-]sham"

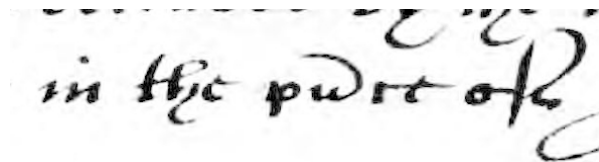


"of Co[-]sham in Ox"



"of Go[-]sham in Oxonsr"

It's tempting to think, because of the multiple instances of "ver" being left out in favor of the orthography, that there is a "v" before the upstroke, but "Sarum" prevents this assumption as well as the word "p[-]ce" in the 1626 will. The clerks using the orthography clearly did so randomly. In other places they spelled out the entire words.



Wills routinely included the phrase "in the presence of" before list witnesses.

Although the clerk wrote "presence" in other transcriptions of wills in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury record books, here he chose "in the p[-]ce of"

Published versions of the *James* list interpret this orthography variously. Some don't bother indicating it and just spell the words or names however

seems likely. "Greenes of Rhode Island" to represent the orthography, although inconsistently, but doesn't resolve it well.⁵ There we have "Evvered," which is a cryptic choice, "New Sarum" and "New Sarm" with a bar over the "m" even though the name is written with the orthography consistently throughout the list, and "Lenage" with a tilde over the "n." Bars over consonants were commonly used at that time to indicate a contraction, so the transcriber was likely using it since the orthography as written couldn't be represented in a standard typeface. The use of a tilde instead of a bar is cryptic. "Co[-]sham" or "Go[-]sham" on the *Confidence* list has been interpreted in print as "Gonsham" and has thus confused researchers.

Published and internet references to the passenger list

Transcriptions for this passenger list have a long history of being transcribed for publication. This is an outline of them:

1838: James Savage, "Gleanings for New England History," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 7:318-320. This is a close verbatim transcription with mistakes and includes the document referring to what was surely a Lord Treasurer's warrant mentioned above.

1851: *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 5 (Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1851), 440. Horatio Somerby, who would become notorious for making up English records to appeal to American clients, sent what he said were corrections to the *James* list printed in the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (listed above) to the NEHGS. He was right in some instances but more often wrong, thus further obscuring the original.

1860: Samuel G. Drake, *Result of Some Researches Among the British Archives for Information Relative to the Founders of New England: Made in Years 1858, 1859, and 1860* (Boston: H. W. Dutton & Son, 1860, republished by the Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore: 1963), 55. The list in this book corrects some mistakes in previous lists but still isn't completely accurate. [<https://dn790001.ca.archive.org/0/items/resultofsomerese00drak/resultofsomerese00drak.pdf> p. 55]

1900: Charles Henry Pope, *Pioneers of Massachusetts* (Boston, Mass.: C. H. Pope, 1900). Pope provides an alphabetical list of the "pioneers." The *James*

⁵George Sears Greene, *The Greenes of Rhode Island, with historical records of English ancestry, 1534-1902* (New York: The Knickerbocker press, 1903), 769.

passengers are included, but he speculates about English origins, sometimes incorrectly. He provides no source citations. Despite the scholarly weakness of this book, his information, along with similar mistakes by Banks (see below), often appears in later 20th century books and websites as part of the ship's passenger list.

1910: John Reynolds Totten, *Thacher-Thatcher Genealogy* (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1910), 86-7. Totten copies directly from Drake.

1937: Charles Edward Banks, *Topographical dictionary of 2885 English emigrants to New England, 1620-1650* (Philadelphia: Elijah Ellsworth Brownell, 1937). This much-used reference is particularly lacking in scholarship. An example is the entry for John Ayers. Predating Banks, he was a presumed passenger on the *James*, but inquiry as to why reveals it is merely because he was related to the Evered brothers, who were passengers. Banks repeats this as fact. The book is full of unsupported speculation about immigrations and English origins, many of which have been disproved.

1979: Michael Tepper, *New World Immigrants, A Consolidation of Ship Passenger Lists and Associated Data from Periodical Literature*, vol. 1 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1979), 58-59. Tepper copies Savage.

1987: Peter Wilson Coldham, *The Complete Book of Emigrants: 1607-1660* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Com, 1987), 134. Coldham gives the passengers on the *James* as a group and not verbatim. He gives interpretations such as "roper" for Phillip Varren, whereas the manuscript says "Roop."

Websites include passenger lists for the *James*, but they rely a lot on Banks and Pope without question, compiling from sources far removed from the original and in some cases, copy from each other. One of the oldest and copied sites is packrat-pro.com (<https://www.packrat-pro.com/ships/james1.htm>), which cites the following sources:

Coldham's *Complete Book of Emigrants*

<http://www.winthropsociety.org/ships/james1.htm>

<http://english-america.com/spls/635ne014.html#James>

<http://olivetreenealogy.com/ships/james1634.shtml>

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~rothlisberger/rothlisberger/996.htm>

Banks, for instance, isn't listed, but referred to repeatedly in the listings of passengers.

The passenger list

What follows is my translation based on the manuscript list at the National Archives, which is available at FindmyPast. Arrangement and orthography are preserved. Known issues of interpretation are those addressed above, such as the orthography. I consulted not only the original manuscript but opinions of others in past publications that showed care and credibility in their own interpretations. Notes have been added to indicate things that have appeared in previous published iterations that are clearly or evidently mistakes:

Southton [Southampton]

List of the names of suche Passeng^{rs} as shipt themselves at the towne of

Hampton [Southampton], in the James of London of iii ^c tonnes

William Cooper M^r [Master]

[v^r s^t?] New=England, in & aboute the vith of Aprill 1635

Augustine Clem^t sometyne of Readinge Paynter &

Thomas Wheeler his servant

Thomas Browne of Malford weav^r

Hercules Woodman of the same mercer

John & Stephen]

E[ver?]ed als Webb]

Gyles Butler]

George Coussens]

Thomas Colman]

John Pithouse]

[above bracketed] of Marlborough laborers or husbandmen

Anthoney Morse]

Willm Morse]

[above bracketed] of Marlborough Shomakers

John Hide Tayler]
John Parker Carpenter]
Richard Walker Somaker]
Maudit Ingles ffuller]
Thomas Davyes Sawyer]

[above bracketed] late of Marlborough

Thomas Carpenter of Amsbury Carpenter

Willm Paddey skinn^r]
Edmund Hawes Cutler]

[above bracketed] late of London

Edmund Batter Maulter]
John Smale his servant]
Michael Shafflin Tayler]
Josuah Verren Rop]⁶
Thomas Antram weav^r &]
Thomas Browne his servant]
George Smythe Tayler]
Phillip Varren Roop]⁷
John Greene surgeon]

[above bracketed] late of New=Sar[um]

Zacheus Courlis of Downton laborer
Henry Rose of Platford laborer
Nicholas Batt [paper damaged, "Batt" is credibly inferred] of y^e
Devyes [Devizes] lennen weav^r

⁶ 19th century transcriptions interpret this as "Rep^r," which is certainly wrong, given that the "o" is clearly written. There is no indication of a superscript "r" and his father Phillip Verren is recorded as a "roper" or ropemaker. See note 6.

⁷ 19th century transcriptions interpret this as "Reep" or "Roop" which is certainly wrong, given that the double "o" is clearly written. There is no indication of a superscript "r" and Phillip is recorded as a "roper" in his son "Hellyer's" (Hilliard) baptism in Salisbury in 1621 (Wiltshire, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1812," Ancestry.com image database by subscription, Salisbury, St Edmund>Parish Registers>1559-1653, https://www.ancestry.com/-imageviewer/collections/61187/images/45582_3082375_0003-00098?usePUB=true&_phsrc=omr3851 image 97) and a hemp cloth and rope worker in alms house records in Salisbury (https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6229e984718e915edd91ce38/-t/62d548d28480c860280a2586/1736443500488/wrs_v31.pdf).

[next column]

Thomas Scoates of Sar[um] laborer

John Pike]

John Musselwhite]

[above bracketed] of langford⁸ laborers

Sampson Salter of Caversham fisherman

Henry Kinge of Brenchley⁹ laborer

William Andrewes of Hampsworth Carpenter

John Knight]

Richard Knight]

[above bracketed] of Romsey taylers

Thomas Smithe of the same weav^r

Nicholas Holte thereof tanner

Robert ffeild of yealing laborer

Anthoney Thetcher of Sar[um] tayler &

Peter Higdon his servant

James Browne]

Laurence Seag^r]

[above bracketed] youthes of Hampton of about 17 yeares old

Henry Le[ver?]age]

Wiliam Parsons]

⁸ This was interpreted as "Langford," Wiltshire. There is a Steeple Langford in Wiltshire but is it more credibly "Landford." There is a Steeple Langford parish in Wiltshire but given John Pike's baptism in Whiteparish and many of the other passengers coming from an area within about eight miles of Whiteparish, the location is very likely Landford, which is about three and half miles from Whiteparish. Although John Musselwhite's origins haven't been proved, "Musselwhite" and it's spelling variations appear in English parish register indexes between 1605 and 1625 mostly in Downton parish. Downton is about six and half miles from Landford. Steeple Langford is about sixteen miles from both Downton and Whiteparish.

⁹ This name is particularly garbled in 19th century interpretations, but comparative handwriting analysis certainly makes this "Brenchley." There is a Brenchley parish in Kent.

[above bracketed] of Sar[um] Taylers

John Emery]

Anthoney Emery]

Willm Kemp servant]

[above bracketed] of Romsey Carpenters

The totall number of these men, youthes & boyes are liiii psons

Besids the wives & Children of Dyvers of these