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### Notes for John (I) Randall, the Immigrant

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John came to America in 1666. (See Crowell's Scrapbook at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia) "John Randall first appears at Newport, Rhode Island, but removed to Westerly, the same state as early as 1667, where the remainder of his life was spent.

Mr. Randall was born in Bath, England, May 28, 1629, the son of Matthew Randall, who was mayor of Bath in 1627. John was a silk manufacturer in England--of Seventh Day Baptist faith, and married there Elizabeth Morton, sister of Sir William Morton, who settled in New London, Conn. (see Hurd's History of New London.)" In fact, it was his grandfather who was the mayor of Bath, not his father. Brian E. Randall, of Sudbury, Ontario, indicates in his notes that both this grandfather, Matthew Randall, and John's uncle, John Randall, were involved in the textile industry.

"John Randall.... was in Westerly, Rhode Island in 1667. In 1670 he purchased land on the Pawcatuck River from Thomas Bell and on Nov. 30, 1670 he was admitted as an inhabitant of Stonington, Connecticut. In 1678 John and Elizabeth subscribed the letter of Westerly Baptist (accepted in Church). John took the oath of fidelity to Rhode Island in 1679 and in 1682 was a deputy to the Rhode Island Assembly. In 1685 Elizabeth, widow of John Randall petitioned for privilege to improve her deceased husband's land." "Just Rooting Around the Randall Family Tree", by George Einarson; Mulgrave, Nova Scotia, Provincial Archives of Nova Scotia (MG 100)

"John Randall, the progenitor of the Randall family of Westerly, Rhode Island and Stonington (Pawcatuck) City first appeared at Newport, Rhode Island, from which place he came to Westerly as early as 1667, remaining in that area the rest of his life.... In 1684 John Randall died in Westerly, and his widow died there in 1685. Their son, John, born 1666 in England removed from Westerly, on the Rhode Island-Connecticut border, in a section known as Pawcatuck. At the time John Randall, Sr. settled there, Pawcatuck belonged to Rhode Island, but in 1663 the court declared that the Pawcatuck River separated the two colonies, with the result that the Randall property eventually came under the jurisdiction of the Town of Stonington."

"Ancestral (Maternal) Lines of Herbert Harris Olding, Jr."; by Herbert Olding

John Randall first appears in the records of Newport, Rhode Island in 1667. Typically, English colonists of this period entered New England through the port at Boston, before traveling on to Rhode Island. In fact, between 1663 and 1700, the only known settlers to enter Rhode Island directly from Europe were a group of French immigrants in 1686. Thus, it is presumed that John either arrived in the American Colonies prior to 1663, or arrived first at Massachusetts before moving on to Rhode Island.

Several sources have erroneously reported that our John was the son of Matthew Randall, Mayor of Bath, England. Matthew of Bath and his first wife, Agnes Cullen, had eight children: Elizabeth, Robert, Matthew, John, George, Richard, John (again), and George (again). Matthew's son John was born in 1609, making him too old to have been our John.

It is possible that our John was actually a grandson of Matthew of Bath, although such a suggestion is purely speculative and no evidence of such a relationship currently exists. Only four of Matthew and Agnes' sons lived to adulthood and produced children. Matthew's only known son was named George. John's only known son was named Matthew. George had a daughter, Anne, and sons George and Matthew. Robert had twelve children, but only two sons, John and George, survived to adulthood. Thus, of Matthew and Agnes' known grandchildren, only one is known to have been named John.

Robert's son John was baptized at Bath Abbey on May 24, 1636. He became a butcher, and moved to St. Clerkenwell, which is now a part of London. He later inherited a portion of his grandfather Matthew's estate at Bath. This John died in London in 1680, and thus could not have been our John. There was also a second John of St. Clerkenwell whom many have suggested was actually our John. However, records of a legal case show that

this John was still living as late as 1690 -- six years after our John's recorded death.

Matthew of Bath's sons, John and Matthew, each vanish from Bath records after the birth of a single son. If our John was indeed connected to Matthew of Bath, it is most likely that he was son of a child born to either Matthew's son John, or his son Matthew. Both of these sons are said to have been involved in the textile industry at Bath. (Note: According to a 1998 report by Paul G. Randall, our John was born May 28, 1629, to Matthew of Bath's son Matthew. However, no documented evidence is provided to support this claim).

In England, it is likely that John was a religious non-conformist, placing him in a very dangerous position. Except for a brief period under the Puritan Commonwealth (1649-1660), Anglican leaders of John's era took great efforts to ensure that all who were not of a like faith were persecuted. Thus, non-conformists frequently went out of their way to cover their tracks by not recording births, marriages, places of residence, etc. This has made tracing the family's English roots very difficult, if not impossible. It can be assumed, however, that before sailing for America, John was of at least the yeoman class. This hypothesis is based not only on the fact that both John and his wife could read and write, but also on the many responsibilities entrusted upon John after his arrival in the Colonies, indicating that he was a respected and trusted member of his community.

In 1668, John arrived at Westerly, Rhode Island, with his wife, Elizabeth, and infant son, John, Jr. There, on May 18, 1669, John was listed as one of the town's original 24 freemen. John took an oath of allegiance at Westerly, on September 17, 1669. At the time, the Colony of Rhode Island had a population of about 3,000 people. Based on the approximate birth date of his eldest son, we can estimate the senior John's birth to have taken place in about 1640, and his marriage to have occurred around 1665. What is not known, however, is whether John was married before or after his arrival in the Colonies. Likewise, it is unknown on which continent John, Jr. was born. At Westerly, John and Elizabeth had three more children: Stephen (c.1668-?); Matthew (1671-1735); and Peter (1674-?).

As for popular reports that Elizabeth was actually Elizabeth Morton, sister of William Morton (?-1669), of New London, Connecticut -- such suggestions also appear to be unfounded. It was actually John of St. Clerkenwell who married Elizabeth Morton, sister of William Morton who immigrated to the American Colonies in 1667, and not Sir William Morton of London as commonly reported. Sir William Morton, imprisoned in the Tower of London for his royalist views, died in England in 1672, having never immigrated to the American Colonies. In 1670, John purchased from Thomas Bell, 300 acres of land along the Pawcatuck River on land he believed belonged to the town of Westerly, Rhode Island. However, in 1663, the courts had declared the Pawcatuck River to be the dividing line between the Colonies of Rhode Island and Connecticut. Thus, John's land was located in territory now claimed by Stonington, Connecticut. At a town meeting held August 9, 1670, the Stonington authorities protested the sale, declaring their dissatisfaction with the fact that the sale had been made privately between the two men, rather than at a formal town meeting. In order for the sale to be considered valid, the town leaders insisted that John come to Stonington and declare his loyalty to the Connecticut Colony. On November 30, 1670, John attended a Stonington town meeting, at which time he was admitted as an inhabitant of the town. The boundary dispute between Rhode Island and Connecticut continued to rage on for many years. The complex dispute of jurisdiction led to fines, arrests, imprisonment, appeals, the appointment of numerous commissions between the colonies, and even direct interference and rulings from the King himself. The town of Westerly and the Randall property had been established on land originally purchased from the Narragansett Indians by the Rhode Island colonists in 1661. However, despite backing from Rhode Island's charter of 1643, Connecticut and Massachusetts challenged Rhode Island's claim to the region, arguing old claims from Indian conquests and taking advantage of undefined phrases in the Rhode Island charter. The present-day boundaries between the three colonies were not finally established until 1728.

It does not appear, however, that John ever actually relinquished his Rhode Island citizenship. John took an oath of fidelity to the Rhode Island Colony in 1679, and was appointed to a committee of an unknown nature at a Westerly town meeting held September 22, 1679. He was selected as a juryman on April 29, 1680, and on September 21, 1682, was chosen a deputy to the General Assembly held at Warwick.

John and Elizabeth were leading members of the Baptist Church. It was Roger Williams who established the first Baptist Church in the American Colonies at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1638, after fleeing the persecutions of the Massachusetts Bay Colony Puritans. This church based its beliefs on seven basic principles: 1) the freedom of conscience in matters of worship; 2) church membership based on religious experience; 3) the separation of church and state; 4) the complete independence of each individual congregation; 5) the Scriptures as providing the only accepted standard of faith and church law; 6) immersion as the only Scripturally accepted form of baptism; and 7) the equality of rights for all members of the church, with every member being an equally

responsible one.

Beginning in 1664, a schism began to arise within the Baptist Church. Led by Stephen Mumford, several church members began to argue that Saturday, the seventh day of the week, should be consecrated as the Sabbath, rather than Sunday, the first. Those who accepted this belief eventually became known as Seventh Day or Sabbatarian Baptists. The Sabbatarians insisted that one could not discard part of the Fourth Commandment without denying all ten. The other side maintained that ignoring Christian reshaping of the Hebrew tradition amounted to a return to Judaism. In December 1671, seven members of the First Baptist Church of Newport seceded, and established the Colonies' first Sabbatarian Church at Westerly. These seven individuals included John and Elizabeth Randall; Samuel Hubbard, his wife and daughter; and John and Mary Babcock, Westerly's first white settlers. By 1678, besides the seven Westerly Sabbatarians, the new church had 10 members at New London, and 20 at Newport. By 1995, church membership had grown to 5,250, with 90 churches nationwide. Initially Sabbatarian services were held every eighth week alternating between the two established churches (Providence and Newport). However, the impracticality of this arrangement soon became too burdensome and, in 1708, the citizens of Westerly established an independent congregation, under the leadership of Rev. John Maxson (1638-1720). By 1712, the church at Westerly, eventually known as the First Hopkinton Seventh Day Baptist Church had a congregation of 130 members.

John is believed to have died at Westerly prior to 1685, the year his wife petitioned for the privilege to improve her deceased husband's lands. Elizabeth is believed to have died in 1685.

"The Randall Family (1665-1997): Ancestry and Descendants of John Randall of Stonington, Connecticut", compiled by David M. Randall  
(Randall Archives)

"John Randall came from Clerkinwall, Middlesex. His son Nathaniel was a baker in Boston. John Randall II came to Westerly with Mosher's group in 1667." The first public record of John Randall in Westerly was a claim for land east of the Pawcatuck River on May 6, 1667.

"Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island"; by John Osborne Austin; The Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc.; Baltimore, Maryland; 1978 (974.5 RI/Genealogy SCGS) (974.5 fA93 NYSL) (RI 38 SR)

"Swamp Yankee from Mystic", by James H. Allyn, 1980

"On May 1, 1678, John and Elizabeth Randall signed a proclamation to organize a Baptist Church in Providence, Rhode Island."

"History of the Town of Stonington, County of New London, Connecticut, from its First Settlement in 1649 to 1900 with a Genealogical Register of Stonington Families"; by Richard Anson Wheeler; Press of The Day Publishing Company; New London, Connecticut; 1900 (974.62 S87WI LAPL) (974.6 CT SCGS)

"Public Records of Colony of Connecticut 1665-1678"; by J. Hammond Trumbull; Press of The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company; Hartford, Connecticut (REF 974.6 Con-HebronPL/CSL)

"A Genealogy of a Branch of the Randall Family, 1666 to 1879", by Paul King Randall; Chenango Union; Norwich, New York; 1879 (FHL US/CAN Film 924417 Item 5 LDS) (929.2 R187 NYSL)

"Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island"; by John Osborne Austin; p. 157-8; The Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc.; Baltimore, Maryland; 1978 (974.5 RI/Genealogy SCGS) (974.5 fA93 NYSL)

Note: According to Joyce K. Lundin who wrote a book on John Randall, James is not in the descendency of John Randall (1629-1685).

"John Randall was said by earlier researchers to have been the son of Matthew Randall, Mayor of Bath. This is an error. The will of Matthew Randall of Bath, who married Agnes Cullen on April 16, 1596 at Bath Abbey, is on file in the Genealogical Society rooms at London, England, Boyd's Units. It names a son John, baptized May 28, 1609, who married January 6, 1647 Abigail Claxton, daughter of Ed Claxton and Judith Pennington. This John Randall, born 1609, was an Alderman and died October 5, 1676, ten years after our John Randall of

Westerly, Rhode Island had left England." This proof that Matthew Randall had a son John who remained in England throughout his life appears to rule out the Mayor of Bath as the father of John of Westerly.

"Descendants of John Randall of Westerly, Rhode Island", by Mrs. Frank C. (Olive Randall) Buckley

"A Genealogy and History of the Chute Family in America", William Edward Chute; p. cix; Salem, Massachusetts 1894 (FH C-36 SR ) (929.2 C564 LAPL)

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"His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation." Luke 1:50

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