

This was the first part of Lewis Compton Burnett's Journal

The English Burnets- from Sullina's Heraldry Folio 1724

Arms of the Burnets

Argent, three hollin leaves in chief proper; and a hunting horn in base, sable, garnished gules is the coat of Burnet of Leys. The same coat was used by Bishop Burnett of Saulsbury and Chancellor of the most notable Order of the Garter.

From Burke's Peerage and Baronetry of Great Britain, edition of 1863 in the Astor Library- Sir James Burnet of Leys, born 1801, brother of the last two baronets Sir Thomas and Sir Alexander. Had by his first wife Robert, born 1833, by second Thomas 1840, Alexander Edwin 1842 and a daughter.

Lineage

The Burnets, originally of Saxon descent, are of great antiquity in the south of Scotland. Robert de Bunard is witness to the foundation of the Abbey of Kelso by King David I anno 1128. At what time the family went into the north country we cannot precisely tell; near 600 years ago. According to Sir George McKinzie, the Burnets of Leys carry the hunting horn in base, with a Highlander in hunting garb and a greyhound for supporters, to show that they are the king's foresters in the north. Alexander Burnard, as the name was originally written, obtained a charter, now in the possession of the family, from Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, of the lands of Kilonach Clerach and six mark of the two Cordneys in the shire of Aberdeen dated 1324.

The following I copied from Burke's Peerage in the Boston Library while Jerome and I were there in 1904.

Burnard or Burnet was one of large possession and importance in Wiltshire, Bedfordshire two centuries after the conquest of England by William of Normandy. Their ancestors appear in Domesday book as tenant of Wm. de Ow. From them sprang the Burnets bearing the same arms, who appeared in the south of Scotland in the 12th century. They owned farming down county of Roxburgh, and figure prominently among the benefactors of Melrose Abbey.

Alexander Burnet espoused the cause of Robert Bruce.

Burnets were also named in Devon, Herefordshire, Shropshire, North and East Riding in Yorkshire and scattered thro-out England.

The name Burnett is supposed to be derived from the color brown. For instance our Burnet would seem to be associated with the fabric of brown mixture common at one period. Our great poet in describing avarice says:

A mantle hung her foote by
Upon a benche weak and small
A Burnete cote hung there withall
Furred with no menivere *
But with a furre rough of hair.
* a grey fur

Burnett motto

"Verescet, Vulneere, Vertus"

Robert Bunard who got lands confirmed to him by a charter under the great seal from King David Bruce dated Scone, 17th of November 1358. He was succeeded by his son Jno. de Bunard, who held the office of King's macer for which he had a salary of 10 marks sterling per annum (about \$1500) a considerable sum for that period and proving the high respectability of that office.

His son and successor was Robt. Burnet who made a considerable figure in the reign of King Henry I of Scotland; was called Baron of Leys. He left a son Alexander the 10th proprier, who got three charters under the great seal of James 6th (James I of England) 1596-1607. He had

- 1) Alexander, his heir
- 2) Duncan, MD, settled at Norwich
- 3) Thomas, MD settled at Boston, Lincolnshire; was of high esteem at Braintree.
- 4) Gilbert, professor of philosophy in Montauban in France
- 5) Robert of Carrach in Mar

Alexander Burnet of Leys had:

- 2) Thomas, first baronet
- 3) James of Craigmyle, from which the Burnet of Monbeddo and Kenmo descended
- 4) Robert of Crimond- constituted by Charles II, one of the senators of the College of Justice. He bore the title of Lord Crimond. His Lordship married Rachel Johnstone, a cadet of the noble family of Annandale, by whom he had two sons; the elder of whom was Dr Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Saalsbury the celebrated historian of his time.

Bishop Burnet

Born 1643, became professor 1669, removed to London 1675, became Bishop 1689 under William III. Married Miss Mary Scott, a Dutch lady of fortune and descended from the family of Buccleugh in Scotland. They had three sons:

- 1) William, Governor of New York & New Jersey (1720), afterwards Mass, where he died in 1729.
- 2) Gilbert, vicar of Coggeshall in Essex, published I think an abridgement of his father's history, also his sermons.
- 3) Thomas; one of the justices of the court of Common Pleas; published political tracts, verses, &c I think. "Speculation of Future State" 1753

Historical notes on Gov. Wm Burnett

"Wm. Burnett was appointed Governor of New York and New Jersey 1720; was a son of the well-known prelate Bishop Gilbert Burnet. If the new governor derived no celebrity from nobility of birth, he inherited a name that piety and learning had raised to distinction. In one of his remarks to the assembly of New York he said, 'I would rather serve for nothing and my own fortune in defense of His Majesty's Honor and welfare of the province of New Jersey than ever give way.' He departed the province of New Jersey 1697 and died in Boston 1729."

The English Burnets have furnished, according to their numbers, a fair proportion of talent and learning. McCauley, in his admirable history of England, speaks of Dr Thomas Burnet, the author of The Sacred Theory of the Earth, as a clergyman eminent for learning, genius and virtue. He further distinguished himself by his firm opposition to one of the arbitrary acts of James II. Born 1635, he became master of Charter House 1685, and later succeeded Archbishop Tillotson as Clerk of the Closet of William III- died 1715.

As this Dr Thomas Burnet was a native of Yorkshire, I am inclined to think that the Thomas Burnet who settled at Southampton, Long Island AD 1643 was a relative of his. That this latter Thos. Burnet was from Yorkshire is rendered probable by the fact that his minister, Rev Dr Pierson, was from that county and that the names of some of his associates are North England names.

Thos. Burnet's 2nd wife was Mary Pierson, daut. of Rev. Pierson. Copied from Jno. Burnet's genealogical notes. We owe much to Jno Burnet, the deaf and blind poet, for his great research in finding out so much of the history of the Burnet family. He said he was certain that all of the Burnets of the US came from Thos. Burnet of Southampton with the exception of the Burnet of Boston of extract fame.

Notes on Southampton, LI, originally named Agawam; undoubtedly named for Southampton, England, the port from which the early settlers took ship for America.

Southampton. L.I. 1640- Mr. Farret, in behalf of Lord Sterling made an agreement with Lieut. Howe, Edward Howel and others by which they were authorized to occupy eight square miles of land in any part of Long Island. The amount that was to be estimated by the Hon John Winthrop, Gov. of Mass. Colony, who fixed the amount of four bushels of Indian corn, in consideration that the country was a wilderness and that the natives pretended some claims to the land.

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They went to Long Island from Lynn, Mass, and others were to follow. They came under the authority of Gov. Winthrop of the Mass. Bay Colony. It was intended to bring 20 families and many more would come if the land was good. The indians whom they found here proved to be friendly, and released to them sufficient land for their necessities, in consideration of 16 coates already received and three acre bushels of corn to be paid upon demand the last day of September 1641. The date of this deed is Dec 13th 1640.

The first mention of a Burnet in the Southampton, Long Island records is this; "Thos. Burnett hath a lot granted unto him on the condition that hee stave three years in the town to

ymprove it." (Oct 13 1643) (New Haven founded 1644)

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Sample of Civil Law relating to freemen;

Southampton on the 8th of the month 1647- it is ordered by this general court that if any man be chosen to be a freeman of this town shall refuse it, shall pay fortie shillings for his fine Imprimis. At this instance General Court Richard Odell, gentleman, was chosen freeman, and Edward Jones, Josiah Stanboro and John White.

It is ordered that this 7th day of October 1648 by the General Courts the Mr Richard Smyth, Mr William Brown, John Howel weir chosen Freemen of this town of Southampton.

And yt is further agreed upon that there shall be in each ward eleven persons:

First Ward

Wm. Barnes, Geo. Wood, Thos. Burnett, Thos. Cooper, Richard Stratton, Jobe Sayer, John White, Thos. Halsey, Wm. Mulford, Thos Talmadge, and M Johns whose duty it it to take turns killing whales, that is each one of the four wards.

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Oct 9th 1648 It is ordered that whosoever shall be found sleeping after he has taken charge of the watch shall be liable to censure of 4 lashes of the whippe by the marshall or else pay 4 shillings.

The above order shows that at all times they had to be on their guard against Indians and other foes. About this time the Dutch of New York was giving them trouble, as they lay claim to all of the island.

LC Burnett

Measure for the safety of the town of Southampton, LI; May 4th 1657- It is ordered by seven men empowered to preserve the town, that one half of the inhabitants of this town shall keep centinel or ward in the town according as they shall be disposed by officers for that purpose for one day. And the other half of the inhabitants shall have liberty to goe about their planting occations, provided they goe together and work soe near together that in judgement of those appointed by a centinell, the company that soe goe forth may come together before any danger in respect of assault as came upon them the other day, and so successfully untill further order in this respect. And all those that soe goe forth are to have their arms with them, and it is left to Sargent Post to see to and effect the aforesaid order. It is further ordered that ye letting off of one gun shall be sufficient allarum in the night then all inhabitants from ye north end of ye town to Thos. Sayers shall repair about Mr Gosmer's.

Witchcraft About 1683

Thos Travally enters a complaint against Edward Lacy for that the defend[ant] injuriously

called compliments [complainant's] wife a witch, and said she set his corne on fire and sat upon his house in the night, a witch, and that hee was hag ridden 3 nights by her and hee was confident she was an old witch.

Southampton - Ellis Cook, Son of Ellis the first, when a young man cleared up a place, built a house on it, and then, maidens it [is] said being scarce in Southampton, went over to Connecticut for a wife. After staying there some time and having found a young woman to suit him. Her father asked a friend one day what young Cook's business was that detained him so long in the neighborhood. He was told that the young man was courting his daughter. "Why don't he ask me then?" And seeing Cook shortly afterwards he repeated the question to him. "That is just what I am about to do," said Ellis, and thereupon the following dialogue ensued; "Where do you live?" "Southampton." "Have you a church?" "Yes." "A minister?" "Yes." "Have you a house to live in?" "Yes." "Well, then young man, you may have my daughter."

Notes: On the preceeding page mention is made of guarding against attacks by the Indians. About this time was the beginning of the King Phillip's War. The Long Island Indians had turned against the whites, and the next few years were years of terrors to all of the outlying settlements. The destruction by the indians of Deerfield or attack on it and many other places. Our fore fathers were in sore straits for several years.

In regard to witchcraft, it was a peculiar [sic] and sad affair, but soon passed away, never to return. It was a day of great distrust of any but your own friends.

Mordecai Burnett was the first to move to New Jersey in 1683; settled at Elizabeth town, where he was admitted as one of the associates under the Indian Title.

List of Townsmen of Southampton,
May 10th 1649

Edward Howell, Thos. Burnet, Jno. Gosmer, Wm. Brown, Thurston Rayner, Richard Odell, This. Halsey, John Howell, John Cooper, Thos. Sayer, Jobe Sayer, Edward Jones, Ellis Cook, Josiah Stanbrough, Thos. Talmadge, Sam'l Douglass, Richard Smythe, Wm. Rodgers, Rob't Merwin, Thos. Vayle, Richard Poste, Thos. Hildreth, Henry Pierson, John White, Isake [Williamson?], Richard Bartlett, Geo. Wode, and James Jessap.

If this was all at this time, and likely it was, you can see it was but a small village, yet of course these were the "freemen" or voters.

I find that the colony that left Southampton and went to Madison or old Bottle Hill, NJ a number of familiar names again appear; "Howels, Burnets, Halsey, Sayers, Douglass, and others, coming to New Jersey about 1700."

First settlement in North Jersey

After some trouble with the indians, a purchase was made including Newark, Bellville, Bloomington, and the Oranges. In the settlement were some 30 families who in our town on the Passaic desired to be of one heart and consent thro God's Blessings....

Who think also the same way may be do as well as to the division of 10,000 acres to be set out to each proprietor as hath formerly ordered, which we desire may be don forthwith without delay.

(This had reference to the settlement at Madison (Bottle Hill)
Coming to this country-

In the year of 1630 about 300 of the best puritan families in the kingdom came to New England. Not adventurers, not vagabonds were these brave people, but virtuous, well-educated courageous men and women who for conscience sake left comfortable homes with no expectation of ever returning. It was not the least of their good fortune to choose a noble leader. If ever a man was held in perpetual remembrance, that man was John Winthrop, Governor of Massachusetts.

In the history of our family I have reason to believe that about the above date when they came to this country. And that these people were above the average, it has been said that the section of Long Island about Southampton has produced more brainy men and women than any like area in the US.

In 1638 Stephen Daye, an English printer, arrived in Boston, bringing a font of types, and the following year set up a press at Cambridge.

In 1640 there were about 26,000 settlers in New England.

Different ways of spelling the name Burnett; assessment record of Southampton, 1683-1687 -- Lot Burnot, Joseph Burnott, David Burnott, Nathen Burnott, Jonathan Burnott, David Burnott, Sam'l Burnot, Isaac Burnott, Phebe Burnat, Elizabeth Burnott, Abigail Burnaot...

Aaron Burnett	assessed valuation	35 pounds
John Burnet	" "	56 "
Thos. Burnett	" "	119 "
Lot Burnot	" "	500 "

"Lynn, Mass; oldest settlement in Essex Co; settled in 1630; 50 new (families) settlers having come in that year from England. It was first calles Saugus, but changed to Lynn; named for Lynn Regus, England."
Lewis' History of Lynn

Undoubtedly these 50 settlers belonged to the party of 300 that came to Boston, as these first settlers were all closely related by the ties of relationship or religion.

Thos. Burnett- A record of his will has been found at River head, the county seat of Suffolk County, from which the following abstract was taken by WS Peletrean, Clerk of Southampton.

I give unto my six children John, Joel, Lot, Hester, Miriam and Priscilla 5 shillings apiece. I give unto my sons Mordecai and Dan all of my land at a place called Cormorant Point when they come to the age of one and twenty. I give unto my son Aaron my house and home lot. I give unto my son Matthias my close (name for enclosed farm) in the great plains (called Jamaica Plains). I give to my daughter Lois at her marriage, or when she comes of age

eighteen Ten pounds. I make Mary, my wife, sole executrix.
dated March 16th 1679 & 1680
Thos. Burnet

There are deeds on record from Thos. Burnet to several of his sons showing that he had liberally provided for them before making the bequest of five shillings to each. He was living in Sept 1683, as his name is found in an assessmant roll of Southampton.

Continued History of the Burnetts
Jno. Burnet's notes 1850

Dan Burnet, brother of Aaron Sr, removed to the vicinity of Elizabeth-town with his sons Ichabod and Daniel, probably to Connecticut Farms, where some of his descensants still live 1850. Dr Ichabod Burnet, son of Dan, had a son William born 1730, 2nd of Dec. old style. He graduated at the College of New Jersey in 1749. He settled at Newark as a physician, acquired popularity and a good reputation in his profession. When the Revolution broke out he took an active part against the King. Was selected by his compatriots as Chairman of Essex County Committee of Safety. Afterwards as Surgeon General, associating with Washington and the other chiefs of the Army and was Judge of the Supreme Court of New Jersey. His first wife was Mary, daughter of Nathaniel Camp of Newark; second, widown of Anthony Rutgers, daughter of Nicholas Gouverneur. One of his sons, Ichabod, was Aide-de-Camp to Gen'l Green in the Revolution.

Matthias Burnet, brother of Aaron Sr. settled in East Hamton, LI. He was Justice of the Peace, Captain, and seems to have been a successful business man. His will is on record dated July 1745, and proved April 3rd 1746. He styles himself "yeoman," leaves to "my well-beloved wife Elizabeth 200 pounds sterling in silver, Indian girl Yamo and other property; to my grandson Burnet Miller, all of my books, gun and sword, Negro Peter, Indian boy John. To my 4 grandsons Jeremiah, Eleazer, Annanias and Abraham each 120 pounds sterling; to my granddaughters each 50 pounds; Grandson Burnet sole executor."

After careful study I am inclined to believe that Matthias Burnet became a captain during Queen Anne's War about 1700. His having two indian boys indicates this. As the indians were not troublesome in Long Island at this time, he must have raised a company and joined his compatriots in driving the French and indians out of Conn. and Mass.

from Thompson's History of Long Island;

Rev. Matthias Burnet; son Aaron Jr; born at Bottle Hill, NJ 1747, graduated at Princeton 1769; settled at Jamaica, LI 1775. Removed to Norwalk, Conn 1785; died in 1806. In the records he is called Rev. Mr. Burnet.

Miriam Burnet, daut. of Thos. B, married Enoch Fithian of East Hampton, who was an officer of militia about 1700 during Queen Anna's War. Priscilla her sister married a brother of Enoch. Of the other daughters of Thomas, no trace.

Of the direct descendents of Thomas Burnet, one became one of the founders of Cincinnati and a judge and historian. One was one of the first governors of Texas, 1837-8.

Another, Peter Hardman Burnett, one of the first Gov. of Oregon and Cal.

The Burnetts have not furnished any very great men, but has given to the world a full share of good men belonging to what we call the great middle class; the class that does things, the class that is far better than the upper rich or the lower poor.