

## EARLIEST HEYTESBURY HARFORDS

### Background

The tracing of Samuel's ancestors in this small English village has involved a number of people over a lengthy period. In addition to ourselves, the researchers include William and Kathleen Harford from Poole, Dorset on the south coast of England as well as Jenny Carollo, Eileen White and Bob Schmidt all from South Australia.

The search has been difficult because of an absence of documentation that gives us certainty about the members of Samuel's family. In more recent times we have been assisted by access to the plethora of genealogical websites that provide on line access to records thus reducing the need to travel to England to access what might be available. However, there still exists a lack of details in these records to enable us to be totally conclusive from a strict research standpoint .

Despite this we believe that there is advantage in postulating what we believe to be the case about Samuel's ancestor's and presenting this stating clearly the assumptions involved in reaching this position. The ongoing challenge therefore is to find some further evidence to support the postulated position more conclusively. Given the time and effort that has already been invested we think this is a highly unlikely outcome. However, that will not stop us and others further searching.

### Early Heytesbury Harfords

The earliest record of a Hartford/Harford baptism at Heytesbury was on 11 December 1707 for a Thomas Hartford. His father was also named Thomas and there is a suggestion that his wife's name was Susanna Snelgar.<sup>1</sup> The suggestion is Thomas Sr. was born in 1690 but this would make him a rather young seventeen year old at the birth of Thomas Jr. in 1707 so our hypothesis is that he was born earlier.

The earliest Hartford/Harford burial at Heytesbury was on 17 December 1719/0. This was for a John Hartford "*of the hospital.*" It seems likely that this John would have been Thomas Sr.'s father and there appears to have been only one family of Hartfords in Heytesbury at that time. Therefore John would have been the primary ancestor for all of the Hartford/Harfords who were to follow in later generations at Heytesbury. The Hartford/ Harford name was relatively common in Wiltshire and its neighbouring counties and it seems that John Hartford had come from a nearby larger town, perhaps Warminster.

Marriage records commenced at Heytesbury in 1654 but there are very significant gaps between 1658/9 and September 1713<sup>2</sup>. We would have expected at least one Hartford marriage and perhaps two in this period. The first recorded Hartford marriage at Heytesbury was not until 1732 when Thomas Jr. married Jean Moor.

The name Hartford was commonly recorded for all Hartford Baptisms up to about 1750. After this time the name appears to have become Harford. The "t" was dropped on 12 of 14 baptisms registered between 1750 and 1800. The two baptisms using the "t" had the same parents, John and Ann. This John has not yet been identified as a direct descendant of Thomas Sr. and he

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<sup>1</sup> William and Kathleen Harford, Poole, Dorset

<sup>2</sup> Phillimore's Wiltshire Parish Registers Volume x

appears to have come to Heytesbury later. We have also noted that there were sometimes differences between the spelling in the Parish Register and in the Bishop's Transcripts

The evidence is that by and large the members of the Hartford family were agricultural labourers, uneducated, illiterate and poor. In this respect the family was representative of the majority of the English population. They owned no land and it is presumed many of them were employed by the most significant land owner, the Heytesbury Estate.

### **THOMAS Sr. 1690? to 1758 SAMUEL'S GREAT GRANDFATHER**

We have analysed available data with a view to establishing the people in Thomas Hartford's family. The primary resources have been the Latter Day Saints Family Search website, Phillimore's Wiltshire Marriage Registers and the Wiltshire Family History Society publications of the Indexed Transcripts of Heytesbury Baptisms and Burials 1582 to 1837. Other websites such as ancestry.com and findmypast.com have also been used.

We have attempted to match people in Burial records to people identified from Baptismal records. To do this it has been necessary to make assumptions. The early records also lack descriptive data such as age and parent and this difficulty is compounded by the use of the same Christian names in different Harford families. The two main assumptions are that the older of two people with the same name dies first and where a Harford named woman has been buried the assumption is that she has never married. Both of these assumptions can lead to errors.

The conclusions with relevant comment follow:

Thomas Sr. is believed to have married Susanna Snelgar<sup>3</sup> and died in 1758 and was buried on 20 May. Susanna is believed to have died on 11 May 1735 (assuming the eldest Susanna died first). They proceeded to have a family of eleven children:

**Thomas (Jr.)** Christened 11 December 1707.

Married Jean Moor 9 April 1732. Buried 3 May 1762 at Heytesbury.

The records show two possible burials for Thomas Harford one in 1758 and the other in 1762. One is for Thomas Sr. and the other for the Thomas born in 1707. It is more likely that the earlier death in 1758 is the older Thomas but we cannot be certain which is which.

**Mary** Christened 24 August 1709. Buried 27 September 1744 at Heytesbury. This was the only Mary we identified living in 1744.

**Susanna** Christened 3 April 1711. Buried 3 June 1758. An alternative death year might have been 1735 which we have assumed was the year of her mother's death. As well there were two Susannah's which could have been misspellings. We have assumed these were correctly spelt and that Susanna never married.

**Catherine** Christened 1712. Buried 31 August 1792 at Heytesbury. Catherine was 80 years of age. She was the only Catherine identified and unsuccessful searches for marriage records have left us with the conclusion that she never married.

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<sup>3</sup> William and Kathleen Harford, Poole, Dorset

**Ann** Christened 9 December 1713. On 22 December 1748 she married Isaac Knight. We have not identified any subsequent baptisms or burials for her at Heytesbury.

**William** Christened 29 March 1715 Buried 22 June 1758 at Heytesbury. There were no other events identified for William. Websites give the birth of John Hartford as 23 March 1715 and have explored the possibility that they were twins. A further related question is if they were twins why weren't they christened on the same day?

The Indexed Transcripts<sup>4</sup> show the John's baptism as 23 March 1715/16. Following discussions with the Wiltshire Family History Society we have confirmed beyond doubt that William and John were baptized 12 months apart. The calendar in use in Britain at the time was the Julian Calendar while in Europe the Gregorian Calendar was used. With the Julian Calendar the year started on 25 March and had 11 more days and the convention in keeping records was to show baptisms from 1 January to 24 March as 1715/16. This indicated that the actual formal date with the Julian Calendar was 1715 but with the Gregorian Calendar it was 1716. This situation was remedied in 1751 when legislation was passed to start the year from 1 January and for the year to be 11 days shorter.

**John** Christened 23 March 1715/16 about 12 months later than William. Married Elizabeth (born about 1730 buried 31 October 1781) Buried 18 January 1782 at Heytesbury.

**Eliza** Christened 20 December 1717. Buried 25 June 1756. No other events were identified for Eliza. The burial record names her as Betty. The conclusion assumes she never married and she is not recorded as marrying at Heytesbury.

**James** Christened 25 February 1719. Buried 28 November 1863 at Heytesbury. No other events were identified. The conclusion assumes the eldest James living at the time died first..

**Sarah** Born between 1719 and 1721. Buried 15 June 1722. We believe Sarah to be the daughter of Thomas and Susanna. She was recorded in the Heytesbury Burials as the daughter of Thomas. We believe there was no other Thomas at Heytesbury having children at that time and there is a gap in the ages of his children that would make this birth appropriate. On the other hand the alternatives are that Sarah could have been a sister of Thomas Sr. or the wife of John the father of Thomas Sr.

**Benjamin** Christened 24 September 1722. Buried 7 August 1730. Benjamin was the only Benjamin we had identified as alive at the time of this death.

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<sup>4</sup> Indexed Transcripts of Heytesbury Baptisms 1582 to 1837, WFHS