

England, Select Marriages, 1538-1973

Name **Thomas Oliuer**
 Gender **Male**
 Marriage Date **29 Jan 1626**
 Marriage Place **Saint Andrew,Norwich,Norfolk,England**
 Spouse **Mary Leman**
 FHL Film Number **993970**

Early Vital Records of Massachusetts
From 1600 to 1850Salem
Marriages

OLIVER Thomas, and, wid. Bridget Wasselbe, July 26, 1666
OLIVER Mary, and Job Hilliard, Apr. 1, 1661

HILLIARD (Hillard) Mary, and William West, 30: 6m: 1672

Salem
Births

OLIVER Christian, d. Thomas and Bridgett, May 8, 1667

Contributed by Eliot Chandler:

THE OLIVERS OF THE SAGADAHOC
 Georgetown, Maine (Formerly Parker's Island)

THOMAS OLIVER of Norwich, Norfolk, England

Born +/- 1601 (Batch #F505218, Source Call #1553254, Type Film, Sheet
 60) (Possibly born in Yarmouth, Norfolk, England)

Occupation: Calender

Died in 1679 in Salem, Essex, Mass
 Married 29 Jan 1626 in Saint Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk, England
 Wife's name: **MARY LEMAN** b.+/-1603, d.?

(Batch #M109761, Dates 1558-1812, Src Call #0993970, Type Film, Printout Call #6907192)

Children: (born in England)

Thomas Jr (Have no dates of children's births or deaths)
 John (Both boys were born prior to June, 1637)

(A bit of history is necessary to view this family's immigration.....

King James I, 1602/3-1625, and his son, King Charles, 1625-1648/49, had no respect for the Puritan movement in England and made it very difficult for those who professed to belong to the movement. These growing difficulties with the King were creating an increased sense of urgency among the Puritans. They all saw the black clouds on the horizon, and feared an impending disaster.

A new Council ruling had been passed prior to 1632 "not permitting ships and passingers to pass from hence for the Bay of Massachusetts without License first had from the President & Councell..." This was inadvertently canceled by the King in 1632, but was re-installed a few years later in attempts to block the Puritans from migrating to Mass Bay. Thus the following report:

"When in the reign of Charles I an endeavour was made to supresse the Puricans, a ship call'd the Mary Anne was fitted out at Yarmouth, by a merchand named Payne, for the conveyance of the persecuted to New England..."

Perlustrations in Yarmouth, England Vol. III)

(Permissions to depart from England are recorded in the Public Record Office in England and copied in Hotten's "Early American Emigrants," page 293. In it those boarding the Mary Anne at Ipswich, England were " desirous to go for Salam, in New England, and there to inhabit...")

The reason that the Thomas Oliver family fled to Mass Bay was that wife Mary Oliver "had the faculty of speech to an unpleasant excess, and had suffered in England for neglect of some custom of trifling importance in the solemnities of the church. [Church of England] And was punished here [New England] for siding with Roger Williams in 1638, and for berating our elders as late as 1646. Her husband, as well as the state, seemed to have suffered [from her activities] for he was driven to go home [to England] in 1648 or 9, but came back in a few years and was in office in 1670 as a measurer of wood. A Bridget Oliver of Salem was charged with witchcraft in 1680, was perhaps a daughter of the free speaking woman. Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England by James Savage, 1860-62. [We now know that Bridget was Thomas's second wife]

The Mary Anne of Yarmouth sailed from Ipswich, England in May and arrived at Boston, Mass Bay, on June 20, 1637, and among her passengers were:

Thomas Oliver, age 36, of Norwich, Norfolk, England, bound for Salem, Wife: Mary (Leman) Oliver, age 34.

Children: Thomas Oliver Jr.

John Oliver
 Servants: Thomas Doged, age 30.
 Mary Sape, age 12.
 Thomas and Mary Oliver settled in Salem and had at least one more child:

David Oliver, born +/-1645 in Salem, and as an adult, moved to Pemaquid, Maine where he was described as a fisherman.

Following Mary Oliver's death, Thomas married again on 26 July, 1666: Wife: Bridget Wasselbe, born +/-1640, died 10 Jan, 1692. Daughter of: Bridget Wesselbe, born +/- 1601, died 1679.

Children:

Chrestian Oliver, born 8 May 1667, died 1693.

Following Thomas Oliver's death, Bridget married Edward Bishop.

Children: Edward Bishop, born +/-1670 in Salem.
 (Bridget Oliver Bishop was of Salem Village, where she kept a sort of wayside tavern, and had long lived in the town. She was the first witch to be tried, June 2, 1692, and executed, June 10, 1692, perhaps because she had so long been under suspicion. She had first been charged in 1680. The records of her case are printed in Records of Salem Witchcraft, I. 135-172.)

DAVID OLIVER of Pemaquid, Maine

Married: before 1670 at Georgetown, Maine.
 Wife's name: GRACE PARKER of Georgetown, Maine
 Born +/- 1650, died before 1718.
 Father: Thomas Parker of Parker's Island (Georgetown)
 Mother: (Unknown)
 Children: Thomas. (Boston Shipwright)

David, born +/- 1670, married 3 Mar, 1691/92 in Marblehead, Mass. Died +/-1732.

Wife's name: Sarah (Pedrick) Britnell of Marblehead, Mass.

Thomas and Mary Leman Oliver Passengers on the Mary Anne

Passengers on the Mary Anne of Yarmouth

Written and researched by Margaret Ofrowaz-Sypniewska, B.F.A.

The Mary Anne of Yarmouth, had William Goose as its master. The Mary Anne sailed from Ipswich, England in May and arrived at Boston, Massachusetts on June 20, 1637.

- Samuel Greenfield 27 weaver of Norwich, Norfolk, England. Going to Salem, MA.

....Mrs. Barbara Greenfield 25
Mary Greenfield

Possibly related to our Peter Greenfield

....Barbara Greenfield
John Teed 19 servant

- Thomas Oliver 36 calender of Norwich, Norfolk, England. Going to Salem, MA.

....Mrs. Mary Oliver 34
Thomas Oliver, Jr.

....John Oliver
Thomas Doged 30 servant
Mary Sape 12 servant

Is this woman our Mary? The name, place, and timing are not inconsistent. But Thomas Oliver did not die in England.

NORFOLK WITCHCRAFT – EXECUTIONS – RITUAL
OBJECTS

January 2, 2013

By Tracy Monger

1659 (1658) Mary Oliver at Norwich of Norfolk – Burned for murdering her husband and accused of witchcraft.

Bloody British History: Norwich

Mark Mower

The History Press, Jun 2, 2014 - History - 96 pages

WITCH MANIA REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

A more significant wave of local witch-hunting began in earnest in 1644 during the English Civil War, under the direction of Matthew Hopkins, the self-proclaimed 'Witch-Finder General'. Hopkins' reign of terror lasted until 1647, when he died of tuberculosis. By then, some 300 people had been tried and executed in East Anglia. The surviving accounts suggest that as many as forty people were tried at the assizes in Norwich as a result of Hopkins' employment there in 1645. Hopkins, of course, had a vested interest in pursuing all alleged offenders. He was paid a fee for every 'witch' he prosecuted.

After Hopkins, witch-hunting continued sporadically in Norfolk. In 1654, Christopher Hall was prosecuted for witchcraft at the county assizes in Norwich. Four years later, Mary Oliver was tried for the petty treason of bewitching her husband to death and was burned at the stake. She was one of only three women burned as witches in England – all of the others were hanged for their offences. Having executed her, the authorities sent an order to the city's gaoler for her possessions to be sold for the city's use.

The Salem Witch Trials (1692-93) – a series of hearings and prosecutions of people accused of witchcraft took place in colonial Massachusetts between February 1692 and May 1693. These are known as the Salem Witch Trials and, of the seventy-two individuals accused and tried, the first to be executed for witchcraft was Bridget Bishop. She had been born in England and married the first of her three husbands, Samuel Wesselbe, in Norwich on 13 April 1660, at the church of St Mary in the Marsh. Her second husband, Thomas Oliver, whom she wed on 26 July 1666, also hailed from Norwich. Prior to the Salem Witch Trials, Bridget had been accused of bewitching him to death but was acquitted due to the lack of evidence against her.

Monday, 25 January 2016

The Husband of Witches: The Marital Strife of Thomas Oliver

Having one wife accused of consorting with the devil was crisis enough. It is possible however that Thomas Oliver of Norwich, Norfolk, had not one but two wives who went to their deaths on accusations of witchcraft.

Thomas Oliver's exact date of birth is unknown, but he married Mary Leman at St. Andrew's Church, Norwich on 29th January, 1626. Three children were born to the couple: Mary in 1627, (who sadly died in April 1635) John in 1635, and Thomas, whose birth year is unrecorded.

"When in the reign of Charles I an endeavour was made to suppress the Puritans, a ship called the Mary Anne was fitted out at Yarmouth, by a merchant named Payne, for the conveyance of the persecuted to New England." [Perustrations in Yarmouth, England, Vol III]



St Andrew's Church, Norwich

Nothing else is known about the early years of their married life, but in May 1637, if that was indeed the reason for their departure, the problems that beset the family did not stop with their relocation. Mary Oliver proved to be decidedly outspoken in her opinions, and she found herself in trouble on more than one occasion for declaring in favour of Roger Williams, the Puritan theologian too extreme for the Puritans. His separatist ideas were not welcomed in Salem and he had withdrawn from there under threat of arrest, but that did not stop Mary Oliver from speaking up for him and in 1638 she was punished for taking his side. The state of affairs did not improve, and it was said that she continued to be at loggerheads with the elders of the Salem community in which they lived as late as 1646.

A couple of years later however saw the couple returning to England, the implication being that they had to flee yet again due to Mary's refusal to curb her tongue and Thomas' refusal or inability to control his wife.

It is there that details grow unclear. All sources agree that Mary Oliver died within a few years of their return to England. What makes matters interesting however is the mention of a record from Norwich in 1659 of:

"Mary Oliver burnt for witchcraft and her goods confiscated for the use of the city."

The date coincides with Thomas and Mary's return to England, and it was from Norwich that they set out those years before. I'm still digging, but there currently doesn't seem to be another potential candidate for Mary's identity (although that doesn't mean necessarily that it is the same woman – watch this space!) and until more evidence comes to light it appears slightly more than possible that this was the woman Thomas Oliver married and quarrelled with so frequently.

Whatever the fate of Thomas' first wife, she was dead by 1666, and the widower was back in Salem and married to Bridget Wasselbe, nee Playfer/Playford on 26th July of that year. It was soon apparent that this marriage would be no calmer than his first. Bridget was known locally as argumentative, and she was taken to court for calling her husband bad names on the Sabbath. At one time their arguing grew so bad that the pair were ordered to stand back to back and gagged in the market place for about an hour to repent of their crime. Later on it is also said that they were sentenced to be whipped if they did not stop arguing with each other. Thomas Oliver was not, it seemed, slow to be harsh with his wife, and it was often reported that her face was bruised and battered by him.

Thomas also made his views known. Bridget was, he declared, "a bad wife", and known to be in league with the Devil who had come to her at night and sat up with her until dawn.

In 1679, Thomas Oliver died. Although she was made administrator of his will, and the house and land were left to her, Bridget, in reality, had very little, as any money was taken by creditors. To make matters worse, Bridget's step children accused her of having bewitched their father to death, amidst other accusations that Bridget was a witch. She was tried before the Court of Assistants, by the Reverend John Hale during which:

"A woman in the neighbourhood, subject to fits of insanity, had, while passing into one of them, brought the accusation against her; but, on the return of her reason, solemnly recanted, and deeply lamented the aspersion. In a violent recurrence of her malady, this woman committed suicide. Mr. Hale had examined the case at the time, and exonerated Bridget Bishop, who was a communicant in his church, from the charge made against her by the unhappy lunatic. He was satisfied, as he states, that "Sister Bishop" was innocent, and in no way deserved to be ill thought of. He hoped "better of said Goody Bishop at that time." [Charles Upham, Salem Witchcraft, 1867]

The case was accordingly thrown out, Bridget no doubt hoping that would be the end of the matter. Bridget went on to marry Edward Bishop and although their marriage was claimed to be as volatile as the one she had known with Oliver, she escaped the courts until 1692 when she was accused of bewitching several young girls in Salem. Evidence given against her then was dragged up from the preceding decade, including her previous trial, and although she pleaded her innocence, Bridget was found guilty and condemned to death, becoming the first victim of the Salem Witch Trials.



"On June 10, 1692, High Sheriff George Corwin took Bridget to the top of Gallows Hill and hanged her alone from the branches of a great oak tree. Now the honest men of Salem could sleep in peace, sure that the shape of Bridget would trouble them no more." [Charles Upham, Salem Witchcraft.]

Was Thomas Oliver married to two women who met their fate as accused witches? If so, were there others who also found themselves in the same unenviable position throughout the witch trial period? As I said before, it is food for thought – watch this space.



[It is also interesting to note that Mary Oliver is mentioned in later sources as having been executed for killing her husband by witchcraft. It will be remembered that this was a claim also made against Bridget Bishop – it is possible that the two wives were confused in later decades, with Bridget's accusation being attributed to Mary.]

Salem Witchcraft: With an Account of Salem Village, and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft and Kindred Subjects, Volume 2

Charles Wentworth Upham
Wiggin and Lunt, 1867 - Salem (Mass.)

The descendants of Bridget Bishop are very numerous in Salem; embracing some of our oldest and most respectable families, and branching widely from them. There is no evidence of issue by her first marriage. Thomas Oliver, her second husband, had daughters by a former wife, who were represented in the next generation under the names of Hilliard, Hooper, and Jones. By his wife Bridget, he had but one child, — a daughter, Christian, born May 8, 1667. She married Thomas Mason, and died in 1693; leaving an only child, Susannah, born August 23, 1687. Edward Bishop was her guardian. She married John Becket in 1711, and by him had a son, John, and six daughters, as follows: Susannah, married to David Felt, Elizabeth to William Peele, Sarah to Nathaniel Silsbee, Rebecca to William Fairfield, Eunice to Thorndike Deland, and Hannah to William Cloutman.



Early Essex County Probate Inventories

Inventory of the estate of Thomas Oliver, intestate,
was granted 21: 4m: 1679 by Edmund Batter and Hilliard Veren
sr:

	£	s	d
house & ground adjoining of about 1-2 an acre	45	0	0
about 10 acres of land in the north field	25	0	0
a smale old bed, bedsteed, flock bolster & pillowes with all appurtenances	2	10	0
his wearing apparrell	1	5	0
a smale old bed, bedsteed, flock bolster & pillowes with all appurtenances			
a litle table and & 3 old chests	15	0	
2 Iron pts & old iron Kettle, and hanger & tonges	10	0	
a brass scillitt & som few earth dishes	5	0	
3 or 4 old chaires	3	0	
2 piggs	10	0	
2 pailes & old tubs & som od lumber	5	0	
an old rusty sword & old bandealers	5	0	
	76	8	0
The estate is Dr. in England, as he said in his sickness about	30	0	0
to severall other men hereare as he said above	15	0	
due to the Towne when sick & at his buriall	2	19	6
due to Dr. Swinerton about	2	3	0
severall other debts owing not yet known			
	35	17	6

Attested by Bridgett, relict of Tho. Oliver, and allowed, 28: 9: 1679

Essex County Quarterly Court Files, vol. 32, leaf 23
The Probate Records of Essex County, vol. III, p. 319.

ESTATE OF THOMAS OLIVER OF SALEM.

Administration upon the estate of Thomas Oliver, intestate,
was granted 24: 4m: 1679, to Bridget, his wife, and she is to
bring in an inventory to the next court at Salem.

Salem Quarterly Court Records, vol. 5, leaf 131.

Inventory of the estate of Thomas Oliver, taken 21: 4m:
1679, by Edmund Batter and Hilliard Veren, sr: house &
ground adjoining of about 1-2 an acre, 45li.; about 10 acres
of land in the north feild, 25li.; a smale old bed, bedsteed, flock
bolster & pillowes with all appurtenances, 2li. 10s.; his wear-
ing apparrell, 1li. 5s.; a litle table & 3 old chests, 15s.; 2 Iron
pots & old iron Kettle, a hanger & tonges, 10s.; a brass scillitt
& som few earth dishes, 5s.; 3 or 4 old chaires, 3s., 2 piggs.
10s., 13s.; 2 pailes & old tubs & som od lumber, 5s.; an old
rusty sword & old bandealers, 5s.; total, 76li. 8s. The estate
is Dr. in England, as he said in his sickness, about 30li.; to
severall other men here are as he said above, 15s.; due to the
Towne when sick & at his buriall, 2li. 19s. 6d.; due to Dr.
Swinerton about 2li. 3s.; severall other debts owing not yet
knowne.

Administration upon the estate was granted 28: 9: 1679,
to Bridget, relict of the deceased, and the estate to be for the
use of the widow, she paying the two sons of her husband, 20s.
each, and her daughter Cristian 20s. and also the debts; and
to have liberty to sell the ten acre lot by advice of the select-
men of Salem, towards paying the debts and her present
supply, and as need shall be, any other part of the estate.

Essex County Quarterly Court Files, vol. 32, leaf 23.

Citation

Essex County, MA: Early Probate Records, 1635-1681. Online database. AmericanAncestors.org. New England
Historic Genealogical Society, 2015.

The Final Inventory Taken after Bridget's Execution Names the Three Daughters of Thomas and Mary Leman Oliver

Inventory of estate of
Thomas Oliver late
of Salem deceased.
1692 August 6th.

No. 20009
Oliver
Thomas
1679, Nov. 28

20009

An Inventory of ye estate of Thomas Oliver Deceased late
of Salem taken July ye 30th 1692
About an acre of land with y^e old house y^e was take
upon it
About ten acres of land in y^e North feild
a litle Table and a Chest

402-00-00
20-00-00
00-12-00
62-12-00

Aug. 6. 92 & borne

Apprized by us
Simon Willard
no More

Know all men by these presents that Wee ~~John Hilliard~~
Job Hilliard as principle & John Pickering
Sen^r of Salem & John Masell Jun^r of Salem as
sureties are held & firmly bound unto Barthe-
lomew Edge Judge of y^e probate of Wills & Granting
Letters of Administration for y^e County of Essex &
his Successors in sd office and to y^e parties concerned
hereafter named their heirs Executors Adm^r &
assignes in y^e full & just sume of Sixty
pounds Lawfull money of New England for y^e
true payment whereof W^{id} of said John Pickering
Job Hilliard & John Masell Jun^r doe bind
oblige our selves our heirs & executors
Jointly & severally firmly by these presents
Sealed with our Seals this 11th Day of August 1693
Annoq. M^o & Regina Gulielmi & Mariae
Angliae & Norm^{ie}

The condition of this obligation is such that Whomever y^e record
& content of y^e Judge of y^e probate of Wills & Letters of Admin^r shall
is ordered out of y^e Estate of Thomas Oliver Deceased. in distribution
of y^e same as followeth. Viz:
To Edward Bishop for disbursements on y^e house - Nine pounds. 09-0-0.
To Ellmer Jones alias Oliver of Newis - Nine pounds. 09-0-0.
To Job Hilliard 4/10th & Abigail Hooper 4/10th - 09-0-0
To Christian Mason - Nine pounds - 09-0-0
in case of said Job Hilliard doe pay & satisfy unto 36-0-0.
of about 20th sons their Respective shares therein named
in Current money of New England within a year
after y^e date hereof when y^e above obligation to be void
& ye to remain in full force & effect.

Signed Sealed & Delivered
in presence of us.
Steph: Sewall
William Longstrete

Job Hilliard
John Pickering
John Masell

Widower of Bridget Bishop: Edward Bishop
Daughters of Thomas and Mary: Mary Hilliard, Abigail Hooper, and Eleanor Jones
Daughter of Thomas and Bridget: Christian Mason