

Sealing the Paternal Ancestry of Massachusetts Bay's Second Governor, Thomas Dudley By H. Allen Curtis

Thomas Dudley's paternal ancestry has been elusive for genealogists for more than one hundred and sixty years.¹ In 1993 Marshall K. Kirk developed a paternal ancestry for Thomas Dudley in which Henry Dudley was the father of Thomas Dudley's father, Roger. Unfortunately, Mr. Kirk was not able to supply any documentary proof of the ancestry.²

The needed proof that Henry Dudley was the grandfather of Thomas Dudley will be presented here. The document containing required information for the proof is Thomas Dudley's will. The will had a seal with an associated coat of arms with two distinguishing features, the most important of which was the single tailed lion. The lion's tail before the 16th century and after that century was forked, that is, double tailed.³ This means that the original owner of the seal had it made for use in the 1500s.

The second distinguishing feature of the seal to be used in the proof is the crescent shaped cadency mark, which represents the second son. No mark means the first son. Below is an enlarged image of the seal.⁴



The seal represents a second son of a descendant of the Sutton Dudleys. Since Thomas Dudley was known to be the first son of his father Roger Dudley, Thomas was not the original owner of this 16th century seal.

Many an early settler found a need to use a seal on documents and adopted a coat of arms associated with his name without knowing whether or not he was entitled to it based on his ancestry. Some may have adopted a coat of arms to enhance their prestige or careers. This clearly was not the case for Thomas Dudley since he only used his seal on his will. Furthermore, if it had been the case for Thomas Dudley, he would have adopted 17th century arms and no cadency mark. The fact that Thomas Dudley was the first son of Roger Dudley indicates that Thomas inherited the seal and brought it with him to America from England.

The New England Historic Genealogical Society established the Committee on Heraldry to address the problem of whether or not a settler was using a correct coat of arms. The Committee

¹ Dean Dudley, *The Dudley Genealogies and Family Records*, (Boston, published by the author, 1848).

² Douglas Richardson, *Plantagenet Ancestry A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families*, (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc.), 280

³ Elizabeth Wade White, *Anne Bradstreet, The Tenth Muse*, (New York, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1971), 10 and Dean Dudley, *History of the Dudley Family*, (privately printed), Wakefield (Mass.), 1886-98, Supplement: footnote of p. 6.

⁴ Dean Dudley, *History of the Dudley Family*, (privately printed), Wakefield (Mass.), 1886-98, Supplement p. 7 Figure of Arms of Gov. Thomas Dudley

registered coats of arms of settlers whose titles were proven by sufficient evidence. They would not register “coats assumed in this country without a grant or an inherited right.”⁵ The first Roll of Arms was registered in April of 1928 and contained seventy-two coats of arms. The second Roll contained ninety registered coats of arms, including the coat of arms of Thomas Dudley.⁶ The Committee apparently also determined that Thomas Dudley brought the seal with him to America.

In 9 February 1953, the Rouge Dragon Pursuivant of the College of Arms wrote that there was enough circumstantial evidence to provide reasonable, inferential proof that Thomas Dudley was descended from the Sutton-Dudleys.⁷ The evidence from which he based his assessment was as follows: the seal itself, the aristocratic background of Thomas Dudley’s mother’s family, and his famous poetess daughter’s published words about her blood relationship to Philip Sidney.

Today, publishers of genealogical quarterlies will not accept articles about Thomas Dudley’s paternal ancestry if they include evidence concerning the seal. Apparently, the publishers’ reasons are based on so-called inconsistencies between Thomas Dudley’s seal and that of his son Joseph’s seal. Joseph’s seal has a double tailed lion and no mark of cadency and Thomas’ seal has a single tailed lion and a crescent shaped mark of cadency. Because of these “inconsistencies”, the publishers doubt Thomas’ honesty regarding his seal and in telling his daughter Anne about her Sutton-Dudley blood line.

The difference between the lions on the two seals is not an inconsistency: The original owner of Thomas Dudley’s seal used the single tailed lion of the 16th century, the time in which he lived. Joseph Dudley’s seal used the double tailed lion of the 17th century, the time in which he lived. Because Joseph was Thomas Dudley’s son by his second wife, the cadency mark would not apply. Therefore, Joseph properly started a new Sutton-Dudley line for which he was the first son.

The above explanation provides justification for the following investigation:

The first seven generations of the Sutton-Dudleys cover a period from about 1266 to the end of 1478. Since the arms of the Thomas Dudley’s seal pertain to the 1500s, the owner of the seal clearly was not among the first seven generations.⁸ There are five well established and documented Sutton-Dudley families with generations covering the 16th century.⁹ Usually a generation is taken roughly as 30 years. To be on the safe side the possible next four generations (8, 9, 10 and 11) will be investigated for the first owner of the seal.

The investigation will proceed under the premise that arms on the Thomas Dudley’s seal are those of a 16th century man of Sutton-Dudley descent. In that case, the arms will be that of a member of one of the five Sutton-Dudley families. To be consistent with the second son crescent requirements of Governor Thomas Dudley’s coat of arms, the men of generations 8, 9, 10 and 11 must be comprised of either three first sons and one second son with Roger Dudley being the

⁵ *NEHGR*, Robert Dickson Weston, Chairman of the Committee on Heraldry, “A Second Roll of Arms Registered by the Committee on Heraldry of the New England Historic Society”, vol. 86, 258-259.

⁶ *Ibid*, at 259

⁷ Elizabeth Wade White, *Anne Bradstreet, The Tenth Muse*, (New York, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1971), 13 (letter to author from College of Arms officer, Captain de La Lanne-Mirrlees).

⁸ George Adlard, *The Sutton-Dudleys of England and the Dudleys of Massachusetts in New England*, (New York, printed for the Author, 1862). First page Chart A of charts preceding page 17

⁹ George Adlard, *The Sutton-Dudleys of England and the Dudleys of Massachusetts in New England*, (Three Charts: Chart A, Pedigree of the Sutton Dudleys; Chart B, Pedigree of the Dudleys, Duke of Northumberland, Earls of Warwick and Leicester; Chart C, Pedigree of the Dudleys of Yeanwith, Cumberland), (New York, printed for the Author, 1862).

first son of generation 11 or else four first sons with Roger Dudley being the second son of generation 11. There are five such cases to investigate. One and only one will contain the correct generation between John Dudley of generation 7 and Roger Dudley. In the investigation of any case, if it becomes evident that there might be only three generations spanning the time to Roger Dudley, that possibility will also be investigated. In the first four cases studied it will be shown that those generations could not be the correct ones separating John Dudley of Generation 7 and Roger Dudley. Then by inference it follows that the generation of the fifth case must necessarily be the correct one.

Case 1¹⁰

8. Edmund Dudley (first son)
9. Edward Dudley (first son)
10. John Dudley (first son)
11. Edward Dudley (first son)

The 11th generation Edward's first wife died in 1566 without male issue. His second wife had two sons both of whom were born too late for Roger Dudley to have been the second son.¹¹ Therefore, the case for which there were only three generations must be investigated. The second son Dudley of the generation 10 was well known to be Henry Dudley.¹² This means that Roger Dudley cannot have been the second son and that neither the three or four generations were the correct ones.

Case 2¹³

8. John Dudley (second son)
9. Edmund Dudley (first son)
10. John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland (first son)
11. Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (first and only son with male issue)

Robert Dudley's first son was Robert born in 1572 just three years before Roger Dudley was married on 8 June 1675.¹⁴ Hence, Roger Dudley could not have been the first son of Robert of generation 11 or for that matter the first son of John Dudley of generation 10 because Robert Dudley was his first and only son.

Case 3¹⁵

8. Edmund Dudley (first son)
9. Thomas Dudley of Yeanwith (second son who had male issue)
10. Richard Dudley (first son)
11. Edmund Dudley (first son)

Edmund Dudley of generation 8 had two sons by his first wife, Joyce Tiptoft, but his second son John of Aston le Wells had no male issue; John's daughter Margaret was his heir.¹⁶ Edmund Dudley of generation 11 was succeeded by Thomas, his first son with a male heir. Since Edmund's *successor* was not Roger Dudley, the generations of case 3 can reasonably be

¹⁰ [note 8] second page Chart A of charts preceding page 17.

¹¹ [note 2], at 280.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ [note 8], second page Chart A and Chart B of charts preceding page 17.

¹⁴ [note 2], at 280.

¹⁵ [note 8], second page Chart A and Chart C of charts preceding page 17.

¹⁶ [note 2], 754.

eliminated as belonging to Roger Dudley's line. Note: the first male heir of Thomas of generation 12 was born in 1607 well after Roger Dudley's birth.

Case 4¹⁷

8. Edmund Dudley (first son)
9. Edward Dudley (first son)
10. Geoffrey Dudley of Russell's Hall (second son to have male issue)
11. Thomas Dudley (first son)

Thomas Dudley of generation 11 was married to Dorothy Lascelles in about 1562. Also, Thomas' first son Jeffrey (not Roger) was born in about 1563. Furthermore, Roger could not have been Geoffrey's first son because Thomas was. Thus, cases 1 through 4 have been eliminated as a part of Roger Dudley's ancestry.

Case 5¹⁸

8. Edmund Dudley (first son)
9. Edward Dudley (first son)
10. John Dudley (first son)
11. Henry Dudley (second son).

Of the five cases 1 through 5, one and only one can consist of the ancestors of Roger Dudley. Since the first four cases have been eliminated, it follows by inference that case 5 must be the one that consists of Roger Dudley's ancestors. Henry Dudley was of an age to have been Roger Dudley's father and Thomas Dudley's grandfather.¹⁹ Furthermore, there is no contradictory evidence eliminating this case from being Thomas Dudley's paternal line. The odds are against this happening with a seal strictly made up without Thomas Dudley being aware of his paternal ancestry.

Both Henry Dudley and Roger Dudley had military careers and both were captains in the British army.²⁰ In 1597 Thomas Dudley was a captain in Queen Elizabeth's army in France.²¹ Thus, Henry started a family career tradition continued by Roger and Thomas. Thomas ended the tradition about a year later upon receiving an inheritance of 500 pounds.²² It seems clear now that such a sizable inheritance must have come from Henry Dudley's estate when his grandson Thomas had reached his majority. It is not unreasonable to think that the seal was part of the inheritance.

Thomas Dudley's second wife, Katherine Deighton, had a noble lineage²³ On the basis of reasoning in 1953 of the college of arms officer about Roger Dudley's background, had he

¹⁷ [note 8], second page Chart A and [note 4] chart of pages 33, 34.

¹⁸ [note 2], 278-280

¹⁹ [note 2], at 280

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Elizabeth Wade White, *Anne Bradstreet, The Tenth Muse*, (New York, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1971), 46 And Douglas Richardson, *Magna Carta Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families*, (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 291. And George Adlard, *The Sutton-Dudleys of England and the Dudleys of Massachusetts in New England*, (New York, printed for the Author, 1862), at 26.

²² George Adlard, *The Sutton-Dudleys of England and the Dudleys of Massachusetts in New England*, (New York, printed for the Author, 1862), at 24.

²³ Douglas Richardson, *Magna Carta Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families*, (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 262-265.

known about Katherine, he would have said that Thomas Dudley surely had a noble background. This is precisely what Henry Dudley had.²⁴

John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland of Case 2 was of generation 10 of the Sutton-Dudley lines. He was the grandfather of Sir Philip Sidney.²⁵ Hence, Sidney was of generation 12. From Case 5, it is seen that Henry Dudley was of generation 11. Therefore, Henry Dudley was the third cousin, once removed from Philip Sidney.

Thomas Dudley's eldest daughter, the renowned poet, Anne Bradstreet, was inspired to write in her book, *The Tenth Muse*, published in 1650, a tribute to Sir Philip, who was a distinguished poet in his own right. Anne's poem, "Elegie upon Sir Philip Sidney", included the following:

Let then, none disallow of these my straines,
Which have the self-same blood yet in my veines.

Evidently, Thomas Dudley had told Anne that she was a blood relative of Sir Philip Sidney. That would be consistent with her being the 4th cousin, twice removed from Sir Philip Sidney who had Sutton-Dudley blood.

In 1639 Thomas Dudley moved to Roxbury²⁶ very near Boston where the most famous Puritan pastor in America John Cotton preached. Coincidentally, Cotton had been the Dudley family minister in Boston, England.²⁷ Anyway, in 1642 John Cotton in his sermon, 'The Pouring Out of the Seven Vials' identified the Antichrist as the Catholic Church. This was a familiar theme to Thomas Dudley who as a staunch Puritan believed that the Pope and his followers were his hated enemies. This belief is reflected in Anne Bradstreet's *The Tenth Muse*, poem, "A Dialogue between Old England and New":

Idolatry . . .
With foolish superstitious adoration,
Are liked and countenanced by men of might,
The Gospel trodden down and hath no right;
Church offices were sold and bought for gain,
That Pope had hope to find Rome here again.

. . .

These are the days the Church foes to crush,
To root Popelings head, tail, branch, and rush.

Henry Dudley's father, Sir John Dudley, in his old age was a pauper living off his friends. Nevertheless, in Protestant England Sir John was buried elaborately in 1553 with Roman Catholic rites.²⁸ Thomas Dudley would have found this fact repugnant and would have been ashamed to have had such an ancestor. Thus, this could well be the reason that there is a dearth of documentary evidence concerning Thomas Dudley's paternal ancestry. Thomas Dudley made sure of that.

Thomas Dudley was a follower of John Dod, a celebrated Puritan preacher. Through Mr. Dod Thomas came to know William Fiennes, Lord Saye, who later recommended Thomas to

²⁴ [note 2], 277-280

²⁵ [note 8], Chart B of charts preceding page 17.

²⁶ Elizabeth Wade White, *Anne Bradstreet, The Tenth Muse*, (New York, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1971), 158.

²⁷ *Ibid*, at 75.

²⁸ [Note 2] at 280.

Theophilus, the Earl of Lincoln, to manage his estate.²⁹ It has been suggested that William Fiennes had taken an interest in Thomas Dudley because of an early blood relationship between the Fienneses and the Dudleys³⁰ Henry Dudley's aunt, Jane Dudley, was the wife of Sir Thomas Fiennes.³¹

Now, William Fiennes' ancestry will be given. The first William Fiennes married Joan de Saye. They had a son, also Sir William Fiennes who married Elizabeth Battsford. They had two sons, Roger and James Fiennes.³² Roger is not in the direct line to Thomas Dudley's friend William Fiennes; however, William Fiennes is in the line to Jane Dudley. This is the motivation for the following Roger's line for the present and coming back to that of James' line. Thus, Roger Fiennes married Elizabeth Holland. Their son Sir Richard Fiennes married Joan Baroness Dacre.³³ Their grandson and heir was Thomas Dacre but he was the son of Sir John Fiennes and Alice Fitzhugh. Thomas Fiennes, Lord Dacre, grandson and heir, was the son of Sir Thomas Fiennes and Jane Dudley.³⁴ The continuation of William Fiennes ancestry will show that he was indeed related to a Sutton-Dudley, Henry Dudley's Aunt Jane.

The continuation is as follows: Sir James Fiennes, Lord Saye and Sele, married Emeline Cromer. Their son was Sir William who married Margaret Wyckham. Their son was Henry Fiennes, who by Anne Harcourt, had his heir Richard Fiennes. Richard married Elizabeth Crofts and they had a son Edward Fiennes. Edward married Margaret Danvers. They had a son Richard Fiennes, who married Ursula Fermor, by whom he had a son Sir Richard Fiennes, Lord Saye and Sele. Sir Richard was married to Constance Kingsmill. Their son was the Sir William, close friend of Thomas Dudley.³⁵

John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland of Case 2 had a sister, Elizabeth Dudley, who was married to William Lord Stourton.³⁶ Their daughter Ursula was the wife of Edward Lord Clinton and Say, Earl of Lincoln. Their son was Henry Clinton, Earl of Lincoln whose son and heir was Thomas Clinton (alias Fiennes), He was the 3rd Earl of Lincoln. His youngest son was Theophilus, 4th Earl of Lincoln. He married Bridget daughter of William Fiennes.³⁷ The latter was Thomas Dudley's friend and it was Thomas Dudley who was the steward of the estate of Theophilus Clinton Fiennes. It seems clear that these three staunch Puritans were drawn together by their Sutton-Dudley interrelationships.

²⁹ George Adlard, *The Sutton-Dudleys of England and the Dudleys of Massachusetts in New England*, (New York, printed for the Author, 1862), at 28.

³⁰ [note 26], at 48.

³¹ [note 8], second page Chart A.

³² J. Debrett, *The Peerage of England, Scotland and Ireland to which are annexed The Extant and Forfeited Peerage of Three Kingdoms* (London, 1790), Vol 1, page 397.

³³ George Edward Cokayne, *Complete Peerage of England Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom Extant, Extinct, and Dormant* (London, 1890) Vol. 3, page 2.

³⁴ *Ibid*, at page 3.

³⁵ [Note 32], at 397.

³⁶ [Note 8], second page Chart A and Chart B of charts preceding page 17.

³⁷ George Edward Cokayne, *Complete Peerage of England Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom Extant, Extinct, and Dormant* (London, 1893) Vol. 5, pages 93-95.

