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A NOTE ON THE REVEREND ROBERT CHAMBERLAYNE OF STROOD, KENT

Father-in-Law of Capt. Richard¹ Betts of Newtown, Long Island

By John Blythe Dobson

A few years ago in the pages of this journal, Jane Fletcher Fiske, FASG, in a landmark paper, provided the long sought-for name of the father of Joanna Chamberlayne, wife of Richard¹ Betts, of Newtown, Long Island.¹ She proved that he was “Mr Robert Chamberlayne Pastor of the Parishe of Stroud,” in Kent, who was buried 1 June 1639, having married (1) by 1622, Joanna —, who was buried there on 20 February 1626/7, and (2) on “the last daye of Aprill 1627,” Elizabeth (Stoughton) Scudder, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Stoughton, a deposed Puritan minister,² and widow of John Scudder, who, after being widowed a second time, came to Massachusetts with her children. Mrs. Fiske provided the names of Robert and Elizabeth’s three children—Samuel (1628), Joanna (1630), and Sarah (1632)—and of one of Robert’s children by his first marriage, “Thomas, school-master . . . deprived of his life at Rochester Bridge,” who was buried on 9 October 1630 at Strood. There was also another son of the first marriage, Matthew, baptized at Strood on 8 December 1622,³ of whom nothing further is known.

The Rev. Robert Chamberlayne (to use the spelling of the name as given in his own signatures) is mentioned regularly in the Strood churchwardens’ accounts, the introduction to the published edition of which provides valuable details on his career. His last known predecessor died on or shortly before 25 September 1615, although the amount of time which passed before Chamberlayne succeeded him does not seem to be a matter of record. “His name,” notes the editor, “is fre-

¹ Jane Fletcher Fiske, “A New England Immigrant Kinship Network: Notes on the English Origins of the Scudders of Salem and Barnstable, Massachusetts, Bridget (—) (Verry) Giles of Salem, and Joanna (Chamberlain) Betts of Long Island,” TAG 72(1997):285–300, especially 289, 295–97.

² In addition to the standard accounts of him in Ethel McLaughlin Turner and Paul Boynton Turner, *The English Ancestry of Thomas Stoughton (1588–1661)* (Waterloo, Wisc., 1958) (hereafter cited as Turner and Turner, *English Ancestry of Thomas Stoughton*), and in the articles in TAG 29(1953):193–204 and 41(1965):30–35, much more has recently come to light on this man and his family. See Stuart Barton Babbage, *Puritanism and Richard Bancroft* (London, 1962), 153–54; Robert Charles Anderson, *Great Migration Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 2 (April–June 1990):10, 16, vol. 3, no. 3 (July–Sept. 1992):1, 18; and the same author’s *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620–1633*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1995), 3:1773–79 (hereafter cited as Anderson, *Great Migration Begins*).

³ Strood, Kent, parish registers, unpaginated [Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City, film #992,462].

quently met with in the Accounts down to 1636, when perhaps owing to ill-health he ceased to officiate."⁴ These accounts contain original signatures of Robert Chamberlayne at five separate places.⁵

Also to be found in the churchwardens' accounts is a laconic reference in 1608 to "Mr. Winge our minister."⁶ It is interesting to compare this with a pair of will abstracts published by Henry F. Waters in his famous series of "Genealogical Gleanings." There, the will of Matthew Wyng of Banbury, Oxfordshire—a fabled center of Puritanism—dated 9 August 1614 and proved on 15 November 1614, makes bequests "to Robert Chaumberlayne my sonne in Lawe tenne poundes," "to Johane my daughter twentie shillings," and "to Thomas Chaumberlayne the sonne of Robert Chaumberlayne my sonne in Law twentie shillings." Next, the will of Matthew's son "John Winge late of the Hague in Holland, clerk, now living in St. Mary Aldermary, London," dated 2 November 1629 and proved on 4 August 1630, mentions a "freehold . . . in . . . Strood in the County of Kent," and names as one of his executors "my lovinge friende Edward Foord of London merch't."⁷ Waters calls the second testator "pastor of the English Puritan Church at Middleborough in Zeeland," enclosing all these words in quotation marks without indicating a source. But Wing's presence in the stated capacity can readily be confirmed at Hamburg (ca. 1615–19), Flushing (1620–27), and The Hague (1627–29).⁸ The executor, Edward Foord, is probably the same as "Edmond [*sic*] Foord, of London, merchant," one of the executors of the 1639 will of Dr. John Stoughton, future brother-in-law of Robert Chamberlayne

⁴ Henry R. Plomer, trans., *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Nicholas, Strood, Kent* (Archaeological Society Records Branch Publications, 5(1927):xxvii (hereafter cited as Plomer, *Churchwardens' Accounts, Strood*).

⁵ Pages 123, 143, 144, 150, and 152, corresponding to folios 109v, 122v, 123r, 128r, 130r of the original book, which does not appear to have been microfilmed and is now at the British Library, Add. MS. 36,937. We are grateful to the custodians for copies of the five pertinent pages.

⁶ Found at p. 98 of the original record, quoted in p. xxvi of the Introduction.

⁷ Will of Matthew Wyng, PCC 111 Lawe, modern reference PRO PROB 11/124; will of John Winge, PCC 73 Scroope, modern reference PRO PROB 11/158. These were both abstracted by Henry F. Waters in *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* [NEHGR] 45(1891):236–37, and reprinted in his *Genealogical Gleanings in England*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1901), 1:519–20.

⁸ Raymond Phineas Stearns, *Congregationalism in the Dutch Netherlands: The Rise and Fall of the English Congregational Classis, 1621–1635* (Chicago, 1940), 15, 84; Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden, 1982), 143, 201–2, 256. "A chronological roll of the Rev^d ministers, elders and deacons of the English Church at the Hague from the year 1595 to 1811," printed in the Dutch periodical *De Navorscher* 45(1895):245–57, at 246, errs wildly in dating his ministry there from 1596. The congregation was actually founded in 1626, as appears from editorial commentary in "Het Doop- en Trouw-boek der Engelsche Kerk te 's-Gravenhage," ed. M. G. Wildeman and J. C. van der Muelen, *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* 11(1893):13–16.

of Strood,⁹ for the 1636 will of "Edward Foord of London, merchant" directs his wife to "pay six pounds yearly to Doctor Staughton, my minister, during his life or abode in Aldermanbury."¹⁰ John Stoughton, Elizabeth Stoughton's brother, was installed as perpetual curate of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, in 1632.¹¹ In other words, the "Robert Chamberlain" who lived in Oxfordshire and who married Joanna Winge had a brother-in-law who ended up living in the parish where Elizabeth Stoughton's brother became pastor two years later. While we cannot prove that the two men's presence in Aldermanbury actually overlapped, they appear to have shared the same executor, Edward or Edmund Foord.

There are other likely points of contact between Robert Chamberlain of Oxfordshire and the Stoughtons. His brother-in-law, the Rev. John Winge, who himself spent most of his life as an expatriate in the Netherlands, married Deborah, daughter of the Rev. Stephen Bachiler, an intransigent Puritan preacher who had been silenced in 1605 for (among other reasons) refusing to subscribe to the extended Anglican Church Articles of 1604, as was Elizabeth Stoughton's father, Thomas Stoughton, in 1606.¹² Furthermore, John Winge's brother, Matthew Winge, and sister-in-law, Ann (Bachiler) (Samborne) Atkinson, each had associations with Strood.¹³ We know from Mrs. Fiske's article that Elizabeth's first husband had a brother, the Rev. Henry Scudder, whose movements in England were almost a perfect reverse of Winge's: Presumably born in Kent, this man received the living of Drayton, Oxfordshire, and was married in Banbury (aforesaid) in 1608. While some of these correspondences may be merely coincidental, their sheer number persuades us that a significant overlap existed between the social circles of Robert Chamberlain of Oxfordshire and of Elizabeth Stoughton.

Bearing in mind that the Rev. Robert Chamberlayne of Strood named his second son Matthew, we feel that the foregoing facts, taken together, form compelling, if circumstantial, evidence that he was identical with the Robert "Chamber-

⁹ Will of John Stoughton, PCC 69 Harvey, modern reference PRO PROB 11/180; this was abstracted by Henry F. Waters in NEHGR 40(1886):306-7, and reprinted in his *Genealogical Gleanings in England*, 1:179-80. Further details on this man will be found in Turner and Turner, *English Ancestry of Thomas Stoughton*, 115-17.

¹⁰ Will of Edward Foord, PCC 2 Campbell, as abstracted by Henry F. Waters in NEHGR 45 (1891):161-62, and reprinted in his *Genealogical Gleanings in England*, 1:507-8.

¹¹ Benjamin Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*, 3 vols. (London, 1813), 3:527; Ralph M. Stoughton, "The Stoughton Families of Dorchester, Mass., and Windsor, Conn.," TAG 29(1953):193-204, at 195.

¹² Amos Otis, *Genealogical Notes of Barnstable Families*, 2 vols. (Barnstable, Mass., 1888-90), 1:39-44; Charles E. Batchelder, "Rev. Stephen Bachiler," NEHGR 46(1892):58-64, 157-61, 246-51, 345-50; Frederick Clifton Pierce, *Batchelder-Batcheller Genealogy* (Chicago, 1898); Victor Channing Sanborn, "Rev. Stephen Bachiler," NEHGR 74(1920):319-20; Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I* (Oxford, 1990), 326, 324; Anderson, *Great Migration Begins*, 3:1777-79.

¹³ William H. Whitmore, "The Wing Family," NEHGR 38(1884):376-78; Anderson, *Great Migration Begins*, 1:63, 3:1777.

lain” who married on 13 January 1612[13] at Banbury, Joane Winge, baptized on 25 December 1592 at Banbury, daughter of Matthew and Mary (—) Winge.¹⁴

One would expect that an Anglican minister of this period would have held an academic degree, and the published registers of Oxford and Cambridge were accordingly checked. There were two graduates of this name at Oxford during the period: a “Robert Chamberlaine of Beds, pleb.” who matriculated at Oxford on 30 January 1600/1, aged 18 years (placing his birth about 1582), and graduated with a B.A. in 1604; and a “Robert Chamberlayne, armiger,” who matriculated on 8 May 1601 at St. John’s College, Oxford, aged 15, placing his birth about 1585–86.¹⁵ Of the first student, nothing further has been learned. Of the second student, the editor of the published record suggests he was “perhaps of Sherborne [*recte*: Shirburn], Oxon, Knight of the Bath, son of Robert,” and this Robert (the younger) was certainly of about the right age to have been the student of 1601.¹⁶ But this same Robert died in 1615¹⁷ and could not have been identical with Robert Chamberlayne the minister. Nor was the minister, as we shall see, probably of the social status suggested by the term “armiger,” which at this time and in such a context could hardly apply to one below the rank of a knight’s son.

One Oxfordshire record which might more probably apply to the future pastor of Strood is a 1606 reference to a Robert Chamberlain, curate of Wardington, a chapelry in the parish of Cropredy, in the hundred of Banbury (and within four miles of the town of Banbury itself), who is suggested to have been “possibly a member of the local gentry family of that name.”¹⁸ The last remark is apparently an allusion to the family of Sir Thomas Chamberlayne the judge (an adult in

¹⁴ Mrs. N. Fillmore and Mrs. J. Pain, transcrs., *Marriage Register of Banbury, Part I, 1558–1724*, ed. J. S. W. Gibson, Banbury Hist. Soc. Records, 2(1960):52; Fern Ella Wing Reid, *The Wing Family of the United States and Canada* (Westminster, Md., 1982). This same theory was arrived at independently by Mr. John Brandon, of Columbia, S.C. (personal communication to the author, 31 Jan. 2001).

¹⁵ Joseph Foster, ed., *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500–1886*, 8 vols. (London, 1887–97), 1:258.

¹⁶ Steven Tomlinson, Assistant Librarian, Department of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, kindly supplied us with an extract from MS. Top. Oxon. c.206, fo. 81, falling in vol. 5 of the “Chamberlain Evidences,” a collection of typescript copies by H. E. Salter of original documents held at Shirburn Castle. The date of birth of this Robert, son of Robert Chamberlain and Alice Coddendam, is given as 15 March 1586, but according to Mr. Tomlinson “it is not clear whether this is Old or New Style dating.” The date of 1588 given in the International Genealogical Index [IGI] is spurious. A number of documents relating to the Chamberlains of Shirburn will be found in Lothrop Withington, *Virginia Gleanings in England* . . . (Baltimore, 1980), 464–69.

¹⁷ L. F. Salzman et al., eds., *The Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, 13 vols. (London, 1907–79), 8:184.

¹⁸ *Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, 10:221, citing the churchwardens’ presentments for Banbury Peculiar. The same document is quoted in A. P. Keegan, *The Town of Cropredy, 1570–1640* (Oxford, 1999), 715, which supplies the modern archival reference as “Oxon. Archd. Papers, Oxon b.52.313.”

1577, d. 1625), who had purchased land at Wardington in 1602, and whose son George settled there permanently.¹⁹ The account of this Thomas in Wotton's *English Baronetage* merely states in regard to his family: "He married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir George Fermor, of Easton Neston, in Northamptonshire, Knt., relict of Sir William Stafford, of Blatherwick, in the same county, Knt. by whom he had Thomas, his son and heir, and George Chamberlayne, of Wardington, in Oxfordshire, Esq., who married Anne, daughter of Sir Richard Saltinstall, of South Okingdon, in Essex, Knt. and left issue."²⁰ We wondered whether there could have been other sons, or whether Sir Thomas may have brought any collateral relations to Wardington, and our researches were inclining in that direction when John Brandon (who was put in touch with us by Jane Fletcher Fiske) wrote to communicate a most striking find.²¹ On 16 August 1612, Thomas Chamberlayne (the judge afore-said), who had been commissioned to gather oaths of allegiance from suspected recusants "beyond Oxfordshire," wrote to Thomas, Lord Ellesmere, the Lord Chancellor of England, ending his letter on an unrelated matter as follows:

I am humblie to entreate your Lo[rds]hip in the behaulfe of the bearer hearof, a poore minister of my name, and minister to Sir Richard Chetwood, my neighbour, well commended in his place, that your Lo[rds]hip would be pleased to bestowe on him a poore living latelie fallen, for which hee shall bee bounde . . . and my selfe most bounden for all your Lo[rds]hip's most honorable favoures towards mee and myne.²²

As Chetwood's seat at Warksworth, Northamptonshire, near the Oxfordshire border, was only two miles east of Banbury, it does not seem farfetched to suggest that this "poore minister" of the Chamberlayne name was the man we are seeking, and that he was recommended to the living of Strood, which as we have seen had just become vacant in September of the previous year. "The curacy of Strood," Plomer informs us, "was in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Rochester; but they do not seem to have taken much trouble to keep it filled."²³ They were perhaps

¹⁹ *Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, 10:214. Thomas Chamberlayne is treated in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Bibliographical references on this branch of the Chamberlayne family are given in an article by Charles Evans on the judge's alleged uncle, "Sir Thomas Chamberlayne and His Wives and Children," *The Genealogist* 3(1982):154-61.

²⁰ Thomas Wotton, *The English Baronetage*, 4 vols. in 5 (London, 1741), 1:492-95. See also G. D. Squibb, ed., *The Visitation[s] of Oxfordshire, 1669 and 1675, Made by Sir Edward Bysse, Knight, Clarenceux King of Arms*, Harleian Soc. Pubs., new ser., 12(London, 1993):45.

²¹ Personal communication to author, 31 Jan. 2001.

²² Thomas Chamberlayne to Thomas, Lord Ellesmere, 26 Aug. 1612, in *The Egerton Papers: A Collection of Public and Private Documents Chiefly Illustrative of the Times of Elizabeth and James I, from the Original Manuscripts the Property of the Right Hon. Lord Francis Egerton, M.P., President of the Camden Society*, ed. J. Payne Collier, Camden Soc. Pubs. [old ser.] 12(London, 1840):453-54. Sir Richard Chetwood, or Chetwode, the previous employer, was the father of the immigrant Grace Chetwode, wife of the Rev. Peter Bulkeley, as noted in Donald Lines Jacobus, *The Bulkeley Genealogy* (New Haven, 1933), 57-58. We are deeply grateful to Mr. Brandon for so generously allowing us to publish his discovery.

²³ Plomer, *Churchwardens' Accounts, Strood*, xxvi.

indifferent enough as to be amenable to advice in the matter. But Plomer was able to unearth little in the records concerning the early ministers, and the prospect of direct confirmation of our theory seems slight. The phraseology of the letter clearly precludes the “poore minister” having been the writer’s son, and suggests that any relationship between them was too distant to be known. We may note that the letterwriter, in his 1625 will, makes no mention of the minister.²⁴

As previously mentioned, we have specimens of the signature of Robert Chamberlayne of Strood, and it was an obvious question whether one matching it could be found for the Oxfordshire curate. To this end a search of the parish registers of Wardington and Cropredy was commissioned, but no such signature was found, nor in the diocesan subscription book which begins in 1602.²⁵ We were further informed by the archivist that “there was no success with our probate records, private deposits, or secondary reading sources.”²⁶ We shall be glad to share these handwriting specimens with any reader who should discover suitable material for comparison.

After this article was accepted for publication, we located the will of “Robert Chamberlaine or Chamberlin, Minister, Preacher and Pastor of Strood, Kent” (as it is designated in the contemporary calendar), dated 24 September 1638, and proved on 27 June 1639.²⁷ Rather than attempt to integrate a discussion of it into the text, we transcribe it here, minus some tedious common-form matter and religionistic meanderings, the omissions being indicated by ellipses:

*Anno D[omi]ni n[ost]ri 1638 vicesimo quarto die Sept[embris] . . . I Robert Chamberlaine Minister & Preacher of Godes holy word & Pastor of the Parish & Congregat’on of Stroud in the County of Kent, being . . . weake in body (after some sorte) yet in good & perfect memory I doe make this my last will & testament in mannour & forme followinge First I comitt my Soule into the most mercifull hande of God my most gracious & mercifull father. . . . And I will that my body be buryed decently in some certaine hope of a ioyfull resurrection at the last day. . . . As concerning my earthly substance which my good Lord & merciful father in Christ hath freely bestowed on me, my loving wife & children. . . . *Imprimis* I give to the poore of Stroud Ten shillinge *Item* I give & bequeath unto my sonne Samuell Chamberlaine a new English Bible in Octavo & Ten poundes of Lawfull money of England A silver wyne cupp Three silver spoones & all my greeke & Latine bookes with all my sermon noates coppys of Catechisme & grounde of Religion after my wives decease *Item* I give & bequeath unto my daughter Joanna Chamberlaine a new English Bible in Octavo, Six pounce of lawfull money of England One silver Maudlin cupp with a silver cover Three silver spoones My wives childbed linen with the Mantle A paire of the best flaxen*

²⁴ PCC Skynner (folio number unknown), modern reference PRO PROB 11/151.

²⁵ Oxfordshire Archives, ODP e.12.

²⁶ Letter to the author from Ms. K. A. Garvey, Oxfordshire Archives, Oxford, England, 4 Jan. 1999.

²⁷ PCC 103 Harvey, modern reference PRO PROB 11/180. Remarkably, this will was calendared over a century ago in John Matthews and George F. Matthews, eds., *Abstracts of Probate Acts in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*, 8 vols. (London, 1902–26), 2:307, but its existence has gone unnoticed.

sheete[s] A paire of the best holland pillowcoates A couple of the best pewter platters A couple of the best fruit dishes The biggest Brasse pott. The one half of my English Bookes A Diaper Table cloath And a dozen of Diaper Napkins after my wives decease *Item* my will is that if it please God to take away either of my children out of this mortall life before the child deceased hath received the port'on bequeathed in my will that then the child surviving shalbe heir to the child deceasing *Item* I give & bequeath unto Johanna Scudder an English Bible in Octavo *Item* I give & bequeath unto my daughter in Lawe Elizabeth Scudder a new English Bible in Octavo A paire of flaxen sheetes A paire of holland pillowcoate A flaxen tablecloth A dozen of Holland Table napkins & a silver spoone *Item* I give & bequeath unto my Two naturall bretherne [*sic*] & their wyves And unto my twoe naturall Sisters & their husbands five shillinge apiece And last of all my debte being payd my funerall discharged & this my will in all pointe & form I give the residue of my goode[s] substance[s] chattells & moveables unbequeathed unto my deare lovinge wife Elizabeth Chamberlayne. . . . And I make my said Dear Wife Elizabeth Chamberlain to be Executrix of this last will & Testament And I desire my Loveing Brethren Christian frende[s] & neighboures Mr Doctor Stoughton Mr Nathaniell Chamberlain Mr Thomas Chamberlaine Mr Henry Scudder Mr Martin Caesar to be Overseers of this my last will and Testament And I give them for their paynes Twelve pence apiece

Ita Testor Ro. Chamberlainus Pastor Ecclesiae in Stroud die et Anno supradict[o] In the p'sence of Thomas Powle Sen.

Probatum fuit Testamentum suprascriptum apud London . . . Curia Prerogative Cant[uariae] . . . vicesimo septimo die mensis Junii Anno D'm'i Mill[esi]mo sexcent[es]imo tricesimo nono Jramento Elizabethae Chamberlaine Relictae. . . .

This document settles several points of doubt about the affiliation of its author. It shows with certainty that he had only two living children, Samuel and Joanna, and in light of its mention of "my Two naturall bretherne" it appears likely that the "brethren . . . Mr Nathaniell Chamberlain [and] Mr Thomas Chamberlaine" named near the end were actual brothers of the testator. The phraseology is unclear as to whether "Mr Martin Caesar" was a brother (in-law) or merely a "frende & neighbour," and he was perhaps the latter as the only Martin Caesar of the right time and place of whom we have found record married at Strood on 13 March 1626 Alice Feildinge,²⁸ who was not a known associate of the Chamberlaynes or Stoughtons. However, the "Nathanyell Chamberlayne" who had a son "Nathanyell" baptized on 22 January 1625 at Strood was presumably the brother of the testator.

Much as the will clarifies some questions, it fails to corroborate the Oxfordshire career we have proposed for its author, revealing associations only with Kentish people. We remain unable, even with the clues it provides, to identify the place of origin or parentage of Robert Chamberlayne, and can only hope that some reader may enjoy greater success.

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²⁸ Controlled extraction of the Strood registers, International Genealogical Index [IGI], Family History Library, Salt Lake City.