

[REDACTED]
 this Thomas Holyman family of Bedford lived on Caldwell Street in 1641. We do not yet know when Thomas died.

6. Anne advises and I agree that she needs to invest more time researching burial records and other data in the Bedford Archives to add context to the family. If she does not find burial records of Christopher and Judith in Bedford, this supports the thesis that Christopher of 1691 is from Bedford and this family.

7. Incidentally Ellen (Helena) Poynard Holyman is buried in St. Mary's Parish cemetery, where of course not known but I include a few headstones from the site. These pictures I took in 2011.

So...Anne will be working to more tightly to tie Christopher Holyman d 1588 of Sherington to Thomas Holyman of Bedford and our 1691 Christopher, IF the evidence points that way. Her goal, our mutual goal, is to discover what evidence is available and arrive at the best truth possible wherever that may take us.

I am grateful to Anne and look forward to her next report next month. This and other information from Anne including family trees I will be writing up for the blog. Fascinating. More later,
 Glenn

Dear Glenn

Results of my findings at Bedford Record Office re- Thomas HOLLYMAN
 [REDACTED]

I have attached copies of the most relevant documents that are connected to the Thomas HOLLYMAN of Bedford, father of Christopher and Judith. I have tried to keep it as brief as possible and after you have read the documents yourself you can come back to me with any queries

Firstly is document reference WL103. This document, dated 6 November 1640, is a Bargain and Sale lease where Thomas HOLLYMAN Senior is one party of two. The information this document gives the reader about Thomas, in brief, is as follows:

* Thomas states he is a Cordwainer or Shoemaker by occupation.]

*The Bargain and Sale refers to the Blue Boar Inn in Caldwell Street, Bedford
 [REDACTED]

*The fact that Thomas HOLLYMAN had a lease on this Inn suggest he had an additional occupation as an inn keeper.
 [REDACTED]

*Elinor is mentioned as the 'now wife' of Thomas, thus pinning this Thomas down as husband of Ellinor and as the father of Christopher and Judith and their siblings. It appears, Ellinor also has some interest in the lease, otherwise she would have probably not have been mentioned.
 [REDACTED]

Thomas Hollyman, Father of Christopher Hollyman
of Virginia²⁴

*Thomas also has a property neighbouring the Blue Boar: occupant was Barnaby CRASH, the son in law of Thomas.

*Thomas has signed the document suggesting he was probably literate or at least he could write. Had he been illiterate he would have just put his mark to the agreement.

*Thomas is giving up his tenure of the Blue Boar and assigning the lease to Richard and Cicely BROWNE for the sum of £40.

Several points to be noted:

If Thomas had put his mark to this document and not signed it, it would have probably ruled him out as a possible candidate for the Thomas HOLLYMAN at school in Sherington in 1595. Interestingly, Thomas is receiving payment of £40 for the assignment of the lease. It is not known what Thomas himself paid for the lease when he acquired it but, casting your mind back to the Will of Christopher HOLLYMAN, Christopher left his two sons £40 each. So, here we have a Thomas who, perhaps had equal wealth monetarily to the Thomas in Sherington. It does not confirm the Thomas in Bedford is the Thomas from Sherington but it does not rule him out either.

The second and third documents are two copies of the same map, date 1610. In 1610, Thomas HOLLYMAN was newly married and living in the parish of Bedford St. Mary, his landlord probably John LEIGH of Caldwell Priory. Until c1630 most of the Caldwell Street properties belonged to the LEIGH family who had bought the nearby Caldwell Priory from the Crown in 1563 see:

<http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/CommunityAndLiving/ArchivesAndRecordOffice/CommunityArchives/Bedford/LaterHistoryOfCaldwellPrioryBedford.aspx> As you can see from the map and its key the parish of Bedford St. Mary is very small. The old Caldwell Priory (no. 17) can be seen in the bottom left hand corner of the map. You can see also that Caldwell Street (no. 14) is close to the Priory and as you get closer to the Church of St. Marys (no 12) you can see where most of the habitation in Caldwell Street was: mostly likely small tenements and cottages where Thomas and his family would have lived. There is a mention of the Blue Boar Inn on the same website previously referred to:

<http://www.bedfordshire.gov.uk/CommunityAndLiving/ArchivesAndRecordOffice/CommunityArchives/Bedford/CaldwellStreetIntroduction.aspx>

The fourth document attached is the Will of John LEIGH of Caldwell, date 20 January 1619.

This document mentions the tenement on which Thomas HOLLYMAN has a long lease. This confirms, with other information that Thomas and his family were probably present in Caldwell Street for at least twenty years (1620-1640) and perhaps longer. Thomas may have been giving up his lease on the Blue Boar as by 1640 he was probably getting near to old age for those times, and perhaps the Inn was too much for him. Eleanor, wife of Thomas, died in 1653 and

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was buried in Bedford St. Mary churchyard. There are no surviving burial records for Bedford St. Mary c1646 to c1652 but it seems likely the elderly Thomas died in those years and thus there is no surviving death record for him. The years 1645 to 1652 were years of turmoil in England. It was during the period of the Civil War and the early years of Cromwell's rule. Many English parishes have gaps in the registers for these years.

There are a couple more documents to be sent which I will forward in a separate E-mail. Sometimes my Broadband does not cope too well with large picture files and they bounce back to me, hence sending the additions separately.

Kind Regards

Dear Glenn

Attached are copies of remaining documents that are relevant to the Thomas HOLLYMAN in Bedford.

Will and Inventory of Edward CRASH, father of Barnaby CRASH

Barnaby CRASH alias BAXTER married Jone HOLLYMAN in 1631. Jone's Christian name is written on the parish register index as Jane. I believe that this is a transcription error as Joan could either be spelt as is or 'Jone'. There were only about two thousand people in the whole of Bedford in the early seventeenth century. As you can see from the Speed map of 1610, the parish of Bedford St. Mary only has a few houses. The Jone or Jane HOLLYMAN, married in 1631, must be Joan, the daughter of Thomas. In addition, the first son and child of Barnaby and Joan is named Thomas. Their second child is named Edward, after the father of Barnaby.

I have included a copy of this Will and Inventory to give some additional weight to the social status surrounding Thomas HOLLYMAN. Edward CRASSE or CRASH, father of Barnaby, although only a Baker appears to be a reasonably wealthy man. From Edward's Will "*I give and bequeath my greate mansion house in Cauldwell Street in the parish of St. Marie*" to Edward's wife Elizabeth until his son Barnaby reaches the age of twenty one, then it becomes Barnaby's. It is not known how 'great' the house was but it must have at least been a little grander than the others nearby. Also attached is a copy of the Inventory of the house in 1619. Edwards estate is valued at around £35. Approximate value today of £35 -3s -8d in 1620 is £3,377.60 see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/>

For interest, £40 in 1590 (Christopher's bequest to Thomas) is equivalent to £5,011.60 today (c year 2005) and £40 in 1640 today's spending worth is £3,432.00. As you can see if monetary wealth is equated to social status (only a guide), the Thomas HOLLYMANS of Sherington and Bedford and Edward and Barnaby CRASH are of similar means. The English class structure that we know of today did not really exist in the same way in the early and mid seventeenth century. If we were to equate them with social status today they could be said to be perhaps in

the middle of society somewhere. Historians like to class seventeenth century individuals like Thomas HOLLYMAN and the CRASH's as the 'middling sort'.

Looking back at the Buckinghamshire HOLLYMANS, the height of their social status was in the mid sixteenth century. A HOLLYMAN married into the LEE family: the LEES were a family who were to become upwardly mobile socially. The fortunes of the remainder of the Buckinghamshire HOLLYMANS were varied, some fared better than others. I do not like to ramble on too much about class but I am just trying to put Thomas HOLLYMAN of Bedford in to some kind of context for you. Thomas was, perhaps, more than just a humble shoemaker, he was also a tradesman trying to make his way in the world.

I have also attached an updated family tree for Thomas HOLLYMAN of Bedford on confirmation of additional information found in the Bedford St. Mary parish registers. Birth years for Thomas HOLLYMAN and Helen POYNARD are estimated based on their year of marriage. As already stated there are gaps in the Bedford St. Mary registers mid seventeenth century. Years 1646 to 1652 are missing for both baptisms and burials. It seems very likely Thomas senior died within this time period. It is also possible that Christopher and Judith perished during these years, however, it is also possible that both left Bedford for a life elsewhere. Another possibly is that Christopher HOLLYMAN fought in the Civil War and died on a battle field somewhere and was buried with his fallen comrades.

The Bedford Record Office Visit provided new information on the Thomas HOLLYMAN of Bedford but still leaves the big question unanswered.

If you have any queries regarding the research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Oh me, much more to consider and study.

In your opinion is there more to be found in Bedford concerning this family?

If not, it appears we are left with circumstantial evidence, nothing 'lockproof' as to the Sherington to Bedford connection, but nothing to disprove the thesis of Christopher of Sherington being the father of Thomas of Bedford.

Now there were Holymans, many of them living in Worcestershire in the 1500s and 1600s. My research in that archives last year did NOT turn up a Judith and Christopher. However, I did not spend much time there.

If we do NOT turn up a Christopher and/or Judith Holyman (Hollyman, Holliman, etc) anywhere else in England during this time period, then the weight of evidence or lack of evidence, seems to affirm, ever so gently, that by the process of elimination, Christopher and Judith of Bedford, are our immigrants to Virginia in 1650.

Am I off base with this conclusion? Could you take a look at the Worcestershire Holymans on line?