

BENNETT

By ARCHIBALD F. BENNETT

The numerous descendants of Gov. Richard Bennett of Virginia will undoubtedly be interested in the discovery of his place of birth in England.

A recent publication, "The Genealogists Reference Journal," in Volume 1, Part 1, for June, 1935, contains this entry extracted from the Public Record Office, HCA 13.71:

"1656/7. Bennet, Richard, Esq., of Virginia, now in London, aged 49, born at Wilscombe (? Winscombe), Somerset."

While the editor believes the parish of Winscombe is intended I am of the opinion that it should be Wiveliscombe parish, which is popularly pronounced Wilscombe. This place is of considerable antiquity, containing several ancient houses and the remains of an episcopal palace. The town occupies a gentle eminence in an extensive valley surrounded by lofty hills, which suddenly break into deep ravines. A considerable woollen manufacture is carried on.

The registers of this parish begin with the year 1558. Only a few fragments from the Bishop's Transcripts at Wells have been published in Volume II of the set by Mr. Edward Dwelly, pp. 373-378. But even these indicate the residence of the Bennett family there.

"29 Oct., 1598. Agnes, dr of Augusten Bennett buried.

27 Oct., 1622. Emmett Bennett buried.

2 Feb., 1622/3. Johan dr of William Bennett buried.

17 July 1623. Thomas Bennett & Agnes Beard married."

Logical next steps in tracing the pedigree of Gov. Richard Bennett would be to search the parish registers of Wiveliscombe for all entries of Bennett from about 1590 to 1630, or better still from the first entries in 1558. A transcript or photostat copy of the will of Robert Bennett, of "Wyvelscombe," Somerset, proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in 1603, (94 Bolein), should be obtained from Somerset House, London, for he may well be the father of Edward, Richard, Robert and perhaps John Bennett of Virginia.

The following notes are sent as a supplement to the scholarly article, "Edward Bennett of London and Virginia," by John Bennett Boddie appearing in Vol. 13, pages 117-131, of your Magazine.

"Richard Benet, St. Bart. Exchange, London, but dec. in Virginia, administration granted to his bro. Edward Benet (his relict Judith Benet renouncing), 8 June, 1627. (Administrations in P. C. C., 1620-1630, by J. H. Morrison.)

These children are recorded for Mr. Richard Bennett in the parish of St. Mary Woolchurch Haw, London, pp. 316-319. 387-388:

- i. Elizabeth, chr. 2 Aug., 1610; buried 13 Oct., 1615.
- ii. Abigail, chr. 15 Nov., 1612.
- v. Ann, buried 20 Apr., 1615.
- iii. Richard, chr. 16 Jun., 1616; buried 24 Sep., 1618.
- iv. Edward, chr 24 Jun., 1618. "Edward, son of Mr. Richard Bennett and Judith his wife buried 14 Nov., 1619."

The will of Edward Brent, dated 1 Feb., 1624; proved before Sir Francis Wyatt, Governor and Captain General of Virginia 20 Apr., 1625, and in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury 24 Aug., 1625; states:

"All such goods at I have laden on board the *Jeames* of London, . . . or in the *Anne* of London, . . . and all debts due to me in Virginia by bill or by my book I do appoint *Robert Bennett* to receive and make sale of and also to recover what debts shall be due to me in Virginia. . . . And my will is that my said overseers do make return of the proceeds of goods and debts &c. unto *Richard Bennett* of London, merchant, and *Jonas Hopkins* of the same city, merchant, and they to pay my debts in England. . . . I do give to *Mr. Richard Bennett* thirty shillings, to be bestowed in a pair of silk stockings, and also to *Mrs. Judith Bennett, his wife*, thirty shillings, to be bestowed in a pair of gloves. . . . To *Elizabeth Bennett* fifteen shillings, to be bestowed in gloves, if she be remaining in *Mr. Richard Bennett's* house, and to *Jeane Bennett*, her sister, ten shillings wherever she be, if she be living, and to *Jeane Pavy (Pauy?)* five shillings, if she be a remaining servant to *Mr. Richard Bennett*, and to *Richard Bennett*, servant to *Mr. Richard Bennett*, twenty shillings, if he be living, to be disposed towards an adventure as his brother *Robert Bennett* shall think fit. . . . Also I do give *Robert Bennett* thirty shillings, to be bestowed in a pair of silk stockings." (Water's Genealogical Gleanings, p. 1090.)

As pointed out in Mr. Boddie's article, page 126, the following extract from the minutes of the General Court, dated 13 Oct., 1626, show that Mr. Richard Bennett, brother of Edward and Robert, died in Virginia about 28 Aug., 1626.

"After the death of Mr. Richard Bennett who deceased about the 28 August last and without any sufficient or particular disposition of the goods and other matters, concerning both his own estate and the estate of Mr. Edward Bennett, his brother" an inventory had been taken, and a copy was to be sent to England. (Virginia Magazine, 57:120.)

The death of Judith, widow of Richard Bennett, merchant, may be referred to by any one of these entries.

"1638. Judith Bennett, of p. St. Dunstan in the East, London, widow. Will proved in the P. C. C. (164 Lee) Nov. 23, by Edward Harris."

"Judith Bennett, from Hackney, bur. 9 Jan., 1654/5," at St. Antholin Parish.

"Judeth Bennett, wid., St. Giles in the Fields, Mdx., will proved at P. C. C., 1655, folio 241."

Of the later careers of the children of Edward Bennett and his wife Mary Bourne, these facts may be added.

Jasper Bennett was listed as servant of Lt. Col. Nathaniel Pope of Virginia, who was associated in mercantile transactions with London. (Hoppin: Washington and Allied Families, Vol. I, p. 283.)

Jasper Bennett was buried at Sutton, Surrey, 11 Apr., 1690. (Sutton Parish Register, p. 20.)

Mary Bland of St. Peter the Poor, London, widow, about 36, licensed to marry Luke Cropley, widower, about 35, gent., at Deptford or Charlton, Kent, or Newington, Surrey. (London Marriage Licenses.) These may relate to Edward Bennett and his wife Mary.

"Edward Bennett of Godstone, Surrey, will dated 16 Aug., 1650; proved 21 Sept. (P. C. C. 140 Pembroke), by sons John and Edward."

"Mary, wife of Edward Bennett, decd. 19 May, 1661; bur. 22 May, 1661, at the parish church of St. Thomas the Apostle."

"Marie Bennett, widow, buried at the parish of St. Olave Hart St., London, 10 April, 1660."

Any further facts on this interesting family will be welcomed by the writer.