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THE BLAKE FAMILY  
IN ENGLAND.

BY  
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OF BOSTON.

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## THE BLAKE FAMILY IN ENGLAND.

IN a "Genealogical History of William Blake of Dorchester," published in 1857, appears the statement that the emigrant to New England was the son of Giles Blake of Little Baddow, Essex, and the record of several generations of the family is given. The substance of this record is trustworthy as being a copy from "Morant's History of Essex," but the statement that the Dorchester settler was of this family was unwarranted by any evidence. Subsequently the late H. G. Somerby, Esq., by request of Stanton Blake, Esq., made extended researches in England to determine the origin of the American family. He finally located it at Over Stowey, Somerset, and the results of his investigations were published in 1881, by W. H. Whitmore, Esq., in "A Record of the Blakes of Somersetshire."

The evidences upon which Mr. Somerby based his conclusions were, first, the record of a baptism in 1594, at Over Stowey, of a William Blake (son of Robert and grandson of John), the date corresponding to the age of the emigrant at death; and second, the fact that a sister of this William, in her will of date 1647, mentioned a "brother in New England," no name however being given. While this evidence was not all that could be desired, it was generally accepted as correct, and the pedigree has been copied in several other genealogical publications.

In 1881, Rev. Charles M. Blake, U. S. A., while visiting in England, was shown by William Blake, Esq., of South Petherton, a genealogical chart of the "Blakes of Somersetshire," prepared by William Arthur Jones, Esq., A.M.

An examination of this chart led Mr. Blake to visit Pitminster, four miles from Taunton, where he found upon the parish registers sufficient evidence to convince him that this was the early home of his ancestor William Blake, but he was unable at that time to give the matter further attention.

Recently, investigations have been made by the writer, through correspondence with the vicar of the parish, and with Edward J. Blake, Esq., of Crewkerne. The latter himself examined the registers of Pitminster, and Over Stowey, and he has had a careful examination made of wills and other original sources of information, for the purpose of determining his own line of descent and verifying the chart referred to. The result of these researches, so far as relates to the American family, has been very courteously copied for the writer and forms the basis of this article.



Mr. Somerby's record of the baptism of a William at Over Stowey, June 5, 1594, was found to be correct, but unfortunately he overlooked this subsequent entry:

"1617. William Blake the sonne of Robert Blake was buried the — of April."

As this record effectually disposes of *this* William, we are forced to look elsewhere for the emigrant.

On page 14 of Mr. Somerby's notes the statement is made that William the son of John<sup>o</sup> and brother of Robert above named died at Bishops Lydiard, leaving a widow Joan, but no children.

A close examination of the records discloses the following facts. By the will of John,<sup>o</sup> his son William received lands at Bishops Lydiard, at Plainfield in Over Stowey, and at Padnoller in the parish of Spaxton. Now in the will of William of Bishops Lydiard, referred to by Mr. Somerby, date 13th June, 1618, and proved in September following by Joan his widow, he is described as a *yeoman*, and bequeaths three acres at Hillfarence which he bought, and his land at *Risun*, with sundry small gifts to friends. He mentions "Philipp Sully, my boye," but no children.

It will be noticed that this William held an entirely different social position from the Blakes of Over Stowey, and in the disposition of his property made *no mention of the lands* which John Blake<sup>o</sup> gave to *his* son William.

Furthermore, we have an abstract of a will of a William Blake of *Riston*, proved at Taunton, May, 1572, in which is a bequest to "my sonne Willyam." Riston is near Taunton, and not more than seven or eight miles from Bishops Lydiard and is undoubtedly the same place described as *Risun* in the will of 1618.

From these facts it is quite reasonable to think that the William who died in 1618 at Bishops Lydiard without children was the son of William of Riston, but *certainly not* the son of John<sup>o</sup> of Over Stowey.

The records of Over Stowey furnish no evidence whatever in regard to John's son, but the Taunton Manor Bolls show that a William Blake bought property at Pitminster, in 1586. The parish registers of Pitminster, which begin in the year 1544, are in a very good state of preservation, but there is not a single Blake entry (with the exception of a Mary Blake, daughter of Richard, who was buried in 1574) until the year 1588, when Grace a daughter of William was baptized. It is supposed that this William was the son of John,<sup>o</sup> that he went to Pitminster to reside about the time of the purchase of the estate there in 1586, and there had the children named below. This theory was adopted by Mr. Jones in preparing his chart, and also by Mr. Blake whose investigations have been made independently of all previous labor in this direction, and it is hoped that this may soon be verified by record evidence.



The following records relating to this branch of the family appear upon the parish register at Pitminster :

Anno Domini.

- 1588. Grace Blake, daughter of Willm Blake was baptized the 9<sup>th</sup> day of February.
- 1592. Eme Blake, daughter of William Blake was baptized the third day of December.
- 1594. William Blake, son of William Blake was baptized the 10<sup>th</sup> day of July.
- 1597. John Blake son of William Blake was baptized the fifteenth day of June.
- 1600. Añe Blaak, daughter of William Blaak was baptized the sixteenth day of October.
- 1603. Richard Blaak, son of William Blaak was baptized the seventeenth day of Aprill.

- 
- 1617. William Blake was married to Agnis Bond widow the 27<sup>th</sup> day of September.

- 
- 1618. John Blake, sonne of William Blake, and Ann Blake daughter of William Blake were baptised the      day of August.
  - 1620. William Blake sonne of William Blake was baptised the 6<sup>th</sup> of September.
  - 1624. James Blake sonne of William Blake was baptised 27<sup>th</sup> April.

With this record from Pitminster before us, there cannot be a shadow of doubt that we have here the family of William of Dorchester. We know that he had a wife Agnes, and children John, Ann, William and James, and to make the case still stronger, the age of the father at death, and also of *three* of the children, Ann, William and James, corresponds with the date of the baptism at Pitminster.

No record has been found of the baptism of Edward, another son of William and Agnes, but it is supposed that he was born in England, as there is no evidence of the father being in this country previous to the year 1636, the statement that he came in the "Mary and John" in 1630 being without foundation.

Following the notes of Mr. Somerby, with the substitution of William<sup>10</sup> for Robert,<sup>10</sup> the line of descent will stand as follows: Robert,<sup>1</sup> Henry,<sup>2</sup> William,<sup>3</sup> Henry,<sup>4</sup> Robert,<sup>5</sup> William,<sup>6</sup> William,<sup>7</sup> Humphrey<sup>8</sup> (great-grandfather of the Admiral), John,<sup>9</sup> William,<sup>10</sup> William<sup>11</sup> of Dorchester.

Or to state the matter more simply, the emigrant is now traced as being the grandson of John Blake of Over Stowey, through his son William, instead of being so deduced through his son Robert. But all the pedigree anterior to the grandfather John is not affected by this correction.



PROGENY OF HENRY BLAKE & MARY WILKINS

John & Mary  
at 1711. Age 100

The Minister's name is given by  
The Name from the Members of  
Charles Henry & B. 1808  
London. Irene Street No 15

1625, John Blake born in London

John & Mary  
at 1680 with  
Age 100

John & Mary  
at 1680  
Age 100

Thomas & Mary  
at 1680  
Age 100

John & Mary  
at 1680  
Age 100

HENRY BLAKE  
of London (born 1625)

There is a line under the names of  
those of whom there are portraits.

JOHN BLAKE  
of Stamford.  
Oversbury & 1577

JOHN

ROBERT BLAKE  
Barrister

MARSHALL BROWNS

WILLIAM BLAKE  
of Barrister

ANNE

HUMPHREY BLAKE  
Barrister  
Oversbury & 1625

SARAH WILKINS  
of London

ADAM BLAKE  
born 1588 died 1637

WILLIAM BLAKE  
of Barrister  
3 1574

JOHN BLAKE  
SEAT  
1607 & 1645

ELIZABETH  
16 1581 2 1588

ANNE BLAKE  
16 1580 2 1588

ANNE BLAKE  
16 1580 2 1588

RICHARD BLAKE  
16 1580 2 1588

James & Mary, the children of the first Henry  
John Blake and his wife, had a son William Blake,  
married in 1608.

JOHN BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1682

MARY WILKINS  
16 1588

ANNE BLAKE  
d. 1648

WILLIAM BLAKE  
d. 1685 & 1641

MARSHALL BLAKE  
of Barrister  
1684 & 1700

MARY  
daughter of  
John Mass

WILLIAM BLAKE  
of Barrister  
16 1684 & 1682

SARAH BLAKE  
16 1685 & 1681

LEWIS BLAKE  
16 1681 & 1674

MARY  
married her  
brother's son

JOHN BLAKE  
of Barrister  
16 1680, 16 1680  
London and after 1704

JOHN BLAKE  
of Barrister  
16 1684

RENE MALACHI BLAKE  
d. 1684  
Barrister

WILLIAM BLAKE  
Barrister  
16 1684 & 1682

JEANS BLAKE  
16 1684 & 1681

SARAH BLAKE  
died before her father, as  
appears by her will

MARY BLAKE

JOHN BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

SARAH BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

SARAH BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

WILLIAM BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

RENE MALACHI BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

SARAH BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

LEWIS BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

CATHERINE  
d. 1734

WILLIAM BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

MARY BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

HANNAH SHAWMAN  
d. 1680

WILLIAM BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

ELIZABETH BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

DOUGLASS BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

MARY BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1680 & 1700

HANNAH  
d. 1761

WILLIAM BLAKE  
d. 1682

MALACHI BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1682

WILLIAM BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1682

ELIZABETH BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1682

MARGARET BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1682

WILLIAM ARTHUR BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1682

MARY BLAKE  
of Barrister  
d. 1682

ERIC BLAKE

WILLIAM BLAKE

MALACHI BLAKE

EMILY BLAKE

ROBERT BLAKE

FANNY BLAKE

FLORENCE BLAKE

ARNOLD WYERSDALE

MARY ELLEN





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