The English Origin of Richard Swaine of Hampton, New Hampshire, and Nantucket

By Clifford L. Stott, CG, FASG

While examining the parish registers and Bishops' Transcripts of Binfield, Berkshire, for an unrelated family in 1997, I noticed the baptism of Francis, son of Richard Swaine, dated 25 January 1620/1. Recognizing that Richard Swaine of Hampton, New Hampshire, and Nantucket Island had a son Francis born about 1620, I continued to investigate Binfield and the surrounding area for other children of Richard Swaine. The parish registers of neighboring Easthamstead yielded the baptisms of Richard's children Nicholas, Grace, Richard and John. All of these children, with the exception of Richard, who was buried at Easthamstead in 1633, are identical in name and approximate age with the proven offspring of the New England immigrant. If additional evidence is needed to confirm the identification, one need only look at the baptism of Richard's son John in Easthamstead Bishops' Transcripts. Although not stated in the parish register entry, the Bishops' Transcripts confirm that John's mother was Basill. The wife of immigrant Richard Swaine had the same unusual given name.

This serendipitous discovery led to an extensive examination of the Swaine family in the vicinity of Binfield. On 19 September 1662, while living on Nantucket, Richard made a deposition in the case of William Fifield concerning a land matter at Hampton. In this document, Richard stated he was "aged about 67 years," thus confirming that he was born about 1595.1

The parish registers of Binfield begin in 1551 for baptisms and 1538 for marriages and burials. Bishops' Transcripts survive for many years of the early sev-

1 Old Norfolk Co., Mass., Deeds, transcript, 1:250 [original, 1:160] [Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City, film #873,020].
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enteenth century. Between 1570 and 1600, three Richard Swaines were baptized at Binfield on the following dates:

- 26 March 1578
- 18 Aug. 1594
- 26 Sept. 1595

Richard Swaines were buried at Binfield between 1570 and 1649 on these dates:

- 26 March 1578
- 19 Aug. 1594

In none of the above entries are parents identified. The inclusion of parents' names in Binfield parish registers was not a general practice until about 1597. Nevertheless, it seems highly likely that the two Richard Swaine infants who were baptized in 1578 and 1594 are identical with the two Richard Swaines who were buried respectively on the day of baptism in 1578 and the day after baptism in 1594. No burial has been found for the Richard Swaine baptized in 1595. It seems most probable, therefore, that he is the ancestral Richard Swaine, who appeared in Binfield as a parent in 1620. Three additional generations of the Swaine family of Binfield have been identified in church and probate records.

1 ROBERT C SWAINE was born say 1497 and was buried at Binfield, Berkshire, on 16 March 1557 [1556/7]. Little is known about him. He was probably the Robert Swayne who witnessed the will of Nicholas Swayne of Binfield in 1556. The will mentions Nicholas's eldest son, John, and several minor children, whose names are not stated. Robert's estate was administered on 22 April 1558 by his son William. The estate was valued at £6 15s. 11d.

Only proven child of Robert Swaine; others are likely:

2 i WILLIAM B SWAINE, b. say 1527; m. JOAN (DEE) MILLER.

2 WILLIAM B SWAINE (Robert C), yeoman of Binfield, was born say 1527. He was buried there on 20 January 1609/[10] as William Swaine the elder. He married at Binfield on 20 April 1567, JOAN (DEE) MILLER, whose parents are unknown. She was buried at Binfield on 4 June 1601. Joan was first married to John Miller at Binfield on 20 November 1549. He was buried there on 20 December 1562. The will of John Miller of Binfield, dated 14 December 1562, proved on 24 April 1563, identifies his wife, Joan, and children Richard, Thomas, John, Margaret, and Elizabeth Miller. Other legatees included William "Swan," to whom he be-

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2 Binfield Bishops' Transcripts exist for 1607, 1613–20, 1622–23, 1625, 1631, 1634–35 [FHL film #1,279,450, item 25].

3 Except as noted, all baptisms, marriages, and burials of Binfield were extracted from Binfield parish registers [FHL film #88,220].

4 Archdeaconry Court of Berkshire, original wills, Batell, folio 186 [FHL film #88,114].

5 Archdeaconry Court of Berkshire, administrations, l:99 [FHL film #88,093].
queathed a heifer. William Swayne also witnessed the will. Richard Dee, probably a relative of his wife, was one of the overseers.6

From his frequent appointment as overseer, William Swaine seems to have been well respected in the parish of Binfield. William Swayne and John Swayne, “my cosens,” were named overseers in the will of John Swayne of Binfield in 1573.7 The two cousins may have been brothers. Among the children mentioned in the will of John Swayne was a son Francis Swayne. William Swayne and his apparent stepson, John Miller, were appointed overseers of Francis’s will in 1592.8 Another John Swayne appointed William Swaine, the elder, “friend,” to oversee his will in 1601.9

The will of William Swaine, the elder, yeoman, dated 11 October 1609, proved on 21 April 1610, mentions only one son, William, but each of the children of this son is carefully identified in birth order, which greatly assists in matching the children with their appropriate baptismal entries.

In the name of god amen the Eleaventh daie of october in the yeare of our lord god one Thou-
sand Sixe hundred and nyne . . . I Willm Swayne thelder of the p[ar]ishe of Binfield in the counti-
ety of Berks yeoman beinge diseased in bodie neverthelesse of p[er]fecte mynde and memorie thanks
be given to almighty god . . . . I make and ordeyne this my p[re]sente testam ‘ conteyning herin m y
last will in manner and fourme followinge (that is to say) Firste and principally I bequeathe &
comende my soule to allmighty god my creato’ and maker and to his sonne Jesus christe my sav-
mour and only redeem’. . . . It[em] I give unto William Swayne sonne of William my sonne being
my godchild one flock bedd the best wth a bedstead and bolster covelott and one paier of sheetes
and other furniture nowe [illegible] wth the same bedd (one brasse pott) my yron kytle my yonge
mare nowe called the Inne mare and one Ewe sheepe/ It[em] I give unto Richard Swaine seconde
sonne of William my said sonne two Ewe sheepe one paier of sheetes and my best chafier and
great brasen candlestick It[em] I give unto Edward Swaine the thirde sonne of my saide sonne
two of my best sheepe my lytle brasse pott and one paier of sheetes/ It[em] I give unto Francis the
fowerths sonne of my said sonne and Grace Swayne the youngest daughter of willm my sonne one
heifer Bullock and eache of them one sheepe and eache of them a brasen chafier the beste and
eache of them one paier of sheetes It[em] [I] give unto Elizabeth Swayne daughter of willm my
said sonne one paier of sheetes and one sheepe and one brasen chafier It[em] I give unto the poore
of Binfield aforesaid the some of xx wth my will is shalbe bestowed uppon suche as have most
[illegible] on the daie of my buriall The rest of my goods chattells ymplem ’ and howshold move-
able & enmoveables whatsoev’ I wholly give unto William my sonne whome I make my full ex-
cetu’ he seing my debts and legacies paid and funarall expences discharged. And I make Thomas
Vayrie and Thomas Atwaters my neighbours my overseers. And for their paines they are to take
herin I give them xiiid apeece In testimony wherof I have caused this my last will to be made and
hau e herunto put my hande and seale the daie and yeare First above wrytten

m3 sealed and also declared to be the last will
of the said William Swaine in the p[re]sents of
John Lichfield

the seal and mark of the said willm

Swayne

X

[seal]

6 Archdeaconry Court of Berkshire, registered wills, D:365 [FHL film #88,095].
7 Archdeaconry Court of Berkshire, registered wills, F:414 [FHL film #88,097].
8 Archdeaconry Court of Berkshire, registered wills, I:45–46 [FHL film #88,099].
9 Archdeaconry Court of Berkshire, registered wills, J:688 [FHL film #88,100].
The estate of William Swaine was inventoried at £35 9s. 2d., but the actual inventory is missing from the probate file.\(^\text{11}\)

Child of William and Joan (Dee) (Miller) Swayne:

3 i WILLIAM\(^\text{3}\) SWAINE, bp. Binfield, 13 Aug. 1567; m. (ELIZABETH?) —.

3 WILLIAM\(^\text{3}\) SWAINE (William\(^\text{b}\), Robert\(^\text{c}\)) was baptized at Binfield on 13 August 1567 and was buried there on 8 June 1630. There is no definitive identification of William’s wife, but she may have been named ELIZABETH. The undated will of Jane Watelton of Binfield, proved on 16 February 1591/2\(^\text{2}\), makes a bequest to William Swayne, the younger, of “my cheste being at my masters w[ith] all that was in it.” This bequest was followed by another to Elizabeth Swayne. The possibility exists that Jane Watelton is the sister of Elizabeth Swayne, but research into the Watleton family has yet to confirm this theory. Jane also gave to “Harre” Swayne, whose connection to William is unknown.\(^\text{12}\)

William was one of the churchwardens of Binfield in 1616, signing the parish register and the Bishops’ Transcript with a firm hand. His signature suggests he was an educated man. No record of probate has been found for William\(^\text{3}\) Swaine, but his children are identified in the will of his father and in Binfield parish registers.

Children of William\(^\text{3}\) Swaine, all baptized at Binfield except the youngest daughter:

i WILLIAM SWAINE, bp. 23 April 1592; m. ELIZABETH — before 1636, when a child was bp. at Binfield; mentioned in his grandfather’s will.


iii RICHARD\(^\text{4}\) SWAINE, bp. 26 Sept. 1595; m. (1?) BASIL —, (2?) JANE (—) BUNKER; mentioned in his grandfather’s will.

iv ELIZABETH SWAINE, bp. 11 Jan 1597/8, “daughter of Willm Swaine Jun”; m. Binfield, 27 Aug. 1621, HENRY ROGERS. She was mentioned in her grandfather’s will.

v EDWARD SWAINE, bp. 1 June 1600, “son of Willm Swaine Junior”; m. Binfield, 29 April 1630, JOAN — [surname not stated]. He was mentioned in his grandfather’s will.

vi FRANCIS SWAINE, bp. 24 April 1603, “son of Willm Swaine the youger”; m. Binfield, 26 March 1638, ANNE REEVE. He was mentioned in his grandfather’s will.

vii MARGARET SWAINE, bp. 6 April 1606, “daughter of Willm Swaine,” no burial found, probably d. before 11 Oct. 1609 (not mentioned in her grandfather’s will).

viii GRACE SWAINE, called “youngest daughter of willm my sonne” in her grandfather’s will. No further record found.

4 RICHARD\(^\text{4}\) SWAINE (William\(^\text{4}\)-H, Robert\(^\text{c}\)) was baptized at Binfield on 26 September 1595 and died on Nantucket Island on 14 April 1682.\(^\text{13}\) Richard’s first

\(^{11}\) Archdeaconry Court of Berkshire, original wills, Berkshire Record Office, D/A1/107/40. The registered copy of this will (L:42 [FHL film #88,102]) is in poor condition because of severe bleed-through and is illegible in many places.

\(^{12}\) Archdeaconry Court of Berkshire, registered wills, 1:18 [FHL film #88,099]. A Henry Swayne was baptized at Binfield on 4 Nov. 1556. He may have been a brother of William\(^\text{3}\) Swaine.

\(^{13}\) Nantucket Vital Records [original], 1:3 [FHL film #906,220].
proven wife was BASILL —. No record of this wife has been found prior to 5 October 1634, when their son John Swaine was baptized at Easthamstead. There may have been a previous wife.\textsuperscript{14} Basill died at Hampton, New Hampshire, on 15 July 1657.\textsuperscript{15} Richard next married at Hampton on 15 September 1658, JANE (—) BUNKER, widow of George Bunker of Topsfield, Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{16} She died at Nantucket on 31 October 1662.\textsuperscript{17}

It has sometimes been stated that Richard emigrated on the Truelove from London to New England in September 1635.\textsuperscript{18} However, the name on this list is actually Richard "Srayne."\textsuperscript{19} Moreover, this Richard was listed as 34 years old, making him too young to be the Hampton settler if the age is accurately reported. Ages on these lists are notoriously inaccurate, however. In any event, Richard’s two eldest sons—William, age 16, and Francis, age 14—arrived in New England on the Rebecca in April 1635.\textsuperscript{20} It is likely that Richard emigrated near this time.

Savage states that Richard\textsuperscript{1} Swaine settled first at Rowley, but he has doubt confused our Richard with a Richard Swan who settled in that place.\textsuperscript{21} The first evidence of Richard Swaine found to date in New England records is on 6 September 1638, when the Massachusetts General Court granted the petition of the Rev. Stephen Bachiler of Newbury and others, including Richard Swaine, to establish a plantation at Winnacunnet.\textsuperscript{22} Settlement of Winnacunnet was begun in

\textsuperscript{14} The marriage of Richard Swayne and Sara Bisco on 8 Dec. 1617 has been found in the parish registers of nearby Wargrave, Berkshire [FHL film #1,040,709]. No children are recorded for Richard Swaine at Wargrave, and no further record of Sara has been found. It is unclear whether this marriage belongs to the immigrant.


\textsuperscript{16} Hampton VRs, 1:74, 555. The wife is called Jane “Godfrey” in James Savage, A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, . . . , 4 vols. (Boston, 1860–62), 1:299 (hereafter cited as Savage, Gen. Dict. of N.E.). I have seen no proof for this assertion. She is sometimes identified as the Elizabeth Godfrey who married George Bunker at Maulden, Beds., 5 May 1644. See Henry L. Bunker, Bunker Family History (Sanibel, Fla., 1984), 80. The leap from Elizabeth to Jane is, however, left unexplained.

\textsuperscript{17} Nantucket Vital Records [original] 1:1.


\textsuperscript{19} John Camden Hotten, The Original Lists of Persons of Quality . . . 1600–1700 (London, 1874), 132 (hereafter cited as Hotten, Original Lists). The list itself was recently reexamined by Robert Charles Anderson, FASG, who confirms the spelling of the name as Srayne.

\textsuperscript{20} Hotten, Original Lists, 54.


October 1638. The name of the town was changed to Hampton [New Hampshire] in 1639. Richard's settlement at Newbury was probably of short duration. He is not mentioned in the town records. Shortly before leaving for Winnacunnett, he had a daughter Elizabeth baptized at Newbury on 9 October 1638. The event was recorded in Hampton town records.

On 13 March 1638/9, Richard Swaine and several other Hampton grantees were made freemen of the Massachusetts colony. Winnacunnet was granted township status by the General Court on 22 May 1639, at which time Richard Swaine was appointed one of the commissioners to end small causes (under 20s.). On his deeds at Hampton, he is called a planter or husbandman. He was probably not an educated man, his signatures being made by mark.

Richard held extensive tracts of land at Hampton. On 24 December 1639, he was granted 100 acres. The following 15 July he was granted ten acres for a house lot, twelve acres of fresh meadow, and fifteen acres of planting ground in the south field. Ten more acres in the south field were granted on 14 September 1640. Ten parcels of land totaling over 195 acres are listed for Richard Swaine in an undated entry in the town records. He was also granted thirty acres of land at Exeter on 4 November 1647. The property bordered the land of his sons Francis and Nicholas, who had settled there.

Richard Swaine held several civil positions in the town of Hampton. On 31 October 1639, he was appointed a lot layer [surveyor] for one year. He was chosen hayward and pound keeper on 24 May 1641. On 2 April 1650, Richard was appointed a prudential man [selectman] for the town of Hampton. He served on the jury of trials at Salisbury in 1650 and on the grand jury at Salisbury in 1653. Richard was a member of the committee to determine an equitable way of assessing land values at Hampton in 1654. He was paid 18s. for taking the county votes to Boston in 1658.

Court records show that Richard Swaine had occasional difficulties with his neighbors. On 26 September 1648 at a court held in Hampton, Richard and several other men were charged with trespass by Robert Hethersay. Richard and his son-in-law Nathaniel Bouller sued Robert Lord for unjust molestation at the same court. On 13 April 1652, Richard Swaine brought suit against John Marian and

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22 Hampton VRs, 1:3.
24 Hampton VRs, 1:259.
25 Hampton Town Records 1:40, 43, 48, 249 [FHL film #15,159]; citations to this source refer to the modern stamped page numbers.
26 Exeter, N.H., Town Records 1:176 [FHL film #15,135].
29 Hampton Town Records 1:83, 485, 487.
Edward Colcord for trespass, stating that they had mowed his meadow and carried away the hay and endeavored to alter the title of his land. The verdict was for the plaintiff, but Marion sued Swaine in 1654 for unjust molestation about a parcel of meadow land. Henry Green brought a defamation suit against Richard Swaine on 5 October 1652 for reporting that Green had “attempted the chastity of Bassill Swaine [Richard’s wife] and used beastly and unseemly carriages and temptations toward Grace Boulter [Richard’s daughter].” The suit was withdrawn.  

Richard Swaine was released from military training in 1653 but was required to pay 4s. annually to the company.  

On 2 July 1659, Thomas Mayhew of Martha’s Vineyard sold his rights to the island of Nantucket to Tristram Coffin Sr., Thomas Macy, Richard Swaine, Thomas Barnard, Peter Coffin, Christopher Hussey, Stephen Greenleaf, John Swaine, and William Pile. Mayhew retained a one-twentieth right to the island.  

On 18 October 1659, arrest warrants were issued by the General Court for eight men charged with entertaining Quakers. Among the group were two of the Nantucket proprietors—Richard Swaine and Thomas Macy. For his part in the affair, Richard Swaine was fined £3 and disenfranchised on 12 November 1659.  

Richard Swaine, his wife Jane, and sons John and Richard apparently removed to Nantucket by 16 October 1661, when Richard, “late of Hampton,” sold several parcels of his Hampton lands to Benjamin Swett of Newbury.  

On 2 July 1663, Richard purchased William Pile’s one-tenth share in the Nantucket patent for the sum of £40. Four days later, Richard deeded half of his latest purchase to his son-in-law Nathaniel Boulter for £20. One Nantucket historian claimed that Richard “never held any town office [at Nantucket] but performed labor for the town in relationship to sheep and cattle.” This is not entirely accurate. In 1664 Richard Swaine was chosen surveyor of highways for the ensuing year.  

Richard Swaine left no will. He executed three deeds on 28 February 1676/7, which effectually disposed of his property on Nantucket. To Thomas Look and

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30 Essex Co. Court Records, 1:149, 151, 252, 269, 369.  
31 Essex Co. Court Records, 1:282.  
32 Nantucket Co., Mass., Deeds 1:1 [FHL film #906,232]. This deed and other early records of Nantucket are published verbatim in Alexander Starbuck, The History of Nantucket (Boston, 1924), 18–23.  
33 Shurtleff, Mass. Bay Records, 4 pt. 1:390, 406–7. According to Gen. Dict. Maine & N.H., 669, the Hampton church excommunicated Richard Swaine as a Quaker in May 1668; George Freeman Sanborn Jr., FASG, and several others have searched unsuccessfully for this record, which may possibly be a misinterpretation of the 1659 court action.  
34 Old Norfolk Co. Deeds, transcript, 2:104 [original, 2:86] [FHL film #873,020].  
35 Old Norfolk Co. Deeds, transcript, 1:241–42 [original, 1:154].  
his wife, he made a deed of gift of several parcels of land for the service he rendered to Richard and his son Richard “in providing for us, washing our clothes,” and other acts of charity. Thomas Look had joined with Richard Swaine as a partner in the Nantucket venture. It was perhaps in 1662, when Richard became a widower with a young child, that this extraordinary service was rendered to the Swaine family. The balance of the Nantucket lands was divided between Richard’s sons John and Richard, who paid £29 each. Richard Swaine Jr., the youngest son, received the dwelling house, barn, and outbuildings.

Children of Richard Swaine and his [first?] wife Basill (—):

i William Swaine, b. ca. 1619. He arrived in Boston on the Rebecca in 1635, age 16. William is identified as a son of Richard Swaine of Hampton to Hezekiah Swaine, “my grandchild my son Williams eldest sonne,” on 22 April 1658. William d. at sea: “The sad hand of God upon Eight p[er]sons going in a vessell by sea from Hampton to boston who were all swallowed up in the ocian some after ther ware out of the Harbour.” He m. ca. 1649, Prudence Marston, daughter of William Marston of Hampton. She m. (2) Hampton, 16 June 1658, Moses Cox.

ii Francis Swaine, bp. Binfeld, Berks., 25 Jan. 1620/1. He arrived in Boston on the Rebecca in 1635, age 14. Francis d. probably at Newtown, Queens Co., Long Island, before 11 April 1665, when his estate was administered. He m. Martha —, who m. (2) Caleb Leverich.

iv  GRACE SWAINE, bp. Easthamstead, 25 Feb. 1627/8; m. ca. 1647, NATHANIEL Boul
ter.45
v  RICHARD SWAINE, bp. Easthamstead, 6 March 1630/1, bur. there, 29 Aug. 1633.
vi  JOHN SWAINE, bp. Easthamstead, 5 Oct. 1634,50 d. Nantucket, before 27 Jan. 1717/8,
when his will was proved.51 He m. Hampton, 15 Nov. 1660, MARY WEARE, daughter
of Nathaniel1 Weare of Hampton.52
1712/3.54 She m. Newbury, 3 Dec. 1656, NATHANIEL2 WEARE, son of Nathaniel1
Weare of Hampton.55

Child of Richard Swaine and his [second?] wife Jane (—):

viii  RICHARD SWAINE, b. Hampton, 13 Jan. 1659/60,56 d. intestate, Cape May, N.J., be-
fore 6 Oct. 1706, when Jonathan Swaine made an accounting of his father's estate.57

During the final phase of research on this project, I was contacted by another researcher, who
stated that he had found the origin of Richard1 Swaine many years ago and was in the process of
compiling a book about the family. Since the Swaine origin was independently investigated by
two researchers, a collaboration seemed to be the most logical and productive process for produc-
ing the best possible treatise on the family. However, my correspondent declined an invitation to
collaborate on a joint article on the Swaine origins on the grounds that his publishing contrac-
tprohibited the release of details prior to publication of his forthcoming book. With no real knowl-
dge of what my correspondent had discovered, and because he expressed doubts that the father of
immigrant Richard Swaine could be confidently identified, I decided to proceed with the present
article. All who are interested in the Swaine ancestry are invited to use these findings to furthe-
r their own investigation of the family.

Clifford L. Stott (840 E. Heather Rd., Orem UT 84097), a Contributing Editor of
TAG, is a professional genealogist and the author of numerous articles concern-
ing the English origins of New England families.

45  Nathaniel Boulter is called son-in-law in a power of attorney from Richard Swaine, 4 Sept.
1660 (Old Norfolk Co. Deeds, transcript, 1:242 [original, 1:155]). Nathaniel Boulter and his wife
Grace had children born at Exeter and Hampton, 1648–72. For Nathaniel1 Boulter and his family,
50  The entry in Easthamstead Bishops' Transcript adds the name of his mother, Basill, which
is not included in the parish register entry [FHL film #1,279,456, item 23].
51  Hampton VRs, 1:74, 556; see also Gen. Dict. Maine & N.H., 726, and the inconclusive in-
vestigation of Nathaniel1 Weare's English origin in Eben Putnam, "Some Notes Regarding the
Weare Arms, the Weares of Devonshire, England, and the Weares of Massachusetts," Putnam's
52  Hampton VRs, 1:3; "at Newbury."
53  Hampton VRs, 1:125.
55  Vital Records of Newbury, Massachusetts to the End of the Year 1849, 2 vols. (Salem,
Mass., 1911), 2:472.
56  Hampton VRs, 1:93.
57  Abstracted in New Jersey Archives, 1st series, 23(Newark, N.J., 1901):449–50.