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CAPT. JONATHAN SPARROW'S WIVES AND THEIR CHILDREN

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CAPTAIN JONATHAN² SPARROW (*Richard*¹) of Eastham was married three times. His first wife was Rebecca² Bangs (*Edward*¹); his second wife was Hannah (Prence) Mayo, the widow of Nathaniel² Mayo (*John*¹) of Eastham; and his third wife was Sarah (Lewis) Cobb, the widow of James² Cobb (*Henry*¹) of Barnstable.

There were no children by the third wife; but there were eight children by the wives Rebecca and Hannah; and the second wife, Hannah (Prence) (Mayo) Sparrow, was a daughter of Gov. Thomas Prence by his first wife, Patience² Brewster (*William*¹). It is very important, therefore, that the children by the wife Hannah should be positively identified.

The necessity for positive identification has been greatly increased by the many serious errors printed about the children of Hannah (Prence) (Mayo) Sparrow in the first volume of the Brewster Genealogy, published in New York in 1908. On page 22 of that volume the compiler gives what purports to be a list of the children of Hannah Prence by her two husbands, Nathaniel Mayo and Jonathan Sparrow. Three of the Sparrow children there given, Jonathan, Elizabeth and Lydia, were by Jonathan Sparrow's first wife, Rebecca Bangs, and have no place in a Brewster Genealogy.

The names of Hannah's six children by Nathaniel Mayo are correctly stated in the Brewster Genealogy, but it contains errors in regard to all of them except the daughter Hannah. Thomas was born 7 Dec., 1650, not "1650-1",* and his wife

* Double dating was used only in the months of January, February and March.

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Barbara was born at Eastham, not at Plymouth. Nathaniel was born 16 Nov., 1652, not "1652-3"*; he died 30, not 3 November; he married in January, not in "June"; his wife's name was Elizabeth, not "Elisa". Theophilus was born 17, not "12" Dec., 1659. All of these births were correctly printed, in 1852, in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register, and again, in 1857, in the Plymouth Colony Records. They have also been copied by myself from the original records. The marriage and death of Nathaniel, taken from the original records, were printed in our January, 1902, issue, and the reading "Jenuarie" proves that the marriage did not take place in "June".

The Brewster Genealogy [p. 22] gives Hannah (Prence) Mayo's son Samuel only six children, but his will proves that he had at least five daughters who married, and at least two sons who survived their father.

The statement in the Brewster Genealogy that Hannah (Prence) Mayo's daughter Bathsheba, who was born in December, 1661, or very early in 1662, married Thomas Freeman, who was nearly fifteen years younger than herself, is also an error. Thomas Freeman⁶ (*Thomas⁴, Mercy Prence³, Patience² Brewster, William¹*), born 11 Oct., 1676, married, 22 Aug., 1706, Bathsheba Mayo⁵ (*Nathaniel⁴, Hannah Prence³, Patience² Brewster, William¹*), who was born 23 Sep., 1683, and died 9 Jan'y, 1706/7, evidently without issue. Her death record calls her "the wife of Thomas ffreeman and Daughter of Nathaniel Mayo", and it is recorded with the family of Nathaniel and Elizabeth (Wixam) Mayo, her parents. The wife of Thomas Freeman⁶ was a granddaughter, not a daughter of Hannah (Prence) Mayo.

The Brewster Genealogy [p. 22] claims that Hannah (Prence) Mayo had by her second husband, Capt. Jonathan Sparrow, five children, viz: Jonathan, Elizabeth, Patience, Richard and Lydia, but only two of these, Richard and Patience, were her children. The others were children of Rebecca Bangs, and were not descended from Elder Brewster.

For convenient reference, Capt. Jonathan Sparrow's children and their mothers are here given :

CHILDREN OF CAPT. JONATHAN AND REBECCA

Rebecca Sparrow, born 30 Oct., 1655, died in Feb., 1740; married 31 Dec., 1673, Thomas Freeman⁴ (*Mercy Prence³, Patience² Brewster, William¹*).

* Double dating was used only in the months of January, February and March.

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John Sparrow, born 2 Nov., 1656, died 23 Feb., 1734/5; married 5 Dec., 1683, Apphia Tracy.

Priscilla Sparrow, born 13 Feb., 1658, died before 10 Mch., 1706/7; married Edward Gray.*

Lydia Sparrow, born after 19 Nov., 1660, died after 16 Mch., 1708/9; married (1st), after 1675, but before 1684, William Freeman⁴ (*Mercy Prence², Patience² Brewster, William¹*); married (2d), probably about 1696, Jonathan Higgins⁴ (*Elizabeth² Rogers, Joseph², Thomas¹*).

Elizabeth Sparrow, born after 19 Nov., 1660, but before 1670; died after 31 Aug., 1688, but before 1694; married 5 Feb., 1684, Samuel Freeman.

Jonathan Sparrow, born 9 July, 1665, died 9 Mch., 1739/40; married (1st), Rebecca Merrick⁴ (*Abigail² Hopkins, Gyles², Stephen¹*); married (2d), Sarah (— †) Young, widow of Henry.

CHILD OF CAPT. JONATHAN

Richard Sparrow, born 17 Mch., 1669/70, died in infancy. (Probably by Hannah, but the evidence is not conclusive.)

CHILDREN OF CAPT. JONATHAN AND HANNAH

Patience Sparrow, born before 25 Oct., 1675, died 25 Oct., 1745; married (1st), 27 May, 1691, Joseph Paine⁴ (*Mary Snow², Constance² Hopkins, Stephen¹*); married (2d), 23 Nov., 1715, John Jenkins.

Richard Sparrow, born about 1675, died 13 Apl., 1728; married, 4 Feb., 1701/2, Mercy Cobb, daughter of his father's third wife.

Fifty-nine years ago David Hamblen, in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register [Vol. VII, page 280; Boston, 1853], stated that Jonathan Sparrow had children: Rebecca, John, Priscilla, "Mary, b. 10 March, 1659; Aphthia, b. 11 Dec., 1660, d. 19 Feb., 1660-1;" Jonathan and Richard. Mary and "Aphthia" were not Jonathan Sparrow's children, and their assignment to his family was the result of a very careless error. Mary was the daughter of Daniel Cole, and "Aphthia" was the daughter of Samuel Freeman, as will be seen by an examination of the following entries, copied from the original Plymouth Colony Records of "Marriages, Births and Burials".

[M. B. B., p. 32] "Rebeckah the Daughter of Jonathan Sparrow was borne the 30th of october 1655

* This was not the Edward Gray, of Plymouth, who married Mary Winslow² (*Mary² Chilton, James¹*).

† See note on page 256, for possible descent from Stephen¹ Hopkins.

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John the son of Jonathan Sparrow was borne the 2nd of November 1656

Presilla the Daughter of Jonathan Sparrow was borne the 13th of february 1658

Apthia the Daughter of Samuell freeman was borne the 11th of December 1660:

Apthia the Daughter of Samuell freeman Deceased the 19th of february 1660:

Mary the Daughter of Daniel Cole was borne the 10th of March 1658"

[M. B. B., p. 59] "Jonathan Sparrow the son of Jonathan Sparrow was borne the 9th of July 1665

Richard Sparrow the son of Jonathan Sparrow was borne the 17th of March : 1669-70 "

Bearing in mind the fact that, for the months of January, February and March, Mr. Hamblen changed the year to new style, the dates given by him for an "Apthia Sparrow" are exactly those recorded for Samuel Freeman's daughter "Apthia"; and the date given by him for a "Mary Sparrow" is exactly that recorded for Daniel Cole's daughter Mary.

It is evident that Mr. Hamblen, in copying the list of Jonathan Sparrow's children, failed to notice the changes in the surnames. Confirmation of this explanation of the cause of the error is found in the similar errors in Mr. Hamblen's "Births, Marriages and Deaths of Provincetown, Mass.," published in 1854, in the next succeeding volume of the New England Historical and Genealogical Register. By reference to the literal copies of the entries in the oldest volume of the Provincetown records, printed by myself, in *The Mayflower Descendant*, it will be seen that Barnabas Briggs had children by two wives, Abigail and Phebe; also that Robert Wickson had children by two wives, Zuby and Deliverance.* Mr. Hamblen, in each case, gave all the children to the first wife, overlooking the second wife entirely, and a careful comparison of his copies with the original Provincetown records has disclosed more than fifty errors in his work as printed. There seems to be no doubt, therefore, that his error was responsible for the claim that Jonathan Sparrow had daughters Mary and Apphia. For more than ten years I have been on the watch for any evidence that Jonathan Sparrow ever had daughters of these names, and have found nothing in the records on which such a claim can be based; yet this error has been copied many times by later writers.

* See ante, Volume 12, pages 25 and 78.

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The birth dates of only five of Capt. Jonathan Sparrow's children have been found; the date of the death of his first wife, Rebecca (Bangs) Sparrow, is unknown; and the date of his second marriage, to the widow Hannah (Prence) Mayo, is also unknown. The conclusions presented in this article are the result of a minute examination of many hundreds of pages of original records: vital, probate and land records, court proceedings, town meeting and proprietors' records, church and gravestone records, and original papers in private hands, for any and every item of possible value in determining which children were by Rebecca, the first wife, and which were by Hannah, the second wife.

In the Plymouth Colony Marriages, Births and Burials [p. 16] we find the marriage, on 26 October, 1654, of Jonathan Sparrow and Rebecca Bangs; and the will of Edward Bangs, dated 19 October, 1677, mentions "my Grandchildren, viz: the children of my Daughter Rebekah Deceased" but does not give their names. [Plym. Col. Wills, 3 : 2 : 106]

As already stated, we have no record of the death of Rebecca (Bangs) Sparrow, or of Capt. Jonathan's second marriage, to the widow Hannah (Prence) Mayo; but, in the Plymouth Colony Court Orders [4 : 127], we find that on 5 June, 1666, "The Court have graunted unto Gyles hopkins; The widdow Mayo of Eastham and Jonathan Sparrow a Certaine psell of land neare Eastham being a smale necke of land Called Sampsons neck; and the wast land lying between the head of the ffresh water pond and the westerly bounds of the widdowe Mayoes land and soe Downe to the Cove"

In the Court Orders [4 : 147], under date of 5 June, 1667, we find: "In Reference unto The graunt of Land graunted unto Gyles hopkins Jonathan Sparrow and the widdow Mayo; the Court have ordered Leiftenant ffreeman either to purchase it or hier it for them as occation shall Require as hee shall see meet ;"

On the Eastham records, in a book labelled "Meetings 1650—1705" etc., we find six entries of Nathaniel Mayo's marks for horses. Two entries are dated 21 May, 1659, one on 5 April, 1661, one on 10 August, 1662, and two on 12 February, 1667. All are recorded together, on page 19 (with the book reversed), and the last three are of especial significance, as Nathaniel Mayo died between 19 December, 1661, and 4 March, 1661/2. His son Nathaniel was born in 1652, therefore these entries must refer to the father, and would indicate that the

estate, which by the terms of Nathaniel's will was to be divided at his widow's second marriage, was still undivided.

As Hannah (Prence) Mayo was the only "widdow Mayo" in Eastham, these two court records and the entries of marks for horses prove that she did not marry Jonathan Sparrow until after 5 June, 1667, and she probably did not do so until after 12 February, 1667/8. The date 5 June, 1667, is the latest direct reference to Hannah as a widow. The next time she appears on the records is on 11 September, 1671, when "Jonathan Sparrow and Hannah his wife" acknowledged a deed before John Freeman. [Plym. Col. Deeds, 5 : 257.]

It is certain, therefore, that all of Jonathan Sparrow's children born before February, 1667/8, must have been by his first wife, Rebecca Bangs, and that all children born after 11 September, 1671, were by his second wife, Hannah (Prence) Mayo.

Only one child, Richard, born 17 March, 1669/70, is recorded between these two dates. Who was his mother? Although this question cannot at this time be answered with absolute certainty, it makes very little difference, since we can prove by recorded deeds that Capt. Jonathan Sparrow, by his second wife, Hannah, had a son Richard, who survived his mother many years. The town records state that Richard Sparrow died 13 April, 1728, and the gravestone at Orleans adds the statement that he was "Aged 53 Years." If the age on the stone is correct, the son Richard born 17 March, 1669/70, must have died in infancy, and the son Richard who married Mercy Cobb was born about 1675, and named for his deceased brother.

The will of Gov. Thomas Prence [Ante, 3 : 203], dated 13 March, 1672, gives certain lands in Middleborough to his grandson Theophilus Mayo and to his granddaughter Susanna Prence (daughter of his deceased son Thomas Prence) and provides that if either dies without issue his or her share shall "Revert unto, and be equally Devided between my Daughters . . . or their heires . . . The Remainder of My estate my will is shalbe equally Devided to my seaven Daughters, hannah, Marcye Jane Mary Elizabeth, Sarah and Judith, and my above mentioned Grandchild Susanna Prence"

Both of these grandchildren, Theophilus Mayo [son of Nathaniel and Hannah (Prence) Mayo] and Susanna Prence, died without issue, and the numerous transfers and subdivisions of their shares of the land in Middleborough, which are recorded in the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, are invaluable in tracing the descendants of these "seaven Daughters" of Gov. Prence.

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On 17 May, 1706, Joseph Paine and his wife Patience, of Harwich, and Richard Sparrow, of Eastham, sold to Thomas Mayo, Nathaniel Mayo and Samuel Mayo, all of Eastham, "All that our Right which We y^e s^d Joseph Paine Patience Paine and Richard Sparrow have or ought to have in and to all Manner of Lands whether divided or undivided in the Township of Middleborough . . . Which s^d Right originally descended from our Honoured Grandfather Thomas Prence Esq^r deceased Unto Our Honoured Mother Hannah Sparrow Daughter of y^e aboves^d Thomas Prence Esq^r also deceased" The deed was not recorded until 28 May, 1734. [Plym. Co. Deeds, 29 : 2]

The dates of birth of the four children, Rebecca, John, Priscilla and Jonathan Sparrow, show that they were by the first wife, Rebecca Bangs; and this deed proves that Richard and Patience were by the second wife, Hannah (Prence) Mayo. It now remains to determine which wife was the mother of Lydia and Elizabeth.

The will of Richard Sparrow [Ante, 12 : 57], dated 19 November, 1660, and proved the following March, mentions his grandchildren, Rebecca, John and Priscilla Sparrow. The fact that no other grandchildren are named does not prove that there were no others, but the way in which these three are mentioned gives the impression that they were the only grandchildren living, and nothing has been found to indicate that either Lydia or Elizabeth had been born before that date. As the sons Jonathan (1665) and Richard (1670) were both recorded at one time, it is not probable that any child was born between these two; and neither Lydia nor Elizabeth could have been born after 1670, since Lydia was married before 1685 and Elizabeth married on 5 February, 1684.

Thomas Howes of Yarmouth married Sarah^a Bangs (*Edward¹*), a sister of Rebecca (Bangs) Sparrow, and in his will dated 15 January, 1675/6, we find the following clause: "I give to Elizabeth the Daughter of my brother Sparrow which liveth in my family the sume of fifteen pounds; and in case shee Die before shee be married or attaine to twenty years of age then her Legacye to returne to my Daughters;" [Ante, 6 : 161]. The will of Sarah Howes, widow of Thomas, dated 26 February, 1682/3, contains the following provision: "Elyzabeth Sparrow y^e now Dwells with me shall have twenty shillings of my estate" [Ante, 6 : 163]. The will of Thomas Howes proves that Elizabeth Sparrow was born after 15 January, 1655/6, and her brother John was born 2 November, 1656, therefore she must have been born after October, 1657, and she probably was born

after 19 November, 1660, the date of her grandfather Sparrow's will.

As Elizabeth Sparrow married Samuel Freeman on 5 February, 1684, we must assume that she was born at least as early as February, 1669; and the fact that she is not called under age in the will of Sarah Howes indicates that she was born before 26 February, 1665/6, that is, more than a year before Hannah (Prence) Mayo could have married Capt. Jonathan Sparrow.

If Elizabeth Sparrow had been a daughter of Hannah (Prence) (Mayo) Sparrow, she could not have been born until 1668, at the very earliest, and it would certainly be very strange for Jonathan Sparrow, one of the prominent men of Eastham, to give the first daughter of his second wife to the sister of his deceased first wife, to be brought up at Yarmouth. If this child had been Hannah's, and there had been any necessity for relieving her of its care, it would have been more natural to give the child to Hannah's own sister, Mercy, the wife of Maj. John Freeman, to be brought up in Eastham, where the child's parents resided. In view of all the known facts in the case there is but one conclusion possible — that Elizabeth was a daughter of the wife Rebecca, and after her mother's death was taken by her aunt Sarah (Bangs) Howes.

Jonathan Sparrow's daughter Lydia married William Freeman⁴ (*Mercy Prence*³, *Patience*² *Brewster*, *William*¹), who died in 1686 leaving at least two children, a son William and a daughter Lydia. The son William's gravestone shows that he was born about 1685, and his sister Lydia was old enough on 4 February, 1701/2, to marry Richard Godfrey. As Lydia Sparrow was certainly married before 1685, and probably before 1684, and as she was not recorded when Jonathan, born 1665, and Richard, born 1670, were recorded, she probably was born before 1665. The definite proof, however, that Lydia Sparrow was not a daughter of Hannah (Prence) (Mayo) Sparrow is found in the conveyances of the various subdivisions of Hannah's share in the Gov. Prence lands at Middleborough, to which reference has already been made.

Hannah (Prence) Mayo had three Mayo sons older than Theophilus, who was mentioned in Gov. Prence's will and died without issue. Thomas was born in 1650 and died in 1729, leaving sons Thomas, Theophilus, Richard and Israel. Nathaniel was born in 1652 and died in 1709, leaving sons Nathaniel and Elisha. Samuel was born in 1655 and died in 1738, four years after Hannah's share of the Prence lands had been sold out of the family by her heirs.

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On 11 July, 1711, this son Samuel Mayo bought from Arthur and Elizabeth (Prence) Howland Elizabeth's one-seventh of the Gov. Prence lands. [Plym. Co. Deeds, 7 : 369]

As already stated, Patience (Sparrow) Paine and her brother Richard Sparrow had sold their rights in the Gov. Prence lands, in 1706, to their half brothers, Thomas Mayo, Nathaniel Mayo and Samuel Mayo.

No other conveyance of any portion of Hannah (Prence) (Mayo) Sparrow's one-seventh part of these lands is found until 29 March, 1734. On this date, as shown by the deed printed at the end of this article, Hannah's son Samuel, her grandsons Thomas, Theophilus, Richard and Israel (all sons of Thomas deceased) and her grandson Nathaniel (son of Nathaniel deceased) unite in conveying to Dr Cornelius Bennett of Barnstable the whole of Elizabeth (Prence) Howland's one-seventh of the Prence lands and all but one-half of one-third of Hannah (Prence) (Mayo) Sparrow's one-seventh. This deed states that the land therein conveyed had come into the possession of the grantors in three ways : by purchase from Arthur and Elizabeth (Prence) Howland, by purchase from Richard Sparrow and Patience (Sparrow) Paine, and by inheritance "from our s^d Grand & great Grand Father Thomas Prence Esq^r"

In another deed, dated 1 July, 1734, Elisha Mayo of Middleborough, who was the youngest son of Hannah's second son Nathaniel, sold to Dr. Cornelius Bennett, the grantee in the deed of 29 March, 1734, one-sixth of one-seventh part of the Prence lands, that is, one-half of his father's one-third of Hannah's one-seventh. [Plym. Co. Deeds, 29 : 119]

In 1734, therefore, Dr. Cornelius Bennett bought the whole of Hannah (Prence) (Mayo) Sparrow's one-seventh part of the Gov. Prence lands from Mayo grantors, as follows : from Hannah's son Samuel Mayo, and from the sons of her deceased sons Thomas Mayo and Nathaniel Mayo. These Mayo grantors distinctly stated that their rights in Hannah's one-seventh came to them in two ways : through the purchase from Richard Sparrow and Patience (Sparrow) Paine, and by inheritance. No reference is made to any purchase from the heirs of Lydia (Sparrow) Freeman, or from the heirs of Elizabeth (Sparrow) Freeman. Descendants of both of these daughters of Capt. Jonathan Sparrow were living in 1734, when these two deeds were made, and they would have been joint heirs with the Mayos, if their mothers had been daughters of Hannah (Prence) (Mayo) Sparrow.

There is no question, therefore, that the only children of

Capt. Jonathan Sparrow by his second wife, the widow Hannah (Prence) Mayo, were Patience Sparrow, who married Joseph Paine, and Richard Sparrow, who married his step-sister, Mercy Cobb.

It is interesting to note, however, that three of Capt. Jonathan's children by his first wife, Rebecca Bangs, married descendants of Mayflower Passengers.

The deed of 29 March, 1734, referred to in this article, follows.

[MAYOS TO BENNETT — 1734]

“Samuel Mayo Thomas Mayo Theophilus Mayo Richard Mayo Israel Mayo & Nathaniel Mayo all of Eastham Yeomen Grand & Great Grand Children of our Hon^d Grand & Great Grandfather Thomas Prence Esq^r formerly Gov^r of New Plymouth now deceas^d” for £175 sold to “Cornelius Bennett of Barnstable Physician all our Rights & Interest in and to all y^e Lands lying in Middleborough Bridgewater & Places adjacent which every ways descended to us by Right from the Right originally of our s^d Deceased Grand & great Grand father Thomas Prence Esq^r . that is to Say all our Right as aboves^d in and to all that Parcell of Land being one hundred acres lying situate near Jon^a Cobbs Dwelling House on the Easterly Side Falbrook at or near Middleborough Together with all our s^d Right in and to that Parcell of Land lying on the Westerly Side of s^d Falbrook being two hundred acres. Together with all Our Right in & to one hundred acres more of Land lying at y^e Mouth of s^d Fall Brook Together wth our s^d Right in and to one hundred acres of land more lying on y^e North Side of y^e great River in the Town of Bridgewater Together with all our s^d Right in and to one whole Share of Land in the Sixteen Shilling Purchase Divided & undivided there being one Lot laid out to s^d Share in s^d Purchase being in number the fourty ninth Lot & lyeth on y^e North Side Taunton Road Together with all our s^d Right in and to one Lot of Land in assawamsett Neck being in number the twenty fifth Lot Containing twenty acres Together with all our s^d Right in and to two Lots of Land Called the South Purchase Each Lot containing fourty five acres the one being in number the Sixty fourth Lot and the other being in number the Hundred & thirty Seventh Lot Together with all the Right or Interest which We or either of Us have in and to all y^e above mentioned Parts & Parcells of Land by us or by either of Us Purchased Particularly that Purchased of Arthur Howland & his Wife Elizabeth by