
A SPECIAL COMPILATION OF THE
HISTORY AND GENEALOGY OF
RICHARD PLATT

BORN IN WARE, COUNTY HERTFORD, ENGLAND
&
ONE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF BOTH
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
AND
MILFORD CONNECTICUT

PREPARED FOR ATTENDEES TO THE
PLATT FAMILY ASSOCIATION REUNION
MILFORD, CONNECTICUT
JULY 11-13, 2003



Platt Coats of Arms

There are several known Platt Coat of Arms – at least 6 or 7 were granted to members of the family. The one shown above is taken from the 1891 Platt Lineage book as a representative Platt Coat of Arms. That design was adopted by our Platt Family Association, with the minor addition of the pair of scissors in recognition that the Platts of Ware, England were tailors.

PLEASE READ THIS PAGE!

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Why This Publication Was Produced

This publication has been compiled and published primarily for the use and benefit of the descendants of Richard Platt of Ware, England, and Milford, Connecticut, and in conjunction with the Annual Reunion of the descendants of Richard Platt held on July 11-13, 2003, and sponsored by the Platt Family Association headquartered at Milford, Connecticut. However, it is available for use by any other person or entity to whom it appears to be of interest.

The Nature Of The Contents Of This Publication

While most of the facts, historical accounts, and genealogy contained in this publication have already been published in one or more previous publications or works (see FORWARD section of this publication), or are readily available in the public domain, this document attempts to compile some of the brief and succinct elements of the genesis, genealogy, related places, and descendants of Richard Platt so that current and future descendants of this Platt Family Patriarch will have their own documentation of the most important facts and information on this important person from whom they are descended. The author makes full recognition that most of the material compiled in this publication has been derived and gleaned from other existing publications, references, and sources, and gives full credit to the authors of those works. Having done no more than read most parts of the main reference "Platt Genealogy", visited Milford, Connecticut, several times, talked with Richard N. Platt, Jr. of Milford (President of the Platt Family Association and an experienced genealogist), and made a brief visit to Ware, England, the birthplace of Richard Platt, the author admits to no expertise in genealogy. Only the desire to document the Richard Platt Family history for the benefit of my own Platt family (descendants most recently of Edward Franklin Platt, #145-111-14 in the Platt Genealogy book) motivated me to compile and produce this document. Hopefully, it will also prove interesting and valuable to other descendants of Richard Platt, our forefather from Ware, England.

Dates Shown In This Publication

All dates in this publication are shown as currently used in our modern world, known as the "new style" in the terminology of the genealogist. This stems from the fact that England was still using the Julian calendar in the 17th century (1600-1699), and under the "old style," as it was sometimes called, the new year came on 25 March, not the 1st of January. Thus, genealogy documentation would show that Richard and Mary were married 26 January 1628/29. This simply means 26 January 1628 "old style", or 26 January 1629 "new style." Britain did not adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1752, so dates before then,

between January and March, will usually have two years. For simplicity in reading and to avoid confusion for those not acquainted with the date system used in technical genealogy records, all dates in this publication are shown in the "new style" which correlates with the calendar we now use.

You Can Make Copies Of This Publication

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One Final Recommendation

Anyone reading this publication will hopefully realize the importance of our own genealogy and the history of our ancestors. To that end, I would strongly urge each of you to immediately set aside time and do a project to dig out, organize, and document all of the history you have of those family members from whom you are descended. There never seems enough time to do something like this, but if you don't, most of your family history and memorabilia will most likely appear as boxes of things about which none of your children or grandchildren have the knowledge of how, or motivation, to save and organize into a source of meaningful family history and genealogy information. Making a family project out of going through boxes of family pictures and items often creates a keener interest in family history for our children and grandchildren. I encourage you to take the time.

Alvin W. Platt
July 1, 2003

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PREFACE

This special publication on the history and genealogy of Richard Platt, originally from Ware, England, was prepared to document some of the more important and key information for the interest and use of the descendants of Richard Platt who are members of the Platt Family Association, as well as for their family members and friends.

Fortunately for us who are descendants of Richard Platt of Ware, England and Milford, Connecticut, much of the basic genealogical research regarding Richard Platt and his descendants has already been accomplished and documented in various publications and records. Most noteworthy of these references are

“The Platt Lineage”

compiled in 1891 by the Reverend George Lewis Platt

“The Descendants of Richard Platt”

an unpublished work by Alrick H. Man

Articles in 1954 and 1955 issues of the “The American Genealogist” titled

**“Richard Platt of Ware, County Hertford, England,
and Milford Connecticut”**

by John Insley Coddington

“Platt Genealogy”

Published in 1963 by Charles Platt, Jr.

The last of the above references is the most complete and current attempt to research and document the genealogy and descendants of Richard Platt of Ware, England. Ironically, this extensive genealogical research project was undertaken by the author, Charles Platt, Jr., under the assumption that his research would lead to the conclusion that he was descended from Richard Platt. Unfortunately, after all of his time and labor, in his research Charles was unable to prove any ancestral link between himself and Richard Platt. After publishing his book, Charles later concluded that he was indeed a descendant of Thomas Platt of Burlington, New Jersey, another major line of Platt descendants in America. Charles Platt is now deceased. Nonetheless, all descendants of Richard Platt should be thankful that Charles undertook his project and published a book on the results. His book was originally published in 1963 in hardback form as a private venture by Charles himself for sale primarily to interested Richard Platt descendants (like my parents), and none of those editions remain for sale. However, a second facsimile reproduction (not a typical “printing”) of the original book was produced and sold, in both hard and soft cover editions, by the Higginson Book Company in 1994. Copies of this second production of the Platt Genealogy can still be ordered from the Higginson Book Company by contacting

them at 148 Washington Street, Salem, Massachusetts 01970; phone number (978)745-7170.

One of the unfortunate elements of the existing genealogy research on Richard Platt of Ware, England, is the complete absence of any documented or organized information on the descendants of the rest of the Platt family into which Richard was born in Ware, England. A new interest has been activated for this quest by our cousin Richard N. Platt, Jr. of Milford, including assistance by some genealogists in England. So far, all that has been uncovered is a single Richard Platt descendant who now lives in England, but was born in the USA. Research will continue.

Many thanks also for the editorial and factual content help provided by cousin Richard N. Platt, Jr. (current President of our Platt Family Association) in producing this document. His knowledge of the entire history and genealogy of Richard Platt of Ware, England, as well as New Haven and Milford, Connecticut, far surpasses that which most of us could ever hope to achieve.

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Section 1

Details Of Richard's Life And Family

His Birth and Family

It is well documented that Richard Platt was born shortly before May 6, 1604 (the recorded date of his infant baptism), at Ware, County Hertford, England. Both his reputed grandfather, Simon Platt (1530 – 1594) and father, George Platt (1570-1609) were tailors by profession. There is no indication that Richard ever learned or practiced the trade of being a tailor.

Richard was baptized at St. Mary The Virgin church in Ware. A facsimile copy of the actual church baptismal record showing the baptism of “Richard Platte” (Platte is an oft used alternate spelling of Platt) is shown on the page 10. This church is still in use and in almost the identical structure and appearance as it was when Richard was baptized in 1604 (more information on this church is contained in Section 4 of this publication).

Married With Children - In England

Richard Platt was married to a local lady, Mary Wood, on January 26, 1629, at the town of Roydon, which is about four miles southeast of Ware. Richard and Mary started having children before they eventually departed to the new frontier in America in 1638, with sons John (born in 1632) and Isaac (born in 1633), plus daughters Mary (born in 1629) and Sarah (born in 1636); one other son, Samuel was born in 1634 but died a year later as an infant. There is no documented explanation of how Richard earned his livelihood while married and raising his family in England. However, it is assumed that he most likely lived the life of a farmer as that was the livelihood he pursued after coming to America.

Coming To America

As was the case for many of his countrymen, Richard most likely thought the new colonies in America offered a good or better life (already being married with children, I would assume that “adventure” was not a motivating factor for Richard to leave England for a new home in the American colonies). However, Richard's primary motivation for migrating to the new colonies in America most likely involved his religious beliefs. In his writings, Coddington makes a strong case that Richard was converted to Puritanism by the preaching of the Rev. Charles Chauncey, Vicar of Ware (see more on Puritanism at the end of this Section). During this period the Church of England, under Archbishop Laud, made a strong effort to root out the Puritans among the clergy. Many of them fled to America, and were followed by many of their parishioners. Chauncey later became an early president of Harvard College. Why Richard didn't follow Chauncey is not known, but he did follow the Rev. Peter Prudden a little later.

We believe that Richard sailed for America in the spring of 1637 with the Prudden or "Hertfordshire" group. A few weeks earlier, a group led by the Rev. John Davenport and the magistrate Theophilus Eaton had sailed on the "Hector." We don't know the name of

the ship that the Prudden group sailed on, but we know, from a legal deposition sent back to England later by one of the passengers, that it left on 31 May and arrived in Boston on 31 July. While in the Boston area, Rev. Prudden added some recruits to his flock of Puritan followers.

In thinking about the millions of immigrants who made their way to America, especially in the earliest days of the colonies (remember that the earliest English colony of record in America, Jamestown, was only established in 1607, and Richard came over just about 30 years after that initial start in the English colonization of the new North American continent), I always marvel how those early immigrants got together enough cash money to buy boat passage to America for their whole family (along with basic tools and several critters), and then have enough cash left over to buy some land and supplies to start life anew once they arrived in their new homeland.

Reproduced copy of the baptismal record of Richard Platt.

Off The Boat At New Haven

The group of Puritans under the leadership of Rev. Prudden remained in the Boston area for a few months and then accompanied the Davenport/Eaton group to the area then called Quinnipiac on Long Island Sound in the spring of 1638, but with the intention of starting a separate settlement. In that area the families led by Rev. Peter Prudden established the New Haven Colony of which Richard was one of the founding fathers (the settlement was formalized into the town of New Haven a few years later). The New Haven Colony was founded as a separate colony in 1638, distinct from the already established Connecticut Colony, but was absorbed into the Connecticut Colony in 1665. While staying in New Haven, Rev. Prudden also preached in Wethersfield and added more members to his flock of Puritan families. Richard continued to own land in New Haven even after relocating to Milford a year after the founding of New Haven.

Moving On - Founding Of Milford

Most of the families under the spiritual leadership of Rev. Prudden had already settled land and built houses in the newly established New Haven Colony. But, in 1639, a large number of Puritan families, under the spiritual leadership of Rev. Peter Prudden, decided to move a little further west along the coast of Long Island Sound and establish another new colony. Selection of the site for the new colony (Milford) is accounted by the following story: During the Pequot War of 1637, some of the militia were returning from chasing the remnants of the Pequot tribe westward down the coast. Sgt. Thomas Tibbals of Wethersfield saw the harbor at the mouth of the Wepawaug River and noted that it would be a good place for a settlement. Tibbals later was one of the Wethersfield group that joined Rev. Prudden and he led the group to the site on the Wepawaug in 1639. A group of 54 families actually formed a new church headed by Rev. Prudden while still in New Haven with the specific intent of founding a new colony based on this newly formed congregation. This they did, and Milford was established in 1639, of which Richard Platt was again one of the founding fathers. Richard Platt was assigned one of the lots in the new town on which he built his house, plus he had farmland outside the town from which he earned his livelihood. In addition to the four children Richard and Mary brought to America from England, they had four more children after coming to America (three more boys: Epenetus in 1640, Josiah in 1645, and Joseph in 1649; and one more daughter : Hannah in 1643).

His Life Consumated

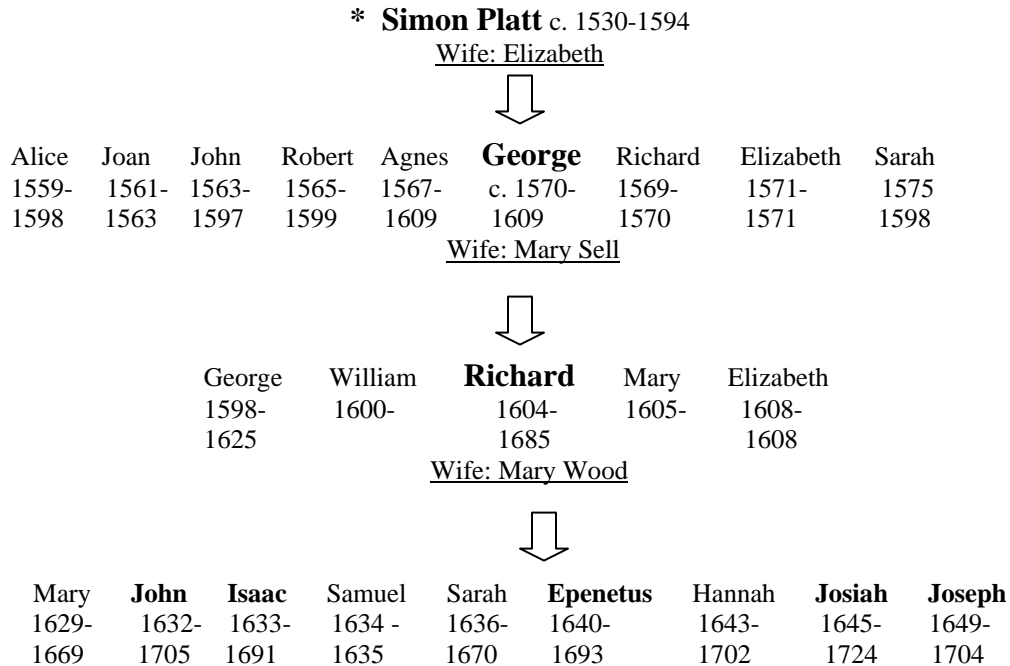
Richard Platt lived out his life in Milford, and the mortal phase of his eternal life ended for him in 1685, at a relatively ripe old age of 80+ years (quite old in those days of short life expectancy, and compared to the short 39 year lifespan of his father). There is no current identification of the exact location of his burial site, since burials in the early days of Milford were usually in the minister's garden and without permanent markers. He still owned land in Milford at the time of his death. The retyped words of his original will are shown on page 13. But, his children lived on and some of his descendants still live in Milford today. It has been documented that his son John finally relocated to Norwalk, Connecticut; sons Isaac and Epenetus relocated to Huntington, Long Island; and only sons Josiah and Joseph remained and lived out their lives in Milford. Some of Richard Platt's current descendants are still in possession of one or more parts of Richard's

original landholdings in Milford. Many more descendants, including me, live throughout the United States. He truly left a great legacy and his memory is revered in Milford as well as through the accomplishments of many of his descendants in our great country.

A copy of Richard Platt's will as transcribed and retyped from "The Descendants of Richard Platt", an unpublished work by Alrick H. Man, and printed in the Charles Platt's book "Platt Genealogy".

Summary Chart Of The Genealogy Of Richard Platt

The following simple chart on the genealogy of Richard Platt may assist in your understanding of the basic antecedents and descendants of our Platt Family Patriarch:



* Based on strong assumptions; valid documentary proof still lacking.

All of us who are descendants of Richard Platt come from one of the above children of Richard Platt and Mary Wood Platt. Those of us with the “Platt” surname are obviously descended from one of Richard’s sons. But, remember those who are descendants of one of Richard’s daughters equally share in the history and heritage of Richard Platt.

Detailed Genealogy

A detailed genealogy, extracted from the “Platt Genealogy” book, is included as Appendix A to this document. The detailed genealogy charts in Appendix A provide the genealogy of the entire line of descendants from Richard Platt of Milford (identified as “Richard 1”) that Charles Platt, Jr. identified in his research. You will note that these handwritten charts required many hours of labor to produce (before the day of universal computer capability) – what a massive undertaking by Charles Platt, Jr.! To test your skill at using these tables, see if you can find my great-grandfather, Edward Franklin Platt, who is #145-111-14 in these charts, and then see if you can find me. Once you learn to navigate these charts, you may be able to identify relatives you didn’t know you had! One thing you will note and be sad about along with the rest of us, is that genealogy documentation most often is concerned with tracking the male line, and the female lineage is often disregarded or lost. The genealogy charts in Appendix A only deal with the male lineage, for sake of brevity in producing this document in a very limited scope. However, if you desire to pursue the female lineage, if you have or can acquire a copy of his book, “Platt Genealogy”, the author Charles Platt, Jr. included a section called, “Alphabetical Index of Platt Wives”, and this may be of some help to you.

And, if you really want a challenge, why not make a trip to Milford and research your entire genealogy from Richard Platt, by tracking all the descendants of the 66 families who founded Milford, and discover that through marriage between these founding families, most of us are related to many of the founding fathers of Milford and our total sphere of “cousins” might include not only our direct male cousins such as Senator Thomas C. Platt from New York, and the Platt brothers who founded Plattsburgh, New York, but also other such notables as Governor Robert Treat of Connecticut.

Section 2

A Little Bit About Milford, Connecticut

Chasing Indians Through Milford

Some say that the founding of the town of Milford, Connecticut was caused by a band of Indians – the band chased by a group of men from the Connecticut Colony seeking to destroy them. The chase caused the men to traverse through the then wilderness area that is now Milford, which area was perceived to be ideal for a new settlement. Thus, in 1639 a large group of English settlers who were among the English settlers who had founded the town of New Haven in 1638, journeyed a few miles west and established the new settlement at Wepawaug that was renamed Milford in 1640. This area, with a small but good harbor, a nice river, and an abundance of rich and fertile land, seemed ideal for a new settlement. The group of families that left New Haven to establish Milford had already formed a new Puritan congregation under the spiritual leadership of Rev. Peter Prudden. The 54 families that established Milford Colony immediately started the first church in Milford, that is still in existence and is currently known as “The First United Church Of Christ, Congregational”. Our patriarch ancestor, Richard Platt, was not only one of the founding fathers of the town of Milford, but also one of the founders of the first church in Milford of which he was always a Deacon until his death. The current church is located on the same site as the original church (34 West Main Street), but the original small and simple church building has long been replaced with a greatly expanded and modernized structure. A reproduction of the original plot map of Milford showing the lots of the founding fathers is shown on page 18.

The Milford Town Green

The town of Milford has obviously changed very much since its founding in 1639, and the open space called the “Town Green” that was set aside by the founding fathers of Milford as part of the new settlement in 1639, has changed somewhat in appearance. It was originally a common pasture, market place, and drilling ground for the militia. The charming grassy park that we all associate with New England is mostly a 19th century invention. Milford was unusual in that the church did not face the Green, and neither did the original home lots of the settlers. One part of the present center of town was a swamp! In the original layout of the town, most of the 54 founding families of Milford had a lot on which to build their house near the town green. The original layout of the lots of the town fathers is displayed on a copy of the “Plan of the Original Town Plot of Milford” shown on page 18. Lot #38 is designated for Richard Platt, and you will note that the original lot was over 4 acres in size. While he probably built a house on that lot, his original house is long gone, and on that lot now stands a house built in 1823 by Judge William Strong, with a current address of 1 Plymouth Place. A picture of the current house on Richard Platt’s original Milford town lot is shown at the bottom of page 17. That old house currently serves as the offices of the local Red Cross Chapter.

The Town Green is currently filled with many memorials and commemorative monuments. This large open space is quite often occupied with vendors and temporary facilities in connection with one of the numerous events or fairs now staged on the Town Green. Pictures showing the current configuration and status of the Milford Town Green are on page 19.

Picture of current house sited on the original Milford town lot of Richard Platt

Shown above, original lot map of the town of Milford showing names of the Milford Founding Fathers.

Photographs showing the Milford Town Green in its current configuration.

The words on the dedication plaque in the bottom picture were composed in 1976
by cousin Richard N. Platt, Jr. of Milford and read as follows:

MILFORD

This area was settled in 1639 as an independent colony by a congregation of English Puritans led by their minister, the Reverend Peter Prudden. Land was purchased from Ansantawae, a sachem of the Pagusset Indians and originally named Wepawaug. It was renamed Milford in November 1640, joined New Haven Colony in 1643, and Connecticut Colony in 1664.

Among the Regicides responsible for the trial and execution sentence of English King Charles I were William Goffe and Edward Whalley, who were sheltered here from royal authorities between 1661 and 1664.

A Connecticut group led by Robert Treat of Milford founded Newark, New Jersey. In 1666. The Reverend Samuel Andrew served as rector of Yale College from 1707 to 1719 and instructed the senior class in his home here.

Richard's Original Church

The church established coincident with the founding of the town of Milford, now known as The First United Church of Christ, Congregational (or "First Church"), was based on the Puritan belief to which all of the founders of the town of Milford subscribed. (Rev. Peter Prudden and his congregation were Puritans and if you are interested, a bit more information about the Puritan sect of Christendom, as it grew out of the resentment towards the Church of England, is contained on the last page of this Section.) Their minister, Rev. Peter Prudden, was in essence the person whom the founding fathers honored as their spiritual leader if not their titular head. As originally formed, First Church reflected the basic personality and culture on which the town of Milford was established. The present church building, located at 34 West Main Street, was built 1823, and is the third such building on the site. Just to the east of the current First Church's main structure is another building called the Plymouth Building. That is part of the First Church's current overall facilities and is used as a chapel and parish hall. However, at one time the land on which the Plymouth Building is sited was once a second church formed by some of the members of the First Church. Formation of the second church, called the "split", occurred during the time of the Great Awakening, a religious revival in the 18th century. In 1741 the more conservative members withdrew and formed the second and separate church, the "Plymouth Church". The two churches remained side by side, on opposite sides of the river, until they reunited in 1926. The old Plymouth Church building continued to be used as a playhouse until it was razed in 1951. The present parish hall and chapel was then built on the site as part of the overall current facilities of the First Church. Richard Platt was a Deacon of First Church all during his life in Milford. A sketch depicting the original building in which the First Church held services is shown on page 21. This was a very plain and multi-functional building used not only for church services but also for town meetings and other public gatherings. This was in consonance with the Puritan view that giving any building special sanctity was itself idolatry. Also shown on page 21 is a picture of the First Church as it appears today.

Shown at top: sketch of original building used for town meetings and First Church services.
Shown below: picture of First Church current main structure.

Memorial Bridge

There was obviously a bridge over the Wepawaug River, down near the Town Green and downriver from the millpond, probably constructed of wood, in the early days of Milford. The current concrete and stone bridge is quite old, having been constructed by the town in 1889 to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the town of Milford. It is known as the “Memorial Bridge” since private donations were solicited and used to buy memorial stones, tablets, and enhanced bridge edifices to memorialize the early founders of Milford. A rendering of the Memorial Bridge and a picture of Richard Platt’s memorial stone on the bridge are shown below.

Other Things About The Town Of Milford

Milford was primarily an agricultural town until the 20th century and had a relatively small population. Very early on it was also a seaport and shipbuilding center. Most trade was coastwise and with the West Indies. This mercantile phase lasted until the early 19th century. Milford was also the site of the first gristmill in the colony. By the 19th century there were numerous small shops in town. Shoes and straw hats were manufactured here, and probably most famous was the Beach Bros. Carriage shop. There was a large population growth during the First World War as people moved in to work in the defense industries in Bridgeport and New Haven. There was a similar large growth during the Second World War, and for the same reason. Today Milford has a population of over 50,000 and is primarily a suburban community. But it is also a retail center and is home to some major industries: Bic Corporation (ball point pens, cigarette lighters, and safety razors), and Schick - Wilkinson Sword (safety razors). Milford is also home to the international headquarters of Subway (fast food franchises).

A Bit Of Information On The Puritan Belief

Early dissenters from the Church of England were known as "Puritans". The Puritans were those who felt that the Church of England had not sufficiently reformed during the Protestant Reformation. They were Calvinist in their theology. Those who settled in Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and the New Haven Colony, were Non-Separatist in their outlook. That is, they wished to continue reforms within the Church of England. They came to America mainly to set up the church the way they thought it should be organized, with an independent, or congregational, system of church government. The settlers in Plymouth, by contrast, were Separatist; this group wished to break entirely with the Church of England. But once over here, both groups grew apart from the Church of England and in fact became separate from it.

One significant aspect of the Puritan belief involved their desire to get rid of all vestiges of "Roman" influence, which they felt the Church of England had not done. They believed that to continue the use of enhancements and trappings purely for religious purposes, such as statuary, elaborate vestments worn by the clergy, stained glass, altars, etc., amounted to idolatry. Their church buildings were plain structures, and they called them "meeting houses." The church (or "Ecclesiastical Society," as they called their organization), met there for worship on Sunday, but the meeting house was also used for town meetings or other public gatherings. To give the building any special sanctity was itself idolatry.

As can be seen from the above basic information regarding Puritans, their dissent from, and rebuke of, the national Church of England did not set well with that religious institution. Thus, during the time of Richard Platt, there was a strong effort to root out any Puritans among the Church of England clergy. This included Rev. Charles Chauncey, the Vicar of Ware, England, the home town of Richard Platt. Such targeted clergy members often fled to the new colonies in America, including Rev. Chauncey (who later became an early president of Harvard) and Rev. Peter Prudden (the ultimate Puritan spiritual leader of the colony/town of Milford).

Section 3

A Very Little Bit About New Haven, Connecticut

Founding New Haven – Richard’s Short Term Home

As already recited in previous Sections, Richard Platt and his own family left England by ship along with a large number of other Puritan families with the objective of settling in the new colonies of America. The group of which Richard was a part undoubtedly had the objective of settling in an area called Quinnipiac on Long Island Sound that became the town of New Haven, Connecticut. Having founded the New Haven Colony in 1638, Richard Platt then moved a little further west in 1639 to found the Milford Colony with 53 other Puritan families. Even though he did own a house and land in New Haven, and retained ownership of some land in the New Haven area up to the time of his death, Richard Platt never considered New Haven as his hometown. But, for proper documentation of history, Richard Platt was a founding father of the New Haven Colony in 1638. The original lot map of the town drawn in 1641 and reproduced on page 25 clearly shows the Richard Platt lot, even though Richard Platt had already moved west in 1639 and founded Milford. The lot of Richard Platt on the original New Haven lot map is located near the northwest corner of the town square, on what is now Chapel Street, corner of York Street, and is now the site of the Yale Repertory Theater.

New Haven –A Major City In The United States And Home To Yale University

Even though you have never visited New Haven, most of us in the United States clearly recognize it as one of our major cities. Originally founded as a seaport city and thriving on ocean commerce, New Haven grew into a major metropolis as an industrial, business, and cultural center. Undoubtedly all of us who are descendants of Richard Platt know that Yale University is located in New Haven. Yale is a private university and is one of the “Ivy League” schools. It was founded in 1701 and is the third oldest university in the United States. Yale was originally chartered by the colonial legislature of Connecticut as the Collegiate School and was held at Killingworth. In 1716 the school moved to New Haven and, with the generous gift by Elihu Yale of nine bales of goods, 417 books, and a portrait and arms of King George I, was renamed Yale College in 1718. Many descendants of Richard Platt have attended Yale, and a few have held academic positions at this prestigious institute of higher learning. You can learn more about Yale University from the school’s website at www.yale.edu.

New Haven Today

If you journey to Milford to see the real hometown of Richard Platt, you should also take time to visit and tour the town of New Haven. This historic city has much to offer in the way of history, culture, and entertainment. You can learn more about New Haven by visiting the following website that links you to all the major websites with information about New Haven: www.newhavenweb.com.

First map in 1641 documenting the original house lots for the town of New Haven.

Section 4

A Little Bit About Ware, England

Ware Started Very Early As A Human Settlement

The town of Ware as a documented human settlement dates back to the earliest ages of mankind. A brief synopsis of the genesis and development of the settlement area now known as the town of Ware is contained in the current Ware Museum brochure as follows:

“ ‘Ware is one of the oldest continuously occupied sites in Western Europe’. So wrote Robert Kiln in The Dawn of History in East Herts. There was a Stone Age settlement here beside the River Lea and later an extensive Iron Age settlement which gave way to a small Roman town, used as a staging post on Ermine Street and an inland port. In the Middle Ages Ware soon outstripped its royal neighbor, Hertford, and contributed more in taxes than any other place in the county. Later it became an important coaching town and one of the first post towns in Britain. But, from the seventeenth century its importance lay in the malting industry. Now the town’s biggest industry is pharmaceuticals and Glaxo’s occupies the site of the Roman town of Ware.”

The Town of Ware As A Roman Outpost

Would you believe that the little English village where Richard Platt was born once was a viable settlement and outpost of none other than the Romans! Ware was most likely a Roman outpost established in accordance with Roman protocol to establish a guard post/way station about every 20 miles (or a comfortable day’s march) from each main Roman town/headquarters. In the case of Ware, it was about 20 miles northeast of the Roman headquarters at what is now called London. Additionally, Ware is also situated at a once strategic crossing (ford) of the River Lea which undoubtedly increased its importance to the Romans.

A Bit Of Non-Richard Platt History: Roman Influence On England

Most of us are a bit rusty on our knowledge of early world history, but if we jog our memory we realize that the Roman Empire did indeed extend across the English Channel into the northern part of what is now England. Truth of the matter is, if you take a trip to England you will see much evidence of the Roman conquest and occupation of the major part of what is now England. Many artifacts and even roadways and residual structural components from the time of the Roman occupation are in evidence in many parts of England, including London, and not the least also in Ware. Many English towns, including London (“Londinium” originally laid out by the Romans on 330 acres and completely enclosed within walls), were either established or developed from existing settlements, by the Romans. For example, unlike most other towns established by the Romans, the city of Bath existed solely as a spa (bath). If you make a trip to England, be sure to take in some of the Roman historical sites – lots of good books to help you on this. For most visitors, at least for me, this results in a much better awareness of the full extent of the Roman influence on England – starting with the Roman invasion across the English Channel in 55 BC (led by none other than the famous historical figure, Julius

Caesar) through 410 AD when the last Roman soldier was believed to have been withdrawn from England – almost 500 years of Roman occupation and domination.

Learn More About The Town Of Ware

If you are really interested in learning more about the English town of Ware, the birthplace of our forefather Richard Platt, you can access the Ware website on the Internet at the following web address: www.wareonline.co.uk. If you go to that website and click on the “History” button on the left side of that Home page, it will take you to the history section of the website that gives a very lengthy and detailed history of Ware (invasions, Roman era, confiscations, Norman influence, etc.). There are many other sections and pages on this website that offer very interesting details about old and modern Ware. At this website you can also click on “Webcam” and get an instant picture of what is happening on the High Street in downtown Ware.

Ware Today

When you visit the town of Ware in this day and age, don’t expect to see the sleepy little rural settlement like the one that existed when Richard Platt lived there. Rather, Ware, like most other towns in the once rural areas around London, is mostly a modern and thriving town. The town is still surrounded by some pastoral fields and meadows, probably not changed much in general appearance since Richard Platt and his family worked them for livelihood. Very few really “old” buildings exist in the town, but some still do. There are traffic lights (and even the modern traffic camera to capture traffic law violators in picture form), traffic jams, trendy restaurants, and some upscale shops. A few pictures on page 28 show the current appearance of Ware. But in the midst of the more modern Ware are few truly really old and historic buildings, such as St. Mary’s Church and the Priory. Although it does not occupy an ancient historic building, the “Old Bulls Head” is an authentic and very old English Pub, dating back to at least 1551 (the date of the first known documented reference to this old public house). As would be expected there are quite a number of “public houses” or pubs in Ware. If you want to learn more about the modern town of Ware (including the numerous pubs), you can get that type information at the Internet website already provided in the preceding paragraph.



Pictures showing the town of Ware as it appears today, including the Old Bulls Head Pub in the lower right picture, second building from the right.

Richard Platt's Church: St. Mary The Virgin

The very church in which Richard Platt was baptized and undoubtedly attended with his parents and then his own family, is still standing and very much in use with a large active congregation. It is still an Episcopal church today (the Church of England). The current church building – a huge, multi-room stone edifice- stands and appears today almost exactly without change as it was when Richard Platt was baptized there in 1604. That church building actually dates its basic construction back to the year 1380 per the following quotation from the brief history of St. Mary's Church cited on the current brochure given to the many visitors to this historic church:

"There has been a church in Ware for well over a thousand years. In 1078 the church and land was given to the Benedictine Abbey of St. Evroul in Normandy, (a connection of which 'St. Evroul Court' in Crib Street is a reminder), and a Priory was built. The church was rebuilt in 1380 under the sponsorship of the Princess of Wales (Joan the Fair Maid of Kent) the wife of the Black Prince and mother of Richard II. Later additions were made in the 15th century by Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of King Henry VII. The church was extensively restored in 1848, 1885, and 1905. The extension to the church was built in 1982."

The church structure that exists today is believed to thus date from the year 1380, with only minor additions and improvements made since that early date, as Dorothy Palmer writes in her book, *"Some time in the fifteenth century, when medieval architecture developed into a decorative period, Margaret, Countess of Richmond, gave the money to build the clerestory and generally beautify the church."* A rendering showing the entire church structure as shown in Dorothy Palmer's book is provided on page 30. An actual photograph of the church taken in 2002, is also included on page 31.

Thus, when descendants of Richard Platt of Ware visit the St. Mary's church in Ware they see the church basically as Richard Platt and his family saw it when they lived in Ware and worshiped at St. Mary's. The baptismal font used for the baptism of Richard Platt (and probably all of his siblings and his own children who were born in Ware) still stands at the rear of the nave. That lovely stonework font has been dated back to about the year 1380, the same year the current church building was constructed. A picture of this font taken in 2002 is shown on page 32.

Visiting Ware

All descendants of Richard Platt are encouraged to visit his birthplace at Ware. This town is a short distance from London, and easily accessed by private vehicle or train. I personally prefer to avoid renting a car in England and just take full advantage of the excellent public transportation system: subway inside London, and the train to go places outside of London. Ware is a convenient ride from London, using the subway to connect with the train service to Ware.

Rendering of St. Mary The Virgin Church in Ware
From the book, "Saint Mary Ware – History and Guide" by Dorothy Palmer.



Photograph of St. Mary The Virgin Church in Ware, taken in 2002.



Baptismal Font in St. Mary The Virgin Church in Ware as it appears in 2002 photograph. This lovely stonework font dates from 1380 and was used in the baptism of Richard Platt in 1604.

Section 5

The Descendants of Richard Platt

General Information About Richard Platt's Descendants

As stated in the book, "Platt Genealogy" by Charles Platt, Jr., *"Richard Platt was quite probably the first immigrant of his surname to come to America, and as such has become the progenitor of more Platts of the present day than any other of his name who followed from the old country to the new."*

In gathering the data for his book, "Platt Genealogy", Charles Platt, Jr. took the time to tabulate and analyze the results of his research and the information he documented in his book. For example on page 26 of his book, Charles Platt shows that as of the publication of his book in 1963 he had information to support 1,824 "sons" of Richard Platt of Ware and Milford. That is, he had information on 1,824 male descendants of Richard Platt as of the publishing of his book in 1963. And he admits there are known "holes" in his lineage charts that portray the unknown and undocumented "sons" because information on them was not found by Charles Platt and his predecessors in their research on the descendants of Richard Platt. And again, this completely disregards all the Richard Platt descendants propagated by the females of the Richard Platt line – probably equal to or possibly greater than the number of Richard Platt's "sons". And, the total descendants of Richard Platt are known to exist in most parts of the United States, and even some foreign countries (one known to be in England, and several known to be in Canada and Mexico). As Charles Platt, Jr. writes in his book, *"The migration of Richard Platt's descendants across the length and breadth of America began with his own sons. . . . John finally to Norwalk, Isaac and Epenetus to Huntington, Long Island; only Josiah and Joseph remained in Milford, the first home of the family."*

Noteworthy Accomplishments And/or Recognition Of Descendants Of Richard Platt

It would take significant additional research as well as substantial volume to provide information in this publication regarding the names and pertinent details regarding all of the noteworthy descendants of Richard Platt of Ware, England, and Milford, Connecticut. To say the least there are many descendants of Richard Platt who have been or have been documented and publicly recognized for their noteworthy achievements or made some indelible mark in the history of our country. However, there are undoubtedly many more descendants of Richard Platt, some currently living today, who have achieved notable accomplishments or made significant contributions to society, who have not been recognized as such. Following are just a few examples of what has been documented:

Founders Of Plattsburgh, New York

Plattsburgh, New York is located on the western shore of Lake Champlain, near the Canadian border. Although today Plattsburgh is a thriving city (population of about 20,000 people as of 1962 per Charles Platt, Jr. in his book), it was founded under a unique plan. The history of this plan and the founding of the town of Plattsburgh was documented in the book, "The History of the Village of Plattsburgh", by Peter Saily Palmer in 1877, as follows:

“In 1781 the Legislature to encourage the raising of troops, passed acts offering bounties of unappropriated lands to officers and soldiers enlisting within a time specified. These were rights of 500 acres each and the act provided that whenever any of persons entitled collectively to 61 rights or 30,500 acres joined in a location, the lands should be laid out in a township of seven miles square - - - In 1784 Zephaniah Platt of Poughkeepsie and thirty-two associates who collectively had acquired the requisite number of rights located them upon land previously granted to de Fredenburg (but which he had abandoned), and on August 12, 1784 procured the certificate of the Surveyor General that the lands were vacant and unappropriated. Letters patent were issued to Zephaniah Platt October 26, 1784, and about the same time he obtained from the State for himself, Nathaniel Platt and Simon Reeves a patent for 2000 acres including Cumberland Head - - - These two tracts were incorporated by a special act of the Legislature into a town called Plattsburgh on April 4, 1785.”

Zephaniah and his brother Nathaniel, were both “sons” of Richard Platt. You can check their lineage in Appendix A: Zephaniah is #132-12 and Nathaniel #132-13. Therefore, Richard Platt was their great-great grandfather, and their great-grandfather was Richard’s son Epenetus. To add to the history of Plattsburgh, it should be noted that their younger brother Charles had already settled in the Plattsburgh area before his two older brothers founded the town, and the youngest of the brothers, Daniel also settled in Plattsburgh and all four brothers were instrumental in developing the town.

Platts In Politics

The pictures on page 35 show three Platts directly descended from Richard Platt who made their mark in politics, as documented by Charles Platt in his book, “Platt Genealogy”.

Other Notable Direct Descendants of Richard Platt

There are many more direct descendants of Richard Platt of Milford who have also made, or will make, noteworthy marks in the history and culture of our great country, including all those Platts who descended from Richard Platt through one or more female lines and thus did not retain the Platt surname. Just to name a few:

Louise Platt, Actress (1939 movie “Stagecoach”)– still living on Long Island.

Oliver Platt, contemporary actor in movies and television productions.

Charles Adams Platt (1861-1933), noted painter and architect.

Rutherford H. Platt (1894-1975), famed naturalist and author.