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Sorting Out Entangled Roots: Tidball Origins in Southwest England

Nothing surpasses the excitement of finding a family in the old country, and pushing the ancestral line back into the 18th, or even 17th Century. Success requires persistence, and usually a bit of luck, together with the same basic research strategies used in American genealogy.

Starting at Home: The Box in the Attic

The Minnesota Tidball family had been an enigma for years, but a cousin's discovery of a box of family memorabilia opened the gate to an exciting trail of discovery. The box contained three treasures:[1]

1) a photograph album assembled by Mary Ann (Lee) Tidball,

2) a Bible given to Mary Ann Lee by her grandmother, and

3) a series of 1930s letters that began when Mary Ann's Minnesota nephew wrote to the Bristol, England, police seeking information about his family back in England.

Before the box appeared, the sum of what the family knew came from family history notes, probably compiled by Mary Ann Lee's grandson.[2] The notes indicated the immigrant John Tidball was born 17 June 1862 in Bristol, England, married Mary Ann Lee 12 March 1884, and left for America three days later. Mary Ann was born 30 March 1862 in Melksham, Wiltshire. John's parents were William and Elizabeth Tidball.

Minnesota vital records corroborated some of the basic facts and supplied additional clues. John Tidball's death certificate gave the same birth date and said his father's name was "Wm", but did not give John's mother's name.[3] Mary Ann's death certificate repeated her 1862 birth date, named parents Bartholomew Lee and Elenore Price, and said Mary Ann was born at Bristol, not Melksham,[4] a town about 20 miles southeast of Bristol.

A quick search of an index to the 1881 English census found more than 40 William Tidballs. More clues were needed to match the Minnesota Tidballs with a specific English family. The box of memorabilia provided them.

The Photograph Album

The photograph album was a voice from the past, whispering several new hints.

- A death notice card stated William Tidball died 28 January 1899 "in his 76th year" and was buried in Greenbank Cemetery, Bristol.

- A death notice card for an Elizabeth Jennet carried a handwritten note with the name "Tidball" inserted between the first and last name.

- Handwriting on a photograph of a winsome young woman identified "Elizabeth Tidball." Beneath the photo, a note said "John Tidball's sister."

- A photograph of a striking young man was labeled "Michael Tidball—brother."

The photographs and death notices crystallized a likely family composition: siblings John, Michael, and Elizabeth. Probable father William was born about 1823.

The Bible

The Bible belonged to Mary Ann Tidball, nee Lee. An inscription inside the front cover reads:

M. A. Lee:
With best wishes from her loving grandmother
March 30th, 1878

On a facing page, another inscription reads:

Mary Price, my dear grandmother, gave me this bible on my 18th birthday. She died in 1882 at Colston's Almshouse on St. Michael's Hill. When she died, she was the oldest but one on the premises. She was respected by all who knew her. Buried at Arno's Vale Cemetery, Bath Rd., Bristol.

The Tidball and Lee families were now placed squarely in Bristol.

The Lee Letters

Among the letters was a 1937 message sent by the Minneapolis Superintendent of Police to the Bristol, England, police on behalf of Minneapolis resident Charles Lee, who was asking help locating William and Charley Lee in England.

A few weeks later, the police passed along a short letter from Mrs. B. Bamford of Coventry, Warwickshire. She said she was Charlie Lee's stepdaughter. The key? She remembered Charlie talking about his sister who went to America "some forty to fifty years ago." Soon, Mrs. Bamford sent a longer, more revealing letter. She now wrote: "As soon as I saw the name Polly Tidball, which is Charlie's sister, it all came back to my memory." This simple statement confirmed the link between the Lees and Tidballs. She said that Charlie's parents were Bartholomew and Eleanor Lee. Mrs. Bamford thought she remembered Charlie saying his sister (Mary Ann) was married at St. Philips Old Market Street Church in Bristol.

Finding the Family in Bristol

Enough clues were now in hand to pin down the family in Bristol using census and civil registration records.

In 1881, fifty-nine year-old William Tidball was living on Albert Place in Bristol with his wife, Elizabeth, and two children: Jane, 18, and Michael, 16.[5] Michael fit with previous evidence, but Jane did not. Jane's occupation was "labourer," somewhat unusual for a young woman. The 1871 census cleared things up. Jane was actually John, who was 8 years old in 1871.[6] The rest of the family matched.

Ten years earlier in 1861, the Tidballs lived on Leigh Street. William Tidball was married to an apparent first wife, Mary Ann. Thomas was 1, and his older sister Elizabeth was 5.[7]

Civil registration records fleshed out the story:

- William Tidball married Mary Ann Bisgrove 6 March 1855 in the parish church of St. Philip and Jacob.[8]
- They had four children: Elizabeth (1856),[9] Thomas (1859),[10] John (1862),[11] and Michael (1865).[12]
- Mary Ann died 9 May 1865,[13] several months after Michael's birth.
- William remarried a year later to 40 year-old

Elizabeth Selina Morrish in the parish church of St. Mary Redcliff in Bristol.[14]

- Twenty-two year-old John Tidball married Mary Ann Lee 12 March 1884 in the Old Market Street Chapel,[15] the location remembered by Mrs. Bamford.

One other important piece of evidence from the box also stood out. Just as Mary Ann Lee wrote in her Bible, widow Mary Price, age 81, was an almswoman in Colston's Almhouse in 1881.[16]

Shifting Tidball residences can be traced from marriage records, birth records, death records, and censuses. The Tidballs, Lees, and Prices were working class families. Bristol offered jobs in sugar refineries, metal works and breweries, and on the docks and rail-

Residences of William Tidball			
Date	Residence	Occupation	Source
March 1855	Paddock	Labourer	Marriage to Mary Ann Bisgrove[17]
January 1856	Pennywell Road	Maltster's labourer	Birth of Elizabeth[18]
December 1859	Swinnell Road St. Philip & Jacob	Maltster's labourer	Birth of Thomas[19]
1861	9 Leigh Street St. Philip & Jacob		Census[20]
June 1862	The Barton, Air Balloon Hill St. George	Maltster's labourer	Birth of John[21]
February 1865	Sion Road St. Philip & Jacob	Maltster's labourer	Birth of Michael[22]
May 1865	Sion Road St. Philip & Jacob	Maltster's labourer	Death of Mary Ann Bisgrove[23]
June 1866	3 Redcliff Hill	Sugar refiner	Marriage to Elizabeth Morrish[24]
1871	20 Park Row		Census[25]
1881	3 Albert Place		Census[26]
March 1884		Brewer's labourer	Marriage of John[27]
1891	3 Park Row		Census[28]
November 1892	25 Park Street		Death of Michael[29]
January 1899	25 Park Street	Labourer in a brewery	Death of William[30]

roads to young men and women arriving from the countryside. William Tidball was a brewer's labourer (see table). Bartholomew Lee was a railroad porter.[31] And, Mary Price lived at least the last 10 years of her life in the almshouse.[32]

Following the Trail to Somerset and Devon

Describing the arrival of the Dashwood family in the Devon countryside north of Exeter, Jane Austen wrote: "The view of Barton Valley as they entered it gave them cheerfulness. It was a pleasant, fertile spot, well wooded and rich in pasture." This, too was the country of the Tidballs in the 18th and 19th centuries. Earlier Tidballs might have been of some means, but probably were not in the same league as Austen's fashionable characters.

Bristol censuses pointed to William's birth place at Brushford, Somerset. Indeed, the 1841 census for Brushford found the family living there at East Nighcott Farm.[33]

> Michael Tidball, 40, farmer, b. Somerset
> Ellen, 40, b. Somerset
> Wm, age 15, b. Somerset
> Betsey, 15, b. Somerset
> Ann, 10 b. Somerset
> Michael, 10, b. Somerset
> John, 9, b. Somerset
> Margaret, 6, b. Somerset
> Thomas, 4, b. Somerset
> Gregory, 1, b. Somerset

In the 1841 census, the age of individuals over age 10 was rounded down to the nearest multiple of five. Thus, William could have been as old as 19, consistent with an 1822 birth date. His father, Michael, was presumably between 40 and 44, implying a birth date between 1797 and 1801.

Brushford parish registers recorded a 14 April 1822 baptism of William Tidball, son of Michael Tidball and Eleanor.[34] Michael Tidball married Ellen Dascombe 29 November 1821 at East Anstey, a parish about three miles west of Brushford.[35] Church records record the burial of "Michael Tidboald" of Nightcott, age 44, in February 1844.[36]

The 1841 census recorded only county of birth, but the 1851 census named the parish. A second Tidball family living at Brushford led to Michael Tidball's birth place. The 1851 census said 58 year-old Thomas

Tidball was born at North Molton, Devon.[37] North Molton, about 10 miles west of Brushford, became a leading target for finding Michael Tidball's origins.

The 1841 Census of England was the first to enumerate individuals, so tracing ancestors before 1841 usually requires use of church records. The North Molton parish register reports that William Tidboald married Margaret Squires 15 April 1792.[38] They had four children:

1) William Tidboald, baptized 13 May 1798[39]
2) Michael Tidboald, baptized 25 January 1801[40]
3) John Tidball, baptized 2 April 1804 (mother's name given as "Mary")[41]
4) Gregory Tidboald, baptized 5 July 1807.[42]

Young Michael later lived at Brushford. The connection between he and Thomas of Brushford goes back one more generation. William Tidboald (b. 1769) was the oldest known child of Thomas Tidboald and Agnes. They had at least eight children, including a son Thomas baptized 24 June 1792.[43] This was the Thomas of Brushford; he was Michael Tidball's uncle.

Searching for 17th and 18th Century Trail Markers

Another Thomas Tidball, age 76, buried at North Molton in December 1814, was probably the Thomas who had children at North Molton from 1769 to 1792. No records at North Molton identify him before 1769. Possibly, he came from Exford, about ten miles to the north, where a Thomas Tidball was baptized in 1739.[44]

Tidballs (or close variants) are known in several Devon and Somerset places before 1770. Families in three Southwestern England parishes stand like rock cairns marking points on a dim trail, but the connecting paths remain indistinct.

Ashburton

The trail starts in Ashburton. The earliest well-documented Tidball was Samuel Tidball, who lived at Ashburton, on the edge of the Dartmoor uplands, about 20 miles southeast of Exeter. He became curate to Robert Law at Ashburton in 1613, and master of the Ashburton Grammar School in 1616.[45] He succeeded Mark Law as vicar in 1644.[46] Samuel died in 1647.[47] Samuell Tudboll of Ashburton—presumably

the same man as Samuel Tidball—was ordained 4 April 1615 in the Silverton parish church, in the status of *literatus*, meaning he probably did not have a degree.[48] Samuel married Elizabeth Heliar 7 December 1615.[49] He likely is the Samuel Tidball appointed vicar about five miles away at Widdecombe in the Moor in 1637.[50]

Samuel's widow, Elizabeth Tidball, left a will in 1658.[51] The will names three children: Samuel, John Tidball, and Martha. Martha is not found in the Ashburton baptism records, but another daughter, Maria, is.

- Maria was baptized 7 November 1616.[52] She married Mark Law, who was vicar of Ashburton until his death in 1644.[53]
- John was probably baptized 23 Febuary 1619.[54] Elizabeth's will names John's wife, Grace, and two children: Mary and Elizabeth.[55] Despite a small age discrepancy, he is probably the 17 year-old John Tidball, son of Samuel of Ashburton, who entered Balliol College, Oxford 13 July 1638.
- Samuel was probably baptized 10 August 1622[56] and died in May 1666.[57] He became vicar at Ashburton in 1647 after his father's death.[58]
- Martha was still living in 1666. She was the executrix for both her mother's and her brother Samuel's estates.[59]

Tidballs disappear from the Ashburton records after the 1660s, raising the question of where they went. The key figure might be John, but no record has been found in Ashburton of his marriage or adult life.

Exford (1600s)

The trail may pass through Exford. Possibly, John moved to Exford, where a John Tidball had children in the 1640s and 1650s. In 1653, a John Tudball took possession of a property at Exford called Prescott, which according to local tradition was the residence of the priests serving the Exford church.[60]

John and Johane Tidball had at least eight children:[61]

1) Guliemus (William), date not clear, but possibly before 1643,
2) Guliemus (William), 1650,
3) John, 1651,
4) Gauter (Walter), 1653,

5) Christopherus, 1656,
6) Alexander, 1658,
7) Joan, 1662, and
8) Alexander, 1663.

Stoodleigh

Walter Tidboald of Stoodleigh left a will in 1670, in which he named sons Walter and Alexander, and wife Margery.[62] Unless he was a very young father, he was too old to be the Walter born at Exford in 1653. Yet, the naming pattern suggests a possible connection. John Tidball of Exford also had sons named Walter and Alexander. Neither was a highly common name in England at the time.

Walter was plausibly 40 to 50 years old when he wrote his will, implying a birth date around 1625. Such a birth date makes him a candidate for the Tidboalds at Ashburton in the early 1600s, but no mention has been found of a Walter in the Ashburton records.

Another Walter Tidboald of Stoodleigh had sons baptized Walter (1677) and Alexander (1683).[63] The father Walter could possibly have been a son of the Walter who wrote the 1670 will. If so, the elder Walter might have been born between about 1635 and 1650.

Walter possibly had another son, Abraham, born about 1679-80. A 19 year-old Abraham Tidboalde, son of Walter Tidboalde of Stoodleigh, enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford 13 March 1699. He was installed a rector of Seaborough, Somerset, in 1710, and at East Anstey in 1711.[64] He is likely the Walter Tidboald who had children at East Anstey in the 1720s. The Stoodleigh church records hold no Tidboald/Tidball baptisms after 1686, suggesting the family moved to another parish.

East Anstey

The trail of the Exford and Stoodleigh Tidballs probably connects with East Anstey, a small village between North Molton and Brushord. Tidballs living at East Anstey from about 1720 to 1760 were certainly related to the Stoodleigh Tidballs, and likely to the Exford Tidballs. Vicar Abraham Tidboald and wife Alice had at least 10 children between 1720 and 1735:[65]

1) John, born 4 November 1720, baptized 7 November,

2) Thomas, born 30 Dec 1721, baptized 31 December;

3) Abraham, born 5 Jul 1723, baptized 7 July, buried 6 October 1724,

4) Alexander, born 21 September 1724, baptized 6 October,

5) Mary, born 12 September 1725, baptized 17 September,

6) Alice, born 14 June 1727, baptized 22 June, buried 22 August 1730,

7) Walter, born 18 February 1728, baptized 20 February,

8) Alexander, born 8 March 1731, baptized 2 April,

9) Elizabeth, born 3 October 1733, baptized 31 October, and

10) Susanna, born 3 January 1735, baptized 4 February.

Abraham Tidboald wrote his will in 1760, giving his wife Alice title to his lands at East Whitnall in Stoodleigh.[66] An East Anstey burial also provides an important tie back to Stoodleigh. Walter Tidboald of "Studley" was buried at East Anstey 6 March 1732. Possibly, he was the Walter born at Stoodleigh in 1677.

Naming Patterns

The repetition of the names Walter and Abraham also suggests connections between the Stoodleigh, East Anstey, and Exford families. One possibility is that Abraham of East Anstey was a brother of Walter of Exford. While the Walter and Abraham born at Stoodleigh in 1677 might be too old for the men having children at East Anstey and Exford in the 1720s and 1730s, the repetition of the names Walter and Abraham suggests a relationship.

Enjoying the View at Trail's End

All the dots along the trail are not connected, but a working hypothesis is that the Tidball family spread north from Ashburton into the Devon-Somerset border area. A possible scenario is built on both fact and supposition.

- Samuel Tidball was a curate, Master of the grammar school and vicar at Ashburton in the early 1600s. He had a son John, born in 1619.

- John possibly moved to Exford, where John Tidball/Tudball lived in the 1640s and 1650s. While he might not have been the man from Ashburton, the Exford John had a son Walter, baptized in 1653.

- Walter possibly moved to Stoodleigh, where a Walter Tidball lived in the 1670s and 1680s. He had a son Walter, baptized in 1677.

- The younger Walter might have moved back to Exford, where a Walter Tidball had a son Thomas, baptized in 1739.

- Thomas, born 1739 at Exford, is probably the Thomas who lived at North Molton in the late 1700s.

The Tidball research trail illustrates the iterative nature of family history research. Clues lead to solutions, which in turn set the stage for new rounds of problem-solving as the researcher pushes farther back into less traveled genealogical terrain. Genealogy is a bit like hiking above the tree line—the trail is hard to follow, but the view at the top is worth the effort.

In this case, an attic treasure was the trailhead. Correlations of American and English records brought Bristol into view, and English censuses, church records, and wills led into the hills of Devon and Somerset, where the ancestral scenery is captivating.

Male Given Names at Stoodleigh, East Anstey, Exford		
Children of Walter Tidboald and Mary at Stoodleigh	Children of Abraham Tidboald and Alice at East Anstey	Children of Walter Tidball and Elizabeth at Exford (Somerset)
Walter, 1677	John, 1720	Abraham, 1726
Abraham, 1677	Thomas, 1721	Walter, 1731
John, 1681	Abraham, 1723	Richard, 1734
Alexander, 1683	Alexander, 1725, 31	Gregory, 1737
Thomas, 1686	Walter, 1728	Thomas, 1739

Notes

1. In 2009, the box and its contents were in the possession of Lois (Lattanzio) (Messal) Marek, a great-granddaughter of the immigrant John Tidball. The author has photographed and transcribed items from the photograph album, Bible, and letters.

2. John Tidball [probable compiler], typewritten notes, untitled and unpaginated, 1972; copy in author's files. Mr. Tidball is deceased.

3. Minnesota Department of Health, death certificate 24,713 (1922), John Tidball, "Death Certificates" microfilm, roll 14 of 1958; Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minn. Tidball died 25 May 1922 in Saint Louis County. Note: Microfilm is the official record copy in Minnesota and is used by the State Health Dept. to make certified copies for immediate family members and is deposited in the State Archives for public use and uncertified copies; it has not been given a State Archives Microfilm (SAM) number.

4. Minnesota Department of Health, death certificate 8,616, Mary Ann Tidball (1958), "Death Certificates" microfilm, roll 15 of 1958, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minn. She died 14 April 1958 in Lake County.

5. 1881 Census of England, County of Gloucestershire, Bristol St. Philip and St. Jacob Civil Parish, Record Group [hereafter RG] 11, piece 2497, folio 36, p. 22, schedule no. 120, William Tidball; FHL microfilm, roll no. 1341602.

6. 1871 Census of England, County of Gloucestershire, Bristol St. Philip and St. Jacob Civil Parish, RG 10, piece 2558, folio 73, p. 38, schedule no. 151B, William Tidball; FHL microfilm 835265.

7. 1861 Census of England, County of Gloucestershire, Bristol St. Philip and St. Jacob Civil Parish, RG 9, piece 1735, folio 37, p. 19, schedule no. 113, William Tidball, FHL microfilm 542859.

8. General Register Office [GRO], Certified copy issued 24 September 2003, entry of marriage from the County of Bristol, vol. 61, p. 90, no. 265 (3rd Quarter 1855), William Tidball and Mary Ann Bisgrove; author's files.

9. GRO, Certified copy issued 8 July 2005, entry of birth from St. Philip and St. Jacob, Clifton Registration District, vol. 6a, p. 108, no. 230 (1st Quarter 1856), Elizabeth Tidball; author's files.

10. GRO, Certified copy issued 27 May 2009, entry of birth from the St. Philip and St. Jacob, Clifton Registration District, vol. 6a, p. 109, no. 463 (4th Quarter 1859), Thomas Tidball; author's files.

11. GRO, Certified copy issued 22 September 2003, entry of birth from Saint George, Clifton Registration District, vol. 6a, p. 27, no. 297 (2nd Quarter 1862), John Tidball; author's files.

12. GRO, Certified copy issued 7 July 2005, entry of birth from St. Philip and St. Jacob, Clifton Registration District, vol. 6a, p. 134, no. 177 (1st Quarter 1865), Michael Tidball; author's files.

13. GRO, Certified copy issued 4 July 2005, entry of death from St. Philip and St. Jacob, Clifton Registration District, vol. 6a, p. 74, no. 495 (2nd Quarter 1865), Mary Ann Tidball; author's files.

14. GRO, Certified copy issued 8 July 2005, entry of marriage from the County of Bristol, vol. 6a, p. 55, no. 30 (2nd Quarter 1866), William Tidball and Elizabeth Selina Morrish; author's files.

15. GRO, Certified copy issued 24 September 2003, entry of marriage from District of Bristol, City and County of Bristol, vol. 6a, p. 135, no. 86 (1st Quarter 1884), John Tidball and Mary Ann Lee; author's files.

16. 1881 Census of England, County of Gloucestershire, Bristol St. Michael Civil Parish, Colston's Almshouse, RG 11, piece 2476, folio 20, p. 2, schedule no. 11, Mary Price; FHL microfilm 1341596.

17. GRO, Certified copy issued 24 September 2003, entry of marriage from the Registration District of Bristol, no. 265, William Tidball and Mary Ann Bisgrove; author's files.

18. GRO, Certified copy issued 8 July 2005, entry of birth from Clifton Registration District, St. Philip and St. Jacob Subdistrict, no. 230 (1856), Elizabeth Tidball; author's files.

19. GRO, Certified copy issued 7 February, entry of birth from Clifton Registration District, St. Philip and St. Jacob Sub-district, no. 463 (1859), Thomas Tidball; author's files.

20. 1861 Census of England, William Tidball.

21. GRO, Certified copy issued 22 September 2003, entry of birth from Clifton Registration District, St. Philip and St. Jacob Sub-district, no. 297 (1862); John Tidball, author's files.

22. GRO, Certified copy issued 7 July 2005, entry of birth from Clifton Registration District, St. Philip and St. Jacob Sub-district, no. 177 (1865), Michael Tidball; author's files.

23. GRO, Certified copy issued 4 July 2005, entry of death from Clifton Registration District, St. Philip and St. Jacob Sub-district, no. 495 (1865), Mary Ann Tidball; author's files.

24. Tidball-Morrish marriage registration, 1866.

25. 1871 Census of England, William Tidball.

26. 1881 Census of Census, William Tidball.

27. GRO, Certified copy issued 24 September 2003, entry of marriage from Clifton Registration District, St. Philip and St. Jacob Sub-district, no. 86 (1884), John Tidball and Mary Ann Lee; author's files.

28. 1891 Census of England, County of Gloucestershire, Bristol St. Philip and St. Jacob Civil Parish, RG 12, piece 1983, folio , p. 30, schedule no. 214, William Tidball; FHL microfilm 6097093.

29. GRO, Certified copy issued 12 July 2005, entry of death from St. Philip and St. Jacob, Barton Regis Registration District, vol. 6a, p. 87, no. 422 (4th Quarter 1892), Michael Tidball; author's files.

30. GRO, Certified copy issued 6 February 2007, entry of death from Bristol Registration District, St. Philip and St. Jacob Sub-district, no. 63 (1899), William Tidball; author's files.

31. 1851 Census of England, County of Gloucestershire, Bristol St. Augustine the Less Civil Parish, HO 107, piece 1951, folio 150, p. 13, schedule no. 67, John Lee, FHL microfilm 87351; and 1861 Census of England, County of Dorset, Melcombe Regis Civil Parish, RG 9, piece 1349, folio 114, p. 42, schedule no. 192, John Lee, FHL microfilm 542799.

32. 1871 Census of England, County of Gloucestershire, Bristol St. Michael Civil Parish, Colston's Almhouse, RG 11, piece 2532, folio 19, p. 1, schedule no. 8, Mary Price, FHL microfilm 835259.

33. 1841 England Census, County of Somerset, Brushford Civil Parish, HO 107, piece 965, book 4, folio 6, [p. 5], Michael Tidball; FHL microfilm 474607.

34. Church of England, Parish Church of Brushford, Parish Registers for Brushford, 1558-1912, items 31-36; original registers in the Somerset Record Office; FHL microfilm 1526379.

35. *East Anstey Marriages, 1813-1837* (Exeter, England: Devon Family History Society, c2000). Copy available in the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, call number 942.35/E4 K29m.

36. "Church of England, Parish Church of North Molton, Parish Register Transcripts, 1539-1850," Michael Tidboald burial, original transcripts in the Exeter Public Library; FHL microfilm 917208.

37. 1851 Census of England, County of Somerset, Brushford Civil Parish, HO 107, piece 1890, folio 144, p. 10, schedule 28, Thomas Tidball; FHL microfilm 221040.

38. "Church of England, Parish Church of North Molton, Parish Register Transcripts, 1539-1850," William Tidball and Margaret Squire marriage, original transcripts in the Exeter Public Library; FHL microfilm 917208.

39. "Church of England, Parish Church of North Molton, Parish Register Transcripts, 1539-1850," William Tidbald baptism, original transcripts in the Exeter Public Library; FHL microfilm 917207.

40. Michael Tidbald baptism, "North Molton Parish Register Transcripts."

41. John Tidbald baptism, "North Molton Parish Register Transcripts."

42. Gregory Tidbald baptism, "North Molton Parish Register Transcripts."

43. Thomas Tidbald baptism, "North Molton Parish Register Transcripts."

44. Church of England, Parish Church of Exford, Parish Registers for Exford, 1618-1902, original registers in the Somerset Record Office; FHL microfilm 1526629.

45. Samuel Tidball appointment record, in the *Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835* [hereafter, CCEd], http://www.the clergydatabase.org.uk/index.html (accessed 19 December 2009), person ID 102793, record ID 171398. Samuel held the title of "clerk" at time of institution as vicar. Clerk is a title given to all clergymen and appears after their name in all official documents. It is usually omitted in the entering of records for the CCEd, but is included, where used, if the office is not one that could only be held by a clergyman, such as schoolmaster.

46. Charles Worthy, *Devonshire Wills: A Collection of*

Annotated Testamentary Abstracts (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1896), 162, *Google Books*, http://www.books.google. com (accessed June 2010).

47. *Ibid.*

48. Samuell Tudboll ordination record, CCEd, person ID 104286, record ID 89851.

49. "Church of England, Parish Church of Ashburton, Parish Register Transcripts, 1603-1837," vol. 4 Marriages, no. 1615, 7 December 1615, Samuel Tudball and Elizabeth [Heliar], transcribed for the Devon and Cornwall Records Society by Rev. F. Nesbitt, original transcripts in the Society's Library in Exeter; FHL microfilm 916802.

50. Samuel Tidball appointment record, CCEd, person ID 102793, record ID 179088.

51. Will of Elizabeth Tidball, Widow of Ashburton, Devon, 15 April 1658, Will Registers: Wootton Quire numbers 106-155, Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and Related Probate Jurisdictions, PROB 11/274, The National Archives [of the United Kingdom], Kew, England; FHL microfilm.

52. "Church of England, Parish Church of Ashburton, Parish Register Transcripts, 1603-1837," vol. 1 Baptisms; FHL microfilm 916801.

53. Worthy, *Devonshire Wills*, 125; Marcus Lawe and Maria Tidball marriage, 22 December 1636, "Ashburton Parish Register Transcripts, 1603-1837," vol. 4 Marriages, p. 25.

54. "Ashburton Parish Register Transcripts, 1603-1837," vol. 1 Baptisms.

55. Will of Elizabeth Tidball, PROB 11/274.

56. "Ashburton Parish Register Transcripts, 1603-1837," vol. 1 Baptisms.

57. Worthy, *Devonshire Wills*, 161-62. His will was proved in the Court of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, 13 July 1666.

58. Samuel Tidball appointment record, CCEd, person ID 102793, record ID 179088.

59. Worthy, *Devonshire Wills*, 162.

60. "St. Mary Magdalene," *Exford Community* website, http://www.exford.org/community/st_mary_magdalene/ history.php (accessed 19 December 2009).

61. Parish Registers for Exford.

62. Will of Walter Tidboalde or Tidboald, Yeoman of Stoodleigh, Devon, 27 February 1671, Will Registers: Duke Quire numbers 1-53, Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 11/335, The National Archives; FHL microfilm.

63. Church of England, Parish Church of Stoodleigh, Stoodleigh Parish Register 1: Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials for 1597-1690, Devon Record Office, Exeter, England, microfiche MF1.

64. *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714, Their Parentage, Birthplace and Year of Birth with a Record of their Degrees*, ed. Joseph Foster (Oxford, England: Parker, 1891-92).

65. "Parish Register Printouts of East Anstey, Devon, England, Christenings, 1596-1812," extracted from a microfilm copy of parish registers in the Exeter Public Library; FHL microfilm 933230.

66. Will of Reverand Abraham Tidboald, Rector of East Anstey, Devon, 7 May 1760, Will Registers: Lynch Quire numbers 1-53, Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 11/856, The National Archives; FHL microfilm 92828.

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Beginning Genealogy: 5 Steps in the Research Process

In the MGS Beginning Genealogy course, we teach a five-step[1] process for genealogical research. This process enables genealogists not only to find facts about their ancestors but also to organize the information and records they have for easy retrieval and use, focus their research, and learn the most from the records they find.

The five steps are:

1. Write down and organize what you know,
2. Decide what you want to learn,
3. Locate a useful source,
4. Learn from the source, and
5. Use what you learned.

Let's look briefly at each step.

Step 1: Write Down and Organize What You Know

In this step, you pull together what you know from personal knowledge, sources you have at home, or research you've already done, writing everything down and organizing it to provide a systematic review of your current state of knowledge. Things to do while working on this step include:

- Collecting and assembling documents, photos and memorabilia about your family.
- Setting up a system of binders, files and/or electronic files to store the records you have (and the ones you find later).
- Setting up a system to preserve fragile or irreplaceable materials, in archival containers if needed.
- Creating pedigree charts and family group sheets for your families of interest (either on paper or in a genealogy database).

This step gives you a sound foundation from which to move forward.

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1. The five steps were originally articulated by Jay Fonkert, CG, and Virginia Nichols, and came into their current form in summer 2009.

Step 2: Decide What You Want to Learn

Having inventoried, examined, and organized what you know, you have probably uncovered gaps in your knowledge. In Step 2, you transform these gaps into specific research questions, with concrete steps leading you toward answers. As you look at all the possible projects you could pursue, you consider which ones you are in a position to attack now, given your present research skills (including the languages you know), your knowledge of the records you need, and your access to those records. This is where you break the big questions ("Where did the Clark family originate?") into smaller, more manageable ones ("Where did the Clark family live before they moved to Iowa?").

Step 3: Locate a Useful Source

The refinement of your research questions in Step 2 often points you toward the sources you need to find the answers. For example, if you want to know how or when one of your families moved from Virginia to Michigan and on to Minnesota, you might turn to census records and other sources that provide location information. If you want to know a maiden name, you might turn to vital records, church records, or cemetery records—records that provide identity information. In this step you:

- Refine your skills in using libraries (including Family History Centers), government offices, and the Internet to find records and to find out how to find other records;
- Write letters, complete forms, and search Internet databases; and
- Improve your techniques for requesting information and searching databases.

Step 4: Learn from the Source

Having found a record, you glean its information. This means taking accurate notes to consult later, possibly extracting the information from the record onto a form, and looking carefully at each bit of information in the record. At the same time, you capture iden-