



NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

www.NewEnglandAncestors.org

Research Services

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2 February 2005

Research Report Case No. 145371

Background:

The purpose of the research is to identify the Rebecca Church who married George Borden in Tiverton, Rhode Island, according to the published Borden genealogy by Hattie Borden Weld. Information about Rebecca's parents is also requested.

In your request you gave the following information about George Borden. George was the son of Stephen Borden (b. 1705) and Penelope Read. George was born in Freetown, Mass., on 2 May 1735 and died on 2 June 1810, probably in Westport, Mass.

Various internet sources identify Rebecca, born in 1733, as the daughter of Benjamin and Judith (Pabodie) Church. However, according to Mayflower Families this Rebecca married Luke Horswell who did not die until 1800. Thus, this Rebecca would have been married to Luke at the same time as George and Rebecca Borden were married.

Research Result:

• Rhode Island Vital Records:

1. Vital Records of Tiverton and Little Compton, Rhode Island:¹

There was no record of the marriage of George Borden in the Tiverton vital records or any record of a Rebecca Church. We did find the following records for Rebecca Church in Little Compton:

Rebecca, daughter of Benjamin and Judith Church, born 18 October 1733;

Rebecca married Luke Horswell on 1 June 1756;

Rebecca married Joseph Hawkins on 30 October 1759.

Since we know that Luke Horswell did not die until 1800, we can conclude that there were two Rebecca's married in Little Compton. According to Mayflower Families, the Rebecca Church who married Luke is the daughter of Benjamin and Judith Church. We have not determined the names of the parents of the Rebecca who married Joseph Hawkins. However, evidence (see the section on Deeds below) shows that George Borden and Rebecca were married by November 1758. Thus, the Rebecca Church who married Joseph Hawkins could not have married George Borden.

2. Newport County, Rhode Island, Vital Records:

¹ Arnold, James N. *Vital Records of Rhode Island, 1636-1850. First Series, Births, Marriages and Deaths.* Vol. 4: *Newport County.* 1893. This volume contains the vital records of Tiverton and Little Compton.



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We could find no record of the marriage of George Borden or the birth of children to Rebecca and George Borden in the *Rhode Island Vital Records, New Series* by Alden G. Beaman. We looked at vol. 10 *Newport County, Rhode Island, Marriages from Probate Records 1647-1860I* and vol. 12 *Newport County, Rhode Island, Births 1751-1860 from Death and Marriage Records A-J*.

- **Family Genealogies:**

We looked at the following published genealogies for Rebecca Church or a Rebecca who married George Borden without success:

1. *Genealogies of Rhode Island Families from Rhode Island Periodical*, 2 vols. (published in 1989.)²
2. As you probably know, almost all members of the Church family in Freetown and Tiverton were descendants of Richard Church who married the daughter of Richard Warren of the *Mayflower*. We looked unsuccessfully in the *Family of Richard Warren* for a Rebecca who could have been the wife of George Borden.³ The likely candidates would have been anyone named Rebecca of the 6th generation. Although the marriages of the 6th generation were not given, we found no one named Rebecca born to the Church family in Tiverton or Freetown.
3. The *Descendants of Richard Church of Plymouth, Mass.* by John A. Church is a thorough but undocumented genealogy of this Church family.⁴ As you probably know, two daughters of Capt. Charles Church of Freetown did marry members of the Borden family. Mary Church married Stephen Borden and Susanna Church married George Borden.⁵ This Stephen and George Borden were 1st cousins of your George Borden.⁶ We could find no evidence that a Rebecca Church married a George Borden. We have enclosed the Rebecca Church entries in the book's index in case any of them seem relevant to you.

- **Local Histories:**

There was no local history of Tiverton, Rhode Island, in the NEHGS Library. However, the *History of Newport County, Rhode Island* did include a history of

² There are two more volumes on genealogies of Rhode Island families that are taken from articles in the *Register*. Since you have already looked at databases on the NEHGS web site, we presume you have already searched for Rebecca in the *Register*.

³ Wakefield, Robert S. *Mayflower Families through Five Generations*. Vol. 18, parts 1-2. *Family of Richard Warren*. General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1999.

⁴ Church, John A. *Descendants of Richard Church of Plymouth, Mass.* Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle Co., 1913.

⁵ Photocopies of relevant pages from *Descendants of Richard Church...* (p. 46-47) and *Family of Richard Warren* (Part I: 113-14) are enclosed. *Descendants of Richard Church...* is available both at the NEHGS Library and www.HeritageQuestOnline.com, a web site that is available at the Library.

⁶ Since this information was taken from Hattie Borden Weld's Borden genealogy, we realize you are aware of this relationship. We did not intend to duplicate your efforts.



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Tiverton.⁷ Although members of the Church and Borden family were referenced, there was no information relevant to a Rebecca Church or the marriage of George Borden. We also looked at *Little Compton Families* by Benjamin F Wilbour [1967] as well as "Family Records copied by Benjamin Wilbour" in the NEHGS Manuscript Collection. There was no relevant information in either.

A History of the Town of Freetown, Massachusetts, with an Account of the Old Home Festival contained no relevant information. We did not find a marriage record for George and Rebecca in *Freetown, Massachusetts, Marriage Records 1686-1844* by Mary P. Herbert [1934.]

- **Probate Records:**

1. We looked for Borden and Church wills listed in the index of wills of the *Rhode Island Genealogical Register*.⁸ The only abstract of a Church will in Tiverton was that of Isaac Church who did not mention a Rebecca in his will. We looked at the abstract of the 1767 will of a George Borden of Tiverton. This turned out to be the will of George who was the brother of Stephen and uncle and guardian of your George, as you know. There was no mention of either your George or Rebecca in this will.

We also looked at the abstracts for Thomas Church of Dighton and Thomas and John Church of Little Compton. John's probate mentions a granddaughter Rebecca who was undoubtedly the daughter of John's son Benjamin who married Judith Pabodie. She is the Rebecca who married Luke Horswell according to your reference in *Mayflower Families*.

2. Bristol County, Mass., Probate Records:

We looked at abstracts of probated records in Bristol County for some information on a Rebecca Church who might have married George Borden.⁹ The only record that we found mentioning a Rebecca was the will of Rebecca Pope dated 8 Jan. 1741 and proved 20 April 1742.¹⁰ In this will she mentions **Rebecca Church**, daughter of **Charles Church dec'd of Freetown**. This Charles Church

⁷ *History of Newport County, Rhode Island*. New York: L.E. Proctor & Co., 1888.

⁸ *Rhode Island Genealogical Register*. Vol. 16 *Index of Wills*. This index references the wills abstracted in the *Register*. We looked up the actual abstracts of wills that appeared to be relevant in the specified volumes. These abstracts gave the names of all persons mentioned in a will and their relationships where given in the will.

⁹ Rounds, H.L. Peter. *Abstracts of Bristol County, Massachusetts Probate Records, 1687-1745*. Baltimore, Md.: 1987.

¹⁰ Rounds. Citing *Bristol County Probate Records*, vol. 10:140-41.



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is undoubtedly the Charles Church who married Mary Pope daughter of Seth and Deborah Pope ca. 1709.¹¹ Seth Pope married a Rebecca as his second wife.¹² In her will, Rebecca is referring to her step-granddaughter who was born in 1713. This Rebecca Church was living in Ashford, CT, in 1795 and is definitely not the Rebecca who married George.¹³

There was no other mention of a Rebecca Church or Rebecca Borden listed in the *Abstracts of Bristol County Probates*. We did find the abstract of the division of the estate of Stephen Burden [sic] of Freetown between his wife Penelope and his children Stephen, George, Mary Shearman and Hannah Brownell dated 23 April 1754.¹⁴ As you know, Stephen died in 1740, and the guardianship of his children George, Stephen, Susena [Lusena?], Mary and Meribe were given to his brother George.¹⁵

3. Bristol County, Mass., Land Records:

We looked at the Bristol County grantor-grantee indices for 1685-1795 for land records involving George Borden or any records that would link the Church family with the Borden family (enclosed are photocopies of indices for George Borden and members of the Church family.)¹⁶

A deed involving George Borden as grantor and John Bowen as grantee establishes that George and Rebecca Borden were married by 10 November 1758.¹⁷ In this deed dated 10 November 1758, George sold to his step-father John Bowen the land in Tiverton that George inherited from his father. The deed is signed by George Borden and the mark of **Rebecca Borden**. At that time (1758) George was a resident of Tiverton, and he was a cordwainer (e.g., shoe maker.)

In a deed dated 25 May 1756 George Borden of Tiverton, then a yeoman, sold a portion of his father Stephen's estate to his step-father John Bowen.¹⁸ There was no mention of a Rebecca Borden in this deed, suggesting that George was not

¹¹ *Family of Richard Warren*, p. 113.

¹² "Genealogy of Thomas Pope of Plymouth." *NEHGS Register* 42:52.

¹³ *Family of Richard Warren*, p. 232.

¹⁴ Rounds. Citing *Bristol County Probate Records*, vol. 17:603-609.

¹⁵ Rounds. Citing *Bristol County Probate Records*, vol. 9:487. The guardianship of Hannah was given to John Bowen who married Penelope, Stephen's widow.

¹⁶ We have enclosed these indices in case you see any deeds that would interest you. The records themselves are available on microfilm at the NEHGS Library.

¹⁷ Bristol County, Mass., Land Records. Vol. 46:158. We have also enclosed a copy of the deed involving John and Susannah Brownell as grantors to George in June 1758 (46:156) in case it is of interest to you.

¹⁸ Bristol County, Mass., Land Records. Vol. 42:444.



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married at this time.¹⁹ Thus, we can tentatively conclude that George married Rebecca sometime after May 1756 and before November 1758.

We looked at a number of other deeds involving George Borden but none of them provided any additional information about the marriage of George and Rebecca or the identity of Rebecca, George's wife.

Conclusions:

We could find no information about a Rebecca Church who reportedly married George Borden son of Stephen and Penelope (Read) Borden. We did find evidence that George married a Rebecca by November 1758 and probably after May 1756. We have no evidence that her maiden name was Church.

Suggestions for Further Research:

1. Because of the time constraint, we were unable to look at all the deeds involving George Borden in detail, particularly later deeds that might involve land that came from Rebecca's family. As you know, land records take time to process but often contain valuable genealogical material.
2. It might be worth looking at Quaker records since Quaker births and marriages are not included in town vital records. Although the births of the children of George and Rebecca were recorded in the Freetown vital records, she could have been a Quaker before her marriage. You may want to look at the monthly meeting records for Newport, Rhode Island, and Westport, Mass. The NEHGS Library has microfilm copies of the records of these meetings.

¹⁹ As you know, wives often had to sign away their dower rights to property as in the case of the 1758 deed.