

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

“ EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTER-BOOK OF A DOVER MERCHANT,
1737-1741 ”

By WILLIAM MINET, M.A., F.S.A.

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On page 254 of the above-quoted book was found a copy of a letter written by Isaac Minet (1660-1745) the Huguenot refugee who fled to England in 1686, and presently settled in Dover to become a successful merchant and banker and an outstanding citizen of character and merit. My notes are to the effect that the letter dealt with an affair of pressgangs and included a reference to “ Mr. Gay Matson, Deputy Mayor ”. This particular passage has since been inspected in a copy of the book.

Genealogy—and with special reference to the Dover Branch of my family—has been a hobby of my later advancing years ; and at once my curiosity was aroused over this strange person. I have since arrived at the conclusion that no such man existed in the history of Dover, and that a definite error in nomenclature was committed—probably by the author. I do not think that Isaac himself would have made this mistake, for he was well acquainted with members of the Matson family in Dover. “ The Huguenot Family of Minet ” by the same author contains a number of references to them.

The evidence on which I have based my opinion is as follows. The name “ Gay Matson ” has not been found in the Dover Corporation Records, or in any history of the Town and Port. On the other hand we find Goddard Gay as Mayor in 1730 and again in 1739 ; and John Matson is noted as Mayor in 1735—the years stated being those of election. In 1736 the former was acting as Clerk of the Cheque and Director-Overseer of the Workes of Dover Harbour ; and the latter was Agent Victualler with his residence at Maison Dieu House. It is suggested that the incorrect name was a careless unison of the surnames of those two men.

On page 280 of the same “ Extracts ” is another extract from a letter or diary entry of Isaac Minet, with regard to the election as Mayor of John Dalgliesh in 1738. The comment is “ cela fait plaisir à John Matson ”, on account of the relationship between those two men as brothers-in-law. Dalgliesh was a Captain of a Naval Packet

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on the Dover Station, and was to be Mayor again in 1746. He had married Susanna, daughter of James Matson, Malster and Jurat of Dover.

MAJOR C. MATSON.

RIPPLE WINDMILL

This strikingly placed Mill, sometimes called Ripple Mill although in Ringwould, is a sea-mark. Hence it is recorded by its owner in 1895 that he received a grant from Trinity House towards its repair.

I regret that I did not mention the Mill in 1931 or the importance to the community of this feature, when I was writing about the Parish. It seems undoubted that the site must have been occupied from medieval times by one of the early Post Mill type such as still exists in a field at Chillenden. In a Ringwould Will of 1592 John Watson, Blacksmith, leaves "to his son John his barn and the mill house". Presumably the Mill remained in the ownership of the Lord of the Manor as a matter of course.

A Mill of the above type probably remained standing well after 1695, as shown in Robert Morden's Map. Coles Finch records that a more modern structure was built at Drellingore in Hawkinge and moved here early in the 19th century. I remember seeing it working but it lost sweeps through timber decay—not storm havoc—in Feb. 1926. It has since been derelict till taken over recently by the Redifusion Company.

W. P. D. STEBBING, 1958.

KENTISH BEE BOLES ; FURTHER NOTE

Mr. and Mrs. John Baker of The Old Vicarage, St. Stephens, Canterbury, report 3 bee boles in a south-facing wall of their garden.

To quote Mr. Baker : " Much of this wall is certainly late Tudor (1560-1600), and is built of 2 in. bricks now very soft and probably of Dutch origin. But the area where the boles are, is in my opinion, later, as the 9 in. by 3 in. bricks predominate here." However, these bricks may have been used in repairing the wall around the recesses, as the measurements of the bee boles are those of a Tudor type—10-11 in. in depth, and 12 in. in length and they have a pointed gable formed by two bricks. These bee boles are similar to those in the War Memorial Garden, Canterbury Cathedral.

Mr. Baker thinks that his garden may have originally belonged to Hales Place, which was only a quarter of a mile away.

V. F. DESBOROUGH.

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BEXLEY CHURCH

Two references in my paper "Bexley Church : Some Early Documents" in *Arch. Cant.*, LXXII need correction. On p. 41 n. 2 the reference should be to the article on "Earthworks in Joydens Wood, Bexley" by A. H. A. Hogg in *Arch. Cant.*, LIV (1941), not to Dr. Gordon Ward. On p. 47, n. 1 the description "Canterbury Assize Roll 369" should read "P.R.O. Justices Itinerant Roll 369, membranes 36-7". The latter correction I owe to the kindness of Mr. C. A. F. Meekings, Assistant Keeper and Librarian of the Public Record Office.

F. R. H. DU BOULAY.

EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FROM SANDHURST, KENT, 1826, 1827 and 1828

In the first thirty years of the nineteenth century poverty in the rural districts of southern England was worse than anything which had been known for many, many decades. The village of Sandhurst, Kent, was no exception to the general rule. Up to 1760 the largest amount of money paid out in any one year in relief to the poor was £200; by 1800 it had reached over £2,000. The average amount paid out for this village of about eight hundred and fifty people for the first thirty years of the century was £1,679 p.a., 1803 being the lowest year with £1,047, and 1822 the highest with £2,333. In these circumstances it is not surprising that many agricultural workers turned their gaze overseas, and where their parishes were prepared to help with their fares many families decided to emigrate.

The first intimation that anyone was wishing to go to the United States from Sandhurst comes from the Parish Request Book of 1822, the year in which disbursements from relief were to stand at their highest. Here, under the date 6th April, is entered as a request "George Fuller to America", and the terse reply in the margin "Cannot be at the expence". Eighteen months later there is a note with no comment.

"George Fuller and family request to go to America.

William Vitler wife and two children do.

Samuel Simonds (single) do."

But it was not to be until 1826 that George Fuller and Samuel Simmonds got their desire. (We hear no more of the Vitler family.) In the intervening years both men had applied to the parish for relief from time to time, though neither of them with the frequency of some other families.

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Apparently by 1826, with other parishes in the district assisting their paupers to go to North America, the Churchwardens and Overseers of Sandhurst had come to the conclusion that in the long run it might save them money to do the same, and in this year and the two following years three groups of people were given their passages and all necessary assistance. By means of parish accounts, extant letters etc., it is possible to trace in fairly considerable detail the arrangements which were made and something about the families who emigrated. A fourth and smaller group also went in 1832 but much less is known about them.

For the first three years the same procedure was followed. A notice was sent out summoning a Public Vestry "to take into consideration raising a certain sum of money to enable persons that are willing to emigrate to America". At this Vestry it was arranged that the required money should be borrowed at 5 per cent. interest paid from the Poor Rate, and the principal repaid from the same source at stated intervals. In 1826, £150 was authorized to be borrowed, in fact £175 was raised; in 1827, £250 was authorized, but only £200 raised; in 1828, £100 was authorized and raised. In 1826, the money was lent by two men—James Collins, miller and farmer, probably the wealthiest man in the village, put up £75, and the other £100 was lent by Thomas Ellis, a reasonably well-to-do landowner, and one of the few people in the locality entitled "Gentleman", and the only one of that class who took any part in the running of the parish. In 1827 James Collins lent a further £50, £50 was lent by another wealthy local farmer Robert Dunk but the remaining £100 was borrowed from the Bankers, Smith, Hilder & Gill of Hastings. In 1828 the lenders were again Thomas Ellis Gentleman £50, James Collins £25, and the last £25 came from another wealthy farmer John Hilder, who was evidently one of the most public-spirited men in the parish and for many years one of the Churchwardens. He it was who in 1826, was charged, with the help of the two Overseers John Humphrey and Aaron Pinyon, to make all the arrangements for the migrants' journey.

The first step taken was to seek advice from the Benenden Overseer, as he already had some experience of this exercise. He supplied the name of an agent in London, and suggestions as to what it was necessary for the emigrants to take with them in the way of provisions bedding, cooking utensils, etc. Mr. Hilder wrote at once to the agent at the London Dock and from 19th April to 9th May a constant succession of letters passed between them. As a result of this it was arranged for the party to sail in the "Virginia" leaving London about the 12th May. The fare was £7 per adult and half price for children under fourteen years of age, with no charge for babies "at

the breast". Chapman, the agent, also undertook to provide the necessary provisions which were 1 barrel (224 lbs.) of salt beef, 2 barrels (each of 200 lbs.) of salt port, 85½ lbs. of bacon, 8 cwt. of best brown bread (in fact a sort of ship's biscuit), 7 cwt. of potatoes, ½ cwt. of flour, 14 lbs. of rice, 2 pecks of split peas, and, at Mr. Hilder's special request, 26 lbs. of butter and 36 lbs. of cheese. On writing to accept the suggestions from Chapman he added "provided you will add some cheese and butter to the articles you mention, I should think that was necessary especially for the children, but I am a novice in these matters what I wish is that they may have what is proper and what passengers going out under similar circumstances usually do". Chapman in his letter had also asked for a deposit, but Hilder had evidently heard that ships' Captains were apt to sell their space to agents and then fill the ship before the country passengers could arrive, and he replies that "the money shall be paid when you take the passengers on board" but gives him the name of a reference in London.

Both the 1827 group and the 1828 one sailed from Liverpool, the former in the "Hercules" and the latter in the "London". Far more is known about the last group than the middle one as in this case they travelled with a party from Benenden and letters still survive to tell the full story. Getting to Liverpool involved a six day journey from London, which was arranged by Pickford at a charge of 16s. per head for adults, children half price, the parish allowing them 1s. per head per day for provisions (children again half price) during the journey. The journey was by canal, probably in "Fly boats" which travelled at 3 to 3½ miles per hour and carried a load of not more than ten tons. They required a crew of four, two steerers and two drivers, since they travelled day and night, the relays of horses doing about forty miles a day. Each passenger was allowed 28 lbs. of free luggage but extra baggage was charged for at 6s. a cwt. The first party had over 11 cwt. of extra luggage, and the second over 17 cwt. extra. One can only suppose that this was their provisions, but (worryingly!) there are no bills for provisions in any of the parish accounts for either of these years, although in 1826 the cost had been over £45. On arrival at Liverpool the party was met by the agent, who was responsible for them until the ship sailed (six days in the first case) and who took them on board and paid their passages, and also some money for the emigrants to have on landing. For this service they charged 5 per cent. of all monies paid out. The adults fare from Liverpool was £5 15s., children between 7 and 14, £3, under seven £2 5s., and £1 9s. 6d. for infants.

Before going any further it would be well to look at the personnel of the various parties. As each group has some connection with one or other of the other groups they are listed side by side.

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1826	1827	1828
Fuller, George and Jemima Four children, and a baby.	Coleman, T. Longley (28) and Harriet (21) Thomas (2½ years) Elizabeth (9 months)	Swatland, Stephen and Sarah Stephen (9) James (7) Solomon (5) Spencer (3) Samuel (1)
Harris, James (26) and Mary One child One baby	Lavender, John and Elizabeth John (11) Mary (9) Thomas (5) Harriet (2)	Wybourn, John and Martha Martha (25) John Orlando (22) William (19) Mary Anne (17) Sarah Serena (10) Gerard Noel (8) Robert (5)
Harris, William (22) brother of James		
Wenban, Charles (29) and his wife	Mainard, William (48) and Hannah (45) William (23) Henry (17) Joseph (12) Eliza (11) Richard (9) Hannah (7) Samuel (5) Stephen (2)	
Mainard, John (19)		
Smith, David George (19) (presumably brothers)		
Simmonds, Samuel		
Wybourn, George (25)	Edmunds, William (22) Sivyer, Henry (20) Wenban, William (25) James (20) Edward (18) (brothers)	

Of the 1826 group, as we know, George Fuller had twice before applied to go to America, and earlier than that he had evidently tried to find work outside Sandhurst for in 1817 he and his wife were brought back from Bethersden, having no means of support there. Charles Wenban was the eldest of a family of ten, and the elder brother of the three young men who followed him to the States in 1827. With the departure of these four young men their parents were left with only one son (and three girls) in England. Charles' wife was probably not a Sandhurst girl for there is no record of their marriage in the Sandhurst registers. Mr. Hilder had been a little worried at her making the journey, fearing that there might be difficulties with the ship's Captain as, so he told the agent, "she is not more than half gone with child, very healthy and very anxious to go", to which Chapman replied "there will be no objection to taking the woman in the family way". Charles was evidently a friend of James and Mary Harris for he was one of the two witnesses to their marriage in 1821. The register shows that though both the Harrises were literate enough to sign their name Charles had to make his mark. This was, however, not the case with all the family for in the following year the

three younger brothers, when about to leave Sandhurst, sent in written requests for clothes to take with them. John Lavender's requests are also obviously written by himself, though spelling was not a strong point either with him or with Henry Sivyver. John Mainard, who sailed in 1826, was not a son of the Mainard family who left the following year, but he may have been a nephew, as may William Edmund for his mother was a Mainard.

Of the 1827 group, Longley Coleman was the illegitimate son of Thomas Longley and Martha Coleman, it is therefore possible that he was a half-brother of James Harris's wife who had been a Longley. Coleman had lived "on the parish" from the moment of his birth, and must have come to think that there was no other life for him. His first wife died just a year after their marriage and he even had to apply to the parish for help to bury her. However only a year later he married eighteen year old Harriet Mainard (a cousin of his first wife) and so with the rest of his wife's family decided to go to the States. It is interesting to note that in the Parish Request Book for 17th April, 1827, which gives the list of people who had applied to go to America, of this family there are only the names of the two young men William and Henry. The Mainard parents and the Longley Colemans must have decided at the very last moment that they would ask to be included if possible.

Of the Wybourn family we know rather more than of the others. George Wybourn, who sailed in 1826, was the eldest of a family of ten children, and this family seems to appear in the Parish Request Book more frequently than any other. George himself must have been in fairly regular work for his requests are few and far between, but the rest of the family are continually asking for clothes, fuel, food and work. Their situation cannot have been made any easier by the fact that the second son, John Orlando, was apparently somewhat unstable mentally. For the first six months of 1825 he was in a Home at Ticehurst, which cost the parish over £20. Later that year he evidently left Sandhurst with James Wenban, probably to try and get work elsewhere, but they were not successful and were returned on a Settlement Order from Plumstead. By December 1826, Mr. Newington, of the Ticehurst Mental Home, was "sorry to hear that young Wybourn is again unruly", but could receive him at any time. There he apparently again went, but by May 1827, he had "lately improved in his state of mind, and in all probability he will soon be sufficiently recovered as to return to Sandhurst". He did not in fact return until mid-August having on this occasion cost the parish over £37. The frustration of the young who could get no work at that time must surely have been enough to make any of them "unruly". As well as these troubles with John Orlando the Wybourn parents had lost

two children in the twenties, a six year old son in 1821 and a fourteen year old daughter in 1827.

Martha, the eldest daughter, probably went out to domestic service in the neighbourhood, for she was not included in the request of the family to go to America and made a separate application late in March. As she was not on relief the parish were disinclined to pay her fare, but Mr. William Paine (possibly her employer) gave £4 towards it and the parish then paid the rest. The time that it took to make these arrangements meant that she was unable to travel with her family to Liverpool, but had to make her own way there alone. She must have been a young woman of considerable character to have been prepared to face a journey of that length by herself.

Before leaving Sandhurst most of the children were vaccinated. An 1826 request reads, "Ge Fuller applies for three of his children to have the cow pock", and the chemist's bills show that the three Mainard children were also vaccinated, three of the Lavender children, both the Colman children and all the five Swatland boys.

The emigrants were allowed from £1 to 30s. a head to equip themselves for their journey. In 1826 the young men did not spend anything like this amount, but the families needed it all. Everyone took an amount of material "by the yard", very probably for the women to make up into the necessary garments during the long voyage. Some ordered new sheets and a pair of blankets, and shoes and stockings appear on nearly all the bills.

Mr. Hilder himself went to London to see that the first two groups got off safely, and Mr. Humphrey saw to the departure of the last party. Naturally neither the Churchwarden nor the Overseer actually travelled up to London with the migrants, but went up by coach and met them when they reached London Dock. In all three cases Mr. Pinyon's waggon, with four horses, took the emigrants themselves and their luggage, and it would seem that his waggoner was thought to be a responsible man for though the actual hire of the waggon was £3 10s. he seems to have had extra money to dispense for "beer and gates" and was given a tip of 6s. Mr. Hilder evidently accompanied the first party on board, and paid the Captain of the "Virginia" £101 10s. for the fares and got his receipt signed "Jon M. Knight". He also changed a sum of money into dollars and gave each man of the party something to have in hand when they landed. The single men got the equivalent of 30s. a head, and the families were paid according to their size.

In 1827 and 1828, these last arrangements were made by the agents in Liverpool, and unfortunately they do not seem to have followed Mr. Hilder's example, but to have paid them in sterling, with in 1828 rather disastrous results which are best told in the words of the Benenden

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Overseer, for in this year at anyrate the two villages sent a party together. On 28th April, he writes to Mr. Humphery "Dear Sir, I received advice from Liverpool this morning and am sorry to say that Wibourn after the muster and payment of premiums and passage on Deck on the 26th left with Wm. Wenman and went on shore saying that they would return again after taking a pint or two of Porter in time before the Vessel sailed however they did not return before the morning of the next day, such unwarrantable conduct is unpardonable. Mrs. Wibourn has the premium with the exception of a few shillings with which it appears that he got intoxicated, under all the circumstances our Agent thought it advisable to secure a passage in the Peru which will sail about the 25th but that will be attended with an extra expense—but as the men appear very desirous to go I think it is the best course he could take particularly in the case of Wibourn, the other is a single man and it is a very unfortunate circumstance that two drunken fellows should have taken their passage in the same Vessel". Mrs. Wybourn, one feels, would have had a stronger expression for it! Bills show that Wybourn did sail in the "Peru", but whether or not he ever managed to join up with his family we shall, alas, never be able to know.

A little is known of the three ships in which the Sandhurst emigrants sailed for America. The "Virginia" was a ship of 367 tons, with, of course, with that name, a New York Registration. The "Hercules" was slightly smaller, of 317 tons, and the "London" it is impossible to identify as there were many ships of that name round about that time, but as Mr. Humphery refers to her once as "the beautiful ship 'London'" it is probable that she was at least as big as the "Virginia". Whatever the actual size the journey by steerage must have been one of almost unmitigated discomfort even to people who were used to hardship. The description of steerage quarters make uncomfortable reading in any book which makes mention of it. The lowest part of the hold contained the heavy baggage, cordwood for fuel and casks of water, usually uncleaned barrels which had been previously put to various uses—oil casks, turpentine barrels, sugar hogsheads etc. The water soon became foul and often towards the latter half of the voyage gunpowder was sprinkled on as a preservative, which gave it a blackish appearance and a repulsive taste which all the tea and coffee could not conceal. Above this lowest part of the hold was the steerage. It was usually not more than six feet from floor to ceiling, and with no means of entrance but a ladder leading from a hole in the deck of the hatchway. Around the sides of the steerage ran two layers of berths, cumbersome shelves wide enough for five persons and filling most of the floor space. The sanitary arrangements beggar description. Dirt and disorder were bound to be prevalent and made an excellent

breeding ground for rats. Every group of migrants were advised to take with them bottles of vinegar as a disinfectant and the Sandhurst people had at least two gallon jars of it with them. The conditions were bad enough in fine weather, but if the weather was stormy then the hatches were battened down and the whole place became absolutely fetid, and one wonders how it was that so many of them survived the journey.

The cooking facilities on board were primitive. Sometimes there was a barrel lined with bricks and mortar on the deck covered with a grill of a few iron bars (occasionally an ordinary cooking stove stood on deck, but this was liable to be washed overboard in the first gale the ship met). On this apology for a stove each family or group had to take their turn to cook their meals and the tempers of most of the women must have been pretty well frayed before they had been a week at sea. The voyage from London was expected to take anything from thirty to forty days, but there were many occasions when the ship might meet adverse winds and then it would take much longer, and the problem of the right apportionment of food was always an acute one. Cases have been quoted of ships coming into New York harbour with their emigrant passengers in a state of semi-starvation.

The allowance given to each individual for board and lodging on arrival in New York seems at first to have been very little indeed, but in fact it was probably quite enough for them. The demand for labour in all the Eastern States at this time was prodigious, and so keen were the employers to secure the services of the new migrants that they frequently sent out agents to meet the ships as they came into harbour, and empowered them to engage the people on board even before they landed. British migration to the United States had virtually stopped for the more well-to-do after the War of Independence at the end of the eighteenth century, and had completely ceased after the war of 1812, but these political upheavals probably had no effect at all on the work that was to be found by the labourer. The demand was too great for any employer to bother where his work-people came from, and it is probable that they were only too thankful to get workers who had not got the extra difficulty of language to contend with.

After 1828 little is known of what happened about people who wished to emigrate. In 1832 four men sailed for Canada, in the "Mint". It was again Thomas Ellis who produced the necessary £50 and the Parish Accounts give the bare outline of how this was spent. The "Mint" was a larger ship than either the "Virginia" or the "Hercules", being 470 tons, registered in Quebec. The money to be given to the men on landing was paid to the Master, Robert Woodward, with their fares, perhaps in order to prevent a repetition of the 1828 incident.

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In March 1838, a large family, sixteen in all, applied to go to New South Wales, but there is no record of what happened to their application. In June of the same year another family applied to go to Sydney and the Vestry Book says simply "Application allowed". In March 1843 eighteen persons applied to go to Canada but again there is no further information. After 1834 the distribution of Poor Relief monies had passed out of the hands of the village Overseers, and perhaps all that they could do was to pass on the applications to the public authorities who were now concerned with the disbursements.

Information gathered from :

Sandhurst Registers of Births, Marriages and Burials.

Vestry Books.

Parish Request Book.

Churchwardens and Overseers Account Books.

Letters between the Sandhurst authorities and,
the Benenden Overseer,
London Agents,
Ships' Captains.

Bills from local shops,

London shops,

Liverpool agents.

Lloyds Register of Shipping.

Messrs. Pickford and Co.

Various books on Emigration to the United States.

NOREEN C. HOLMES.

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