

# The Importance of Thomas Dudley's Seal in the Discovery of his Paternal Ancestry

By H. Allen Curtis

Thomas Dudley's paternal ancestry has been elusive for genealogists for more than one hundred and sixty years.<sup>1</sup> In 1993 Marshall K. Kirk developed a paternal ancestry for Thomas Dudley in which Henry Dudley was the father of Thomas Dudley's father, Roger. Unfortunately, Mr. Kirk was not able to supply any documentary proof of the ancestry.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Dudley used a seal on his will. The seal had two distinguishing features, the most important of which was the single tailed lion. The lion's tail before the 16<sup>th</sup> century and after that century was forked, that is, double tailed.<sup>3</sup> This means that the original owner of the seal had it made for use in the 1500s.

The second distinguishing feature of the seal is the crescent shaped cadency mark, which represents the second son. No mark means the first son. Below is an enlarged image of the seal.<sup>4</sup>



The seal represents a second son of a descendant of the Sutton Dudleys. The second son could either refer to Thomas Dudley or an ancestor of his. Cotton Mather wrote that Roger Dudley was the father of Thomas and a younger sister and they were very young when Roger was slain in wartime.<sup>5</sup> In the parish register of St. Andrews Church the following is recorded: "1576 - Thomas Dudley bapt 12 Octobris" The church is near to the village of Yardley Hastings where Thomas was born. The same register records the baptism of Mr. Dudley's daughter Mary on the 16th of October 1580. Susanna Dorne was the mother of Thomas and Mary. She had previously been baptized at St. Andrews Church on 5 March 1559/60.<sup>6</sup> Roger Dudley and Susanna Dorne were married on 8 June 1575 at Lidlington, Bedfordshire.<sup>7</sup> Susanna Dorne's father made his will on 28 October 1588. In the will Susanna is referred to as a widow, Susanna Dudley.<sup>8</sup> Cotton Mather's information proved to be generally reliable.

There is no known evidence that Thomas Dudley was a second son. However that does not mean that Roger Dudley did not beget a son by an earlier wife. If Thomas Dudley was a second son, then he was of a line of all first sons back to the first Sutton-Dudley. Sir Ferdinando Dudley, born in 1588, was the first son in the line of all first sons in the Sutton-Dudley paternal ancestry. He was younger than Thomas Dudley. Thomas was not Ferdinando's uncle, who was a John Dudley. Ferdinando's grandfather was Edward Dudley whose oldest brother was Henry Dudley, not Thomas Dudley.<sup>9</sup> Since Henry Dudley was old

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<sup>1</sup> Dean Dudley, *The Dudley Genealogies and Family Records*, (Boston, published by the author, 1848).

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Richardson, *Plantagenet Ancestry A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families*, (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc.), 280

<sup>3</sup> Dean Dudley, *History of the Dudley Family*, (privately printed), Wakefield (Mass.), 1886-98, Supplement: footnote of p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, Figure of Arms of Gov. Thomas Dudley

<sup>5</sup> George Adlard, *The Sutton-Dudleys of England and the Dudleys of Massachusetts in New England*, New York, printed for the Author, 1862), 24.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Wade White, *Anne Bradstreet, The Tenth Muse*, (New York, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1971), 7, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas Richardson, *Plantagenet Ancestry A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families*, (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc.), 280

<sup>8</sup> [Note 6], at 8

<sup>9</sup> [Note 5], First page Chart A of charts preceding page 17

enough to have been Roger Dudley's father,<sup>10</sup> Thomas Dudley could not have been a second son. In a similar way, it is seen that Roger Dudley could not be a second son either.<sup>11</sup>

Roger Dudley's birthplace is unknown. A possible clue is that he was married in Bedfordshire. The visitation of Bedfordshire shows the Dudley family of Clopton, Bedfordshire, It includes two Thomas Dudleys, The most recent one was born in 1618, 42 years after Governor Thomas Dudley was born. The other Thomas Dudley in the family was of an age to have been Governor Thomas. However, his father was William not Roger. This Thomas Dudley was born in Liddington like Roger but in Northamptonshire. The visitation of Northamptonshire shows the Dudley family of Clapton, Northamptonshire. The Clopton family and the Clapton family were one and the same and included no Roger Dudley.<sup>12</sup>

The earliest second son in the Sutton-Dudley genealogy was John Dudley of Hatherington, Sussex.<sup>13</sup> For him to have been represented by the crescent on Thomas Dudley's seal, each of John Dudley's male descendants must be a first surviving son or first son to have male issue, including Roger Dudley. This John Dudley's first son was Edmund Dudley born 1462 and beheaded 1510. Edmund's first son was Sir John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, who was born in 1502 and beheaded in 1553. The Duke's first surviving son was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who died 4 Sept. 1588. The Earl's first son was Sir Robert born 1572, just 4 years before Thomas Dudley and well after Roger Dudley.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, John Dudley of Hatherington could not be the second son represented by the crescent on Thomas Dudley's seal.

The next earliest surviving second son was Thomas Dudley of Yeanwith who was the half brother of Edward, Lord Dudley and died about 1530.<sup>15</sup> For a detailed proof that this Thomas Dudley was a second son, check the second last paragraph of this article. Thomas' first son was Richard Dudley of Yeanwith. Richard's first son was Edmund Dudley. Edmund's son and heir was Thomas whose first surviving son was Christopher born 1607 well after Roger Dudley.<sup>16</sup> Hence, Thomas Dudley of Yeanwith could not be the second son represented by the crescent on Thomas Dudley's seal.

The next earliest second son was Geoffrey Dudley of Russell's Hall.<sup>17</sup> He was the second son to have male issue. Geoffrey's first son was Thomas Dudley whose first son was born in about 1563, after the birth of Roger Dudley.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Geoffrey could not be the second son represented by the crescent on Thomas Dudley's seal.

The next earliest second son was Henry Dudley.<sup>19</sup> Henry was born around 1517 and married approximately from 1545 to 1550. He died intestate between 1568 and 1570. There is no known record of his having children.<sup>20</sup> Henry's brother, the first son, had a first son, Edward Dudley, who was too young to have been Roger Dudley's father.<sup>21</sup>

The only second son who could possibly have been Roger Dudley's father was Henry Dudley. He was of an age to have been Roger's father and Thomas Dudley's grandfather. Thus, what is known about Henry Dudley should be investigated for clues. Henry Dudley in 1563 was a captain in the English military for Queen Elizabeth. Similarly, Captain Roger Dudley had a military career and fought in Queen Elizabeth's service.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, in 1597 Queen Elizabeth called for troops to fight in France. She commissioned

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<sup>10</sup> [Note 7], at 280.

<sup>11</sup> [Note 5], First page Chart A of charts preceding page 17

<sup>12</sup> William Harvey, Robert Cooke, George Owen, Sir Richard Saint-George, Frederick Augustus, *The Visitations for Bedfordshire, Annis Domini 1566, 1582, and 1634*, The Publications of The Harleian Society, Vol. 19, London, 1884. Page 100. And William Harvey, Augustine Vincent, Walter Charles Metcalfe, *The Visitations of Northamptonshire made in 1564 and 1618-19: with Northamptonshire Pedigrees*, London 1887. Page 17.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid And Chart B

<sup>14</sup> [Note 5], Chart B.

<sup>15</sup> [Note 5], Chart C.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, Chart C.

<sup>17</sup> [Note 5], First page Chart A of charts preceding page 17, And Dean Dudley, *History of the Dudley Family*, (privately printed), Wakefield (Mass.), 1886-98, Supplement 33, 34.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> [Note 5], First page Chart A of charts preceding page 17.

<sup>20</sup> [Note 7], at 280.

<sup>21</sup> [Note 5], First page Chart A of charts preceding page 17.

<sup>22</sup> [Note 7], at 280.

Thomas Dudley as captain to take some eighty men to Amiens, France.<sup>23</sup> The siege of Amiens ended before Thomas Dudley had engaged in the battle. Is it a coincidence that Henry and Roger were in the English military as captains? Or, did Henry start a family career tradition, continued by Roger and Thomas? Thomas Dudley about a year later ended his military life when he received an inheritance of 500 pounds.<sup>24</sup>

Henry Dudley spent much of his adult life engaged in plots to overthrow Queen Mary or to help Elizabeth before and after she became the queen. A common element to his service was his working under or with relatives, mostly of Sutton-Dudley descent. Two of the more notable relatives were John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Henry Dudley served under Edward Fiennes in two capacities first as Captain and second as Vice Admiral when Edward Fiennes was Chief Captain and Admiral, respectively.<sup>25</sup> The wife of Edward Fiennes, Lord Clinton, was Ursula Stourton. She was the daughter of William Stourton and Elizabeth Dudley, sister of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland.<sup>26</sup> Remarkably, Edward Fiennes was the great grandfather of Theophilus, Earl of Lincoln whose steward was Thomas Dudley.

The line of descent from Edward Fiennes was as follows: The son of Edward and Ursula was Henry Clinton, Earl of Lincoln. His son and heir was Thomas Clinton (alias Fiennes) father of Theophilus, 4th Earl of Lincoln. Theophilus, married Bridget daughter of Sir William Fiennes. Lord Say,<sup>27</sup> Cotton Mather noted that Thomas Dudley being a follower of Master John Dod (a renowned Puritan teacher) came to know Lord Say (William Fiennes) who commended Thomas to the service of the Earl of Lincoln. While he was the Earl's steward Thomas procured a match between Bridget, daughter of Lord Say, and Theophilus, Earl of Lincoln.<sup>28</sup> Was it just another coincidence that Henry Dudley's choice of working with relatives led to an important part of Thomas Dudley's life?

Thomas Dudley's eldest daughter, the renowned poet, Anne Bradstreet, was inspired to write in her book, *The Tenth Muse*, published in 1650, a tribute to Sir Philip Sidney, who was a distinguished poet in his own right. Anne's poem, "Elegie upon Sir Philip Sidney", included the following:

Let then, none disallow of these my straines,  
Which have the self-same blood yet in my veines.

Evidently, Thomas Dudley had told Anne that she was a blood relative of Sir Philip Sidney. Sir Philip's mother was Mary Dudley daughter of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland.<sup>29</sup> If Thomas Dudley was the grandson of Henry Dudley, it would verify that Thomas Dudley told Anne the truth about Philip Sidney and that she was a Sutton-Dudley. That would be consistent with her being the 4<sup>th</sup> cousin, twice removed from Sir Philip Sidney who had Sutton-Dudley blood.

Cotton Mather related that Roger Dudley was slain in the wars but did not say where. He did leave a clue by revealing that Roger died when Thomas Dudley and his sister were very young. From Thomas Dorne's will it is known that Roger died before the end of 1588. A suggested date for Roger's death was 1586.<sup>30</sup> In 1586 Thomas and Mary Dudley would have been 10 and 6, respectively. That date is consistent with Cotton Mather's words and the aforementioned will. According to history, in 1585 Queen Elizabeth sent military forces led by Robert, Earl of Leicester to aid the Dutch in the Battle of Zutphen, Netherlands against King Phillip II of Spain. Sir Philip Sidney died at Zutphen in 1586 when Thomas Dudley was 10 years old.<sup>31</sup> It appears that like Henry Dudley, Roger Dudley served militarily for Queen Elizabeth with Sutton-Dudleys. Like father, like son? Cotton Mather said of Thomas Dudley the following: "He was a

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<sup>23</sup> George Adlard, *The Sutton-Dudleys of England and the Dudleys of Massachusetts in New England*, (New York, printed for the Author, 1862), at 26.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, at 24

<sup>25</sup> [Note 7], at 280.

<sup>26</sup> George Edward Cokayne, *Complete Peerage of England Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom Extant, Extinct, and Dormant* (London, 1893) Vol. 5, pages 93-94, And [Note 5], Chart B.

<sup>27</sup> George Edward Cokayne, *Complete Peerage of England Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom Extant, Extinct, and Dormant* (London, 1893) Vol. 5, pages 94-95.

<sup>28</sup> [Note 23], at 28, 29.

<sup>29</sup> [Note 5], Chart B.

<sup>30</sup> Dean Dudley, *The Dudley Genealogies and Family Records*, (Boston, published by the author, 1848), 17.

<sup>31</sup> Augustine Jones, *The Life and Work of Thomas Dudley, The Second Governor of Massachusetts*, (Boston and New York, 1900), page 6.

man of great spirit, as well as of great understanding; suitable to the family he was, by his father, descended from".<sup>32</sup> This statement is indicative of Henry Dudley being Roger's father.

In 1597 as Thomas Dudley prepared to go to war against King Philip II of Spain in Amiens, France, he must have had thoughts of avenging Roger Dudley's death. Thomas did not reach Amiens in time to do any fighting himself, but he could have honored his father by having the seal made in 1598 when he returned to England.

Roger or Henry Dudley might have had the seal made. The modern, fixed cadency marks were in full use in the 1600s. It has been said in recent years (2003) that marks of cadency "were firmly established by the middle of the sixteenth century when (John) Bossewell in 1572 had them accepted as a rule with the first son and heir to bear a label of three points, the second son a crescent, the third son a mullet, the fourth son a martlet, the fifth son an annulet, the sixth son a fleur-de-ls, the seventh son a rose, the eighth son a cross moline, the ninth son an octofoil (or possibly a primrose)".<sup>33</sup> If Henry Dudley had the seal made when modern cadency marks were established, the crescent would have referred to himself and the seal would have correctly reflected his Sutton-Dudley descent. He probably would have had the seal made after the birth of his first son, in the mid-century, a problematic time in regard to the use of the modern cadency marks. The seal would in that case offer evidence that Sir Henry did, indeed, have a son who was born to Christopher Ashton's daughter around 1547 to 1552, consistent with the approximate dating of Henry's marriage with the Ashton woman.<sup>34</sup> Roger Dudley's estimated date of birth, 1550, falls within the approximate limits of the possible date of Henry Dudley's first son.<sup>35</sup> Because of this early date for the modern system of cadency marks to have been used, it is much more likely that Roger Dudley or Thomas Dudley had the seal made.

Since Thomas Dudley was born late in 1576 it is likely that his father Roger Dudley would have had the seal made in or around 1577 when the rules of adjacency definitely were in use. If so, the only Sutton-Dudley for which the second son crescent of the seal could apply was Henry Dudley. That is also the case for the crescent on Thomas Dudley's seal.

If Henry Dudley did have the seal made, the single tailed lion would have represented his Sutton-Dudley ancestry and the cadency mark would have distinguished the number of son he was. Thus, even though it was before 1572, the crescent had to stand for the second son. Therefore, whoever, Henry, Roger, or Thomas had the seal made it represented accurately that one.

Charles Boutell, an eminent authority on Heraldry had the following to say: "the differences (marks of cadency) of Modern Heraldry are the same as they are presumed to have been since the fourteenth century".<sup>36</sup> Regarding the crescent, are the following examples:

1. Guy De Beauchamp and Alice de Tony had two sons, first Thomas and second John.<sup>37</sup> In 1347 Thomas, the Earl of Warwick, had a shield bearing six golden crosslets while his brother Sir John differenced his shield with a crescent.<sup>38</sup>
2. Robert De Holland and Maud De La Zouche had four sons. Thomas the second son bore his paternal arms differenced with a crescent. His was a fourteenth century shield also.<sup>39</sup>
3. Before 1387 Henry De Beaufort, second son of John of Gaunt and Catherine Swynford bore the same arms as his older brother but differenced with a crescent.<sup>40</sup>
4. The next shield is from the monument of John Dudley of Stoke Newington.<sup>41</sup> He was a contemporary of Henry Dudley. John's grandfather was Edmund Dudley.<sup>42</sup> John Dudley's shield was Quarterly Quartered, that is, it was divided into 16 parts showing his family's arms. The most important part was

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<sup>32</sup> [Note 23], at 36.

<sup>33</sup> Cecil R. Humphery-Smith, AIH, FSA, FHS, *British Ancestry* website, "ORIGINS OF CADENCY" (2003), at page 2.

<sup>34</sup> [Note 7], at 280.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Boutell, *Heraldry, Historical and Popular*, Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged, London, 1863, 188

<sup>37</sup> [Note 7], at 713

<sup>38</sup> [Note 36], at 166.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, at 223

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, at 224.

<sup>41</sup> James H. Mason, *The Dudley Genealogies*, Glendale, CA, 1987, 8.

<sup>42</sup> [Note 5], First page Chart A of charts preceding page 17 And [Note 5], Chart C.

the topmost on the right or dexter side of the shield. It exhibits the Sutton-Dudley lion differenced with a crescent to indicate that John's father Thomas Dudley of Yeanwith (or Yanwath) was a second son. That he was a second son is shown as follows:

Thomas Dudley was a son of Edmund Dudley and his second wife, (Matilda) Maud Clifford. Of their sons five preceded Thomas Dudley of Yanwath. Oliver and John d. s. p. Richard and George were priests; as such they would not continue the line. That leaves Robert who was born in about 1472. He died between May of 1538 and 1539 about 8 years after the death of Thomas Dudley of Yanwath. Though Robert had no children by his two wives, he was the first son all during Thomas Dudley's life.<sup>43</sup> John Dudley of Stoke Newington was the second son of Thomas Dudley and Grace Threlkeld.<sup>44</sup> This confirms that the crescent at the very center of John's shield represents his being their second son. In his will John Dudley, who had been secretary to the Earl of Leicester, put aside 100 pound for the Earl to have John Dudley's arms engraved on a piece of silver.<sup>45</sup> This means that the Earl of Leicester was aware of John Dudley's arms as they later appeared on his burial monument. It could well be that the Earl had seen a large seal or stamp containing John's arms. The Duke of Northumberland procured a captaincy for John in October of 1549 at Whittingham, Northumberland.<sup>46</sup> It could have been as early as 1550 when John Dudley established his arms.

The foregoing study of the use of crescents to represent second sons before the Modern Heraldry was established shows that Henry Dudley could have had his seal made in the 1550s. If so, because he knew his ancestry better than his son or grandson, he was the most likely to have been the originator of the seal.

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<sup>43</sup> [Note 5], First page Chart A of charts preceding page 17. And

James Henry Mason, *The Dudley Genealogies*, Glendale, California, 1987. 20. And Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, Vol. XV (1934), 174, 175.

<sup>44</sup> *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, edited by The William Salt Archaeological Society, Volume X, London, 1889, Part II, "An Account of the Younger Branches of Sutton alias Dudley", 3, 4

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Stanley Bindoff, John S. Roskell. Lewis Namier, *The House of Commons: 1660 – 1690: 1, Introductory Survey*, Volume 8, Secker and Warburg, London, 1982, 63