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THE AVERYS OF GROTON.

It is highly probable that the Avery family is of Norman origin and came to England with the Conqueror in the eleventh century. Several members of the family were granted Coats of Arms, one of which, granted to William Avery of Fillongley, in the county of Warwick, in 1579, has been often copied in this country. The connection between Christopher Avery and the other members of the family in England is not yet known, but it is hoped that investigations preliminary to the publication of the history of the Groton Averys, which volume is now (1888) in preparation, will determine the question.

1642 Contemporary with Christopher Avery of Gloucester were: John Avery, who lived at Dorchester in ~~1842~~, removed to Boston and died on the last day of July, 1654; Thomas Avery of Salem, who came in the "John and Mary" (1633), was a blacksmith, and became a freeman on the twenty-eighth day of December, 1643; and Dr. William Avery of Dedham, who came to this country in 1654, became a freeman in 1677 and died at Boston in March, 1687, aged about 65. See Savage's "Genealogical Dictionary of New England." The known descendants of these contemporaries are comparatively few.

The houses of Dr. William Avery of Dedham and of Christopher Avery of Gloucester were united (probably for the first time in America) by the marriage of Catherine Hitchcock Tilden and Elroy McKendree Avery, in 1870.

Dr. Wm. Avery¹; Dr. Jonathan Avery²; Dorothy (Avery) Angier³; Dorothy (Angier) Hitchcock⁴ (wife of Gad Hitchcock, LL. D., who preached the famous Election Sermon at Boston, 1774); Gad Hitchcock⁵, M. D.; Catharine (Hitchcock) Tilden⁶; Junius Tilden⁷; Catharine H. Tilden⁸ = Elroy M. Avery⁸; Caspar H. Avery⁷; Amos W. Avery⁶; Abraham Avery⁵; Wm. Avery⁴; John Avery³; James Avery²; Christopher Avery¹.

1. CHRISTOPHER AVERY,

A weaver, was born in England about 1590. It is known that a Christopher Avery buried his wife, Mary, at Salisbury, in 1591. Possibly, she was the mother of our Christopher.

There are two traditions concerning his emigration. The first is, that he came from Salisbury, Wils. County, England, with Governor John Winthrop, in the transport "Arbella," and landed at Salem, June 12, 1630. According to the other, he came over with John Winthrop, the younger, in 1631. The tradition in one branch of the family is that, on the voyage, the subsequent governor of Connecticut formed an attachment for the lad, James Avery, which ripened into a friendship that lasted through life, and finally culminated in the marriage of Samuel, the youngest son of James, to the governor's granddaughter. Christopher settled at Gloucester, Massachusetts, where he was a selectman of the town from 1646 to 1654. He removed to Boston in 1658, and, on the eighth of August, 1665, was at New London, where he bought the house, orchard and lot of Robert Burrows, in the town plot. He claimed exemption from watching and training, on account of age, in June, 1667, was made a freeman of the colony in October, 1669, and died in New London, March 12, 1679. He was the father of the founder of a family that has representatives in every state in the Union.

2. CAPTAIN JAMES AVERY,

The only child of Christopher and properly the founder of the family that we call the Groton Averys, was born in England about 1620. He came to America with his father. His mother was in England in 1653; it is not known whether she ever came to America or not. He married Joanna Greenslade of Boston, November 10, 1643. Nothing is known of her ancestry. She received a letter of dismissal from the church at Boston to the one at Gloucester, in 1644. The names of the oldest three of their children are the first on the Gloucester registry of births. In 1650, he removed from Gloucester to New London, where his friend, the younger Winthrop, had begun a settlement five years before. The births of his three children were transferred from the Gloucester to the New London registry and the names now appear as the first thereon, giving a misleading appearance to the latter. Other births were registered from time to time. The whole list is as follows: Hannah³, born October 12, 1644, married Ephraim Minor; James, Jr.³, born December 16, 1646; Mary³, born February 19, 1648, married Joseph Minor; Thomas³, born in New London, May 6, 1651; JOHN³, born February 10, 1654; Rebecca³, born October 6, 1656, married William Potts, August 5, 1678; Jonathan³, born January 5, 1659, died August 14, 1691 (he might have married, but we have no record of it); Christopher³, born April 30, 1661, died August, 1681; Samuel³, born August 14, 1664; Joanna, ———— 1669.

Mr. Homer D. L. Sweet of Syracuse, who has worked on the Avery genealogy for thirty years, thinks that "this last is an imperfect record of the death of Joanna, the mother, as in the year following, 1670, James was admitted to the First Church of Christ. Had his wife been living, she would, likely, have joined at the same time." The inference is natural and legitimate, but the premises probably are not correct, as will appear below,

At New London, James Avery seems at once to have taken an active part in private business and public affairs. He received a land grant from the townsmen, October 19, 1650, and a town lot early in 1651. But ideas grew and there was a quick thirsting after large domains. Among the early grants was one of "Little Owl Meadow," near the town plot. This was to James Avery. About 1652, he was granted a farm in South Groton, where lands were especially desirable, as they might be cultivated immediately. He, however, continued to live with his family on his town lot for several years. Early in 1653, he secured another farm, further up the river, in what is now the town of Ledyard. About 1656, he built "The Hive of the Averys" at Poquonnock (in Groton) and lived therein until he died. The ancient dwelling is still in good repair and is occupied and owned, as it has ever been, by an Avery family. For a fine heliotype of the "Hive," see Allyn's "Battle of Groton Heights and its Centennial." Also see Miss Caulkins's "History of New London," from which much of this information has been culled. Groton was not set off from New London, as a separate town, until 1705. In 1668 and 1675, the General Court rewarded his services to the public by grants of a hundred acres in each case.

He soon became active in military affairs, and is generally spoken of by the title of Ensign, Lieutenant or Captain. The region in which he had made his home was formerly the chief seat of the formidable Pequot tribe that had been almost exterminated by the English a few years before. The Pequot Fort taken in 1637, by Captain John Mason in command of the Connecticut troops and their Mohegan and Narragansett allies, was on the Mystic river, on the eastern line of Groton. After the Pequot War, a few survivors of that once dreaded tribe still lived in the haunts of their fathers, with the Narragansetts on the east, and the Mohegans, under their Sachem Uncas, near by on the west. In 1657, the Narragansetts made a wild foray and Uncas fled from the blood and fire that marked their course. He took refuge in a fort and was besieged by his unrelenting foes. But just in time, "Lieutenant James Avery, Mr. Brewster, Richard Houghton, Samuel Lothrop, and others well armed, succeeded in throwing themselves into the fort; and the Narragansetts, fearing to engage in a conflict with the English, broke up the siege and returned home." The legislature approved of the measures that had been taken for the protection of the faithful ally of the English.

In 1667, the Pequot remnant was transferred to a reservation, although, as the historian informs us, "Mr. Winthrop, Captain Denison, Captain James Avery and some other men of influence, dissented from these views and labored for the accommodation of the Pequots." The fair disposition and judicial temperament of Captain Avery are here clearly shown—qualities that doubtless gave him much of the great influence that we know he possessed with the friendly Indians of that region. For several years, before and after this, the Commissioners of the United Colonies referred almost everything relating to the Pequots to Messrs. Dennison, Stanton and Avery for adjustment. In 1678, the said Commissioners granted Captain Avery, five pounds "for his good service in assisting in the Government of the Pequots for sundry years past." See Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 10.

In 1668, he and Cary Latham were chosen by the town to settle the boundary line with the sachem Uncas. The £15 that secured the desired formal deed was paid by James Avery and two others, each of

whom was indemnified by the town with 200 acres of land. Captain Avery's services seem to have been often called for by the town and by individuals in the settling of such controversies.

In 1673, danger was apprehended from the Dutch, and each county was ordered to prepare for defence. New London County was to add a hundred "dragoones" to her train-bands, and for "such forces as shall be called out of that county, James Avery [was] appoynted Captⁿ."

New England's long continued freedom from the horrors of Indian war was abruptly ended in 1675. The name of King Philip became a terror to the English settlers from Connecticut to Casco Bay. In the summer months, Massachusetts suffered untold agony, and, in October, the General Court at Hartford practically put Connecticut under martial law. The Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England put a force of a thousand men under command of Governor Josiah Winslow of Plymouth. In early winter, he was in the hostile country where a great battle was fought on Sunday, December 19, 1675. The Narragansett fort was in what is South Kingston, R. I. It included five or six acres of dry ground, was surrounded by a swamp and defended by palisades and felled trees. The only entrance was by a bridge made by a felled tree and commanded by a block house. Within, were not fewer than 3,500 warriors. The fight was desperate, for, on either side, it was a clear case of conquer or die. Victory was for the English. It is said that 700 Indians were killed that day and that of their wounded, 300 died. The power of the Narragansett tribe was broken. In this fight, the Pequot allies were commanded by Captain James Avery; Captain John Gallop, who commanded the Mohegans, was slain.

The Narragansett fight had enraged the Indians and made them desperate. The English plantations were in greater danger than before. In the following February, began "that series of forays into the Indian territory, which, issuing at short intervals from New London County and led by those noted Indian fighters, Denison and Avery, contributed in no small degree to the favorable result." In the third of these excursions, the chief surviving sachem of the Narragansetts, Canonchet, the son of Miantonomo, was captured—"one of the great exploits of the war." The particulars of his capture and execution may be found in Hubbard's "Indian Wars," pp. 165-9, and in Trumbull's "History of Connecticut," I. 343-5.

He was equally prominent in the civil matters of the town and colony. According to Mr. Sweet's circular, "he was chosen townsman in 1660 and held that office twenty years. He was twelve times elected to the General Court from 1658 to 1680, and was one of the Commissioners of Peace and Assistant Judge in the County Court." We first meet him as "Judge" Avery, on May 31, 1664; "Deputy-Governor Mason, Messrs. Talcott, Bruen and Avery on the bench." Miss Caulkins says that "after 1666, for fifteen or twenty years, the commissioners (justices) for New London were almost invariably Messrs. Avery, Wetherell and Palmes." (p. 180.)

There was then a close union between church and state, each being part of the other. The Congregational church was fully "established," wholly "orthodox," and the only one recognized by law. The minister's salary was raised by public tax and a few of the old rate-lists for this purpose are still preserved. In that for 1664, the names of

105 property holders appear. The name of "John Winthrop, Squire," heads the list. He was then a non-resident; his property was set down at £185. The estate of James Rogers is set down at £548—nearly double that of any other tax-payer. The next highest are John Pickett, £299, 10s.; James Morgan, £252; Robert Burrows, £246; James Avery, £236; and Cary Latham, £217. At *that* time, land was hardly taken into account in the estimate of the value of a man's estate.

James Avery was prominent in matters relating to the church, and the references to him in such relations are numerous. The church record kept by the Rev. Mr. Bradstreet, begins October 5, 1670, the day of his ordination. It begins with the following list:

“ THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

Lieutenant James Avery and wife,
Thomas Miner and wife,
James Morgan, senior, and wife,”

and eighteen others. This seems to dispose of the inference of Mr. Sweet that the wife Joanna died in 1669, or, at least, of the reasons given for such an inference. Joanna doubtless died, and probably about this time; her bereaved relict married Sarah, the daughter of Thomas Miner of Stonington.

The four sons of Captain James Avery married and had eighteen daughters. Each of the four sons had seven sons. The sons of James, Jr., were James⁴, Edward⁴, Ebenezer⁴, Christopher⁴, Joseph⁴, Jonathan⁴ and Benjamin⁴, all of whom married. The sons of Thomas were Thomas, Jr.⁴, Samuel⁴, Jonathan⁴, William⁴, Ephraim⁴, Abraham⁴ and Joshua⁴, five of whom married. The sons of JOHN were John, Jr.⁴, Benjamin⁴, WILLIAM⁴, Elisha⁴, Thomas⁴, Daniel⁴ and Nathaniel⁴, five of whom married. The sons of Samuel were Samuel, Jr.⁴, Jonathan⁴, William⁴, Christopher⁴, Humphrey⁴, Nathan⁴ and Waitstill⁴, four of whom married. Thus twenty-one of the grandsons of James became heads of families, and there is nothing in the records to show that the other seven were not married. These twenty-one grandsons, of whose families we have the records, had 90 sons. Of these, at least 85 might have married, and it is known that more than fifty of them did marry.

The founder of the family died later than February, 1694.

3. JOHN AVERY,

Third son of James Avery; born February 10, 1654. Married Abigail Chesebrough (the daughter of Samuel and the grand-daughter of William Chesebrough, the first settler at Stonington, Connecticut), November 29, 1675. Unto them were born thirteen children, namely: Abigail (died in infancy); Abigail (again); Mary; Elizabeth; Desire; Anna, and the seven sons already named.

In the General Court at Hartford, May 12, 1692, it was recorded: "This Court doe not see reason to confirm those nominated for officers on the east side of the riuer at New London at present, but doe appoynt Captain James Auery to be Captⁿ of sayd Company, and James Morgan L^{nt}, and John Auery to be Ensign of sayd company untill the Honoured Major Generall and Mr. Witherell shall see cause to lead them to a new choys of officers." (See Colonial Records of Connecticut for that year, p. 74.)

The record of the General Court for May 11 of the following year, has

this: "Thomas Auery is approued to be Captⁿ of the traine band of New London on the east side of the riuer, and John Morgan Lt^{nt}, and John Auery, Ensigne, of sayd Company, and are to be commisionated accordingly."

From a similar record of the General Court, May 13, 1697, we learn that "John Avery [was] appointed Captain of the train band at New London on the east side of the river." His name appears with this title in the patent for New London, granted by the General Court, October 14, 1704. In 1700, he became one of the original proprietors of New Lebanon, and, on the tenth of May, 1705, the General Court confirmed him and his associates in the possession of lands in that town. He is known to have held lands in Preston, Connecticut, in 1706.

4. WILLIAM AVERY,

Third son of John Avery; born about 1687. Married Anna Richardson, March 7, 1715; by her he had four children, namely: William, Jr.⁵; Richardson⁵; John⁵; and Anna⁵. He married a second wife, Sarah (or Abigail) Walker, June 3, 1731; by her he had ten children, namely: Amos L.⁵, born January 30, 1732; Christopher⁵, *b.* April 7, 1734; Elias⁵, *b.* July 5, 1736; David⁵, *b.* October 30, 1738; Daniel⁵, *b.* October 29, 1740; Benoni⁵, *b.* January 29, 1744; Abigail⁵, *b.* April 26, 1746; James⁵, *b.* December 27, 1748; Nathaniel⁵, *b.* August 28, 1751; ABRAHAM⁵, *b.* May 20, 1754.

5. LIEUTENANT ABRAHAM AVERY,

Ninth son of William Avery by his second wife; born May 20, 1754, (probably) at Stonington, Connecticut. He was taken prisoner during the Revolutionary war; was landed from a prison-ship at Elizabethtown, New Jersey; was turned adrift with the ship-fever, and begged his way back to Connecticut. Married Mercy, the daughter of Ichabod Packer (of Groton?), by whom he had six children, namely: Elias Packer⁶; Hubbard Burrows⁶; AMOS WALKER⁶; Ichabod Denison⁶; Esther⁶; Abigail⁶. His grand-daughter, Mrs. McCandless, (living in 1888,) says that he "was a noble specimen of manhood, a fine scholar for that day, and possessed more general information than anyone else in the region where he lived. As a Bible student, I have never known his equal." He probably lived at Coleraine, Massachusetts, in 1787 and, at an earlier period, in Vermont.

During the progress of the Revolutionary War, the territory now known as Vermont was claimed by the State of New York. In 1777, many of the settlers in that region were in favor of a new State. A convention adopted a declaration of the rights and independence of what had been called the New Hampshire Grants, and proclaimed the commonwealth of "New Connecticut *alias* Vermont." Congress was petitioned that New Connecticut might be ranked "among the free and independent American States, and delegates therefrom admitted to seats in the grand Continental Congress." New York took measures to bring the disaffected back to their allegiance and to secure Congressional interference in her behalf. Meantime, there were many in the "Grants" who were favorable to the government of New York. "In Brattleborough they were more numerous than the Vermont adherents, and were not afraid to act as their convictions dictated." Thus sprang up two factions, the "Vermonters" and the "Yorkers." By 1783 there was, especially in Windham county, a

condition of mutual terror and distrust. "Houses were divided—the father upholding the jurisdiction of New York, the sons maintaining the supremacy of Vermont. Friendships the most intimate were disturbed. The word neighbor carried no meaning with it beyond the idea of contiguity. The physician could not visit his patient in safety unless protected with a pass. The minister of the gospel failed to enforce the doctrine of Christian charity on the hearts of men who knew none for one another." In Guilford, the Yorkers held the power and prevented the Vermonters from executing their laws and collecting taxes. The new government took active measures that tended only to unite the opposition in their determination to withstand the execution of laws originating in an authority that they did not acknowledge, and to follow such a course as seemed to them best fitted "to promote the interests of New York and of the United States."

In Hall's "History of Eastern Vermont" is told the story of the capture of a staunch Vermonter by the name of Benjamin Carpenter. He was carried away by the Yorkers, "to his great damage," but lived many years thereafter and left a quaint epitaph to declare to coming generations that his "Stature was about six feet. Weight 200. Death had no terror." "The more prominent actors in this seizure were Abraham Avery, Cyril Carpenter, Nathaniel Carpenter [and others], *all of Guilford.*" (Page 505.) The seizure was made December 1, 1783. In the following February, twenty-five of the Yorkers were arraigned at the bar of the Superior Court. Abraham Avery was among those charged with the assault upon Benjamin Carpenter. He pleaded not guilty and the case against him seems to have been dismissed upon his payment of the costs.

There were many such indictments on account of the current hostilities, and many of the Yorkers in the southern part of Windham county endured countless inconveniences and losses. In 1786, the New York legislature took action on the subject of the sufferings of their friends, who, led partly by the resolutions of Congress, especially those of December 5, 1782, and "by their attachment, zeal and activity in endeavoring to support the just and lawful authority of New York," had brought upon themselves confiscations and imprisonments and had suffered "such exquisite tortures." It was shown that their losses amounted to £16,663, 13s, 8d, and it was deemed proper for the state to grant them "a quantity of vacant land equivalent to a township of eight miles square." The land was divided into one hundred lots of 640 acres each. Lot No. 50 was appropriated to the use of "Gospel and Schools," and lot No. 51 "For promoting Literature." Lot No. 87 was given to Abraham Avery and William Gault, the former receiving 430 acres. The grant was dated July 11, 1786. At the same time, 214 acres in lot No. 62 were granted to Ichabod Packer and 132 acres in lot No. 42 to Nathan (Nathaniel?) Avery. In 1791, the "sufferers' lands," with an addition, were made a township by the name of Jericho. In 1814, the name was changed to Bainbridge, which may be found on the map in the southeast corner of Chenango county.

It is supposed that about 1794, Abraham Avery moved to Rome, New York, and about 1800, settled at Preston, Chenango county, New York. He died in (February?) 1843, at Earlville, Madison county, New York, about six months after the death of his wife.

6. **AMOS WALKER AVERY,**

Third son of Abraham Avery; born at Coleraine, Massachusetts, May 24, 1787. On the fifth of July, 1808, he married Nancy McCutcheon and soon settled at Avon (now Rush) in Monroe county, New York. Died at LaSalle, Monroe county, Michigan, June 1, 1863. He was the father of seven children, viz., CASPAR HUGH⁷; Betsey Jane⁷; Hubbard Burrows⁷; Evaline Nancy⁷; Mercy Miranda⁷; Amos John⁷; Minerva Pratt⁷.

7. **CASPAR HUGH AVERY,**

Oldest child of Amos Walker Avery; born at Preston, New York, July 25, 1809. His first marriage was without issue. He settled at Erie, Monroe county, Michigan, in 1833, and married Dorothy Putnam, September 26, 1843. She died March 17, 1868, and he followed March 5, 1873. They left four children: ELROY MCKENDREE⁸, Susan Adeliza⁸, Charles Hedding⁸, and Ella⁸.

8. **ELROY MCKENDREE AVERY,**

Oldest child of Caspar Hugh Avery; born at Erie, Michigan, July 14, 1844. At sixteen years of age he was a soldier. He served throughout the War of the Rebellion and, at its close, was mustered out of the service as Sergeant-Major of the Eleventh Michigan Volunteer Cavalry. He was graduated from Michigan University in 1871, and received the degree of Ph.D. in 1881. On the second day of July, 1870, he married Catherine Hitchcock, the older daughter of the Hon. Junius Tilden of Monroe, Michigan, and a descendant of Dr. William Avery of Dedham, Massachusetts, as mentioned at the beginning of this record. They live at Woodland Hills, Cleveland, Ohio. His sister Susan⁸ married Sidney S. Lewis, and has one child, Adah⁹. They live at Hiattville, Bourbon county, Kansas. Charles H. Avery⁸ married Ada Boys, and has three children, Charles Boys⁹, Leila Covert⁹ and Elroy Putnam⁹. They live at Buffalo, New York. Ella Avery⁸ died March 2, 1880.

One of the chief objects of this circular is to aid in gathering further information concerning John³, William⁴, and Abraham⁵ of this line. If any person receiving this copy can contribute anything to that end, the information may be sent to Elroy M. Avery, Woodland Hills, Cleveland, Ohio, by whom it will be gratefully received. Another object of the writer is to awaken interest in the publication of the full and illustrated history of the Groton Averys. Persons interested in this project are requested to correspond with Mr. Homer D. L. Sweet, 92 Wieting Block, Syracuse, New York.

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