

Thomas Langdon circa 1620 – 1664/5

Note: The following biography of Thomas Langdon was based on the biography written by Herbert Furman Seversmith in Colonial Families of Long Island, New York, and Connecticut, and was updated and revised by Thomas P. Langdon, a 13th generation descendant of the immigrant Thomas Langdon.

Thomas Langdon was born about 1620-1625 in England. The ancestry of Thomas Langdon is currently unknown. A Thomas Langdon was listed as a passenger to Barbados in the 1630s-1640s, but it is not known if this Thomas Langdon was the progenitor of the Long Island Langdon Family. There is also some speculation that Thomas Langdon was of Lynn, Mass. at an early date. Herbert Furman Seversmith, as reported in his Colonial Families of Long Island, New York, and Connecticut, was of the opinion that even if a man of that name was in Lynn, he was not the present Thomas Langden or Langdon.

On 7 January 1650 Mr. Richard Malbon, lately of New Haven in the New Haven Colony, was referred to in the local court as having been the "master" of Goodman Thomas Langdon. Seversmith interpreted this to mean that Langdon had been one of the "covenant servants" of Mr. Malbon, who brought over a number of yeomen who served an indenturship to pay for their passage. Mr. Malbon was in New Haven as early as 1642, when he served as a judge of the New Haven town Court. He served in several political offices but was a resident of New Haven only a few years, returning to England before 1650. Of him James Savage could say in his Genealogical Dictionary "perhaps went home in 1648/9, and it had been better if he had gone sooner."

Thomas Langdon was in New Haven, Connecticut shortly after 10 March 1646/7 (the plan of the seats in the meeting house in New Haven as of this date does not list the family of Thomas Langdon).

Thomas appears to have been somewhat of a roisterer in his early days in New Haven. He was politely called a tavern keeper on 7 January 1650 and was complained of in Court for disorderly entertaining of young men in his tavern at unreasonable times of the night, to use the description of the day. Not only that; he had been heard to sing songs which were called filthy and corrupting. To all this he answered that he saw no harm in such songs, and if they were in old England they could sing like that, and be as merry as they pleased. The New England Colonies at that time, populated primarily by religious emigrants from England, apparently did not have the same penchant for freedom of speech that their descendants espoused 140 years later, and the Puritan theocracy of the New Haven Colony was not amused by Thomas' behavior. He was fined twenty shillings.

After 2 March 1650 and before the Court held at New Haven 6 April 1652 Thomas Langdon was referred to as a resident of Milford, which at that time was claimed under the jurisdiction of New Haven. On 4 May 1652 he appeared in Court to answer for his wife's "disorderly inviteing of Mr. Cranes maide in the night to her house to eate a sacke posset (a beverage of hot milk curdled by sack, a strong white wine) with an intent to have her meete a young man there, without parrents or masters consent." The devious testimony given by Thomas Langdon and his wife, taken together with the somewhat conflicting testimonies of witnesses, successfully irritated the Court.

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But the worst was yet to come. Thomas Langdon and his wife, then of Milford, were called before the Court 1 March 1652 to answer to a charge of what appears to have been the old English trick of poaching. What made it so bad was that his dogs had, according to him, drowned one of the Rev. Mr. Peter Prudden's hogs by holding him in the water by the ear; and by way of their trespasses or otherwise, one or two more of Mr. Prudden's hogs had found their demise at the hands of Thomas Langdon's blunderbuss. That it happened at all was bad enough, but to affront the local theocracy in the person of Mr. Prudden was the last straw. Langdon was heavily fined and (if the sentence of the Court was carried out) severely whipped.

In 1654 Thomas Langdon removed with his family to Paugasset, now Derby, Connecticut, where with his brother-in-law Edward Wooster he was one of the very first settlers. The first entry in the Town Records is without date, but the late Samuel Orcutt concluded from various circumstances that it was written in January, 1665/6, when Abel Gunn, the first recorder, started to keep the records. This entry shows that Mr. Goodyear, Mr. Wakeman and Mr. Gilbert sold to several men, then called of Milford, a tract of land at Paugasset in 1655. The company included Edward Wooster, Thomas Langdon, Isaac Platt, and seven others. At that time Thomas Langdon was to have his home lot of 1 1/2 acres where his house already stood; and he was credited also with four acres of upland and three of meadow. After this plan was adopted and before the land was laid out Alexander Bryan bought all of Thomas Langdon's land in this particular tract, and Edward Wooster bought it in turn from Mr. Bryan. Where Thomas Langdon and Edward Wooster lived was called Old Town, and at first there was not another family within several miles.

Thomas Langdon figures in a prosecution which the settlers of Derby undertook against the inhabitants of Milford; however he was told in 1654 that if he prove troublesome to the Court the latter would take a course to either quiet or remove him. But it seems that by this time Langdon had learned that discretion is the better part of valor; and although he was still of record in Connecticut on 25 May 1657, he had decided to remove from Connecticut by the end of the year. Instead of moving to another area of the English colonies controlled by a local theocracy, he decided to try his hand under Dutch rule by moving to Hempstead, New York (then New Amsterdam).

On 23 September 1655 Gysbert Opdyck sold land in Hempstead, NY to Alexander Bryan of Milford, and the latter conveyed this land to Thomas Langdon on 17 December 1657. As a consequence he was rated in the town of Hempstead early in 1658. He took up land granted by the town on 29 November 1658 and had five cows tallied to him 16 January 1659. Langdon received 5s in February, 1659 for undisclosed services which he performed for the town in 1658. At a town meeting of the same month he was chosen with Lawrence Ellison and three others to serve as townsmen for the year (to perform a variety of offices). On 14 March 1659 he assisted the surveyors of the town with his labor; and on 17 April of the same year he was one of those named to fence in Rockaway. A levy was taken in the town 8 March 1659 for the "public charge" and he was rated.

Thomas Langdon deeded 19 acres of land to Robert Williams 25 January 1660, and on 12 November 1662 he purchased from Aaron Forman of Oyster Bay, New York, seven and 1/2 acres, consisting of a homestead with house, barns, farm land and other appurtenances in Hempstead which Aaron Forman had lived in. According to Mary Bunker Powell in her [Genealogies of Long Island Families](#), the land Thomas Langdon purchased from Aaron Furman was sold to Furman by Adam Mott, and was the former dwelling place of Christopher Foster.

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This was in Mr. Strickland's Neck (a real estate venture of John Strickland) and the transactions show that Thomas Langdon was illiterate.

Thomas seems to have adjusted his hunting instincts by the time he came to Hempstead, the result of which was that he achieved a remarkable record for killing wolves, on which there was a bounty. He collected six pounds for six wolves during 1658, although the town fathers soon brought the rate down; at a meeting of the town of Hempstead on 12 January 1659 it was voted that Thomas Langdon having killed ten wolves, was to be paid for each wolf head six bushels of Indian Corn, "and he is to have his range one mile w'thin ye North woods and in all the South Woods w'thin ye towne bounds." James Pine and John Mead, townsmen, testified before Mr. Richard Gildersleeve, Mr. Robert Ashman and John Hicks, Magistrates on 13 May 1661, that Thomas Langdon had killed ten wolves. However Langdon was so proficient and intrepid at this business that the townsmen reduced the rate per wolf head to four and one half bushels of Indian Corn. Bernice Schultz, in her work *Colonial Hempstead*, (Copyright 1937), page 67, provides a slightly more sarcastic account of these activities:

"So under the Dutch the roster of officers included two or three magistrates, five townsmen, a clerk, a pounder, two or three cow and calf keepers, and at times a hay warden. There was also Thomas Langdon, who was evidently self-appointed as the Town wolf-killer. While he did not have a monopoly, he seems to have devoted himself to this work. In 1659 he received six bushels of Indian corn for each ten wolves killed, but in 1661 his wage was reduced to four and a half bushels, his assiduity at his own labor having decreased the demand."

The last entry has a flavor of poetic justice; on 17 December 1663 the town allowed Thomas Langdon to have 24 guilders in beaver pay, for damages sustained by his swine.

Between this last date and 23 March 1663/4 Thomas Langdon died. He left no will, and the administration of his estate is not of record. He was probably buried at South Hempstead, NY. On 7 June 1666 there was sold and delivered for the use of Edward Wooster of Stratford, Connecticut a debt due from Thomas Langdon, late deceased, consisting of among other things, a mare and colt.

Thomas Langdon married about 1646 to Isabella, maiden name unknown. She was evidently something of a matchmaker, and was living 1 May 1678 at Hempstead, NY.