

## CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

NICHOLAS PEARSALL  
of Flushing, Long Island, New York

*This chapter has been in part deleted. See Note, page 1041.*

### SECTION 1.

NICHOLAS PEARSALL, son of Thomas Pearsall, Chapter 27, Section 1; resided at Pearsall's on Hellgate Neck, and Flushing, Long Island, New York; married Sarah ——. Children:—

1. Sarah Pearsall, married Robert Embree. Child:—\*1. Robert Embree.
2. Mary Pearsall, resided at Flushing, Long Island, New York; married John Thorne, son of William and Sarah Thorne of Flushing, Long Island, New York; the license to marry was issued March 9, 1664-5. He died 1709. Children:—\*1. William Thorne. \*2. John Thorne. \*3. Joseph Thorne. \*4. Mary Thorne, who married William Fowler. \*5. Elizabeth Thorne, who married Frederick Schuerman, born 1667, died age 43 in 1710. \*6. Sarah Thorne, married Joshua Cornwell, son of John Cornell and his wife Mary Russell. \*7. Hannah Thorne, born 1678, died 1756; married 1701, Richard Cornell, born 1st mo. 26, 1678, died in Scarsdale, New York, 4th mo. 15, 1757; son of John Cornell and his wife Mary Russell. Child:—1. Phebe Cornell, born 3rd mo. 6, 1715; died before 1754; married 9th mo. 13, 1735, Ebenezer Haviland, born 1702; died 1749. They had a daughter Hannah Haviland, born at Purchase, Dutchess Co., New York, 4th mo. 1738; died 7th mo. 5, 1758; married 11th mo. 21, 1754, John Griffen; born 1733, died 1807. They had a son, John Griffen, born in Purchase, New York, 12th mo. 16, 1755; died 9th mo. 3rd, 1826; married at Purchase Friends' Meeting, New York, 10th mo. 22, 1777, Esther Cornwell, born 1st mo. 1, 1760; died 6th mo. 11, 1832. They had a son Edmond Griffen, born North Castle, Westchester Co., New York, 2nd mo. 29, 1796, lost by drowning in Lake Erie, 8th mo. 10, 1841; married 8th mo. 15, 1821, Abigail Field, born 5th mo. 3rd, 1798; died 1st mo. 7, 1879.

Nicholas Pearsall was constable of Flushing, appointed December 24, 1664.

The Land Records of Queens County, New York disclose:—Deed Book A, page 43, deed dated March 16, 1686-7 wherein Nicholas Parcell of Flushing and Sarah his wife convey to William Fowler of the same place a salt meadow on Trues Neck bounded by William Lawrence and David Roer.

Deed Book B. 1, page 163, deed dated March 27, 1689-90, wherein Nicholas Parsell of Flushing conveys to Daniel Whitehead land in Flushing on south side of the Kills, witnesses Thomas Oakley, John Everett, and Daniel Denton, Jr.

Nicholas Pearsall witnessed and took part in the warfare in the Chesapeake Bay country which finally resulted in his being captured, along with his brothers

and others on the Delaware River, and being carried as prisoner of war to New Amsterdam before Governor Van Twiller, only to be released and brought by De Vries to Virginia. But this did not happen without Nicholas Pearsall and his brothers thoroughly spying out the land around New Amsterdam and making friends among those who were the most trustworthy in that community. So favorable was their report upon their return to Virginia that the movement of the Dutch-English traders to Long Island, in 1639, completely changed the course of the tobacco trade in America, and hence in the world. Nicholas Pearsall settled at the town of Pearsall along with his brothers; the next year he removed to the open plains and joined with those who had founded the town of Hempstead as a great cattle and farming venture. Nicholas Pearsall had no love for the New Englanders who in 1644 proposed to join in patenting a town of Hempstead. He did not look with favor upon the proposition to bring in such a large number of Puritans as would enable them to control the policies and politics of the town, so he returned to Hellgate Neck, as soon as he saw that the negotiations were going to result in these accessions to the town's population. There were others who thought as he did, and the year after the patent was issued for the town of Hempstead, they formed a more congenial company who moved across the creek on Hellgate Neck and founded the town of Flushing. Unfortunately there is not much left of the history of this most interesting movement by the Dutch-English traders as the town records were long since destroyed.

It is probable that the most interesting event in the history of Flushing was the introduction of Quakerism. Here Fox found a flourishing meeting when he came to America, and here he delivered several of his most memorable speeches while in America. Long before this the authorities in New Amsterdam had tried to suppress this new sect by the most drastic laws, which were enforced in the most cruel manner against the peace-loving Friends. This was more than these Dutch-English traders in Flushing could stand for, so they courageously remonstrated against the law concerning Quakers, and the subsequent proceedings by the government against the Quakers and others favoring them, saying that if any of these said persons come in love vnto vs wee cannot in Conscience lay violent hands vpon them but give them free egress and regresse into our Towne and howses as god shall perswade our Conscience and in this wee are true subjects both of Church and State for wee are bounde by the law of god and man to doe good vnto all men and evill to noe man and this is according to the Pattent and Charter of our Towne giuen vnto vs in the name of the States Generall which wee are not willing to infringe and violate but shall houlde to our pattent and shall remaine your Humble Subjects the inhabitnats of Vlishing written this 27th of December in the yeare 1675 by mee Edward Heart Clericus, Tobias Feake, William Noble, William Thorne, Wm. Thorne, Junior, Edward Tarne, John Storer, Nathaniel Hefford, Benjamin Hubbard, William Pidgeon, George Clere, Elias Doughtie, Antonie Feild, Richard Stocton, Edward Griffin, Nathaniell Tue, Nicholas Blackford, Micah Tue, Philipp Udall, Edward Ffarington, Robert Ffiled, senior, Robert Field, junior, Nick Colas Parsell, Michael Milner, Henry Sawtell, Edward Heart, John Mastine, John Townesend. First of January 1658.

The foregoing remonstrance delivered to his Honor, the Director-General, by the Schout, Tobias Feake of Vlissingen, on the 29th December, having read, his Honor immediately ordered the Fiscal to arrest the said Schout, which was done.

On the first of January 1658, summoned by their Honours, the Director-General and Council, appeared Edward Farrington and William Noble, two of the Magistrates of Vlissingen, who likewise signed the foregoing remonstrance, and were immediately arrested. It was further resolved, to summon also the Clerk of the said village, Edward Hart. Date as above.

Thursday, the 3rd of January, 1658, they were tried before the Council, composed of his Honor, the Director-General Petrus Stuyvesant, and the honorable Councillors Nicasius de Sille and Peter Tonneman.

When it appeared from the testimony that the remonstrance had been adopted at a town meeting and that Nicholas Pearsall and many of the others had signed the same at this meeting the officers of the town were convicted and imprisoned. [New York Historical Records, vol. 14, page 402, 562; also vol. 2, page 789.]

Nothing more is known concerning Nicholas Pearsall until 1664 when he was appointed constable of the town of Flushing. The following being a copy of his certificate of appointment:—Whereas I have approved of William Hallett and William Noble to be the present Magistrates, Nicolas Passall to bee Constable of the Towne of fflushing upon long Island. These are in his Majesties name to require all Persons, Inhabitants of the said Towne, and Precincts, that they do take notice thereof, and that they obey the said William Hallett and William Noble as the Magistrates, and Nicholas Passall as Constable of the said Towne of fflushing, & Precincts, and (if occasion bee) that they bee ready to give their utmost Aid and Assistance unto them in the Execution of their respective Offices, hereof they are not to faile, as they will Answer ye contrary at their perills. Given under my hand at ffort James in New Yorke this 24th of December 1664. Richard Nicolls. To the Inhabitants of the Towne and princts of fflushing.

Flushing was not overlooked by the English Governors in their anxiety to collect fees for new patents to the towns on Long Island. February 16, 1666, a patent of confirmation, drawn in the usual form, was obtained from Governor Nicolls and made to the following persons, to wit: "John Lawrence, alderman of the city of New York; Richard Cornhill, justice of the peace:—Charles Bridges, William Lawrence, Robert Terry, William Noble, John fforbush, Elias Doughty, Robert ffield, Edmund ffarington, John Maston, Anthony ffield, Phillip Udall, Thomas Stiles, Benjamin ffield, William Pidgeon, John Adams, John Hinckman, Nicholas Parcell, Tobias ffeeks, and John Bowne, patentees for, and in behalf of themselves and their associates, the freeholders, inhabitants of the town of Flushing, their heirs, successors, and assigns for ever, all that certain town in the north riding of Yorkshire upon Long Island, called by the name of Flushing, situate and lying and being on the north side of the said island; which said town hath a certain tract of land belonging thereunto, and bounded by Flushing Creek, Tews Neck, Matthew Garretsons Bay, Hempstead and Jamaica.

August 12th 1667, the following Persons of fflushing presented themselves to the Governor & gave in their names to be ready to serve his Majesty under his

honors Command upon all occasions: William Noble, George Wright, Edward Griffin, Thomas Sadler, Aaron fforman, Nicholas parcell, George Tippetts, Jonathan Wright, John Thorne, John Elce, William Bishop, Richard Long, Joseph Thorne, Joseph Hedger. [New York Historical Records, vol. 14, page 598.]

Nicholas Pearsall survived all his brothers. Samuel Pearsall the youngest brother was the first to die. Thomas Pearsall the oldest brother was the next; he left a family of half grown sons; these, Nicholas Pearsall took under his guardianship during their minority. There is no finer eulogy that can be made concerning Nicholas Pearsall than that he was a good and faithful father to these fatherless boys. Every one of the sons of Thomas Pearsall named a son Nicholas and thereby so fastened this name upon the descendants of Thomas Pearsall that for several generations it was the distinguishing characteristic of this branch of the family, to have a son Nicholas. This they adhered to although they wandered far away from the style of Thomas Pearsall in writing their family name. Thus we see that although Nicholas Pearsall had no sons of his own to continue his line, these sons of Thomas remembered him and continued his name for many generations.

The marriage of the daughter of Nicholas Pearsall to the son of William Thorne will afford a parting opportunity to again consider the close family relationships that existed amongst the leading Dutch-English traders before they came to America in connection with the tobacco monopoly. The ancestors of William Thorne came from Shropshire-Staffordshire where Thomas Thornes was proprietor of the manor and estate of Thornes, in the parish of Shenstone, temp. Edward IV., in which reign he built a mansion at Thornes. In the History of Shenstone, by the Rev. Henry Sanders, B.A., published in 1794 [Vol. ix, No. 4, 2061, among the collection of Miscellaneous Antiquities in the British Museum Reading-room], it is said that this was a manor in the parish of Shenstone, and belonged to a family of the name of Thornes, in the reign of Henry VI., who most likely purchased lands here from the lords of the manor, and, as was usual in those days, and earlier, took the name of Thornes from the place. The Thomas Thornes mentioned by Sanders had issue, Thomas, who, in 1470, let Thornes on lease to one Richard, of the Ruddings. This lessor is described as of Salop, and from that period may be dated the settlement of the family at Shevlock. Members of the family had, however, been resident in Shrewsbury some ninety years previous to the letting and subsequent alienation of the manor of Thornes. The last-named Thomas Thornes married Mary, daughter of Sir Roger Corbet, of Moreton Corbet, Knight, and had issue Roger, who was grandfather of Roger Thornes, called The Wyse Thornes, who died in 1531. He was so named in Shrewsbury for that bothe toune and countrey repared to hym for advyse, whoe gyded this toune polytyckely, and lyeth buried in St. Mary's Church. This Shropshire worthy married a daughter of Sir Roger Kynaston, but, being himself descended from a younger son, he did not inherit Shevlock, and died without issue. Shevlock continued in the male line until 1670, when the last male heir, Thomas, the son of Francis Thornes, by Beatrix, daughter of Sir Andrew Corbet, of Moreton Corbet, died unmarried. Then we see that at the time of the granting to Edmund Pearsall of the tobacco monopoly, the Thornes and Pershalls

were relations by marriage to the same families in Staffordshire-Shropshire, specially the Moreton-Corbets, who were also tenants of the Pershalls. [Shropshire Notes and Queries, vol. 1-2, page 32.]

William Thorne of Flushing was the son of a Dutch-English trader from the Chesapeake Bay country, where the family were located on the Delaware peninsula, in the eastern shore of Maryland, in Somerset County. William Thorne was one of the party who, early in 1640, came from Hellgate Neck to the plains of Long Island where they founded the town of Hempstead. He had gone from Virginia to Lynne, Massachusetts, in 1638, where he located. The next year he joined the other Dutch-English traders on Long Island. He thereby acquired a right to the land and property under the terms of the agreement for the first town government. When the patent was granted in 1644, for Hempstead, he obtained a proprietary right which he appears never to have exercised in the distribution of lands except for the benefit of others to whom he sold.

He however retained his old holdings under the original town, which lands were subsequently, about 1677, occupied by his son, William Thorne. William Thorne returned to Hellgate Neck before Doctor Denton arrived at Hempstead with his associates from Stanford. Upon his return to Hellgate Neck, William Thorne settled on lands which were later to be organized as the town of Flushing, but which he named Thornes Neck. Waller in his history of Flushing says William Thorne acquired this property in 1642. But the sequence of events would make it nearly two years later before he occupied this neck of land. The next year, 1645, he was one of the original associators in founding the town of Flushing. Here he was early joined by Nicholas Pearsall, who was not one of the original incorporators. The records of this town were destroyed by fire in 1780, so that it is not possible to say definitely when Nicholas Pearsall removed from Pearsall, on Hellgate Neck, to Flushing. That he was at the latter place quite early is certain. And the few records that we have indicate that he was prominent in his government. John Thorne was with his father, William Thorne, in Flushing, where he remained after his marriage, and the records show that he there offered his services as a soldier in 1667. [New York Geneological and Biological Register, vol. 19, page 153; Maryland wills, vol. 1, page 51; Hempstead Town Records, vol. 1, page 309; vol. 8, pages 292-397.]