John Seymour of Sawbridgeworth and the Evidence Linking Him to the Ducal Branch of the 16th Century

Okay, after learning so much about the family over the past year and a half, it seems obvious to me that John Seymour of Sawbridgeworth (JoS) was directly related to the ducal clan. There is just too much circumstantial evidence to be ignored. However, since I’m a Seymour, and since I’m not a professional historian, but just an aficionado, I’m lacking a little bit in the credibility department with respect to drawing this conclusion.

Therefore I went searching for some independent, third party corroboration. I guess, a little bit of the professional auditor training in me. I first tried to contact both, the Duke of Somerset, and the Marquess of Hertford, but they weren’t responding to my e-mails. I then contacted the humanities inquiries section of the British Library, whose personnel were very helpful, and they directed me to:

Barrett L. Beer, Ph.D., Fellow, Royal Historical Society
Professor of History Emeritus
Kent State University

He has written the following books:

Northumberland: The Political Career of John Dudley, Earl of Warwick and Duke of Northumberland June 1, 1974

Tudor England Observed: The World of John Stow November 1, 1998

Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England During the Reign of Edward VI

I found him to be very receptive, and helpful. We exchanged several e-mails, and finally I sent him my own personal reconstruction of how I think the evidence explains JoS’ birth and ancestry (further below), and he responded as follows, and later gave me express permission to use his opinion. This is the complete e-mail which included his opinion, but I’ve marked in bold certain parts:

On Wed, Apr 20, 2011 at 7:02 PM, BEER, BARRETT <bbeer@kent.edu< wrote:

**“What you have here is a reasonable, plausible account connecting your family with the Seymours of the 16th century.**

As before, I have focused on the 1530s where the evidence is unclear as far as I can tell.  Specifically:

 1.  The relationship between Catherine and Sir John
 2.  The dissolution/ annullment of the marriage between Edward Seymour and Catherine
 3.  Parentage of John Sawbridgeworth

To be honest I don't know whether answers exist.  Research in local archives might be helpful, but there is a distinct possibility that long hours might go unrewarded.  Many legitimate historical questions cannot be answered irrespective of how much effort is expended.  No records may have been kept, records may have been lost or destroyed, **and in this case good reason existed for concealing family secrets.**  It is easy to say that your conclusions are not supported by sufficient, irrefutable evidence, but can I offer the 'correct' explanation?  Unfortunately the answer is a resounding 'no'.”

All best wishes,
Barrett Beer

Of course he didn’t explicitly say that the evidence absolutely supports the fact that our John is the son of Sir John and Catherine Fillol, because that’s impossible, but as an objective 3rd party expert, his opinion that it’s “reasonable and plausible”, and his admission that the family “had good reason” to cover up the existence of our John, is good enough for me.

The family had many reasons to keep the origin of JoS a secret, and based on the evidence obtained by local professional genealogists, we can assume that that is why absolutely no documentation exists as to his birth, or parents.  At least three local Herts genealogists have been hired to do extensive searches, but have only concluded that "he must have come from somewhere other than Sawbridgeworth", and that he was admitted as a tenant to Pishiobury Manor in 1572.  Some of the other related coincidences that are hard to ignore:

* It has been reported that the following **all occurred in 1535**: JoS was born, Catherine Fillol died in a Wilts convent, and Edward and Catherine's marriage was annulled due to an affair between Catherine Fillol and Sir John,
* **Sir John died in 1536**, surrounded by Edward, Thomas and Jane, and reportedly mentally unsound,
* Sir John had previously fathered another illegitimate child, also named John, but who whose birth caused no political damage, and who was therefore raised as part of the family at Wulfhall,
* Edward, Thomas and Jane, in **1535, were close to securing a marriage with Henry** **VIII**, and as the family were not of royal blood, the birth of a child to Fillol and Sir John would have ruled out the royal wedding,
* Edward was named **Earl of Hertford in 1537**, so surely had incredible influence in Sawbo,
* There is no documentation of JoS' birth, and the evidence suggests that he came to and lived and died in Sawbridgeworth, which is far from Wulfhall, but was also under Edwards' powerful influence. A good place to hide him away, but still monitor his life,
* During the childhood of JoS, Edward's little sister Dorothy Seymour married Sir Thomas Leventhorpe of Sawbridgeworth. The Leventhorpes were one of the richest landowners in Sawbridgeworth at the time, and served the Earl of Hertford, in this case Edward Seymour,
* JoS was apparently an only child, and an orphan,
* **In 1572** JoS was admitted as a tenant to Pishiobury Manor.  PM had been in the St Maur family previously, and then returned to the family when Edward VI inherited it from his father Henry VIII, therefore effectively in the hands of Edward the Protector as of the 1540’s.  Anne Boleyn was gifted the Manor, and had stayed there for a while as Queen, so why was a simple cobbler admitted as a tenant 40 years later?  Although surely not to the main house, it's still odd,
* Coincidentally, Edward, son of the Protector through Stanhope, and 1st **Earl of Hertford** (2nd creation), was released from a decade or so imprisonment **in 1571**, and Thomas Leventhorpe was named **High Sherriff of Herts** **in 1573**.
* I believe that at about this same time JoS received the Seymour family seal with the 2 golden wings conjoined which JoS' great grandson, Thomas Seymour, would use 140 years later to seal his will in Norwalk, Conn.
* JoS' next daughter, after being admitted to Pishiobury Manor, who was born in 1579, was named Dorothy,
* Finally, I started looking up Seymours on both sides of the pond, and found that they were remarkably similar.  Tending to be national level military and political leaders in both cases, despite the fact that the American branch had started from scratch in 1639, while the British ducal branch were some of the wealthiest people in England, and therefore the world. This remarkable similarity in personal characteristics suggests a genetic relationship.

In other chapters I’ve already presented the historical facts surrounding the royal wedding between Jane and Henry, and the affair between Sir John and Catherine Fillol at about the same time, and Catherine’s subsequent disappearance, etc. all of which had been occurring at the Seymour family manor, Wulfhall in County Wilts, and at the royal court in London. The part that we’re missing is why John was raised in Sawbridgeworth as an orphan, and isolated from the family almost completely, but apparently given a little bit of help in middle age.

Here is my complete reconstruction of the scenario which I had sent to Barrett Beer prompting his e-mail response above.

Sir John, like his ancestors, was a great knight, known for his loyalty and soldiering skills. He was also apparently held in high regard by King Henry VII, father of Henry VIII, who knighted him on the battlefield after John had fought bravely in a rebel uprising. Therefore when King Henry VII died, the new King, his son, took his father’s advice, and trusted Sir John, and kept him as a trusted military advisor. Sir John, like any father, took advantage of this opportunity and introduced his sons and daughters to the royal court, and Edward, Thomas, Jane and Elizabeth were all well accepted and their fortunes advanced.

Back at Wulfhall, in Wiltshire SW England, Edward had married Catherine Fillol before 1519. Catherine was the daughter and co-heiress of Sir William Fillol, of Woodlands, Horton, Dorset, and of Fillol's Hall, Essex. They had two sons together, the first being named John, who was born before 1518 based upon the entry for him in the House of Commons, and Edward, born sometime after.

Those are all facts, although there is some historical variation in the dates involved, Edward and Catherine most certainly had those two sons, John being the first. According to some accounts, Edward, for unknown reasons, seems to have doubted the paternity of his first son John. Unfortunately, the facts surrounding the reasons why have apparently been lost to us, but it’s interesting to note. There was obviously some distrust between Edward and Catherine, or possibly this “doubt” arose after the marriage to Stanhope.

In 1535, for whatever reason, Sir John and Catherine were discovered to have been carrying on an affair. Sir John was then about 61, and Catherine at least 28. This was then discovered by Edward, very coincidentally in the same year that our John Seymour of Sawbridgeworth was born, without any documents regarding his parentage. In at least one rumor, I think started by Anne Boleyn, Edward discovered the relationship when he returned home after an extended trip and found Catherine pregnant. We know by historical evidence that Edward had been making trips to France at about this time for various reasons in his service to Henry VIII.

Obviously, under any circumstances, this would be an embarrassing, and emotionally difficult discovery for any man. For Edward, in 1535 while he was in his prime, and his fortunes were rising in the royal court, it was a real disaster. Not just personally, but the scandal could have ruined his ambitious political plans as well, not to mention those of his brother Thomas, and sister Jane, as well.

At this very moment, during 1535, he along with his brother and sister, were making good progress towards convincing King Henry that his hopes for having a son with their cousin Anne Boleyn weren’t working out, and that he would be better off with Jane Seymour. That marriage occurred in 1536 at Wulfhall just a few days after Anne Boleyn was beheaded. Since the Seymours weren’t exactly of royal blood (although Margery Wentworth was descended from Richard III), this scandal, if it became public, would have completely ruined the chances for a royal wedding, and would have tarnished the Seymour name for many years afterward. For that reason, Edward very quickly and quietly, back in Wiltshire, sent Catherine to a local convent where she could have the baby of his father in private.

He would later annul the marriage and have his first two sons with Catherine declared bastards, but kept them in the bloodline in the case that his future bloodline, already planned with Anne Stanhope, ceased for any reason. The bloodline through Anne Stanhope did fail in 1750, and the bloodline through Catherine Fillol, via their second son Edward are currently the Duke of Somerset, and the Marquess of Hertford.

In 1535, the evidence suggests that Catherine had a son in a Wiltshire convent, and according to historical records, also died the same year. She certainly disappeared from history, and if she did die at such an early age, it was most likely due to postpartum infection, which was very common during that era. Jane Seymour would die a couple of years later the same way after giving birth to the future Edward VI, as would Thomas Seymour’s wife and former Queen, Katherine Parr a couple of years after that.

It would also follow custom at the time for the illegitimate baby to be named John, after his father. This is significant, because her first son, with Edward, was also named John. By naming this son John as well, it’s clear that they both had different fathers, and that Catherine’s first two sons were not bastards. We’ve already learned something about Anne Stanhope, and history has indicated that Edward was a little bit too much manipulated by his second wife. In this case, the abandonment of his first wife and first two children was said to have been in order to satisfy her as well.

In order to assure the secrecy of little John, which was aided by the fact that both the mother and father were both dead as of 1536, Edward needed to place him somewhere far removed from Wulfhall, but still under his influence. Therefore Edward sent the baby to another convent in far away Sawbridgeworth, County Herts, where he had considerable influence as the Earl of Hertford. It was also nearby his place of work at the royal court, being only 19 miles northeast of London.

He also had a presumably loyal and powerful subject there in the form of his future brother-in-law Sir Thomas Leventhorpe. His younger sister Dorothy Seymour would marry him a few years later in 1543. The fact that Leventhorpe was the youngest son in his clan, and that Dorothy was some 10 years older than he, and previously widowed, indicates a favorable marriage for him, and probably in return for favors granted and secrets kept. I can easily imagine that this marriage had been suggested by the Protector, between his loyal subject and his little sister. By 1543 it was obvious that Edward would be the big cheese upon the death of Henry, as uncle of the future king. This is exactly what happened just four years later in 1547.

The deaths of both, Edward’s ex-wife Catherine and his father Sir John, before their baby was a year old, were very convenient for Edward, Thomas and Jane as they were the only ones who could give baby John an identity, and therefore create any scandal. The nuns in Wiltshire would not know where the baby had been taken, and the nuns in Sawbridgeworth would have no knowledge of who the baby’s parents were, although he did have the same last name. I can imagine a deathbed promise made to Sir John in 1536 that the baby would be at least minimally looked after in some way, and not be harmed.

John grew up in Sawbridgeworth in humble circumstances, as an orphan, and not knowing that his father had been a famous knight of the courts of both Kings Henry VII and VIII. From these humble beginnings he went on to make a living as a cobbler, marry, and have eight children. His first wife, Jone Andrews died young, and he married second, Dyzory Porter in 1562. They first had three daughters, and then in 1573 had a son, named Robert (see the tree at the link on my page).

In the 1970’s, a local Herts genealogist, hired by another American Seymour descended from John, discovered that in 1572 John had been admitted as a tenant to Pishiobury Manor, as also was later his first son Robert. Coincidentally, this was the year after his nephew Edward Seymour, first Earl of Hertford (second creation) had been released after a decade or so in the Tower, and subsequent house arrest with other nobles. The following year, his brother-in-law Sir Leventhorpe would be named High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, possibly as a favor granted by Edward for maintaining a family secret, while looking after his unfairly disadvantaged uncle.

This Edward’s father, Edward the Protector, had been executed twenty years earlier in 1552. His nephew Edward VI, Henry VIII’s and Jane Seymour’s son, had also died shortly thereafter rendering the whole potential scandal surrounding the tryst between Sir John and Catherine FIllol in 1535, at that point almost 40 years previous, as much less potentially damaging. At least our John’s existence in 1572 wasn’t going to keep the Seymours off the throne. By 1572, Queen Elizabeth was quite stable in her position, which is why this Edward had been released from prison for having married and had children with Lady Jane Grey. I can imagine that maybe now Lord Leventhorpe considered it safe to give John a slightly better life, considering his great heritage, but the scandal still could have tarnished the name and made other favorable marriages difficult, so he could not be taken into the family with open arms.

Although John’s half sister Dorothy had since died in 1572, it’s not difficult to believe that Leventhorpe had promised to continue looking after John. Probably to Dorothy, or maybe even he had previously promised his first Lord, Edward the Protector, to do so many years before when baby John was taken there from Wilts. It would make sense that at about this same time, Leventhorpe passed on to John the Seymour family seal which he in turn passed on to his first son Robert, who passed it on to his first son Richard, who took it with him to Connecticut, and then passed it on to his first son Thomas. Unfortunately, the knowledge of who they really were, and what the real significance of the seal was, was never passed along. If it was, John would have to have sworn upon his life to not share it, and apparently his grandson Richard wasn’t aware of any such heritage. Leventhorpe did, though, let John know that Dorothy had been a significant help to him, and John therefore named his next daughter, born in 1579 Dorothy in her honor.

Therefore, this obscure little branch of the great Seymour family, followed not it’s tradition, for they had no knowledge of that tradition, but instead carried in their blood the same genes which had been brought across the channel in 1066 by Wido Ste. Maur, of Ste. Maur Sur, Loire, France, and subsequently cultivated over the centuries. Sixteen generations later, Richard Seymour took off across the Atlantic Ocean in 1639 to an unknown future and to help found yet another great country. With remarkable similarities to their namesakes in England, regarding their leadership and accomplishments in the young colonies, and later in the Revolution for independence from their forefather’s homeland, and then the forming of the newly established US government, the humble shoemaker’s descendants have done rather well.

So there was the scenario which Dr. Beer opined was a “reasonable and plausible” link to the ducal clan of the 16th century.

I later learned that there was another John Seymour at this time, and that he was definitely an illegitimate son of Sir John. He was born sometime earlier, and not to any of Sir John’s daughters-in-law, and not while any members of the family were trying to marry the King. He was, therefore, part of the family, and apparently raised at Wulfhall, and definitely highly regarded by Edward. In Bath Longleat Manuscripts, Seymour Papers, it’s stated that this John was a “leading member of Edward’s household” and acted as his attorney. It was he, and not Edward’s son John, by Catherine Fillol, who was imprisoned in the Tower with Edward prior to his execution. This John’s son, also named John, was called John Seymour of Frampton Cotterell, Glouc., Esq., and he married Jane Poyntz. Some have confused this John Seymour with ours of Sawbridgeworth.

Therefore, we see that Sir John, although married to one of the most beautiful women in England, had an eye for other ladies, and acted on it. Just one more fact in favor of the probability that he also fathered our JoS.

Next I’ll flesh out with more details the Sawbridgeworth connection. Let’s start with what is to me probably the most compelling evidence that JoS was a direct relative, that being his admission into Pishiobury Manor.

*Here’s the Wiki history of Pishiobury:* [*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pishobury*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pishobury)

**Pishiobury Manor in Sawbridgeworth**

**** Pishobury Park; coloured lithograph from Neale's, Views of Seats 1821

“Pishobury or Pishiobury was the second great estate in medieval Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire**.**

History

This sub-manor of Pishobury originated in a grant of 74 libartes of land within the Manor of Sawbridgeworth, which Geoffrey de Mandeville, 1st Earl of Essex, who died in 1144, made to Warin FitzGerold (died 1216) and Henry FitzGerold (died after 1217) to hold by service of one Knight for each 20 libartes. Henry survived his brother, but his niece Margaret FitzGerold/FitzWarin inherited Pishobury. She had married in 1200 Baldwin de Redvers, 6th Earl of Devon, and in 1228 she levied a fine with William de Saye by which it was agreed that William and his heirs were to have free warren, a hunting right, throughout Sawbridgeworth. *Recall that Margery Wentworth was the daughter of Ann Saye.*

The successive Lords of the manor of Pishobury had local hunting rights and their own park, too. In 1248 William de Say granted the heiress of Pishobury, Margaret FitzGerold/FitzeWarin, wife of Baldwin de Redvers, the right of free hunting on her own estate with dogs, birds or nets, and free fishing in the river where it joined her lands; in return she recognized the de Says' right to have free warren over the whole Sawbridgeworth, including Pishobury. This right still exists today.

This agreement shows how the right of other manors developed out of the original manorial powers of John, Lord Robert Lisle's son *(this name is important)*, kept 12 acres (49,000 m2) of underwood from the land called Vodeleye; the park of Gedelesho and Gedelesho Wood (Gilston) and its keeper are mentioned, so presumably this was the manorial park. That the estate had some boundary fence or bank marking it off from neighbouring land is suggested by a reference to a house, on the left hand side within the second gare, which contained two chambres for habitation. Some idea of the size of Pishobury estate emerges from the long lease which Richard, Lord Scrope of Bolton, granted to John Chauncy in 1400. The property then consisted of 319 1/2 acres of arable, 58 acres (230,000 m2) of pasture and 36 acres (150,000 m2) of meadow - houses and an orchard. **In 1534, Lord Scrope, sold the manor to Henry VIII of England who granted it to Anne Boleyn**; *so the year before our John showed up in town, and while Edward is an important part of the royal court, and three years before Edward is named Earl of Hertford -* an extend made at this time once again describes the estate. The perimeter of the park was nearly two miles; it was well wooded with game, deer and rabbits, and there was a lodge on one side for the keeper: *could this have been the house within the second gate of 1343 mentioned later?* There was a moated house within the park with stabling for twenty horses. The house was described as "somewhat fallen into decay" *(maybe the perfect spot for a secret half brother?)*; it was replaced in 1585 by a new house built by Sir Walter Mildmay. Chauncy described it as a "very neat and fair Pile of building for the Manor-house, upon a rising Ground in the Vale near the River Stort, lately converted into a Paddock for Deer, adorned in the Front thereof with a fair Bowling Green, raised about five Foot high, enclosed with a Brick Wall top with stone, and balls upon it, and two fair walks planted with trees; each walk extending about four Furlongs in length from the house to the road; where it is observable that there is no dust in summer, nor no dirt winter, a clear description of the setting of an Elizabethan house in its ground. The house was remodelled or rebuilt for Jeremiah Milles by James Wyatt in 1782-84, the house as it was illustrated in Neale's Views of Seats 1st ser. iv (1821, illustration, right).

Lords of Pishobury Manor

Geoffrey de Mandeville, 1st Earl of Essex, who died in 1144, made the sub-manor of Pishobury originated in a grant of 74 libartes of land within the main Manor of Sawbridgeworth to Warin FitzGerold and Henry FitzGerold, to hold by service of one Knight for each 20 libartes.

Henry survived his brother, but his niece Margaret FitzWarin (Gerold) inherited Pishobury. She married in 1200 Baldwin de Redvers, 6th Earl of Devon.

Margaret was succeeded at Pishobury by her son, also Baldwin de Redvers, 7th Earl of Devon, on whose death without issue, his widow Countess Margaret de Savoy had livery of the Manor until her death in 1292. It then passed to Earl Baldwin's sister Isabella de Redvers, Countess of Abalina, who died the following year and was succeeded at Pishobury by her daughter Abalina de Fortibus, wife of Edmund Earl of Lancaster, second son to King Edward I of England. Her cousin, Hugh de Courtnay, great-great grandson of William de Redvers was her heir, but **Warin de Lisle** claimed Pishobury in right of his son Robert de Lisl and was successful in 1310 (Henry Fitzgerald's daughter Alice was married with Robert de Lisle).

Robert de Lisle was summoned as Lord Lisle in 1311 and on his death in 1343 was succeeded by his grandson John Lord Lisle who died in 1356. Robert de Lisle was succeeded by his son William Lord Lisle who in 1393 granted Pishobury to Lord Scrope of Bolton. *Below there is some evidence that a Lisle was married to a St Maur*

It remained in the Scopes, until **1534** when the 8th Lord Scrope **sold it to King Henry VIII of England**, who annexed it to the Royal Honour of Hudson. An extend of the Manor, probably for the King at about this time, describes the park at Pishobury to be nearly two miles in circumference, well wooded and supllied with game, deer and foxes.

Pishobury was also **enjoyed for a short period by Anne Boleyn on whose execution it reverted to the Crown. Kind Edward VI** of England granted it to a gentleman of the Chamber and in 1555 it was held by Thomas Mildmay, whose son, Sir Walter Mildmay, began the present house in 1585.

*So here we see that it was actually in the Seymour family with Edward the VI during John’s youth.*

In 1611, Sir Thomas Mildmay passed Pishobury Manor to Lord Lionel Cranfield. Henceforward, it followed the same route as Sawbridgeworth Manor. Nowadays, the title is held by a German family, officially recorded in HM Land Registry. The historic rights are still owned by that family.”

 *Here is an older story written by another descendent of Richard Seymour, immigrant to Hartford, where he hired a genealogist to find the parents of our John of Sawbo. No evidence of his parents were found, but it wasn’t wasted effort.*

<http://s560.com/dokuwiki/puritan_migration>

“No genealogist has carried the ancestry of Richard Seymour of Norwalk (1604-55) beyond his grandfather, John Seymour of Sawbridgeworth, who died when his grandson was one year old. We have no knowledge of when or where this John was born, although thousands of dollars have been spent to trace his ancestry back one generation. In 1976, at the suggestion of the Marquess of Hertford *(Hugh Edward Conway Seymour, 8th Marquess of Hertford*) the author engaged the services of Mr. P. Llewelyn Gwynn-jones, M.A., the College of Arms in London, and Bluemantle Pursuivant, who was given the task of carrying the work of countless other genealogists one step further. Two years of research passed without any contribution of knowledge concerning Richard's family. Then, in Mr. Gwynn-jones's letter of August 25, 1978, he revealed, for the first time, that a search of Manorial Court Rolls had disclosed that **John Seymour was admitted tenant of Pishiobury Manor on Monday, 2 June 14 Elizabeth (1572)”** *just after his nephew, Edward Seymour (protector’s son by Stanhope), Earl of Hertford, had been released from imprisonment in June 1571, where his first son had been born in 1561. Also coincidentally, his brother-in-law, Thomas Leventhorpe, would be named High Sherriff of Hertfordshire for 1573*. *There are just too many coincidences to ignore. As our John is about to have his first son, there may have been some sympathy for him on the part of both Edward, and Leventhorpe. It’s hard to imagine why else a nobody cobbler would be living at such a place. Maybe Leventhorpe had to wait for permission from his Lord, the Earl of Hertford, in order to do anything for John.*

 “This manor dominated the southern section of Sawbridgeworth, and the author immediately sought more information about the history of the manor.

Through the good offices of the Reverend Rupert Child, vicar of Great Saint Mary's Church in Sawbridgeworth, and Mr. K. E. Wilson, of 26 Bell Street of the same town, a photocopy was sent the author of material published in The Victoria County History of the County of Hertfordshire, showing the amazing coincidence that in 1339 Pishiobury Manor was owned in part by Alice Lisle St. Maur, the wife of Sir Thomas St. Maur. The policy established by Bluemantle Pursuivant, to look close at hand for ancestors, apparently paid off.”

*Here we also see that Pishiobury was coincidentally in the family some 200 years before as well, but I don’t think it has any bearing on John’s relationship to the family. It’s just a little more family information.*

**“Pishiobury Manor in the Fourteenth Century** (Braughing Hundred)

Robert Lisle was summoned to Parliament as Lord Lisle from 1311. Shortly before his death in January 1342-43 he took religious orders, having previously in 1339 granted Pishiobury with other manors to his daughters ALICE, WIFE OF SIR THOMAS SEYMOUR, and Elizabeth Perverel for life, with the remainder to his son John who quitclaimed to his sisters. This grant was apparently made by Robert for the performance of certain alms. In 1343, however, John obtained from Alice and Elizabeth a release of the manor for thirty years, with the exception of certain premises-viz. the house on the left-hand side within the second gate, which contained two chambers for habitation, and the part of Gedelesho, which belonged to the Manor, John retaining 12 acres of underwood yearly with profits from the land called V odeleye and housbote and heybote for the manor, the keeper of Gedelsho Wood to be chosen with the assent of both parties and to have his robe from A lice and his livery of corn, &c., from John. John Lord Lisle died seized of the lease in 1356. After his death, Alice Seymour surrendered Pishiobury to his son Robert, who was to assist her in the foundation of charities begun by Sir John for the soul of his father. . . . A William Lisle granted Pishiobury in March 1392-3 to Richard first Lord Scrope of Bolton, this transaction being followed by a quitclaim from Robert Lisle in 1394.”

*Let’s look at the town of* ***Sawbridgeworth****:* [*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sawbridgeworth*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sawbridgeworth) *Although this doesn’t really support the theory that our John is the son of Sir John in any way either, it’s also interesting since it’s the town that our ancestors definitely emigrated to America from. I’d love to make it there someday*

“Prior to the Norman Conquest, most of the area was owned by the Saxon - Angmar the Staller.

The Manor of "Sabrixteworde" (one of the many spellings previously associated with the town) was recorded in the Domesday Book. After the Battle of Hastings it was granted to Geoffrey de Mandeville by William the Conqueror. Local notables have included Sir John Leventhorpe *(Remember that Dorothy Seymour, one of Edward’s and Jane’s sisters, married into this family during John’s childhood)*, who was an executor of King Henry V's will, and Anne Boleyn, who was given the Pishiobury/Pishobury estate, located to the south of the town.

Much of the town centre is a conservation area; many of the buildings date from the Tudor, Stuart, and Georgian periods. Great St. Mary's church was originally built in the 13th century (although a church on the site existed in Saxon times) and includes a Tudor tower containing a clock bell (1664) and eight ringing bells, the oldest of which dates from 1749. It should be noted that historically, it is unclear where the apostrophe lies in "Great St. Mary's", and even which St. Mary it was, and why it is "Great". Ralph Jocelyn of Hyde Hall, who was twice Lord Mayor of London in the 15th century, is buried here; images of many of his family and other locals have been engraved on brass, and hence the church is popular for enthusiasts of brass rubbing.

The town's prosperity came from the local maltings, owned by George Fawbert and John Barnard; in 1839 they set up the Fawbert and Barnard charity to fund local children and their education, funding a local infant school that still exists today.

Apart from the historic nature of the town, attractions include local river cruises in the summer, one annual fair held on Fair Green on the Sunday of the first May Bank Holiday and Carol singing on the green on Christmas Eve.

By the time of the Norman conquest, or soon after, Sawbridgeworth's rich farming land was fully developed for cultivation as was possible with the means available at the time: it was the richest village community in the country. It is, then, hardly surprising that many important medieval families had estates here. The land was divided amongst them, into a number of manors or distinct estates; the Lord of each manor had rights not only over this land but also over the people who farmed it. The number of manors increased during the Middle Ages, by a process of subinfeudation, that is the granting out of a part of an existing manor to a new owner so that the new manor was created. Many manors sprang from the original Domesday Book holding of the de Mandeville family. The first came to be called Sayesbury manor, from the de Say familywho inherited it from the de Mandeville's in 1189.The many important people who held these manors built themselves houses with hunting parks around them; when they died their tombs enriched the parish church, so that today St. Mary's has one of the finest collections of church monuments in the country. The Lordship of Sawbridgeworth includes the following estates: The Lordship of Sayesbury, The Lordship of Pishobury, Lordship of Gilston, Lordship of Eastwick Hall, Lordship of Overhall, Lordship of Giffards, Lordship of Shingle Hall and Lordship of Tedmanbury and is held by James Fell who has estates in London and Bedfordshire.

The name of the town is now almost universally pronounced in the obvious way, but this was not always the case. In the Middle Ages it is believed to have been pronounced "Sapserth", and since then the pronunciation has varied to include "Sapsa", "Sapster" and "Sapsworth", and even until the Second World War was pronounced "Sapsed". Current residents often use the casual abbreviated name "Sawbo".

*More about Pishiobury during this period--* [*http://www.eastwickandgilston.org.uk/html/parish\_history.html*](http://www.eastwickandgilston.org.uk/html/parish_history.html)

“John Chauncy appears to have owned considerable property in the district in addition to Gilston His estates included part of Eastwick, and he had a lease of Pishiobury Manor, near Sawbridgeworth. He died in 1479, and he and his wife were buried in Sawbridgeworth church.

The Chauncys and New Place

The Chauncy family was to be associated with Gilston for over 170 years and during that time did much to develop the estate as we shall mention later. John Chauncy was succeeded by his son, John, who received as part of his inheritance, a house and lands called 'Giffards', woodlands at Eastwick and part of the Manor of Overhall.

John Chauncy died in 1510, and was succeeded by his son, yet another John. The family still lived at Pishiobury, and this John Chauncy tried to buy the Manor from its owner, Lord Scrope. He was unsuccessful in this, for the land was given in trust to King Henry VIII, who confirmed John Chauncy's lease.”

“At the death of John Chauncy in 1546, his estate passed to his second son, Henry. At this time there was friction between Lord Hunsdon, a favourite of the Queen, and the Chauncy family, because Henry would not sell him part of Gilston. Hunsdon then persuaded the Queen to cancel Chauncy's lease of Pishiobury.” *John lived there a few years after this time, and it’s interesting to see that even Queen Elizabeth was involved with the property, and she was in power when John lived there.*

*Next is the evidence that I stumbled across showing Dorothy Seymour’s marriage to Thomas Leventhorpe of Sawbridgeworth, and a little about the Leventhorpes.*

<http://www.archive.org/stream/leventhropesofsa00kerr#page/n29/mode/2up>



*Thomas Leventhorpe of Albury, 1526-1588, so some ten years younger than Dorothy Seymour http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~hwbradley/aqwg2768.htm*

*He was born at Shinglehall in Sawbridgeworth and died in Albury a few miles NW of Sawbo. His father, Thomas, was High Sherriff of Herts in 1526, and then died in 1527 when he was 1 year old. According to his father’s will, he was the owner of the Manors of Shinglehall (an old Mandeville Estate), Mathams, Blounts, Bancrofts, and Thorley in Herts, and another in Essex. His youngest son, Thomas Leventhorpe of Albury, Dorothy’s husband, was also High Sherriff in 1573 when John was admitted as a tenant at Pishiobury.*

*According to sources,* [*http://mypages.allwest.com/~rognan/genealogy/pafg3776.htm*](http://mypages.allwest.com/~rognan/genealogy/pafg3776.htm) *they were married in 1543 when John was 8. We can see above that Thomas didn’t have any children with Dorothy. Dorothy must have died young, and Sir Thomas married two more times, having children with his second and third wives. He lived until 1588, when John would have been 51 years old. He was only nine years older than John. Possibly he promised Dorothy to look after him?* [*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High\_Sheriff\_of\_Hertfordshire*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Sheriff_of_Hertfordshire)

*Note in the tree that John’s first daughter born after he was admitted to Pishiobury in 1572 was named Dorothy. Hmmmm…….*

Interestingly a Leopold Seymour of Hadham was High Sherriff of Herts in 1964. He’s a descendent of Edward and Catherine Fillol.

Although it’s nice to have Barrett Beer’s affirmation, I think it’s also important, in the interest of credibility, to provide here for the sake of comparison and contrast, the opinions of the naysayers. Following is a well written excerpt from the famous book written about the Seymour Family by George Dudley Seymour and published in 1939 in which he states that any tie between John of Sawbdridgeworth and the ducal clan is highly unlikely. GDS was a patent attorney in New Haven, and like me, just wrote his book out of an interest in his genealogy. Unlike me, his book is highly regarded as THE authority on the Seymour family. At least up to now. Back in the 1930’s he wasn’t blessed with the internet, and wasn’t aware of certain facts.

He dedicates a fair amount of text to proving that Richard Seymour and Mercy Ruscoe were from Sawbridgeworth, which leaves little room for doubt that we have the right Richard and therefore trace back to his grandfather John of Sawbridgeworth. What I’m mostly interested in here is his theory regarding where John might have come from.

As a side note, this guy’s name, George Dudley Seymour is ironic. Remember that it was the Duke of Northumberland, John Dudley, who played a major role in the executions of both Thomas and Edward, and shortly thereafter presided constantly over Edward VI as he died, before being executed himself. Before that happened, two of Edwards’ daughters were married to sons of Dudley.

Now let’s see what GDS has to say:

[http://www.s560.com/dokuwiki/book:english\_origin](http://www.s560.com/dokuwiki/book%3Aenglish_origin)

“In which the editor examines and interprets the evidence in Sawbridgeworth in Old England, in Hartford, and in Norwalk; respecting the origin of Richard Seymour, the colonist; **all showing how conclusive circumstantial evidence may be.**

The late Mr. J. Gardner Bartlett, an expert genealogist who specialized in the English field, while conducting searches in Hertfordshire in connection with another family, found by accident the clue which led to the discovery of the origin of the American Seymours. After the data he discovered had been offered to other members of the Seymour family, the information was purchased by the author, who contributed it in 1917 to the New England Historical and Genealogical Register, in which it was published (vol. 71, pp. 105-115). For full details of the English connections, the reader is referred to that publication

Some twenty-five miles north-east of London, in the contiguous counties of Essex and Hertfordshire, traces are found in the sixteenth century of a family which spelled its name variously Seymer, Seymor, Seamer and Semer. The orthography employed at that period by country vicars means very little, but it is worthy of note that the spelling earliest used and most frequently used was Seymer. This was the form of the surname preferred by the Seymers of Dorsetshire, a gentry family which displayed the arms (with differences) of the Seymours of Devonshire, later the ducal house.

The members of the family in Hertfordshire *(important to note that he’s referring only to John and his offspring, as the origin of John is a mystery)* were, at this period, largely of the small yeoman and tradesman class. The social status of any family at a given period of time is no indication of the ancestry of that family. The Tudor period in England was one of rapid change and mobility. The older Plantagenet aristocracy had suffered severe losses during the Wars of the Roses; many of its members had fallen in battles, and many more had lost their estates by attainder or, as we should say, by confiscation. Many new families had risen to power and position, trailing the Tudor fortunes. Some of these, sneered at as “Tudor upstarts,” were of extremely humble origin, and this was so notorious that Elizabethan heralds found it a profitable business to invent pedigrees for “gentlemen” who lacked any real claim to “gentle blood.”

There are records of retired pirates who bought manors with the proceeds of their villainy and founded families of distinction *(a la the Kennedys)*. On the other side of the picture, the owners of manors - the “minor gentry” - often apprenticed younger sons to learn trades. Younger sons of younger sons of the older aristocracy not uncommonly descended to the ranks of the unlanded laborers. When, at a little later period, the last Duke of Northumberland of the male-line Percy family died, the claimant to one of the proudest titles in England was a humble trunk-maker of Dublin.

With these reflections in mind, we turn to the records of Sawbridgeworth (a name locally pronounced “Sapsearth” *actually that pronunciation is archaic, and it’s now known more as Sawbo or said out as Sawbridgeworth*), a rural parish in co. Herts, which extends to the eastern boundary line of this county and borders on co. Essex. Here in 1605 “John Seymer ye elder was burred ye xxiijth day of October.” A man of sufficient substance to make a will, John Seymer had married, for his second wife, 9 May 1562, Dyzory Porter. His eldest son, Robert Seymer, was baptized at Sawbridgeworth 30 Nov. 1573, married there 14 Nov. 1603, Elizabeth Waller, baptized there 12 Dec. 1578, daughter of John and Elizabeth (Bayford) Waller, and was buried there 23 Aug. 1637.

In 1604 “Richard Seamer ye sonne of Robert Seymer was baptised ye xxvijth day of January,” the year being 1604/5, or 1605 when reckoned by our modem calendar. “Richard Seamer and Mercy Ruscoe ware maried the 18 Aprill” 1631. Three children of this marriage were recorded at Sawbridgeworth:

 Thomas, bapt. 15 July 1632

 Mary, bapt. 9 Jan. 1634/5; bur. 3 Apr. 1635

 Mercy, bapt. 8 July 1636

Although the Sawbridgeworth registers were searched to 1650, the family of Richard Seamer or Seymer drops out with the last entry in 1636.

Now what are the reasons for accepting this Richard Seymer of Sawbridgeworth as identical with Richard the Colonist? Admittedly, we lack direct record evidence. This is not the same as to say that legal proof is lacking. Many things can be proved in a court of law by cumulative circumstantial evidence. Historians too look with favor on this type of evidence when its weight is sufficient. A single piece of direct evidence may be a lie; an entry in a Bible, as we have seen, may have been forged by a fraudulent dealer for the sake of profit. But when we review all the known facts, and each circumstance harmonizes with all the other circumstances, and every bit of evidence fits neatly into the picture as if by magic, - then we feel entitled to claim that theory has given way to proof.

First of all, there is the negative evidence of excluding other possibilities. A tremendous amount of research was done by various English professional genealogists for the Hon. Henry W. Seymour, and afterwards by Miss Talcott in person, and about a score of Richard Seymours were found at the proper period, no one of whom it was possible to identify with the Colonist.

The locale is correct. A large number of the Hartford settlers were from Essex or near its borders, and Sawbridgeworth lies just over the boundary line. The age of this Richard is right. The Colonist was a very active man up to the time of his death, which apparently was sudden, and there is no reason to suppose that he had passed the prime of life. The baptism at Sawbridgeworth makes him fifty years of age. The wife of the Colonist was named Mercy. This was a Puritan name, and not particularly common in England. Richard the Colonist and his wife Mercy brought with them a son Thomas who, since he married in 1653/4, must have been born in England. Richard and Mercy of Sawbridgeworth had a son Thomas baptized there in 1632, who was in his twenty-second year at the date of the marriage of Thomas in Norwalk, Conn.

It is a most unlikely coincidence that two Seymour families in England would have a son Richard; that each Richard would marry a girl named Mercy; and that each couple would have an eldest son named Thomas - all of proper age for identification with the family of the Colonist. For collateral evidence, consider the name Zechariah which the Colonist bestowed on one of his sons. At Ware, co. Herts, only six miles from Sawbridgeworth, a Zechariah Seamer was married in 1637. He may well have been a younger brother of Richard, and was almost certainly a relative.

Many identifications of colonists have been made and widely accepted where the evidence was trifling in comparison with this remarkable correspondence of names and dates. Add to this the facts that the last child of Richard recorded at Sawbridgeworth was born in 1636 and that his father died there in 1637, after which his family disappears from the local records, just in time to reappear in Hartford, Conn., and the circumstantial case is almost perfect. The father's death, with the likelihood of a small inheritance from that source, well may have been the deciding factor in fixing the time of emigration.

But we have left to the last the strongest, or at least the most convincing, link in our chain of evidence. Mercy Ruscoe, daughter of Roger and Sarah Ruscoe of Sawbridgeworth, was named in 1618 in her father's will. The surname is extremely rare in England, and the family was probably Flemish in origin. John Rouscoue, alien, was taxed at Great Dunmow, co. Essex, in 1545. Outside of Essex and Hertfordshire, the surname has not been found in England.

Rev. Thomas Hooker, ministerial leader of the founders of Hartford, preached for ten years at Chelmsford, co. Essex, less than fifteen miles from Sawbridgeworth. He came to New England in 1633 with some of his followers, and others followed shortly after. In 1635 came William Ruscoe, with a certificate from the minister of Billericay, co. Essex, and sat down with Hooker in Cambridge, Mass., following him in 1636 to Hartford, Conn. Richard Seymour and his wife, born Mercy Ruscoe, arrived in Hartford by 1639. This William Ruscoe - his age is stated as 41 in the shipping list of 1635 - was roughly twenty-five years older than Mercy, hence in age was suitable to be her uncle. This is theory: what are the facts?

In Feb. 1639/40 William Ruscoe granted land in Hartford to Richard Seymour, and on 14 Dec. 1650 Richard Seymour conveyed land to William Ruscoe. In 1651 Richard Seymour, with Nathaniel and John Ruscoe, sons of William, were among the fourteen original proprietors of Norwalk, Conn., and John Ruscoe removed from Hartford to Norwalk with Richard Seymour. When Richard Seymour made his will in 1655, John Ruscoe was one of the witnesses.

This intimacy with the Ruscoe family should have suggested a connection to the genealogical mind, even before the discovery of the Seymer records in Sawbridgeworth. Combining the evidence from the English records with the evidence from the Connecticut records, our case is complete, and, we dare assert, impregnable. It was the Ruscoe connection which appealed to the trained genealogical mind of Miss Talcott and played no small part in convincing her of the authenticity of the English discovery and of the identity of Richard Seymour the Colonist with the Sawbridgeworth yeoman.

Over twenty years have passed since publication in the Register of Mr. Bartlett's momentous discovery. The facts there presented very largely speak for themselves, and gradually they have prevailed over errors of opinion. The author is content to sum up here the evidence, believing it will prove convincing to all who are willing to be convinced; others are free to pursue their own notions and to defend them as best they can. In the words of Coventry Patmore:

 For want of me the world's course will not fail:

 When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;

 The truth is great, and shall prevail,

 When none cares whether it prevail or not.

The author, indeed, opines, though he be put down a cynic for saying so, that there are thousands of Americans of the old stock who would far rather trace their descent from Edward Seymour, First Duke of Somerset, than from Richard Seymour of Sawbridgeworth (Sapsearth), even though the latter may be thought to have sired a finer race of men than the former. The author cannot refrain from inserting here a parody that has long amused him and that will be readily recognized by all readers of Tennyson.

 Of course 'tis noble to be good,

 But what are hearts to coronets

 And simple faith to Norman blood.

As for the inordinate family pride with which the members of the family have long been charged, it must be admitted as true so far as the Hartford branch descended from the first John Seymour of Hartford is concerned. This pride long antedates the appearance of the alleged Seymour Bible. The author leaves it to the readers of this book to determine the reasons for this pride, but will not add more himself except to say that so far as his experience goes the members of the family have not suffered from what is now described as an “inferiority complex.” It is often said that, pride of blood is less to be condemned than pride of purse. Money getting has never been a family characteristic. No more has display on the part of those who had it. Despite the high social position occupied for years by groups of the family in Hartford and Litchfield, Conn., and in Utica and Cazenovia, N.Y., the family has been free from anything like ostentation. They built no notably fine estates and in general paid little attention to the appanages of wealth and social caste. Even their mortuary remains (and the author deplores it) are meagre and insignificant, and one is reminded of the attitude of the high-born Wyllyses in that regard. No monument of any sort can be found to-day to the First Mayor of Hartford, and the stones erected to some members of his family have been allowed to fall into decay.

In conclusion, it may be said that the records at Sawbridgeworth and elsewhere indicate that Richard the Colonist and his wife Mercy were far removed from the arms-bearing class; but the fact remains that over two and a quarter centuries have passed since the day in 1712 when Thomas Seymour of Norwalk, English-born eldest son of the Colonist, being then very “sicke and weak,” sealed his will with a small seal (charged with the wings forming the paternal coat of the Seymours of Penhow. That Thomas Seymour used a seal for any other purpose than to comply with the common law requirement of a seal of some kind is wholly incredible, and that any contemporary who saw the seal on the document had the faintest idea what those wings signified is almost equally so, but it is certain that a relatively poor man, living in a pioneer settlement, would not have thought of having a seal cut to “exalt his horn” and would have had no opportunity for doing so, if he had thought of it. The actual impression on the will, moreover, shows that it was made from a seal that was already old and worn. The seal from which it was made must have been brought to this country by Richard the Colonist, whose original will no longer exists to show whether it too was sealed with the same seal.

Whether any attempt to trace the family in England further back than John Seymour, grandfather of Richard the Colonist, can be anything but futile, is extremely doubtful. Mr. Bartlett tried to do so, but without success, for the simple reason that the search took him into a period when parish records were not compulsory. The author also employed Mr. Bartlett to make further investigations along the line of the Colonist's grandfather, but without finding any clue. Mr. Bartlett's opinion was that Richard's grandfather (John) had come from a different locality.  *A convent in Wilts, perhaps?* The author subsequently employed Mr. Jacobus too, through his English correspondents, to make further searches, but again without success. For his own part, the author feels that the record of the family in this country is sufficient in itself. The American Seymours have been men and women of character, high breeding, integrity, and devotion to public service, and until the unfortunate appearance of the so-called “Seymour Bible,” they were without any pretense to noble ancestry. The ghost of the Bible has now been laid. It was General Truman Seymour who said:

 “Except as a motive of curiosity there is little to be gained by

 settling the question [the English origin of the family]. The

 American Seymours are quite as respectable as the English and

 have nothing to ask, in dignity, from any relationship”.

 G.D.S.”

*I agree 100% with Truman. I’m just a curious guy, and realize that dignity has not been affected whatsoever, as I’ve always felt a high degree of pride in my family, including when I knew nothing of it beyond the county line of Delaware, New York….*

As I read George’s research and opinions, the first thing I note is that it’s a bit outdated. He very well documented that the Hartford and Norwalk founder, Richard Seymour was from Sawbridgeworth, and the grandson of John. As far as where John comes from he says that no one knows, and we may never know due to the lack of records. Two genealogists which were hired at great expense, and whom I would assume, did a very diligent search of records concluded that “he must have come from somewhere else”. Note that they didn’t conclude that there was a normal lack of documentary evidence for this period, and his parents just can’t be determined, but instead concluded that he came from somewhere else, and there’s no record of where. It’s as though they didn’t find the records which they would normally find if John had been born and raised normally, rather than born in a far away convent under unusual circumstances to a prominent family.

George then goes on to remind us of the seal that Thomas used in Norwalk, and that it wouldn’t make any sense that he was trying to look like a big shot in Colonial America where no one knew what the seal meant anyway. His primary evidence that John must not be related to the Wilts clan, as far as I can tell, is that he was a simple shoemaker, and therefore couldn’t possibly be related. Personally, I find that a little weak, and think this has been adequately refuted by the evidence presented herein.

The evidence that John, and Robert both lived at Pishiobury was found in the 1970’s, 40 years after GDS’ book. Also, I think that I’m the first to bring into play Dorothy Seymour’s local Sawbridgeworth marriage with Thomas Leventhorpe during John’s youth. Surprisingly, I haven’t been able to find anywhere, at least on the internet, where anyone else has also noted, and connected all of these remarkable coincidences, which I find amazing.

One must also keep in mind that George was living in the more conservative 1930’s, and might have been less likely to propose the set of circumstances that I am proposing, as there is no hard documentary evidence to support it. Let’s also remember that it was he himself who very eloquently stated just how conclusive circumstantial evidence can be.

In my opinion, the sum of the new, and more complete circumstantial evidence, some of which George wasn’t aware of, points to the fact that since John just happened to appear from “somewhere else” according to at least three of the best local English genealogical researchers that money can buy (including the researcher in the 70’s who found the Pishiobury connection, which the first two genealogists had missed), that that somewhere else was the convent where Catherine Fillol was forcefully sent to have Sir John’s child in secret. After reading the biographies of Edward the Protector, and his brother Thomas Seymour, it should be no surprise that there would be no documentation of that.

Finally, I’d like to highlight that here again, we see yet another reference to the integrity of the Seymours, with which I would definitely agree, Edward and Thomas notwithstanding. On that note, let’s observe that it seems that the line descending from Catherine Fillol, was a distinctly different group from the line which descended from Margery Wentworth, and then Anne Stanhope. In our line, integrity, principle, and keeping one’s word seem to be worth more than financial gain.

I totally agree with both GDS and Truman Seymour, that being descended from Sir John doesn’t make us any better, nor worse, than who we already are, and as I’ve said many times, I didn’t set out to prove that. It just so happens that I did.....

*Proud? Definitely Arrogant? Probably Ambitious? Sometimes Ostentatious? Never*

Also not available in George’s day was the ability to do DNA testing. I’d love to compare DNA with this guy. I’d be willing to bet that it’d show our common ancestry.....

**

**John Michael Edward Seymour**, **19th Duke of Somerset** DL (born Bath, 30 December 1952) is the present holder of the Dukedom of Somerset and a major landowner in Wiltshire and Devon. He inherited the title in 1984, on the death of his father, and is also a Baronet.

The son of Percy Seymour, 18th Duke of Somerset, by his marriage to Jane Thomas, between 1954 and 1984 he was known by the courtesy title of Lord Seymour.

In All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley, Wiltshire, on 20 May 1978, he married Judith-Rose Hull, daughter of John Folliett Hull. They have four children:

Sebastian Edward Seymour, Lord Seymour (b. Queen Charlotte's Hospital, London, 3 February 1982), m. Lagrasse, France, 27 August 2006 Arlette Marie Leontine Lafayeedney

Lady Sophia Rose Seymour (b. 1987)

Lady Henrietta Charlotte Seymour (b. 1989)

Lord Charles Thomas George Seymour (b. 1992)

Patrilineal descent is the line of descent from father to son, governing the descent of most titles in the Peerage of England. The ducal house is Seymour. On two occasions, in 1750 and 1923, the Dukedom of Somerset has been inherited by a distant cousin of the previous Duke.

Sir Roger de St Maur

Sir Roger Seymour

Sir William Seymour, d. 1391

Roger Seymour, 1366 - 1420

John Seymour, Sheriff of Wiltshire, 1402 - 1464

John Seymour, Sheriff of Wiltshire, b. 1425

John Seymour, 1450 - 1491

Sir John Seymour, the maternal grandfather of King Edward VI, 1474 - 1536

Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset, 1506 - 1552

Sir Edward Seymour, 1531 - 1593

Sir Edward Seymour, 1st Baronet, 1556 - 1613

Sir Edward Seymour, 2nd Baronet, 1590 - 1659

Sir Edward Seymour, 3rd Baronet, 1610 - 1688

Sir Edward Seymour, 4th Baronet, 1633 - 1708

Sir Edward Seymour, 5th Baronet, 1663 - 1741

Edward Seymour, 8th Duke of Somerset, 1695 - 1757

Very Rev. Lord Francis Seymour, 1726 - 1799

Colonel Francis Compton Seymour, d. 1822

Captain Francis Edward Seymour, 1788 - 1866

Rev. Francis Payne Seymour, 1815 - 1870

Edward Seymour, 16th Duke of Somerset, 1860 - 1931

Evelyn Seymour, 17th Duke of Somerset, 1882 - 1954

Percy Seymour, 18th Duke of Somerset, 1910 - 1984

John Seymour, 19th Duke of Somerset, b. 1952

*But I’m afraid that his Lordship, or whatever you call him, isn’t receiving requests for DNA samples, and who could blame him. Oh well, I remain sure anyway.*