

*Illustrated Estate of Mathew Stanley (Standley)  
of Topsfield  
Essex Probate Docket # 26150 (Admn), Suffolk County  
Probate Docket #501*



*of Court of Probate  
el Standley one of y<sup>e</sup> Administr<sup>r</sup> & I have  
above is a true & perfect Inve  
Estate of Mathew Standley De<sup>d</sup>. to  
of his know ledge & what more  
Knowledge he will add if same  
attest. Heph. Sew*

This is the last will and testament of Mathew Standly  
being in perfect memory  
I give and bequeath my soule into the hands  
of my mercifull redeemer and saviour Jesus  
Christ, and my body to be decently buried and the charge  
of my funeral to be discharged and all my lawfull  
debts to be paid

Item I give to my son Samuell Standly all that piece of Land  
one or north side of the Court way between the street and  
John Goulds Land provided that hee shall maintaine a fence  
and Cart bridge over the swamp to John Goulds Land as I  
am bound to doe also that hee shall maintaine all the business  
concerning that piece of Land as I have given him as I am  
bound to doe by Covenant;

Item I give to my son William Standly all that Land from  
my house bound to the river at the foot path goes now  
down to the river and so to James Watkins Land and up to  
the Court way and so to the house againe as the path goes  
along in the orchard

Item I give to my three sons John Standly Joseph Standly Benjamin  
Standly and to my six daughters Elizabeth Boulds and  
Rebeckah Andrews and Hannah Standly and Elizabeth Standly  
and Sarah Standly and Ruth Standly all the rest of my  
Land to be equally divided amongst them at the decease  
of my wife

Item I doe make my loving wife Ruth Standly my soule  
Executrix of this my last will giving her the improve-  
ment of all my Lands excepting the two parcels that  
I have given to Samuell & William Standly; with all the  
improvement during her naturall life and at her decease  
then all my Lands as before expressed with the stock  
of Cattle and movables to be divided amongst my  
three sons and my six daughters as is before expressed  
on Watkins, Wheatons & Haru tenements for my hand  
and seal this twenty fourth of February one thousand  
= an six hundred eighty and five or eighty six  
signed sealed & delivered  
in the presence of us

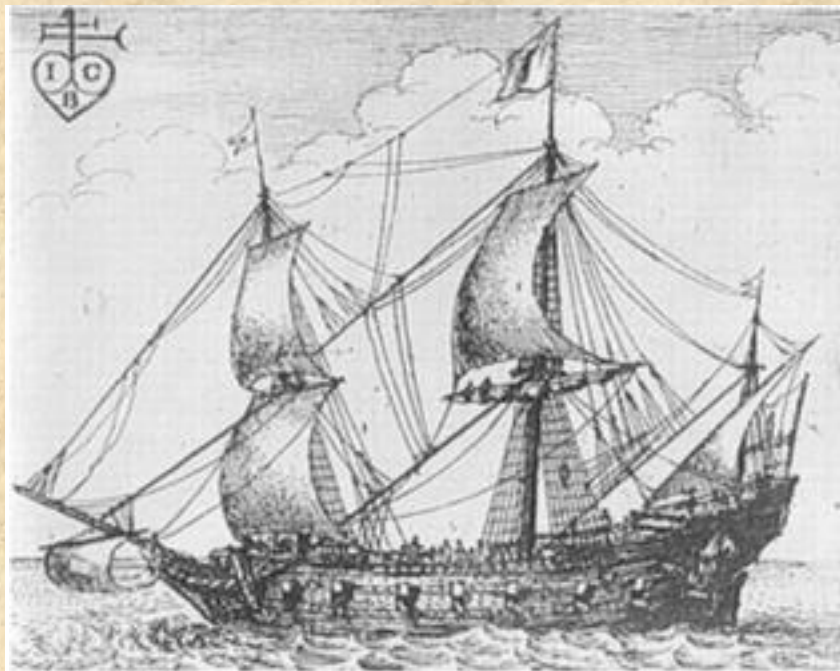
Hon: Lako  
John Gould Junr

Mathew Standly  
marked

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT:



Mathew Stanley/Standley (b. 1628?) immigrated from his birthplace in England (London/Middlesex?) as an indentured? child or young adult. Most probably in the years between 1637 and 1646. No ship's passenger records have been found.

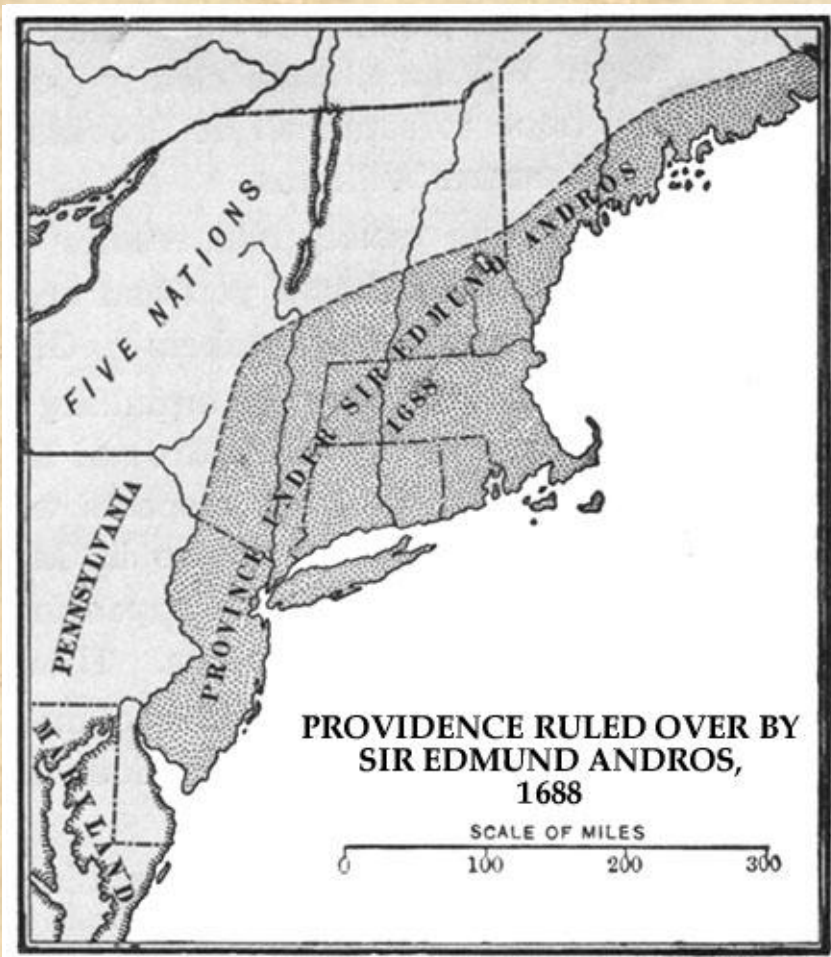


No English family of origin has yet been proven, although several theories remain, by association with other immigrant families who settled in Salem Village, later Danvers, and New Meadows, later Topsfield Massachusetts. (A Hartford Stanley Family connection has never been proven by historic records or by genological DNA

comparisons, although widely attributed in undocumented family trees.) A Mathew Standley website documents genealogical research on his line at MyHeritage.com:

<https://www.myheritage.com/site-70561601/lineage-of-matthew-stanley-of-massachusetts>

“The Dominion of New England was formed in 1686 and merged the colonies of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island, together into one large colony. ... The creation of the Dominion of New England officially brought the New England Confederation, an alliance between the New England colonies, to an end.”<sup>1</sup>



“Mathu Standly Estate whoe departed this Life ye 30th Apriell 1686 and subscribed by me on ye 29 day of May 1686 ” (Misstatement from the

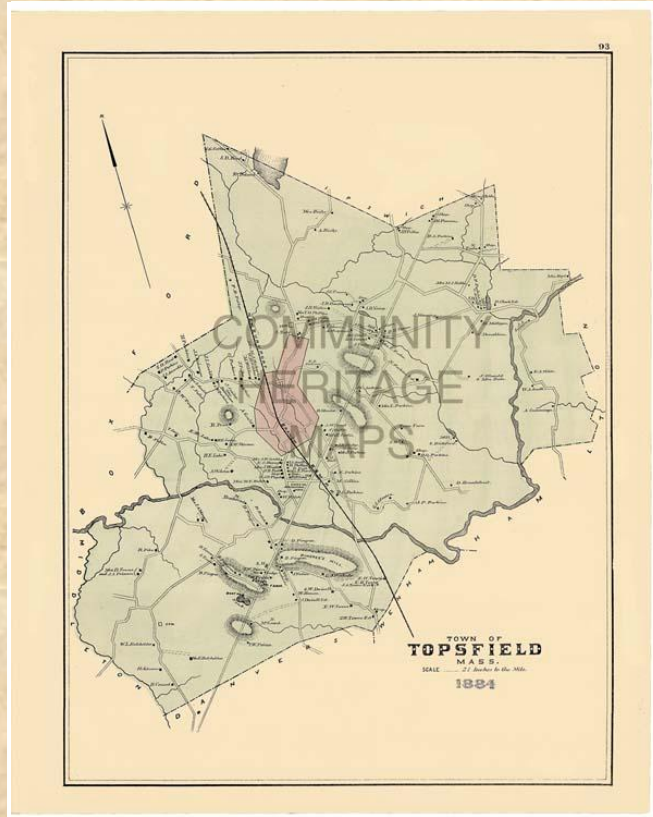
**Inventory of his estate, which gives his accurate death date.) Matthews Will was written 24th of February."**

**The Puritan Minister, The Rev Samuel Willard of Boston, one of the virtuous clergymen, opposed to the witch trials, preached on Acts 1:7, "*It is not for you to know the times or the season,*" on February 24, 1686, the day in which Mathew Stanley's will was written.**

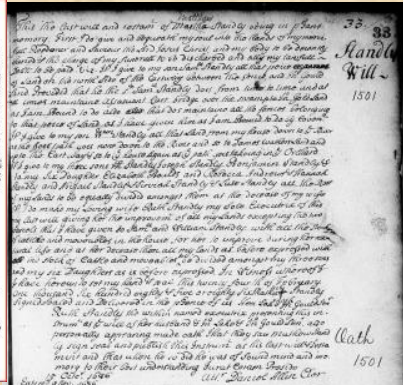


**Mathew Stanley's farm was purchased from New Meadows (later Topsfield" proprietor, Zacheus Gould, who began selling parcels of his 300 acre estate to yeomen, in 1645/1646. <sup>2</sup>**





*into towns of  
George and Elizabeth*



**This is the Last Will and Testament of Matthu Standly, being in ye sane memory.<sup>3</sup>**

## Colonial New England Farmer

- The New England was a society of small independent farmers known as yeomen.
- These farmers owned more than 70 percent of the land and worked to maintain a society of equal property owners.
- The first settlers divided their large farms among their children, and the next generation did the same thing.







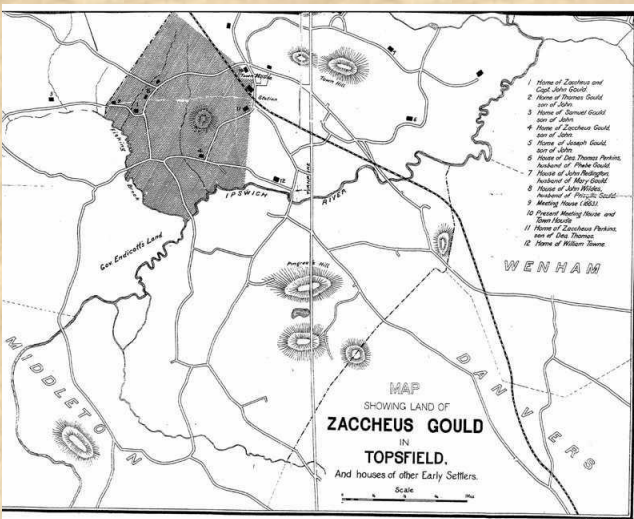
“...and all my lawful debts to bee paid.”

*{In Pounds, Shillings, and Pence. The 1652 Massachusetts “Pine Tree Shilling” is depicted here.}^7*

Viz:

Item: “I give to my son Samuel Standly all that peice of Land, one ye north Sid of Ye Cartway betweene Ye fences and John Gould Land...”<sup>8</sup>

*{Mathew’s relationship with the Gould Family was social, familial, and economic.}^9*



“Provided that hee, Ye Sd Samuel Standly dos from time to time and at all times maintaine a Satisfactre Cart bridge over the Swamp to John Gould Land...”

*{Old Concord Bridge depicted.}*

*The Topsfield town status of the Gould Farm was not settled until 1706.*<sup>10</sup>

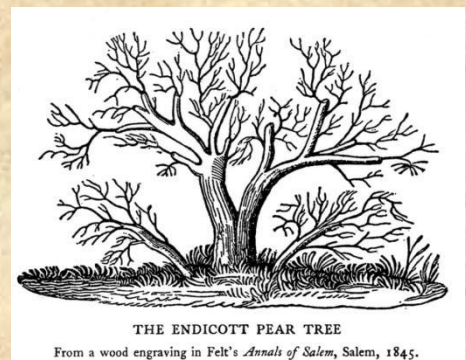


**“... as I am bound to doe also that dos maintaine all Ye fences belonging to that peice of Land as I have given him as I am bound to doe by Covenant.”**

*{This “Covenant” probably refers to a town fence ordinance or landlord/tenant covenant between the Goulds and Stanleys, perhaps as a provision of the sale of property to Mathew. Precedents for this property maintenance covenant exist.<sup>11</sup>}*



**Item: “I give to my Son William Standly all that Land ffrom my, house doune to Ye rieur and So to James Watters Land up to the Cart Way and So to the house againe as Ye path goes taking in Ye orchard.”**

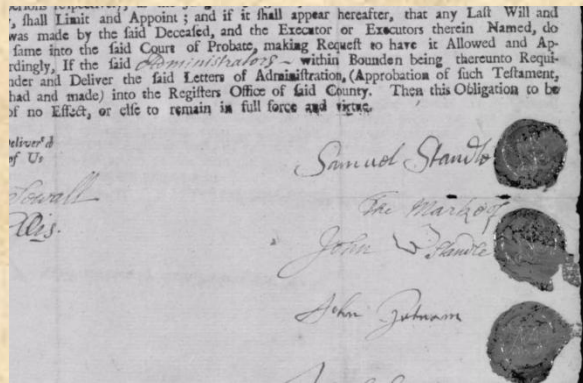




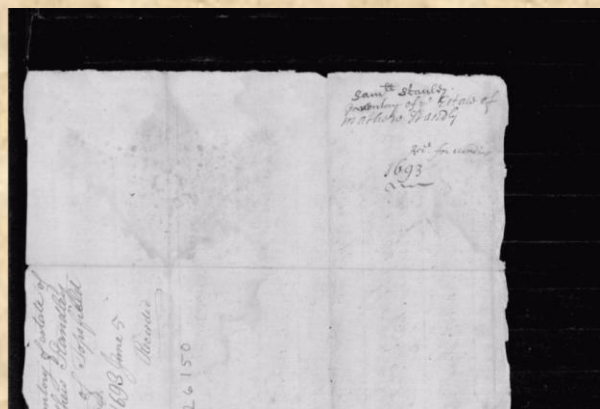
{Mathew's neighbor, James Waters, was the son of Richard Waters, of Salem, a family that may have known Mathew, in his younger days in Salem.<sup>12}</sup>}



**Item: I give to my three Sons John Standly Joseph Standly Benjamin Standly and to my Six daughters Elizbath Boulds<sup>13</sup> and Rebecca Androus<sup>14</sup> and Hannah Standly and Abbigale Standly and Siruiah Standly<sup>15</sup> and Luse Standly all ye rest of my lands to be Equally deused amongst them at Ye decease of my Wife.<sup>16</sup>**



Item I doe make my Loving Wife Ruth Standly my Soule Executix of this my Last Will giueing her the improment of all my Lands excepting Ye two parcills that I haue William Standly of Cattell and house for her to nattereill Life at my Lands as before Yoke of Cattell and deuied amongst my Six dafters as is given to Samuel and with all of Ye Yoke movables in Ye improve during her her decease then all expressed with Ye movables to bee three Sons and my before expressed.<sup>17</sup>



in Witness Whereof I have hereunto Set my hand and Seale this twenty fourth of february one Thousan Six hundred Eaighy and Five or Eaighy Six.<sup>18</sup>

ise daftrus as is by  
A rare benedictio  
fforth of febrw  
ny and sine or laie  
his  
Mathu X Standly  
marke

**Signed Sealed & Delivered Mathu X Standly markein Ye prSance of us**

**John Lake**

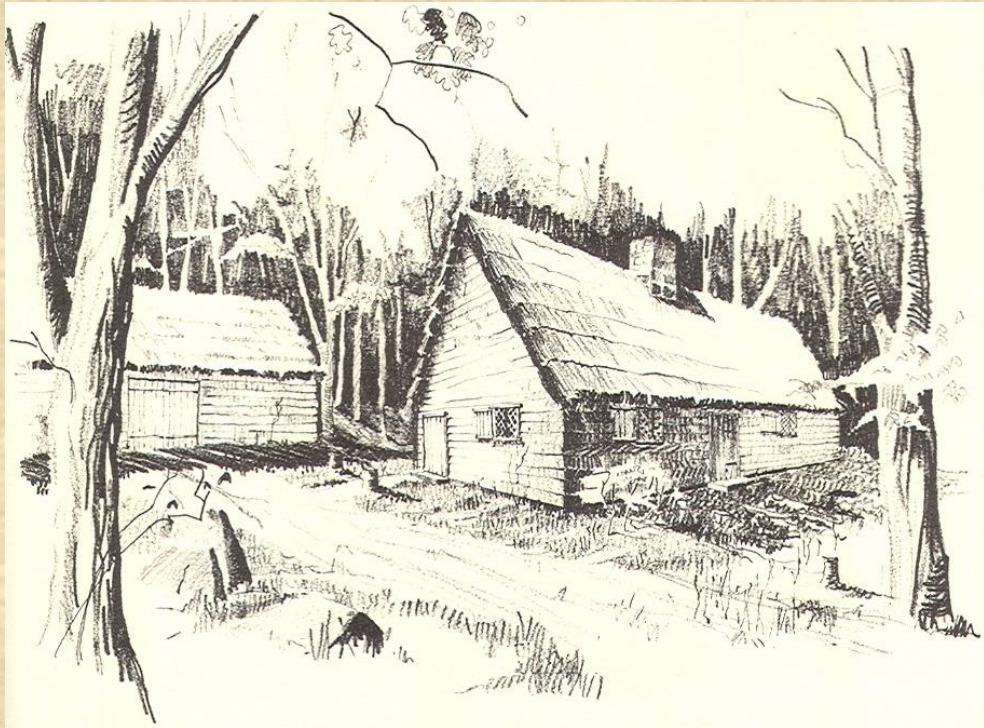
**John Gould Sr**

*John Gould*



**Ruth Standly the Within Named Executrix presenting of the Will of her husband & John lake and John Gould Sr. also personally appearing and made Oath they saw Matthew Standly Sign & Seale and publish this instrument as his Last Will and Testament and That when he did so he was of Sound mind and memory to the best of their understanding. Lucas Cram, Probate Attr.**

**Daniel Alin Clr**



**Source: Transcribed from the original located at Judicial Archives,  
Massachusetts State Archives, Boston, Suffolk County Probate docket # 501**



An Inventory taken of Mathew Standly Esqrs who departed this life the 29 day of May 1686 and succeeded by his son Mathew Standly Esqrs

100m	Caplan & midero about 60 acres & house	150-00-00
5	Cows on grass 2 years old	018-00-00
1	one steer 2 years old one calf	
1	one heifer old	005-00-00
8	Sheep & 1 Cows	
1	one mare one Colt 2 years old	007-00-00
1	one Colt one year old	002-00-00
2	horses	001-07-00
1	one iron pot one iron skillet	
1	one brass skillet	
2	spittles spalters one spittles	000-12-00
1	one iron pot one spouting one	
1	one bid one candle one spile	008-00-00
2	spittles 2 spittles 2 blankets	000-18-00
6	of Linen yarn	000-15-00
10	Sheep wools	
1	one spence of dyffiss & sermehus	000-10-00
1	and other wood in ware all	
1	one small chest one small chest	000-08-00
1	and one box	000-04-00
2	ppr Cows	000-10-00
1	old cows & one meat house	000-05-00
3	Chairs	
10	one plow one chain one yoke	001-12-00
1	wild hoes & flaps to it 2 days	
2	little wings 3 horses one axe 2 sickles	000-07-00
1	one leather wheel one Linen wheel	002-00-00
1	waring apparrell	000-07-00
1	four ladders for a house to draw in	000-07-00

Total 397-32-05

John Gould Junr  
 15. Feb<sup>r</sup> 1686. Ruth Standly Exors of the last Will and Testament of Mathew Standly personally appearing made oath that this Acct above contains a true and true inventory of her husbands Estate till yet come to her knowledge and that when more appear she will keep it to be added hereafter  
 At Dan & Allen Co

**The Inventory of Mathew Stanley's Estate: Suffolk County Probate Records:**



**An inventory taken of Mathu Standly Estate whoe departed this life ye 30  
Apriell 1686 and Subscribed by me on ye 29 day May 1686**

**Item: Upland & Meadow about 60 acres & house --- 150-00-00**



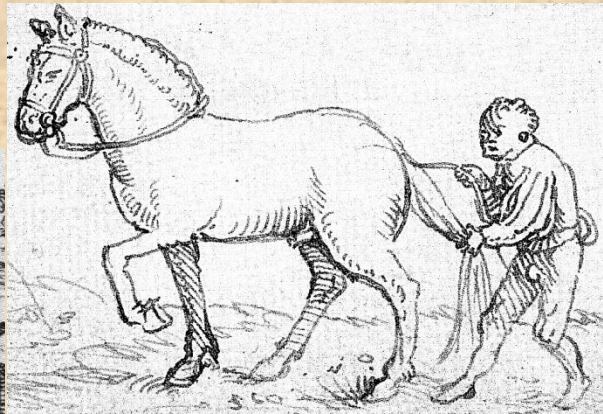
**Item: 3 Cows one steere 3 years old, one steere 2 years old, one calf one year  
old --- 018-00-00**



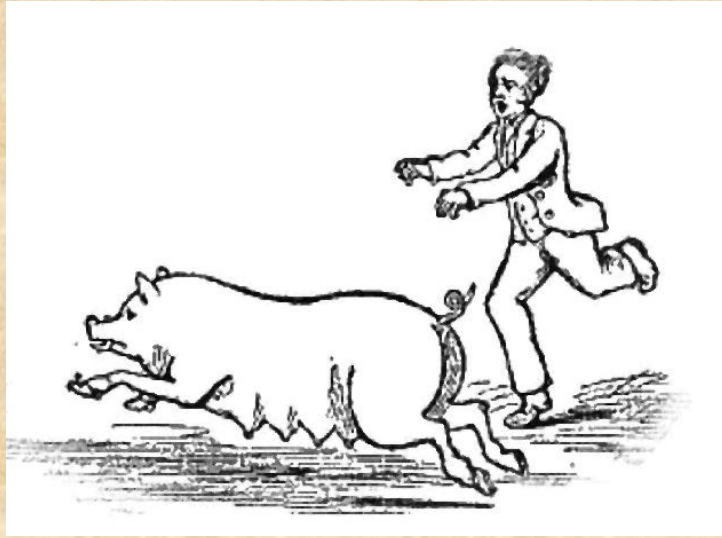
Item: 8 sheep & 4 lambs ---003-00-00



Item: one mare, one colt, 2 years old, one cold one year old --- 002-00-00



**Item: 2 hogs --- 002-00-00**



**Item: one iron pot, one iron skileat, one large skileat --- 001-00-00**



**Item: 2 putter platters, one putter, pint pot, one porringer, onbe tin pot ---000-12—00**



**Item: one bed coverlid, one pileo, 2 pileo Covers, 2 p'r Sheetes, 2 Blankets ---  
008-00-00**



**Item: 6 lbs. Linnon yarns ---000-18-00**



**Item: 10 lbs. Sheee woole --- 000-15-00**



**Item: one parcel of dishes & trenchers, and other wooden ware all ---000-10-00**



**Item:one smale table, one smale Chest --- and one box --- 000-08-00**



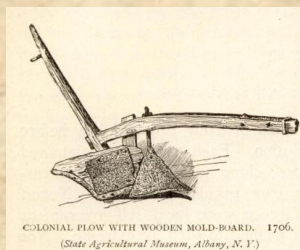
**Item:2 p'r Cards --- 000-04-00**



**Item: 4 old tobes & one smale brase – 000-10-00**



**Item: 3 Chares --- 000-05-00**



**Item: to one plow, one chane, one y(h)ooke, with hookes & staple to it 2 wegges, 2 Cattell rings, 3 hoes, one axe, 2 Sickles ---001-12-09**





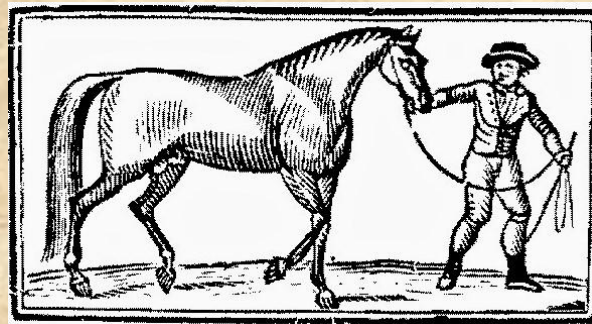
**Item: one Cotton wheele, one Linnon wheel --- 000-05-00**



**Item: waring aperiell --- 002-00-00**



**Item: for tackling for a horse to drae it --- 000-05-00**



**Ye toatall is 197-12-03**

**John Gould, Sen'r**



**15 Oct'r 1686. Ruth Standley Executrix of the last Will and Testament of Matthew Standly personally appearing made Oath that this Auo't above contains a just and true inventory of her husbands Estate that is yet come to her knowledge and that when more appears she will cause it to be added. Jurat Coran Att Danial Allin Cler**

## ENDNOTES:



<sup>1</sup> <http://historyofmassachusetts.org/what-was-the-dominion-of-new-england/>

<sup>2</sup> *Meanwhile the proprietors of the lands at the New Meadows were looking for yoemen to buy their farms and develop the settlement beside the river.* A new name and an order of the Court creating a town was considered eminently desirable and in the summer of 1648, the following petition was presented to the Great and General Court, viz :

“Wee Humbly Intreate this honored Court that you wold bee pleased to bestowe a name Ypon oure Village at the new medowes at Ipswich Which wee suppose may been an Incorporment to others to Come to liue amongst vs: and alsoe a

meanes to further a ministry amongst vs wee thinke hempsteed wile bee a fit name if the Court plese to gratifie vs herewith

Will Payne  
Brian Pendleton  
Zacheous Goold

"[History of Topsfield Massachusetts](https://archive.org/stream/historyoftopsfie00dowg/historyoftopsfie00dowg_djvu.txt)"

[https://archive.org/stream/historyoftopsfie00dowg/historyoftopsfie00dowg\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/historyoftopsfie00dowg/historyoftopsfie00dowg_djvu.txt)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=Massachusetts\\_Probate\\_Records](https://www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=Massachusetts_Probate_Records)

<sup>4</sup> Parson Capen Records: ““Since my ordination were Benjamin Bixbys Wife, My own Wife, Wife of Matthew Stanley sr.”  
[https://archive.org/stream/historyoftopsfie00dowg/historyoftopsfie00dowg\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/historyoftopsfie00dowg/historyoftopsfie00dowg_djvu.txt)

<sup>5</sup> “By 1660 non-Puritan laborers had been accepted as part of the social fabric in Massachusetts.”  
Social and Economic Networks in Early Massachusetts: Atlantic Connections

By Marsha L. Hamilton

[https://books.google.com/books?id=ZQmJCgAAQBAJ&pg=PT50&lpg=PT50&dq=Non-Puritans+in+Topsfield&source=bl&ots=7i5i2UNrak&sig=ktYQbuAxVyjqvpWz3oeEOvui6Ok&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwju-b3jvpbWAhUPOsAKHfY\\_CL4Q6AEIJjAA#v=onepage&q=Non-Puritans%20in%20Topsfield&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=ZQmJCgAAQBAJ&pg=PT50&lpg=PT50&dq=Non-Puritans+in+Topsfield&source=bl&ots=7i5i2UNrak&sig=ktYQbuAxVyjqvpWz3oeEOvui6Ok&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwju-b3jvpbWAhUPOsAKHfY_CL4Q6AEIJjAA#v=onepage&q=Non-Puritans%20in%20Topsfield&f=false)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=155419689>

<sup>7</sup> **Before 1652, the Colonies had no currency. Only the king held the power to issue coins in the British colonies. But in 1649 rebels in England beheaded Charles I, leaving Massachusetts struggling to maintain its economy with little hard currency. So in 1652, the General Court approved establishing America's first mint, and John Hull was made mintmaster by the General Court of Massachusetts.** <http://hausegenealogy.com/sanderson.html>

<sup>8</sup> “River Road would have been “Ye Cartway” at the time. The portion of the road off to the right and out of the picture, is probably close to the original path, at least as it wrapped around Billingsgate Hill. A portion of it likely ran across swampland and had a bridge. However, the road likely turned in towards the original Standley house at about the hay bails you see in the bottom right of the image and continued past the original Standley house running parallel to it and continued to wrap around Billingsgate Hill. The path of the road would be right where the Lake addition to the house is currently.” ~email from David Brian Stanley, July 29 2017

<sup>9</sup> John Gould descendancy:

<https://minerdescent.com/page/19/?sa=X&ved=0CCIQ9QEwBTg8ahUKEwiZl6WSnfnGAhXMvhQKHylad9l>

<sup>10</sup> “The Town agreed to clame cap Goulds farm of Three Hundred acres according to the true Bounds of it as it was lay d out by the lot layers as Township to Topsfield.” The Historical Collections of the Topsfield Historical Society, Volumes 11-12

<https://books.google.com/books?id=Z-o5AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA111&dq=Gould+Farm+Topsfield&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjPr571-5jWAhUT0IMKHQbnAdwQ6AEILDAB#v=snippet&q=Gould%20Farm%20&f=false>

<sup>11</sup> “The deed contained a by the grantor to maintain fences between land and that conveyed The fence was maintained.”

<https://books.google.com/books?id=AJggAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA241&dq=New+England+%22maintain+fences%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiKm8LjhZnWAhWENSYKHY1UBJEQ6AEINjAD#v=onepage&q=New%20England%20%22maintain%20fences%22&f=false>

“Despite many town bylaws in existence for the maintenance of fences, however, the General Court in 1653 was still receiving “information of many inconveniencies and differences by meanes of deficient fences.” Law and Society in Puritan Massachusetts: Essex County, 1629-1692

[https://books.google.com/books?id=vd\\_dDAAAQBAJ&pg=PT132&dq=%22town+bylaws+in+existence+for+the+maintenance+of+fences%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiylMupo5nWAhXKOSYKHAm1CgoQ6AEIJjAA#v=onepage&q=%22town%20bylaws%20in%20existence%20for%20the%20maintenance%20of%20fences%22&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=vd_dDAAAQBAJ&pg=PT132&dq=%22town+bylaws+in+existence+for+the+maintenance+of+fences%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiylMupo5nWAhXKOSYKHAm1CgoQ6AEIJjAA#v=onepage&q=%22town%20bylaws%20in%20existence%20for%20the%20maintenance%20of%20fences%22&f=false)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=113959668>

<sup>13</sup> <https://findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi/http%2522//fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=155795284>

<sup>14</sup> <https://findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi/http%2522//fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=104449714>

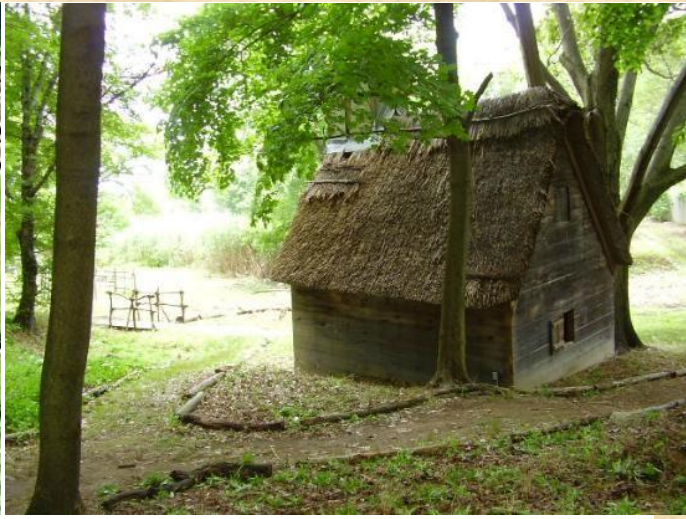
<sup>15</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=85757277>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/mediaui-viewer/tree/14597141/person/28053842164/media/451ffd7c-f0f0-4652-a740-8e89bd70df9f>

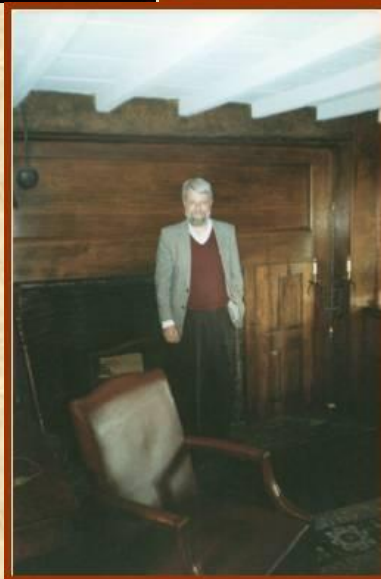
<sup>17</sup> "15 Oct'r 1686 Ruth Standley Executrix of the last Will and testament of Matthow Standly personally appearing made Oath that this Auo't above contains a just and true inventory of her husbands Estate that is yet come to her knowledge and that when more appears she will cause it to be added. Jurat Coran Att Danial Allin Clerk

<sup>18</sup> "CASE 1501, Probate Court, Suffolk Co., Massachusetts Clearly identified as "Matthu Standly of Topsfield". The Mass. Bay Colony, only recently dissolved at that time, became part of the Royal Provisional Government. The Will of Matthew Stanley of Topsfield was filed in the interim in Boston, MA, where I read it and requested a copy which was made for me in 1966. . 'Mathu Standly Estate whoe departed this Life ye 30th Apriell 1686 and subscribed by me on ye 29 day of May 1686 " (This statement from the Inventory of his estate, which gives his accurate death date.) Matthew's Will was written "24th of February" copied verbatim (sic)-- see below." ~Gloria Konikoff <http://www.genealogy.com/ftm/k/a/h/John-B-Kaherl/BOOK-0001/0004-0062.html>





Possible location of the Stanley Cellars, site of Mathew Stanley's first Topsfield home.



Stephen Stanley at Stanley-Lake House Topsfield Massachusetts 1998

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This Tribute to Mathew Stanley's legacy is also dedicated to his New England Descendants, here pictured in Lincoln New Hampshire, 1917:



*Stephen R. Stanley, October 2017*