
From: "Steve Swan" <steve7408@gmail.com>
To: "Hubble, Hilbert R" <hubble@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 2, 2014 2:45:29 PM
Subject: Re: Harvey Hubbell's descendants

Hello Hilbert,

Thank you for replying to my email request, it's much appreciated.

My goal is to establish the silversmith who made these buttons, at present this is pointing towards a Job Prince of Milford Connecticut (1699-1703) died at the age of 23. Within a tailors account book of a Thomas Clarke there is a mention of twelve silver buttons being sold to him by the silversmith Job Prince, this is mentioned in Patricia E Kanes book, Colonial Massachusetts silversmiths and jewellers page 786, he is mentioned in this book as he was born in Boston but moved to Connecticut when only 19 years old.

The elegant tankard you referred to is a high quality piece made by Peter Van Dyck, Job Prince on the other hand, being so young and based in a small town like Milford would have only carried out small works, to make church silver I believe you would need a very good reputation built over some years.

During these seven long years of research I have only quite recently come across the name Richard Hubbell Jr 1654-1738, in his last will and testament is a mention of 7 large silver buttons and fifteen small silver buttons, does any of the family have some of these buttons? Would any of the family have colonial silver marked with IP for the silversmith? Whoever these buttons belonged to had to be reasonably wealthy, not just for the silver buttons but the cost for the engraved initials would have been a pretty penny too.

Job Prince was the first silversmith of Connecticut and people wanting small items I believe Job would have been called upon, I know the engraving to the buttons was carried out by a specialist, this you can tell by the naïve way the buttons have been made, still with the gentle hammer marks showing to the backs, the eyelets slightly off centre and the soldering lacking some finesse yet beautiful, a small town silversmith's work in my opinion.

Being the first silversmith in Connecticut and quite local to the Hubbell's residence, about 12 miles away I believe, it is possible that the Tailor Thomas Clarke sold these buttons attached to some clothing to Richard Hubbell Jr, it would be great if one of the family had an accounts book of that period.

Suffice to say, whoever had the buttons engraved was well to do and of some standing within their community

I look forward to your reply, should you wish for photographs of the items please let me know

Kind Regards,
Steve Swan

On 2 October 2014 15:01, <hubble@comcast.net> wrote:

Steve Swan (see below) has some interesting buttons purchased in CT with the initials RH.

He is looking to see if any of our family has similar buttons/silverware that might match.

Pictures on the web site he quotes.

For Steve:

I think it is a long shot to think the same silversmith crafted the pieces at the United Congregational Church at Bridgeport that we saw on a tour of the church. The name Peter Van Dyck (1684-1750) of New York is associated with a Tankard illustrated on page 53 of our 1980 history.

Hilbert

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Steve Swan** <steve7408@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Sep 30, 2014 at 7:31 PM

Subject: Harvey Hubbell's descendants

To: Captimpro@gmail.com

Hi,

Sorry to email to this address but I have no other way of contacting the above person.

I wondered if you could pass this message onto Harvey Hubbell V regarding his colonial relatives, could you ask if he is related to Richard Hubbell Jr 1654-1738.

I am researching some colonial items I have in my collection, wondered if anyone in his family have any of the same pieces, the reason is to put a name to the items which may also point to the silversmith which is my goal.

Just to prove this is not a weird email, if you Google 12 American Colonial Silver Buttons (<https://www.12americancolonialsilvercoinbuttons.co.uk/>) and click on images you will see what I mean, they should show pictures posted on 925-1000 site, if you follow the link to the page it explains my research there.

May I thank you in advance for your time, I believe you will have my email address from this post.

Kind Regards,

Steve

From the UK

The text below are excerpts from the website shown above:



For the people who may be interested in the history of these silver buttons, I have written a brief summary of the journey this research took me on, how through obtaining all the information I could from recent and old published books on silver and silversmith's touch marks. Searched historical records from the British Isles and America where possible to glean as much information as I could. These buttons have had many tests carried out to the silver, this is too the buttons, loops and solder, all which has lead me to my conclusions. The information used from historical archives can all be verified, tests carried out on my behalf by the assay office of Goldsmith's hall, London, Est 1300's are all uploaded. The information I have gleaned is here for you to make your own informed decision, are they British or American? With a lot of research and some luck it was possible I believe to make historical events tie together, the tests to the silver and workmanship confirm my thoughts.

In 2007 I bought 12 silver buttons from a gentleman who lived in Connecticut, America. It was from this moment I began a little research project or so I thought, I did not realise that it would come to an end as late as 2019.

..... once again I set about buying books and searching through the internet, this went on for weeks which then turned into months and so on. I had seen I.P marks and IP marks in various books, but none were a close enough match. I then came across the book American silver smith's and their marks by Ensko, the mark for Job Prince caught my eye. The I.P mark on page 285 was a very good matching mark to the one's on my buttons, along with this mark was an early date of 1700 for Job Prince. There is a piece on Job Prince in the book Colonial Massachusetts Silversmiths and Jewelers by P.E.Kane, where there is a mention of twelve silver buttons traded by this silversmith to the tailor Thomas Clarke of Milford.

Now with a very good matching touch mark, a name and a reasonable date, I began to research this silversmith. He was born in Boston, November 1680, he then left Boston for Milford in 1699. Before 1699 he must have completed his apprenticeship in Boston although there is no

evidence for this allegedly. The reason I say he was is that he had to already be a newly qualified silversmith as there would have been no other silversmiths nearby to train him. He arrived as noted in many books the first silversmith of Milford, Connecticut in 1699. Aged only 19 on his arrival he had a very short silver smith's career, Job passed away in 1703/4, it was within these dates he had dealings as a silversmith/Jeweler.

As I had previously mentioned, Job Prince sold 12 silver buttons to a Thomas Clarke who was a tailor in Milford, these transactions are recorded in Clarke's accounts book. With this new information my interest rose quite a bit, here was a young silversmith of only 19 years of age, he would not be a very experienced tradesman by then. Job's Will mentions some silver smith's tools and a small pair of bellows, surely if this man was turning out some good work he would need a few more tools than this? His mark matching the marks on my silver buttons according to a few books, the dealing with the tailor by Job Prince of 12 silver buttons is very significant. It is with this very important piece of information that it had to put an IP or I.P mark on the 12 silver buttons without any doubt, I believe this young man to be a very good candidate for my buttons, he had ticked many of my research boxes. The history of this young man as a silversmith is unfortunately very scarce, I am unable to discover any other works by him in books or museum's.

....Knowing I had to be looking for a wealthy family, a family that probably had many resources to hand and was making good money. They would have to be wealthy enough to save these buttons as heirlooms, now came the near impossible mission to find the RH owner of these silver buttons.

Looking at the time period for the dealing of silver buttons by Job Prince to Thomas Clarke 1699-1703/4, I knew I was searching for a person of reasonable wealth that had to be of good standing in the community and more importantly with those initials. I started searching the inhabitants of Milford first, then onto surrounding areas. Slowly but surely working through all early records I could find, births, deaths and other news about early Connecticut. After many months I came across a gentleman called **Richard Hubbell of Stratfield** as it was known then, he seemed a very good candidate for my research. This Richard Hubbell I am referring to was the son of the first Richard Hubbell, his father came across from England in the 1640's.

These two Richard's were members of the original nine of the Congregational church of Stratfield parish as it was called back then, now I concentrated on researching this Richard Hubbell who was living in Stratfield only a short distance from Milford. As luck would have it, I came across a book that is available on the internet called the History of the Hubbell family- by Walter Hubbell. It was here where I believe so much of the information I had researched over the years came together. Bearing in mind the time period for the making of the silver buttons 1699-1703/4, this put Richard's age around 45-49, by then he was a very wealthy man and of good standing within the community, also held many offices of trust. Would this RH be a likely owner of silver buttons? Would he like to dress well while carrying out his duties?

In the History of the Hubbell family book, there is this Richard's Will who is noted as being Lieutenant Richard Hubbell's, it begins on page 32. Here it lists what he gives and has given his family, now that to me is a wealthy family, on page 35 there is a list of all his worldly goods. Reading down this list to Line 5 it mentions as it is written, a pair of briches 10s, one pair of leather briches with plate buttons valued at £3.2s. The reference to plate buttons means silver buttons for those that may not know this term they used back then.

On line 10 of the Will it reads, seven large silver buttons £1.7s and fifteen smaller silver buttons £1.14s. Those details made my heart jump quite a bit, this is a very rare find having silver buttons in that quantity and listed in a Will. The mention of having the two different silver button sizes was another great boost, could these be the same silver buttons I have?

Well it certainly showed this gentleman liked to dress very well, looking smart for the offices he held in the community? If these buttons mentioned in the Will are the engraved buttons I have, would they have recognised such a fancy RH and the reversed RH cypher and mentioned it in the Will? Not many people would recognise these as initials in the early days, not to be rude but most ordinary folk would have thought these were just fancy patterns. This could explain why a book came out in 1726 entitled A New Book of Cyphers, which under this title it states, very entertaining to the curious and useful to all sorts of artifices. The mention of the curious reaffirms that people could not always work out the reversed cypher details, even the monogram on a small button was believed to read RJC by a colleague I had shown. This book of cyphers I mentioned is a later copy of a 1704 book by William Parsons, but it does show the RH reversed cypher quite nicely, again this book is on the internet.

Back to the Hubbell's family book, between page 32 and 33 there is a picture of the tankard mentioned in his Will, this was owned by Richard Hubbell and was gifted to the church. Looking closely at the R and H of the name engraved on the tankard, I was very impressed with the likeness of those initials on the small buttons. Had the engraver of the tankard seen or been shown the silver buttons with their engraving? This is just an observation of mine, nothing more.

A name put forward for the silversmith who made the tankard was a Cornelius Kierstede, I am at present unable to clarify this information to be true or not. This church silver was sold so I have no idea where it is at present, that information would be nice to know.

Whilst reading the Hubbell family book I came across Abigail Hubbell, this lady was the third wife to Sergeant Richard Hubbell the first. There is a mention in her Will at the bottom of page 27 going onto page 28, it reads I bequeath to my daughters ...and it goes on to mention various bed linen which has Abigail's initials of AH sewn on. Interestingly the family liked to put their initials on personal items, this is just another observation.

Now I believe very strongly I have managed to put a name to the owner of silver buttons, is it possible these buttons are the ones made by Job Prince of Milford? Richard lived roughly 12 miles away from Milford, in those days a short trek if you needed some goods. Did the tailor supply Richard with clothes and the community of Stratfield? Had Richard ordered clothes that required silver buttons? By then he was an established gentleman aged around 45-49 and wealthy, in his Will he had some fine clothes that would have needed many fine silver buttons as listed.

When you start to tie up many of the facts which I have stated, all these details are in books or Wills that I have researched, the odds of them being his buttons in my honest opinion is extremely high. The silversmith Job Prince definitely made 12 silver buttons, these would have been marked with I.P or IP that we can be sure of. He could have made many more silver buttons for Richard, he was the only silversmith around at that time. Are these buttons that I have just some of the buttons Richard owned? Did the family at that time just keep six of each size of these loose Buttons as a nice set to remember him by?



...It has taken me 12 years of research including a short break to get to this point, backed by quality tests to help substantiate my findings to date. These are not British silver buttons for the reasons I have mentioned, so if these buttons are not British this would mean they must be American colonial buttons.

Based on what I have written, do you think all the information listed to date is plausible? I only started on this journey after buying some very nice silver buttons from America, it is through years of research and tests that has brought me to this point. When researching history you can only use what is around at this moment in time, you put together all your research details and see if it all makes sense.

As far as I am concerned and without a shadow of a doubt these buttons are American colonial coin silver buttons, which I now like to call silver coin buttons for obvious reasons. There are far more reasons for them to be American than British, I am unable to make a case for them being British silver buttons at all.

I hope you have enjoyed reading about the research carried out, I will gladly answer questions relating to the silver buttons the best I can, the tests results and pictures of the buttons speak volumes themselves. As and when I have more information or need to answer some questions a new page will be added

Email: steve@12americancoloniailvercoinbuttons.co.uk