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THE SYDENHAM-SIDMAN FAMILY OF NEWARK, N.J.

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The second oldest house still standing in Newark, and the oldest still privately owned, is the Sydenham house on the Old Road to Bloomfield opposite Branch Brook Park, where until 1910 the Sydenham-Sidman family of Newark lived for two centuries. It has been designated a State Approved Historical Site. While the land about the house consists at present of only half an acre, in the 19th century it comprised what became the Forest Hill development of a later date. In 1839, Belleville became a separate township and the address of the Sydenham family. Originally, this section of Newark was called Watsession or Wardsession.

Progenitor of the Sydenham family of Newark was John¹ Sydenham, who reputedly eloped with Susanna Handcock of Newark before 1711 and later proved to be "of good family." Tradition has it that he came "from an island off the coast of Long Island."

The parentage of John¹ Sydenham, who was probably born ca. 1680-1690, is unknown. He may have been the son of William Sydenham and Ann who had a daughter Sarah born 10 March 1682 at Boston (9th Report of Records Comm., Boston, p. 158). On 29 March 1697 an Ann Sydenham was made a freeman of New York (Burghers and Freemen of New York [Coll. NYHS], p. 60). This William Sydenham is assumed to be son of William Sydenham and Frances, the father being first recorded at New York, 24 Nov. 1675, when he took the oath of allegiance (Minutes of the Common Council 1675-1696, 1:12). He appeared as attorney for John Robinson at a court of sessions at Jamaica on 14 June 1676, and was in Albany on 13 April 1678 when he was sued for 20 beavers by Johannes de Peyster (A.J.F. Van Laer, Minutes of the Court of Albany, etc. 2:312-4). William Sydenham père was made Sheriff of Fairfield County under Andros on 2 Nov. 1687 (Col. Rec. Conn. 15:472f.) and is on record as residing in Fairfield, Conn., 1684-9 and his wife Frances "on behalf of her husband" until 1691. (D. L. Jacobus, Fam. of Old Fairfield). After Andros was removed from power, they may have fled to that "island off the coast of Long Island," as no further records have been uncovered in Connecticut, Massachusetts or New York. Published records of Block Island and Fisher's Island have been searched without success. Possibly, William Sydenham and Frances returned to England or took ship for another British colony.

The earliest documentary evidence of the existence of

John¹ Sydenham is a deed of gift dated 21 Feb. 1711/12 from Edward Handcock of Newark, who "in Concideration of ye Love Good will & Affection which I have & Do Bear unto my Loveing Son in Law John Sydenham . . . & my ownly Daugther Susanah his wife" conveyed two tracts, one of four acres and one of six acres, to him (Orig. Book of Newark Land Recs., N.J. Hist. Soc.).

Susannah Handcock was born, after 1690, in Eastchester, Westchester County, N.Y., daughter of Edward Handcock and Sarah Fowler (widow and second wife of Samuel Godwin, and sixth child of Henry Fowler and Rebecca Newell) who were married prior to 1690. The date is established by the quit claim of that date from Edward Handcock to his stepson, John Godin (Eastchester Town Recs.). The first wife of Samuel Godwin was a daughter of Henry Gray of Fairfield (Jacobus, *op. cit.*). The 1698 Census of Eastchester shows Edward Hancock, Sarah Hancock, Elias Hancock, Susana Hancock, John Godin, Mary Godin and Abigail Godin in one household (NYG&BR 59:67). The two step-sisters of Susanna Handcock, Mary Godwin and Abigail Godwin, both married men from Fairfield, Conn., Christopher Sturges and Thomas Disbrow (Jacobus, *op. cit.* 1:227; "Eastchester Early Families," clippings from the Boston Transcript 1931-33). These links with Fairfield may or may not have a bearing on the possibility that John¹ Sydenham of Newark was the grandson of William Sydenham, Sheriff of Fairfield County in 1687.

Charles Carroll Gardner, in his loose-leaf notebook now at Rutgers University Library, has entered a note stating that on 23 Dec. 1717, the New York Assembly passed an act to make payment of various amounts owing by the province to soldiers and their heirs for service in His Majesty's Fort at Albany under Capt. Jochim Staats in 1689 and 1690, and that one of the names listed was that of Edward Hendcock which he equates with Hancock. However, careful scrutiny of the Journal of Votes & Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Colony of New-York, vol. 1, fails to reveal such an entry for that or other date.

Between 30 April 1705, when John Hancock and Sarah conveyed their Eastchester land to John Hadden Jun. of Fordham Manor (Westchester Deeds C:362 f.) and 31 Dec. 1707, when John Godden (stepson) of Newark conveyed to Edward Hancock 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of upland in Newark and 27 acres on the Long Hill between the path that leads to Watsession and Second River (East Jersey Deeds C-2:521), Edward Hancock removed to Newark, N.J.

On 22 Nov. 1723, perhaps in contemplation of death, Edward Hancock of Newark, yeoman, conveyed to John Sydenham of the same, yeoman, for a valuable sum the same 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres "at the Long Hill between the road that leads to

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Watsession & the Second River" (Sydenham MSS at NJHS). However, Edward Handcock may have been still alive in 1731, when at the September court term, in the case of Edward Hancock vs John Goding, "an old action," the defendant confessed judgment (Essex Co. Ct. B:174).

John¹ Sydenham was a cordwainer, farming his land in summer and plying his trade in winter. His name appears frequently in land transactions, and it is noted that, unlike Edward Hancock, he was able to sign his name. The first known use of the variant Sidman appears in the 16 Jan. 1738/9 inventory of the estate of John Wynn (Wint) of Second River, Essex County, which included a debt due from John Sidman (*N.J. Wills* 2:553). Many other variants appear at various times in the public records, including Sydman, Sidingham, Siddenham and Sidenham.

On 7 May 1743, an agreement was entered into between John Sydenham, Junr. of Essex County and John Sydenham Senr. which explains why there is no probate record for John¹ Sydenham. "Whereas on this date John Sydenham Senr. by indenture of bargain and sale has granted the house and lot where he dwells to John Sydenham Junr., . . . John Sydenham Junr. has demised to John Sydenham Senr. all sd premises to hold during his natural life" (Sydenham MSS at NJHS).

That John¹ Sydenham was still living on 20 Dec. 1745 is proved by the fact that John Sydenham of Newark in County of Essex and Province of Nova Cesarea or New Jersey, Cordwainter, conveyed to William Crain. Since the deed was witnessed by John Sidman, the grantor had to be John¹ Sydenham (*ibid.*).

The death of John¹ Sydenham occurred between 20 Dec. 1745 and 20 March 1748/9, when Ebenezer Farrand of Newark deeded to John Sydenham of Newark 6 acres "bounded on the south by land sold to John Sydenham, dec'd." (*ibid.*)

Susanna Handcock survived her husband at least until 1755 when she was described as Widow Sydenham in the probate proceedings of her son, John² Sydenham (Essex Co. Wills B:223).

Children:

- 2 i. John², b. 16 March 1714, Newark (Sydenham MSS, NJHS).
- ii. Samuel, mistakenly alleged to have d. unm. 1759 (C. J. Hine, *Woodside-The North End of Newark, N.J.* [1909], p. 100). No birth rec. but sonship is proved by "A Statement of the Amt. of the Sale of Land to Joseph Crane by David Ogden" dated 11 Aug. 1759, which shows a debt of £4.6.11 owed by executors of John² Sydenham to Samuel Sydenham (Sydenham MSS at NJHS). He moved to Rockland Co., N.Y., married, and has many descendants. He is the subject of a monograph by the present writer.

Wachter

5/18/10

John Sydenham ~~A. Edgum~~
bet 1711 Hancock

William Sydenham = Frances
1675 at N.Y. oath All.

William Sydenham = Ann
1697 Freeman NY

Edward Hancock
of New York

Sarah
b. 10 Mar 1662
Boston

John Sydenham =
bet 1711
1711/12 deed

Susan Hancock

William = Frances

1675 oath at Albany NY Jamaica
1676 court of sessions ~~Albany~~
1678 sued Albany
1687 Sheriff Fairfield
-1691 resided Fairfield

Search billions of records on Ancestry.com

First Name

Last Name

Person Sheet

Name John Sydenham⁸²

Spouses

1 Susannah Handcock⁸²Birth aft 1690, Eastchester, Westchester Co., NY⁸²

Children John (1714-1754)

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poss. b son of William & Ann
or grd son

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