

### **Thomas Tudway Snr – Father of the Tudway Family Tree (c1610 – 1671)**

There is no evidence that suggests Thomas Tudway Snr was involved in Transatlantic slavery in any way at all but his story gives an understanding of the milieu in which his children grew up and which may have influenced them in their career choices.<sup>1</sup>

There are no available birth records for Thomas and other records about him are scant so his story is pieced together from what is available. The information that informs of his life is largely taken from The Chapter Acts of the Dean and Canons of Windsor<sup>i</sup> where records span from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The first record of him is that of a possible first marriage, suggesting Ann was a second wife. This marriage record refers to Thomas Tudway, a gentleman from New Windsor, Berks who married Amy Gibson, daughter of William Gibson, a yeoman of Arnham Co. Notts. The marriage took place at St Alphage Church, London Wall, on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1625. How the locations of London, Nottingham and Windsor came to be connected remains a mystery.

Further information in the Acts of the Dean and Canons of Windsor show that Thomas Tudway, gentleman, became a 'Lay Clerk' to St George's Chapel of Windsor in 1628. In 1631<sup>ii</sup> he was granted a piece of land to make a garden for himself by the Dean and Canons. On 7<sup>th</sup> April 1635, a Nathaniel Tudway was elected as a chorister.<sup>iii</sup> No birth records have been found for Nathaniel, but as a choristers were elected from a young age, this would chime with dates for the marriage to Amy, making Nathaniel possibly his son. In 1665, the pay of Mr Tudway, Chorister, was taken away and was dismissed, with his father being given notice of it.<sup>iv</sup> It cannot be assumed that this was Nathaniel, but in order to establish who this son might be, a deeper exploration into the events of the time is necessary.

In 1642, Cromwell's army invaded Windsor Castle and executed Charles I for treason. They sacked the Chapel and all who served there had to flee. It would have been a terrifying time for this family. Much of the Chapel's records were destroyed, which may contribute to the difficulty in finding relevant documents. It is assumed that Thomas Tudway may have fled east to Canterbury, Kent, as the family tree shows he was married to Ann Plat, 5<sup>th</sup> daughter of Richard Plat, 1<sup>st</sup> son of Sir Hugh Plat of Bedwell Green, Middlesex, Kent.<sup>v</sup> Records of this marriage have not been found but one family tree recorded on Ancestry places the date of marriage as 1648<sup>vi</sup>. While it may have his date of birth incorrect at 1625, it has the most correct list of children for the couple. The first five, born during the interregnum period, were Clement (1649-1689); Ann (1651-1715), Thomas (1654-1726), Richard (1656- 1707), and Elizabeth (1658- ?).

In 1660, the monarchy was reinstated and King Charles II came to the throne and the Tudway family moved back to Windsor. That same year Thomas and Anne had another baby boy, calling him Charles, (1660-1693), assumingly after the newly crowned King, thus attesting to Thomas' Royalist loyalties. There followed two more boys, being John and William, born the same year, possibly twins, both of whom died young in 1662. A final daughter, Suzannah was born in 1665.

The family lived comfortably in accommodation leased from the Dean. In 1664, Thomas Tudway asked to become a petit Canon, but was refused, being ordered instead to sing Tenor in the choir.<sup>vii</sup> Then followed the incident when Tudway the chorister was dismissed, had his pay taken and his father was to be told about it. It then appeared that Thomas senior was 'superannuated' – i.e.

pensioned off. So it appears that the errant Tudway was Thomas junior, who would have been only 11. Thomas began his music career in the Chapel Royal as a child before going on to Cambridge becoming the organist there in 1670. From there he pursued an illustrious music career as a teacher, and Doctor of Music and writer of religious pieces. Thomas was the only son who was not involved with slavery.

Thomas Snr's daughter Anne married a Mr Cooper, but there is no further information and no confirmation of the date she died. Elizabeth married Joseph Whitfield and they lived in London in the Strand, having connections to the elder brothers' slaving business. Suzannah married Richard Shuckleburgh.

Thomas Tudway senior died in 1671 leaving Ann as his widow with the responsibility of her young daughters. As he died intestate there was no inheritance or provision for her and their children so the Dean allowed her to keep the chattels of their house, which was valued at around £8000 in today's money. She left Windsor with her children and went to Essex, presumably to her parents' family home. Clement was 22, so already on his career path as a 'merchant' in London. Thomas, as we have seen was involved in music, Richard was 14, so perhaps already working, possibly in the Navy or for the Royal African Company, and Charles was 11, seeking to follow in his father and brother's footsteps in religious music.

To understand what shaped or influenced them we need to look at what plans King Charles II had regarding Britain's colonial expansion. In 1660, very early into his reign, he issued a charter which granted a monopoly to the Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa which initially was interested in gold. By 1663, this had developed into including the trade in trafficking Africans for slavery in the plantations of the Americas. The monopoly forbade English merchants to trade with foreign countries along the West African coast line so tensions and skirmishes ensued which had a counterproductive effect and the company fell into debt. In 1668, the Gambia Adventurers was formed under a ten year licence, after which it merged with the old company which was still beset with losses and folded in 1672. In that same year, the Royal African Company of England was formed, and its charter allowed it to set up forts and factories on the African Coast and impose martial law in those places deemed profitable to trade in gold, silver, ivory and Africans. Among the Company's six coastal forts were the infamous Ouida (Dahomey) and Cape Cast Castle (modern Ghana). It continued in trading in enslaved Africans until 1731 and supplied the English Mint with gold from which the famous Guinea coin was made which featured an elephant under the King's head.

With Thomas Snr now dead, two of his oldest sons, Clement and Richard, took advantage of the privilege of having grown up literally in the King's backyard and found their way into the wider business of the Royal African Company as slave traders, sugar merchants, and eventually to slave labour plantation ownership in Antigua.

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<sup>i</sup> Bond, S (ed)(1966) The Chapter Acts of the Dean and Canon of Windsor. Windsor. Oxley and Son.  
<sup>ii</sup> Ibid p 149  
<sup>iii</sup> Ibid p167  
<sup>iv</sup> Ibid p256

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<sup>v</sup> Oliver, V. L. (1894/9) A History of the Island of Antigua, one of the Leeward Caribbees in the West Indies, from the first settlement in 1635 to the present time. London. Mitchell and Hughes. Vol 3 p.148

<sup>vi</sup> [Thomas Tudway - Facts \(ancestry.co.uk\)](https://www.ancestry.co.uk)

<sup>vii</sup> Bond, S. Op cit P.249