

May 15 1973

MEMO to Paul Belknap:

I hope that Rowse doesn't dismiss your inquiry brusquely because you said that Shakespeare's grandmother was a Belknap. I'm enclosing a sheet that shows the true and very slender relationship. You can calculate how many great-great-great-great grandmothers he had -- two centuries before his own birth.

Also, I hope you're not one of those people -- whom I occasionally encounter -- who are offended when a correction is suggested. For myself, the man to whom I feel most deeply grateful is the one who keeps me from making an error.

Your page 7, in letter to Rowse: Sir Edward Belknap was great-great grandson (not great grandson) of Sir Robert. You may have been misled by the inaccurate wording in the article on Sir Robert, in the British Dictionary of National Biography, which omits ~~one generation~~ of his descendants. (And I should add that this same article errs in saying that Sir Robert was "undoubtedly" descended from the Belknap who came over with the Conqueror. There is no convincing support for that old claim, which appears to have been based on a forgery in the 14th century.) Probably no such "Belknap" existed.)

More on your page 7: Sir Edward Belknap, of Warwick Castle and Weston and Burton Dassett in Warwickshire, left no issue -- neither sons nor daughters. On his death, his sisters became his heirs -- including Anne, from whom the present Queen is descended. Anne's son Nicholas Wotton, whose tomb you saw, was Edward's nephew.

PAUL E. BELKNAP  
691 GREENE DRIVE  
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789

May 11, 1973

Dr. Alfred L. Rowse  
All Souls College  
Oxford, England

Dear Dr. Rowse:

A family with its roots deeply embedded in Puritan New England has a dual surname mystery which began in Elizabethan England. The mystery's origin might involve the theatre and Shakespeare.

It is my hope that you, as the premier authority on the Elizabethan theatre and William Shakespeare, will be interested in my hypothetical solution and the facts which led to it. Perhaps from your research you could supply evidence which would change the hypothesis into fact.

The hypothesis: The brother of the family's last English ancestor lived from 1562 to 1599/1600. He spent his adult years as an actor in Southwark, the headquarters of the Elizabethan theatre in this its golden age. He adopted a stage name which was the surname of William Shakespeare's maternal grandmother. Hence, it may have been suggested by fellow actor Shakespeare. By judicious use of his considerable savings, he prevailed on his solid, yeoman farmer brother to change the family name to his stage name.

If the hypothesis can be proved, it would have humorous aspects. One can imagine the consternation of people in Cotton Mather's New England if they had known they bore a stage name.

In the United States there are several hundred people named Belknap. Careful research by many during a century or more has established that all of us are descended from Abraham Belknap and his wife Mary who came from England to Lynn, Mass. sometime between May 10, 1635 when a son was baptized in England and 1637 when Abraham was granted 40 acres at Lynn. Abraham's father was Bennet Belknap who, according to his will, was a yeoman farmer of some substance in Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire. In 1610 he was Warden of St. Mary-the-Great church.

Now for the dual surname mystery: Prior to 1599 there is no record of Belknaps in Sawbridgeworth. The people known after 1599 as Belknap were formerly known as Beltoft. Bennet and his brother, Josias, are in church records as Beltoft. Their father, Richard, so called them in his will of 1594.



24 March 1624/<sup>4</sup>25 Abraham's son David  
buried as Belknap.

31 January 1627 Abraham made deposition  
as Abraham Belknapp.

20 October 1630 Bennet's wife Grace was  
buried as Belknap.

2 May 1631 Bennet's son Josias married  
as Belknap.

after the date of probate of Bennet's will,  
no use of Beltoft appears in records  
till 1663, when two children of Henry  
Belknap (grandson of Bennet) were buried  
as Beltoft; and again in 1683 when Henry's  
last child, Mary, was buried as "daughter  
of Henry and Mary Belknap also Beltoft."

Bennet's brother Josias who started the name  
change had neither wife nor children. He had  
apparently prospered greatly, although only 37  
when he died. He made cash bequests of £109.  
Bennet was the principal beneficiary. He  
received all Josias' land, £20 immediately  
plus the residue from bonds, notes, debts owed  
Josias and cash remaining after bequests.

From the internal evidence of Josias' will, it

He left them to Bennet.

In 1599, perhaps the year before Josias' will and death, Bennet had a son baptized Josias. When Bennet died this Josias inherited the bulk of the estate. Abraham, who was older, was cut off with 20 shillings. This suggests to me that Bennet and Josias, his brother, made a deal in 1599. Bennet would be Josias' principal heir if Bennet's son Josias would be called Belknap and would ultimately inherit his uncle's estate. Bennet seems to have solved the whole thing by changing his name to Belknap and making Josias his principal heir. Even passed-over Abraham changed his name probably because he could still inherit if his brother Josias died without issue.

This brings us to why the first Josias changed his name, why he chose Belknap and why he wanted the new name perpetuated.

In endeavoring to uncover the English roots of our family several Belknaps, including me, have wasted considerable time trying to trace ourselves back to a knightly family of Belknaps, from Sir Robert de Belknap, who was chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas in

the time of Richard II and died in 1400, down to his great grandson, Sir Edward, who was born in 1473, was custodian of Warwick Castle and a privy councillor of Henry VIII. He died 26 March 1521, leaving no sons. An incidental piece of intelligence I picked up on this quest was that one of Sir Edward's daughters married Robert Arden, whose daughter Mary married John Shakespeare. If this is correct, William Shakespeare's maternal grandmother was a Belknap from this knightly line. This could explain the source of the eleven painted cloths the Ardens had. You felt that they marked "a standard of taste above that of the ordinary farmer."

The facts that Josias lived in Southwark, that he made so much money at an early age, that he changed his name and wanted the new name perpetuated all suggest that he may have been an actor, a theatrical entrepreneur or both.

Why would he pick Belknap as his stage name? No one of that name had been prominent in England since Sir Edward in the early days of Henry VIII. Is it possible that he had a co-worker or acquaintance

named William Shakespeare who suggested the name of his own grandmother? There was much to recommend it: the same first syllable as his true name, yet quite different in total sound; although easy to say and remember it was not a common name.

Sir, I thank you if you have come this far with me. If you have, may I ask if, in your exhaustive studies, you have run across an Elizabethan theatrical person named Josias Belknap. Is it true that Shakespeare's maternal grandmother was a Belknap?

Sincerely yours,

Paul E. Belknap



CARROLL YORK BELKNAP      25 Club Road      Riverside, Connecticut 06878

SHAKESPEARE'S BELKNAP ANCESTRY

As stated by Patrick Montague-Smith, Editor of Debrett's

Sir Robert Belknap = Juliana Darset

Joan Belknap = Edward Hampden  
(widow of Sir Ralph Stoner)

John Hampden = Eleanor Whalesborough

Eleanor Hampden = Walter Arden

Thomas Arden = Mary -----

Robert Arden = 1st wife -----

Mary Arden = John Shakespeare

William Shakespeare = Anne Hathaway

(William Shakespeare was born 23 April 1564.  
Joan Belknap was born between 1367 and 1388,  
probably about 1370 or 1375. CYB)



Inc & Dec  
 Mother - death + Birth (1924) 1951 (parents marriage)  
 Father - (1884-94?) 1949  
 m to ~~Robert~~

~~Sister~~ Sister

Frances Edna — 1887

m —  
 d — 1931

Brother

Arthur Edward b — 1887  
 d — 1907

Self b ~~1894~~ 17 Feb 1897

m (1) ~~1914~~ 1914 - 16 Sept

m (2) ~~1957~~ 7 April 1960

wife (1) Meg Huron

d of — + —  
 b —  
 d — 1957

Dan Margaret Lucille b — 1921  
 m — 1944

Her husband Walter Grayburn Davis

s of — + —  
 b — at —

1370 Fairfax Street  
Denver, Colorado 80220  
Wednesday, 2 January 1974

Mr. Carroll York Belknap, Management Research  
25 Club Road  
Riverside, Connecticut 06878

Mr. Paul E. Belknap  
691 Green Drive  
Winter Park, Florida

Dear Carroll and Paul:

I must apologize to both of you for my tardiness in providing you with information about my branch of the Belknap family. I have had a peculiar year, going back to last summer, and all through the succeeding months at Colorado State University. I was very much involved in the creation of the Elwood Mead Distinguished Professorship in Engineering at CSU, and then came two little sessions of illness which involved brief hospitalization, but now I am in good shape again. I will retire from duties at CSU at the end of the winter term, and then I'll go fishing and possibly traveling. My residence will continue in Denver.

I have reread your good letter and the information you have recorded about the Belknaps of the past. You, Carroll, have done a great deal of research and all of us should be very grateful to you. And, Paul, I was glad to have supplemental information from you, and particularly happy to know that you and I are first cousins. Everything I have received from you ties back to the information I received from my mother that we all came from the three brothers who trekked from England to America and settled in the eastern seaboard states. But I had learned that Samuel Belknap was wounded in the foot in the battle of Bunker Hill and that he had died from that injury. I had not known that he was a grandfather, or a great grandfather. I used to tease my mother wondering (to her) whether he was wounded in the heel or the forepart of his foot!

In the above connection I had the opportunity to view the Belknap hardware store in Louisville, Kentucky, during WW II, and learned from the owner that he too spoke of a grandfather or a great grandfather who had died in the battle of Bunker Hill. So, he too, is a fairly close relative of ours! His hardware store is a great institution as it covers an entire block and is four stories in height.

I must confess that I paid too little attention to the information about the Belknaps, given to me by my mother, but I found that my sister, Frances, had delved into the history of our forebears quite thoroughly. That information is, in part, recorded in the family Bible.

I know little of Stephen Belknap who was associated with my father, Edward Milton Belknap, in their foundry and machine shop work in Corvallis. You will remember that I was but two years old when my father died. I have no real information on Stephen's wife, my aunt Rose, who was buried in our family plot at the Crystal Lake (Masonic) Cemetery near Corvallis. They had no children.

Letter to Carroll and Paul Belknap, page 2

A Douglas fir tree was planted in memory of my father by the faculties of Oregon Agricultural College (now Oregon State University) shortly after his death in 1894. One who had been the landscape architect for Oregon State University, Professor Peck, and I, recently looked into records and photographs and we easily identified the tree which is now almost three feet in diameter at the base. Since then a memorial plaque has been placed at the base of the tree which is adjacent to the new Computer Center for the University.

My brother, Arthur Edward Belknap, an employee of the State of Oregon Engineering Department died in Portland, Oregon, of an acute attack of cerebro-spinal meningitis in 1907. He was an beloved personality in Corvallis as is shown in a copy of the Gazette Times which I will attempt to have duplicated and then send a copy to you. Arthur was just past twenty-three years of age when he died, as I remember.

X My mother, as your records show, married a Mr. Webster Belknap, a resident of the Belknap community near Monroe, Oregon, quite a number of years after my father died. Later when she was living with my sister, Frances Hollenberg, in Salem, Oregon, she died in 1924. She was buried in our family plot at Crystal Lake (Masonic) Cemetery in Corvallis, Oregon.

In my brief memorandum to Carroll, on the second page, I alluded to a rather complete sketch as to my movements prior to moving out to Denver to be near my daughter and her family. I wanted and needed companionship. Inez and I had traveled together from Corvallis to Pittsburgh, then because of my military call for duties with the developing Air Corps, and later the Air Force, we moved to Washington, D. C. After nearly five years in the military we moved to Rochester, N.Y. to be with the University of Rochester. The U. S. Air Force asked me to rejoin as a civilian in charge of graduate education at the Institute of Technology and Inez and I moved to Dayton, Ohio. After four years in Dayton Inez died, and after one more year with the Air Force I took an early retirement and moved alone to Denver to be near my daughter, Margaret and her family.

My first wife, Inez, whom I met in Corvallis was the daughter of a merchant in Corvallis, and a wonderful musician. She pursued her musical inclinations at Oregon State University and became a member of the Music Department faculty, teaching in both piano and voice. Our daughter, Margaret, was born in Corvallis just a short time before I was called to be with Westinghouse. The three of us traveled to Pittsburgh by car when the roads were not so good. but we made it safely.

Again, Carroll and Paul, I do appreciate so much the information that you have given me. I hope I have helped a bit in clearing up a point or two, and I do hope we may be able to get together ere long. All good wishes to you and your families.

Most sincerely yours,

  
John Harrison Belknap





**BELKNAP, John Harrison**, born in Corvallis, Ore., U.S.A., on 17 February 1892. Profession: Engineer; Educator; Administrator. Married in Corvallis, on 16 September 1914, to Inez Johnson (deceased 1952); Remarried in Denver, on 7 April 1960, to Virginia Wittenberger; one child: Margaret Lucile (Mrs. Davis). Education: B.S.E.E., D.Eng., Oregon State University and University of Chicago, 1912 and 1940.

Appointments held: Teaching Fellow, Instructor in Physics, Oregon State University, 1912-17; U.S. Army, 1917-19; Assistant Professor, Electrical Engineering, Oregon State University, 1919-23; Design Engineer, Manager, Control Engineering Department, Consulting Engineer, and Manager, Technical Employment and Training, Westinghouse Electrical Corporation, 1923-42; Major to Colonel, U.S. Air Force, 1942-46; Chairman, Division of Engineering and Yates Professor of Engineering, University of Rochester, 1946-48; Dean, Graduate Section, U.S. Air Force Institute of Technology, 1948-53; Chief, Scientific Personnel, Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, University of California, 1953-55; Member, Mayor's Cabinet, and Manager of Welfare, City and County of Denver, Colo., 1956-59; Professor of Physics and Engineering, Assistant to the Dean of Engineering, Colorado State University, 1960-; Fulbright Visiting Professor in Physics, University of Libya, North Africa, 1963-64; Adviser to Planning Board for creation of the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Memberships: Denver Chamber of Commerce; U.S. Chamber of Commerce; American Society for Engineering Education (Past Council member); Boy Scouts of America; Civic Club, Forest Hills, Pa. (Past Board of Directors); Sigma Tau (President, 1948-49); Sigma Xi; Tau Beta Pi; Eta Kappa Nu; Sigma Pi Sigma. Honours, prizes, awards: D.Eng., Oregon State University, 1940; The Calling of an Engineer, Dominion of Canada, 1947; Citations of Commendation, Air Force, 1943, 1945. Hobbies: Photography; Map-making; Woodworking; Fishing; Gardening; Landscaping; Mountain climbing. Address: 1370 Fairfax Street, Denver, Colo. 80220, U.S.A.

From Two Thousand Men of Achievement, 1971 edition



to Paul 5/27/74

Copies memo 5/23

to Sherman & Dreythaler

PAUL E. BELKNAP  
691 GREENE DRIVE  
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789

June 12, 1973

Dear Carroll,

I think there is no question but what you have found Stephen III's marriage. I looked again at my father's note about him. The name easily could be Munson with a u instead of an o. Dad definitely gave the date as June, 1867, as compared with your March, 1867. The children are given as Ida (no comma) Rose, Edward and Eda. Since the year of the marriage is right, the bride's surname is right in both records and the children's names are right (Eda is a diminutive for Edith), the chances that this was not the same Stephen are astronomical.

It appears that Dad copied this information from a record his father (my grandfather) had kept. My confusion about whether Ida Rose was one or two people could have been duplicated by my father in considering Arthur Edward. Since grandfather died in 1890, he could not have known about J. Harrison born in 1892. Dad may have heard that Edward left three children and assumed that Arthur & Edward were two people. J. Harrison's sister had the same name as our grandmother. (over)

Sincerely,  
Paul

P.S. Thomas L.'s wife's maiden name could be  
HARTWILL or HARTWICK. Christian name is  
definitely Phoebe. Fairly sure that children's names  
represent four separate people. 1873 is right for wedding.  
Paul



**Registry of Breeds**  
**35 Court Street**  
**Northampton, Mass. 01060**  
**Robert F. Czelusniak, Register**



*Carroll York Belknap*  
*25 Club Road*  
*Riverside, Conn. 06878*



RETURN IN 5 DAYS TO  
**REGISTRY OF PROBATE**  
**NORTHAMPTON, MASS.. 01060**

*Carroll York Belknap*  
*25 Club Road*  
*Riverside Conn*



**Carroll York Belknap**  
**25 Club Road**  
**Riverside, Conn 06878**

1370 Fairfax Street  
Denver, Colo. 80220  
Monday, 11 June 1973

✓ Mr. Carroll York Belknap  
251 Club Road  
Riverside, Conn. 06878

Mr. Paul E. Belknap  
691 Green Drive  
Winter Park, Florida 32789

Dear Carroll and Paul:

It was a joy to receive the several good letters and to know of the work you have been doing in identifying the Belknaps of an earlier day. And now it is quite clear that we are closely related, and stem from the three brothers who came from England to America so many years ago.

I had known of that source and had the information that a great (or great-great) grandfather was killed in the battle of Bull Run!

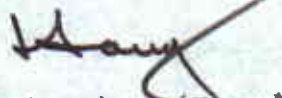
I am grateful to both of you for verifying that information and in pointing out that we are closely related. We must get together!

This will be a preliminary letter, but I will put the various pieces together and will develop for you a bit of information about my immediate family as I know it. I will tell you of my mother, Elizabeth Ann Hooper-Belknap, my father, Edward Milton Belknap; my sister, Frances Edna Belknap-Hollenberg, my brother, Arthur Edward Belknap, my wife, Inez Johnson-Belknap, my second wife, Virginia Wittenberger-Belknap, my daughter, Margaret Lucile Belknap-Davis (by my first wife, Inez), and a bit about myself. All of that will come later.

Our school year at Colorado State University is just completed, and I will be off on a business trip to Ames, Iowa to attend the annual meeting of the American Association for Engineering Education next week. I have many things to do in cleaning up my affairs at CSU, and I will be spending time here at the home in Denver and at CSU, where I have an apartment, in Fort Collins. But I will get to the Belknap history and write to you again before the summer is over.

Again, Carroll and Paul, it is so nice to hear from you, and to know, with more assurance, just who the Belknaps were, and are!

Cordially yours,



John Harrison (Harry) Belknap

P. S. Please excuse my very imperfect typing. It was done at home in Denver.



PAUL E BELKNAP from CYB

June 14 1973

I'm most grateful to you for spotting my error on Richard's will. Let it be a lesson to me: "When you check a citation, read slowly." In looking at that will, to make sure my memory was correct, I read too rapidly and too carelessly. My eyes went right by those words, without seeing them. I've crossed out that clause in my copy. Please make same change in yours. Thanks.

Other points in your letter 6/8:

(in England and America)

Dates, Josias and Richard. Till 1752, the first day of the calendar year was March 25. Days before that day are now customarily written so as to show both "Old Style" and "New Style." Will of Josias was dated, when signed, as 28 Januaire 1599; we now write it 28 January 1599/1600 or 1599/00 -- so as to enable translation to our present calendar. . . No such notation is needed for dates from March 25 to Dec 31. . . . Burial of Josias, 4 Feb 1599/00, was two months after burial of his father Richard. . . By Old Style calendar, Abraham was born in 1589. By our present New Style calendar, he was born in 1590 -- as the day was before March 25.

Possibility that Richard split his land between Bennet and Josias? Could be.

Bennet as churchwarden: The original record showing Bennet as churchwarden, in HMB's files, did not survive the fire that burned his house in 1914. All I know is the statement in his 1914 article, that he signed the church register with his mark "b" three times in the one year of his service in that position -- "1620.

Customarily, two churchwardens were elected each year, for one-year term. As he was calling himself Beltoft in 1623 (his will), it seems likely he was known as Beltoft in 1610 -- but the only known fact is that the only recorded instance of Belknap, for Bennet, was 1600 probate of will of Josias. . . As Bennet must also have probated Richard's will, which named him Bennet Beltoft, he presumably called himself Beltoft in doing so. Unfortunately, the complete copy of Richard's will in HMB's files does not show anything about the probate -- though it goes so far as to reproduce even the varying marks used by the testator and the witnesses.

the  
original  
of

Wealth of Josias: As a student of Shakespeare's life, try making the comparison I once attempted -- estimated total worth of Josias, at age 37, vs estimated total wealth of Shakespeare at age 55. Involves a lot of guesswork, of course -- but still interesting. . . I've tried to get a reliable figure for present-day equivalent value of English money of 1600. Unsuccessful -- but did find that present equivalent of a 1700 shilling would be about \$8, according to one source. Not sure that's correct.



PAUL E. BELKNAP  
691 GREENE DRIVE  
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789

6/8/73

Dear Carroll,

Thank you for the updating on Abraham and "The English Ancestors of Abraham Belknap."

The latter is well reasoned indeed. The practice of tenure en burgh anglais is completely new to me. May I make some comments for your consideration:

1. In support of your gift before death hypothesis (re Richard, Bennet, Josias): Although Richard's will is dated 1594, he was not buried till December 2, 1599, and Bennet owed Josias four years rent. Richard may have given the land at the time he wrote the will. He said he was in ill health at the time of the will.
2. Josias' death must have been in 1600. The father was dead when Josias made his will. Or, is <sup>Richard's</sup> ~~and will~~ (unlike) burial record wrong? Or, Josias' burial record?
3. Judging from the spirit of Richard's will, he may have previously given half his land to Josias and half to Bennet. He gives choice of furnishings to Josias but after specific bequests it is his wish that things be divided equally between Josias and Bennet. He mentions the "house" but leaves no house. It seems possible that he had given the house to Bennet and lived in it with Bennet. Josias left Bennet "those goods & legacies wch my fath<sup>r</sup>

OS/NS



Quite  
Possible

left me & the linen & household stuffe with he hath  
of myne in his keeping..." This suggests Bennet  
had Richard's house and the things inherited by Josias  
had been left in position there. Josias may have  
been given choice of furnishings because he had  
lost out on the house. It makes sense that the  
younger brother would not inherit all in this  
instance. He was engaged elsewhere. Bennet  
was the farmer.

Tham's

4. In your statement that Richard <sup>mentions</sup> no farm  
equipment or animals you seem to have  
overlooked the following in his will: "all manner  
Corne and grain, Horses, byne, Cattells, Householdstuffe,  
ymplements, utensills..." This does not harm  
your hypothesis about the gift (or gifts) of land.  
He could have kept ownership of animals, implements,  
utensils and household goods while giving away  
land and buildings. How else explain Josias'  
ownership of land and Bennet's ownership of land  
and buildings?

Evidence  
missing

5. H. M. B. mentions that Bennet was churchwarden in  
1610. He signed by "B" as his mark in the parish  
register. Do we know for sure whether he was listed  
as Beltoft or Belknap in this capacity?

Compare

6. You are certainly right about the importance of Josias'  
money. Shakespeare paid only £60 for New Place, one  
of best houses in Stratford.

Sincerely,  
Paul

marries before 1790

Jonas - 1783 - aged 24 - B'ton

Joseph - 1786? - aged 24 - Stafford

Jonathan -

Seth - Probably yes 3 apd. 23 in '90

Stephen - Probably (surely) No



May 29 1973

Dr J Harrison Belknap  
1270 Fairfax St  
Denver, Colorado 80220

Dear Dr ~~HARRIS~~ap:

Yesterday I finally was able to establish, in full, the record of your lineage. Till then, your letter of 6 Feb 1971 had rested unhappily in my file labeled "unidentified."

The identification came about as the result of recent correspondence with Paul E Belknap, 691 Greene Drive, Winter Park, Florida 32789 -- who has helped me by remedying the long-time lack of knowledge of what became of the Stephen Belknap who was a brother of my own great great grandfather Jonas Newton Belknap. Both you and Paul are descended from that Stephen.

Stephen was your great grandfather. Till recently, all that was on record about him was that he went to Canada and died there. Now I'm beginning to learn much more, thanks to Paul's aid.

I'm enclosing a copy of my notes on Stephen's father, Samuel -- showing the record of Stephen's birth, death, and marriage, as now known. I'll send you similar sheets for the earlier generations in America in a day or so.

I'll also send you some blank forms that I hope you'll be able to complete -- as aid in building up a full record of Stephen's descendants.

Meanwhile, I'm making this note brief, in order to get it into the mail promptly. I'm happy to be able to tell you that you and I are relatively close cousins, as Belknaps go.

Cordially,

Jan 21 1971

Mr John Harrison Balknap  
1370 Fairfax St  
Denver, Colorado 80220

Dear Mr Balknap:

One of my correspondents has sent me a recent letter he received from the Michigan State library, listing your name among those of people interested in the Balknap family.

As I'm working on the preparation of a Balknap genealogy, I hope you'll enable me to include you and your branch.

If there is any aid I can provide, from my files on more than 4,000 Balknaps, just ask for it. I make no charge for this sort of help. It's just the way I get help from people who can give me information that I don't yet have.

Very truly yours,

*Cy Balknap*



JOHN HARRISON BELKNAP from CYB

May 30 1973

I'm enclosing forms covering yourself, your daughter, and your father. I hope you'll edit and complete them. As you will see, I need your aid in making sure of the accuracy of the entries -- and there are blanks that I have not been able to fill in.

My identification of your parentage and ancestry came about because two lines of inquiry happened to converge at the same moment: (1) the ancestry of a brilliant young lawyer in New York City, Michael Belknap, whose father Paul supplied a lot of information; (2) the identity of the "Lassie Belknap" who was the second wife of Webster Belknap (a first cousin of my father).

Paul identified Edward "M" Belknap as son of Stephen Jr and grandson of Stephen Sr. And after years of search, I came across an old note written in 1911, showing that Webster's second wife was Elsiebeth Hooper, whose first husband had been Edward "Myron" Belknap. This sent me back to your 1971 letter, naming Elizabeth Hooper as your mother.

As you will see, I have to ask for verification of the middle name of your father, for since you were only 2 when he died, there's the possibility that you might be wrong -- and I have the equal possibility that the 1911 record may have been wrong.

As Paul no doubt will tell you, the root of your difficulty in tracing your ancestry was the fact that Stephen (Sr) -- brother of my ancestor Jonas -- died by drowning in Burlington Bay in Ontario six months before his only son, Stephen (Jr) was born. Till 1880, descendants of Stephen Jr had no knowledge of the identity of their New England forebears -- beyond first names, not entirely accurate, of ~~SEVEN~~ brothers of Stephen (Sr). In that year, your father and his brother Stephen (III) went from Corvallis to Belknap Settlement south of Corvallis (now Alpine) and there visited my tribe -- getting some information from the patriarch of the tribe, Jesse (my great grandfather, then 80 years old, and grandfather of the Webster Belknap who was your mother's second husband according to that record in my file). . . . Paul has sent me a copy of the letter that your father wrote, telling his parents about that visit.

I think I'll see if I can make a copy of that letter for you -- right now.

Yes. It came out fairly well. The copying machine here in my study has trouble in reproducing blue ink. But here's the result. I think you can read it.

Can you tell me anything about your father's brother Stephen (III) who was with him on that visit to Belknap Settlement?

COPY to Paul E Belknap, with copy of JHB letter Feb 1971.

PAUL E BELKNAP from CYB

June 2 1973

Enclosed is a revised copy of my notes on Abraham -- including newly received information on first date when he is known to have been called Belknap -- and deleting my statement that he was "virtually disinherited," which I should have removed long ago, for reasons explained in a memo just written, on our English Ancestry, which I also enclose.

ELINTON BELKNAP from CYB

June 2 1973

Enclosed is a revised copy of my notes on Abraham -- including newly received information on first date when he is known to have been called Belknap . and deleting my statement that he was "virtually disinherited," which I should have altered long ago, but overlooked till now.

I'm also enclosing a new memo on our English Ancestry -- most of it old stuff to you -- but the passages marked in red may be new to you.

**Dr. J. Harrison Belknap, P. E.**  
**CONSULTING ENGINEER**

TELEPHONE  
(303) 377-0373  
1370 FAIRFAX STREET  
DENVER, COLO. 80220

ASSISTANT TO THE DEAN  
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
FORT COLLINS, COLORADO 80521  
TELEPHONE (303) 491-6585



PAUL E BELKNAP from CYB

May 29 1973

Things I should ask -- and things I should tell you.

- (1) Can you give me any further information about the J W Belknap Jr. Seattle, with whom your father corresponded? Even full name would help me.
- (2) Can you give me any information about your sisters Beatrice, Hazel, Miriam? Marriages -- children -- dates -- places?
- (3) There's much to do in broadening the record of descendants of Stephen -- even just names of places can put me on the right trails. Example, Stephen -- older brother of Edward M -- maybe I can trace him from Corvallis, where he was in 1880 according to Edward's letter.
- (4) I think you have read HWB's piece in 1914 volume of New England Historic and Genealogical Register. Unfortunately it contains a number of errors. Suggest you also read his later piece in 1931 Register. Pages 281 to 288 give a revised record of Abraham's English ancestry.
- (5) I have found no record of the brother Samuel mentioned in Edward's letter. Nor any unidentified Samuel who might be a brother of Stephen. In my branch -- Jesse's tribe -- there has been no tradition of a brother Samuel in Stephen's generation.
- (6) The "three brothers legend." In dozens of varying forms, this legend has been widespread -- often "two brothers", even in branches who know only much later ancestors. Reason is obvious. Abraham died while his children were very young -- so his grandchildren never knew him -- and his existence was forgotten, until research dug him up in the middle of the 19th century. Truth: youngest brother John died before 1671; both other brothers, Samuel and Joseph, lived out their lives in Mass. One son of Joseph got as far as New York City and nearby NJ. One son of Samuel landed in southern NJ by 1690. Otherwise, no dispersal beyond New England till just before Rev War (unless I forget some exceptions!) Primary exit from NE was through NY State -- first in eastern part, then western part. No early record in Virginia till after Rev War, and very little then.
- (7) Can you give me any further information about the Thomas who served in Civil War? Date of death?
- (8) Middle name of the Edward M who wrote that letter? John Harrison Belknap gives it as "Milton." My slight record, mentioned in an earlier letter to you, shows it as "Myron." JHB could be wrong, as his father died when he was only 2. But I hold no brief for my record.



PAUL E. BELKNAP  
691 GREENE DRIVE  
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789

Stephen

May 7, 1973

Mr. Carroll York Belknap

Dear Cousin:

From what you wrote in your interesting letter of April 25, we must be cousins at a degree of your removal which, with your superior knowledge, could put a number on.

Enclosed are the forms you sent Mike. I have filled them out to the best of my ability. My hardest problem in trying to trace my family has been in the immediate past from my great grandfather (Mike's great, great grandfather and your great, great uncle). This is due to a series of circumstances that it would be hard to duplicate:

1. The tragic death of his father before his own birth meant that my grandfather knew little or nothing of his father except the names of his <sup>(the father's)</sup> parents and that he came from the states.
2. My father was the youngest in his family and I was born when he was 55. As a result the only other member of my father's family I ever met and talked to was Uncle Thomas. He came to my father's funeral. I was then 13. From him I learned three things -  
(a.) He had run away at 16 and joined a Michigan regiment in the Civil War (this was confirmed at his



but possibly it was  
Ralph

own funeral, which I attended, when the G. A. R. gave him full military honors; (b) his home was in Alpena, Mich. (c) he had two other middle aged children - a daughter named Pearl who never married and a son (name unknown) who was then Traffic manager of the Ford Motor Co. in Detroit. My father from time-to-time talked about his brother Edward, who was his favorite and after whom I was named. My recollection is that Edward lived in Corvallis, Oregon and that he worked for Oregon State College. My half-sister Hazel, now deceased, worked for a time at San Francisco. She told me she had met Edward's son there. He was an army officer.

My father seemingly made a concerted effort to trace his family. This was <sup>mostly</sup> done before I was born. But I never went through his papers until I retired. He had corresponded with Henry H. Belknap of Salem, Mass., and J. H. Belknap, Jr. of Seattle, Wash. He also had a copy of Henry H. Belknap's 1914 study on the English ancestry of Abraham. I went to St. Mary the Great in Sawbridgeworth and checked Sir Edward at Warwick castle, Sir Robert in London and Sir Edward's grandson at Canterbury Cathedral. But like H. H. B. I ran into a blank wall as to the connection between the knightly Belknaps and us. The work I passed on to Mike is mostly my father's. I just put his notes into chronological form and added what I had picked up, so additions and corrections from you would be most welcome.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Belknap



May 11 1973

Mr Paul E Belknap  
691 Greene Drive  
Winter Park, Florida 32789

Dear Cousin:

Yes indeed we are relatively close cousins, as Belknaps go. My great great grandfather was Jonas Newton Belknap, oldest brother of your Stephen.

I'm deeply grateful for your letter and the filled-in forms. Can you also supply, for those forms, the information I somehow omitted to ask for on them -- date and place of marriage? For anything designed to help people generations from now, that sort of information is needed, to tell them where to search for what may still be unknown.

What you say about the sources your father found, in searching for a record, means that I need not pester you by asking questions about points on which your records differ from mine. He apparently got most of his data from Henry Wyckoff Belknap in Henry's early days, when Henry was just learning how to be a genealogist. Before 1910, he made lots of beginner's mistakes, as all of us do. Later, he revised and rewrote almost all his notes. But in the meantime he had given out a lot of stuff that later proved incorrect -- so his early errors have gained wide currency.

I'm enclosing copies of my notes on four early generations in our line: Samuel, Ebenezer, Samuel, and Samuel. Though some problems remain unsolved, you'll find these sheets reliable, for everything in them comes from original primary sources except where specifically noted otherwise.

I'm also enclosing, as possibly of interest to you, my notes on my own great great grandfather, Jonas Newton Belknap. I'm a descendant of his son Jesse, who took his entire family -- sons, daughters, husbands and wives, and their children -- from Ontario County NY to Kentucky to Ohio to Iowa to the Willamette Valley in Oregon: a journey that took from 1820 to 1848. In 1848 they founded what was called Belknap Settlement, a bit south of Corvallis. . . Of the hundreds of descendants of that tribe, I'm the only one to return to Connecticut where Jonas was born.

Pay no attention to the numbering on my sheets. I'm in process of renumbering my records, to bring them into line with revisions and additions.

It interests me to see that you have seen the tomb of Anne Belknap's son -- Dr Nicholas Wetton -- in Canterbury Cathedral. Have you looked him up, in the British Dictionary of National Biography? Most libraries have it. A remarkable man. Worth knowing.

If there's anything more you'd like me to supply, please ask for it.

Cordially,

129.4

302 to 306

493  
numbers

Joseph 662-665.1 + 2

Jonathan 672

Stephen

673 674 ← Stephen

~~492~~ 1120 - 1125



PAUL E. BELKNAP  
691 GREENE DRIVE  
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789

June 1, 1973

Dear Carroll,

I had just mailed my letter enclosing the chart of Stephen II's male offspring when I received the copy of your letter to J. Harrison Belknap. Let's hope he is still alive so we can get the names of his mother and paternal grandmother <sup>and the birth dates of father and grandfather</sup> thus clearing his relationships beyond doubt. My father was a very precise man, and he had corresponded regularly with his brother Edward until Edward's death in 1894. It's hard to believe he would not have known of and recorded a son John Harrison. In light of the foregoing and considering his age I suspect J. Harrison is the son of my father's brother Stephen's son Edward. Stephen III was married to Rose <sup>Ward</sup> ~~Monson~~ in 1867. Edward was their second child. Assuming he was born in 1869 or '70, Edward would have been 22 or 23 when J. Harrison was born. 1871

Your news on this will be awaited with great interest as will the details of J. Harrison's career which have so impressed you. He must be something to outshine Chauncey whose distinction has put my mundane bio in the shade in the last several editions of Who's Who in America.

Sincerely,  
Paul



MICHAEL BELKNAP  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
230 PARK AVENUE  
ROOM 1340  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017

212 725-2150

April 24, 1973

Mr. Carroll York Belknap  
25 Club Road  
Riverside, Connecticut 06878

Dear Mr. Belknap:

Thank you for your letter of April 23, 1973. Rather than attempt to fill in the forms which you sent, I enclose a recent letter from my father which traces our family history. In addition, I have sent the forms to my father. If you have any further questions, my father would be better able to provide the answers.

Sincerely yours,



Michael Belknap

MB:pr  
Enc.

PAUL E. BELKNAP  
691 GREENE DRIVE  
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789

4/5/73

Dear J & M,

Thank you for the inventory of Waldron P. Belknap, Jr.  
collection. His father seems to have been part of  
the in-group in the great days of Boston society. On  
"The Proper Bostonians" among shows as an  
exhibit of the ultra leaders a dance invitation as  
follows: "Mr. & Mrs. Charles D. Adams, Jr. Mr. & Mrs. Allen Forbes  
Mr. & Mrs. <sup>John</sup> D. Ames, Jr. Mr. & Mrs. <sup>Malcolm</sup> Genough  
Dr. & Mrs. Benjamin Bacon Mr. & Mrs. Samuel H. Halliwell  
Mr. Waldron Phoenix Belknap Mr. & Mrs. Carmichael Herick  
Mr. & Mrs. George Percy Blake Mr. & Mrs. James Lawrence, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Geo. B. Cabot Mr. & Mrs. Ronald D. Lyman  
Mr. & Mrs. Frederic C. Church Mr. & Mrs. Sumner A. Shaw  
Mr. & Mrs. J. Jefferson Coolidge Mr. & Mrs. Richard C. Story  
Mr. William A. Coolidge Mrs. Bayard Warren  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Devens Mr. & Mrs. George S. West  
Mr. & Mrs. Alexander C. Forbes Miss Katherine Winthrop  
Mr. & Mrs. Frederic Winthrop

request the pleasure of \_\_\_\_\_'s company at a small  
dance on Friday evening April the eleventh in the  
Ballroom of the Somerset Hotel at ten o'clock.

R s v p  
Mrs Samuel Halliwell

Eleven Newbury St.  
Boston, Mass. "

notability by association. That's all I know of him. He is  
probably related but quite distantly. According to authorities  
(over)



(Essex Antiquarian, Savagie's Genealogy, etc.) it is probable that most, if not all, of the Belknaps in America were descendants of Abraham and Mary Belknapp who came from Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, England, to Lynn, Mass., in 1635. Abraham was born in 1589 and died in Salem, Mass., 1643. The inventory of his estate is on file at Essex Court in Salem, Mass. Abraham's father was ~~Bennet~~ Bennet Belknapp who, according to his will, was a farmer of some substance in Sawbridgeworth. In 1610 he was Warden of St. Mary the Great Church. He died in 1624. Abraham's mother was Grace Adam, daughter of a "berebraver" of Ware. Abraham's brother, Josias, was the chief beneficiary of the will. All Abraham received was 20 shillings and his son 10 shillings: Ten unnamed poor people of the parish did better in total: they each received 3s. 4d. The mother died in 1630. Josias had a son in 1632 and a daughter in 1634. His <sup>(Abraham's)</sup> only chance to inherit the land was if Josias died without issue. The second child of his brother probably convinced him that his chance had passed. Hence the emigration in 1635.

The only other Belknapp family of which there seems to be a record in England is a brightly one beginning with Sir Robert de Belknapp, who was chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas in the time of Richard II and died in 1400, down to his great grandson, Sir Edward, who was born in 1473, was warden of Warwick Castle and a ~~privy~~ <sup>privy</sup> councillor of Henry VIII. He died 3/26/1521, leaving no sons. Shakespeare's mother



and the first Protestant Dean of Canterbury were descended from daughters in this line.

Interestingly, our line is continuously in Sawbridgeworth records from 1560, a burial in 1560, a baptism in 1561. This is within 40 years of when the name disappears in Warwickshire. There may be a connection but it so far eludes searchers.

An intriguing sidelight is that in Hertfordshire our people were called alternatively Belknap and Beltoft, the same man being called both in the same legal documents. For example, Bennett's estate was entered in the Probate Act Book (1623-26) under Belknapp, while it appeared in the Calendars of Wills under Beltoft. The Somerset House records list this document both ways.

In Hertfordshire dialect "toft" is a low hill; "knapp" is a small hill. Alternative surnames are said to have been somewhat uncommon in England although much used in the Channel Islands because of the dual language situation. This suggests to me that the first Hertfordshire Belknap may have come from the

Haverickshire branch and the local people plus the man's own children, having no knowledge of the Norman meaning of the name (fair page), thought it was English for pleasant low hill. In such case, the random mixture of "knaf" and "toft" would make sense to them. Wonder if I'll ever know.

after Abraham our line is:

- (2.) Samuel, <sup>A</sup>2nd child, born Sawbridgeworth 1627, died 1676 <sup>B</sup>Haverhill, Mass. Married a widow <sup>C</sup>Sarah Hill, probably daughter of Robert Jones of Hingham. They lived in Salem, Malden and Haverhill.
- (3.) Ebenezer, 5th child, 3rd son, born Haverhill 1665, died 1760 near Plaistow, New Hampshire. Married 1690 Hannah Ayer of Haverhill. Lived in Haverhill and Dramingham, Mass.
- (4.) Samuel 7th child, 4th son, born Dramingham 1703, died 1757 Enfield, Conn. Married July 9, 1723 at Mansfield, Conn., Mary Dickinson daughter of James and Mary Wood Dickinson of Rowley, Mass. They lived in ~~Somers~~ <sup>Somers</sup>, Mansfield and Enfield, Conn.



- (5) Samuel, 4<sup>th</sup> child, 3<sup>rd</sup> son, born June 13, 1731, Enfield, Conn., died 1775 in Cambridge, in camp the day after Bunker Hill <sup>Battle</sup> in which it is said he became overheated. He married Mary Newton (his brother Job married her sister Phebe). They lived in Folland and Windham, Conn.
- (6) Stephen 6<sup>th</sup> child and son, born Folland, Conn., 1769. Drowned in Burlington Bay, Ont., Can., December, 1814. He had settled in Antario and married Eleanor Middaugh. They lived in Hamilton, Ont.
- (7) Stephen 2<sup>nd</sup> child, only son (born 6 months after his father drowned) born June, 1815 in Hamilton, died Feb. 22, 1890 in Michigan. He married Frances Fox in 1837. They moved to Michigan in 1860.
- (8) Joseph Howard 6<sup>th</sup> child, 4<sup>th</sup> son, born Oxford, Ontario September 18, 1854, died August, 1923, Bay City, Michigan. Married (1) Emma Dell Sept. 1887 (2 daughters) (2) Ida M. Dell July 1907 (1 son, 1 daughter). He lived in Omer and Bay City, Mich.



6.

(9) Paul Edward, 3rd child, 1st son, <sup>and only</sup> born  
March 17, 1910, Bay City, Mich. married  
Mary Elizabeth Gibb, July, 1936.

See all the work you made me with Waldron's  
inventory. But, thought you should have this  
information. You, Mike, are the 10<sup>th</sup> generation in  
America.

Love,  
Dad

P.S. If you have a Xerox at your office, please  
make three copies; send one to Gay, one  
to Miriam and one to me. I'd hate to go  
through this job again.

D.

April 23 1973

Mr Michael Belknap  
Corporate Property Investors  
230 Park Ave, NYC 10017

Dear Mr Belknap:

Thank you for sending me the sheets of data for yourself and your father.

To my surprise, I find that I must ask for still more help. For the first time in many years, I'm unable to link up the lineage of someone who names his grandfather.

So, please, will you fill out more sheets for me -- on the enclosed forms?

I'll be grateful. What I've read about you makes me eager to include you in the Belknap genealogy I'm preparing.

Cordially,

CYBelknap:

PAUL E. BELKNAP  
691 GREENE DRIVE  
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789

May 19, 1973

Dear Carroll,

Thank you for your May 15 memo giving me the correct date on the Shakespeare - Belknap tie and the relationships between Sir Robert and Sir Edward. Please don't pull any punches in correcting me. Like you, I am trying to find out the truth.

I hope that I haven't turned off Rowse with my misinformation. Because, given Josias' time and place when he initiated the name change, the stage-name theory seems possible. This is so even without the Shakespeare connection.

Your mention of Anne Belknap as an ancestor of the present Queen suggests another source from which Josias may have picked up the name Belknap as a stage name. I believe the Queen's relationship to Anne is through the Queen Mother (Bowes-Lyon). A prominent resident in the Blackfriars at the time of Josias and Shakespeare was Henry Bowes, of the family of the present Queen Mother. Do you happen to have information on his or his wife's antecedents? Shakespeare's printer and boyhood friend, Richard Field, was in Blackfriars too.

Cordially,  
Paul



April 25 1973

Mr Paul E Belknap  
691 Greene Drive  
Winter Park, Florida 32789

Dear Mr Belknap:

I am delighted to receive from your son Michael, today, a copy of the letter you wrote on April 5 -- for it gives me something I've been trying to find for some years. Till today, all I had been able to learn about the Stephen who was a brother of my own great great grandfather consisted of the name of his wife and the fact that he drowned.

Of course I'll be grateful if you can complete the forms that Michael has forwarded to you.

From the detail in your letter, I judge that you must have done a good deal of work on the family history. Indeed, there are a number of points in your letter that I'd like to ask questions about -- where you seem to have drawn information from sources that I haven't seen, so that your record may be more accurate than mine at points on which there are differences. May I write to you about this?

I'm enclosing something that you may wish to have: a copy of my notes on Abraham. They contain everything that is factually known about him, including some things that have been learned in the past few years, such as the date of his marriage and the full name of his wife.

sheet

The "HMB" whose initials appear on that sheet was Henry Wyckoff Belknap -- the man who traced our English ancestry back in 1914 and 1931. When I began serious work on Belknap genealogy some years ago, I was lucky enough to find his notes and correspondence, which had been in storage since his death in 1946, and was permitted to make copies of them. Since then, I've been verifying his records and revising them and adding to them, so that my files now contain about 4500 names.

I'm glad to be able to add, now, the descendants of Stephen.

Cordially,

C Y Belknap:

May 25 1973

Mr Paul E Belknap  
691 Greene Drive  
Winter Park, Florida 32789

Dear Paul:

I thank you for taking the time and trouble to copy the letter from your uncle Edward. It's my last view of my great grandfather Jesse, for he died in 1881 -- a year after Edward visited him.

Edward's name and location roused a memory in my mind. Following a hunch, I've found another time when the trails crossed. According to my records, his widow Elizabeth Hooper, daughter of John & Sarah Hooper, married as her second husband Webster Clark Belknap, one of Jesse's grandsons, in 1901. It was Webster's 2nd marriage, too. Her first husband, Edward, is said to have died in March 1894.

Your trail and mine almost crossed too. Like you, I was married in Evanston -- possibly by the same rector though my marriage took place not at the church but in the home of John Henry Wigmore, dean of Northwestern Law School. We lived in Highland Park till we moved East in 1932.

I fear I don't think much of the Bowes Connection -- in regard to Josias. The Bowes name came into the present Queen's line only 7 generations ago -- not back in Josias's time, which would be 16 generations ago -- or thereabouts.

QUERY: Does the name John Harrison Belknap mean anything to you? Born 1892. One of my "unidentified" Belknaps. I think possibly a descendant of Stephen.

Yours