

ORIGINS OF THE MANSURS OF New England

The name Mansur is not a corruption of any similar French name. It is derived from the old NORMAN MANSUR, which was a Christian name and by the Normans introduced into England, but not now frequently met with in England.

The earliest mention of the name in New England occurs on the marriage record of Charlestown, Mass., and it is there spelled "er".

James Manser was a passenger to Barbados, on the "Alexander" May 2, 1635. See Drake's Founders of New England. He was age 27.

"The name is from Richard Manesier, Normandy 1198. Quotation from "the Norman People" by Henry S. King and Company

It is probable that the Mansurs in this Country came from IPSWICH, ENGLAND. There was at that time a family spelling the name just that way living in Ipswich, and one of the men was a mariner. He may have owned a ship which came to this country, or have been in command of one, and have brought a relative over, and that relative may have become the ancestor of the family in this country; that would account for one of the name being listed among the passengers of any of the early vessels.

Charlestown was the center of a settlement of many fishermen from the Isle of Jersey. It is possible that Mansur was one of this group. The argument against this view is that the "er" has always been sounded, while in the other cases the spelling has been changed to agree with the pronunciation.

Charles Harley Mansur in 1891 wrote to John H. Mansur that he has heard the tradition that the family went to England with William the Conqueror from Normandy; heard also that early in the history of New England three members came from England, and two were killed in a battle with the Indians, and that all Mansurs are descended from the other one.

FIRST GENERATION

Robert Mansur of Charlestown (Mass.)

I. ROBERT MANSER married Elizabeth Brooks, a widow (age 23) June 6, 1670.

He was living in 1677-8, but probably dead before 1680. (Charlestown title lists), but there was no settlement of his estate.

Elizabeth Manser, Sr. and Elizabeth Manser, Jr. ordered to be summoned into court for not appearing at the court upon summons of the Charlestown Committee Oct. 7, 1684.

October 29, 1684, they appeared in court and their answer being accepted they were dismissed. (Middlesex Court Records).

Wyman, in his "Estates," records that the widow Elizabeth Manser was to have a chamber at Thomas Barber's. October 21, 1689. (Selectmen's Records).

Elizabeth Manser, widow of Robert, died January 3, 1694-5. There is no settlement of her estate.

Children: 1. John born about 1671. 2. Thomas born before 1680. 3. William, born before 1680. 4. Elizabeth, age 13 in 1685, married Dec. 3, 1687 to Thomas Pope, a mariner. 5. Robert, born April 15, 1674 at Charlestown. (see "Savages Genealogical Dictionary, Vol. E, page 149.)

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The Second Generation

(11.) 1. JOHN MANSUR, possible of Boston, but probably of Charlestown. He may have been born about 1671, as he married in 1695. Wyman says there is no doubt that he is the son of Robert Manner. Age, residence and station all go to prove it.

John Mansur married in Boston, April 24, 1695, by Rev. James Allen to Mary Mirick (16). He is described as of Charlestown, and the bride of Boston. His name is spelled Monsir. Wyman says Mary Mirick had been a servant of Anthony Stoddard in Charlestown.

No children are recorded to this marriage. Woburn records the marriage of John Mansur to Elizabeth Henshaw of Charlestown, June 3, 1701. They had the following children, born in Charlestown: 1-1 Elizabeth, born January 28, 1703, baptized March 28, 1703. 1-2 John, born November 10, baptized Nov. 11, 1705.

There is no settlement of the estates of John or his wife.

Elizabeth Henshaw was the daughter of Thomas and Hannah (Cleveland) Henshaw of Woburn, and was born July 30, 1678. She was baptized Dec. 20, 1702. Thomas Henshaw, son of Joshua and Elizabeth (Summer) Henshaw. Born (probably in England) about 1650; died Woburn (Mass.) Jan. 16, 1699-1700. Married Woburn Sept. 24, 1677 to Hannah Cleveland, daughter of Hoses and Ann (Winn) Cleveland.

CHILDREN: Elizabeth born July 30, 1678, married John Mansur June 3, 1701, Charlestown; Thomas; Hannah, born 1683; William; Sam, Ebenezer and Josiah.

The Henshaw family in England was respected for wealth, rank and influence. Thomas Henshaw was a soldier in King Phillip's War. (Mass. Archive IXVIII34).

The Third Generation

III. 1-2. JOHN MANSUR of Methuen (Mass.), born Nov. 10, 1705, son of JOHN, son of Robert. He was of age in 1726. He first comes to notice in 1729.

JOHN Mansur for L72 (72 British pounds) (i.e. (\$235) buys of Abel Austin and his wife Sarah of Methuen, forty acres in Methuen, bounded on JOHN Guttason Jr., Thomas Astine, James Baker and JOHN Guttason; deed dated April 15, 1729; acknowledged May 14, 1729; recorded July 10, 1740. (Essex Deeds 79-134).

John Mansur of Andover, husbandman, buys of Thomas Astin and wife, Sarah, or Methuen, for L26 land there, being 20 acres, bounding on Benjamin Gage by Haverhill former line, late Eben. Barker, also on Haverhill line and Wm. Gutterson, May 24, 1726; acknowledged May 27, 1729; recorded July 10, 1740. (Essex Deeds, 79-134).

JOHN MANSUR of Methuen, married in Andover Dec. 31, 1732, by Mr. Phillips to Hannah Lovejoy of the South Parish (Andover Records).

John Mansur (spelled Mancer on the rolls) served in the French War. He was of the Train Band of Methuen on 1757, (Mass. Archives 95-298). John Mancer, Jr. was also of the TrainBand.

John Mancer appears on a muster roll sworn to March 1, 1759 as of Lieut. Chandler's Co., Col. Osgood's regiment which marched on an alarm to the relief of Fort William Henry Aug. 1757. They marched from Andover August 15 to Worcester. Dated Andover March 1, 1759.

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CHILDREN: John, born June 21, 1734; 1-2-2, WILLIAM, born Jan. 1, 1737; 1-2-3 Elizabeth, born about 1740; James, born Sept. 7, 1744; 1-2-5, Samuel, born 1745.

John appears to have been a man of prominence in the community and was what is called a "tithing man". This curious office is now obsolete, but during its continuance it was a very important part of the economy of the New England Village, and brought the official into very close relations with the townspeople. While his duties were connected with the church, he was also a town officer, and had many semi-secular duties to perform. Each tithing man had several neighboring families under his charge, originally ten as the term "tithing" would signify. He enforced the learning of the church catechism at home and sometime during the week visited the houses to hear the children recite their catechism. These families he watched especially on Sundays, to see whether they all attended church and did not loiter on the way. In some Massachusetts towns, he was ordered to watch on weekdays to keep "boys and all persons from swimming in the water." Truly ten large families, with many boys, such as were common in New England, must have kept him busy on hot August days.

He inspected taverns and reported all disorderly persons within, forbade the sale of intoxicating liquors to them, and had power as a constable to arrest any evil doers, administered the "oath of fidelity" to new citizens, and warned undesirable visitors to leave town. He could arrest persons who walked or rode at too fast a pace while going to meeting on Sunday, or who made needless visits or took unnecessary rides on Sunday, or otherwise broke the Sunday laws. Within the meetinghouse, the tithing man kept order by beating out dogs, correcting unruly and noisy boys and waking those who slept. To accomplish this, he sometimes walked up and down the church aisles, carrying a stick, which had a knob on one end, and a dangling foxtail on the other. It is said that he tapped the boys on the head with the knobbed end of the stick, and tickled the faces of sleeping church attendants with the foxtail. In those days everybody, old and young was supposed to attend church. If anyone was absent, it was noticed, and if the absence continued three Sundays it was the duty of the tithing man to visit the family and ascertain the cause.

JOHN MANSUR lived and died a strict Puritan, and now lies buried at Methuen, Mass., Elmwood Cemetery, beside his son, James Mansur.

The Fourth Generation

1-2-2. 1. WILLIAM MANSUR, son of John, born in Dracut (Mass.) January 1, 1737; died 1808. Married Oct. 30, 1762 to Isabel Harvey of Dracut. He went from Dracut, Mass. to Wilton, New Hampshire, now Temple, in 1762, and it may be that he was one of the very first settlers. He purchased Lot No. 1, Wilton range of Temple, lots in the extreme southwest corner of the town, then a wilderness, and possible only to be traveled by marked trees. (History of Temple, page 231.).

He had received a grant from the government for military services in the Revolution.

It was evidently a wild lonesome place, for a grandchild of Mr. Mansur remembers being told that wolves very frequently sat upon the hill around the house and stared into the windows, and the bears could be distinctly heard calling their cubs, under the hill, and so late as March 1783, it was voted to give "ten dollars to any town inhabitant who kills a wolf and brings ye head to the selectmen, and has ye ears cut

off by then," and in Sept. 1808, Major Heald caught a large bear in a trap in Theodore Barker's cornfield, which weighed 300 lbs, dressed, and another was caught in Joseph Searls field. The last remembered bear hunt was in 1815. Bears remained longer in the area than wolves. The following story is related by Deacon N. Wheeler of Temple (History of Temple, page 175).

"William Mansur was an early settler (I suppose the first on the lot now owned by Summer Blanchard at the Falls) Sept. 14, 1762.

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"He shut up his dog at home and started for Methuen, crossing the river southeast from his house at the fordway. He soon heard his dog yelping after him, and looking, saw a panther following. The dog ran under a heap of brush, and the panther sprang on top of it as a cat after a mouse. The dog left the brush and ran to his master for protection. Mr. Mansur faced the creature, smote the ground with his staff, and made a formidable appearance as possible, and he supposed by the help of his scarlet vest, so terrified the animal that he was pleased to run away and leave him to pursue his journey."

Stirring times were at hand. The storm of resistance to British oppression, which has been gathering for some time, was about to break, and everybody in the settlement must take sides either for or against the Colonies. Fortunately, we are not left in uncertainty as to where William Mansur stood. His name appears several times among those who espoused the * "patriots cause" and we have a pretty fair account of his services during the "times that troubled men's souls."

Early in the year 1776, the General Committee of Safety sent a communication to each of the several towns. That to Temple reads (History of Temple, page 105):

"To the selectmen of Temple, Colony of New Hampshire. In committee of safety, April 2, 1776. In order to carry out the unwritten resolves of the Honorable Continental Congress into execution, you are requested to desire all males above 21 years, lunatics, Idiots and Negroes excepted, to sign the Declaration on this paper, and when so done to make return hereof, together with the name or names of all who refuse to sign the same, to the General ASSEMBLY of Committee of Safety of this colony.
M. WEARE, chairman.

"In Congress, March 14th, 1776

"Resolved that it be recommended to the several Assemblies, Conventions and Councils, or Committees of Safety of the United Colonies, immediately to cause all persons within their respective colonies, who are notoriously disaffected to the cause of America, or who have not associated or refuse to associate, to defend by arms the United Colonies against the hostile attempts of the British fleets and armies.
Charles Thompson, secretary"

The Town Council immediately took action, as follows: (Minutes of Town Council):

"In consequence of the above resolution of the Honorable Continental Congress, and to show our determination in joining our American brethren in defending their lives, liberties and properties of the inhabitants of the United Colonies--

"We, the subscribers, do solemnly profess our entire willingness, at the risk of our lives and fortunes with arms, to oppose the hostile attempts of the British fleets and armies against the United American Colonies, whenever and to such degree as such attempts of the British may require."

84 persons signed this, only two of whom, however, concern this narrative. The 12th name is Peter Felt, who was the father of Hannah Felt, who was married to Stephen Mansur (1-2-2-6), and the 36th name is WILLIAM MANSUR.

But he evidently was a man of deeds as well as words. We read (History of Temple, pages 96 and 97):
"April ye 19th, 1775

"A list of those persons (fifty-six) who marched from Temple to Cambridge, Mass., on the alarm of the 19th of April 1775"

WILLIAM MANSUR appears on the list, and the record shows he was gone six and one-half days.

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But this was not his only service. Twice afterwards he volunteered in the Continental Army. We find the following (History of Temple, NH page 104):

"A list or those who engaged in ye Continental service, in Captain Ezra Towne's company in Colonel Reed's regiment for one year from January 7, 1776". There are sixteen names in the list, of which William MANSUR is the tenth, and Peter Felt, before mentioned is the fourteenth. The town of Temple afterwards paid to each of these men seven pounds and four pence in addition to their wages, etc. Again, June 29, 1777, more than a year later and presumably after the expiration of his former service, an alarm came from Ticonderoga, and the turnout was immense. There was a great rush to the town ammunition deposit, and there nine men drew powder, balls and flints, and the next day they marched for Ticonderoga, thirty-seven all told, and in the list the name of the 20 th is WILLIAM MANSUR. They were all in Capt. Drury's company of Lieut. Col. P. Heald's regiment, and received in all 88 pounds and 16 pence. William Mansur remained in the company during the seige, and when the American forces were compelled to evacuate the fort retreated with them into Vermont.

William Mansur was present at the surrender of Burgoyne.

William Mansur married Isabella Harvey in 1762. She was born in Dracut, Mass. in 1739. She moved to Temple, NH soon after her marriage, for it is reported that she spent the greater part of her life there. Tradition relates that more than once she visited her friends in Dracut traveling the whole journey of forty miles on horseback in one day, carrying her baby (Stephen) in her arms, and fording the Nerriman River on the way, the water rising to the pommel of the saddle. She survived her husband about 18 years and died in Temple, NH Dec. 27, 1826, aged 87 years, leaving more than 80 descendants. She was a daughter of Lord John Harvey of Limerick, Ireland.

Children (born in Temple, NH): 1-2-2-1 William, born Aug. 23, 1763; 2. John born March 16, 1765; Elizabeth, born March 4, 1767: died in Andover, Vermont 1858; married Joseph Carrelton; JOSEPH, born March 23; 1769; Ezra, born April 19, 1771; Stephen, born Dec. 18, 1773; 7. Aaron, born March 7, 1776; 8. Jeremy, born April 16, 1778, died 1791; 9. Hannah, born Oct. 13, 1779; 10. Harvey, born July 11, 1784, died young. On pages 101 and 102 of the History of Temple, is a census of all the people of temple. William Mansur is down as having in 1775 the following people in the family males under 15, 5; males from 16 to 50 and not in ye army, 1; females 2; guns 1; gunpowder, three-fourths pound.

The Fifth Generation

Joseph Mansur of Morgan, VT., son of WILLIAM, born at Temple, NH March 23, 1769; died at Morgan, VERMONT Sept. 1860. Married at Danville, 1798 to Abiah, daughter of Capt. Elliott of Danville.' She was a schoolteacher and was born in 1777 and died in Nov. 1860. Joseph Mansur removed in 1816 to Stanstead, P.Q. and remained there six years. From 1822 until death he lived in Morgan, VERMONT. He was a shoemaker and a man of Christian virtues.

CHILDREN: 1-2-2-4-1. WARREN, born June 23, 1800; 2. William, born March 1802; 3. Betsey, born March 1804.

The Sixth Generation

1-2-2-4-1. WARREN MANSUR, son of JOSEPH, born in Danville, Vermont June 23, 1800; died at Island Pond, Vermont January 1885, married at Morgan, Vermont August 1825 to Jane A., daughter of John Morse of Barnet, VT., a descendant of a Mayflower pilgrim. She was born March 1807 and died October 1891. Doth Warren and Jane Mansur are buried in the cemetery at Island Pond, VT.

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Mr. Mansur moved to Island Pond, VERMONT in 1881. He was a farmer and a Republican. His first vote was for John Quincy Adams as President.

Children, (1-2-2-4-1-1): Susan, married T. F. Ballard of Springfield, Mass., who- died Sept. 1880 leaving no children; 2. Joseph Aaron, settled in Island Pond, 1859, died there Oct. 1896. He held many town and County offices and a commission as an officer in the State Guards during the Civil War. Unmarried; 3. Warren, Jr., died of consumption at Morgan in 1059. He was a school teacher; 4. ELIZA JANE, born Feb. 21, 1833 at Morgan, VT.; 5. Abiab A., born 1836; 6. Jacob C.; Sarah C., twin sister of Jacob C.; 8. Nary Ann, who lived on the homestead at Island Pond, VERMONT unmarried, She was a schoolteacher; 9. Zophar, died in infancy; 10. Zophar N., born in Morgan, VT., Nov. 19, 1843. (See page 7 for further details); 11. Luella N., unmarried, lived in Island Pond on the homestead; 12. John K*E died in infancy; 13. Orange L., a grocer at Island Pond. He was assistant postmaster for many years; 14. Emma E formerly a schoolteacher, married H. H. Hobson of Island Pond, a lumber merchant in Hastings, ME.

The Seventh Generation

(1-2-2-4-1-1-4): ELIZA JANE married MARK WIGGIN (S) of Barton, VT., a merchant, April 15, 1860. Hark Wiggins was born April 10, 1824 at Morgan, VT., the son of Jonathan W. and Folly Wiggins.

ELIZA JANE MANSUR was born Feb. 21, 1833 at Morgan, VERMONT She married MARK WIGGINS of Barton, VERMONT April 15, 1860 with Elder A. Howard, a Methodist minister officiating, at Morgan, VERMONT

Three children were born to this marriage: Anna Gertrude, Agnes (Ida) Mae and Evelyn. With his family, Mark Wiggins moved to Minnesota in 1864, where he later purchased a farm in Albin Township, Drown County, MN. (Rural Sleepy Eye). In Minnesota, he farmed and worked__ part-time as a carpenter. As a young man he suffered from polio which left him somewhat crippled. He walked with a limp, and when riding a wagon, would always ride on his knees with a pillow underneath.

Eliza Jane died of pneumonia on March 9. 1885 and is buried in Home Cemetery, Sleepy Eye, MN.

William Elliott Somerville, formerly of Olmsted County moved to Brown County about 1874. He later operated the Wiggins farm for Mark Wiggins, and married Mr. Wiggins daughter, Agnes Mae on March 20, 1881. The 1885 Minnesota census (Roll 22) of Drown County, Albin Township, enumerated 18 May 1885 lists the following family unit:

No. 58 William E. Somerville age 24
Agnes Mae (Wiggins) wife age 24
Earl Somerville age 3
Mark Somerville age 1
Mark Wiggin age 62

Eva Mae (Wiggins) age 15

Born after 1885 to William and Agnes Mae at the Albin Township farm were: Lee Lot Somerville (Dec. 7, 1885) and Birdie Glen (March 12, 1889).

After the death of his wife, Mr. Wiggins continued to live in the Sleepy Eye area until 1898 when he moved to Lamberton to make his home 'with his daughter, Evelyn (Mrs. John Woolley), who later cared for him in his declining months. He died of cancer on June 5, 1903 following an 11-month illness. He is buried in the Home Cemetery, Sleepy Eye, beside his wife, Eliza Jane. Others buried on this cemetery lot are his daughter, the first Mrs. William Somerville (Agnes Mae Wiggins), who died Feb. 13, 1890 and Alexander Somerville, infant son of Win. and Mary Somerville, who died Nov. 6, 1895.

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For further details of descendants of the Mansur family, i.e., of Agnes May Wiggins Somerville, please turn to page 7, "The Family of William Somerville and Agnes May Somerville,"

The following biography of Zophar H. Mansur may be of interest to family members. Zophar Mansur was a son of Warren Mansur, younger brother of Eliza Jane Mansur Wiggins, and uncle of Agnes May Wiggin (first wife of William Elliott Somerville).

"Zophar N. Mansur, son of Warren Mansur, was born in Morgan, VT., Nov. 19, 1843, and married Nellie I. Newhall of Norway, ME. August 16, 1868. He died March 12, 1914.

"Colonel Mansur located at Island Pond in 1066 where he held the office of postmaster from February, 18 until December 1884. In 1911, he was president of the National Bank of Derby Line, VERMONT

"Zophar Mansur is thus referred to in an article in "The Vermonter," a monthly magazine published at St. Albans, Vermont

"The Hon. Z. N. Mansur is admirably equipped for the responsible duties of this office (Collector of customs), District of Mamphremagog, VERMONT His experience in government service and his business ability render his selection most fitting Colonel Mansur is one of Vermont's Honored Union Veterans, and an empty sleeve testifies to his gallantry and heroism in defense of 'Old Glory'.

Col., Mansur was a student of Montpelier Union School, a graduate of Derby, VERMONT Academy. Enlisted August 13, 1862 in Co. K., 10th Vermont Regiment, and served three years (part of the time as corporal). He participated in the battles of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Hanover CourtHouse, Cold Harbor, Waldon Railroad, Monocacy and Opequan Creek. In the latter battle, which took place Sept. 19, 1864, he lost his right arm. After being honorably discharged on account of the loss of his arm, he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1875. He was subsequently postmaster at Island Pond and- Deputy Collector of Customs in charge of the port of Island Pond under Harrison's administration. Col. Mansur was elected State's Attorney of Essex County in 1886, representative from Brighton in the Legislature of 1886, Senator from Essex County in 1888, president of the Vermont Officer's reunion society in 1889, Dept. Commander of the O. A. K. in 1892 and president of the Sons of the American Revolution of Vermont in 1884. "Col. Mansur was elected Lieutenant-Governor of Vermont in 1894. He has settled more estates and effected the sale of more real estate than any other man in Essex County. He is one of the trustees of the Soldier's Home in Bennington, VT., director of the National Bank in Derby Line,

VERMONT REFERENCES; "The House of Mansur" by Mary Rebecca Ellis

Charlestown Title lists

Wyman's "Estates"

Savages Genealogical Dictionary

Woburn Records

Andover Records

History of Temple

Recollections of Evelyn Wooley, Lamberton, MN.

Recollection of Birdie Somerville Hanks, Le Roy, MN.