

HILDRETH HIGHLIGHTS

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Leonarde Hildrethe

Another Hildreth Founding Father

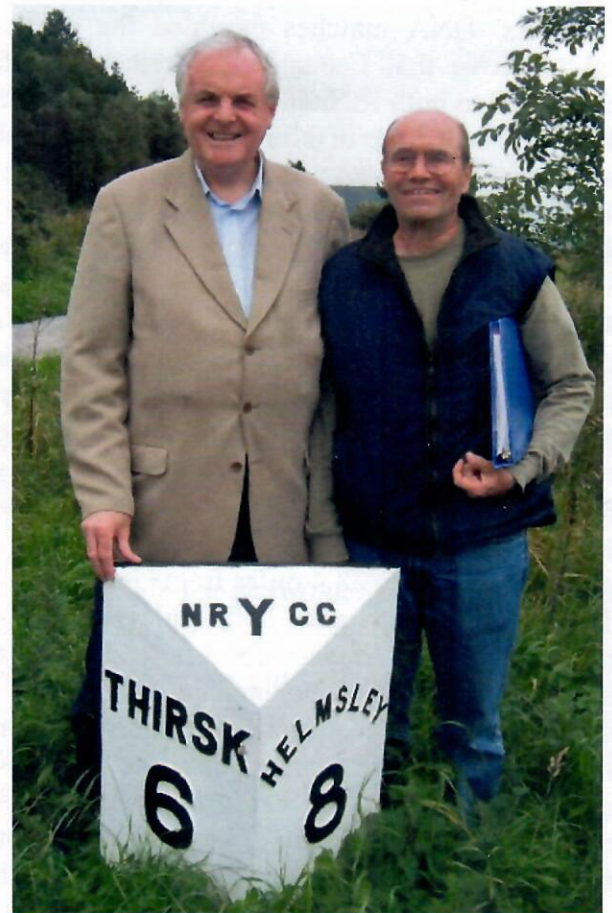
By Raymond C "Bud" Hildreth

Since 1977, the year that the present day Hildreth Family Association was reorganized by my good friends, the late George and Barbara Parkhurst, there has long been the question of the lineage of several Hildreths whose names would surface, but whose ancestry could not be traced to either Richard or Thomas Hildreth. The first such reference appeared in the January 1984 issue of Hildreth Highlights authored by George Parkhurst concerning Hildreths who came to America after Richard & Thomas Hildreth but were of unknown lineage. He goes on to detail a specific case in point. A John Hildreth arrived in the U.S. in 1871, and eventually descended on Holyoke MA arriving as a 23 year old on Independence Day Monday July 5th 1875. He went on to study law and was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar Association and eventually was appointed as a district judge. During his many years in Holyoke he became a beloved contributor to his community, church and profession.

The next reference to Hildreths not tied in to the Richard and Thomas lines appeared as the lead article in the April 1996 Highlights "New Branches on Our Family Tree" written by Dr. Franklin P. Mason II of Clayton CA. This focused on three Hildreth brothers, James, John and Richard Hildreth, Jr. who came to the U.S. during the period from 1869 to 1879. There are obviously many who descend from these three brothers living in the U.S. and we would like to hear from them.

Then a solicitor from the UK, Steven M Hildreth, had an article published in the July 1998 issue of Hildreth Highlights titled "An English Cousin's Heritage" This is a well-researched, very interesting article on the earliest Hildreth ancestors, and their probable arrival in England, including the approximate time and areas they settled. He also traced and detailed his own lineage back some distance. However, the question of his earliest ancestry and that of others lingered. After lengthy and extensive

research by both Steven and Dr. Franklin Mason of California, who traveled to the UK in 2008 and met with Steven M. Hildreth, they collaborated to publish an article in the July 2008 issue of Hildreth Highlights titled "The Descendants of Leonarde and Emmate Hildrethe of Thirlby, Yorkshire, England.



*l. to r. Steven M. Hildreth,
Franklin P. Mason II
at top of hill in Thirlby, 2008*

Both Steven and Franklin had traced their lineage to this same ancestor, but did not know of what relationship this forebearer had to Richard and Thomas Hildreth, if any.

Fortunately, a third cousin of Franklin, James M. Hildreth, a now proven descendant of Leonarde Hildreth who is living in New Jersey, agreed to have his DNA tested. He submitted his DNA to Family Tree DNA of Houston Texas in 2011. This is the same company with whom I initiated the Hildreth family DNA project in 2001 when I became the first Hildreth male to take the Y-DNA test with them. Family Tree DNA is one of the earliest, most respected, and largest companies in the DNA testing field.

James' DNA produced a match to six Hildreth males, including me, most who are documented descendants of Richard and Thomas. However, at that time I did not know that James was a direct descendant of a Leonarde Hildreth. He was also found to be of the G-M201 haplogroup, as are most Hildreth males who have been tested. Once Franklin informed me that James was a documented Leonarde Hildreth descendant, it immediately solved the mystery of whose ancestral line those many formerly unidentified Hildreths were in. For me this revelation "sealed the deal." James' DNA matches provided the evidence needed to prove that Leonarde Hildreth is in fact closely related to both Richard and Thomas Hildreth.

Leonarde Hildreth of Thirlby, County Yorkshire, England, was born about 1580 and died in 1615, so was probably born one generation prior to that of Richard and Thomas. Records were not being written and recorded in England until almost 1600, so a written record of Leonarde Hildreth's birth does not exist, although his death was recorded. By deduction, his birth is estimated to be about 1580. All three, Leonarde, Richard and Thomas lived in the contiguous counties of Yorkshire and Durham. Thirlby and Gainford in County Durham are only about 35 miles apart. Over Siltan, also thought to be an origin for early Hildreths, is only 28.4 miles from Gainford.

It is interesting to note that while Richard and Thomas Hildreth left England for a new, difficult and adventurous life in New England in the 1630's, the Leonarde Hildreth descendants who came to America did not appear to leave England until the late 1860's, some 230 years later. One can only speculate as to their reasons, and they may be varied, although religious persecution and the right to practice their strict Puritanism unhindered by the Church of England appeared to be the primary motivation for the departure from England of both Richard and Thomas.



James M. Hildreth

Now back to Leonarde Hildreth of Thirlby, Yorkshire, England. He remained in Thirlby until his death in his early or mid-thirties. He married a woman named Emmate. It is not known exactly when Leonarde and Emmate arrived in Thirlby and they were apparently the only Hildreth family living there, although there were other Hildreth lines within 30 miles or less which obviously included the parents of Richard and Thomas Hildreth. Leonarde and Emmate's first child, a girl who they named Fraunces, was born in 1601. They then had two more children, John born in 1603, and Elizabethe, born in 1605, the same year as Richard Hildreth. From the dates that their children were born, it is logical to assume that Leonarde and Emmate were born around 1580.

Sadly, Leonarde and his wife Emmate both died in 1615, before any of their three children had reached adulthood; they were buried within three days of each other. Their untimely early deaths could have been the result of an epidemic called "a burning fever" which killed many people around that time. From the Descendants Report sent to me by Franklin Mason, one can readily note that the last "e" in Leonarde Hildreth was dropped by his son John as all of John's five children in generation three were of the family name Hildreth (without the "e").

Three brothers, James, John and Richard, Jr. who we now know were direct descendants of Leonarde, came to the U.S. between the years 1869 and 1879 and we know that they have several descendants scattered around the U.S. Franklin has sent me a CD containing considerable information on these three brothers and of their descendancy from Leonarde. It also contains a chart that focuses on the American descendants of Leonarde.

It is quite evident that considerable time and research have been devoted to complete this Leonarde Hildreth Descendant's Report. There are almost 1300 people and 368 marriages in the family tree. Should anyone be interested in having a copy, please email me at budhildreth@gmail.com.

I would be remiss were I not to again bring up the names who have given a tremendous amount of time, effort, and yes, love for the Hildreth genealogy and are responsible for bringing Leonarde Hildreth to the forefront. That would be Solicitor Steven M. Hildreth of the UK and Dr. Franklin Mason of California, with whom I have had considerable email correspondence. Both trace their lineage to Leonarde Hildreth. And of course, we are indebted to James M. Hildreth for providing invaluable data to Franklin and for submitting his DNA which has tied this package together. I am most appreciative of receiving Franklin's proactive email dated January 4, 2017 urging the HFA to recognize Leonarde as a most deserving Hildreth founding father. His wish is now being honored!

The four related articles referenced in this article are all contained in the Hildreth Heritage DVD, produced by Darry D. Eggleston and this writer in 2011. For those who would like the DVD, we have copies available for sale for \$25 each, including shipping costs. One may send a check made out to the Hildreth Family Association to our treasurer, Stephen D Hildreth, 10 Plant Ave., Hudson MA 01749-1406. The DVD, with instructions, will be promptly sent via first class mail.

There is little question that Leonarde Hildreth should have been recognized as a founding father by the Hildreth Family Association some time ago. Unfortunately, when James Hildreth had his DNA tested by Family Tree DNA in 2011, he did not indicate that he was a Leonarde Hildreth descendant, so I was not aware that he was in another Hildreth line. I assumed he was of the Richard or Thomas Hildreth branches as are most of the 43 others who have joined the Hildreth DNA Project at Family Tree DNA.

But, not to dwell on past omissions, I now could not be happier to have so many new cousins. I hope in the coming days, we can make contact with several of them and invite them to become contributing HFA members. I think I speak not only for myself, but for the entire HFA by shouting out a loud and prolonged three bully Hildreth cheer to **Leonarde Hildreth**, our newly minted **Hildreth Founding Father**.

Bios of the key players:

Franklin P. Mason II

Franklin P. Mason II traces his genealogy back to Leonarde Hildreth b. about 1580. (See July 2008 Hildreth Highlights) He was born in Ossining, New York and grew up in Westport, Connecticut, where he graduated in 1960 from Staples High School. He received his B.A. degree in Chemistry in 1966 from Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan and his Ph.D. in Chemistry in 1971, from the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon. He taught Chemistry at the college level for several years, most recently at San Jose in San Jose, California. He then became a Technical Writer and then Manager of Technical Publications at Finnigan Corporation also in San Jose. He retired after 20 years in Technical Publications.

Franklin is married to Christina (Tina) Potter Mason and they live in Clayton, California. They have four children: Karen, Ann Elizabeth, Franklin III, and Paul, and five grandchildren. Tina is a Dentist with a thriving practice in Clayton.

Steven M. Hildreth

"Steven was born in 1947 in Wetherby, a town in the center of Britain's biggest county of Yorkshire and which is also mid-way between the English and Scottish capitals of London and Edinburgh (that's only 400 miles--we are small over here!) Though his family is solidly Yorkshire, Steven lived in many places in Britain because of his Dad's job.

Graduating in law, Steven worked in London for two years and then as a lecturer at the University of Law in Chester and then in York (a fascinating city that he loves and where he is a qualified tour guide). Then back to Chester (also a lovely city) when he was also appointed part-time Immigration Judge--hearing appeals in immigration and asylum cases.

In retirement, Steven got ordained as a minister in the Church of England (unpaid). [A very wide-ranging church which is kind of episcopal meets Southern Baptist meets charismatic new church.

James M Hildreth

James M. Hildreth is descended from Leonarde Hildreth of Thirlby, Felixkirk, Yorkshire, UK. As such, he is a cousin of authors Franklin P. Mason II and Steven Hildreth.

James' grandchildren are carrying on the line from their 4th great grandfather, James Hildreth Sr, who founded the Hildreth Varnish Company and who was one of the three brothers who established their branch of the Hildreth family in the United States about 1870.
