

Early Woollacotts and Variations Thereon

April 2006

Introduction

From various sources I have been able to work the Woollacott family tree back nine generations to a John Woollacott born 1695 in High Bickington, Devon, England. I am told that many earlier records were maintained in Exeter, not far from High Bickington, that unfortunately were destroyed in World War II. As I continued to search I came upon an internet site www.wolcottfamily.com. Within this site is a section entitled **The Wolcott Family of Devonshire England** that has provided some plausible links to John Woollacott born 1695 in High Bickington.

Of note are the following:

- 1) In 1525 there are three Wolcotts at High Bickington and in 1543 there are four.
- 2) There are several references to Wolcotts collecting rent from land and tenants in High Bickington.
- 3) A Walter Wolcott c.1480-1550 married the granddaughter of a Walter Beale. John and Thomas Wollacott were baptized in High Bickington in 1601 and were probably twins like their grandfather. In the Visitation pedigree of 1620, John Wolcott, the twin, stated that his great grandfather was Walter Beale of Yolland (presumably Yelland Farm which is to date owned by a Woollacott) in High Bickington, property which John apparently inherited. At a later date, a George Downe of Pilton, sailor left a bequest to "my tennant Thomas Wollacott of Yolland in High Bickington".
- 4) In the 1600s there are several Wollacotts in the High Bickington and the neighboring town of Atherington. John Woollacott born 9/13/1862, the patriarch of the Fitchburg Woollacotts and his wife Nora (Newcombe) Woollacott were both born in Atherington.
- 5) Quite a number of Wollacotts signed the Protestation Return in 1641. They were: High Bickington: John Woolacott, John, Joseph, Richard, Samuel, Simon, Thomas, Thomas, and William Wollacott; Crediton: Walter Wolcott, George Wollacott; Northam: John Wollacott; Oakford: William Wollacott; North Tawton: John Wollacott; Atherington: John Woolacott; Chittlehampton: Hugh Wollacott.
- 6) The Wolcotts of High Bickington nearly always spelled their name "Wollacott", a spelling which helps distinguish this branch of the family from other Wolcott families who did not use the "a" between syllables.
- 7) Within the website www.Wolcottfamily.com, there is a discussion of the Coats-of-Arms. There are three presented, two recorded for the Shropshire Walcotts and one for the Wolcott family of Devon. John Wollacott of High Bickington registered the Wolcott

coat-of-arms and a family pedigree during the Herald's Visitation of Devon in 1620. This would seem to connect him back to John Wolcott of Chagford c. 1420 – 1505.

Negating somewhat the above, I have not found a Woollacott spelling. However, the number of Wollacotts that existed in High Bickington in the early and mid 1600s and the frequency of Johns are more than encouraging that there is a link to John Woollacott born 1695. Further, there are many variations on our name that occur, even within the same document. Nonetheless, some one in the greater family did spell it Woollacott and it has seemed to continue from John Woollacott born 1695.

There were two sets of twins born to Wollacotts in the 1600s. Yet in all my work to date from John Woollacott born 1695 to the present, I do not recall any twins.

I have segmented this work into three main sections. The first is from The *Book of High Bickington* published by Avril Stone. It will address the earlier inhabitants of the High Bickington area. The next two sections come from the website www.wolcottfamily.com. The first section will deal with the earliest known Woollacott, a John de Wollecote c. 1330- 1350 and his descendants. The second and most relevant section will start with John Wolcott of Chagford c. 1420 –c. 1505 and his descendants, many of whom resided in High Bickington.

Alfred Woollacott III
April 2006

Early Inhabitants of High Bickington and the Surrounding Area

Most of what follows has been extracted from Avril Stone's book *The book of High Bickington*.

Although the Saxons began arriving in Britain around 400 AD it was late in 650 AD before they conquered and settled in the Vale of Taunton. Around 690 AD they arrived in Exeter. North Devon was settled by an advance from Somerset, so the earliest settlement at High Bickington must have been around 700 AD

The most popular idea is that Bickington is derived from Bichenstone which means settlement or farm of the sons (or tribe) of Beocca. Beocca was probably the first Saxon landlord. Since Bickington is located on an elevated area the term High is self-explanatory. Many of the names in the area have Saxon datives as does Yelland Farm which means "Ye old land" – land long cultivated, gone out of cultivation or worn out.

The hamlets and manors in the area were consolidated in 930 AD when King Athelstane founded the Church of High Bickington. King Athelstane gave a gift of a "holt", the Saxon word for great wood or forest, which supports the theory that the area around High Bickington was forested.

Before the Norman Conquest of 1066 High Bickington was in possession of a Saxon called Brictric. Brictric was sent on a diplomatic mission to Flanders and while there Matilda, the Duke of Flanders' daughter, fell in love with Brictric. She offered herself to Brictric in matrimony but Brictric refused and returned to England.

Matilda later married William the Bastard, The Duke of Normandy, and as the story goes that Matilda only agreed to marry him after he beat her into submission. William invaded England and in the Battle of Hastings October 1066 became the conqueror. He was crowned King and his wife Matilda, Queen.

Matilda demanded Brictric's arrest and he was imprisoned in Winchester where he met a slow and painful death. Namely, all his lands and estates passed to Matilda. In 1086, William undertook to categorize the holdings on the isle of Britain. While William died a year later, this listing has become known as the Domesday Book and is a very significant and early reference book.

According to the Domesday Book, Matilda usurped from Brictric the following lands: Bichenstone, Clovelly, Bideford, Winkleigh, Tiverton, Lew, Halwall, Littleham, Langtree, Idlesleigh, Ash, Lapford, Aldwaldsdone, Morchard, Holcombe, Halberton and Washburton. There are two accounts of Bichenstone in the Domesday Book.

In 1083 Matilda's son William Rufus, later William II, inherited the lands his mother had taken from Brictric and gave Bichenstone to Robert Fitzhamon. William II was succeeded by his younger brother Henry I who married off Fitzhamon's eldest daughter

Maud to his illegitimate son Robert. To enable Henry to consolidate Bichenstone, Maud's three sisters and co-heiresses were put in a convent in Shaftesbury.

By 1150 the manor of High Bickington was in the possession of the Champernownes of UMBERLEIGH. Lady Joan Champernownes insisted that her sons keep her maiden name as opposed to that of their father. Sir Ralph Willingdon. Lady Champernownes had a chantry built at Atherington and she gave some lands and a Holt to the Loges family.

During the reign of King John (1199-1261) Hugh de Loges owned the manor of Buckington Loges. Eventually this passed down through the family. From the 12th to 15th century, the manors were reduced in size as land-owners sold off parcels of land.

From the 15th century onwards the Pyncombes of North Molton amassed much of the land surrounding High Bickington. This land was put into a charitable trust on January 20, 1730. On November 26, 1919 the Pyncombe Estate sold all their properties at an auction. J. H. Woollacott is recorded as purchasing Yelland Farm at that auction.

Early Woollacotts and Variations Thereon

What follows is an extraction of data from www.wolcottfamily.com under the caption The Wolcott family of Devonshire, England revised April, 2005. This section has over 60 pages of information of early Wolcotts and variations thereon. There are several other interesting sections to this website and for those who such an interest, I would encourage them to access the site and explore.

The name, Wolcott, is apparently derived from “Wulfnoth’s cote”, meaning house of Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth being a Saxon given name. This name was given to a farm and tenement in the parish of Thrushelton. Thrushelton is located on the edge of Dartmoor, between the towns of Okehampton and Lifton. The name is first found on an assize roll for Lifton Hundred dated 1238, where William Corbet and Robert de Wlnethecote are listed as a pledge for William Atwater. The name also appears on a subsidy roll dated 1330 as Wolnethecote, and on an assize roll dated 1364 as Woltheote. On the subsidy roll of 1332, the name was simply Wollecote. Today, this farm is called Wollacott.

Two major sources for the genealogy presented here are a genealogy of descendants of Ralph Wolcott of Thrushelton found in a collection of documents called the Wollocomb Mss. from Stowford, now at the Devon Record Office, and a genealogy recorded by the English heralds during the Visitation of Devonshire in 1620. Names listed in those two documents will be given below in italics.

Earliest Woollacotts and variations thereon

Generation one

John de Wollecote, c1330-1350

I

I

I

Generation two

I

Richard Wollecote, c1330-1390
m. Sarah Carey (?)

Ralph Wollecott, c1330-1400
m. Meliora

Generation three

I

No apparent children

I

I

I

Generation One

- 1) John de Wollecote, c.1300-c.1350, is listed on the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1332 as one of the ten residents of the manor of Thrushelton who were freemen with property to be taxed. He paid a tax of 12d, the amount paid by most of the freemen of this manor. By this time, family names were becoming fairly well fixed, so although the “de” only indicates that John held the farm in Thrushelton known as Wollecote, it is also likely that he was the earliest known ancestor of those who later bore the family name of Wolcott. No other Wolcotts are found on this early tax roll that lists all of the tax paying residents of the county of Devon. The next Wolcotts that we have record of were a Ralph and a Richard Wolcott. They were contemporaries and were probably born about 1330. They may have been sons of John, but there is no evidence one way or the other. Ralph held the land called Wollecote, and was the ancestor of most, if not all, Wolcotts.

Generation Two

(2?) Richard Wollecote c 1330-c.1390 According to documents of the Cary family, Richard Wollocote and his wife, Sarah, granted their estate in Westmonaton, in the manor of Mormalherbe, to Thomas Carey, rector of Ashwater, in 1380. It appears that Richard and Sarah had no children to inherit their land. Possibly Sarah was a Cary and the land was a marriage portion which was returned to the Cary family because of a childless marriage. Moor Malherbe, also known as Moor Vipont, was a manor in Broadwoodwidge parish, Lifton Hundred, near Thrushelton.

(2) *Ralph Wollecott*, c.1330-c.1400, and his wife, *Meliora*, are mentioned several documents in a collection of old legal papers called the Wollocombe Manuscripts from Stowford. There may have been other Wolcotts who died out in the plague years of the 14th century. This disease reached Devon in the winter of 1348-9, and nearly half the population of England were killed by it. Ralph and Meliora seem to have been the ancestors of all later Wolcotts. Four of Ralph’s children are named in the Wollocombe documents.

Generation Three

(3) *Thomas Wollecote*, c.1355-c.1420 Thomas is mentioned in several of the Wollocombe documents as the son and heir of Ralph and Meliora. He resided at Wyke in Sourton. Meliora may have been a member of the Wyke family that lived at Sourton. According to the Wollocombe documents, Thomas was the father of John Wolcott, and grandfather of Joan Wolcott who married John Bidlake

3) *Joan Wolcott, c.1365-*. Joan is identified in the Wollocombe documents as a sister of Henry Wolcott, and wife of Jordan Langston.

(3) *Alice Wolcott, c.1365-*. Alice is identified in the Wollocombe documents as another sister of Henry Wolcott, and wife of John Cranford.

(3) *Henry Wolcott, c.1365-c.1440* Henry is shown in the Wollocombe documents to be son of Ralph Wolcott and brother of Thomas, above. Following the great plague years, many of the great English landowners found it difficult to find people to work their lands, so they often found it easier to just sell it. Often the land was sold to people who were their tenants, as seems to have been the case with Thrushelton. A survey of 1428 shows that in that year Thomas Wrey, John atte Mill, Henry Wolcote, and Thomas Lucas were tenants in chief at Thrushelton of one half a knight's fee, formerly held by Henry de la Pomeroy, with the land divided among them. These men had bought the manor of Thrushelton, and had become freeholders, holding their land directly from the King. Henry's nephew, John, and John Bidlake, probably held their land at Thrushelton as their tenants. Henry is named as residual heir to the Wolcott properties at Thrushelton and Sourton in the deed of 1431. In 1506, Henry Wolcott's descendant, Nicholas Stapilhill, brought suit against John Bidlake's son or grandson, Thomas Bidlake, claiming the Wolcott properties as Henry's heir. A genealogy was attached to this claim showing: "Ralph Wolocott, held lands - Meliora, mother of Henry; Thomas Wolocot who had issue John Wolocott the said donor that died without issue & children & heirs; Henry Wolocott brother of Thomas, who had issue John Wolocott, who had issue John Wolocott, who had issue Ri.Wolocott who had issue Marjorie who had issue Nicholas Staplehill that dd." Nicholas appears to have prevailed because there is a deed conveying the lands in question to him. The Bidlakes seem to have retained the land, however, possibly through a cash settlement.

Generation Four

(4) *John Wollecote, c.1385-c.1440* John is mentioned both in the Wollocombe Mss. and in the 1620 Visitation of Devon. The Visitation gives his father as Ralph Wolcott, in error. In 1431 John Bidlake signed a conveyance to John Wollecote, son of Thomas Wollecote of Wyke, of lands called Wollecote and Blakelond in the manor of Thrushelton, conveyed to him by Meliora Wolcott, and lands called Wyke and Southedon in the manor of Sourton that had been conveyed to him by the aforesaid John Wolcott. These lands were probably settled on John Bidlake and Joan Wolcott at the time of their marriage. There are other charters among the Wollocombe papers, dated 1433, and signed by John Wollecote at Wyke where he was apparently living. In these deeds John Wolcott released his claim to the Wolcott lands at Thrushelton and Sourton to John Bidlake. Descendants of his brother, Henry, later challenged this gift of land in court, apparently successfully. The 1433 deed gives John's wife's name as Margery. John may have

been the person named in the Calendar of Patent Rolls for 1416-22, p. 76: “John Wolcotes, Robert Carey, Henry Foleford, John Jaysen, and Roger Wyke to inquire about tresspass in Dartmoor.

(4) *John Wolcott, c.1385-c.1460* According to the above deed, Henry’s eldest son was named John. Twelve miles east of Thrushelton lays the city of Okehampton, and in 1436 we find a John Wolcote established there. It is probable that this was Henry’s son. At this time people were beginning to leave the country manors and take up trades in the larger towns. Okehampton had grown up next to the castle of the Earls of Devon. The town became a center of trade for the western half of the county of Devon. In 1436, William Denbold, John Rysdon, Jr., John Wolcote, and three others, acting as trustees for the church lands at Okehampton, granted a parcel of land known as “le hammede” to William Furse in exchange for an acre of land which lay within land belonging to St. James Chapel. This indicates that John Wolcott had lived at Okehampton for some time.

Generation Five

(5) *Joan Wolcott, c.1405-c.1431; m. John Bidlake c.1425* A notation on the 1620 Herald’s Visitation of Devon relates: “Joan, daughter and heiress of John Wolcott was married to John Bidlake and by him had issue two sons and two daughters, and conveyed the lands of Wolcote to the use of the said John and Joan and the heirs of their bodies lawfully begotten, and for default of such issue, to the heirs of the same John Bidlake forever; and afterwards the same Joan and all her children died of the plague without issue, whereby Bidlake and his heirs had the lands of Wolecot.” After the death of Joan and her children, John Bidlake married Joan Combe and had other children. A document of 1454 in the Wollocombe manuscript collection pardons them for marrying in ignorance of a bar of sanguinity. John Bidlake must have been born about 1405 and probably married Joan Wolcott about 1425. John Bidlake

(5) *John Wolcott, c.1410-*. John is shown in the Wollocomb Mss. as son and heir of John, above. It is possible that John did business at Exeter, for J. Wolcok is listed on the Mayor’s Court Roll of Exeter in 1436, and J. Wylcot in 1437. There was also a J. Wylcot who was a member of the Exeter Common Council in 1445, and in 1450-53.

Generation Six

6) *Richard or Robert Wolcott, c.1435-*. According to the above documents, John’s son and heir was apparently named Richard or Robert. The name is written in an abbreviated form and looks like Ri, Rd. or Ro.

Generation Seven

(7) *Margery Wolcott*, c.1455-c.1500; m. John Staplehill Richard must have had no sons, for the Bidlake-Wolcott deeds say that his daughter, Margery, was his heiress and that in 1506 her son, Nicholas Staplehill, was heir to the Wolcott property. The Staplehills were a prominent Devonshire family. William Staplehill of Devon, and John Staplehill of Wiltshire and Devon, both died in 1436, and their considerable lands, held directly from the King, were taken by the Crown until John's son, John, came of age in 1444. In 1461 and 1463 John Staplehill was given additional lands at Donsford, Fulford, Melhewysh and in other parishes in Devonshire which had been taken from Baldwin Fulford who was attainted for treason. It was apparently this John's son, John, who married Margery Wolcott.

Generation Eight

(8) *Nicholas Staplehill*, c.1480-1517 When the Bidlakes were sued in 1506 over the property deeded to them by John Wolcott, Margery's son, Nicholas Staplehill was the heir to the Wolcott and Wyke properties. Nicholas lived at Exeter in the parish of St. Petrox. The parish records of St. Petrox show that Nicholas Stalplehill, gent, was a churchwarden there for 1515 and 1516, and a bayliff when he died there in 1517. There are no further records of Staplehills in that parish, and Nicholas' heirs are unknown, but John Wolcott appears in this parish about this time.

Earliest Possible Descendants of the High Bickington Woollacotts

In reading through the www.wolcottfamily.com section on The Wolcott Family of Devonshire, England, I found several interesting notes. There are references to High Bickington, Atherington and Yooland Farm, all of which have relevance to the Woollacotts of High Bickington. While none of these descendants spell the name as we currently do, there are many in the 1600s that are very close (Wollacott). Further, most all descendants in High Bickington add an “a” between the Wol (and variation thereon) and the cott.

The earliest High Bickington Woollacotts trace appear to descendants of John Wolcott of Chagford, c 1420-c.1505, which would put him the fourth generation of the earliest Woollacotts. The right hand side of this family tree has the greatest relevance to us High Bickington Woollacotts

Generation Three

Wolcott(?)
m.
Alice Skerret
I
I
I

Generation Four

I
I
John Wolcott of Chagford, c.1420-c.1505
I
I

Generation Five

I
I

I	I	I
John Wolcott of Chudleigh c1450-1523 m.Margaret Bozom	Richard Wolecot 2 filius	Thomas Wolecote, c. 1440- m. Joan Colebrooke
I	I	I
I	I	I
I	Descendants from here are difficult to follow for Richard, if	
I	indeed he had any	
I		I

Generation Six

I			I
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I		I	I
John Wolcott of Chudley, 1481- 1548 m. Jane Foxley		Alice m. John Charles (no further descendants traced)	I
I			I
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I	I	I	I
I	John Wollacott, c1495-1543m. Emota (?)	Thomas Wollacott c 1495-1550	Walter Wolcott c.1480-1550 m.
I	I	I	Elizabeth Lampry
I	No children survived (?)	(no further descendants traced)	I
I			I

Generation Seven

I			I
<hr/>			
I		I	I
Thomas Wolcott of Southcott 1516-1555 m. Jane Wrey		Catherine, c1520- m. John Wood I (no further descendants traced)	I
I			I
I			I
<hr/>			
I	I	I	I
I	John Wollacott, c1530-87 m. Mary Preston	Thomas Wolcot fil et haer, c.1510-1546 m. Margery Davy	
I	I		I
I	(no further descendents traced)		I
I			I
I			I

Generation Eight

I				I
Peter Wolcott, c1540- c.1605 m. Alice Mitchell			(Twins)	I
I	I	I		I
I	John the Younger	Thomas Wolcot, geminus, 1544- 1615 m. Joan	John Wolcott, the elder geminus, aetat 76 1544- 1627	I
I	I			I
I	(no further descendants traced)	Penecott in 1585		I
I		I		I
I		I		I

Generation Nine

I		I	I	I
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I	I	I	I	I

William Talbot in 1428. The Wolcotts may well have owed military service to the Talbots as a requirement for holding their land. He or another William Talbot was knighted in 1437. It seems likely that William Talbot served in France and that John Wolcott served there with him and was rewarded with the augmentation of honor. It may have been at this time that the Wolcotts began using the arms of "five martlets on a cross Flory" given on the 1620 Visitation of Devon.

With the end of the wars in France, John Wolcott settled at Chagford where John's mother, Alice Skerret, is said to have come from. The stannary town of Chagford was a center for the tin trade. John's eldest son, John Wolcott of Chudleigh, was involved in this enterprise, so perhaps his father was also. He was probably the John Wolcott whose name appears as churchwarden of St. Mary's Chapel at Chagford in 1482. He and/or his son, John, was probably the John Wolcott who was the patron of the church at Ashton from 1498 to 1516 according to Oliver's Ecclesiastical Antiquities. He may also have been the person named in a deed of 1501, where James Chudley, John Kyrton, and John Wolcote of Chagford granted land in the manor of Exborne to William Chudleigh. He may have been the John Wolcote who, in 1502, serving as Coroner of the King in Devon, held an inquest at Plymouth into the death of Robert Matthew, Jr., fisherman.

Generation Five

5) *John Wolcott of Chudleigh, c.1450-1523* The Visitation pedigree shows John Wolcott of Chagford's eldest son as John Wolcott of Chudley. Chudleigh is a town about ten miles southeast of Chagford. It was this John who, according to the Visitation pedigree "did commonly beare but only the armes of Skerret with his fathers crest". About 1482 he married Margaret Bozom, a twice-widowed heiress with many children. By this marriage he became related to several prominent Devonshire families. Margaret and her sister, Elizabeth, were daughters and co-heiresses of John Bozom of Bozomhele and his wife, Jane Fortesque of Wood. John Bozom's sister, Joan, was the wife of Sir Henry Fortesque, Chief Justice of Common Pleas for Ireland. John Bozom's eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married Sir Baldwin Fulford, and, after his death, Sir William Hadesfield. Margaret Bozom, born about 1450, first married John Herte of Chudleigh and Bovey Tracy, by whom she had a son, John Herte. Next, in 1475, Margaret Bozom married Nicholas Southcott of Winkley in North Tawton, son of Nicholas Southcott and Jane Pury. They had children, Thomas Southcott of Winkley, William Southcott of Chudleigh, Walter Southcott who became a priest, James Southcott who died young, and John Southcott of Indio in Bovey Tracy. Thomas Southcott married Margaret, daughter of Thomas Cole of Slade, the granddaughter of Thomasine Wolcott. John Southcott was the second wealthiest man in Bovey Tracy in 1525, taxed on 40L in goods. Nicholas Southcott died about 1480, and Margaret, a widow with six or more young children, married John Wolcott, by whom she had another son, John Wolcott, and possibly a daughter, Alice.

This is apparently the John Wolcott who was enrolled as a freeman of Exeter in 1481. His principal residence, however, must have been at Chudleigh until his eldest stepson, John Herte, came of age about 1490. John Herte would have then taken over his inheritance, which must have been considerable, for in 1525 "John Hart" is the wealthiest individual in Chudleigh, taxed on 50L in goods. His stepfather, although he maintained a house at Chudleigh, seems to have moved to Exeter about 1511, the year in which he was admitted as a freeman of the city, and was then described as a "gentleman". John, was a candidate in 1512 to represent Exeter in Parliament, but was defeated. He may have also been the John Wolcote who was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Devon in 1514. He was probably the John Woolcott listed in Izacke's Antiquities as bayliff of the city of Exeter in 1516, for the John Wolcott who was later to be mayor was not admitted as a citizen of Exeter until the following year. His name appears on the military survey of Exeter in 1522 residing in the parish of St. Mary Major.

The family's involvement in the tin mining trade of western Devonshire is shown in the records of the Stannary Courts that controlled this trade. In 1520 John Wolcot of Chudleigh is listed as one of the Jurates of the Stannary Court of Chagford, and in that year both he and his stepson, John Herte, paid taxes at the same court. Chagford was one of the four towns where tin miners could bring their metal for assay and stamping. Records for stamping duties paid in 1523, show that John Wolcott, presumably John of Chudleigh, John Wolcott of Pulbrooke, Peter Wolcott, John Herte, and John Southcott all paid tinning taxes at Chagford, and a John Wolcott, possibly John of Chudleigh again, paid the tax at Tavistock.

John was involved in a number of Chancery proceedings regarding land disputes. The first of these occurred about 1490, when Joan Teyngcomb, daughter and heiress of John Teyngcomb of Teyngcomb, brought suit against John Wolcote and others to obtain possession of houses and land at Chagford. Apparently the problem was not resolved, for again in 1505, Joan and her husband, John Wyll, and Joan's sister, Marjorie and her husband, Harry Barar, daughters of John Teyngcomb of Teyngcomb, brought suit against John Wolcote, John Wyll of Hill, and Michael Lackey, feoffees to uses in houses and land at Chagford. "Feoffees to uses" are trustees managing lands for another person or organization, such as a church. John was involved in another Chancery proceeding in 1495, when John Throwston, grandson of Thomas Throwston, took John Wolcote of Chudley and John Wyll, feoffees to use, again, in a house and land at Chagford, to court in a dispute over these lands. Richard Whyte took John Wolcott to Chancery court for detaining deeds to lands at Throwleigh about 1505, and Richard Forde appealed to the Chancery Court around 1520 to make John Wolcote give him the deeds to a house and lands at Chagford that John had wrongly detained. John became the plaintiff in another Chancery hearing which was held about 1510, when John Wolcote of Chudleigh took Richard Wykys, clerk, Robert Wythebroke, chaplain, and others to court for wrongful detention of deeds to a house and land at Stinial (Stenehalle) in Chagford.

John died at Exeter in 1523, by which time he had accumulated substantial property, either through inheritance from his father, marriage to Margaret Bozom, or from the tin trade. An inquest taken at Ashburton at the time of his death, states that John Wolcote, Senior, died at Exeter in 1523, and that John Wolcote, his son and heir, was age 42 years and more. John died seized of five houses and 140 acres of land at Chagford, 20 acres of pasture in Southteign Manor at Chagford, three houses and 130 acres of land at Moreton Hampstead, 20 acres of land at Little Bovey, 4 acres of land at Newton Bushel in Highweek, a cottage with one acre of land at Chudleigh, 170 acres of land at Ashbury, 120 acres of land at Hollocomb Purramore in Winkley, a house with 120 acres of land at Exbourne, a house with 160 acres of land at Throughleigh, and a house with 100 acres of land at Hawkdown in Dowland.

(5) *Richard Wolecot 2 filius*, b. c.1425, second son of John of Chagford, is named in the Visitation of 1620.

(5) *Thomas Wolecote*, c.1440-. The Visitation of Devon of 1620 says that Thomas, son of John Wolcott of Chagford, **married Joan, daughter of William Colbrooke of Chittlehampton, a town about 2 miles northeast of High Bickington.** Thomas is shown as father of Walter, who was father of Thomas, whose sons were born in 1544. **There are three Wolcotts at High Bickington in 1525: Walter, Thomas, and John, and four in 1543: Walter, Thomas Sr., Thomas Jr., and Emota, widow. This Thomas might have still been alive in 1525, but it is highly unlikely that he could have been alive in 1543. It seems most likely that Walter, Thomas, and John were all his sons.**

Generation Six

6) *John Wolcott of Chudley*, 1481-1548. In the military survey of 1522, John is listed residing in the parish of St. Mary Major, as is his father, and is described as "not ready for war", which might mean that he had some physical disability. He inherited his father's property in 1524, and on the Subsidy Roll of 1524-5 he is shown as residing in Holy Trinity parish. His descendants continued to reside in Holy Trinity parish for several generations. The Subsidy Roll of 1544 lists him at Holy Trinity, and refers to him as "gent."

The earliest Visitation of Devon, dated 1565, shows John, his wife, and children as the only Wolcotts listed. It says that John Wolcote of Exeter married Jane, daughter of John Foxley of Blakesley, Northampton, and by her had children, Thomas and Catherine. In 1523, pardons were granted to John Wolcote of Exeter, and Joan, his wife, for having stolen 55L belonging to his father, John Wolcote, Sr. This is found in State Papers, Domestic, 15 Henry 8, p1, m16. This must have been discovered right after the death of John's father. This was not John's only

embarrassment. According to Chancery Proceedings 565/42-3, for the period 1515-1529, John Ripley of Exeter, tailor, was refused bond by the Mayor and Bayliff of Exeter on an action of trespass demanded by John Wolcott against Ripley and his wife, Joan, for hanging "a ram's horne in a ryng of the outer doore of the said John Wolcott to the defame & hurte of his name and honeste", damages being laid at 1000L. John Wolcott agreed to abide the arbitration of Roger Cholmeley and Robert Chidleigh of London, gentlemen, whose award was fulfilled by Joan Ripley "in the parish church called Saint Marie the More within the said city personally knelyng on both her kneyes bifore the sete where oon Johanne wife of the said John Wolcote most usually did sitte and asking the said Johanne Wolcote forgeveness". The ram's horn would have suggested cuckoldry.

In 1541, according to J.C.Tingey's Calendar, fol. 37, John Woolcote, gent, sold to William Saxssen a house in Chudleigh in which William dwelt. This sale seems to end the family's connections with the village of Chudleigh. The deed for this sale mentions Thomas Woolcote, son and heir of John, who probably had to agree to the sale because the property was entailed. This was the only property named in the inquest taken at the death of John's father that did not descend to Thomas. An Inquisition Post Mortem was taken in 1549, shows that John left the lands inherited from his father, except the above house at Chudley and also the following properties which he had acquired: 2 tenements and 6 acres of meadow in Alphington; 1 tenement and 60 acres of pasture in Dawlish; 2 tenements, 6 acres of meadow and 100 acres of pasture at Doddiscombe; 40s annual rent from land at Cheriton; 1 messuage in Holsworthy; 13s 4d annual rent from land and tenements in Werrington; 13s 4d annual rent from land and tenements in Hatherleigh; **6s 8d annual rent from land and tenements in High Bickington**; 1 messuage, 6 acres of meadow and 70 acres of pasture in Nymet Roland; 2 acres of meadow in Bow and 1 tenement, 10 acres of meadow and 50 acres of pasture in Witheridge. John had nearly doubled the property that his father had left him. The Inquisition Post Mortem taken at his death says that he died 2 Edw 6, and that his son, Thomas Wolcote, was 34 years of age and more at the time of his father's death.

6) Alice, daughter of John Wolcot of Chudley married John Charles, son of William Charles of Morton and his wife, Elizabeth Chaldon.

6) *Walter Wolcott, c.1480-c.1550* **The 1620 Visitation says that he married Elizabeth, daughter of William Lampry and Elizabeth, daughter of Walter Baghell or Beale of High Bickington. Walter was taxed on 3L in goods at High Bickington on the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1524. Thomas and John, presumably his brothers are also listed as paying similar amounts.** Walter was taxed on 8L on the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1543.

(6) John Wollacott, c.1495-1543 John is listed on the 1524/5 Lay Subsidy Roll living at High Bickington, probably the brother of Walter and Thomas. He is probably the John Wolcott of **High Bickington**, servant of Sir John Bassett,

who sent the letter to Lady Lisle dated 1533. Sir John Bassett lived during the reign of Henry VII, married **Jane Beaumont, heiress of land at Atherington, and is buried in Atherington Church. John Wollacott's will, proved in 1545, states that he was to be buried in the churchyard of the Church of St. Nicholas at Bickington, with his entire estate going to John Shaptor, he to provide for John Wolcott's wife as long as she lived. This indicates that he probably had no children who survived. The Emota Wolcot, widow, who is on the 1543 Subsidy Roll at High Bickington may be his widow.**

(6) Thomas Wollacott, c.1495-c.1550 **He is taxed on 4L in goods on the 1524/5 Lay Subsidy Roll, living at High Bickington. Among the correspondence of the Lisle family is a letter to Lady Lisle dated 1533, from John Wolcott of High Bickington, servant of Sir John Bassett, saying that goods belonging to Richard Edward had been sold to Thomas Wollecott. He is probably also the Thomas Wollacott Sr. of High Bickington named on the 1543-5 Subsidy Roll, and uncle to the son of Walter, listed as Thomas Wulacott Jr.**

Generation Seven

(7) *Catherine*, c.1520-. John's daughter, Catherine, married John Wood at Holy Trinity Church, Exeter in 1546. The 1620 Visitation shows that John Wood, son of Edmund Wood of Orchard in Lewtrenchard, and his wife, Jane Franklyn of Tudlake, married Catherine, daughter of John Wolcott of Exeter and had five children, Thomas, William, Elizabeth, Alice and Phillipa. John Wood died in 1586.

(7) *Thomas Wolcott of Southcott*, 1516-1555. Thomas was born about 1516, according to the Inquisition Post Mortem taken at the time of his father's death. He married Jane Wrey about 1548. She was the daughter of Walter Wrey of North Russell and Bridget, daughter of Robert Shilstone. Thomas Wolcott held several positions of responsibility. In 1550, Hugh Scafford acknowledged a deed before Thomas Wolcote, Justice of the Peace, and in 1551 a case regarding John Sampford was handled by Thomas Wolcote, Justice of the Peace. In 1553, Thomas Wolcott was listed on the Calendar of Patent Rolls as a member of the Subsidy Commission. The name of Thomas Wolcote, gent, is also found on a list of the people who paid annuities to Simon Rede, the last abbot of Tor Abbey. Thomas died in 1555. At the time of his death he held most of the property that his father and grandfather had held. According to an Inquisition Post Mortem taken at the time of his death, Thomas held: 10 messuages, 40 acres of meadow, and 200 acres of pasture at Chagford; 1 messuage, 10 acres of meadow and 100 acres at Fen and Kenworthy in Chagford; 2 tenements and 6 acres of meadow in Newton Bushel; ½ of a messuage, 4 acres of meadow and 40 acres of pasture at Ashbury; ½ of a messuage, 6 acres of meadow and 60 acres of pasture at Winkleigh Keynes; 2 messuages, 20 acres of land, and 100 acres of pasture at

Exbourne; 2 messuages, 20 acres of meadow, and 80 acres of pasture at Dowland; 2 tenements and 6 acres of meadow in Alphington; 2 tenements with 20 acres of pasture in Dawlish; 2 tenements, 6 acres of meadow, and 100 acres of pasture at Doddiscomb; 1 messuage in Holsworthy; 13s 4d annual rent from land and tenements at Werrington; 13s 4d annual rent from land and tenements in Hatherleigh; **6s 8d annual rent from land and tenements in High Bickington**; 1 messuage, 6 acres of meadow and 70 acres of pasture at Nymet Rowland; 2 acres of meadow at Bow; and 1 tenement, 10 acres of meadow, and 50 acres of pasture at Witheridge. The properties that his father had left him at Moreton Hampstead, Throwleigh and Cheriton had been disposed of, but Thomas had acquired an additional tenement with 4 acres of meadow and 40 acres of pasture at Shapleigh Hilling in Chagford; 10s annual rent from land and tenements at Barchworthy in Chagford; 42s 6d annual rent from land and tenements at Hurston in Chagford; and 2s 4d annual rent from land at Willhead in Chagford. The inquest makes no mention of land held at Exeter, a free city apparently excluded from the Crown's purview. A document dated 1576, however, sets forth the boundaries of lands which funded Exeter charities. One of these pieces of land, located in St. Sidwell parish, is described as being bounded on one side by Thomas Woolcote's land, probably a description that had been written in Thomas' lifetime. Following Thomas' death, his widow married Robert Fry, 4th son of William Fry of Yerty. They apparently lived in the Wolcott house in Holy Trinity parish, for Robert Fry paid a tax on land valued at 10L per year in Holy Trinity in 1557. The second half of the subsidy was collected later that year, and this time Robert paid a tax on land valued at 3L per year, and his name is followed by that of his stepson, Peter Wolcott, who had come of age.

(7) John Wollacott, c.1530-87 A John Wollacott married Mary Preston at Crediton in 1558. This is too old to be John, the eldest twin born in 1544, and was probably his uncle, born about 1530. John Wollacott is listed on the Crediton muster roll of 1569 to serve as an archer and the tax roll of 1581 shows John Wollacote of Crediton taxed on goods valued at 8L per year. John Wollacote was buried at Crediton 1587. The will of a John Woolcott of Crediton was recorded at the Exeter Principal Probate Registry, number 2380, in 1587. A will of Joan Woolacott of Crediton was proved at the Exeter Probate Registry in 1602. This was probably the "Widow Woollacott" who was buried at Crediton 1602. She may have been John's second wife for this seems the only Wolcott widow expected to be found at Crediton in 1602.

(7) *Thomas Wolcot fil et haer*, c.1510 -1546 According to the Visitation, Thomas married, Margery, daughter and coheirress of John Davy and Margery Eston, daughter and coheirress of Thomas Eston of Morchard Bishop. **A Hugh Prust, age 36 in 1550, married Honor, daughter of John Davy of Bickington, gent, who was apparently Margery's sister and coheirress.** This was apparently the John Davy who died in 1553 leaving several daughters but no sons. The Davys were a prominent Devonshire family, living at Crediton and Morchard Bishop. Thomas' father-in-law, John Davy, was probably the brother of Robert Davy of Crediton, whose son, John Davy, was mayor of Exeter in 1590,

and married Margaret, daughter of George Southcott of Calverly, step-son of John Wolcott of Chudleigh. John and Margaret Davy were the parents of Sir John Davy of Sandford who married Julian, daughter of Sir William Strode of Newham. The Estons of Morchard Bishop were another prominent Devonshire family whose pedigree was recorded in the 1620 Visitation Thomas Wollacott Sr. was taxed on 4L on the Lay Subsidy roll of 1543-5. **The will of Thomas Wollacott of High Bickington dated 1546 was proved at Exeter, but was destroyed in the bombing of Exeter in World War II.** Apparently Thomas died when his sons were infants. According to the Visitation, Thomas Wollacott had three sons, John and Thomas, twins born in 1544, and John, the younger. **The Wolcotts of High Bickington nearly always spelled their name "Wollacott", a spelling which helps distinguish this branch of the family from other Wolcott families who did not use the "a" between the syllables. The tax assessment rolls of 1581 shows five men with the name spelled this way. Thomas Wollacotte of High Bickington, who was assessed on 7L of goods, must have been the twin born in 1544. He would have been 37 years old at the time of this tax. John Wollacotte of High Bickington, assessed on 3L of goods, must have been his brother. George Wollacotte of High Bickington, assessed on land valued at 1L per year, was probably the George who was on the High Bickington muster rolls in 1569 and probably an uncle of the twins. The John Wollacote of Crediton, assessed on 8L of goods, and Nicholas Wollacote of Merton, assessed on 7L of goods,**

Generation Eight

8) *Peter Wolcott*, 1540-c.1605 This may be the Peter Wulcote mentioned in the South Tawton Court Rolls of 1572. In 1577 Peter paid a tax on land in Holy Trinity parish valued at 5L per year. In 1581, Peter Wollcott, gent, of Holy Trinity parish, was also taxed on land valued at 5L per year. The tax rolls for Exeter for 1584 state that Peter Wolcot paid a tax of 22d on the barbigan within the walls, between the Southgate and the tenement next to the watergate built by Geoffrey Thomas in Holy Trinity parish. This was later crossed out and the inscription added, "The heirs of Wolcott hold the barbigan on the West of Southgate at 16d tax". A barbigan is a defensive tower built into a gate or bridge, and apparently the Wolcott's Exeter residence was built into this tower. This same tax roll states that Peter Wolcot and Edward Wolcot held land in St Mary More parish in Exeter. Also in 1584, Peter Wolcot was one of a number of prominent citizens of Exeter who signed a document entitled "The Exeter Bond of Association for the Protection of Queen Elizabeth". This indicates that Peter was of the Protestant faith. On the Subsidy Roll of 1586, Peter Woolcott paid a tax on land in Holy Trinity valued at 4L per year, and in 1593, Mr. Peter Wollcote was taxed on land with the same value in the same parish. Then, in 1602, Peter Wolcott, gent., paid a tax of 5s 4d on land in Holy Trinity valued at 4L per annum and Edward Wolcott, gent., paid the tax on land in the same parish valued at 2L. Peter married Alice Mitchell, daughter of John Mitchell of Truro, Cornwall, and his

wife, Jane, daughter of John Killigrew. The Visitation of Devonshire of 1620 gives only the name of his son, John, but he had a number of other children.

(8) *John the younger*. John, born about 1550, is named in the 1620 Visitation.

(8) *John Wolcott the elder, geminus, aetat 76, superstes 1620, 1544-1627*. John was the person who registered the family pedigree during the heralds visitation in 1620. **John was born in 1544, and was probably the John Wolcott of High Bickington who was listed to serve as a pikeman on the muster rolls of 1569. John Wollacotte of High Bickington was assessed on 3L of goods on the tax roll of 1581. He was probably the John Wollacott, Sr., who was buried at High Bickington in 1627. John would have then been 83 years old at the time of his death.**

(8) *Thomas Wolcot, geminus, 1544-1615*. **Thomas is shown as twin of John Wolcott, above In 1569, a muster of able bodied men at High Bickington lists Thomas Wollacot as one of the four presenters in charge of the muster, and states that he had goods valued at between 20 and 30L per year and therefore was required to provide a bow, a sheaf of arrows, a steel cap, a bill and a harquebus.** He was also mustered as an archer, as was George Wolcot, who was probably his uncle. **The tax assessment rolls of 1581 shows Thomas Wollacotte of High Bickington assessed on 7L of goods. He would have been 37 years old at the time of this tax. In 1570 Thomas Woullacott of High Bickington, yeoman,** conveyed to Anthony Coplestone of Weke, gent., 1/2 of 3 tenements called Southworthe and Durdon in Bradworthy and Woolfardisworthy which were in the tenure of Richard Woode, John Jorye and John Cleverton. Thomas Wollacott married Joan Penecott in 1585, at Black Torrington, a village 15 miles south of High Bickington. If this is the same Thomas he would have been 41 years old, so this may be his second marriage. Thomas' two daughters were baptized at Great Torrington in 1586 and 1587. There is a Wollacott memorial in the parish church of Black Torrington. In 1609, Hugh Speke of Hazelbury, Wilts, Thomas Wollacott, gent, and William Wollacott, esq., purchased the manor of Box and Wadswick in the parish of Batheaston, a village in Somerset 3 mi. south of Wivilscomb. Thomas apparently died shortly thereafter. From the spelling of the name, these appear to have been members of the High Bickington branch of the Devonshire Wolcott family. There seems to have been no other Thomas alive at this time who might be described as gentleman. Hugh Speke was the second son of Sir George Speke and Dorothy Gilbert of Whitlackington, Somerset. Hugh married Anne, daughter and heiress of John Mayne of Staplehurst. In 1630, Hugh had the gift of the vicarage of Box, formerly held of Sir John Young of Bristol. Hugh Speke was made a baronet in 1669 and died in 1661.

Generation Nine

(9) *John Wolcote*, 1591-. John, son of Peter Wollcot, was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1591. John married Dorothy Bampfield about 1615. She was the daughter of Giles Bampfield, a member of one of the leading families in the county. Giles was the eldest son of Richard Bampfield of Poltimore (1526-1594), Sheriff of Devonshire in 1594, and his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Sydenham. He is listed as Giles Bampfield, gent., light horseman, on a muster roll of 1569. Giles died prior to 1594 on a voyage to Ireland. Giles' younger brother, Sir Amyas Bampfield, was his father's heir and "30 years of age and more" when his father died in 1594, and was Sheriff of Devon in 1603, the year in which he was knighted. The Wolcotts may have alienated their land holdings in order to arrange this marriage, for this seems to be the last time that this branch of the family had wealth. Dorothy died 1617, apparently childless. A memorial tablet in the church at Huxam reads, "The remains of Dorothy Wolcott wife of John Wolcott gent. The lady was the daughter of Giles Bampfield esq. and paid the debt of nature on 5 Nov 1617". John then married Joan Headland at Alphington in 1619. Either John or his son signed the 1641 Protestation Return at Alphington

(9) Dorothy, b. c.1575 at Exeter; m. Thomas Drew 1604 at Wolborow and Newton Abbot. Thomas Drew of Exeter registered his family pedigree in 1620, recorded in the Visitation of Devon. In it he stated that he had married Dorothy, daughter of Peter Wolcott of Exeter, and by her had children, Henry age 5, Thomas, George and Susan. Thomas Drew was the son of John Drew of St. Leonards, and Susan, daughter and co-heiress of John Gaverick or Gavercock of Ford, who were married at Wolborough and Newton Abbott in 1573. Their son, Thomas Drew, Jr., is thought to have been the Thomas Drew that immigrated to Virginia and was at Charles City in 1650. His will mentioned his daughter, Dorothy, and brother, George. Dorothy married Capt. Hubert Farrell in Virginia. The same parish records show that just a month earlier in 1604, Elizabeth Drew, apparently Thomas Drew's sister, had married a Simon Wolcott. Elizabeth was the widow of William Strode, whom she had married at Wolborough and Newton Abbot 1601. Simon must have been related to Dorothy, possibly the son of her uncle, Edward.

(9) Florence, 1581-. Florence, daughter of Peter Wolcote was baptized at Exeter Holy Trinity in 1581. The wedding of Florence to William Saunder was recorded at Alphington in 1607.

(9) Margaret, 1582-. Margaret, daughter of Peter Wolcote, was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1582.

(9) Katherine, 1585-. Katherine, daughter of Peter Wollkott, was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1585.

(9) Mary, 1589-. Mary, daughter of Peter Wolcot was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1589. Mary was married to John Coplestone in 1611.

(9?) William Wollacott, c.1575-. A William Wollicott married Mary Wilmot on 1600 at Merton, a village 8 miles southwest of High Bickington. He may be the

William Wollacott, esq., named with Thomas, above, in the purchase of the manor of Box in 1609.

(9) John, c.1570-1633. **John must have had a son named John, for the High Bickington parish records, of which only a few years during this period still exist, show the names of John Sr. and John Jr. The younger John was probably the John Wollacot who married Joan Ball at Mamhead in 1593.** Mamhead is 8 miles south of Exeter. Joan was baptized at Chudleigh 1561, and was the daughter of Egidius Ball of Chudleigh who died in 1595, and Thomasine, daughter and heiress of Potter of Cristow. Her grandparents were John Ball of Mamhead, who died in 1570, and his wife, Joan Whitehasle. **John Wollacott was a church warden at High Bickington in 1614, and in 1616 John Wollacott, Jr. signed the parish records as "guardian". An Inquest Post Mortem taken at Torrington 1639 states that John Wollacott died at High Bickington 1633 siezed of one third part of a tenement of 120 acres at Grattercliffe in High Bickington, one third of the rents from a tenement called Shuttleigh in High Bickington, one third of a tenement with 48 acres of land in Northeale in High Bickington, one third of a tenement with 98 acres of land in Eastacombe in Addrington, one third part of two tenements with 38 acres of land in W'ton and Wenneytottburne in Crediton, one third of a tenement with 37 acres of land at Millford in Frithelstock, and one third of 4 acres in Littlehaselwood in Sampford Peverell;** and that John Wollacott, his son and heir, is 30 years of age and over, that is, born prior to 1606. Thomas, the other twin son of John, Jr., must have died.

Generation Ten

(10) John, 1620-. John Wolcott was baptized at Alphington in 1620.

(10) Joan Wollacott, 1601-. Joan, daughter of William Wollicott, was baptized 1601 at Merton.

(10) Katherine Wollacott, c.1597-1597 John and Joan seem to have been the parents of Katherine, **daughter of John Wollacott, Jr., who was buried at High Bickington 1597, the earliest year that any parish records from High Bickington survive.**

(10) John Wollacott, 1601-. **John and Thomas, sons of John Wollacott of Yoeland, were baptized 1601. John Wollacott, who lived at Atherington may have been the John who inheirited one third of the Wollacott property in 1639. John Wolacotte married Mary Rogers at Atherington 1634. John Woolacottt signed the 1641 Protestation Return at**

(10) Thomas Wollacott, 1601-, **Parish records show that John and Thomas, the sons of John Wollocott of Yoeland, were baptized at High Bickington in 1601. They were probably twins, like their grandfather. In the Visitation pedigree of 1620, John Wolcott, the twin, stated that his great grandfather was Walter Beale of Yooland in High Bickington, property which John apparently inheirited. At a later date, a George Downe of Pilton, sailor left a bequest to "my tennant Thomas Wollacott of Yolland in High Bickington." Thomas Wollacott signed the 1641 Protestation Return at High Bickington.**

Generation Eleven

(11) Mary Wollacott. Mary, daughter of John and Mary Wollacot, baptized 1642 at **Atherington.**

(11) Joan Wollacott. Joan, daughter of John and Mary Wollacott, baptized 1644 at **Atherington.**

(11) Margaret Wollacott. Mary, daughter of John and Mary Wollacott, baptized 1646 at **Atherington.**

(11) William Wollacott. William, son of John and Mary Wollacott, baptized 1649 at **Atherington.**

The Woollacotts and Yelland farm

The Woollacotts and Yelland Farm have had a long history and I offer here some thoughts. In Generation six, John Wolcott of Chudley held lands from which he collected rents in High Bickington. Whether these rents were from Yelland Farm, one cannot determine.

Also in Generation six, Walter Wolcott married the granddaughter of Walter Beale and he, Walter was taxed on goods in High Bickington. This Beale name will re-appear later. Also Thomas of generation six is taxed on goods in High Bickington.

In generation seven Thomas Wolcott of Southcott collects rent from land in High Bickington.

The Woollacotts and variations thereon continue to reference rents from High Bickington. In generation nine John Wollacott had three properties in High Bickington.

In generation ten there are specific reference to Yoeland and specific variations thereon. Further the connection between a Beale and Woollacott are made with Thomas Wollacott.

This Woollacott and Yelland Farm connection ends in the mid 1600s.

From “*The Book of **High Bickington** – A Devon Ridgeway Village*”, the following is gleaned. The Pyncombe Estate and the church were the principal land-owners in High Bickington. The last surviving member of the Pyncombe family was Gertude who died in 1730 and left her property to a trust, which include lands throughout Devon including High Bickington.

The Pyncombe Charity Trust liquidated their assets on November 26, 1919. At that time a J. H. Woollacott purchased Yelland Farms from the trust. Other farms in High Bickington were also purchased from the Trust.

The Wolcott Coats-of-Arms

The following was extracted from website www.wolcottfamily.com .

The College of Arms has recorded two coat-of-arms for Walcot and one for Wolcott. The oldest, a cross with five fleur-de-lis, dating back to 1383 or earlier, was that of Sir John Walcot of Shropshire. A second one was granted in 1415 to John Walcot of Shropshire, believed to be Sir John's son. It had a chevron between three chess rooks. A third coat-of-arms was used by the Wolcott family of Devon in the 15th century, a cross with five martlets.

In addition to the two coats-of-arms recorded for the Shropshire Walcots, The College of Arms has also recorded the following arms for the Wolcott family of Devon: on a shield divided vertically blue and red, a silver cross flory with 5 black martlets; over it, a gold "chief" with a fleur-de-lis between two red rings; the crest a silver griffin's head with drops of blood, holding in it's beak a fleur-de-lis with three gold coins. A cross flory is similar to a cross patonce, with the arms of the cross divided into three points. Martlets are heraldic birds, always shown without feet. The griffin is a mythological beast, half lion and half eagle, which is traditionally said to guard hidden treasure. These arms were used by the Wolcott family in the 1500s. Joseph Holland's Roll of Arms, dated about 1579, gives these arms for "Walcot of Exeter". Hooker's Mss. 5827, written about 1580, gives a variation of these arms for Wolcott, with the chief containing "a rose between two fleurs-de-lis proper". Brooke's Mss. 28834, dated about 1587, gives the same arms as Holland for Wolcote.

John Wollacott of High Bickington, Devon, registered the Wolcott coat-of-arms and a family pedigree during the Herald's Visitation of Devon in 1620. On this manuscript there is a marginal note referring to another manuscript of the Tudor period or earlier (prior to 1547), which gave these arms for John Wolcott of Exeter. Another marginal note states that John Wolcot of Chudleigh and his son, John, did commonly bear the arms of Skerret (Or a chief indented sable). This John Wolcott of Chudley died at Exeter in 1549, and was the father of John Wolcott who lived at Exeter most of his life. Burke's General Armory gives additional arms for the Woolcott family of Morston like that of the College of Arms, but with the shield silver, and for Walcot of Oxford like the College of Arms, but with the cross "patonce". These last two coats were used by descendants of John of Chagford's second son, Richard, brother of John Wolcott of Chudleigh. The descendants of Maximillian Wolcott of Knole House, Devon, also Richard's descendants, used similar arms with the cross of gold. Burke also gives another variation for Wollcot of Exeter, having a blue field with a cross patonce. Two other variations are known, one for Woolcot with a chief charged

with a cross between two fleur-de-lis, and one for Woolcott with the shield red and a chief with a fleur-de-lis between two red crosses" formee".

The 1620 Visitation states that John Wolcott of Chagford, father of John Wolcott of Chudleigh, "for his good service in the warres had an addition given to his armies, on a chief or a lis entre two annulets". In order to receive an augmentation, the recipient must already have been an acknowledged bearer of a coat-of-arms. The fleur-de-lis on the augmentation of honor probably indicates that it was received for service in the Hundred Years War with France.

There were actually two sets of arms recorded for the Wolcotts on the 1620 Herald's Visitation of Devon, the martlets on a cross, and a second one "a cross flory with five fleur-de-lis." Both arms were followed by the word, "quere", indicated that there was a question about the arms. The cross with fleur-de-lis arms was the first coat-of-arms used by the Walcot family of Shropshire. It appears that the Wolcott arms with five martlets on a cross may have derived from the earlier Walcot arms with five fleurs-de-lis on a cross. The Wolcott family of Devon began to use their arms at about the time that the Shropshire Walcots got their new arms with the chess rooks. It is conceivable that John Walcot of Shropshire was given the new chess rook arms because he objected to the Devonshire Wolcotts using arms similar to the Shropshire Walcot arms.

Although coats of arms had been used in England for a long time, the laws governing their use had been pretty loose. King Henry V issued the first law regulating coats-of-arms in England in 1417. It was then proclaimed that no one could assume arms unless he held them by right of inheritance or by the donation of some person who had the power to give them "except for those who with us carried them at the battle of Agincourt." This was just about the time the Walcots received their chess rook arms.

Two early treatises on arms, one written in 1394 by John de Bado Aurea, and the other written in 1466 by Nicholas Upton, state that the martlet, when used on arms, indicated that the first bearer of them had acquired nobility by his own exertions or by the patronage of a Lord or King, since the martlet is shown without feet indicating that he had lacked foundations of his own to begin with. This would seem to apply to John Wolcott of Chagford, the first Wolcott known to have used a coat-of-arms. Most American Wolcotts appear to be his descendants