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The Estate Distributions of the Worshipful Mr. Thomas Welles and Captain Samuel Welles

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In the last newsletter, I supplied the wills of Gov. Thomas Welles and his oldest son John. In this newsletter, I continue with information on the estates of sons Thomas and Samuel. Neither of the younger two sons left wills. Each estate, however, includes a Distribution which divides the estate among the legal heirs. What follows are transcriptions of the Distributions of the estates of Thomas Welles, Jr., and Captain Samuel Welles.

Of the two remaining Welles men of this generation, Thomas Welles, Jr., was the first to die. His estate appears as docket no. 5860 in the Hartford Probate District Court records. He died “intestate”, that is, he died without leaving a will. Without a will, his estate would be evaluated and then distributed according to the law. The law was that one-third of the estate would go to the widow for her use during her life (and would then be divided among the children after her death). That one-third is called the dower or the dower third. The remaining two-thirds would be divided into shares numbering one more than the total number of children. The eldest son would receive two shares and each remaining child would receive one share. This is what happened to Thomas’s estate.

The inventory of the estate of Thomas Welles, Jr., was taken 20 August 1668 by Eleazer Holyoke, John Allyn, Thomas Bull, and James Ensign. It totaled £1297:11:00 before debts. Of his debts, the largest debt, £240:00:00, was to his stepdaughters Hannah and Mary Pantry, the daughters of Hannah by her previous marriage to John Pantry. In all likelihood, this represents the shares they had inherited from their own father’s estate that were held in trust for them by their stepfather.

The distribution of the estate of Thomas Welles was submitted to the court on 4 March 1668/9. In the top left-hand corner is a list of the assets of the estate. It reads:

	£	sh	d ¹
Supposing the Estate	1100	00	00
Whereof in House & lands	515	00	00
Chattels	585	00	00

In the top right-hand corner is a list of Thomas’s children with notations about their ages. This little chart reads:

	1668	years
Thomas	11	this october
Icabod	8	next november
Samuell	6	this october

¹ £ is pounds, sh is shillings, and d is pence.

The inventory of Samuel's estate was taken 15 Jul 1675 by Samuel Talcott, John Chester, and John Deming. It totaled £1100:00:00, the exact same amount that his brother Thomas, Jr.'s estate had totaled. At the end of the inventory the appraisers appended a list of Samuel's children which reads:

The names & age of Capt. Sam'l. Welles his children:
Samuell Welles aged 16 years } or thereabouts
Thomas Welles 14 years }
Sarah Welles 12 years }
Mary Welles 10 years }
Ann: Welles 7 years }
Elizabeth Welles 5 years }

The widow Hannah Welles was appointed Administrator of the estate on 7 Sep 1676 but she came back to court on 3 Nov 1676 and relinquished administration. The duties of handling the estate then fell to John Chester (husband of Samuel's sister Sarah) and to Mrs. Ann Hawkins (Samuel's older sister). Samuel Talcott and John Deming also agreed to act as Overseers of the children and requested that Ann Hawkins take the children into her care. The court also ordered that the widow would receive one-third of the land and £50 of the personal estate. The Distribution given in Probate Register III, p. 157, is for: Samuel £380; Thomas £230, Mary "considering her lameness" £140; and to Sarah, Ann and Elizabeth £100 each. In volume IV on page 37, on 10 Mar 1680/1, or five years later, the court ordered John Chester, Samuel Talcott and John Deming to distribute the estate among the heirs. No actual list of this distribution has survived.

At this point an interesting thing happens to Samuel's estate. Evidently his widow remarried. Had Samuel written a will, it is most probable that he would have specified that Hannah's dower share would be hers only as long as she remained his widow, that is, until her next marriage. He would have done this knowing that she was not the mother of his children and that by rights the dower thirds should have remained with his descendants. But he didn't write a will and Hannah's new husband was John Allyn, an astute and politically connected man.

On p. 148 of Volume IV, on 4 Mar 1696/7, an order is entered that Mrs. Hannah Allyn, formerly Welles, is to enjoy her use of her dower thirds "without Molestation from any person pretending any right hereto during her life." On 16 May 1696, a full 21 years after the death of Samuel Welles, John Deming and Samuel Talcott drew up a list of the lands that comprised the dower third of Samuel's widow, now Hannah Allyn. It reads:

The land belonging to ye Worshipfull Capt. John Allyn, Assist[ant]³ upon acct. of Mrs. Allyn's thirds out of the Land of Capt. Sam'l Wells deceased

Impr[imus] One third part of the lower lott at Naubuck, his p[ar]t lying in the middle of s[ai]d lott

It[em] One third pt of ye upper lott on west side [of] the river in ye great meddow the lott being twelve acres his pt is 4 acres lying on the East side of ye lott

³ That is, a member of the upper house of the state legislature.

It: one acre $\frac{3}{4}$ 21 rod lying between Thomas & Samll Wells towards the south side of the 14 acre lott & $\frac{1}{4}$

It: two acres $\frac{3}{4}$ 18 rod $\frac{1}{2}$ towards the upp[er] side of the forest lott lying between Mary & Ann their two parcells being his thirds of fourteen acres $\frac{1}{4}$

It: In Beaver Meadow $\frac{3}{4}$ of an Acre about $\frac{1}{2}$ lying in the East side of ye lot; ye whole being 7 acres $\frac{3}{4}$

It: the third pt of the pasture in ye woods he payring for what fence stands upon it, when it is delivered to him

It: of the lower lott in ye meadow, 1 acre $\frac{3}{4}$ lying in ye middle of ye lot, it eing one third of five acres & one rod

It: the north end of the dwelling house being the kitchen end; Samll Wells or his Assigns to have liberty to make use of the oven as they shall see cause thereby; Capt [Allyn] to have convenient & cellar roome; allso to have the old barn end & one halfe of ye corner house & one third pt of ye lott; lying on the north west corner; of ye sd lott; and allso liberty to pass & repass through Samll Wells his Land at ye south gate; & Samll Wells to have liberty to pass too & fro ye corner house as he see cause. Capt. Allyn to bare a proportionable share with Samll Wells in maintaining ye gate or barrs at the south and a the forsaid lott where ye gate now is. Always provided that if Samll Wells see cause to make sale of his house lot, & houseing upon the same, that than Capt. Allyn shall have for his wives thirds during her life time so much land as shall amount to the value of twenty shillings by year – the foresaid distributed lands to belong to Mrs. Allyn during her naturell life; that distribution above written & on the shares is agreed upon; by Capt. John Chester; Mr. John Deming; & Samll Tallcott as Attest your most humble serv[an]t & kingsman,

Samll Tallcott

Hartford May 16: 1696

What is written in this paper & signed by my self Mr. John Deming and Capt. Samll Tallcott as said Tallcott alleges is as fare as I can Know or remember a thing off so long standing as was a cobby off the thirds of Capt. Samll Wells his Lands distributed unto his widdow or Relick now Lt. Coll. John Allyn's wife as itt was coppied out by Mr. Samuel Tallcott as witnes now my hand

John Chester, Senr.

Mr. Samll Wells allso attests this Capt. Samll Tallcott his handwriting as his known hand

Samll. Welles

This wrighting was shown att the Court of Assistants before Robert Treat Esquire Gov as attests

Caleb Stanley

This is the last action found in the court records for the estate of Capt. Samuel Welles. No exact date of the death of Hannah (Lamberton) (Welles) Allyn has been found, but she lived at least three more years. As for Col. John Allyn, he didn't enjoy the use of his wife's lands for long. He died 6 Nov 1696 according to his gravestone.