The English Ancestry Committee
of
THE WILLIAM STROTHER SOCIETY, INC.

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

August 2, 2000

Attachments to the Report:

- Treasurer's Report
- Genealogical Chart
- Report on DNA Analysis

THE ENGLISH ANCESTRY COMMITTEE
The William Strother Society, Inc.
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REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This first report of the English Ancestry Committee to the Boards of Directors includes a report on the background and purpose of the Committee, in addition to a report on its activities.

Background: Strother family members for many years have unsuccessfully sought proof of our suspected English ancestry. Generally, these efforts have been by individuals and sporadic. The last major effort by the Society to determine William's ancestry was in 1991 when the Society engaged the services of Debrett Ancestry Research Limited, one of the leading genealogical research firms in England, to search English records for evidence of William's ancestry. Debrett was unable to find any documented evidence of William's ancestry and suggested that William Strother, the immigrant, may not be of English descent.

Judson Banks, one of the Society's authorities on the ancestry of William Strother, the immigrant, conceived the idea of using DNA analysis as a means of obtaining evidence of the purported English ancestry of William for which documentation is lacking. He had explored this idea with Strothers in England and obtained their promise of cooperation. Jud then recruited Nolan B. Hensarling and Edward L. Strother to form an informal group to assist in studying the feasibility of such a project.

It was soon determined that the work needed required an analysis of the Y chromosome. Women get an X chromosome from their mother and another from their father. Men get an X chromosome from their mother but a Y chromosome from their father. Thus it is possible to follow a male line through many generations by looking only at the Y chromosome.

The Committee found that commercial DNA laboratories that do DNA analysis for forensic and paternity purposes do not do work on the Y chromosome as it requires sophisticated equipment. The Internet was then searched for all research laboratories that do work with Y chromosomes. Inquiries were sent to a number of them and two responses were received. A Swedish laboratory responded with a bid of $90,000. The other response was from The Vanderbilt Program in Human Genetics of the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, Tennessee. Their bid was reasonable enough that the project appeared to be feasible. The informal group then requested formal approval by the Executive Committee to proceed with the project in the name of the Society.

Committee Established: The Executive Committee of the Society by its action of August 26, 1999, formed the English Ancestry Committee. The Committee was established for the purpose of making a sustained, organized effort to determine the ancestry of William Strother, our immigrant ancestor. The Committee was authorized to solicit in the name of the Society such funds as may be needed from time to time in furtherance of the purposes of the Committee. Members of the Committee are Nolan B. Hensarling, Chairman, Judson Banks and Edward L.

Strother, Treasurer.

Financial: Following formation, the Committee solicited the membership by letter for contributions to fund its projects. Seventy-six members responded. Attached is a Treasurer's Report through June 30, 2000, which shows receipts of $5,200 and expenditures of $3,502. This left a balance of $1,698 which is available for the next project of the Committee.

DNA Analysis Project: As a first project, the Committee addressed the English descent question by the use of DNA studies. Through the services of the Vanderbilt Program in Human Genetics, the Committee conducted a comparative study of the Y-chromosomes of male line Strother descendants in England with those of male line descendants of William, the immigrant.

Blood specimens were collected from four well documented descendants of William, the immigrant. In finding specimen donors in England or with documented English connections, we were faced with finding individuals who had at least some documentation of their lineage, preferably of a lineage from some legendary ancestor of William and, in addition, had an interest in helping us in our quest. We found three individuals: two of essentially the same lineage and another of a separate lineage. We then had three different lineages, thought to be related, to test and compare. The three lineages were identified as William, the immigrant, Lancelot of Felkington and John of Ripon. Attached is a chart that sets out the supposed relationship of the specimen donors.

The test results showed, with a very high degree of probability, that although members of each lineage group were closely related to each other, none of the groups was related biologically to either of the other groups.

There could be several reasons for this result. The first alternative is that there are, in fact, three biologically unrelated groups with the surname Strother. This could have resulted from ancient place-name naming practices. Another is the unrecorded adoption of a male child who is given the surname Strother. Still another is the possibility of mis-paternity, i.e., the son of a Strother's wife is not, unbeknown to the husband, the son of the husband. Either or both of these latter two alternatives could occur anywhere in the lineage.

We want to emphasize that, although the study does not prove that William, the immigrant, is of English ancestry, as we hoped and expected, it also does not prove that he was not of English ancestry. Thus those who have claimed to be of royal descent through Elinor Conyers, who married Lancelot of Kirknewton, need not yet give up hope. The problem may lie with the other two lineages studied and not with that of William. For instance, if there is an adoption or mis-paternity or for some other reason the specimen donors in the Lancelot of Felkington line are not biologically related to Lancelot of Kirknewton, then William, the immigrant, might very well be so related. The DNA test results did not prove or disprove this.

What the DNA analysis did do was give us a Y chromosome base line for William, the immigrant, against which Y chromosomes of other male line Strothers in England can be compared.

A copy of the report from Vanderbilt University on the results of the study is attached.

Further Research: The Committee plans to proceed along two different avenues. We plan to continue the DNA analysis approach and search for male line English Strothers who have some documentation of their lineage and would be willing to be specimen donors for further DNA analysis. We expect that the English specimen donors in the just completed study will assist in this as the idea of three biologically unrelated families of Strothers would be as intriguing to them as it is to us. We may also need to work with local, e.g., Northumberland, genealogical organizations in identifying prospective specimen donors. We will also need to re-negotiate our arrangement with Vanderbilt University as our original arrangement with them covered only the seven blood samples examined.

The Committee is considering using the services of Debrett again to assist in identifying the ancestry of William, the immigrant. They have advised that since the study they made in 1991, a lot more records have been made available that could be relevant to a search for William's ancestry. We are considering authorizing Debrett to make a search of those records. Debrett may also need to be called on to assist with the lineage documentation of prospective specimen donors.

We think our best chance of determining William's ancestry is by using DNA analysis to place William in a particular family group in England and then have Debrett focus its efforts in that direction,

How much of this can be accomplished depends, of course, upon how much the membership evidences its support for the project by their financial contributions. Support evidenced by membership contributions for the project just completed was generous enough that we have funds on hand sufficient to begin the search for additional specimen donors from male line English Strothers. We will, however, need additional funding for the further DNA analysis, documentation and research. Accordingly, in the last issue of the newsletter, we asked the membership for contributions to enable us to continue this work.

Respectfully submitted.

Nolan B. Hensarling, Chairman

The English Ancestry Committee

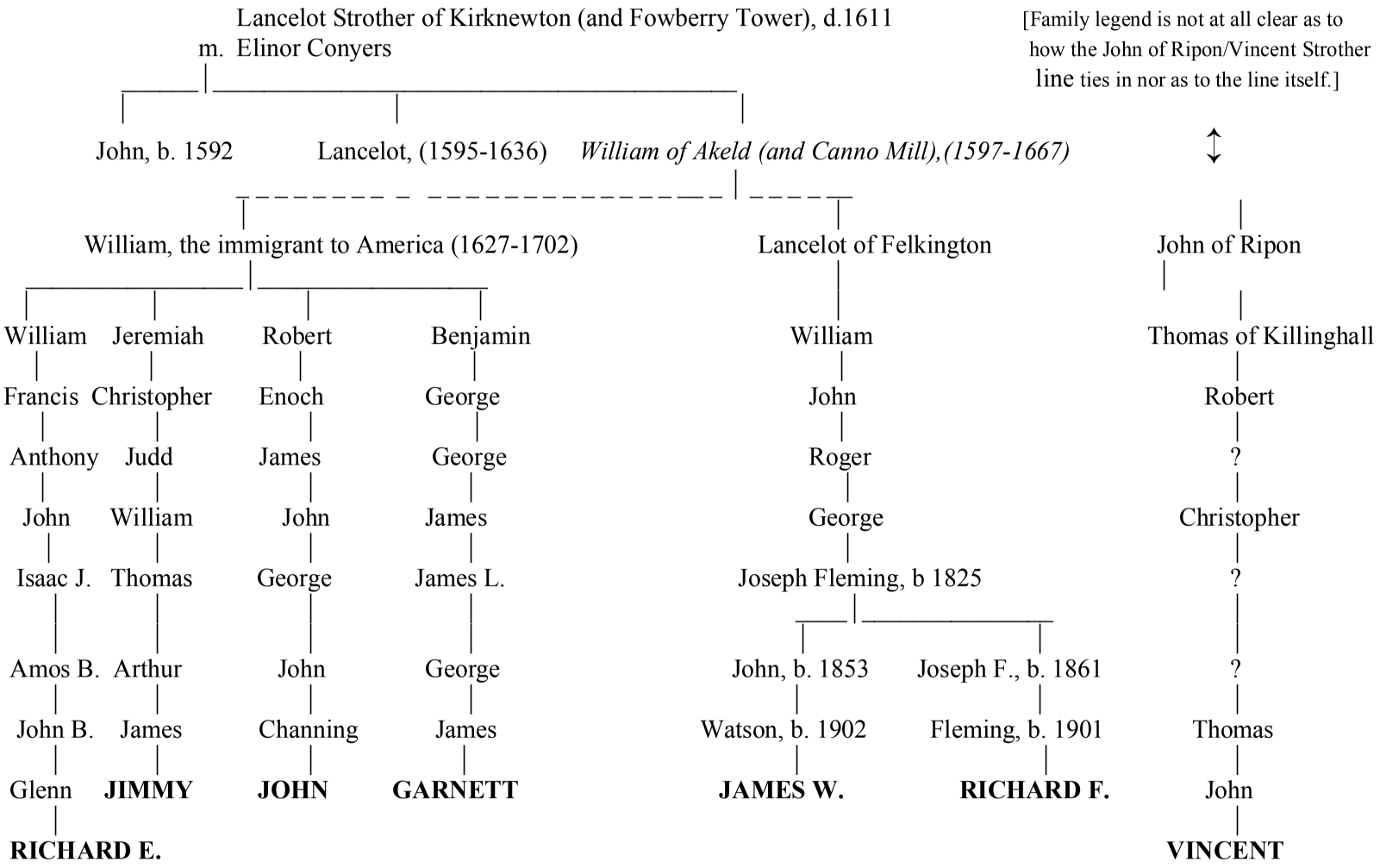
The William Strother Society, Inc.

Treasurer's Report

August 26, 1999 through June 30, 2000

Receipts	$5,200.00
Disbursements:	
Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville	3,500.00
Bank charge	2.00
Total disbursements	3,502.00
Cash balance at June 30, 2000	**$1,698.00**
Other expenses:	
Mailing expenses paid by Society directly	$ 196.14

William Strother DNA Project June 23, 2000

***William Strother of Akeld*, Presumed Common Ancestor of Some Specimen Donors, His Father and His Male Descendants Relevant to the Project**

(The dotted line indicates the family legend links that are not documented.)