

PARISH OF SHALBOURN[E], with “NewTown” partially visible at left (for source details, see Shalbourne Map, in KEY TO SOURCE NOTES, below)

WILLIAM¹ CARPENTER OF NEWTOWN, SHALBOURNE,
WILTSHIRE, AND WEYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

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WILLIAM¹ CARPENTER was born in England about 1575 and was apparently living in Weymouth, Massachusetts Bay Colony, in late 1640 and perhaps early 1640/1 (see **BIRTH**, **DEATH**, and **RESIDENCES** sections, below; TAG 70:193–94, 203). *The identity of William's wife (or wives) has not been established* (see **MARRIAGE** section, below). [Sources are cited in full in **KEY TO SOURCE NOTES**, at the end of this sketch. The format below is patterned loosely after that used by Robert Charles Anderson in his *Great Migration* series.]

BIRTH: William¹ was of Newtown, parish of Shalbourne, Wiltshire, England, by 1608, when he became a copyholder [a type of tenant] at Westcourt Manor (Westcourt Recs 7). Shalbourne, completely in Wiltshire since 1895, previously straddled the line separating Wiltshire and Berkshire, with Westcourt comprising the Wiltshire part of the parish (Shalbourne Map); the Hampshire border was/is about four miles away. It is likely that William was born in one of these three counties.

The record of William's renewal of his Westcourt tenancy on 22 June 1614 gives his age as 40 (Westcourt Recs 7). The passenger list of the *Bevis*, the ship on which he left England, is dated 2 May 1638 and states William's age as 62 (NEHGR 14:336; TAG 70:193, 203; see also **IMMIGRATION**, below). From these facts is calculated a birth year of about 1575.

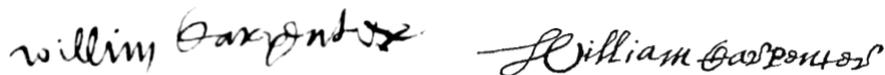
A William Carpenter, son of Henry Carpenter, was baptized about thirty miles north of Shalbourne in the parish of Great Coxwell, Berkshire (now in Oxfordshire), on 5 May 1576 (GCPaR). About the same distance south-southwest of Shalbourne in Salisbury, Wiltshire, a William Carpenter, probable son of Thomas Carpenter, was baptized in the parish church of St. Thomas the Martyr on 1 May 1571 (ChrRecs). (The record of this baptism omits the father's name; however, St. Thomas records of John and Richard Carpenter, baptized 30 November 1572 and 17 December 1580, respectively, name Thomas Carpenter as their father.) *Evidence that either of these persons was the eventual William¹ Carpenter of Shalbourne has not been found.*

DEATH: Until recently (2023) the latest known record of William¹ was the aforementioned *Bevis* passenger list entry of 2 May 1638. His namesake son, William² Carpenter, settled at Weymouth probably in 1638 and certainly before 13 May 1640, when he was admitted a freeman there. It could be argued that William¹'s failure to be made a freeman was due to his advanced age and modest station (the latter when considered apart from his son's)

(see TAG 14:336, 70:193, 195n13; see also RESIDENCES). That he might have died before 1640, however, is no longer a possibility. (The claim that he returned to England on the boat that brought him is addressed in RESIDENCES, below.)

It is estimated that the undated estate inventory of Henry¹ Butterworth (Weymouth 1635) was taken shortly before 28 January 1640/1, when the Massachusetts Bay Colony General Court “allowed” Mr. James Parker, Weymouth deputy to the court, “to marry Thomas Clifton & [Henry’s widow] Mary Butterworth w[i]thin a month” (MBCR 1:313). Presumably Mary had not been permitted to remarry until Henry’s estate was settled, so as to protect the rights of their children; he had died four years previously (Stevens–Miller Anc 1:255, 258). One of the three men who signed their names as appraisers of the Butterworth inventory was “Willim” Carpenter (SPR; Stevens–Miller Anc 1:258). But which one?

That the appraiser’s signature is not that of eventual Rehoboth town clerk William³ Carpenter is easily ascertained: he was only nine years old in 1640/1. And one need only compare Willim Carpenter’s signature to that of William² of Rehoboth to eliminate the latter from consideration.



The signature on the left, from the Butterfield inventory, differs considerably from that on the right, from a 1653 deed copied “in the hand and Custodie of mee William Carpenter of Rehoboth” (RIHSMss). The inescapable conclusion is that the former signature belongs to William¹ Carpenter, living in Weymouth in late 1640, perhaps early 1640/1.

MARRIAGE: William¹’s having emigrated only three months after the death of Alice Carpenter, who was buried in Shalbourne on 25 January 1637[8], might be interpreted to suggest that she had been his wife (though not necessarily William²’s mother); it is possible, of course, that she was an unmarried sister or daughter (TAG 70:194–95).

A William Carpenter married Alice Swithen in St. Denys Church, parish of Warminster, Wiltshire, 14 January 160[4/5] (WarPaR [image 111]). “Luis” [Louise?] (not Lillis, as indexed at *familysearch.org*) Carpenter, daughter of William Carpenter, was baptized at Warminster St. Denys 26 December 1607 and was buried there 11 August 1609 (WarPaR [images 59, 190]). By the latter date, William¹ had been in Shalbourne for more than a year (see RESIDENCES section, below). It is possible that the child had been returned from Shalbourne for burial, but available records fail to support such a hypothesis.

Two other Warminster marriages in which the groom was named William Carpenter preceded the aforementioned one: on 2 December 1596, William Carpenter married Elinor Hunt, whose burial (as “Edeth” Carpenter, repeating the forename of the preceding entry) almost certainly occurred on 22 September 1597 (WarPaR [images 108, 180]); on 11 July 1603, William Carpenter married Jane [Edwards] (WarPaR [image 110]). Elizabeth, daughter of William (and presumably Jane) Carpenter, was baptized in Warminster 26 October 1604 and probably married Richard Whittaker there 9 April 1632 (WarPaR [images 56,

118]). The only William Carpenter whose Warminster baptismal date raises the possibility that he married either or both Jane Edwards and Alice Swithen (but not Elinor Hunt) received the sacrament on 25 November 1582 as the son of Hugh Carpenter (WarPaR [image 31]). While the man of that name buried in Warminster 19 December 1616 might well have been the husband of Alice (Swithen), no ancillary records are found to verify it (see WarPaR [image 195]). (Baptized in Warminster 19 December 1562, William Carpenter “of the Laynes,” hamlet of Bugley, was buried in Warminster 27 March 1625; on 29 January 1581[2], he had married there Dorothe Batt, who survived him [WarPaR (images 11, 103, 202); CCS Probate, admin. bond].) No Warminster baptismal record of a William Carpenter is any nearer to 1575 (William¹’s calculated birth year) than that of 1582, above.

The foregoing facts neither confirm nor refute that Alice Swithen was the wife of William¹ of Shalbourne, but they tend toward the latter. It should be remembered that his relationship to the Alice Carpenter buried there is uncertain. But even if we accept for argument’s sake that she was his wife, the only evidence pointing toward her having been the former Alice Swithen is matching, popular forenames; relative proximity of Shalbourne and Warminster (36–40 miles); and a marriage date compatible with the approximate birth year (1605) of William¹ Carpenter’s only known child (see CHILDREN section, below). This falls far short of the Genealogical Proof Standard (see BCG).

A William Carpenter married at St. Thomas the Martyr, Salisbury, Wiltshire, 18 April 1605, Mary Bath (not Batt) (WiltPaR 5:22). Christopher Batt, a tanner of [New] Sarum (i.e., Salisbury), Wiltshire, was one of the Carpenters’ fellow passengers on the *Bevis*. Records of the Batt family of Salisbury indicate that he and a Mary Batt of appropriate age (baptized at St. Thomas 7 Aug. 1584, daughter of Richard and Agnes (Danyell) Batt) “would be no more than distant cousins” (NEHGR 14:336; Martin, citing NEHGR 51:181–88, 348–57, 52:44–51, 321–22). It seems likely that this William Carpenter had been the infant of that name baptized at St. Thomas on 1 May 1571 (see BIRTH section, above), and that he remained a Salisbury resident. Evidence that Mary Bath was the eventual wife of William¹ Carpenter of Shalbourne has not been found.

IMMIGRATION: William¹, with son William² and the latter’s family, embarked at Southampton, Hampshire, on the *Bevis*. The preamble to the ship’s passenger list indicates that by 2 May 1638 “they [had been] some Dayes gone to sea” (NEHGR 14:336). They landed probably at Boston (the point of all but a handful of Bay Colony arrivals) in June or July 1638 (the average ocean crossing took five to eight weeks).

RESIDENCES: He was living at Newtown by 1 June 1608 and until at least about 18 September 13 Charles [1637]; on the latter date a new family assumed tenancy of the parcels previously held by the Carpenters (Westcourt Recs 7). The last Carpenter record at Shalbourne is that of Alice Carpenter’s burial, in 1637/8 (see MARRIAGE, above). Although her place in the Carpenter family is uncertain, we may be fairly confident that the others were present in or near Shalbourne at this time (TAG 70:194–95).

Amos B. Carpenter’s claim that William¹ (whom he inappropriately numbers as William²) resided in London prior to emigrating is completely baseless (see Carpenter [1898] 34, 38). As above, William was at Shalbourne by 1608. In 2004, John R. Carpenter of La

Mesa, California, requested a search by Guildhall Library, London, of that city's Carpenters' Company freemen's lists (begun in the sixteenth century) and of various catalogs; no reference to a William Carpenter was found.

Despite the *Bevis* passenger list's description of William¹ (and son William²) as "of Horwell"—that is, Wherwell, Hampshire (about 15 air miles south-southeast of Shalbourne)—the aforementioned Shalbourne records make it clear that he was at the former place no more than a few months, perhaps only a day or two (see [William² of Rehoboth sketch](#), RESIDENCES).

Apparently based solely on his having found no record of William¹ in Massachusetts, Amos Carpenter claimed that William¹ returned to England on the ship that brought him (see Carpenter [1898] 38). There is no evidence of this, however, and no reason to suppose it. His having endured the rigors of the voyage to Massachusetts, it is doubtful that William¹, an old man by the conditions and standards of the time, would have opted to face, unaccompanied, the physical demands of a return trip. And to what would he have returned? William² was his eldest (perhaps only) son and heir. (This we infer from the inclusion of William Carpenter Jr. with his father in the Westcourt Manor *copy court roll* beginning with the initial record of their tenancy.) Where better for this father and grandfather to spend his last years than in the company of those with whom he had come? Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence: considering his age (advanced), marital status (presumably widower), and position in his family (almost certainly subordinate to his highly educated son), it is not significant that William¹ fails to appear in Massachusetts records as a freeholder or town officer, for example. And with deaths at this time being the vital event least often recorded, it is unremarkable that no such record is found for him. (Also unrecorded is the birth, probably in late 1638, of his grandson Samuel³.) The most compelling evidence that William¹ did not return to England, however, is presented in the DEATH section, above.

OCCUPATION: The *Bevis* passenger list describes William¹ as a carpenter (NEHGR 14:336). That his copyhold included not only a messuage [house and adjoining land] with a garden but also a small number of acres in nearby common fields indicates that he was also a husbandman [subsistence farmer] (see Westcourt 7; "Recommended Reading," GMN 16, no. 3).

EDUCATION/OFFICES: William "Crpentr," church warden, signed his mark to a *glebe terrier* (describing lands belonging to the Shalbourne vicarage) dated 6 June 1628 (SVGT). A Shalbourne parish register transcript for that year, presumably submitted to the Bishop of Sarum in spring 1629, also bore the mark of church warden Willia[m] Carpenter (ShalPaR). Knowing now that William¹ could sign his name (see DEATH, above), we can only speculate that the illiterate signatory might have been William¹'s otherwise unidentified father.

CHILDREN: The only known child of William¹ Carpenter is the son named with him in his record of tenancy at Shalbourne Westcourt and with whom he emigrated: the eventual William² Carpenter of Rehoboth (Westcourt Recs 7; NEHGR 14:336; see also [William² of Rehoboth sketch](#)). The *Carpenters' Encyclopedia of Carpenters 2009* main database's

attribution to William¹ of additional children through alleged wife Mary “Batt” is baseless (see MARRIAGE section, above).

COMMENTS: The will of Robert Carpenter of Marden, Wiltshire, dated 12 January 1606[/?] and proved 21 May 1607, names (among others) adult sons William and Richard. It has been claimed that these brothers were William¹ Carpenter (father of William² of Rehoboth) and Richard^A Carpenter of Amesbury, Wiltshire (father of William¹ of Providence, R.I.). While it is not impossible that William¹ of Shalbourne was the son of Robert of Marden, evidence of it has not been found; it is unlikely that Richard of Amesbury was Robert’s son. Genetic testing of agnate descendants of William of Shalbourne and Richard of Amesbury has established with a high degree of probability that the two were in fact related but far more remotely than generally believed. For more-detailed discussions of these matters, see NEHGR 159 (2005):64–66, 67n63; [William² of Rehoboth sketch](#), COMMENTS.

In *Carpenters’ Encyclopedia of Carpenters 2001* (CECD 2001), compiler John R. Carpenter presents an extensive ancestry for the subject William¹ Carpenter and Richard^A Carpenter of Amesbury, beginning with the aforementioned Robert Carpenter of Marden and his widow, Elinor, as their parents. Most of this ancestry—back from Rev. Richard Carpenter of Herefordshire and Wiltshire (d. 1503)—has been proven invalid (NEHGR 159:65n53–66n53[contd.]); as above, the remainder is unsubstantiated and, particularly for the Amesbury man, dubious. Earlier versions of this ancestry, which differ from it for the first few generations (beginning with parents), are even more improbable than the CECD 2001 version (see, for example, Carpenter [1898] 1, 34). *The ancestry of William¹ Carpenter, including his parentage, is unknown (as is that of Richard^A).*

Amos Carpenter, the first to assert that Richard^A Carpenter was William¹’s brother, further claims that Alexander^A Carpenter of Wrington, Somersetshire, and Leiden, Netherlands, was another brother (Carpenter [1898] 34). There is absolutely no support for this.

A Robert Carpenter was among those who took the estate inventory of William Shefford of Shalbourne in 1609 (Shefford Inv). Although it seems reasonable to suppose that he is related to William¹ (perhaps a brother [born by 1588]), evidence linking them has not been found. *Robert* is not a Rehoboth Carpenter forename.

A Wikipedia article about Culham, Oxfordshire, states that “[r]ecords from Culham Manor of the late 1500s to the early 1600s . . . show a William Carpenter senior and his son William Carpenter junior, who emigrated to Weymouth, Massachusetts, in 1638 and helped found Rehoboth, Massachusetts, in 1645 [*sic*]” (Wikipedia1). Another Wikipedia article, about the Rehoboth Carpenters (the same person is the main contributor to both), asserts that “[m]anor records from Culham . . . contain various references to a father-son William Carpenter whose activities conform to Shalbourne records. The Carpenters [of] Culham [were] a prosperous yeoman family . . . William Carpenter Sr. served as assessor of fines in the Culham Manor Court. Many pages of Latin records bearing his name are now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. William Carpenter Sr. educated his eldest son Robert at Oxford for the church. Many of what were perhaps Robert’s books made there [*sic*] way to Massa-

chusetts in the possession of Carpenter's son William Carpenter Jr. (b. 1605)" (Wikipedia2).

These passages reflect one of the most common types of error in genealogy: "right name, wrong man," the merging of different persons of the same name into a single identity; in this case, four are reduced to two. The author of the above-quoted statements ignores important evidence refuting his identification of the Carpenters of Shalbourne, Weymouth, and Rehoboth with those of Culham. Far from being the scholarly yeoman (land-owning farmer) who sat on a manorial court at Culham, William¹ Carpenter of Shalbourne (35 miles distant) was a carpenter and husbandman; he was in no position to send a son to Oxford (see OCCUPATION, EDUCATION/OFFICES, above). (There is no evidence that the Robert Carpenter recorded at Shalbourne in 1609 was a clergyman; in any case, he was too old to have been William¹'s son [see above].) On 22 November 1636, moreover, William Carpenter of Culham was appointed to administer the estate of his son Thomas of London, whose will failed to name an executor (PCC Probate Acts 83). By this time, William¹ Carpenter and his only known son, the eventual William² of Rehoboth, had been living at Shalbourne for twenty-eight years! In summary, there is absolutely no basis for the claim that the two immigrant William Carpenters formerly of Shalbourne were identical to a Culham father and son of the same name or that the two pairs of men were connected at all.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: See, for example, Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1991; repr. 1992 [paperback]); Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards*, rev. ed. (Lebanon, N.H., 1995 [paperback]); John Chandler, *Marlborough and Eastern Wiltshire* (Salisbury, England, 2001), and "Shalbourne Concise History," online at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getconcise.php?id=199, a Wiltshire County Council – Wiltshire Community History webpage; Shalbourne History Project, *Shalbourne to the Millennium (Shalbourne, England, 1999)*; Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570–1700* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1991; repr. 1996 [paperback]); Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud: 1573–1645* (London, 1940; repr. 2000 [paperback]); Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525–1700*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, England, 1995 [paperback]).

KEY TO SOURCE NOTES:

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| BCG | Board for Certification of Genealogists, "The Genealogical Proof Standard," online at bcgcertification.org/resources/standard.html |
| Carpenter [1898] | Amos B. Carpenter, <i>A Genealogical History of the Rehoboth Branch of the Carpenter Family in America</i> [informal title: <i>Carpenter Memorial</i>] (Amherst, Mass., 1898) |

CCS Probate	Consistory Court of Salisbury, wills, bonds, and inventories, ref. P1/C/120, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham, England
ChrRecs	<i>England & Wales Christening Records, 1530–1906</i> , online database at search.ancestry.co.uk
GCPaR	Great Coxwell Parish Records (not paginated) [Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City, film #88,267]
GMN	<i>Great Migration Newsletter</i> , online at greatmigration.org (subscription website; printed issues available)
Martin	David Kendall Martin, FASG, letter to Gene Zubrinsky, 16 March 1998
MBCR	<i>Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, 1628–1686</i> , ed. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, 5 vols. in 6 (Boston, 1853–1854)
NEHGR	<i>The New England Historical and Genealogical Register</i> , vol. 1 (1847) through present
PCC Probate Acts	John Matthews and George F. Matthews, <i>Abstracts of Probate Acts in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1635–1639</i> (London, 1903); digital image at books.google.com
RIHSMss	Rhode Island Historical Society Manuscripts Collection, MSS 9003, vol. 5, p. 5, Rhode Island Historical Society; digital image online at http://carpentercousins.com/Deed in Hand of Wm2 Carpenter of Rehoboth.pdf
ShalPaR	Shalbourne Parish Records, Bishop's Transcripts 1587–1699 [image 42], in <i>Wiltshire, England, Church of England, Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1538–1812</i> , online at ancestry.com ; Bishop's Transcripts for Shalbourne 1587–1835, online at familysearch.org [FHL film #1,279,426, item 11]
Shalbourne Map	Parish of Shalbourne, from <i>Andrews and Dury's Map of Wiltshire, 1810</i> , online at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getcom2.php?id=199 , a Wiltshire County Council – Wiltshire Community History webpage

Shefford Inv	William Shefford estate inventory, facsimile online at <i>history.wiltshire.gov.uk/heritage</i> , a Wiltshire County Council – Wiltshire Archive Catalogue webpage; abstract online at <i>genuki.org.uk/big/eng/BRKwills/wa10419.html</i> , a GENUKI: UK & Ireland Genealogy website maintained by Nick Hidden (1998)
SPR	Suffolk County, Massachusetts, Probate Records, case no. 2623 (original), also vol. 5[new series]:297–98
Stevens–Miller Anc	Mary Lovering Holman (and Winifred Lovering Holman), <i>Ancestry of Colonel John Harrington Stevens and His Wife Frances Helen Miller</i> , 2 vols. (Concord, N.H., 1948, 1951)
SVGT	Shalbourne Vicarage Glebe Terrier, ref. D/5/10/2/8, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham, England
TAG	<i>The American Genealogist</i> , vol. 9 (1932) through present
WarPaR	Warminster St. Denys Parish Register, 1556–1654, in <i>Wiltshire, England, Church of England, Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1538–1812</i> , online at <i>ancestry.com</i> [also FHL film #1,279,363, item 13]
Westcourt Recs	Survey of Shalbourne Westcourt (c1610–1639/40), Saver-nake Estate Collection, ref. 9/24/460, Wiltshire and Swin-don Archives
Wikipedia1	Wikipedia contributors, “Culham,” <i>Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia</i> , online at <i>en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culham</i> (accessed 5/4/2009)
Wikipedia2	Wikipedia contributors, “Rehoboth Carpenter Family,” <i>Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia</i> , online at <i>en.wiki-pedia.org/wiki/Rehoboth_Carpenter_Family</i> (accessed 5/4/2009)
WiltPaR	<i>Wiltshire Parish Registers. Marriages</i> , vol. 5, ed. W. P. W. Phillimore, Edmund Nevill, and John Sadler (London, 1907) [FHL film #496,691, item 4]

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