

THE IMMIGRATION AND MARRIAGE OF
WILLIAM¹ CARPENTER OF AMESBURY, WILTSHIRE,
AND PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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In the January 2005 issue of this journal, an article mainly about Abiah³ Carpenter of Warwick, Rhode Island (*William*² of Rehoboth, Massachusetts), devotes an appendix to the immigration and marriage of William¹ Carpenter of Amesbury and Providence, the American progenitor of an allied Carpenter family.^[1] From the evidence presented therein, the author (this writer) concluded that “William Carpenter did not come to New England in mid 1635 with and as an in-law of the [William¹] Arnolds [of Providence], but arrived sometime during the next year or two and married Elizabeth Arnold about 1637, probably at Providence.”^[2] New evidence strongly suggests, however, that this William Carpenter did arrive in the summer of 1635, though not with the family into which he married. The apparent facts of his immigration, along with other newly noted evidence, nevertheless heighten the probability that he married at the above-quoted time and place—rather than by 1635 in England, as has been widely supposed.

The following entry, dated 3 June 1635, appears in Massachusetts Bay Colony Governor John Winthrop’s journal: “heere [at Boston] arived . . . the Iames a shippe of 300: t. with Cattle & passingers which came all safe from S: hampton within [about five weeks and three days].”^[3] Two months earlier, at Southampton “in & aboute the vj¹ of April 1635,” fifty-three “men, youthes, & boyes . . . besids the wives & Children of Dyvers of these” registered for passage to New England on the *James* of London.^[4]

¹ Eugene Cole Zubrinsky, “Abiah³ Carpenter of Warwick, Rhode Island, and His Family: With Additional Material Concerning William¹ Carpenter of Providence, Rhode Island, and William² Carpenter of Rehoboth, Massachusetts,” *Register* 159 (2005):55–68, at 67–68. Abiah Carpenter’s sister Hannah married Joseph Carpenter, ultimately of Musketa Cove (in Oyster Bay), Long Island, New York, son of William¹ Carpenter of Providence. The Carpenter Cousins Y-DNA Project (<http://members.cox.net/johnrcarpenter/>) has produced genetic evidence that the Rehoboth and Providence Carpenter families were related but far more remotely than long thought (Zubrinsky, “William¹ Carpenter of Providence, Rhode Island” [Ojai, Calif., 2008; <http://members.cox.net/jrcrin001/Wm1-Providence.pdf>], 14–15).

² Zubrinsky, “Abiah³ Carpenter of Warwick” [note 1], *Register* 159:68.

³ Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle, ed., *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630–1649* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 147.

⁴ Original list of the *James*, The National Archives, CO 1/8:183–85, at 185 (digital image); Peter Wilson Coldham, *The Complete Book of Emigrants, 1607–1660* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987), 133–34; [Samuel G. Drake], “The Founders of New England,” *Register* 14 (1860):297–345, at 332, erroneously has v¹ of April. The emigrants’ dockside arrival probably occurred over a period of days. But the ship’s departure, calculated as about 26 April, was likely

Among the names on the *James*'s passenger list are "Thomas" Carpenter of Amesbury, carpenter; "Josuah Verren" (Joshua Verin), roper; and John Greene, surgeon. The latter two are listed (beginning with the third name below Carpenter's) in a cluster of nine men "late of New Saru[m]." ^[5] If the Amesbury carpenter was not already acquainted with Verin and Greene—New Sarum (Salisbury) is only seven miles south of Amesbury—he unavoidably got to know them during the voyage. While Verin settled first in Salem and Greene in Boston, there is no record of a Thomas Carpenter in New England until 1692. ^[6] Joshua Verin and John Greene (Roger Williams's "neighbor Greene," below) were among the six men "which Cam first" to Providence, in mid-1636; *William* Carpenter joined them there a year or so later (see below). ^[7]

It is thus a fact that an Amesbury carpenter surnamed Carpenter emigrated on the same ship as two men from nearby Salisbury who became early associates of Roger Williams in Providence, as did an Amesbury carpenter surnamed Carpenter not long thereafter. ^[8] If passenger Carpenter were listed as William rather than Thomas, we would not hesitate to conclude that he and William of Providence were one. While the forename conflict gives pause, it is the only ill-fitting puzzle piece. It is likely that the *James* passenger was actually William Carpenter—inadvertently recorded with the same forename as Thomas Davyes (Davis), who

delayed while a replacement for the original master was found. The passenger list names William Cooper, but Winthrop (see note 3) identifies the ship's master as a man named Graves, with whom he is familiar.

⁵ List of the *James* [note 4]; Coldham, *Complete Book of Emigrants* [note 4], 133; Drake, "Founders of New England" [note 4], *Register* 14:333, erroneously says "late of New England."

⁶ John B. Threlfall, "The Verin Family of Salem, Massachusetts," *Register* 131 (1977):100–12, at 101, 103; Robert Charles Anderson, George Freeman Sanborn Jr., and Melinde Lutz Sanborn, *The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England, 1634–1635, Volume III, G–H* (Boston: NEHGS, 2003), 141–42 (John Greene); James N. Arnold, *Vital Record of Rehoboth, 1642–1896* (Providence, R.I.: Narragansett Historical Publishing Co., 1897), 572 (Thomas Carpenter in 1692). For the passenger "Thomas Carpenter," note Robert Charles Anderson, George Freeman Sanborn Jr., and Melinde Lutz Sanborn, *The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England, 1634–1635, Volume II, C–F* (Boston: NEHGS, 2001), 10 ("There is no evidence that this man arrived in New England.").

⁷ *The Early Records of the Town of Providence*, 21 vols. (Providence, R.I.: Snow & Farnham, 1892–1915), 1:4–5; John Russell Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, 10 vols. (Providence, R.I.: A.C. Greene & Brothers, 1856–1865), 1:17; Threlfall, "Verin Family" [note 6], *Register* 131:103; Anderson, Sanborn, and Sanborn, *Great Migration, Volume III, G–H* [note 6], 141–43, 145–46.

⁸ That William¹ Carpenter of Providence was a housewright is evident from the nature of the many tools listed in his estate inventory (*Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 6:149–50). In a letter dated in 1708, a daughter of Pawtuxet resident William¹ Harris recounted that William Carpenter had built her father's house ("Editorial Notes and Cullings," *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society: New Series* 4 [1896]:194, 195, 196). A history of Rhode Island calls him "an English-bred carpenter . . . from Amesbury" (William B. Weedon, *Early Rhode Island: A Social History of the People* [New York: Grafton Press, 1910], 87). Pawtuxet, in that part of Providence now southeast Cranston, was first settled sometime between 1638 and 1642 by Carpenter, Harris, and a few others (Eugene Cole Zubrinsky, "William¹ Carpenter of Providence, Rhode Island" [rev. 2009], 6, online at <http://members.cox.net/jrcrin001/Wm1-Providence.pdf>).

is listed immediately above the Amesbury man.^[9] That William Carpenter's first appearance in New England records does not occur until 1637 or 1638^[10] is not significant; many early immigrants went unrecorded for some years after their arrival. The aforementioned Thomas Davis, for example, does not appear in New England records until 1641.^[11] It is therefore probable that the eventual William¹ Carpenter of Providence (listed as passenger "Thomas Carpenter") arrived at Boston on 3 June 1635 aboard the *James* from Southampton.

This corrects the author's 2005 assertion that William¹ Carpenter of Amesbury immigrated up to two years after the William¹ Arnold family's arrival on 24 June 1635.^[12] Simultaneously, however, it reinforces the related conclusion (stated in the same article) that Carpenter came to New England not with the family into which he has been thought already to have married but as a single man who did not marry Arnold's daughter Elizabeth until about 1637, probably in Providence.^[13]

Augmenting the evidence presented in 2005^[14] are certain Providence records, including the first two of William Carpenter in New England, that make it practically certain that he met and married Elizabeth Arnold at Providence about 1637. These records strongly imply that Carpenter arrived there not "at the same early date" as the Arnolds^[15] but as much as a year or so later. First, under the heading "Agrements & orders the second year of ye Plantation" [about June 1637 to June 1638], is an otherwise undated order that William Carpenter, Benedict Arnold, Francis Weekes, William Reynolds, Thomas Angell, Mrs. Daniel, and Mary Sweet "shold pay in consideration of Ground at present Granted vnto them" two shillings [and sixpence?] apiece; Edward Cope is assessed five shillings [and sixpence?].^[16] Immediately after this is another undated entry, ordering that Mr. Cole (Robert Coles), Francis Weston, and Richard Waterman are each to pay two shillings [one shilling and sixpence?] if "they do not Improue their Ground at present graunted to them . . . by preparing to fense to plaunt to build etc."^[17] Of those named above, only four—Carpenter, Coles, Weston, and Waterman—are

⁹ List of the *James* [note 4]; Coldham, *Complete Book of Emigrants* [note 4], 133; Drake, "Founders of New England" [note 4], *Register* 14:334.

¹⁰ *Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 1:3, 4.

¹¹ Anderson, Sanborn, and Sanborn, *Great Migration, Volume II, C-F* [note 6], 310, 316.

¹² Zubrinsky, "Abiah³ Carpenter of Warwick" [note 1], *Register* 159:68; Edwin Hubbard, "Early Records of the Arnold Family," *Register* 33 (1879):428.

¹³ Zubrinsky, "Abiah³ Carpenter of Warwick" [note 1], *Register* 159:68.

¹⁴ That evidence includes but is not limited to a deposition indicating that Carpenter's son and probable first child, Joseph, was 26 in 1664, implying a birth year of about 1638—not by 1635, as deduced over a century ago from a faulty assumption that he was an adult in 1656 (see Zubrinsky, "Abiah³ Carpenter of Warwick" [note 1], *Register* 159:68).

¹⁵ Daniel Hoogland Carpenter, *History and Genealogy of the Carpenter Family in America, from the Settlement at Providence, R.I., 1637-1901* (Jamaica, N.Y.: Marion Press, 1901), 9.

¹⁶ *Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 1:3; *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* [note 7], 1:15, "and sixpence."

¹⁷ *Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 1:3; *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* [note 7], 1:15, "one shilling and sixpence."

subsequently identified as original proprietors.^[18] The latter three, slow to take up their respective grants, presumably had received and paid for them at least several months previously. Carpenter and those named with him, on the other hand, were yet to pay for their lots and almost certainly had obtained them more recently. That none of the others listed with Carpenter was an original proprietor, moreover, suggests that he was one of the last of the thirteen men to earn that designation in later records.^[19] (Roger Williams recounts that “poor young fellow” Francis Weekes and “a lad of Thomas Waterman’s,” generally thought to have been Thomas Angell [both are named with Carpenter, above], were among the first to join Williams in the spring of 1636.^[20] It is generally supposed that land grants to them were delayed until they came of age.)

The Arnolds, by contrast, had joined Roger Williams more than a year earlier. Benedict² Arnold recounts that “We came to Providence to Dwell the 20th of April, 1636.”^[21] First situated on the eastern bank of the Seekonk River, Williams and his friends moved about two months later to the other side of the river (beyond the jurisdiction of Plymouth Colony), where they built their permanent settlement. William Arnold stated in 1659 that “I was one that the very first day entred with some others vpon the land of Prouidence and so laid out my money to buy and helpe pay for it.”^[22] (Despite having accompanied his father at that time, Benedict Arnold [named with Carpenter above], did not reach adulthood until 21 December 1636 and consequently, as with Weekes and [presumably] Angell, was not an original proprietor.)^[23]

The second Providence record naming William Carpenter, dated 10 4th month [June] (year not recorded but probably 1638),^[24] implies the order of arrival of two cohorts of settlers: “y^e Severall portions of grasse & medow w^{ch} our neighbour[s] Greene . . . Cole . . . Arnold & . . . Weston Layd out in y^e Townes name vnto [our] neighbour[s] James . . . Olney . . . Waterman . . . Cole . . . Weston . . . Carpenter . . . Holyman were Confirmed as their proper Right & Inheritance to them & theirs as fully as the *former* portions appropriated to [our] neighbour Throck-

¹⁸ See, for example, *Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 3:90–91; 4:73; 14:274.

¹⁹ See preceding note.

²⁰ Glenn W. LaFantasie, ed., *The Correspondence of Roger Williams, Volume II, 1654–1682*, (Providence, R.I.: Rhode Island Historical Society, 1988), 750; Samuel Greene Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1859–60), 1:97.

²¹ Hubbard, “Early Records of the Arnold Family” [note 12], *Register* 33:428.

²² *Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 15:77–78.

²³ Hubbard, “Early Records of the Arnold Family” [note 12], *Register* 33:428.

²⁴ Bartlett gives the year of this record as 1637 (see *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* [note 7], 1:17); other records suggest, and other writers conclude, that it was 1638 (see *Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 1:4 [Joshua Verin disfranchisement]; Allyn Bailey Forbes, ed., *Winthrop Papers, Volume 4, 1638–1644* [Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1944], 30–31; Howard M. Chapin, *Documentary History of Rhode Island*, 2 vols. [Providence, R.I.: Preston & Rounds, 1916], 75; John C. C. Clarke, “The Pioneer Baptist Statesman,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 10 [1876]:180–204, at 196–97).

morton neighbour Greene neighbour Harris Joshua Verin,^[25] neighbour Arnold and neighbour Williams were or are confirmed to them & theirs” (emphasis added).^[26] The six men listed as having previously confirmed their allotments (including William Arnold) are evidently the earliest of the Providence settlers. In a letter written to the town of Providence in 1650, Joshua Verin speaks of “we six which Cam first.”^[27] The seven men receiving confirmation of title (William Carpenter among them) had clearly arrived later than the six whose titles had already been validated.

Based on the foregoing, we may reasonably estimate that William¹ Carpenter, formerly of Amesbury, arrived in Providence at least a year after the Arnolds joined Roger Williams in Seekonk, in April 1636. Considering also the evidence presented in 2005, it is virtually certain that Carpenter married Elizabeth Arnold in Providence no earlier than 1637.

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²⁵ The only one not called “neighbour,” Joshua Verin had recently been disfranchised and would soon leave Providence, forfeiting his lands there (*Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 1:4; Threlfall, “Verin Family” [note 6], *Register* 131:103–4). He thus is not among the original purchasers named in subsequent records.

²⁶ *Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 1:4–5; *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* [note 7], 1:17. This record names all the original proprietors except Stukely Westcott (compare, for example, with *Early Records of Providence*, 3:90–91; 14:274).

²⁷ *Early Records of Providence* [note 7], 15:37; *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* [note 7], 1:17n.