



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

WILLIAM¹ CARPENTER
OF NEWTOWN, SHALBOURNE, WILTSHIRE
(*BEVIS*, 1638)

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WILLIAM¹ CARPENTER was born in England about 1575 and was still living a few days before 2 May 1638; he died probably at Weymouth, Massachusetts Bay Colony, or Rehoboth, Plymouth Colony (see **BIRTH**, **DEATH**, **MARRIAGE**, **IMMIGRATION**, and **RESIDENCES** sections, below; TAG 70:193–94, 203). [While the foregoing genealogical data is presented in *Register* style, the embedding, grouping, and severe abbreviating of source citations are conveniences that depart from it. 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, Shalbourne Parish, Wiltshire, England, by 1608, when he became a copyholder (semipermanent leaseholder) 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 was baptized in the parish of Great Coxwell, Berkshire (now in Oxfordshire), on 5 May 1576, son of Henry Carpenter (GCPaR). Evidence that this is more than coincidence has not been found. But since Great Coxwell is only twenty map miles due north of Shalbourne, further research in the vicinity of the former place is warranted.

DEATH: The latest known record of William¹ is 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. That William¹ was not made a freeman at the same time was perhaps because he had died. It might, on the other hand, have been due to his modest station, when considered

apart from that of his son (see TAG 14:336, 70:193, 195n13; EDUCATION/OFFICES, below).

MARRIAGE: Despite claims to the contrary, the identity of William¹'s wife (or wives) is unknown. His having emigrated only three months after the death of Alice Carpenter, who was buried at Shalbourne on 25 January 1637[/8], suggests that she had been his wife (though not necessarily William²'s mother); it is possible, however, that she was an unmarried sister or daughter (TAG 70:194–95).

A William Carpenter married at St. Thomas the Martyr, Salisbury, Wiltshire, 18 April 1605, Mary Bath (not Batt, as per various informal sources) (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, however, 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 has not been established that William¹ Carpenter was the man of that name who married Mary Bath.

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 leased 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 the absence of any record of William¹ in Massachusetts, Amos Carpenter claims 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 (assuming he completed it), 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 (single), and position in his family (almost certainly subordinate to his 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.)

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 with his mark a *glebe terrier* (describing lands belonging to the Shalbourne vicarage) dated 6 June 1628 (SVGT). William²'s obvious literacy excludes him from consideration as the subscriber (see [William² of Rehoboth sketch](#), EDUCATION). The only other man of that name found in Shalbourne records is William¹.

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” (see MARRIAGE, above), is baseless.

COMMENTS: The will of Robert Carpenter of Marden, Wiltshire, dated 12 January 1606[/7?] 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; 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 William'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 1688]), 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 Massachusetts 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 an illiterate carpenter and husbandman (see OCCUPATION, EDUCATION/OFFICES, above). And as such, he was in no position to send a son to Oxford. (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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| 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) |
| 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 www.greatmigration.org (subscription website; printed issues available) |
| Martin | David Kendall Martin, FASG, letter to Gene Zubrinsky, 16 March 1998 |

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 online at http://books.google.com
Shalbourne Map	Shalbourne Parish, 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 http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/wills/P5-1609_71_A1{TCL}.jpg , a Wiltshire County Council – Wiltshire Archive Catalogue webpage; abstract online at www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/BRKwills/wa10419.html , a GENUKI: UK & Ireland Genealogy website maintained by Nick Hidden (1998)
SVGT	Shalbourne Vicarage Glebe Terrier, ref. D/5/10/2/8, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham (formerly Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Trowbridge), England
TAG	<i>The American Genealogist</i> , vol. 9 (1932) through present
Westcourt Recs	Survey of Shalbourne Westcourt (c1610–1639/40), Saverlake Estate Collection, ref. 9/24/460, Wiltshire and Swindon Archives
Wikipedia1	Wikipedia contributors, “Culham,” <i>Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia</i> , online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culham (accessed 5/4/2009)
Wikipedia2	Wikipedia contributors, “Rehoboth Carpenter Family,” <i>Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia</i> , online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rehoboth_Carpenter_Family (accessed 5/4/2009)

WiltPaR

Wiltshire Parish Registers. Marriages, vol. 5, ed. W. P. W. Phillimore, Edmund Nevill, and John Sadler (London, 1907) [FHL film #496,691, item 4]

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