

= William Arnold ( settler ) =

William Arnold ( 24 June 1587 ? c . 1676 ) was one of the founding settlers of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations , and with his sons was among the wealthiest people in the colony . He was raised and educated in England where he was the warden of St. Mary 's , the parish church of Ilchester in southeastern Somerset . In 1635 , along with family and associates , he immigrated to New England , where he initially settled in Hingham in the Massachusetts Bay Colony , but soon relocated to the new settlement of Providence with Roger Williams . He was one of the 13 original proprietors of Providence , appearing on the deed signed by Roger Williams in 1638 , and was one of the twelve founding members of the first Baptist church to be established in America .

After living in Providence for about two years , Arnold moved with his family and other relatives and associates to the north side of the Pawtuxet River forming a settlement commonly called Pawtuxet , later a part of Cranston , Rhode Island . He and his fellow settlers had serious disputes with their Warwick neighbors on the south side of the river and as a result separated themselves from the Providence government , putting themselves under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Bay Colony . This separation from Providence lasted for 16 years , and as the head of the settlement , Arnold was appointed as the keeper of the peace . He died sometime during the great turmoil of King Philip 's War in 1675 or 1676 . Arnold 's son , Benedict Arnold , succeeded Roger Williams as President of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in 1657 , and under the royal charter of 1663 became the first Governor of the colony .

Highly unusual for a 17th @-@ century American settler , Arnold began a family record based on entries from the local parish registers in England and brought this with him to New England ; this family record would eventually span more than 200 years and six generations . Nearly 300 years after his birth , a fabricated pedigree for Arnold was published , claiming his descent from 12th @-@ century kings living in Wales . Three and a half decades later , in 1915 , his correct ancestry was published , but not before the misinformation had been printed in an important source for Rhode Island genealogy .

= = Early life = =

Born in Ilchester , Somerset , England on 24 June 1587 , William Arnold was the son of Nicholas Arnold ( c . 1550 ? 1623 ) by his first wife Alice Gully ( 1553 ? 1596 ) . In about 1610 he married Christian Peak who was baptized 15 February 1584 , the daughter of Thomas Peak of Muchelney , Somerset , a village about six miles ( 10 km ) west of Ilchester .

Arnold 's parents lived in the small village of Northover , located across the River Yeo ( also known as the River Ivel ) from the town of Ilchester . Nicholas was a tailor , and the mention of his occupation in his will and the vital records of some of his family members suggests that he was prominent in his work , and likely a member of the Tailor 's Guild , which carried professional and political clout in its day . As he advanced in his profession , and after the baptism of his oldest daughter Thomasine in 1572 , Nicholas moved with his small family from Northover across the river to the much larger town of Ilchester where he became well established in his trade , and where the remainder of his children were born .

Arnold 's mother , Alice Gully , was the daughter of John Gully ( c . 1508 ? 1559 ) and his wife Alice ( c . 1510 ? 1583 ) of Northover . His mother died in 1596 shortly after child birth , when Arnold was eight years old , and he was thereafter largely raised and influenced by his sister Joanne who was ten years older than he . Though Joanne eventually married William Hopkins of Yeovilton and died at an early age in England , two of her children , Frances ( Hopkins ) Man and Thomas Hopkins , immigrated to New England with their Uncle William Arnold .

Arnold and his siblings were likely educated at the Free Grammar School associated with the parish church in Limington , slightly more than a mile to the east of Ilchester . This ancient school is where Thomas Wolsey was the curate and schoolmaster from 1500 to 1509 . Wolsey later became the Lord Cardinal and Primate of England .

Only two records for Arnold are known to exist while he still lived in England . The first of these was

a transcript of baptisms , marriages and burials that he signed in 1622 as the warden of St. Mary 's , the parish church of Ilchester . These bishop 's transcripts , as they were called , were sent to the City of Wells , Somerset , a central repository for such records . The other record mentioning his name was the will of his father , Nicholas Arnold , dated 18 January 1623 . William Arnold was appointed by the will as overseer along with Ambrose Chappell , a friend of Nicholas .

There is no record of Arnold between 1623 and his sailing to New England in 1635 . He was an educated man , since he had to be able to read and write as the warden of his parish church , and appeared to have a secure relationship with his church and community . Unknown are his motives for emigrating from England and when he began planning to do so . For whatever reasons , his plan to leave England with his family and associates materialized in 1635 .

= = Voyage to New England = =

With members of his immediate family and other relatives and associates , Arnold gathered his group together with their baggage and supplies in the spring of 1635 and made the trip from Ilchester to Dartmouth on the coast of Devon . While the exact route of the travelers was not recorded , a probable path was through Yeovil , Crewkerne and Axminster to Exeter . From there the party likely turned south along the Devonshire coast traveling through Teignmouth and Torquay to the port city of Dartmouth .

Fred Arnold , in 1921 , provided a perspective of the group as they prepared to load their ship destined for the New World : " While their eyes rested upon these last scenes in the home land , the ... young people ... were perhaps thinking more of the village greens of Ilchester and Yeovil ... and their playmates from whom they were now separated ... while the older ones were more likely turning their thoughts toward the unknown sea with some doubts and misgivings mayhap , but yet with stout hearts and strong hopes facing the great adventure that lay before them in a new world . "

The ship carrying William Arnold and his group sailed from England to New England in 1635 , with some brief particulars of the voyage given by his son Benedict in the family record : " Memorandum my father and his family Sett Sayle ffrom Dartmouth in Old England , the first of May , friday & c . Arrived In New England June 24o Ano 1635 " The name of the ship on which this group sailed was not recorded , nor has it been identified since . Governor Winthrop recorded that in the six @-@ week period beginning 4 June 1635 , fifteen ships had arrived in the Massachusetts Bay area , but he gave the names of only two of them . The ship on which the Arnolds sailed was not the Plain Joan , as stated in some accounts , which vessel carried a Thomas Arnold from England to Virginia . There is no known record of any event that took place at sea , only the length of the trip . The journey to America was less than two months in duration and ended on William Arnold 's 48th birthday .

= = Settling Providence and Pawtuxet = =

Once in New England , Arnold joined a group of settlers from Hingham , Norfolk , England who were about to establish the new settlement of Hingham , in the Massachusetts Bay Colony . On 18 September 1635 the town of Hingham gave Arnold a 2 @-@ acre ( 8 @,@ 100 m2 ) house lot " lying in the Town Street . "

According to historian John Barry , William Arnold was banished from Hingham for reasons that were not religious , but the reason is not given , nor are any references . Years later , Arnold 's son , Benedict , recorded in the family record , " Memm . We came to Providence to Dwell the 20th of April , 1636 @.@ per me Bennedict Arnold . " The younger Arnold was using the place name of Providence loosely , since Providence had not yet been founded ; the Arnolds actually settled with Roger Williams at Seekonk near the western edge of the Plymouth Colony ( now Rehoboth , Massachusetts ) . That the Arnolds came here before arriving in Providence is borne out by a statement made by William Arnold in 1659 : " for as much that I was one that the very first day entred [ sic ] with some others upon the land of providence , and so laid out my money to buy and

helped pay for it , ... " The settlers could not remain in Seekonk , because Plymouth would then be harangued by Massachusetts for harboring its fugitives . The Plymouth governor Edward Winslow , gently urged Williams to move with his fellow settlers across the Seekonk River into the lands of the Narragansetts . Most historians agree that it was about June 1636 when the small group of settlers moved across the river , and settled on the bank of the Moshassuck River at a place that Roger Williams soon named Providence .

Arnold became one of the 13 original proprietors of Providence , and his initials appear second on the " initial deed " signed by Roger Williams in 1638 , following the initials of his son Benedict 's future father @-@ in @-@ law , Stukeley Westcott . He was assigned a house lot on what was later North Main Street , but his stay in this part of Providence was short . About 1638 he , his wife and children , his son @-@ in @-@ law William Carpenter , his nephew Thomas Hopkins and a few associates and all their families moved four miles ( six km ) south to the Pawtuxet River , at the far southern edge of Williams 's Providence purchase . They settled at the ford where the Pequot Trail crossed the river , close to where the Warwick Avenue ( US Hwy 1A / Hwy 117 ) bridge later crossed the river in the town of Cranston . Here Arnold remained until the end of his life . Though in some deeds he continued to be called " of Providence " after his move to Pawtuxet , this was before a dividing line had been created between the two localities , and he physically resided at the location called Pawtuxet .

William Arnold had been important to his church in England , and Samuel Gorton , in his work *Simplicity 's Defence* ... , wrote that Arnold had been a great professor of religion in the west of England . Once in the New World , Arnold became one of the original 12 members to organize the First Baptist Church in Providence in 1638 . This church , founded by Roger Williams , was also the first Baptist church established in America .

Arnold had a good relationship with the native people , and in the words of Elisha Stephen Arnold , author of the family genealogy ( 1935 ) , " he felt for the Indians a conscientious kindness and in his dealings with them was actuated by a sense of strictest justice . " Also , like Roger Williams , he made an effort to learn their language and acted as interpreter many times , being paid , in one instance , 26 shillings for his services . Being able to communicate with the Indians , he was able to buy large tracts of land from them , and soon he and his sons owned nearly 10 @,@ 000 acres ( 40 km<sup>2</sup> ) . In 1650 he paid more than three and a half pounds and his son Benedict paid five pounds , the highest taxes paid in the colony , implying that the Arnold family was among the wealthiest , if not the wealthiest , families in the colony in terms of land holdings .

= = Difficulty with the Gortonites = =

In 1641 the Pawtuxet settlers complained to the Massachusetts authorities of their neighbors in Warwick , the Gortonites , so called , led by the Samuel Gorton mentioned earlier . Gorton had been causing disturbances for several years , and had already been evicted from several places for creating difficulties which centered around his religious beliefs , insubordination towards the magistrates , refusal to pay taxes , and his dealings with and treatment of the Indians . The Massachusetts authorities replied that they were unable to help because the Pawtuxet settlement fell under the jurisdiction of neither the Massachusetts Bay Colony nor the Plymouth Colony . As a result , in 1642 William Arnold and other Pawtuxet settlers subjected themselves to the Massachusetts government with Arnold appointed to keep the peace . This separation from Providence lasted for 16 years .

One of the primary reasons for the separation from Providence was dissension over admitting Samuel Gorton and his Warwick friends to equal rights in Providence . After being evicted from other places Gorton attempted to join in the Providence government , but the Pawtuxet settlers wanted no part of him or his followers . On a personal level , Gorton had bought from the Indians some of the same land that Arnold had bought four years earlier and attempted to seize the land . Another cause of dissatisfaction was Gorton 's treatment of the Indians . Having acquired the language of the Narragansett people , Arnold felt a strong affinity towards them , and in a long letter to Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts in 1648 he complained of the injustice shown them by Gorton and

the other Warwick settlers .

So unhappy was Arnold with the conduct of the Gortonites that on 1 September 1651 he wrote to Massachusetts protesting Roger William 's proposed errand to England to seek a charter for the colony . In this letter he spoke in very uncomplimentary terms of the Warwick settlers saying " under the pretense of liberty of conscience about these parts there came to live all the scum and runaways of the country , which in time for want of better order may bring a heavy burden on the land . " Over time these sentiments dissipated ; following an appeal to the Massachusetts government , Gorton 's objectionable activities ceased , and he accepted Arnold 's ownership of disputed land . Being able to coexist with Gorton , in 1658 the Pawtuxet settlers expressed the desire to reunite with Providence , and upon their own motion it was done .

= = End of life = =

In the two decades following Pawtuxet 's reunification with Providence , William Arnold continued to reside in Pawtuxet being a party to several land transactions where he deeded away some of his properties . Here he lived in relative peace until July 1675 when King Philip 's War erupted into a major confrontation between the natives and the English settlers . Pawtuxet was not a safe place to be , but Arnold refused to go to his son Benedict 's house in Newport , nor would he go up to Providence . He was eventually persuaded to go to his son Stephen 's garrison house further up the Pawtuxet River . In December 1675 a detachment of Massachusetts troops led by General Josiah Winslow , en route to the " Great Swamp Fight " in Kingston , Rhode Island , stayed at this garrison house and was given provisions .

In January 1676 , after the Kingston fight , about 300 Indians attacked Pawtuxet , burning buildings on William Carpenter 's land , driving away livestock and killing two members of his family . The attacks continued , and by March the Indians had burned all the houses in Warwick and Pawtuxet , and most of them in Providence , scattering the residents to other localities . William Carpenter and Thomas Hopkins most likely went to Oyster Bay , Long Island where they had family . Where Stephen Arnold went with his family is not known , but William Arnold was probably not with him . He likely died that winter or spring , aged 88 , and was buried in a family plot with his wife and grandson William , son of Benedict . Confirmation of his death did not occur until 3 November 1677 when his son Benedict described himself as " eldest son and heir of William Arnold late of Pautuxett in the said Colony deceased . "

= = Ancestry = =

The genealogy of the early Arnold family has been pieced together from a number of historical documents , but two such documents were of enough significance to be published as entire articles in an early genealogical journal . The first of these was a family record created by William Arnold and brought to New England by him in 1635 . The second of these was a fabricated pedigree of Arnold 's lineage , showing descent from some early kings in Wales dating back to the 12th century . Both of these documents were published side @-@ by @-@ side in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register in October 1879 .

= = = The Arnold family record = = =

While events concerning the immediate families of many colonial immigrants to America were recorded in family Bibles , some of which exist to this day , what William Arnold did was highly unusual among those immigrating to the New World in the 17th century . As the warden of St. Mary 's Church in Ilchester , Arnold had access to the records of baptisms , marriages and burials that were kept in the parish register . As he contemplated immigrating with his family to New England , he recorded all the baptismal entries in the Ilchester parish register pertaining to his children and siblings . He then took the process a step further , crossing the River Ivel to the parish of Northover , where his parents had lived and where his oldest sister was baptized , recording pertinent

information from that register as well , thus creating a personal family record .

This family document sailed with Arnold from England to the New World in 1635 , but the record did not end then . In later years Arnold 's son , Benedict , added his own notes and family events to the document , and then Benedict 's son Josiah Arnold added his family . The latest entries in the family record were made by the son of Josiah , Josiah Arnold Jr . This exceptional historical document , spanning a total of 223 years and six generations , began with the baptism of William Arnold 's mother Alice Gully in 1553 and ended with the death of Josiah Arnold III in 1776 .

What became of the document between 1776 and the mid @-@ 19th century is uncertain , but it eventually came into the possession of Mr. Patrick Anderson McEwen ( a descendant of Governor Benedict Arnold ) of Windsor , Ontario , Canada , from whom it passed to Isaac N. Arnold , president of the Chicago Historical Society . A copy was then made by Edwin Hubbard in 1878 , and ultimately published under his name the following year . ( It turns out that Isaac N. Arnold was descended from Thomas Arnold of Watertown , and thus not from William Arnold of Pawtuxet . ) As with any historical document , genealogists and historians wanted to know how reliable it was . Once the original parish registers were discovered by a researcher in 1902 , it was demonstrated that every entry in Arnold 's original document that could be corroborated with these parish records in England was correct and precise to the minutest detail .

= = = The false pedigree of the Arnold family = = =

Published in the same issue of the New England Historical and Genealogical Register with the Arnold family record was another article giving a lineage for William Arnold going back 16 generations . In 1870 the genealogist Horatio G. Somerby compiled this pedigree of the Arnold family for a client in New York based on his research in England . In this pedigree , William Arnold was shown to be a son of a Thomas Arnold and to descend from a 12th @-@ century King of Gwentland ( in modern day Wales ) whose name was Ynir . Mr. Somerby 's manuscript was " compiled from Herald 's Visitations , Inquisitions Post Mortem , Subsidy rolls , Wills , Parish registers , and other original documents . " A few years after this pedigree was published , John O. Austin incorporated some of it into his Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island .

In 1902 , Edson S. Jones , a descendant of Thomas Arnold of Watertown and Providence mentioned earlier , visited England in search of records pertaining to his family . Thinking that Thomas Arnold was connected with William Arnold ( which , it turned out , he was not ) , he visited Northover and Ilchester , finding the original parish registers , as well as other important source documents . He discovered that every entry in the Arnold record that could be compared with entries in the parish registers matched perfectly . He also discovered that the Somerby pedigree of the Arnold family had serious discrepancies with original documents . As he checked the source documents from which Somerby supposedly compiled the pedigree , he found that some of the generations in the Somerby pedigree had been shuffled from the original documents , some members of the lineage came from unrelated families , and some place names seemed to have been totally made up . It had earlier been believed that a Thomas Arnold was the father of William Arnold , and Somerby stated that this Thomas Arnold came from a place called Northover near Cheselbourne in County Dorset . No such place exists . The Somerby pedigree of the Arnold family published in 1879 was riddled with misinformation , and it had been accepted as fact for over three decades by even prominent genealogists such as John O. Austin . Fred Arnold wrote in 1921 , " The most regrettable feature in Somerby 's work is , that in the absence of any English record , known here to disprove it , so reliable a genealogist as Mr. John O. Austin was led to accept and use it in his dictionary , although neither give any record evidence . Very rarely has Mr. Austin accepted another 's statement , unless he has himself seen evidence to support it . " This fabricated research was not an isolated incident ; Mr. Somerby had also been implicated in other fraudulent research and was out to please his clients regardless of the veracity of his work .

= = = The correct ancestry and English home of William Arnold = = =

Edson Jones eventually published his findings on the Arnold family in 1915 , demonstrating the accuracy of the Arnold family record , and then carefully revealing each inconsistency and factual error found in Somerby 's pedigree . In 1921 , Fred Arnold summarized these findings and synthesized them into a coherent lineage of the Arnold family which is consistent with every known historical document , and presented his findings to the Rhode Island Historical Society . To summarize the work of both Edson Jones and Fred Arnold , William Arnold was the son of Nicholas Arnold of Northover and Ilchester in Somerset based on the Arnold family record and the Northover parish register . Arnold 's mother was Alice Gully , and her parents were John and Alice Gully based on the same two documents . These are the only known ancestors of William Arnold based on known historical records , and the parents of Nicholas Arnold have not been identified in any historical document .

The Somerby pedigree of the Arnold family indicated that the family had lived in many counties in both England and Wales . This was not the case ; the Arnolds and their associates all lived in a small area within southeastern Somerset . While in England William Arnold and his family lived in Ilchester . His parents had come from the village of Northover , scarcely one half mile ( 0 @. @ 8 km ) across the River Yeo to the north . When Arnold 's son Benedict mentioned his " Lemmington " farm in his will , he was referring to a New England property named after the village of Limington in old England ; this village is less than a mile and a half ( 2 @. @ 5 km ) east of Ilchester . A very short distance north of Limington across the River Yeo is the town of Yeovilton where William Hopkins , the husband of Arnold 's sister Joanne , lived . Six miles ( 10 km ) west of Ilchester is the village of Muchelney , the home of Arnold 's wife Christian Peak , and five miles ( 8 km ) south of Ilchester is Yeovil , the home of Stukeley Westcott , whose daughter Damaris married Arnold 's son Benedict , and who may have accompanied the Arnolds on their voyage to the New World . Thus , Arnold and all of his known kinsmen had lived within six miles ( 10 km ) of each other in southeastern Somerset .

= = Children = =

William and Christian Arnold had four children , all born in Ilchester , Somerset . The oldest child was Elizabeth ( 1611 ? after 7 September 1685 ) who married William Carpenter ( c . 1610 ? 1685 ) , the son of Richard Carpenter of Amesbury , Wiltshire , England ; the couple had eight children . William and Elizabeth Carpenter settled in Providence , and then followed her parents to the settlement of Pawtuxet , where they lived the remainder of their lives , except for a short time during King Philip 's War , when they were forced to flee to Long Island .

The second child and oldest son was Benedict ( 1615 ? 1678 ) who married Damaris Westcott ( 1621 ? after 1678 ) , the daughter of Stukeley and Juliann ( Marchante ) Westcott . They had nine children . Stukeley Westcott lived in Yeovil , five miles ( eight km ) south of Ilchester , where he was married and where Damaris was baptized . The Westcotts may have sailed to New England with the Arnolds ; if not they likely sailed at about the same time . Benedict moved with his family from Pawtuxet to Newport in 1651 , and in 1657 succeeded Roger Williams as the President of the colony . When the royal charter arrived from England in 1663 , Benedict Arnold became the first Governor of the colony , and served as either president or governor for a total of 11 years .

The third child and youngest daughter , Joanna ( 1617 ? after 11 February 1693 ) , married first Zachariah Rhodes ( c . 1603 ? 1665 ) , and settled in Pawtuxet near Joanna 's brother Stephen . Following Zachariah 's death by drowning , Joanna married Samuel Reape . She had eight children , all by her first husband , and became the ancestress of the Rhodes family of Rhode Island .

The fourth and youngest child of William and Christian Arnold was Stephen ( 1622 ? 1699 ) who married Sarah Smith ( 1629 ? 1713 ) , the daughter of Edward Smith of Rehoboth , Massachusetts . Stephen and Sarah had seven children . Stephen was either a Deputy to the General Assembly or colonial Assistant nearly every year for a period of three decades . He and his family settled in Pawtuxet near his father , and had a garrison house along the Pawtuxet River . Stephen was 13 years old when he sailed from England to the New World with his parents and relatives , and he was the last surviving member of that sailing party .

= = Notable descendants = =

Several descendants of William Arnold became prominent in either the military or the civil affairs of the United States . A great @-@ great grandson , named Benedict Arnold , became one of the great generals of the American Revolutionary War but was better known for his betrayal of the American revolutionary cause . Other well @-@ known descendants include U.S. Presidents George Herbert Walker Bush and George W. Bush ; Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry , American hero of the Great Lakes during the War of 1812 and his younger brother Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry who was sent across the Pacific in 1852 by President Millard Fillmore to open Japan to western trade ; and Stephen Arnold Douglas who debated Abraham Lincoln in 1858 while vying for the Illinois Senate seat and winning the contest , but later losing to Lincoln in the 1860 presidential race . Stephen A. Douglas descends from both sons of William Arnold . Rhode Island colonial Deputy Governor George Hazard is another descendant . The hall of fame rodeo cowboy and western artist Earl W. Bascom is also a noted descendant . A published line of descent from Arnold to U.S. President James A. Garfield was later disproven .