

WHENCE CAME WILLIAM GOODRICH OF WATERTOWN

By Merton Taylor Goodrich, Genealogist

It has been said so often of William Goodrich or Goodridge, the colonial pioneer of Watertown, Massachusetts, that he came from Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England, that the statement has become firmly rooted in the field of genealogy. Recently, however, researches were made by Winifred Lovering Holman on the ancestry of the John and William Goodrich who settled in Wethersfield, Connecticut, and this inquiry included William of Watertown.

The discovery was made that there is no record in Bury St. Edmunds of a William Goodrich who can be identified with the William who settled in Watertown, and it was also discovered that all of the contemporary William Goodriches in Bury St. Edmunds or in adjoining towns can be identified otherwise than as the William of Watertown. Such startling discoveries called for the immediate study of the whole question of whence he came. The liberal contributions of several of his descendants made further research possible. This report includes the results of that research.

This report does not include any data on the ancestry of William Goodrich of Wethersfield, and refers to him only to make clearer the story of William Goodrich of Watertown. As is well known, records prove that the two Williams were distinct, that John and William of Wethersfield were brothers and their parentage has been proved by wills, and that John of Wethersfield went there from Watertown. There is evidence in the colonial records of a close relationship between these three pioneers, but the nature of that relationship has not yet been fully established. In the early days of genealogical research, many conjectures were made in regard to it. One of the first of these was made by Bond, in his great work on the Watertown Genealogies. Stating frankly that his supposition should be verified or corrected by future research, he stated that these Goodriches came from Bury St. Edmunds. The assumption that William of Watertown also came from that place is not based upon any record but upon his supposition. It cannot be verified.

It has long been known that William of Watertown had a wife Margaret, and that their daughter Mary was born in England, and that they had three sons born in Watertown. But the date and place of birth of Mary as published in the Goodrich Genealogy by Dr. Edwin A. Goodridge, on pages 74 and 77, has no more meaning than the dates of birth and death of her father, as published in that book on pages 71 and 72. The record of the document by which the widow Margaret bound out her son Joseph as an apprentice in Middlesex Co. Deeds, original volume page 172, proves that she was a widow two years before the date of death referred to.

There is no record of the death of William in Watertown, and there is no record of the birth of his daughter Mary in Bury St. Edmunds. And yet both of those dates are printed with the month and day as well as the year as if they were taken from some

official source. After a most exhaustive search in the records, it is necessary to state that all those dates are merely guesses. The records known previous to this recent research prove that William died in the spring of 1645 and that his daughter Mary was born in England before 1636.

The most important records discovered in England are the following:

William Goodrich and Margaret Butterfield, both single, Mar. ye 19th of August 1631. (Parish Register, Wolverstone, of Wolverstone, Suffolk Co., England.)

Baptised William sonne of William Goodrich ye 4 October 1632. William ye sonne of Willm. Gudrich bur. Ye 30 of April 1633. (Parish Register, Wolverstone, of Wolverstone, Suffolk Co., England.)

Maire ye daughter of Will. Goodrich bap ye 21 of August 1634. (Parish Register, Wolverstone, of Wolverstone, Suffolk Co., England.)

The parish registers of Wolverstone begin in 1539. The baptisms have been examined in the original records from the first up to 1680, the burials up to 1699. The marriages up to 1659 have been examined by means of Boyd's Index. In making this search all possible variations of the name have been included. It is remarkable that in all this period of time there is no other parish record that clearly refers to a Goodrich except those just quoted. This indicates that William Goodrich came to Wolverstone from some other parish before his marriage, and that the family left Wolverstone shortly after 21 August 1634.

Here is a family in Suffolk Co., England, consisting only of William and Margaret Goodrich and their infant daughter, Mary, which left Wolverstone probably in 1634, 1635 or 1636. The earliest record of William in Watertown is his being allotted three acres there in the second division of land 28 February 1637. (Watertown Records, prepared for publication by the Historical Society of Watertown, 1894, page 8 of the Land Grant section.) This decision was made on the basis of one acre for each head of the family, including cattle. At that time, this family consisted of William Goodrich, his wife Margaret, and their infant daughter, Mary. The conclusion is justifiable that these families are identical.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note from the parish records that Jonathan Skynner, the Rector who baptized Mary Goodrich, entered a number of protests in his records against parishioners who refused to let him take the child in his arms and sign it with the sign of the cross, and as he insisted upon this form of baptism, they took their children to be baptized in St. Stephen's Church in Ipswich. Evidently Mary was baptized in the form preferred by the Rector.

A note was also made of the marriage of Phillipe Gray and Joane Goodrid, 2 Auguste 1574. Several entries were found in regard to persons by the name of Gray, but no clues in regard to a connection with the Goodrich family. It is very probable that the

name “Goodrid” is a variant or misreading of some name entirely distinct from “Goodrich.” The will of Phillipe Gray, of Kyrketon alias Shotley was found in the records of the Archdeaconry Court of Suffolk Co., Book 30, folio 178, dated 11 August, 26 Elizabeth, and proved 3 Feb 1584-5. It mentions the widow Johane, son George, daughter Marie, daughter Agnes, and son John, all under 21.

The records of the Archdeaconry Court from 1602 to 1660 were thoroughly examined for clues from the parish of Wolverstone and the adjoining parishes of Erwarton, Shotly, Holbrooke, Freston, Chelmondston, and Barkstead. Such a search almost always yields some definite information in regard to the ownership of land, but nothing was found in regard to William of Wolverstone, He may not have been a land owner.

The Wolverstone Records deposited at the Ipswich Public Library by the British Records Association, Records Preservation Section, under their number B.R.A. 215 consists of three large boxes, not yet catalogued. These were examined, and the only reference to a Goodrich between 1600 and 1700 was dated 31 Dec 1632. This was an indenture between John Cooke of Shotley, husbandman, and Humphrey Wythe of Wolverstone, mariner, whereby Cooke sold to Wythe “all that messuage or tenement wherein Thomas Oxborough did lately inhabite or dwell, and wherein Augustyn Woon and Thomas Gutteridge doe now dwell with the barne and stable thereunto belonging in Wolverstone and three pightles of land and pasture conteyninge in all by estimacion five acres upon one of which pightles the said messuage is scituate; the one lies between lands of Wolverstone Rectory and lands of now or late John Peirson (bounded) west and south by the way from Wolverstone Church to Ipswich; the 2nd between Wolverstone churchyard and a spurr or parkway; all lately bought by Cooke from Ric. Mann of Clopton, yeoman, 29 Jan, 4 Chas. I.”

Subsequent deeds relating to these premises do not name the tenants until the seventh deed dated 20 Jan 1678-9 when Benjamin Morse of Ipswich, mariner, and wife Abigail, sold the property to Robert Caston of Ipswich, mariner, and wife Mary, stating that the land—the messuage and three pightles—was then or late in the occupation of Mary Newton and that it came to Benjamin Morse as eldest son and heir of Benjamin Morse, his father, who purchased them of Jenipher Plover of Ipswich, mariner.

Search was made in the Wolverstone parish registers for the persons named in the deed of 31 Dec 1632:

Augustine Wood, husbandman, was buried 26 March 1637.

A child of Thomas Oxbo was buried 18 Jan 1615-16.

John Oxborrow, a child, was buried 21 Dec 1617.

Sara Oxborrow was buried 20 June 1626.

There is no reference to a Thomas Goodrich in these registers.

In the registers of Erwarnton, a parish adjoining Wolverstone, there is a record of Thomas Gooderidge ye sonne of Wm. Gooderidge baptized there ye xxij of November 1575, and several entries referring to George Goodrich who had children baptized there between 1611 and 1627. These registers were examined for the period 1558 to 1631, but they do not contain the baptism of William. It is not impossible that William was the son of the Thomas mentioned in the deed of 1632, and that this Thomas was the one baptized in 1573, but this is merely conjecture, and against it is the fact that the first name Thomas does not appear among the early descendants of William in America. These registers also show that "the wife of George Goodric" was buried 23 Jany, June or July 1629, the name of the month being difficult to determine.

The registers of the parish of Holbrook, also adjacent to Wolverstone, show that on 10 September 1635, "George Gooderidge, widower of Jane Perryman, widow, were married." The only Perryman who had a wife Jane in this period was Robert Periman, who married Jane Rawlins at Freston in 1623. This Robert 'Perriman' was buried at Holbrook 14 March 1630-31.

The copy of the Holbrook parish registers in the Ipswich public library was examined for the period 1559 to 1636. "William Goodricke widower and Joane Wilbye widdowe were married in the seaventh daye of June 1576." These two marriages are the only Goodrich marriage records in the parish. The only other Wilbye marriage is that of "Robert Wilbye and Joane Bundish married the fyve and twentieth daye of November 1565." "Robert Wilbye the elder was buried the seconde daye of Februaye 1575-76." The baptisms of several children of Robert and Joane Wilbye are on record. The only Goodrich burial is "Willum Goodrich was buried the xvijth day of Aprill 1578." It is not impossible that this is the William who was the father of Thomas. There were no Goodrich baptisms in Holbrook.

All this indicates that while there were Goodriches living in Wolverstone or Woolverstone and vicinity, this family was not one of the long established families of that section, there being only two men by that name in Wolverstone, two in Erwarnton, and two in Holbrook, and evidently only four of these were different individuals.

Wolverstone is a parish some distance east of Bury St. Edmunds, located on the River Orwell. There is no evidence that William was born there. It appears clear, however, that he came there, was married there, had two children born there, one of whom died, and that he and his wife and infant daughter left there at the time of the migration to America. It seems probable that he came to Wolverstone to visit the Thomas mentioned in the deed of 1632, and that this Thomas was a relative rather than his father.

The compiler is convinced that William of Watertown is identical with William of Wolverstone, but whence he came is still a mystery. And it appears certain that this mystery can be solved if enough parish, land and probate records can be examined.

The following records have now been covered:

Parish Records of Wolverstone, Erwarton and Holbrook.
Wolverstone Records at the Ipswich, England Public Library.
Records of the Archdeaconry Court at Ipswich.
Prerogative Court Calendars for Wolverstone and Erwarton.
Testamentary Records for the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, 1601 to 1660, both wills
and administrations.
Boyd's Indexes to Suffolk marriages.
Redstone's Extracts from the Corporation Records of Ipswich.

We now take up the story of William in America. With his wife Margaret and infant daughter Mary, he settled in what was then called Watertown, Massachusetts between 1634 and 1637, most probably in 1635. His homestead was just within the present boundaries of Cambridge, between Shallow Pond and the forks of the old highway, adjoining the present Watertown line, and a part of what is now the beautiful Mount Auburn Cemetery. (See Bond's map of ancient Watertown.)

William's name first appears in the Watertown records as a participant in the second division of land 23 Feb 1637, when he was allotted three acres. He was admitted as a freeman in Watertown 18 May 1642. In that year an inventory of all the states in Watertown was taken, and the following lots were listed as belonging to him. (Watertown Records, published by the Historical Society of Watertown.)

"An Homestall of Five Acres more or less."
"Three Acres of Meddow in the remote Meddowes & the 15 Lott."
"Ten Acres & halfe of upland beyond the further Plaine and 7 Lott."
"Twenty-five Acres of upland being a great Divident in the 4 Division & the 17
Lott."
"Ninety-one Acres of upland in the 1 Division."
"Three Acres of Plowland in the further Plaine and the 106 Lott."
"One Acre of Meddow at Beverbrook."

It may be noted that "Beverbrook" and "the further Plaine" are now in Waltham.

Of these seven lots, the second and fourth were originally granted on 25 Sep 1636 and 26 June 1637 respectively to the John Goodrich who later settled in Wethersfield, and these are the only records of John in Watertown. (Watertown Land Grants, pp 5, 8.)

On 3 Sep 1639, "William Guttridge was enjoined to take care of Ales Burwood until he may be lawfully discharged of her" by order of the General Court. The real name of the girl was Alice Benfield, and she was one of two little children left orphans when their father, John Benfield died. The other daughter, Mary Benfield, married Samuel Garfield. After William's death, Alice became a servant to Emanuel White, but her subsequent history is not known. (Bond's History of Watertown, pp 26, 777.)

The dates of birth and death of William printed in the Goodridge Genealogy by Edwin A. Goodridge are absolutely fictitious. The date of birth of his daughter Mary as published in that book is equally false. That William Goodrich died early in the spring of 1645, only about ten years after his arrival in Watertown is proved by an indenture dated 8 May 1645, executed between his widow Margaret and Samuel Thatcher, which provides for the care and maintenance of his son Joseph as an apprentice and calls Margaret his widow. The indenture is given in full in the family history of the son Joseph. (Reference, Middlesex Co. Deeds, 1:172.)

The inventory of the estate of William Goodrich was not taken until 3 Apr 1647. This inventory is the only record written by an educated man in America concerning William, and it repeatedly spells the surname Goodrich. The Wolverstone records also spell the name this way. The spelling Goodridge came into use after William's death.

In the earliest records on this side of the water, the Wethersfield families as well as the Watertown family were frequently called by some variant of Gutteridge. The form Goodridge, however, was generally used among the members of the Watertown branch for five or six generations. Then the descendants began changing the name back to Goodrich, and at the present time the majority spell the name this way. According to the inventory, the estate was valued at 32 pounds 1 shilling 9 pence, with outstanding bills of 0 pounds 12 shillings 6 pence. (Sullolk Co. Probate Records, 2:32.)

Much has been written to the effect that William and Margaret Goodrich were highly educated people and leaders in the settlement of Watertown, one person even going so far as to say that William was admitted to the bar in Watertown. (Address of Rev. F. G. Clarke at the 150th Anniversary of Lyndenborough, New Hampshire.) All this makes very pleasant reading for those who like to deceive themselves, but nearly everyone knows that the procedure of admitting lawyers to practice "at the bar" was not followed in those days. There is not one scrap of evidence in support of these flights of the imagination.

William never held public office of any kind and is not mentioned in the records except in an ordinary way. His inventory shows that among his possessions at death were only two books, a Bible and a Psalm book.

His widow signed the apprenticeship agreement, her will and other papers with her mark. After the death of her husband she sold her lands in Watertown. There is nothing in this act to indicate that "she possessed more than usual business capacity." According to the records, William and Margaret were plain, respectable, law-abiding and church-going people, who did their bit in a humble way to found a new civilization in America.

William succumbed at an early date to the hardships of early colonial life, leaving his widow with four children to bring up. She married in 1650 to Captain John Hull, and moved to Newbury, taking along her daughter Mary and her sons Jeremiah and Benjamin, leaving her son Joseph in the care of Samuel Thatcher.

There were no children by her second marriage. It appears that Captain Hull was a mariner, and the records show that he provided with special care for the support of the Goodridge children.

In 1653 Lieutenant Robert Pike was fined heavily, disfranchised and disbarred from holding any public office because he denounced the law forbidding anyone to preach on Sunday who was not a regularly ordained minister of the Puritan Church, and said the law was against the liberty of the country. Petitions against his unjust punishment were signed by nearly all the men of Newbury, Andover, Hampton, and Salisbury. The General Court repealed the law, but declared that the petitioners must appear before a special committee and explain their reasons for signing the petition and admit their error in so doing.

Captain John Hull was among the fifteen signers who refused to appear before the committee, asserting that they had the right to petition whenever they saw fit, and denying the right of anybody to interfere. This was the first stand for the right of petition on this continent, a right that had not then been gained in England. These men took this stand before Rousseau and Tom Paine had been born. They were never called to trial. Four years later, in 1657, Lieutenant Pike paid his fine, was re-enfranchised, and immediately elected a member of the General Court. (The Story of Robert Pike, by Sidney Perley in the Essex Antiquarian, 4:113.)

Captain Hull died 1 Feb 1670. Margaret survived him about twelve years and died 3 Feb 1682. In her will dated 4 Aug 1681 and proved 10 Apr 1683 she made bequests of her personal property valued at about fifty pounds to her children, the greater part going to her youngest son Benjamin, who had taken care of her in her old age. Documents relating to these estates have been printed. (The Goodridge Memorial, by Sidney Perley. Massachusetts Colonial Records, 3:347, 4:190. Essex Co. Probate Records 1:232, 2:179. Essex Co. Quarterly Court Records, several references.)

Children of William and Margaret Butterfield Goodrich, the first two baptized at Wolverstone, England. (See this manuscript of Merton T. Goodrich.)

William, bapt. 4 Oct 1632. Buried at Wolverstone 30 Apr 1633.

Mary, bapt. 21 Aug 1634. Came to America with her parents when about a year old. Married Edward Woodman.

Jeremy, later called Jeremiah, whose birth record reads, "Jeremy Guttereg of Willyam and Margrett Guttereg born ye 6 d. 1 m. 1637," or 6 Mar 1637. Married Mary Adams.

Joseph, whose birth records read, "Joseph Gutterig son of Willyam and Margrett Gutterig borne the 29 d. 7 m. 1639" or 29 Sep 1639. Married Martha Mooers.

Benjamin, b 11 Apr 1643 or as recorded, "Benjamin the son of William and Margaret Guttridge borne 11 (2)1643." Married 1st Deborah Jordan. Married 2nd Sarah

Croad. The will of Deborah Jordan's mother and the marriage record of Mary Jordan to John Kimball prove that Benjamin did not marry Mary Jordan, and that he was married but twice. (See the American Genealogist, October 1936.)

This compilation is the result of research extending over a period of more than thirty years.

Merton T. Goodrich

WILLIAM GOODRICH

By Merton Goodrich

William Goodrich, father of Joseph, was the progenitor of this branch of the Goodrich family in America. He was born in England, probably at or near Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk County. The exact date of his birth has not been determined, the date printed in the Goodridge Genealogy being without any foundation. The names of his parents are not positively known, but there is undeniable evidence of a close relationship between him and the John and William Goodrich who settled in Wethersfield, Connecticut. In the spelling of the name, his children used the form Goodridge, a form which some of his descendants carry at the present time, but which was generally changed back to the original form, Goodrich, between 1800 and 1850.

William Goodrich, with his wife Margaret and daughter Mary, came to America in 1634 from Bury St. Edmunds. The family settled in what was then Mount Auburn Cemetery, just within the present boundaries of Cambridge, between Shallow Pond and the forks of the old highway. (See Bond's map of ancient Watertown.)

William's name first appears in the Watertown records as a participant in the second division of land 28 February 1637, when he was allotted three acres, the number of acres being determined by the number of heads in the family, including cattle. As he had a wife and daughter, this proves he then had no cattle...

William Goodrich died only three years later, the date published in the Goodridge Genealogy being as fictitious as the date of his birth. That he died early in the spring of 1645 is proved by the indenture by which his son Joseph was bound out as an apprentice, which is dated 8 May 1645 and calls Margaret his widow. The inventory of his estate was not taken until 3 April 1647. This inventory is the only record written by an educated man concerning William, and it repeatedly spells the surname Goodrich...

The reason for so much confusion in regard to the intellectual attainments of William is that at the time he sailed for America in 1634, there was a William Goodrich of Bury St. Edmunds who was admitted to Cambridge University, aged 17 years. This younger William became a minister in Hegesset, Suffolk County, England. He left no children and never came to America, but someone, disregarding dates and wills, confused him with the William who settled in Watertown.

While William of Watertown was not in any way a prominent man, still he did not belong to an inferior type. Overcome by the hardships of early colonial life, he died only eleven years after coming to America, leaving a widow and four small children.

After the death of her husband, the widow Margaret disposed of her lands in Watertown, married in 1650 for her second husband Captain John Hull, and moved to Newbury, taking with her her daughter Mary, and her sons Jeremiah and Benjamin. There were no children by the second marriage. Captain Hull died 1 February 1670. She survived him twelve years and died 3 February 1683. She disposed of personal property worth about 50 pounds, the greater part going to her son Benjamin who had taken care of her in her old age.

Children of William and Margaret Goodrich or Goodridge, the first born in England, the others in Watertown, all settled in Newbury before marriage:

1. Mary, born 8 Jan 1633; married Edward Woodman.
2. Jeremy, later called Jeremiah, born 6 Mar 1638; married Mary Adams.
3. Joseph, born 29 Sep 1639; married Martha Mooers or Moores.
4. Benjamin, born 11 Apr 1642; married 1st Deborah Jordan; 2nd Sarah Croad. The proof that he did not marry Mary Jordan and that he married but two times has been published in the American Genealogist for October 1936.