

**GENEALOGY OF A PART OF THE
WODELL FAMILY, FROM 1640 TO
1880: WITH NOTICES OF SOME
OTHER FAMILIES, COPIES OF
ANCIENT INTERESTING DOCUMENTS**

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Genealogy of a Part of the Wodell Family, from 1640 to 1880: With Notices of Some Other Families, Copies of Ancient Interesting Documents by Eli Wodell

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ELI WODELL

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1880: WITH NOTICES OF SOME
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GENEALOGY

OF A PART OF THE

W O D E L L

FAMILY

FROM 1640 TO 1880,

WITH NOTICES OF SOME OTHER FAMILIES, COPIES OF ANCIENT
INTERESTING DOCUMENTS; AND A CONDENSED

BIOGRAPHY

OF THE AUTHOR AS WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

ELI WODELL

1880

Every *matured* man, should make a mark ; a bright one if possible, a dark one in preference to none.—Author.

To all of the present and future descendents of the illustrious and honorable William and Mary WODELL, who cherish their memory and own their *proper* names, repudiating such corruptions as illiteracy, indifference, and carelessness, may have introduced; this little book, with the well wishes of the author, is dedicated.

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1880 The Ten Generations in brief.

First Gen. William Wodell or Wm. and Mary of Warwick, and later of Portsmouth, R. I. William 1st. p 38.

2d Gen. The children of Wm. and Mary; Mary *W* who was born 1640, the earliest known birth of a Wodell in America md Daniel Grinnell; Gershom *W*, Gershom first md Mary Tripp (afterwards Mary Gechel) born 1642; Sarah *W* md Samuel Sanford; Frances *W* md John Anthony; Alice *W* md Abram Anthony.

3d Gen. The four brothers sons of Gershom 1st viz Wm *W*; *Gershom W* Gershom 2d whose wife was Sarah, and who made the will p 20; Richard *W*; Return *W*; also Ruth *W* who md Stephen Manchester; and Mary *W* who md George Lawton.

4th Gen. The two brothers Wm 3d who md Elizabeth Borden and *Gershom* 3d md Mary Gage sons of Gershom 2d also his five daughters as named in his will p 20. Innocent, one of the daughters md Peleg Sherman.

5th Gen. The children of the two brothers being William Innocent, Ruth, Borden, Gershom 4th, and Patience; also Gershom 5th, *Phineas*, Thomas, Silas, Susanna, Mary, Constant and Lavina Wodell; those whose families are more minutely described on pages 40 to 61 inclusive. Phineas being my grandfather.

6th Gen. My father Benjamin *W* and his class, being too many to be named here see Margins p 40 to 61.

7th Gen. Myself Eli *W* and my class see the first name in each sub-lateral p 40 to 60.

8th Gen. My children and their class, each name *preceded* in the sub-laterals by this figure.

9th Gen. My grandchildren and their class each name *preceded* by the parallel lines thus —

10th Gen. My great-grandchildren if I have any and their class. Each name *preceded* by a single dash thus —

Preface.

It is much to be regretted, that people do not take some pains, to keep alive some knowledge, of their relations ; to transmit to posterity whatever they may know of their ancestry ; and to know and to hand down facts, and relationships. If one quarter of men and women, would exercise a little interest in such matters ; and one out of every hundred take some pains to collect and write them, our present ignorance of these matters would not exist.

Most of people have a desire to know something of their relatives and ancestry ; and yet there is many a man even in New England, and even in this boasted day of schools and books, who can scarcely tell the names, and places of residence, of his four grand-parents ; such ignorance is inexcusable, showing, among other things, that we have little or no veneration for our ancestry ; at least not enough to induce us to exercise a little care in handing it down. The heathen and wild savage, is, in many cases ahead of us, in this respect, and should put our boasted cultivation to blush.

To know who were my fore-fathers, from what part of Europe, they came, where they first settled &c, has been with me an object of solicitude for sixty years past. I would sacrifice much, to get a good view of writings of a member of our family, whose views and tastes were similar to mine ; and who wrote on that subject 100, or 150 years ago. How often have I reflected on the gratification which I might find, in searching such a work, whether in print, or in manuscript.

I have made many inquiries of aged people ; I have searched town records ; I have travelled considerably ; I have met with some success ; more would be desirable ; I am satisfied that my

name was among the early settlers of Rhode Island, I find them as early as 1640. I cannot doubt that some of them bore arms against the celebrated, and for a time dreaded Indian King Philip. I have proved that one of them, then an old man, was called on to assist in devising means to resist him and it is not unlikely that his son and sons-in-law were soldiers in that very sanguinary contest. But I have never yet, and perhaps never shall, ascertain what part of Europe they came from.

I will however note one fact which *may* throw a faint light on the subject. In 1865 I was in Dublin, the capital of Ireland, near which city I saw "Wardwell" in the sign of a large mercantile establishment (on the mutilation of names hereafter) It may be that this Irish merchant is one of my 20th cousins.

Some sixty years ago, I began to collect and record statistics and facts, as I happened to meet with them, revising and enlarging my collection, at different periods, and as I am now 75, *this*, most likely will be my last effort in that line.

I have wished to get a few copies printed. First, to keep alive the names and memories of my venerable and respectable ancestors; Second to give my posterity a chance, to know something of their relatives, I still have such a desire and hope to be able to gratify it during the present year. I have taken liberties with the characters of a few of the persons named. I have told the truth, whether it be to praise, or to blame and execrate, such individuals.

On the mutilation of names: Our proper name is WODELL our ancestors all wrote it so; others wrote it differently, not knowing any better; none of *us* ever wrote it differently till some time in the present century. Now the most of them write it *Wor-dell* some of my own children undutifully and in defiance of my known wishes, write *Wardell*, it has been written and printed about a dozen different ways, and this fact renders it difficult to know in some cases, whether the individual is or is not, of our race. During the war of the Rebellion, one of the rebel cruisers was commanded by *Waddell*, this pirate was probably one of our degenerate cousins; there was not long ago a member of Congress from North Carolina with a similar name. Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga, in his narrative of his sufferings as a prisoner of war; at and after the battle of Long Island (August 1776) in-

stances the case of General Odell or Woodhull who was hacked to pieces with cutlasses when alive, Allen, evidently did not know the proper orthography of the name; he must have heard it spoken, and adapted an orthography of his own; the best that he knew. This is evident from his trying twice. In all probability this General, whatever his true name, was a second or third cousin of my grand-father Phineas. In fact I find a great many such mutilations and corruptions.

Another piece of folly, which has given me much trouble, is that of giving to each child three or four names, instead of one besides the fathers name. Until the last 60 years very few persons had more than two names each. In all of my researches I think I never met with a person of three names, previous to that of P. T. Wodell my uncle, who died June 1878. It is not only folly, but is mischievous, and may make trouble, more especially as it is quite common to use in every day use other than the first name, a person may be known as John Smith whose real name as he writes it is Thomas J. Smith; some again with several names, have a happy faculty of using sometimes one sometimes another, as fancy or caprice may lead. This is wrong, as it gives the person a chance to be roguish if so disposed. The child should take the fathers name as legitimate children generally do, that exact name, and never add a letter or a syllable (This is due to our ancestors in order to keep up their true name); or erase one. The mother, or somebody else should give it another name, and let that suffice; but if a child must have more than two names, it should always be called in general usage by its first one. It should leave, nearly out of sight, the middle name.

I object to another thing in this connection, certain names very dissimilar from each other, are said to mean the same person Elizabeth may be called Bet, or Betsy, or Eliza, or Lizzie; and Mary may be called Polly, or Molly, with full propriety; if she chooses, I do not know what authority or right there is for this. If my children may call themselves *Wardell* why may not the next generation call itself *Bardell* another *Bumdell* then *Bumshell* &c. : who knows where it would end if unrestricted I do not wish to be the ancestor of Bumshells, or Bumtails.

William and Gershom have been pet names in our family for at least two centuries past. It seems as if each generation was

ambitious of retaining both of these names; in this case there may have been some propriety in adding a middle *letter* if they would keep that letter still, and unobtrusive. I have occasion to record William 6th Gershom 7th &c. Now when I find Gershom A Wordell, and generally known as Bial Wordell, I do not give him the post of Gershom 8th for which he was probably designed; nor shall I admit *Willie* who writes his name so, to be William the 8th or anything of the kind. *Willie* is not *William*, *Gershom Abiel* is not *Gershom*.

I am not pretending by any means, that I have collected and accounted for even one twentieth part of the descendents of Wm. 1st or William and Mary. I have only named such as I could find. It must be borne in mind that many of our early people migrated West. It is probably that his descendents now live in every state of the Union; and perhaps more than half of the *counties* in the United States have in each of them, a Wardell, Wardwell, Waddell, Woodwell, Wudall, Woodwill, Woodhill, *Wordell*, Odell, Ordell, or some other corruption. Besides many names connected with ours by marriage which has taken birth from illiteracy, who are descendents of the illustrious William and Mary. *Hodel* was the Prussian who a year or two ago shot at his king and lost his head by it, April 9, 1880.