

A genealogical profile of Roger Williams

Birth: Roger Williams was born about 1606 in London.

Death: He died after January 27, and before March 15, 1682/3, in Providence, Rhode Island.

Ship: *Lyon*, 1631

Life in England: He was the son of James and Alice (Pemberton) Williams, one of four children. He received his degree from Pembroke College, Cambridge University, in 1626–7. Mary Bernard, daughter of Reverend Richard Bernard, was baptized at Worksop, Nottinghamshire on September 24, 1607. Roger Williams was the chaplain of Sir William Masham of Otes in High Laver, Essex, when he married Mary Bernard.

Life in New England: Roger Williams and his wife settled first in Massachusetts Bay. He refused to join the church there due to some differences of religious opinion. He was briefly in Salem, and then came in 1631 to Plymouth. After a promising beginning there, according to William Bradford, he “began to fall into some strange opinions, and from opinions to practice,” which led finally to his return to Salem in 1633. He was chosen teacher for the church in 1635, and then pastor. Controversy again erupted, and in 1636 he left the colony, traveled south and founded Providence, Rhode Island. In 1643–4, he returned to England and obtained a government charter for Providence Plantations, governing the colony for many years.

Family: Roger Williams married Mary Bernard on December 15, 1629, at High Laver, Essex and had six children. She died soon after 1683.

Children of Roger and Mary Williams:

- Mary was born in August 1633 in Plymouth. She married John Sayles by 1652 and had six children.
- Freeborn was born on October 1635 in Salem. She married (1) Thomas Hart about 1661 and had three children. She married (2) Walter Clarke on March 6, 1683, in Newport, Rhode Island, as his third wife but had no children. She died December 10, 1709.
- Providence was born on September 1638. He died, unmarried, in 1686.
- Mercy was born about July 15, 1640, in Providence. She married (1) Resolved Waterman and had five children and she married (2) Samuel Winsor on January 2, 1676/7, in Providence and had three children.
- Daniel was born about February 15, 1641/2. He married Rebecca (Rhodes) Power on December 2, 1676, and had seven children.

- Joseph was born in December 1643 in Providence. He married Lydia Olney on December 17, 1669, and had six children.

For Further Information:

Robert C. Anderson. *The Great Migration Begins*. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1995.

Robert C. Anderson. *The Pilgrim Migration*. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2004.

Winifred L. Holman. “Roger Williams.” *The American Genealogist* 28 (1952): 197–209.G.

Andrews Moriarty. “Bernard of Epworth, co. Lincoln.” *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 113 (1959): 189–92.

G. Andrews Moriarty. “John Sayles of Providence.” *The American Genealogist* 15 (1938): 228–30.

Gary Boyd Roberts. *The Best Genealogical Sources in Print, Vol. 1*. Boston, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2004. Roger Williams genealogical bibliography, p. 220.



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Where do I go from here?

Researching your family's history can be a fun, rewarding, and occasionally frustrating project. Start with what you know by collecting information on your immediate family. Then, trace back through parents, grandparents, and beyond. This is a great opportunity to speak to relatives, gather family stories, arrange and identify old family photographs, and document family possessions that have been passed down from earlier generations.

Once you have learned all you can from family members, you will begin to discover other sources. A wide variety of records can help you learn more about the lives of your ancestors. These include birth, marriage, and death records; immigration and naturalization records; land records; census records; probate records and wills; church and cemetery records; newspapers; passenger lists; military records; and much more.

When you use information from any source — an original record, a printed book, or a website — always be careful to document it. If you use a book, you should cite the author or compiler, the full title, publication information and pages used. Also be sure to record the author's sources for the information. If the author's sources aren't provided, you will have to try to find the original source. Many genealogical works contain faulty information, and the Internet also contains many inaccuracies. In order for your work to be accepted — by lineage societies and other genealogists — it must be properly documented.

IMPORTANT GENEALOGICAL RESOURCES

New England Historic Genealogical Society

Founded in 1845, NEHGS is the country's oldest and largest genealogical society. The library contains over 200,000 books, plus significant manuscript and microfilm collections, and a circulating library by mail. NEHGS members receive two periodicals, the *Register* and *New England Ancestors*, and can access valuable genealogical data online.

NEHGS, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116;
888-296-3447; www.NewEnglandAncestors.org.

Plimoth Plantation: *Bringing Your History To Life*

As a non-profit, educational organization our mission is: to offer the public powerful experiences of history, built upon thorough research of the Wampanoag and Pilgrim communities. We offer multiple learning opportunities to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship of historical events to modern America. Members have access to our Research Library.

Plimoth Plantation, 137 Warren Avenue, Plymouth, MA 02632;
508-746-1622; www.plimoth.org

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

- www.PlymouthAncestors.org
- www.CyndisList.com
- www.FamilySearch.org
- www.USGenWeb.org



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GENEALOGICAL LIBRARIES IN PLYMOUTH

General Society of Mayflower Descendants Library

A collection focused principally on the genealogies of the descendants of the *Mayflower* passengers.

4 Winslow St., Plymouth; 508-746-3188; www.mayflower.org

Plymouth Collection, Plymouth Public Library

Over 1200 items relating to the descendants of the Pilgrims, as well as the many other immigrants who settled in the area.

132 South St., Plymouth; 508-830-4250;
www.plymouthpubliclibrary.org

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Genealogy by Christine Rose and Kay Germain Ingalls, Alpha Books, 1997.

Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research by Marcia Melnyk, NEHGS, 1999.

Shaking Your Family Tree: A Basic Guide to Tracing Your Family History by Ralph J. Crandall, NEHGS, 2001.

Unpuzzling Your Past by Emily Croom, Betterway Books, 2003.

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