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Surnames originally were used to designate occupation, locality or event. Sometimes written sirename, as if to designate one's father or family.

The name WATSON is derived from Wat. an abbreviation of Walter, with termination of son, signifying son of Walter. A name of Teutonic origin and introduced about the time of the Conquest.

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WATSON

ROBERT WATSON—A Bell-founder of London, embarked from the west of England with wife Elizabeth and seven sons.

Judge Davis' "History of Plymouth" says "seven sons and daughter Frances." Stiles' "Ancient Windsor," page 776, vol. ii, says "seven sons all came together about 1632 and settled in Massachusetts and Connecticut."

John Rogers of Plymouth in 1631, but of Duxbury in 1634—his will calls himself of Marshfield—married Frances Watson.

Where Robert Watson and family first landed is not recorded.

Winthrop's Journal tells us, that the landing of ships were not always at their original destination, as in those early times there were no pilots and only meager charts. Adverse winds sometimes determined an obstinate captain to land his passengers where he could bring his ship to anchor.

Thus, with the *first* of not less than seventeen ships, that before the close of the year 1632 left Plymouth, and brought seventeen hundred emigrants to Dorchester, Roxbury, Watertown, Medford and Weymouth, the "Mary and John," first of that fleet, instead of landing, May 30, 1630, at Charles River, their original destination, by an unfortunate misunderstanding, Capt. Squeb summarily put them ashore at Nantasket (now Hull), where they were obliged to shift for themselves. Enfeebled by a passage of ten weeks, threatened with scarcity of food, as Roger Clap, one of the company, tells the story,—“Oh the hunger that many suffered, and saw no hope in the eye of reason, to be supplied, only by clams, muscles and fish. We did quietly build boats, and went fishing, but bread with many was scarce, and flesh of all kinds, but God's glory be praised, for he sent Indians, with baskets of corn on their backs, to trade with us.”

Ten of the male passengers went in search of the promised land, and at last reached Charlestown. They were kindly

received by an old planter, who gave them a dinner of fish, but no bread. There they remained two or three days, when they returned to their company, who in the meantime had found pasturage for their cattle at the Neck (South Boston), which they named Dorchester, in honor of the Rev. Mr. White of Dorchester, England, whose zeal in the construction of colonies for the settlement of New England gave him the appellation of "Patron of New England emigration."

Great pains was taken in constructing these colonies with all the elements of a well ordered independent community. Men with knowledge of government; men with military experience; men to look after the spiritual welfare; men of education; men of high character; men of good estate, and also men with adult families were desired, although active, well trained young men with or without families were the persons upon whom the development of the colony devolved.

Early as 1633 Robert Watson and his family were in Plymouth.

The only other Watson known to have been in New England previous to 1645 was his younger brother JOHN, who left England on the ship "Lion" June 22, 1632, arriving in New England September 16, 1632. Made Freeman at Roxbury November 5, 1633, and married April 3, 1634, Alice, the widow of Valentine Prentice, who in 1631 came in the "ship Lion" bringing wife Alice, and son John, having buried one child at sea. He was Freeman August 7, 1632, and died before the end of the next year, as his widow married John Watson April 3, 1634. John and Alice (Prentice) Watson had son John, born January 1635; Edmund, b. 1636; Joshua, b. 1637; Dorcas, b. 1639; Caleb, b. 1641, and Mary, b. 1643. When his will was probated, February 1672, there were living John, Dorcas, Caleb and Mary, all remembered in the will, as well as John Prentice, his wife's son by her first husband, Valentine Prentice.

John the eldest child, b. January 1635, had wife Mary, but no children are mentioned in his will, made July 27, 1693. He died August 13, 1693, will probated the following September, in which provision was made for his wife, as long as she continued his widow, to have all his estate, and after her marriage or decease devising small sums to his brother Caleb,

his sister Dorcas Adams, and nephew John Dwight, also nephews Thomas, Joshua, Joseph, and Mary Stedman, besides 20£ to Tabitha Brooks; the Residue to his nephew, Caleb Stedman.

DORCAS WATSON, b. September 20, 1639, married Timothy Dwight, born in England about 1620; was at Dedham in 1640, where his brother John was settled. Freeman June 2, 1641; 1652 was Representative for Medfield, where he resided, and where he died in 1677. In his will, probated April 1677, he names wife "Dorcas, who was the elder daughter of John Watson of Roxbury," and sons Timothy and John.

The widow married secondly Edward Adams of Medfield, born in England, son of Henry of Braintree who came to New England from Braintree, County Essex, England, in 1632. Tradition says, with eight sons and one daughter; only five sons are named in his will, probated June 8, 1647, namely Peter, John, Joseph, Edward, Samuel, and daughter Ursula. In February 1641, by vote of Boston, of which Braintree was part until made a separate township in 1639, he had a grant of forty acres, the proportion of ten people.

The inscription on the monument erected by his descendant John Adams, second President of the United States, reads: "In Memory of Henry Adams who took flight from the Dragon Persecution in Devonshire, England, and alighted with eight sons near Mt. Wallaston.

One of his sons soon returned to England, four removed to Medfield and the neighboring towns, two to Chelmsford, and one, Joseph, an original proprietor in the township of Braintree, incorporated in 1639, lies buried at his left hand."

Edward Adams of Medfield was made Freeman in 1654; by wife Lydia he had fourteen children. She died according to the Old Style, March 3, 1676. He married as second wife Dorcas, widow of Timothy Dwight who had departed from this life in the month of April 1677.

Edward Adams was much employed in public duties, was ensign, Selectman for many years, Representative in the two General Courts next after the overthrow of Gov. Andros in 1689. He died November 12, 1716. His will, made May 19, 1715, probated December 3, 1716, taking notice that his wife was antenuptially provided for; and he gave his sons double the amount that he gave his daughters.

CALEB WATSON—born at Roxbury July 29, 1641; graduated at Harvard College 1661; married Mary, daughter of George Hyde, December 15, 1665. Freeman 1666. Schoolmaster at Hadley, 1668. Soon removed to Hartford, where he was schoolmaster twenty-five years. Sometimes called Rev. Caleb Watson. He died at Hartford in 1725, aged 84. It is not known that children were ever born to him. None were living at the time his will was made. After providing for his wife Mary, during her life, he gave his estate to his sister, Dorcas Adams, who was two years older than himself, but wife Mary was mentioned as executrix of his will.

She might not long have survived him, for papers relative to the administration of Caleb Watson's estate, by a great-grandson of Robert Watson, who calls himself *cousin*, are still preserved.

MARY WATSON, youngest child of John Watson of Roxbury, was born May 2 and baptized May 5, 1643. Married in 1669 Thomas Stedman of Boston, that point called Muddy River, now Brookline.

Had son Thomas, born in 1671; had Joshua, Caleb, Joseph and daughter Mary, all remembered with legacies in the will of their Uncle John in 1693, with other legatees, Caleb having the residue.

I write thus at length of the family of John of Roxbury, to show that his male line passed not beyond his sons; that the name Watson can be claimed in New England and dating previous to 1645 only by the descendants of Robert Watson—Plymouth, 1633, Windsor, 1637.

“Coat of Arms” used by John of Roxbury and Robert of Windsor: Argent, on a chevron engrailed azure, three crescents or, between three martlets sable. A helmet sideways with vizor closed.

Crest: A griffin's head erased, sable, gorged with two bars gemels argent.

Motto: “Mea Gloria Fides.”

Evidence of Relationship—Tradition has ever made the claim. The same “Coat of Arms”—like names in both families and papers still preserved showing when Caleb died in Hartford at an advanced age, the last male descendant of John Watson of Roxbury, his estate was administered by a great-grandson of Robert who called himself *cousin*.

Colonial Law first suggested (April 10, 1640) that the magistrate who solemnizeth marriage shall cause a record to be entered in court, of the day and year thereof. Four years later, June 3, 1644, an order was passed, "to record births"; but it was not until 1650 that the importance of also recording "deaths" was appreciated, and the order requiring town clerks to record deaths was passed.

Thus it is readily recognized that previous to these dates, family and Church records are our only authority, and where they are not obtainable, we can have only tradition.

What is Tradition?—Unwritten history transmitted from ancestors to descendants. People are apt to confound tradition with romance: the difference between truth and imagination is not greater.

Example.—When our forefathers came to New England, two hundred and eighty years ago (more or less), they had their Bibles with its family record; they also had large families, as also did their early descendants. The eldest son usually inherited the Bible, or if the widow survived her husband, the child who continued to make a home with her, but those other children had been familiar from childhood, not only with the records but the family's early history, told around the winter's evening fireside. And when those not fortunately inheriting the Bible, followed the course of the "sun," ever going westward, they in turn had pleasure in relating to their descendants their own early lessons in family history, and that repeated, generation after generation, in which the germ of history is preserved is "Tradition."

Having followed the male line of John Watson of Roxbury to extinction in 1725, we will return to Robert Watson and his family, whom we left at Plymouth in 1633. In 1636 we find Robert Watson with the Dorchester settlers at Windsor, then called Dorchester, Connecticut, and there he died in the summer of 1637. (*Family Records.*)

The presumption is, that the attractive reports of wide meadows, stoneless and easily tilled ground, with abundant water, brought to the Massachusetts and Plymouth colonists by the Indians to induce white settlers to come thither, enticed even a man of many years, who had seven sons to locate, to join the Dorchester removal in the early spring of 1636, leav-

ing his wife Elizabeth and sons George, Thomas, Samuel, and perhaps Edward, at Plymouth, accompanied by Robert, Nathaniel and John;—although there was an earlier colony who came to Windsor from Plymouth, of which Jonathan Brewster was the resident agent. Their trading-house was located on the meadow south of the Tunxis River, even now locally known as "Plymouth Meadow," while the "Great Meadow above the Tunxis, now Farmington River, was used by the Dorchester colonists, and it was with these Dorchester people where Robert Watson located his home, and where he died in 1637. And there his son Robert continued to reside although not then married.

In the Plymouth Records is found a deed by Elizabeth Watson, widow, dated July 17, 1638, in which she assigns her servant to Thomas Watson, showing she was living the year following her husband's death, and at Plymouth.

GEORGE WATSON, born in England in 1602, died according to the Old Style of reckoning, on the 31st day of January 16⁸⁸/₈₇, having entered upon the 87th year of his age, so by computation it would appear that he was born early in the year of 1602, and is supposed to have been the eldest child.

He was one of the most prominent of the early inhabitants of Plymouth, came with his father Robert to New England about the year 1632, was resident of Plymouth, and Freeman in 1634. In 1635 became a householder, having purchased a dwelling-house of Deacon Richard Masterson, and married Phebe, daughter of Robert Hicks, a passenger of the "Fortune" in the fall of 1621 with Robert Cushman, the noted agent of the Colonists. Phebe came with her mother Margaret, and other members of the family in the "Ann" in the summer of 1623.

George Watson was very early of considerable consequence in the little community of Plymouth, performing the duties of many offices. He was a man of large estate, and reared a family of children who in their turn have each been parent stock of a large number of the most respectable and public-spirited men in the Old Colony.

"Watson Hill," first called by the settlers "Strawberry Hill," derived its name from Elkanah Watson, son of George and his wife Phebe (Hicks) Watson, who bought it in 1680 of

Jabez Howland, son of John Howland of the Mayflower. His descendants continue to own it at this time.

ELKANAH WATSON, in passing from Boston to Plymouth, was shipwrecked February 8, 1690, on the Gurnets Nose in Boston Harbor, and was drowned in company with the second Edward Doty and his son John.

"Clark's Island," just within the entrance of Plymouth Harbor, so called after the mate of the "Mayflower," was an island reserved for the benefit of the poor until 1689, when it was sold to Samuel Lucas, Elkanah Watson and George Masterson. The Watson family have been in possession of this island for more than two centuries, and some of them reside there at the present time.

George Watson, as before stated, died January 31, 1689, and his wife, Mrs. Phebe (Hicks) Watson, died May 22, 1663.

A Watson memorial relic, brought from England in 1632 and handed down in the family all these years, is a silver-bowl, and each descendant inheriting it has initials thereon inscribed. George Watson's initials are on its base. At his death in 1689 it fell to his daughter, Elizabeth, wife of Joseph Williams of Taunton, and it bears their united initials thus

$\begin{array}{c} J E \\ \hline W \end{array}$. Then it passed to Elizabeth, daughter of their son Benjamin Williams, who in turn gave it to her great-grandson, Nehemiah Hall, in whose possession it now is, and whose initials (N. H.) it also bears.

It is preserved as a link between the present and the olden time, and is a memorial of a worthy family.

THOMAS WATSON, second son, born in England, married in 1637 and was admitted with wife Joan to the Church.

Was made Freeman at Plymouth May 13, 1640.

He died March 1, 1672. His will mentions no children.

His wife died December 16, 1674.

SAMUEL WATSON, born in England, Judge Davis places as third son, but of him we know nothing, unless he is the Samuel Watson who died at Plymouth in 1649.

ROBERT, fourth son of Robert Watson the bell-founder of London, and Elizabeth his wife, was born in England in 1608. In 1669 Robert Watson was "exempt from watch & train, having last year reached the age of 60 years." (*Colonial Record*.) He came with his father, mother and brothers to

New England about 1632. Was in Plymouth as early as 1633; removed with the Dorchester emigration to Windsor, then called Dorchester, Connecticut, in the spring of 1636. His father died at Windsor the following year of 1637.

The Town Records of Windsor previous to 1650 have not survived. Family papers and tradition are largely relied upon for knowledge of places and things. If Robert Watson and sons came not with Rev. John Warham, they were identified with that emigration by location of home-lot, which was above the Palisado and on the Great Meadow north of the Tunxis River—assigned by purchase and preëmption to the Dorchester Colony; that below the Tunxis River on which the Plymouth Colony's Trading-house was located being called "Plymouth Meadow" and afterwards purchased by the Dorchester people.

After the death of Robert, sen., the son or sons were at the same place, but in 1646 Robert bought the Thomas Dibble place adjacent, and married Mary, daughter of John and Wilmarth Rockwell. In 1650 he exchanged these places with Anthony Howkins, whose place was near the home of John Rockwell, his wife's father.

They had five sons—John, Samuel, Ebenezer, Nathaniel, and Jedidiah; daughters Mary, born January 11, 1651, and Hannah, b. August 8, 1658, who married May 28, 1678, John, born January 11, 1650, son of Richard Burge, who came from Dorchester with Rev. Mr. Warham, and from whom my father's mother descends.

Robert Watson died July 19, 1689, aged 81 years; his wife's death preceded, she dying August 21, 1684.

Their third son, Ebenezer, b. April 25, 1661, married April 1, 1703, Abigail Kelsey of Windsor. They removed to the east side of the Great River, to that part of the town which in 1768 became the Township of East Windsor, and where from that time some of their descendants have resided.

Ebenezer Watson died October 3, 1747, aged 86. Abigail, his wife, died June 16, 1752, aged 72.

Whether EDWARD WATSON, fifth son, removed to Windsor, or remained with his mother at Plymouth until after his father's death is a question.

Governor Theophilus Eaton of New Haven who came from

England and landed at Boston July 1637, was one of the men who the succeeding autumn journeyed exploring the Connecticut coast, and decided upon Quinnipiac as the place for settlement; and in the spring of 1638, sailing from Boston they were two weeks on their journey to Quinnipiac, where they founded their colony.

They were the wealthiest band of settlers that had ever come to New England and they designed to make it a model colony.

Robert Watson, the father, had died in 1637; in 1638 the widow had assigned her servant to Thomas, perhaps in the way of settling the estate.

The sons were of an age to decide for themselves their future homes. The death of the father had changed their first plans, and if Edward did not join the first settlers at Quinnipiac, Governor Eaton was occasionally at Plymouth transacting business for the Colony, where by his personality and his enthusiasm in depicting the model Quinnipiac settlement, he failed not to impress upon young men, when thinking of locating their future homes, its superior social and business advantages; and they of Plymouth, appreciating the rigor of the winter on that eastern shore, were attracted. At least Trumbull's History, vol. i, page 183, says, "the young and enterprising colonies of Connecticut and New Haven had attracted from Plymouth and Massachusetts some of their most active and progressive men."

The first meeting of the "United Colonies" was held at Boston September 1, 1643. (They were held quarterly, and alternately, at Boston, Hartford, Plymouth and New Haven.)

Governor Eaton took the Oath of Allegiance at New Haven July 1, 1644, and that same date administered it to others, among whom was Edward Watson.

John Walker, New Haven 1639, died 1652; his inventory was taken April 1652. Edward Watson married Grace widow of John Walker, July 1, 1653, had a daughter Grace (Watson), bapt. March 1654, and son John, born September 22, and bapt. September 28, 1656. Edward Watson died at New Haven in 1660. His daughter, Grace Watson, married, in 1673, Thomas Hall of Wallingford and had eleven children.

NATHANIEL WATSON, sixth son, came with his father to Windsor, but when in 1637 that father died, the home was shattered. Soon, in 1640, the township of Farmington began to be occupied by white settlers, principally inhabitants of Hartford, but the settlers on the Tunxis, now Farmington River, at Windsor, were not insensible to its value, and many of Windsor's people removed there.

It appears from the Colonial Record that "on June 15, 1640, a particular Court was ordered to conclude the planting of Tunxis." Two hundred years later, in 1840, the Rev. William S. Porter prepared from the records at Farmington and Hartford a list of the owners of home-lots before 1645, among whom was Nathaniel Watson. His death is not on the Farmington records, nor was such a record necessary previous to 1650. Savage and Caulkins both say he was in New London in 1647, and after that time, there is no trace of him.

JOHN WATSON, seventh son of Robert and Elizabeth Watson, born in England about 1616, was first at Plymouth, and came with his father to Connecticut in the spring of 1636.

A little more than one year passed, when in the summer of 1637, Robert Watson, the father, was added to the multitude that journey and never return. The mother had remained at Plymouth with part of the family, and a weary distance separated them.

Priority of birth would leave Robert in the home secured by the father; the others having reached an adult age, evidently were convinced it was better to provide individual homes. Hence we find Robert remaining on the home-lot at Windsor, Edward in New Haven, Nathaniel at Farmington, and later at New London. The inference is that John, after receiving that which would fall to him from his father's estate, located a few miles south of Windsor at Hartford, the largest of the Connecticut settlements. The early records are imperfect; if not admitted to the Church, or made Freeman, it is hard to connect a date. Mr. W. S. Porter says in 1640 John Watson's home-lot at Hartford was No. 9 Main Street South of the Bridge. In 1644 we find John Watson as Juror, and in the interim he may have revisited Plymouth. He had married Margaret daughter of Francis Smith of Rox-

they made a grave for her, as they had done for Thomas, in the field across the street, and everything in the room, including the Family Bible, was put in the grave."

V. Son Caleb, born at Hartford, May 5, 1695, married July 5, 1733, Hannah Porter. He administered the estate of his brother John in 1724. Records show that he was a man of large estate. He died without children, his widow inheriting his estate. She married secondly ——— Collins, by whom she had three sons, to whom she left a large estate.

There was a daughter Anna, born May 26, 1688, married Lamarack Flowers, one of the first Proprietors of New Hartford. Also a daughter Sarah, born at Hartford December 13, 1692, who married Thomas Shepard.

Levi Watson, bapt. September 11, 1726, at West Hartford, was the third son of Cyprian and Elizabeth Watson. He married Abigail Ensign, born March 17, 1730, daughter of Daniel and Abigail (Goodman) Ensign. They lived about one mile west of his father, on the main road at that time, from the Connecticut River and other eastern settlements to the Ousatonic River and Northern New York settlements. "Watson's Genealogy," published in 1864, says, "he was an enterprising farmer and Tavern-keeper, was much employed in Town official business, and many times represented the town in the Legislature." At the time of the Boston Tea-party, December 1773, he was ordered to bear the message to New York; the telegraph at that time was horseback in relays. That official order or document was preserved by his fourth son, Alvin, through his life, and then given to his grandson, Gaylord Watson, at that time a publisher of maps in Beekman street, New York, who two years before his death removed to Omaha, Nebraska. He had promised that document should later come to me, therefore after his death I wrote to his widow respecting it. As they could not find it, it was concluded that the eldest son, Howard, must have taken it to the West Indies, where he went for the benefit of his health, soon after his father's death. He never returned, but passed away at the Sea-side Hotel at St. Christopher, July 4, 1901.

Although his belongings came back with his body, that paper was not with them.

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Levy (or Levi) Watson was in Theophilus Munson's Company. Enlisted May 26, 1777, discharged January 1, 1778; also Eighth Regiment Connecticut Line, from March 5, 1778, until October 28, 1779.

He had five sons, who became thrifty farmers in his immediate neighborhood. He died May 27, 1798, aged 72.

His wife was Mrs. Abigail (Ensign) Watson, who died March 22, 1819, aged 89. They were buried in Torrington.

Isaac Watson, son of Levi and Abigail (Ensign) Watson, born at New Hartford December 30, 1764, married February 18, 1798, Sarah Phelps, born August 29, 1769, at Harwinton. He owned and occupied a large farm about one mile north of his father's home, and there he died February 25, 1826, aged 61 years. His wife, a daughter of Joshua Phelps of Simsbury and Harwinton, died November 30, 1827, leaving three sons and one daughter, two sons having died in infancy, the second of whom, Henry Phelps Watson, died at Trogadoo Island, 30 miles south of Charleston, the May following his mother's death; he was born November 11, 1804; graduated at Williams College; was a theological student at Princeton, but after his mother's death went to South Carolina for improvement of his health, where he died May 15, 1828, five and one-half months after his mother.

Royal Isaac Watson, eldest son of Isaac and Sarah (Phelps) Watson, born at New Hartford January 17, 1799; married (1) June 2, 1823, Eliza Seymour; (2) February 4, 1828, Sally Seymour, and (3) July 8, 1846, Celestia Hosford. By his several wives he had nine children; only two were living at his death, December 12, 1853.

MARIA WATSON PINNEY.

DERBY, CONN.

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