

# French, William Register Report

## First Generation

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**1. Captain William<sup>1</sup> FRENCH Esq.** was born circa 1604 in England<sup>[1]</sup>. We know that he was aged 30 at time of his migration in 1635 and aged "about seventy & six years" on 5 June 1679. William died in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA on 20 November 1681; he was "in [his] 78th year"<sup>[2,3]</sup>. William had a brother named John who was in Cambridge by 1637 and had a daughter named Sarah<sup>[9]</sup>.

William migrated to New England in 1635 aboard the *Defence*, Thomas Bostock, master (Edward Pearce was first listed as master, but it was later changed to Mr. Bostock<sup>[15]</sup>). On 3 July 1635 William French, 30 and Elisa, his wife, 32 were mentioned as servant to Roger Harlakenden, who took the Oath of Allegiance & Supremacy from the Minister & Justice of Peace. William, being a servant, would not have been eligible to take this oath. They embarked on 4 July 1635 with his family: "Elizabeth French, 30; Elizabeth French, 6; Marie French, 2-1/2; Francis French, 10; Jo: French, 5 mo." were all listed as beng from Fenchurch, London, Middlesex, England. They sailed from London<sup>[6,16,17]</sup>.

Once freed from Harlakenden's servitude, William became a Tailor<sup>[4]</sup>. We know that William was educated, since he signed his will<sup>[6]</sup>. More importantly, he sent to a friend in England "the relation of one Indian of two years profession, that I took from his own mouth by an interpreter, because he cannot speak or understand one word of English; this document was then included in a pamphlet: "Strength Out of Weakness; or a Glorious Manifestation of the Further Progresse of the Gospel among the Indians of New-England. Held Forth in Sundry Letters from divers Ministers and others..." This tract was published in London in 1652<sup>[5]</sup>.

As seen by his title, William served in the local militia. He was admitted to Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston, Suffolk co., MA (still extant!) in 1638<sup>[21]</sup> and quickly moved up the ranks -- which indicates more popularity with his fellow soldiers than military prowess. He became Sergeant on 27 September 1642<sup>[22]</sup>; was nominated as Lieutenant on 1 October 1645<sup>[23]</sup> and confirmed as such on 26 May 1647<sup>[24]</sup>. He was still a Lieutenant at the time of his daughter Abigail's birth in 1673<sup>[25]</sup>. The date of his promotion to Captain is unknown. Also, his inventory included an "old musket & gun barrel" valued at 12s<sup>[6]</sup>.

William took the Freeman Oath on 3 March 1635/6 -- seventh in sequence of 11 Cambridge men<sup>[6,7]</sup>. His town service in Cambridge, Middlesex co., MA consisted of serving on the petit jury of 3 December 1639<sup>[20]</sup>. Once he moved to Billerica, Middlesex co., MA in 1652, his town service picked up considerably. He was empowered to marry others in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA on 15 May 1667 and in Billerica & Chelmsford, Middlesex co., MA on 18 October 1659<sup>[19]</sup>. Finally, he was a deputy (much like a local representative to the State Legislature) from Billerica, Middlesex co., MA to the Massachusetts Bay General Court on 19 December 1660, 27 May 1663 and 3 August 1664<sup>[18]</sup>.

On 23 May 1655, the General Court considered a petition to which William French was a signer, asking that the residents of Shawshin (once part of Woburn, Middlesex co., MA and now the town of Burlington, Middlesex co., MA) be freed of all taxes and rate from the town of Cambridge<sup>[41]</sup>.

William was admitted to the Cambridge Church prior to taking his Freemanship oath on 3 March 1635/6. In January 1658/9 list of Cambridge church members are "William French & Elizabeth his wife both are members in full communion, Their children [:] Elizabeth now Elliot & now joined at Dedham. Mary baptized in England between 2 and 3 years old at her father's joining. John baptized by Mr. Hooker in Cambridge. Sarah, Jacob, Hannah born and baptized in this Church"<sup>[6,42]</sup>

William first settled in Cambridge, Middlesex co., MA but in 1652<sup>[6]</sup>, he moved to Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[2]</sup>. He made many real estate transactions and so is easy to track through deeds and land records. In Cambridge, he had one house on the 8 February 1635/6 list of "those men who have houses in the town"<sup>[26]</sup>. On 6 February 1636/7, he was granted two acres of land in Cambridge<sup>[27]</sup>. In 1639, he held two parcels of land: "bought of Mr. Richard Champnes, one dwelling house & garden"; and "given by the town two acres of land in the New West Field"<sup>[28]</sup>. By

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1639, William French had sold to John Sill "one house with garden and backside in the town"<sup>[29]</sup>.

In the Cambridge land inventory of 6 September 1642, William French held four parcels : "in the town one dwelling house with about half a rood of ground"; "in the New West Field two acres"; "on the south side of Charles River, eight acres more or less being the seventh lot in the lower division of lots"; and "in the upper division of those lots eight acres more or less being the three and fiftieth lot there"<sup>[30]</sup>.

In 1645, William French was granted "six acres & half" "on the west side of Monotamye [Menotomy - a now-extinct town which comprised parts of Cambridge, Somerville and Arlington, Middlesex co., MA] River"<sup>[31]</sup>; on or soon after 10 December 1646, William French sold to Edward Winship : "in the lots beyond Menotomy six acres & half"<sup>[32]</sup>.

On 15 August 1646, William French sold to Andrew Stevenson "four acres of land more or less in New West Field"<sup>[33]</sup>. On a later unknown date, William French held five acres in Fresh Pond Meadow<sup>[34]</sup>. In the division of "Shaw Shine" [the aforementioned "Shawshin", now Burlington, Middlesex co., MA] on 4 June 1652, "Lt. Will[ia]m French" received Lot #24, 150 acres<sup>[35]</sup>.

On 27 Feb 1654/5 William French of Cambridge, tailor, sold to Gilbert Crackbone of Cambridge, husbandman, "four acres of land...in a planting field commonly called there West Field"<sup>[36]</sup>.

On 10 June 1656 "William French of Cambridge..., tailor," sold to "William Barret of the same place, tailor,...my now mansion house situated in Cambridge before named with about half a rood of land adjoining to the same..., also a barn and outhouse standing on the east adjoining the highway with about half a rood of land adjoining thereto"<sup>[37]</sup>.

On -- February 1667/8, "William French of Billerica...in consideration of a valuable sum of money, to me well and truly paid, by Sgt. John Parker (now deceased) sometimes of Billerica aforesaid, for the use and behoof of Jonathan Danforth" of Billerica, deed to Jonathan Danforth a parcel of meadow in Billerica "containing by estimation one acre and three quarters"<sup>[38]</sup>.

On 29 November 1678, "William French of Billerica...for and in consideration of the love & affection he beareth to his son Jacob French, as also for the full & final accomplishment of a contract & agreement made between the said W[illia]m French & Elder Richard Champney of Cambridge deceased, upon the marriage of the said Jacob French to Mary, the daughter of the said Elder Chamney, " deeded to Jacob French a parcel of land in Billerica "containing by estimation twenty-five acres lying on the Pine Plain"<sup>[39,40]</sup>.

On 2 April 1650 the "Court granted W[illia]m French right and power of administration upon the estate of his brother John French deceased, and do confirm and allow of his disposal of the children"<sup>[8,9]</sup>.

In his own will, dated 5 June 1679 and proved 20 December 1681, "W[illia]m French of Billerica, aged about seventy & six years," declared that "I have already given to all by children that have been already married their portions, I only add to them as followeth: to the eldest son of John French, to W[illia]m the son of Jacob French, to Elizabeth daughter [of] Richard Ellis, to Jonathan the son of Jhonathan Hides, to the eldest daughter of Jonathan Peake, to Marah the daughter of John Brackett, which are all my grandchildren, to each person as aforesaid twenty shillings"; residue to "my beloved wife, & to those children born to me by her, to be divided to each at the discretion of our honored county court after my decease"; "my beloved wife & my son Jacob French" executors; at the time of probate, there was "allowed to the [illegible] of the children £6 13s. 4d., to the widow 1/3 the remainder, to the widow the remainder 2/3 equally to be let out by Lt. Jonath[an] Danforth, Joseph Thompson & Josiah Converse to each his part & the widow to have the benefit of the children's portion for the bringing up & education until they come of age to choose thier guardians."<sup>[10]</sup>

The inventory of the estate of "Lt. W[illia]m French of Billerica who deceased 20 November 1681 being his 78 year of age", taken 6 December 1681, totalled £231 12s. 10d. (against which were debts of about £25), of which £104 was real estate: "house & barn, homestead, meadows & outlands," £104; presented 8 December 1681 by "Mary French executrix to the estate of Lt. French her deceased husband"<sup>[11]</sup>.

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On 6 December 1687, “the estate of Lt. William French of Billerica (who deceased the 20.9m.1681)” was divided, “to the widow one-third part of the whole estate and to the three children the remaining two-thirds, equally, “ the widow receiving £60 14s. 10d., “Mary French (now Sharp),” £40 10s., “Sarah French” £40 10s., and “Hannah French” £40 10s.; this division was acknowledged on 20 August 1722 by “Sarah Crosbey, Mary Dunklin & Hannah Child (daughters of the within mentioned Will[ja]m French deceased)”<sup>[12,13,14]</sup>.

Circa 1625 when William was 21, he first married **Elizabeth GODFREY? SYMMES?**, in England<sup>[43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50]</sup>. Elizabeth died on 31 March 1668 in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[3]</sup>.

They had the following children:

<b>2</b>	i.	[possibly Francis]
<b>3</b>	ii.	Elizabeth
<b>4</b>	iii.	Mary
<b>5</b>	iv.	John
<b>6</b>	v.	Sarah
<b>7</b>	vi.	Jacob
<b>8</b>	vii.	Hannah1
<b>9</b>	viii.	Hannah2
<b>10</b>	ix.	Samuel

On 6 May 1669 when William was 65, he second married **Mary LOTHROP**, daughter of **Thomas LOTHROP & Mary [surname not known]**, in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[2,3,51,52,53,50,54,55,56,57,49,58]</sup>. Mary was born on 4 October 1640 and died after 1735; she was 94<sup>[2]</sup>. The town records mention that “She was living in 1735 ‘very aged’”. William was Mary’s second husband. She first married **John STEARNS** and third married **Isaac MIXER**.

On 21 December 1680, “Mary French administrator to the estate of her deceased husband John Starnes, “ along with “John Stearnes” and “Samuel Starnes” petitioned for a division of the estate of John Stearns. To this petition were appended two other items: “Request of the selectmen of Billerica for the Court to take into considteration the condition of the family of one Lt. W[illia]m French “ 18 December 1680; and the “Court being informed that Lt. W[illia]m French of Billerica is by God’s hand through impotency & weakness unfit to govern his domestic concerns, at the request of his friend Deacon Tompson & his son Jacob French are empowered to assist his wife in the ordering & disposing of his estate, so as may best conduce for the supply of the family,” 21 December 1680 [Scott Gen 196, location of petition not stated]<sup>[59]</sup>.

They had the following children:

<b>11</b>	i.	<b>Mary</b>
<b>12</b>	ii.	Sarah
<b>13</b>	iii.	Abigail
<b>14</b>	iv.	Hannah

Generation: G7 Grandparents

Person Numbers: 978/979

## Second Generation

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### Family of Captain William FRENCH Esq. (1) & Elizabeth GODFREY? SYMMES?

**2. [possibly Francis] FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born circa 1625 in England. Anderson says there is no further record of him and that he may not have been a child of this couple. Francis was on the *Defence* in 1635, aged 10. William French would have been barely twenty at the time of Francis’ birth, which is not impossible but is younger than the norm<sup>[3]</sup>. It is possible, during this time of extremely large families, that Francis was a younger brother of William &

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John. Regardless, Torrey notes that a Francis French & Lydia Bunnell married in Derby or Milford, CT in 1661. Even if this is not \*this\* Francis, someone wished to perpetuate the name.

**3. Elizabeth FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born circa 1629 in England<sup>[3]</sup>. She was aged 6 at time of migration. On 19 September 1650 when Elizabeth was 21, she married **Richard ELLIS**, in Dedham, Norfolk co., MA<sup>[3,60]</sup>.

**4. Mary FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born circa 1632 in England<sup>[3]</sup>. She was aged 2.5 at time of migration in 1635 and married **Jonathon HIDE**.

**5. John FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born circa 1635 in England<sup>[3]</sup>. He was aged 5 months at time of migration in 1635. John was baptized in Cambridge, Middlesex co., MA in 1635<sup>[61]</sup>. John married four times. On 21 June 1659 when John was 24, he first married **Abigail COGGAN**, in Barnstable, Plymouth co., MA<sup>[3]</sup>. On 3 July 1662 when John was 27, he second married **Hannah BURRIDGE**, in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9]</sup>. On 14 January 1667/8 when John was 32, he third married **Mary ROGERS**, in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9]</sup>. On 16 January 1677/8 when John was 42, he fourth married **Mary LITTLEFIELD**, in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9]</sup>.

**6. Sarah FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born in March 1638 in Cambridge, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9,62]</sup>. On 15 August 1660 when Sarah was 22, she married **Jonathon PEAKE**, in Roxbury, Suffolk co., MA<sup>[9]</sup>.

**7. Jacob FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born on 16 January 1639/40 in Cambridge, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9,63]</sup>. On 20 September 1665 when Jacob was 26, he first married **Mary CHAMPNEY**, in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9]</sup>. On 30 June 1685 when Jacob was 46, he second married **Mary CONVERS**, in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9]</sup>. Jacob third married **Mary [surname not known]**.

**8. Hannah1 FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born on 2 February 1641/2 in Cambridge, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9,63]</sup> and died in Cambridge, Middlesex co., MA on 20 June 1642; she was 1<sup>[9,63]</sup>.

**9. Hannah2 FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born circa 1643<sup>[9]</sup>. On 6 September 1661 when Hannah2 was 18, she married **John BRACKETT**, in Braintree, Norfolk co., MA<sup>[9]</sup>.

**10. Samuel FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born on 3 December 1645 in Cambridge, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9]</sup> and died in 1646. He was buried on 15 July 1646 in Cambridge, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9]</sup>.

### Family of Captain William FRENCH Esq. (1) & Mary LOTHROP

**11. Mary<sup>2</sup> FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born on 30 April 1670 in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[2,9,64]</sup> and died in Lexington, Middlesex co., MA as "Dunkley, Mary". on 17 September 1729; she was 59<sup>[65]</sup>.

On 20 June 1687 when Mary was 17, she first married **Robert SHARP**, in possibly Woburn, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9,43,66,67]</sup>. Torrey mentions that they are both "of Billerica"<sup>[43]</sup>.

On 23 March 1693 when Mary was 22, she second married **Nathaniel DUNKLEE**, son of **Elnathan DUNKLEE & Silence BOWERS**, in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9,43,57,68,69,70,71,72]</sup>. Under Robert Sharp's Torrey entry, Mary's second husband is listed as "Nathaniel Dunckler"<sup>[43]</sup>.

They had the following children (*surnamed DUNKLEE*):

- i. Silence
- ii. David
- iii. Elnathan
- iv. Jonathon
- v. Hannah
- vi. **Hezekiah**
- vii. Robert
- viii. [possibly Ruth?]

Generation: G6 Grandparents

Person Numbers: 488/489

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**12. Sarah FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born on 29 October 1671 in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[2,9,73]</sup>. On 6 May 1691 when Sarah was 19, she married **Joseph CROSBY** of Billerica, in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9,56]</sup>.

**13. Abigail FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born on 14 April 1673 in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[2,9,25]</sup> and died on 13 April 1674 in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[2,9,74]</sup>.

**14. Hannah FRENCH** (*William*<sup>1</sup>) was born on 25 January 1676/7 in Billerica, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[2,9,75]</sup> and died in Watertown, Middlesex co., MA in 1766; she was 89<sup>[2]</sup>. On 5 October 1693 when Hannah was 17, she married **John CHILD**, in Watertown, Middlesex co., MA<sup>[9]</sup>.

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