

THE MARRIAGE OF MR. EPHRAIM CHILD
(ca.1593-1663)
OF WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

By Douglas Richardson, M.A.

Mr. Ephraim Child almost certainly came to New England with the Winthrop Fleet. He first appeared in the 19 Oct. 1630 list of those desiring to be made free (Charles E. Banks, The Winthrop Fleet of 1630 [Boston 1930] p. 64 [quoting Mass. Col. Recs. 1:79]). He was admitted a freeman on 18 May 1631 at Watertown, where he served as a town officer, deacon, and a deputy to the General Court (Henry Bond, Genealogies of the Families and Descendants of the Early Settlers of Watertown..., 2nd ed. [Boston 1860; rpt. Boston 1978], hereafter Bond, 1:152). He died at Watertown on 13 Feb. 1662/3, aged about 70 years (Bond 1:152), which indicates that he was born about 1593.

There are several clues to Ephraim Child's origin. One of them is in a letter from John Winthrop to his wife Margaret, dated 9 Oct. 1629 (Stewart Mitchell, ed., Winthrop Papers [Boston 1931] 2:157). In that letter, Winthrop asked his wife to show some papers on New England to his "neighbour Childe" and to "others that have a minde to [go to] New England." The editor of the Winthrop Papers takes the position that "neighbour Childe" is identical with the immigrant Ephraim Child of Watertown (2:157).

In 1629, John Winthrop lived in Groton, co. Suffolk. According to Bond, Ephraim Child married at nearby Nayland, co. Suffolk, on 8 Feb. 1625 [examination of a recent transcript of the Nayland register indicates that the marriage took place on 8 Feb. 1624/5] Elizabeth Palmer, widow. No supporting evidence for identifying this Ephraim Child with the immigrant is offered either by Bond or by the editor of the Winthrop Papers, which also mention the marriage.

Ephraim Child did have a wife named Elizabeth. Both Ephraim and Elizabeth in their wills mention their "loving cousin" William Bond; Henry Bond (1:46, 152) suggests that Elizabeth Child was the Elizabeth Bond, daughter of Jonas and Rose (Wood?) Bond, baptized at Bury St. Edmunds, co. Suffolk, on 17 Jan. 1599[/1600] and thus was an aunt of William Bond of Watertown, who Henry Bond believes came with the Childs to New England (St. James' Parish records, courtesy of Myrtle Stevens Hyde; Bond gives the date incorrectly). If Child's wife were really Elizabeth Bond and if Ephraim Child were the man of that name who married in 1625 widow Elizabeth Palmer, then one would need to find a marriage for Elizabeth Bond to a Palmer before her marriage to Ephraim Child in order to prove the assumptions made in print. Accordingly, I searched Boyd's Marriage Index, an excellent source for locating English marriages of this period. With little trouble, I found the following marriage in this index:

Elizabeth Bond and Samuel Palmer (of Needham) married 1617 at Fornham St. Martin, co. Suffolk

The parish register itself indicates that the marriage took place at Fornham St. Martin on 3 Sept. 1617. Fornham St. Martin borders Elizabeth Bond's home of Bury St. Edmunds on the north. The fact that she was not married at Bury St. Edmunds explains why Bond genealogists missed the marriage record. Her first husband was probably the "Sam[uel] Palmer householder" who was buried at Nayland on 12 May 1624.

The evidence cited above shows that Elizabeth Bond was indeed the widow Elizabeth Palmer who married Ephraim Child at Nayland, co. Suffolk, in 1624/5. We conclude in turn that Ephraim Child was in fact the "neighbour Childe" mentioned in John Winthrop's 1629 letter. Ephraim and Elizabeth (Bond) (Palmer) Child died without issue. They were, however, joined in New England by two brothers, Richard and John Child of Watertown (for the supposed William Bond of Watertown, claimed as father of Richard and John, see the article below) and by Benjamin Child of Roxbury; Ephraim was probably closely related to these younger Childs since he bequeathed to Richard and John and to Benjamin's son, also named Ephraim (Bond 1:152). Unfortunately, a search of the LDS International Genealogical Index [IGI] for co. Suffolk revealed only a few scattered Child entries, none of them significant. It may be that at his marriage Ephraim Child had only recently arrived in Nayland and that a search elsewhere would be fruitful.

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THE NON-EXISTENT WILLIAM CHILD OF WATERTOWN

Mr. Richardson's article on the marriage of Mr. Ephraim Child of Watertown encouraged me to make a search for a shadowy figure: William Child, also said to be of Watertown. My conclusion is that he did not exist. He was apparently conjured up out of whole cloth by Elias Child in his Genealogy of the Child, Childs and Childe Families... (Utica, N.Y., 1881), (hereafter Child Gen.). This work makes William Child a freeman of Massachusetts Bay in 1634, states that the births of his two sons, Richard and John, are in the Watertown vital records, and seemingly quotes from the will of Elizabeth (Bond) (Palmer) Child, who supposedly made a bequest to her sister-in-law, the widow of William Child (Child Gen. p. 494). There is, however, no record of a freeman named William Child in 1634 or at any other time. William Chase was made free on 14 May 1634; no other name comes close. Very few births are on record for Watertown in the early 1630s, and certainly none for members of the Child family. And finally, the will of Elizabeth Child, widow of Ephraim, does not mention a sister-in-law (Middlesex, Mass., PR Case #4399). Richard and John Child did exist and, as

Mr. Richardson's article points out, were mentioned in the will of Ephraim Child, but there is nothing to suggest that their father was ever in New England or that his name was William.

-- Robert Charles Anderson, Assoc. Editor

JOANNA HATHAWAY, WIFE OF NATHANIEL³ BLACKWELL
OF DARTMOUTH, MASS.

By Robert S. Wakefield, F.A.S.G.

Lydia B. (Phinney) Brownson and Maclean W. McLean in their excellent article "Michael Blackwell of Sandwich, Mass. (c.1620-1710)" state that the first wife of Nathaniel³ Blackwell (John², Michael¹) was Joanna ----- (NEHGR 117:193).

She can now be identified as Joanna Hathaway, daughter of John and Joanna (Pope) Hathaway and granddaughter of Arthur and Sarah (Cooke) Hathaway. John Hathaway's will is among the Bristol Co., Mass., will abstracts provided by H.L. Peter Rounds, C.G.:

John Hathaway of Dartmouth, yeoman. Dated 11 July 1732, probated 15 Aug. 1732. Names [second] wife Patience, daughter Joanna Blackwell [and his other children] (Bristol Co., Mass. PR 7:395-399). On 28 March 1733, Joannah Blackwell and Nathaniel Blackwell of Dartmouth signed a receipt for a legacy from the estate of her father, John Hathaway (Bristol Co. PR 8:4).

Elizabeth Starr Versailles, in her Hathaways of America (Northampton, Mass., 1970), p. 753, states that Joanna Hathaway, born in Dartmouth on 28 Jan. 1685, daughter of John and Joanna (Pope) Hathaway, married Elkanah Blackwell. This statement should be corrected to Nathaniel Blackwell.

Nathaniel Blackwell was a great grandson of Richard¹ Warren of the Mayflower² through his mother Sarah³ Warren (Nathaniel², Richard¹).

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