



In-Depth First Settler Profile:
William Cheney (1655) /
Anna (unknown surname)

Name: William Cheney

Birth: Uncertain, but possibly in Little Bourton, Oxfordshire, England; name also spelled Cheeny, Cheeny, Chiny, and Chinye in the records.

Emigration: Unknown

Death: November 1705 (FFS)

Occupation & Public Service: “He held the offices of Rate maker, Constable, Grand Levy man and Townsman, by appointment served on various town committees, and in 1685 he was named as one of the patentees of the town. He held the positions of Sergeant and Ensign in the train band.” (FFS) On April 27, 1677, inventory of estate of John Kirby taken by Nathaniel Bacon and William Cheeny (MAN vol. 1, p. 211); on November 7, 1677, inventory of estate of Jasper Clements taken by William Cheeny, Nathaniel Bacon, and John Hall Senior (MAN vol. 1, p. 291); on December 5, 1678, Ensign William Cheeny and Sargeant William Ward appointed overseers of the estate of Alexander Bow (MAN vol. 1, p. 277); on September 10, 1680, inventory of estate of Thomas Miller taken by Thomas Wetmore, James Tappin, Richard Hall, and William Cheeny (MAN vol. 1, p. 334); on April 2, 1691, inventory of estate of Richard Hall taken by William Cheeny, Deacon John Hall and Samuel Hall (MAN vol. 1, p. 458); distribution of the estate of John Wilcox made by Nathaniel White, William Cheeny and John Hall on January 13, 1694/5 (MAN vol. 1, p. 255)

Marriage: m.(1) Ann (unknown surname) (d. abt. 1689, Middletown, Conn.) She was sister to either Benjamin Hands of Little Bourton, England or to Katheren his wife [**Compiler’s note:** “Benjamin Hands nephew to Ann my wife lately deceased” (MLR vol. 2, p. 30)]; m.(2) Hope (Lamberton) (Ambrose) Herbert, abt. 1690, Middletown, Conn. (b. abt 1636, London, England; d. abt. 1703, Middletown, Conn.) She was the daughter of George Lamberton and Margaret (Lewen) Lamberton of London, England and New Haven, Conn. She divorced her first husband, Samuel Ambrose, in 1678 on grounds of desertion; they had two daughters, Abigail and Margaret. (Records of the Court of Assistants of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay, 1630-1692 p. 127; Families of Ancient New Haven by Donald Lines Jacobus, 1981)

Parents: Unknown

Children: He died childless. (FFS)

Residence/Property: On February 16, 1659, land of William Cheney recorded, six acres of upland “whereon his house standeth” bounded east on highway (Main Street) west on his own land south on William Ward’s land and north on Richard

Hall; six acres adjoining his homelot; four acres of wet meadow; two acres at wongonke meadow; twelve additional acres of upland; on January 26, 1667, two acres of upland which he bought from William Ward; on February 11, 1667, three acres of upland adjoining his other land; twenty acres on the east side of the Great River (which he later sold to Richard Goodale); on April 23, 1668, four acres which he bought from Mr. Giles Hamlin; on November 11, 1669, two acres of meadow; on November 10, 1669, seven acres of upland in the farther neck; sixteen acres lying southwest from town which was given him by the town; six acres which he bought from Samuel Eggleston; four acres of pond on the east side of the Great River; on March 5, 1671/2, two hundred fifty acres lying south of the town; on January 5, 1676, three hundred fifteen acres lying west from town; on May 27, 1680, three hundred twenty acres of land lying in the Long Lotts on the east side of the Great River; on January 27, 1661, eleven acres of land bought from Mr. Giles Hamlin; on May 20, 1700, twenty three acres of upland on the east side of the Great River called a half mile lot (which he later sold to James Wright). (MLR vol. 1, p. 28)

Will: Vol. 2, p. 39-40 (MAN). Will dated September 17, 1704, “William Cheeny” of Middletown, to my kinsman Benjamin Hand 80 acres of land out of my lot in the second part of the first division of land; if Cheeny Clark (the son of John Clark decd, my son-in-law) shall live to the age of 21 years; to Ambrose Clark son of sd John Clark decd; to Eunice Clark, daughter of John Clark, decd.; appoint my son-in-law John Williams and my daughter-in-law Abigail his wife to be executors; on February 5, 1716/7, estate distributed to Cheeny Clark, Ambrose Clark, and Eunice Clark; on November 5, 1717, Cheeny Clark, a minor of 19 years of age, son of John Clark, late decd., chose Capt. Joseph Rockwell of Middletown to be his guardian. (Estate inventory, November 12, 1705: 259-03-06, i.e. 259 pounds)

Burial Location: Unknown

Notes:

(CAF): “From whence Alexander Bow and William Cheney came, it is not ascertained. The latter was a representative to the General Court in several instances.” William Cheney was a representative from Middletown to the General Court held at Hartford in 1660, 1663, 1672-1673, 1675-1679, 1684-1685, and 1695-1696.

(SAV): “WILLIAM, Middletown, freem. of Conn. 1667, rep. 1660, 1, 3, and oft. after, d. 1705, leav. d. Abigail, but no s.” [**Compiler’s note:** Abigail was described as William Cheney’s “daughter-in-law” in his will (MAN vol. 2, p. 39-40) and was, therefore, not his biological daughter.]

(FFS): “William Cheney became a resident of Middletown in 1654 and three years later was made a freeman by the General Court. He held the offices of Rate maker, Constable, Grand



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Levy man and Townsman, by appointment served on various town committees, and in 1685 he was named as one of the patentees of the town. He held the positions of Sergeant and Ensign in the train band. He outlived his two wives, Ann and Hope, and died in November 1705, childless.”

(Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, 1636-1776): At a General Court of Election held on May 21, 1657, Will: Cheney was “made free.” (vol. 1, p. 297)

(HCCM): On March 5, 1667/8, “Wm Cheeny sworne Constable for Midleton there February last” (p. 84); on March 7, 1671/2, Wm Cheeny sworne constable for Middletown (p. 150); on September 3, 1674, “This Court Confirms Wm Ward, Samll Collins John Warner & Wm Cheeny Sargts of the Train Band of Midleton” (p. 184); on April 2, 1684, “This court being informed of the death of the relict of Alexander Bowe who hath left Three young Children behind her the one of which is with Mr. Collins & one with Ens: Wm Chee[n]y & the yonnger with Tho Warde this Court appoint sd Ensigne Che[n]y Ensign Wm Warde to make Indentures for the children to bind them out to their seuerall masters till they be eighteen yeares of age” (p. 371)

(HMC): “March the on[e] and twentieth 1670 or 71. The towne voted and agreed to present there request and seek the help of Captayne John Talcot and Lieftenant John Alin ... concerning the true proprietours of the plantation whether the present accepted inhabitants are not for to be accounted who are or shal be esteemed inhabiants to whom the propriety of undivided lands belongs unto ... and for the furtherance hereof wee doe appoint a Comity whose names are underwritten to inform what is needful. the Comity is Ensign White William Cheney William Ward, John Wilcocke.” The names of the proprietors of Middletown with their estates, taken March 22th 1670 included William Chinye with a value of £101. The list of the estates of the inhabitants of Middletown taken in 1673 included Sargt. Chiny with a value of £93. “At a towne meeting November 18, 1679. The Towne made choyc of Capt'n Danill Harris & Leften'nt Nath Whit and ensine William Chiny to take the wholl of the magesene of the town & pounches and pikes & despose of it in places in the towne whare they see most convenient ... At the same towne meeting it was voated be willing that a belle which is purchased by parte of the inhabitance of the towne ... that if they be willing that the sayd belle shall be hanged up in the meeting house,” included Ensigne William Cheney for the amount of one pound. “June 30, 1685. At the same towne meeting the towne made choice of these mentioned as patentees for the towne to pro cuer a patten for the towne according to the Court order. The men are Mr. Gills Hamline, Leftnt White & Ensign Ward and Ensigne Chiny & Captn Harris and Deacon Hall and Robert Warner & William Harris and Deacon Alyn.”

(A Catalogue of the Names of the Early Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Connecticut by Royal Ralph Hinman, 1852):

“Cheeny, Cheeney, Cheney, Cheny, William from Little Bo[ur]ton near [B]anbury, in Oxfordshire, England was made a freeman at Hartford, Ct, in May, 1657, and was early settled at Middletown, where he was one of the principal men of the town ... It appears he had one daughter, (or a daughter of one of his wives,) who married John Clark, of Middletown, and had three children, viz., Cheeny, Ambrose and Eunice Clark ... For some cause Mr. Cheeney sent to England, to his brother-in-law Hands, to send his son, Benjamin Hands, to him at Middletown, Conn., and he would make him his heir. Mr. Cheeny died at Middletown in 1705. Inventory taken Nov. 12, 1705. Estate, £259, 3s. 6d. He gave Benjamin Hands, his kinsman (nephew), 80 acres of land; to Cheeney Clark, 327 acres, and to Cheeney, Ambrose and Eunice Clark, all his personal property. John Clark had deceased before the death of Mr. Cheeney. In the will, made Sept. 17, 1704, and proved in 1705, he appointed his son-in-law, John Williams and his wife Abigail, his executors. In the will he made in 1699, he noticed Anne Hand, daughter of Benjamin Hand; he also noticed his wife Hope, for the use of a part of his estate during her life, and then to go to the children of John Clark. By Hand's letter it appears that Wm. Cheeney and Benjamin Hands, his nephew, were from Little Bo[ur]ton, near [B]anbury, in Oxfordshire, England. Cheeny had a second wife, and it is doubtful whether he had children by either.”

(A Catalogue of the Names of the Early Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Connecticut by Royal Ralph Hinman, 1852):

“Cheeney, Mr. William, of Middletown, not having children of his own, sent to England for Benjamin Hand, his nephew, to come to Middletown, Conn., and become heir to his estate. He came to Boston, in Mass., and on the 20th of Feb., 1681, Hand wrote a letter to his ‘Dear loving uncle and aunt William and Ann Cheeny, of Middletown, from yr cousin, Benjamin Hands son of your dear brother Benjamin and Katheren Hands of little bo[ur]ton near [B]anbury in Oxfordshire’ ... and desired his uncle Cheeney to redeem him for his passage ... On the trial as to the estate of Mr. Cheeney, Caleb Stanley testified, then aged about 60, that soon after Benjn Hand come from England, Mr. Cheeny came to his house in Hartford, and told him sd Benjn was his kinsman, and he sent for him to be his heir ... Mr. Cheeney called for his young kinsman, for Mr. Standly to see him, being much taken with him, and told before his wife that he had sent to Engld for the young man to be his heir, and he should be his heir, &c.; that she said her husband would be sorry he ever sent for him to come from Engld that Cheeny's wife desired her husband to send for one of the Cheeneys, that was nearer of kin to him ... By the will sd Cheeny dated March 3, 1699, he gave Anne Hand, daughter of Benjn, one cow as a token of his love for her. All the rest of his estate, real and personal, &c., he gave to his loving wife Hope, the use of the real for her life, and after her death to be equally divided to his d[au]ghte[r] Clark and her



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children, only reserving that his d[augter]r Clark's part should be in his house and homestead ... Mr. Wm. Cheney made a second will, dated Sept. 20, 1704, in which he gave his kinsman, Benjamin Hands, of Middletown eighty acres of land ... The remainder he gave to Cheeny Clark, son of John Clark, deceased, his son-in-law, about 327 acres east of the river, &c. He also gave Ambrose Clark, son of said John Clark, several lots of land on both sides of the river, and gave all his personal estate to the three children of said John Clark, deceased, his son-in-law, being Cheeny, Ambrose and Eunice Clark."

(A Catalogue of the Names of the Early Puritan Settlers of the Colony of Connecticut by Royal Ralph Hinman, 1852): "This will was proved in court at Hartford. Dec. 6, 1705 upon which a long trial was had before the court. It was proved by Isaac Johnson, Sen., that in 1681-2, Ensign Wm. Cheney was informed that he had a cousin who had come to Boston from England, which he had so often sent for to his brother Hands to send one of his sons to enjoy what God had given him in New England. Isaac Johnson and his wife testified that Ensign Cheney employed said Isaac to go to Boston, to look up his cousin if to be found there, and that Wm. Cheney told him that if the boy's name was Cheney, he would not own him, but if he was his brother Hand's son then he would bring him up (to Middletown from Boston) that he brought him, and Ensign Cheney and his wife received him as a cousin, the son of their brother Hands: testified Dec. 5, 1705 ... John Hall, aged about 56 years, testified that some time before Mr. Cheney married his second wife, he was informed that Mr. Cheney had made a second will, in which he had given to Benjamin Hands little or nothing, and he talked with Mr. Cheney about it, and that Cheney said it was true ... Worshipful John Hamlin and Noadiah Russell testified, that about fourteen years previous, they had certain knowledge that Mr. Cheney had a will, to which they were witnesses, in which he gave the town of Middletown for the use of a school, viz., his house and home-lot in Middletown. Anna Coe, alias Everts, testified, that after Mr. Cheney married his second wife, he then being sick, he heard Mrs. Abigail Clark say, that her father Cheney had sent for Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Russell to make his will, and perceived Abigail and her mother had much concern about the matter. Joseph Miller testified that some time after his master was married to his second wife, he discovered his mistress was very discontented; that he overheard a discourse with his master for making such a will; that she often cried, and she told his master Cheney that if that will should stand, he had as good turn them out doors, and said she knew he had given a great part of his estate to his cousin Benjamin Hands."

(MUH): "John Clark, b. 1637, New Haven; m. Abigail Cheney." **[Compiler's note:** John Clark married Abigail Ambrose, step-daughter of William Cheney.]

(The Cheney Genealogy by Charles Henry Pope, 1897):

"William Cheeny (so he wrote his name) was an early settler in Middletown, Conn. Made freeman and deputy to the Court in 1657, a commissioner seven years, ensign of Middletown training-band in 1667; possessed large estate. Had no son, but sent to England for a nephew, Benjamin Hand, of Little Bourton, co. Oxford, to come and be his heir, avowing that he would leave nothing to any of his relations by the name of Cheeny. He made a will Sept. 17, 1704, dividing the estate between Benjamin Hand and Cheeny, Ambrose and Eunice, the children of his deceased step-son John Clark. He d. soon after, and litigation ensued." (p. 554)

(Records of First Church of Christ, Congregational, Middletown, Connecticut, 1668-1870 (available at Godfrey Memorial Library, Middletown, Conn.): On August 22, 1669, Goodman [William] Cheney and [Anna] his yoak fellow received in full communion (p. 7) **[Compiler's note:** First names found in Catalogue of Members of the First Congregational Church, Middletown, from November 9, 1668 to May 7, 1876]; on March 17, 1695, "Hope ye wife of Ensign Willm Cheney" admitted to full communion (p. 45); on March 24, 1695, "Jno & Annah ye children of Abigail ye wife of Jno Clark Junr were baptised" (p. 46); on March 29, 1696, Ambros ye son of Abigail Clark baptized (p. 49); on October 16, 1698, Cheney ye son of Abigail was baptized (p. 52); on September 1, 1700, "Eunice ye daughter of Abigail ye wife of Jno Clark Junr" baptized. (p. 54)

(MLR): On August 14, 1689, Ensign William Cheney for the good will and affection I bear to Benjamin Hands nephew to Ann my wife lately deceased (vol. 2, p. 30); on February 16, 1690/1, Ensign William Cheney sold three hundred fifty acres in the westernmost range of lots abutted west on Wallingford bounds (vol. 1, p. 76); on March 17, 1693/4, Ensign William Cheney with his wife Hope Cheney sold twenty three acres in the half mile lots (vol. 1, p. 96); on February 4, 1702/3, William Cheney granted his sixteen acre homelot to "my son in law John Williams lately of Wethersfield" and to "my daughter in law Abigail now the wife of sd John Williams which Abigail was dafter to my late wife now deceased" (vol. 2, p. 105); on October 19, 1705, Ensign William Cheney granted to his son in law John Williams and Abigail his wife three hundred twenty seven acres on the east side of the Great River (vol. 2, p. 152); on July 6, 1717, Ambros Clark sold to John Williams father in law to sd Ambros Clark his right in land that descends to him by last will and testament of William Cheney grandfather in law to sd Clark. (vol. 3, p. 343)

(New Haven, Connecticut, Land Records): On September 27, 1692, "Mr. William Cheney, husbandman, with Hope his wife, dwelling in Middletown;" on November 1, 1692, "John Clark, now resident at Middletown, with Abigaile his wife, the eldest daughter and only surviving child of the above mentioned Mrs. Hope Cheney" (vol. 1, p. 564); on February 20, 1692/3, "Mr. William Cheney of Middletown in the right of his wife Hope



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Cheney, the daughter of Mr. Lamberton some time of New Haven deceased (vol. 1, p. 635); on May 26, 1698, "William Cheney of Middletown, with the consent of Hope 'my present' wife conveys land formerly Mr. Lambertons (vol. 1, p. 760); on May 23, 1700, "John Clark of Middletown and Abigaill Clark, his wife, enter their caution against any further record of the lands belonging to their mother, Hope Cheney, formerly Hope Lamberton, which did formerly belong unto Mr. George Lamberton, lying within the precincts of New Haven" (vol. 1,

p. 816); on February 27, 1728/9, "John Williams and Abigail his wife, Ambrose Clark, Cheny Clark, Edward Jackson and Eunice his wife, all of Middletown." (vol. 10, p. 398)

(MLR): Children of John and Abigail Clark were Anne, born November 5, 1690; John, born April 12, 1693; Ambros, born March 25, 1696; Cheny, born October 8, 1698, and Eunice, born August 27, 1700. (vol. 1, p. 14); John Williams married Abigail Clark on January 27, 1702; Annah Williams, daughter of John and Abigail Williams, born December 18, 1703, died January 21, 1721/2; Abigail wife of John Williams died January 16, 1731/2. (vol. 1, p. 9)

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**Abbreviation code used in SMFSD
biographical sketches and in-depth profiles:**

(MVR) Middletown Vital Records (originals at Middletown City Hall, Middletown, Conn.; also available on microfilm at Russell Library, Middletown, Conn.)

(BCVR) *The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records* (original index at Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Conn.; printed index available from Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Md.; digitized index available on CD-ROM as part of *The Ricker Compilation of Vital Records of Early Connecticut*, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Md.)

(MLR) *Middletown Land Records* (originals at Middletown City Hall, Middletown, Conn.; also available on microfilm at Russell Library, Middletown, Conn.)

(MAN) *Digest of Connecticut Probate Records*, Hartford District (Manwaring, Charles William. *A Digest of the Early Connecticut Probate Records*. Originally published 1904-1906; reprinted 1995. Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995.)

(CBRMC) *Commemorative Biographical Record of Middlesex County, Connecticut, Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens, and Many of the Early Settled Families*. Chicago, Ill.: J.H. Beers & Co., 1903.

(MUH) *Middletown Upper Houses* (Adams, Charles C. *Middletown Upper Houses, A History of the North Society of Middletown, Connecticut from 1650 to 1800 with Genealogical and Biographical Chapters on Early Families*. New York, N.Y.: The Grafton Press, 1908.)

(FFS) Frank Farnsworth Starr ("The Settlers of Mattabesec 1650-1660," *Middletown Penny Press*, Oct. 11, 1900; also published in the *Middletown Tribune* 250th Anniversary supplement.)

(CAF) *Centennial Address of Rev. David Field*. (Field, David D. *Centennial Address: With Historical Sketches of Cromwell, Portland, Chatham, Middle Haddam, Middletown, and its Parishes*. Middletown, Conn.: W.B. Casey, 1853.)

(GMB) *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633* (Anderson, Robert Charles, FASG. *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1633, Vol. I-III*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1996.)

(SAV) *Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England* (Savage, James. *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, Showing Three Generations of Those Who Came Before May, 1692, on the Basis of Farmer's Register*. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown & Co., 1860-1862.)

(GFHC) *Genealogical & Family History of the State of Connecticut* (Cutter, William Richard. *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Connecticut: A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making of a Commonwealth and the Founding of a Nation*. New York, N.Y.: Lewis Publishing Co., 1911.)

(HMC) *The History of Middlesex County* (Henry Whittemore, ed. *The History of Middlesex County 1635-1885*. New York, N.Y.: J.H. Beers & Co., 1884)

(RPCC) *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663* (Adams, Arthur W., ed. *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut 1639-1663*. Hartford, Conn.: Connecticut Historical Society, 1928.)

(HCCM) *Hartford County Court Minutes, 1663-1687* (Ullmann, Helen Schatvet, CG, FASG., ed. *Hartford County, Conn., County Court Minutes, Vol. 3 & 4, 1663-1687, 1697*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2005.)

(NEHGSR) *NEHGS Register (New England Historical and Genealogical Register)*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1847-2007. (Online database available at NewEnglandAncestors.org)

(TAG) *The American Genealogist* (articles by Donald Lines Jacobus, ed., 1922-1971) (*The American Genealogist*. New Haven, Conn.: D.L. Jacobus, 1922-1971)