



***In-Depth First Settler Profile:***  
***William Cornwell (1650) /***  
***Mary (unknown surname) Cornwell***

**Name:** William Cornwell (“Sgt.”)

**Birth:** Baptised May 25, 1609, Terling, Essex, England(GMB)

**Emigration:** To Roxbury, Mass. 1633(GMB); to Hartford, Conn., by 1639(FFS); to Middletown, Conn. before November 1652.(FFS)

**Death:** February 21, 1677/8 in Middletown, Conn.(MVR)

**Occupation & Public Service:** Appointed to committee to apportion home lots & planting fields in 1652 & 1657; constable 1664; surveyor of highways 1668; new meeting house committee 1669; representative in General Court 1654, 1664, & 1665.(FFS) Fought in Pequot Indian War with Capt. Mason in 1637.(GMB)

**Marriage:** m.(1) Joan Ranke September 27, 1632, Fairsted, Essex, England (b. England; d. before 1639); m.(2) Mary (unknown surname) about 1640 (b. unknown; d. after 1675).(GMB)

**Parents:** William Cornwall & Margaret Hayward of Terling, Essex, England (GMB, from William Cornwall’s baptismal record)

**Children** (MVR, Land Records, vol. 1, pg. 45; BCVR) all recorded in Middletown, but all but the last child born at Hartford):

- (1) John Cornwell, b. April 1640, Hartford, Conn.; d. November 2, 1707, Middletown, Conn.; m. Martha Peck, June 8, 1665, Middletown, Conn. (10 children)
- (2) William Cornwell, b. June 24, 1641, Hartford, Conn.; d. November 2, 1707, Hartford, Conn.; m. Mary Bull, June 8, 1670, Middletown, Conn. (6 children)
- (3) Samuel Cornwell, b. September 1642, Hartford, Conn.; d. December 6, 1728, Middletown, Conn.; m. Rebecca Bull. (7 children)
- (4) Jacob Cornwell, b. September 1646, Hartford, Conn.; d. April 18, 1708, Middletown, Conn.; m. Mary White, January 16, 1676-7, Middletown, Conn. (10 children)
- (5) Sarah Cornwell, b. October 1647, Hartford, Conn.; d. unknown; m. Daniel Hubbard, October 16, 1675, Middletown, Conn. (6 children)
- (6) Thomas Cornwell, b. September 1648, Hartford, Conn.; d. 1702, Middletown, Conn.; m. Sarah Clark, November 14, 1672, Middletown, Conn. (10 children)
- (7) Esther Cornwell, b. May 1650, Hartford, Conn.; d. May 2, 1733, Middletown, Conn.; m.(1) John Wilcox, Jr. by 1672 (3 children); m.(2) John Stow by 1679 (3 children)

(8) Elizabeth Cornwell, b. January 1651/2, Middletown or Hartford, Conn.; d. unknown; m. Capt. John Hall by 1670, Middletown, Conn. (8 children)

**Residence/Property:** “His home lot of five acres was located on the southeast corner of Main and Washington Streets.”(FFS) “They lived near the present day corners of Main and Washington streets. He owned five acres at the intersection of these streets and ten acres across the street from his home. His lands in Middletown were first formally recorded January 30, 1657, though a grant to him is alluded to as early as March 15, 1652, about which time the land records begin. The total amount recorded to him is nine hundred and three acres. Besides this amount he had a ‘great lot over the Great River’ and an original proprietor’s share in the undivided lands of the township.” (Cornwall, Edward E., M.D. *William Cornwall and His Descendants: A Genealogical History*. New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1901, pg. 5-6)

**Will:** Vol. 1, p. 294 (MAN). (Estate evaluation, June 12, 1674: 251-03-00, i.e. 251 pounds)

**Burial Location:** Unknown. “... probably buried in the old cemetery by the Connecticut River, though there are no tombstones standing there of so early a date.” (*William Cornwall and His Descendants*/Cornwall, 1901)

**Notes:**

**(CAF):** “William Cornwall, was an early settler in Hartford and had five sons; three of whom, John, Samuel, and William, Jr., accompanied him to Middletown. It is said that he died in 1677, an old man.” (Field, pg. 145)

**(CBRMC):** “The founder of the family in this country, William Cornwell, settled at Roxbury, Mass., about 1634, and he and his first wife, Joan, were members of the Rev. John Eliot's church in 1635. In 1636 he went with the ‘great removal’ to Connecticut, and in 1637 was one of thirty-seven soldiers from Hartford in the expedition against the Pequot Indians. This good man lived in Hartford until 1651; was a member of the church there, and probably all his children by his second wife, Mary, were born there. In 1651 William Cornwell removed to Middletown, being among the first settlers there, and residing near the present corner of Washington and Main Streets. In 1664 he served as constable. Two years later he received a grant of land in East Hartford for his services in the Pequot War. In 1654, 1657, 1664, and 1665 William Cornwell was a representative to the Colonial Legislature, or General Court, and he died February 21, 1678, his wife surviving him.”

**(SAV):** “WILLIAM, Roxbury 1634, when his w. was Joan, rem. to Hartford 1639, thence to Middletown, was rep. 1654, 64, and 3, d. 21 Feb. 1678, leav. wid. Mary, s. John, b. Apr. 1640; William, 24 June 1641; Samuel, Sept. 1642; Jacob, Sept. 1646; Thomas, Sept. 1648; beside Sarah, Oct. 1647, wh. m. 16 Oct. 1675, Daniel Hubbard; Esther m. 1671, John



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Wilcox of the same, and next, 1678, John Stow of the same; and Elizabeth wh. m. John Hall.”

(GMB): Referring to Edward Cornwall’s 1901 published work *William Cornwall and His Descendants*, Anderson calls it “a typical, solid genealogy of its period ... but with little documentation.” Anderson also makes note of the author’s assumption, based on family tradition, that William Cornwall’s designation in Hartford as “sergeant-at-arms” indicated that William Cornwall “had been an officer in King Charles’ body-guard.”

(*William Cornwall and His Descendants: A Genealogical History*, by Edward E. Cornwall, M.D. (New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1901): “The first record of William Cornwall is found in the Reverend John Eliot’s list of the members of his church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, which includes the names of: “William Cornewell,” and “Joane Cornewell, the wife of William Cornewell ...” The date 1633 is given just before and just after the entry of these names. No further record of him is found in Roxbury, but we have evidence that in May 1637, he was one of the seventy-seven soldiers, all but nineteen of whom were from Hartford and the other Connecticut River towns, who attacked and all but exterminated the Pequot Indians in their fort at Mystic.” (Pg. 2-3)

“In 1639, when the land records of Hartford, Conn. begin, William Cornwall had a house lot of eight acres in the

village, ‘no. 54, west of South Street, south from the Lane,’ which corresponds to a location near the north end of the present Village Street.” (pg. 4)

“He removed before March 5, 1648, from the village of Hartford to the east side of the Connecticut River at Hocanum. On that date he bound out his second son, William, who was seven years old, to Susannah Hooker of Hartford, widow of the Reverend Thomas Hooker, with provision for his education.” (pg. 5)

“William and Mary next were found living in Middletown (Mattabesek Settlement) on the Connecticut River, fifteen miles below Hartford. They lived near the present day corners of Main and Washington streets. He owned five acres at the intersection of these streets and ten acres across the street from his home. His lands in Middletown were first formally recorded January 30, 1657, though a grant to him is alluded to as early as March 15, 1652, about which time the land records begin. The total amount recorded to him is nine hundred and three acres. Besides this amount he had a ‘great lot over the Great River’ and an original proprietor’s share in the undivided lands of the township.” (pg. 5-6)

“William and family joined the church in Middletown on 3 Dec. 1668. William became a representative from Middletown in the Colonial Legislature in 1654, 1664, and 1665. He was also a constable in 1664. A March 26, 1670 tax list gives 52 house holders in Middletown, Conn., including him and three of his sons, the other two having stayed behind in Hartford. He was included in this list even though the General Court in 1667 had freed him from paying taxes, probably due to his age.” (page 6)

***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 Mattabesek 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](http://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)



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“He was 64 when he signed his will ‘Cornell’ in 1674 and he called himself ‘well stricken in years and much abated in any natural strength.’ He is probably buried in Riverside Cemetery, though no tombstones exist from that date.” (page 6-7)

**Compiler’s Note:** In the past several years a theory of uncertain origin, built on circumstantial evidence only, with no basis on original source records, has multiplied via the Internet that William Cornwall’s second wife, Mary (surname unknown), was actually Mary Hyanno, a Native American “princess” of the Cummaquid Wampanoags of Cape Cod, Mass. An article in the Spring 2006 issue of the SMFSD newsletter, *The Middler*, summarizes the state of inquiry on this subject, including references to web sites that align the circumstantial evidence. (See the Middler Archive on the SMFSD web site.) Investigation continues in order to

determine if there is any truth to this conjecture, which, remarkably, sprouted from a single unsourced entry in a “United Ancestries” family tree on CD-Rom (Family Archive CD-100).

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**For further reading:**

*William Cornwall and His Descendants: A Genealogical History*, by Edward E. Cornwall, M.D. New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1901.

William Cornwall sketch in *The Great Migration Begins*, by Robert Charles Anderson. (Boston, Mass.: NEHGS; continuing series)

“Middletown descendants want to know: What is the story with Mary Hyanno?”, research report by R.W. Bacon, *The Middler*, Spring 2006, Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants.

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