

WILLIAM BRADLEY (1619/20-1691)
 ALICE PRICHARD (abt. 1625-1692)

The DAR record gives a brief sketch which served the writer well as a beginning to the research made on the life of William and Alice (Prichard) Bradley. From that record is quoted:

"From American Genealogist, Vol I; William Bradley came to New Haven, 1638, arriving in Boston in 1637 with Governor Theophilus Eaton and Rev. Davenport from London, England. He took the oath of fidelity Aug. 5, 1644 (see appendix # 7). He obtained large land holdings in New haven and served as deputy at the General Court 1675-83.

"He married, 18 Feb. 1645, Alice Prichard, dau. of Roger Prichard of Springfield, Mass. (7-79) (map #6). Children born in New Haven:

1. Joseph Bradley, bp. 4 Jan. 1646; d. Jan 1705, md. 25 Oct. 1667, Silence Brockett, dau. of John Brockett of New Haven (7-77)
2. Martha Bradley, bp. Oct. 1648; d. Jan. 1707; md. 26 Oct. 1665, Samuel Munson
3. Abraham Bradley, b. 24 Oct. 1650; d. 19 Oct. 1718; md. 25 Dec. 1673, Hannah, dau. of John Thompson
4. Isaac Bradley, b. abt. 1647; d. 12 Jan. 1713; md. Elizabeth
5. Mary Bradley, b. 30 Apr. 1653; d. 26 Sept. 1724; md. 24 Nov. 1668, Samuel Todd (1645-1714)
6. Benjamin Bradley, b. 8 Apr. 1657; d. 1728; md. Elizabeth Thompson
7. Hester (Esther) Bradley, b. 29 Sept. 1659
8. Nathaniel Bradley, b. 26 Feb. 1660-1; d. 17 Aug. 1743; md. Ruth Dickerman
9. Sarah Bradley, b. 21 June 1665; md. 23 May 1682, Samuel, son of John Brockett. (see 7-81) " 1

"William Bradley is called 'Brother Bradley' in the early New Haven Records. (The term Brother and Sister was used to signify rank) . . . It is probable that William had belonged to Rev. Mr. Davenport's congregation in London. Eaton and Davenport were intimate friends and the former was Davenport's strong supporter." 2

In the DAR report are these words: "According to the 'History of Bingley,' England, (about 7 miles from the town of Bradley) William Bradley was a Major in the Parliamentary Army and removed to New Haven, Connecticut." 3 Bingley, Yorkshire had been the habitat of many of William's progenitors for generations.

The Yorkshire branch of the family may be traced to a remote period, Sir Francis Bradley living there in the time of Edward III. William, our ancestor, could have enlisted in the military while in Yorkshire, though his father and step-mother were living in Coventry, Warwickshire. In checking William's age at the time he arrived in New England he was 17 or 18 and must have been younger than that when he enlisted in the military in England. It is evident by his title, "Major," that he had received military training in Cromwell's standing Army at the time before it was disbanded. He was referred to in colonial records as either Major William Bradley or Bro. William Bradley. Henry Kellogg Willard gives us further particulars regarding the disbandment of Cromwell's troops.

"According to tradition the Bradleys were all Cromwell men and staunch dissenters. They held important offices among Cromwell's "Ironsides". On the behavior of the Protector's troops when disbanded, Macaulay has passed the highest praise: -

"Fifty thousand men, accustomed to the profession of arms, were at once thrown on the world; and experience seemed to warrant the belief that this change would produce much misery and crime, - that the discharged veterans would be seen begging in every street, or that they would be driven by hunger to pillage. But no such result followed. In a few months there remained not a trace indicating that the most formidable army in the world had just been absorbed into the mass of the community. The Royalists themselves confessed that, in every department of honest industry the discarded warriors prospered beyond other men, that none was charged with any theft or robbery, that none was heard to ask alms, and that if a baker, a mason, or a waggoner attracted notice by his diligence and sobriety, he was in all probability one of 'Oliver's old soldiers'.

"Consistent with this description of the scarred and war-worn veterans of the Protectorate was the conduct of the Bradleys." 4

Theophilus Eaton became a very wealthy merchant in England. He was closely associated with the well respected and honored Rev. Davenport. It is plausible that William's father as well as a cousin, Francis Bradley, all Puritans, along with the Rev. Davenport, met occasionally in Eaton's spacious home in London to discuss the possibility of migrating to America. William's father must have made arrangements for his son to have an opportunity to emigrate for as stated by Willard:

"William was placed under the auspices of Eaton in London before leaving for New England in the ship, 'Hector'. The company did not stay long in Boston. Not only the people of Boston, who welcomed this particular group because of its persons of opulence, intelligence and notoriety, but the whole Colony of Massachusetts were desirous that they should settle within its Commonwealth. Liberal proposals were made to them, but this was not in accord with the purposes of either Davenport or Eaton. Davenport's idea seemed to be to found a colony and establish that perfect 'Haven' of righteousness and prepare a place for the Savior's return as predicted in the scriptures of the Bible. His colony was to be absolutely controlled by the church, transferring to this country the English idea of 'Church and State'; only instead, it must be the Church of the Congregational order, 'Puritan,' with which he was identified. This concept, to his bitter disappointment, was shattered when, later, the idea of making Hartford the central place of a General Court for the larger territory of Connecticut. People seemed to favor the unifying of settlements for greater influence of power and protection as settlements continued to advance along the rivers off Long Island Sound." 5

"The design of genealogical research is to preserve the memory of local events and enterprises, as well as family history, and to record the manners and customs, the character and services, the sacrifices, toils and sufferings of our fathers, and to glean from old records and family traditions, well worthy of preservation, material which would otherwise be lost to the State and Country . . ." 6

To any descendants the identity of ancestors can give to that bit of history, a spark of interest that might otherwise not be there. Fitting an ancestor into a period of history, brings that period into a focus and perspective like no history text could ever do by mere rhetoric.

The history of New Haven is of special interest to the compiler of this work because so many ancestors immigrated to this particular area and were among

those who landed with Eaton and Rev. Davenport, first at Boston and, in two years removing to New Haven. Those who arrived in Boston on the ship 'Hector' or its unnamed consort ship, was John Brockett (7-81), William Bradley and others. There were William Peck (7-71), John Moss (7-73), David Atwater (7-68), William Ives (4-10), and Nathaniel Merriman (4-13) who arrived in New Haven after either coming from England with Eaton and Davenport or joining them in removal from Boston, for they were all early arrivals and original proprietors of New Haven. Other ancestors of New Haven were John Austin (7-64), Samuel Cook (4-5), and Edward Parker (4-9) who arrived in New Haven shortly after the first company to aid in the settlement there. Like the sons of Noah after the flood, a new land became peopled by the sons of New Haven's founders.

It is interesting to note that Joseph Bradley married Silence Brockett in 1667, 29 years after their fathers, William Bradley and John Brockett, had sailed the ocean together in the ship "Hector" and its consort. An interesting item is recorded by Edward J. Brockett, in further reference to the passengers of the "Hector":

"The Lords of the Admiralty for the king's service by 1636 were aware that a considerable emigration to New England had already taken place, but supposed them to be, for the most part, poor and mean people of little advantage at home and they were unaware how strongly this emigration was leavened with Puritanism. If they had known that several wealthy merchants of London inclined to non-conformity, and were about to embark their whole estates in the "Hector" and were intending to go to New England with their families, they would have found means to frustrate their undertaking." 7

Several ships that usually sailed from London avoided being too conspicuous by sailing from other ports. We are told that some ships sailed from Bristol. Another factor which put the Colonists in disfavor with England was a rumor that came back from Boston which inferred that they, the Colonists, were traitors and rebels because they did not display the king's colors at their fort.

While the 'Hector' was preparing for another voyage to Boston, the voyage of 1637 which would carry the company of Theophilus Eaton and Rev. Davenport, the vessel was seized by the Lords of the Admiralty in an effort to stop its leave from England. The captain made a petition that the vessel was previously chartered and a great loss would ensue. This met with a refusal but on a second petition the Hector was released and soon after, and perhaps to meet cases similar to this, "a proclamation was issued restraining the disorderly passing out of the kingdom to America, and commanding that none of the King's subjects be permitted to go without a license from the Commissioners of plantations and a certificate that they had taken the oath of allegiance and of conformity to the discipling of England's laws, returns to be made every half year to the Commissioners." 8

This restraining order affected all non-conformists of the Church of England and as seen through the following years, England's efforts of persecuting the Puritans did not stop emigration, and illegal passages to New England continued.

"New Haven was from the first a compactly settled town of wealthy, refined and religious people. The homes in New Haven were soon to excell in elegance and costliness all the other plantations in New England . . .

"Families entertained travelers . . .and highly prized their visits as seasons of fellowship and opportunities to exchange the news of the day and hear what tidings were come from the mother-land." 9

William's experiences as a young man in a new wilderness land must have been exhilarating to say the least. Forests had to be cleared before homes could be built. Obtaining logs for buildings was a means to that end. By clearing the land, crops could be planted. Life was rugged and dangerous. Though the Indians seemed friendly, one never knew when they might turn enemy. Game was ever so plentiful but in the winter time bears, wolves and other wild animals became even more numerous as the wild animals would resort to the sea-coast in considerable numbers. The settlers could waste no time in preparing stockades and walls to insure their own protection and that of their domestic stock.

William was 25 years of age when his thoughts turned to matrimony. He found his choice in Springfield, Mass., (map #6) where he married Alice Prichard, 17, the daughter of Roger and Frances Prichard (7-79).

Noting the distance that Springfield is from New Haven, one is struck with a desire to know the circumstances surrounding the occasion of the marriage of these two. The most accessible means of travel into or from the interior was by way of the Connecticut River. The town of Old Saybrook was the settlement at the mouth of the river so even when using such a waterway there was still need of travel overland. Any overland route at this early date had to be made on horseback since only Indian trails provided any wilderness route. Could William have made such a journey to claim his bride and then return with her to New Haven? Much has to be read between the lines. If the details could be lifted from the past when records fail to reveal it all, such a journey would make a journal in itself.

William and Alice lived in New Haven where William, no doubt, had already provided himself with a home.

"It is difficult at the present day to imagine the immense difficulties our fathers had to undergo in traveling from one town to another. Over steep hills, through swamps, across rivers, fording or upon rafts, with no compass to point out their irregular way; now in the open space of the forest, where the sun looked in; now under the shade of an old tree, now struggling through the entanglements of bushes and vines, with perhaps a 'bridle path' cut through the trees. Wherever a road had been built it was little better than none at all.

"Our ancestors wrought with a love and kindly fellowship with nature. They planted and admired the Elm, the oak, and the Chestnut for their beauty and for their long life. Their descendants seem to have inherited their love for these trees, as New Haven still abounds in its Elms and rejoices in being called 'The City of Elms.' " 10

William and Alice lived in New Haven where their nine children were born and where the parents remained for the full term of their lives. Alice was 26 years old when her mother, Joanna, passed away in Springfield, Mass. Her father then moved to Milford, Conn., a coastal settlement a few miles south-west of New Haven. (map #6)

During the lifetime of William and Alice, much growth was seen in numbers and in industry at New Haven. The marketplace became a busy and thriving center. Ships from Boston and some directly from England were commonly docked in the harbor to exchange goods of commerce.

Alice died in 1692, at the age of 67. William preceded her, 1691, age 70 years. Both were buried in New Haven. All of the children were married and still living at the time except perhaps, Hester, of whom we have no marriage or death date, who would, if she were living, have been about 33 years of age. She may have passed away earlier, however.

Our ancestor, Joseph Bradley, was the oldest child of William and Alice (Prichard) Bradley, a descendant of a long line of Bradleys of Yorkshire, England. Joseph's father did not continue the name of William. None of his son's carried that name but if one had, it would have been the fifth William in a line of continuous generations.

1. #71 pp. 29, 30
2. #81 p. 30
3. #71 p. 32
4. #81 p. 30
5. #79 p. 14, also #111, pp. 9,10
6. *ibid*, p. 21
7. *ibid*
8. *ibid*
9. *ibid* pp. 15, 16
10. *ibid* p. 20