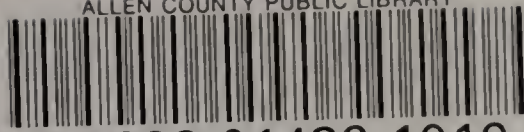


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Sheldons Prior to 1700

By

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I N D E X

Researching on Sheldons

Our Name

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1 Isaac Riddle

The Godfrey Line

The Salem Story

Other First Sheldons in America

Gilbert Sheldon,

Archbishop of Canterbury

Early Anecdotes and Sheldon Stories

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Author's Note

For the readers better enjoyment of the facts found within, please read it in the order printed as each chapter depends on material found in previous chapters. Data in the first chapters will make each chapter as you come to it more fully understood.

I hope you will like the style of the set-up. It was done with a purpose. As you read you will want to make notes or you may find excerpts pertaining to the same data. It all can be put on the blank page opposite. Thus, it becomes a work book as well as a reference book.

I know there is a very bad grammatical error all through the book. I tried to write it in the impersonal but there were times when the "I" just would creep in. I know it is very bad rhetoric and I ask your indulgence.

Researching on Sheldons

All English authorities seem to agree that the Sheldons were a "very ancient and eminent family" of "noble descent". That wording in varying degrees is found many times in English accounts — "anciently", "ancient", "bearing from early times the name Sheldon", "long-founded worth and prominence". In another place it is worded this way: "so numerous were the branches and so nobly connected its principal line that few private families, even in feudal times, could surpass them in opulence and alliance". And again, "In the cathedrals they vied with the kings" in position and numbers, or "Their monuments jostled those of the kings."

The spelling of the name is a very interesting and revealing study, leading us back in early times in England to 792 and to 200 years before the Conquest, to Baldwin de Sheldon and other Sheldons who held land in 1066, to Robert de Sheldonne and his brother, Guy, and others of the family who fought with William the Conqueror, to Sir Nicholas and Sir Peter de Sheldonne who were among the rebelling barons against King John (reigning 1199-1216) which led to the Magna Carta of 1215. To say nothing of various connections to royalty: French, English, Scottish and Irish; and the long line of King's officers and politicians.

The increasing large families spread throughout all parts of England. Records of Sheldons have been found in over 24 counties and there are only 39 counties in all. That means that Sheldons were in over half of the counties in the realm; and substantiates the fact that Sheldons received large grants from the crown all over England. Spreading in this way makes it hard to trace the lineage of each and every family, which may have to be done before we find the family or families from whom descended our American ancestors. Part of the lineage can be found through the study of more than a hundred recorded Sheldon-owned manors and their descent through families. Though the name was spelt many ways it can be proved to be the same family thru descent of the Manors, which in some cases is the only way some of the data can be put together and a family line established. It is a fascinating procedure to trace the descent of a manor from father to eldest son, to brother, to nephew, to cousin, back to an uncle and to the heirs of his body, all of whom may spell the name differently; or any line of successive descent, as the manor or manors are inherited by the different members of a family through several generations in each of the numerous separate lines of the main family. It is challenging to put a family together in this way. The question is what became of all the brothers of the heir in each family who did not inherit the family manors. That is where, perhaps, will be found those who became our American ancestors.

An interesting point to prove the numbers of Sheldons in England is found in two obituary records. In that of John Sheldon of Bromwich Manor it is stated "he left 9 children, 51 grand-children, 95 great-grand-children, and 5 of the fourth generation." Ralph Sheldon at the time of his death at the age of 102 left 130 descendants. Adding the two, that makes 290 Sheldons descended in four generations from only two sires. Think of how many Sheldons descended from all the other Sheldons from 792 to the 1600s when some came to America. An almost incomprehensible number. Yet, all of them may be necessary to locate before we succeed in tracing the right line to our American ancestors.

It is not hard to agree with the following quote: "It can not be doubted by anyone who has given attention to the subject of British family origins that although the Sheldon families of England had become very widespread at the period of the early colonization of America, they all belong to a common stock." So, with Sheldons all over the English island, it is making it very difficult to locate the family or families whose sons came to America.

The record made by J. Gardner Bartlett seems only to have been on the Derbyshire Sheldons. From my search I feel sure that when we locate that questionable Isaac it will be in records in another part of England. Some day with perseverance I feel sure the lineage will be found, as it has been unearthed for other families who came to America. As one author said, "This Genealogy has been twenty years aborning." And another said it had taken him 40 years. My search has been only 4 years. I'm not discouraged. Rather challenged. If it has taken years for others to accomplish their feat, I am willing to search many times 4 years, if necessary, to find the true Sheldon lineage.

The Sheldon name can be found in the index of most genealogical or family record books. In some books there will be only mere references, while in others there will be found long accounts. The number of books read in which Sheldons are found has long since gone well over the thousand mark, with notes or the full account copied from many hundred, which had Sheldon data of use in our search. This material is being assembled into a Sheldoniana, which could be classified for very interesting reading under at least 25 headings, such as:

- Early Sheldon References
- Sheldons in English History
- Sheldons of Royal Descent
- Descent from Magna Carta Surety Barons
- English Sheldon Lineages
- Gilbert, Archbishop of Canterbury
- Religious Beliefs of Sheldons in English Rebellions
- Sheldon Towns and Manors
- Sheldon Houses and Churches in England and America
- Sheldon Businesses and Enterprises in England
- Elizabethan Sheldon Tapestries
- Our English Origins
- The # 1 Isaac Riddle
- The # 5 Isaac Controversy
- The Salem Story

And many more plus the Vital Statistics of all New England States. Each in itself a topic for extended discussion, which will be put into a complete book at a later date. The following discussions of a few of these topics are submitted at this time for your consideration, as they are the ones which are the most controversial at the moment. They are not meant to be the final proof, only setting forth some of the facts available and the point of view of others on these particular statistics. They are submitted at this time that others may have the data made available to them for their consideration.

So - - - - - Happy Reading!

May you have as much fun reading it, as I have had hunting for it all.

Your comments will be appreciated.

Special Note!

When all facts are gathered, there will be printed a complete book of about 25 chapters on:

"SHELDONS in ENGLAND and AMERICA"

Our Name

If the reader is one of the firm believers in the fact that Sheldon has always been spelt Sheldon from time immemorial, this chapter is presented for such persons' consideration, as well as for the pleasure and enlightenment of all interested in the orthography of not only this family name but of all places and names through the decades.

ORTHOGRAPHY of OUR NAME

The spelling of the name in its various forms
from earliest times to the present!

I hesitate to mention the spelling of the name because I know people are going to doubt it. So may I quote one compiler of a family genealogy who said: "This Genealogy has been twenty years aborning. Had anyone told me 20 years ago that the name was spelt in so many different ways, I would not have believed them." To quote again: "When I started my work on the family history, I would not have accepted anyone's word that all these people (under different spellings) were descendants of one family, but I have proven them to be so by:
the official English records,
the rosters of Cambridge, Oxford, and Dublin Universities,
the early grants (tracing the land held by men under their variously spelt names),
the first two census lists,
as well as by the wills, court records, family bibles, papers of estates, etc. both in England, Ireland and in America." So, again, to all doubting Thomases, I say, "Investigate the records for your own satisfaction, I ask no one to take my word for proof."

How many times have you heard some one say, "They are no relation to us." They spell their name with an 'e'. We spell ours with an 'i' or "They have a 't' in their name, we don't." Yet, if they would go back 4 or 5 generations or more, they would probably find one of their g. g. g. g. g. g. g. g. grandfathers was one and the same man. In my town there were four families of Barnes's and all claimed no relation whatever. Yet, in doing town history, it was found they all came from the first Barnes settler in town.

Had any one told me four years ago that Sheldon was spelt in over 60 ways I would have laughed at the idea. Sheldons were Sheldons. Any other spelling was a different family. I don't ask you to take my word for it. Instead let us now go to the records and I'll share with you the proof of many spellings found by others and the facts I have found on the spelling of our name in England and later in America.

England

It was a fad at one time in England to see how many ways a man could spell his name. The more ways the more elite. Shakespeare spelt his in 17 ways. And Sheldons over 60 ways. Often a father and all his sons spelt the Sheldon name differently.

Going back to earliest days we find two spellings: de Shelldonne and Schelladonne.

By the time of the Norman Conquest, we find Robert de Shelldonne and his brother Guy fought with Wm. the Conqueror. Later on, we find the "Sch" has become Skelton in Cumberland or else the "d" has been dropped and it is now Sheldon in Yorkshire, but Shelton in Norfolk and Suffolk.

In the Introduction to Bank's "Topographical Dictionary" is the following on 'Distorted Spelling': "Frequently, in case of definite statements of the parish of origin, a distorted spelling will confuse one unfamiliar with the peculiar pronunciation and spelling of English localities which exist even today. Examples are found in the printed notarial records of Lechford and Aspinwall. We have not such strange transformations as Kirton for Crediton, or Ciseeter for Cirencester, or Sawbridgeworth which is locally pronounced Sapsearth! There is no way of unravelling these queer transformations of sound and spelling, but the searcher must be prepared to deal with such confusing local place-names. Then, there are almost entire changes in the spelling of parish names, such as Agmondisham which is now written Amersham." And with 7000 parishes in England according to the official clergy Directory, a searcher will have need to exert much patience as well as have much fun and many a laugh.

"Before 1600 a certain style of Chirography" (style or character of handwriting) "is found and roughly speaking, a gradual change took place after that, and in the following century a further evolution occurred," which makes it hard for the present day person to read the records and be able to interpret them.

Dugdale, one of the best authorities states: "In etymologizing" (derivation of words) "the names of Towns and Places, I have not been over-bold, because most of them had their originall denomination from the Britons, or Saxons; and that Time hath much varied the antient name, by contracting it for the more ease in pronunciation, or in some sort altered it from what it was at first, as is evident in most of them. Much variation, there is, I confess, in the names of sundry places and persons, which perhaps may cause some doubt of my care therein; but in that I have been very curious, having Records, or other authentique writings for my authorities, which I thought much more fit to follow, than to deliver the names as they are now written."

(At the end of a future Sheldoniana will be found a longer
(extract from Dugdale, which some may find interesting reading.
One of his authorities was the "learned Selden" of whom he speaks several times.

To continue quoting from Dugdale: "In the beginning of King Alfred's Reign (which was about the year DCCCLXXII) there were few Priests that could understand the Latin Service, or that could translate any Writing from Latin into English." The Romans and the Latin influence had been out of England since about A.D. 410 or approximately 450 years with barbarian tribes invading the island. Speaking of King Alfred it is interesting to note here that King Alfred divided his kingdom into Shires, Hundreds and Tithings. He "seems to have made an exact Survey thereof. Which Roll Time hath consumed, I believe; for I could never discern that our greatest Searchers after Antiquities had seen it." But it is referred to many times in Domesday Book.

To continue, referring to the priests: "Neither did they much minde Learning, till a little before the Conquest by Duke William, as may appear by the Testimoni of an authentique Writer (Quotes in Latin) Not a few Years before this Coming of the Normans, the Clergie were content with disorderly Learning, being scarce able to stammer out the words of the Sacrament; he which understood the grammar being admired of the rest. So that it was not such a Marvel that we have no more Light of Storie to guide us in those elder Times, as 'tis a wonder there is anything at all left to us, by reason that learned Men were exceeding scarce, and that the Monasteries, which were the Preservers of what is left to us of that kind, suffered such miseries by those barborous people, who were grown so powerful in the Realm."

DOMESDAY BOOK

Some writers say that Sheldons were in Bedfordshire in 792. Some that they were in various places several hundred years before Wm. the Conqueror. Others say they came with William the Conqueror as de Schelledonne is a French name. But in

that case, we would find record of his giving them direct grants for their services. But it is found that after the Conquest all overlords had such names as: Verdun, de Gaunt, Beauchamp, de Brus, de Bohun, Devereaux, Neville, Vernon, Maudeville, Calliard, Monceaux, Turchil, Musard, Filiol, Valoins, Meschines, Gerrard, Verney, and such. The underlords and tenants were the conquered English. There is the possibility, of course, that the Sheldons may have joined with the Normans in their army to subdue the remaining territories of unconquered earldoms as they marched north.

However, let us go to the Domesday Book and see what is found there.

Many records say Sheldons were not recorded in the Domesday Survey. When they say that I believe they were not recorded in the particular county of which they are speaking. For, I have found Sheldon in various spellings in Domesday Book. To refreshen your memory on what Domesday Book was, as I had to do, let me say that it was a record of general survey of England made at order of William I in 1086. It ascertained economic resources of most of the country for purposes of more accurate taxation. (So Income Tax of our day is nothing new.)

Lands were not bought in those days, but granted by the Crown for certain returns -- returns of military services, so many days work a week on the denemse lands, payment of fees for weddings of their overlords, ceremonies for knighthood and entertainment of royalty, etc. These lands were granted to the earls or barons but not in large portions as a county, such as co. Derby, nor parts of a shire; but rather, as a hundred or manor here, and another there, making a total of a great many all over the realm, so that no lord could gather an army from his underlords and advance against King William. These manors were granted in turn in still smaller portions by these overlords to those of lower rank, each subject to the overlord. These underlords in turn becoming overlords of a tithing or surities to their underlords. Thus a knight might have one manor for $\frac{1}{2}$ knight's fee or several manors, on which lived the families of his lesser tenants or villains. Such manors in many cases were the beginnings of the present-day towns. In some cases several manors now comprise a township. Somewhere within these divisions the Sheldons played their part.

It was this knowledge that William the Conqueror wished to secure by and through the Domesday Survey. It was unsurpassed in medieval history for speed and thoroughness. It is an invaluable historical source. The records after taken were put into Two Original Books. The reprint which I saw was in four books. As I went through the Counties, I found such spellings as:

Glowecscire	Herefordscire	Bockingha'scire
Wirecscire	Wirecestrescire	Sciropecscire
Herefscire	Derbyscire	Glowegestscire
Warwicscire	Northantscire	Grentebescire
Sum'ersete	Sudsex	

There seem to be no Sheldons in those shires, not even in Warwickshire and Worcestershire where later they were so numerous.

But, in the following we find:

Eurvicscire	Scachelden	Ledestrescire	Sceltone
	Scacheldene	Devenscire	Sildene
	Sceltune	Statfordscire	Sandone, Scandone
	Scheldone	Snotinghscire	Sceltun, Sceltune
	Scheltone	Lincolescire	Scantone
	Scheltun	Nordfolc	Sceltuna
	Schereltune	Cestrescire	Saltone
	Scaltun		
	Scaltune		

In Index 2 of Volume 4 we find:

Carlewin Glowecefterfe
Scheldone B. terr geld, prat - Eurvic fe W.R.
 Agemundreneffe - Arc Ep E borⁿ

Scheltone
Schetone
Schetun
Schillingtone Chet & twen
Schillingtune
Seldene
Seltone
Sildene

In a translation was found a description of Bakewell.

Bakewell - Manor - with 8 berewicks - 18 carucates of land
to be taxed.

Now, King has in demesne seven ploughs, 33 villanes, 9 bordars.
2 priests and a church, under them 2 villanes, 5 bordars, 11 ploughs
1 knight having 15 acres of land and 2 bordars
1 lead mine 80 acres of meadow.
 Hadune (Haddon)

Aiffeford (Ashford) Scelhadun (Sheldon)

In the "Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names by Eilbut Ekwall is found:

Devonshire In Domesday Book it is Sildene
 In the Cartulary of Buckland Priory in 1185 it was Schildene
 In Old English it was Scylfdenu or Valley of Steep sides.

Derbyshire In Domesday Book it was Scelhadun
 In the Pipe Rolls of 1230 it was Schelehaddon
 The place is near Haddon
 In Middle English Sheldon consists of Schele - shed or hut
 and Haddon - with a shed or sheds.

Warwickshire In Pipe Rolls of 1190 it was Scheldon
 In Book of Fees of 1236 it was Sheldon
 Old English - Scylfdun - hill with a scylf or flat top

Bedfordshire In Domesday Book it was Eseltone
 In Feet of Fines 11 97 it was Sheltone
 In Assice Rolls in 1276 it was Schylton

Norfolkshire In Domesday Book it was Sceltuna
 In Assice Roll of 1203 it was Sceltun

Nottinghamshire In Domesday Book it was Sceltun
 In temp. John in Index to the Charters of Rolls in the
 British Museum, London, it was Scelton

Shropshire In Domesday Book it was Scelfitone
 In Eyton's Shropshire 1221 it was Shelfton (Shelston)

Staffordshire In Domesday Book it was Scelfitone
 In Pipe Rolls for 1190 it was Schelton
 Old English - Scyifton - tun on a bank or ledge.

As time went on the name continued to change its spelling. Often a father and all his sons spelt the name differently. Nicholas and Peter de Shelldonne had a brother Ralph Sheldon, who had sons:

1. Ralph de Schelton, from whom descended Anslem de Sheldon of Warwick.
2. Sir Henry Sheldon, who in 1316 held "Sheldon Hall".
3. Sir Robert, who was called to Parliament as Sir Robert de Carleton, and his son was called to Parliament as Sir Alan de Cherletone and two generations later it becomes Charlton. Another of Sir Robert's sons is Sir John Skelton And another is Nicholas Sheldon of Derbyshire.

Again, Sir John Shelton, 6th Lord of Powys, was called to Parliament as Sir John de Charletone

His son was de Cheritone

His grandson was Charlton

Many of these appear in county records of Oxford and Cambridge as Carleton and later as Skelton.

Thus over the course of years we find the following spellings:

Scheldon	Schelton	Schylton	
Skeldon	Skelton	Skylton	
		Skilton	
Sheldon	Shelton	Shildon	
Shelden		Shilton	
Sheldin		Shilston	
		Shilldin	
Shellden			Shalden
			Shalton
			Shabdon
Shelling	Shenton		
Shelding	Sherton		
	Selton		Snelson
	Sealton		Snelston

Still farther afield in spelling is this list of vast changes, which seem unbelievable but true.

Felton	Chilton	Chariton	Carelton
Melton	Chelton	Carleton	Charleton
Helton	Chilston	Carlton	Cherlton
Yelton			de Cherleton

"In England, in the earlier centuries, the history and people were too well known to cause confusion, and the spellings were used interchangeably." according to the "Gentleman's Magazine"

Most of the records of the Shrewsbury family, Shropshire, are spelled Charlton or Carleton. Yet, the old oak there is called the "Sheldon Oak". (Story of it is found under Anecdotes.)

John of Rye on records appears as Sheldon, Shelton, Charleton or Chilton.

Christopher Selton's son was baptized Aug. 7, 1635 as Thomas Shelton.

On May 6, 1622 William Shlton was married to Blelizabet Fbonne.
(no e used)

The names Shelton, Skeldon and Skelton were pronounced so nearly the same that the name would be written interchangeably by the same person or by different persons at different times. The counties in which all three spellings

are found are of such close proximity they must be of the same stock and therefore are all patronymics.

As many of the records in the next period are in Latin, it accounts for the use of D and T interchangeably in the name. When you consider the lack of education even of the cleric in those days it is very easy to understand that it would be written as it sounded. Enunciation was probably no better then than today, so different ones speaking the names would make them sound sometimes like a "d" and at other times like a "t", as both letters are made with the same articulate organs.

Reading matter will be about Sheldons or Sheltons and in the footnotes which refer to the court records it will be called in each case just the reverse. Again in one sentence it has the "t" and in the next sentence it uses the "d". Sometimes, I fear, it is whichever the writer wants to make it, in order to get a lineage. In one of the Shelton Genealogies it speaks of early Scelfitone, co. Stafford, as later called Shelton. But in all records and later maps it is Sheldon. In another Shelton Genealogy, the author claims not to be able to get a straight Shelton lineage and finds the missing links on the Sheldon Family tree and proceeds to spell all the Sheldons Shelton claiming they were really Sheltons. Some day it is hoped that the first of the clan will be located. Then, we will know what the true spelling really should be and from what spelling we all really descended. Perhaps all the Sheltons are in reality Sheldons. Further searching may reveal the truth.

The following shows how it jumps from one spelling to another.

John de Schelton, Knight of the Shire of Cumberland in 1318
↓
Adam Skelton
↓
Adam Skelton, Proctor of Cambridge
↓
Anslem de Sheldon of Sheldon Hall, Warwickshire
↓
Henry de Sheldon
↓
Sir Nicholas de Sheldon
↓
Henry de Shelton, b. 1443

Records in Oxford and Cambridge University verify this interchange in spellings of the name in the same family. (The Salem Story will verify this)

Skelton is explained thus: In Cumberland records it is spelt Schelton. The "c" having been dropped and the old English "h" being formed in such a way that it looks like our "k", it became Skelton. The old English "h" was written with a hook that made it look like our present "k". When you look at the signature of Ralph Sheldon you will find the "h" in the first and last names are written alike, as if it were Ralph Skeldon. The last letter of Ralph can not be k. Therefore the second letter of his last name must be an "h" or Sheldon not Skeldon. That is the signature of the famous Ralph Sheldon of tapestry fame in Beoley. Yet, some claim him to be Ralph Shelton.

One lineage writer of a family genealogy claims that Sir John Sketon married Ann Boleyn. In the Sheltons of Norfolk and Suffolk, it is Sir John Shelton who married Lady Ann Boleyn, whose brother was the father of Queen Ann, second wife of Henry VIII. It was to this Lady Sheldon and her husband Sir John that Elizabeth, later Queen Elizabeth, fled when so persecuted during her half sister, Queen Mary's reign.

Now, believe it or not. We came on the Mayflower under the spelling of Chilton. Yes! Sheldons may even lay claim to being on the Mayflower by the spelling of Chilton. That "faire maide", Mary Chilton was the first woman to leap on the rock at Plymouth. Her father, James Chilton and also her mother died in the first sickness.

On the Ship Anne in 1623 came Mrs. Hilton, wife of William, with William Jr. and Mary. Far fetched? Yes! Maybe! But if you had searched the records as I have it would not seem so. As one lovely lady in the west remarked, Our family "were all well educated people and I never could understand why the name was spelt Chilton and pronounced Shelton."

So we find the branches of the family hanging on many another's Tree. That brings us to the American records.

The American Sheldons

In conversation with many people at different times, it seems to be their conviction that if the name is not spelt Sheldon, that they do not belong to the Sheldon lines. So may I quote from other sources on the question.

"Do not imagine that it was always spelled as it is now. A few hundred years ago but few people could read and write, and members of the family, most of them, did not know how to spell their own name. Thus the name was spelled the way the minister or the lawyer or the landlord thought it should be spelled. It might be spelled one way in the church record. Another way in a deed and still another way in a will."

From The Handy Book of Genealogists

In the History of Lynn: "Of all residents of Lynn, from the time the Plantation began, 1629, to the year 1700, most names were spelled in different ways. I have seen in the same deposition the same name spelled in as many as five different ways."

Dr. Gilbert Doane in his excellent book of aid to genealogists states: "The early census takers were marvels, when it came to spelling, for in the first census, in 1790, we find the surname Reynolds spelt in 34 different ways, ranging from Ranals thru Renholds, Reynull, and a few other spellings to Runnels and Ry-nolds. They managed to spell even Brown in 7 ways: Bronn, Broons, Broun, Broune, Brown, Browne and Brownes."

Another example of such spellings is found in the Vermont State Capital: "Remember also that names are spelled as they sound to the enumerator. A simple name like Barnard is shown as: Bernard, Barnard, Barnhard, Barnot, Barnhart, Bunnard, Barnerd, Bonnod."

Did you ever try to write the English language as it sounds? That is the way the early recorders of Vital Statistics had to do. It is not much wonder the names were spelt in so many different ways. Some people clip their words, others drag out their words, others have a pinched speech, rasping tone, etc. All of which changes the sound of the same words and names.

Then, too, in early days children were not by law required to go to school through High School. Many only went to 1, 2, or perhaps 3, or 4 grades, just enough to learn to write their letters and read simple words. When in later years they started to write a letter they put the words down as they sounded to them. Ever read any of those old letters? Take the simple word of Pumpkin, for instance. Do you very often hear the sound of m and p? More often it is pun'kin. Then take the words that are sounded alike but spelt differently. And of course the parents did not have the advantage of any schooling and could not even write their own name. Many deeds are signed with an X for their mark. Occasionally you will see an attempt at just the initials, as in William Sheldon's deed. W S is made very awkwardly.

Let us go back now to the first Sheldons in America and to that questionable Isaac. Here is another surprise. In deeds in Windsor, Conn. the name is spelt Shelding. In #5 Isaac's will it is Sheldin. In 1650 he was spelling it Shelling. If we accept Isaac as a Sheldon with those spellings, we will have to accept other spellings.

Take another first Sheldon in America — Godfrey. He signed his will as Godfrey Shellden. In the will of his son, William, whose wife was Robackah, it was headed "The Will of William Shelding" and signed Shildon. His son, Ephraim, was Shelling and his children were recorded as Shalden. In a deed, it began: "We, Ephraim and Jane Shelden" and was signed Shelding. In another deed by the same Ephraim, it started, "I, Ephraim Shelding." Their son, William, if we find him to be their son, was recorded in his marriage record in three different towns as William Shelton, who married Mary Robarts. The births of three of their children are recorded as Shelton, and two as Shelden. His grand-son, Samuel in his marriage to Sarah Wellman was Shelden, yet his children are all Sheldon.

Another first is John. In his marriage intentions it is John Shilden, and a duplicate record is John Sheldon. His son John, Jr. when married is Shildon, but his first child, a daughter, Mary, was Sheldon.

Another first in America — but that will be told in the Salem Story.

So in our own Sheldon family in America we find the first Sheldons spelling their name in several different ways.

For all doubting Thomases, like myself, who believed the name to be spelt only as Sheldon, this chapter has been written to give the proof found which convinced me of the various spellings. It is, I realize, rather drawn out and perhaps in places became monotonous, but it was all included for others to see what has been found on the subject. In closing this chapter, perhaps all will agree

That whatever we find the spelling to be,
It all boils down to one and the same family.

To paraphrase Shakespeare, who spelt his name 17 ways,

A rose by any other spelling
Would be the same.

5 Isaac Controversy

The identity of the first Isaac Sheldon in America has been a stumbling-block to all Sheldon genealogists and still is. Many discussions have been had, articles written and solutions offered, and this will not be the last one. The main objective of this presentation is to bring together some of the material written on the subject for easier consideration.

It is not the purpose of this discussion to treat disparagingly any past attempts to prove the English ancestry of some of the first Sheldons in America, but to record only the facts found and then to set forth the reasoning from said facts against the lineage conclusions drawn through supposition by others. I do not wish to criticize unjustly, or to appear to treat with contempt or depreciate past efforts or belittle in any way what has previously been done to try to prove our English ancestry. They sincerely tried, as I am trying to do, to bridge the gap between England and America and connect the known Sheldons of this country to some Sheldon family or families in England.

From what I can find, I feel sure that the three brother story eventually can be proven and that the "Phantom Isaac" really did exist. Search, so far, for the English ancestors of Isaac Sheldon has proved fruitless, though given time the correct facts will be found as many facts point that way. However, sufficient evidence has been found to prove J. Gardner Bartlett's Derbyshire Isaac ancestry not to be that of our American Isaac, and that others may have the facts to use in their search the following is submitted for their consideration and basis for further search.

In J. Gardner Bartlett's exposition establishing Isaac as the son of Ralph and he the son of Arthur he uses the following 14 words of supposition:

apparently	without a doubt	supposed date of birth
probable	seems likely	any reasonable doubt
evidently	it is apparent	probably if
presumably	were doubtless	seems probable

At no time throughout his discussion can he substantiate his facts with proof, except evidence that the particular fact is in a certain record, but with no conclusive proof that he is #5 Isaac of Windsor, Conn. and Northampton, Mass.

He also leaves a loop-hole in two places. On page 3 — His search in English records "revealed an Isaac Sheldon", not the. Again he concludes that Ralph Sheldon the supposed father of our #5 Isaac, was not in England at the time of the 1663 Hearth Tax, as he is not listed in his native county. County, mind you. Of course, he might have been in another of the 38 counties in England, but Ralph was the most used name in the Sheldon family, and certainly would have been hard to locate that Ralph elsewhere. In fact, there were enough Ralphys, if all put together, to have sunk that ship he was supposed to have sailed on. So, for convenience sake to establish the parentage of our Isaac, J.G.B. didn't locate that Ralph, (son of Arthur, as he claims, and father of our Isaac) who married Barbara Stone, for if he had found him in another county he would have had no lineage. That is being rather tough on J.G.B., but I have found other Isaac Sheldons in England in the early 1600s, so that Isaac of Ashford has only a chance with the others of being the right one. J.G.B. didn't find a license to get Isaac to America after 1651 and as he would have been over 20 years of age, he would have needed one, unless he came on one of the Sheldon ships or worked his passage. Isaac is not a common name in the family, in fact, very rare, but there are others. Their lineage remains to be traced, and that will need be done in England.

For the sake of record, that the reader of this treatise may have the points of discussion, I'll quote from J. Gardner Bartlett, George Sheldon, and also from Holmes' Genealogy of the Stevens-Miller Family, and those questioned Windsor deeds.

P. 3 "Extensive researches revealed an Isaac Sheldon of the parish of Bakewell in Derbyscire, who seems, beyond any reasonable doubt, to have been identical with the New England immigrant of that name. The results of these investigations are herewith presented, and disclose the probable English ancestry of Isaac Sheldon of Windsor and Northampton, the founder of the principal Sheldon family in North America."

P. 4 "The Sheldon family from which it is probable that Isaac Sheldon, the immigrant settler at Windsor, Conn., and at Northampton, Mass., was descended, is found at Monyash, in Bakewell, co. Derby, as early as the 14th century. - - - - Carry down the line of descent to the Isaac Sheldon, of the tenth generation, who was probably identical with the New England immigrant of that name."

P. 14 "Will of Arthur Sheldon of Ashford, co. Derby, yeoman, weak in body, dated 10 June 1651. To be buried in the chapel of Ashford, near William Lowe his seat there. To my son Ralph Sheldon, 2s.6d. and to his wife, Barbara, 2s.6d. My grandchild Isaac Sheldon $\frac{1}{8}$. To (grandson) Samuell Sheldon $\frac{1}{4}$. My grandson Solomon Sheldon is to be kept one and one-half years with meat and drink after my decease, at the cost of my executor. To my grandsons William, Thomas and John Wright 5s each. To (daughter) Anne White, wife of Ralph White of Sheldon $\frac{1}{2}$ 20. All the residue of my goods to (daughter) Elizabeth Lowe, wife of William Lowe of Ashford, and she to be sole executrix."

P. 20 Ralph Sheldon - son of Arthur. "The earliest mention made of him is the record of his marriage to Barbara Stone, 27 Apr. 1629 at Bakewell."

"On Jan. 10, 1650/1 a license was issued to Ralph Sheldon to pass beyond the seas. (State papers, Interregnum, Licenses to Leave the Country 1650-1653, 1-111, fo. 17, in the Public Record Office, London). The last mention found of him is in a will of his father, dated 10 June 1651, in which he and his wife, Barbara, were given legacies of 2s, 6d. each. This will also provides for three grandchildren, Isaac, Samuel, and Solomon Sheldon, apparently children of Ralph Sheldon, and gives the bulk of his estate to two daughters, making one of them sole executrix. From the terms of this will and the issue of the imigration license it seems likely that Ralph Sheldon had already received his share of the paternal estate, and, therefore, he and his wife were given merely nominal bequests, and that he had emigrated from England in the spring of 1651, leaving temporarily his three sons in the care of their grandfather, until he should send for them. In the emigration licenses at that period a destination on the Continent of Europe, such as Spain, France, Holland, etc. is thus specified, while the term "beyond the Seas" generally refers to America. If Ralph Sheldon started in the spring of 1651 for New England, it is probable that he never arrived there, but either died on the voyage or was lost at sea; at least no mention has been found of him in New England nor did he return to Derbyshire, for his name does not appear on the rolls of the hearth tax for that county in 1663, in which every householder is named. It therefore seems probable that Ralph Sheldon died at sea in 1651. As the registers of Ashford before 1687 are missing the records of the baptisms of the children of Ralph and Barbara Sheldon are probably lost; but they were doubtless the parents of the 3 Sheldon children who were named as grandsons in the will of Arthur Sheldon."

P. 21 #17 Isaac¹⁰ Sheldon was born probably at Ashford, in the parish of Bakewell, co. Derby, presumably late in 1629 or early in 1630, his parents having been married on 27 Apr. 1629. As the registers of Ashford before 1687 are lost, the record of his baptism has not been found; but he was evidently the eldest child of his parents, and, as his younger brothers, Samuel and Solomon Sheldon married in 1656 and 1657 respectively, it is apparent that he was born as early as 1630. By the will of his grandfather, Arthur Sheldon, dated 10 June 1651, he was to receive a legacy of $\frac{1}{8}$ and this provision in his grandfather's will is the only record of him that has been found in England. In 1663 a hearth tax was assessed on every fireplace in England; the rolls of this tax for Derbyshire are preserved at the Public Record Office in London and give the name of every householder in the county, with the number of

* Genealogy of the Stevens-Miller Family as found in
Ancestry of Colonel John Harrington Stevens
and his wife Frances Helen Miller
compiled for
Helen Pendleton (Winston) Pillsbury
by
Mary Lovering Holman, F.A.S.G.

Published by Rumford Press, Concord, N.H. 1948
Permission granted by Winifred Lovering Holman
daughter of the compiler,
who edited and published the book.

hearths in each house. While the names of his brothers, Samuel and Solomon Sheldon appear in these rolls in 1653 as living in Ashover, co. Derby, no trace of this Isaac Sheldon is found in them, and presumably he was not living in his native county. What had become of him between 10 June 1651 and 1653? It is probable, beyond any reasonable doubt, that he was identical with the Isaac Sheldon who, as "Isaak Shelding, Senr.," deposed at Northampton, Mass., 29 Apr. 1679. "aged 50 years or thereabouts", regarding property there of Thomas Mason, and who first appears in New England records on 13 Sept. 1652. when at a meeting of the townsmen (or select men) of Windsor, Conn. the following order was passed:

'It is assented y^t Isaackes Sheldon and Samuell Rockwell shall keepe house together in ye house y^t is Isaackes, so (long) they cary themselves soberly and doe not intertayne Idel persones to ye evell Expenc of time by night or daye.'

(Windsor, Conn., Town Acts, 1650-1714, fo. 11)

"Isaac Sheldon of Windsor, Conn. and of Northampton, Mass., was born about 1629 a date which agrees with the supposed date of the birth of Isaac Sheldon, son of Ralph and Barbara (Stone) Sheldon of Ashford, in the parish of Bakewell, co. Derby, England, and died at Northampton, Mass., 27 July 1708, aged 78 years."

End of quote.

Next we will see what Holman in the Genealogy of the Stevens-Miller family has to say about the above in connection with their Sheldon Line.

Referring first to the facts in the New England Register on the Sheldon family of Derbyshire by J. Gardner Bartlett, is added:

"That there was an Isaac in this family, who presumably was born the same time as the immigrant, is undoubted, but there seems little evidence that they are identical. This account credits him as the supposed son of a Ralph Sheldon and the grandson of an Arthur Sheldon.

"In his record, Mr. Bartlett finding a license to 'pass beyond the seas' issued to a Ralph Sheldon, 10 Jan. 1650-51, assumes the latter to be the son of Arthur, named in the latter's will of 10 June 1651, and since no further record of him has been found suggests that he died on the voyage.

"Against this theory is the fact that although our Isaac had 8 sons and 6 daughters, not one of them bears the name of his supposed father, mother, or grandfather. Isaac's eldest child, Mary, was undoubtedly named for his wife, and her mother; his eldest son, Isaac, for himself; the 2nd son, John, was not named for any member of his wife's family; the 3rd son, Thomas, was named for his wife's father. The only name in all 14 children that also appears in the English family is that of Samuel. The prominent names in the English tribe were Arthur, Hugs, George, Richard, and Ralph and the latter's wife was named Barbara."

"There is so little evidence that these Isaac's are the same man that the supposed English Ancestry is omitted from this account."

End of Quote.

Note that J.G.B. could not find any record of Isaac's birth or baptism to ~~know~~ the date he was born, and that the only mention of him is in his grandfather's will.

In the will, under date of 10 June 1651, of that Arthur Sheldon of Ashford, in Bakewell, co. Derby, he leaves his "grandchild Isaac, £ 8." Note he is called a child. The other two are called grandsons, which would infer that Isaac was much younger than the other two, which would not make him born in 1629. If younger, maybe the grandfather's favorite and thus he received a larger portion. Furthermore, the will was not proved until 20 May 1653 for Isaac to receive his inheritance, yet our Isaac was in Windsor, Conn. as of record 13 Sept. 1652. And how far would £ 8 go even in those days, after paying his passage and living in New England until established, to buy all the property recorded against his name in Windsor on that questionable date of Jan. 11, 1640, which the venerable historian, George Sheldon, of Deerfield, Mass., claims was bought at a later date. Yet, even he agrees to that by saying:

"Young Isaac probably had some backers at the outset, for it is hardly probable he could have accumulated his large estate unaided at 21 years."

But to quote from George Sheldon's "History of Deerfield":

"Sheldon, Isaac, of Dorchester 1634; rem. with part of the congregation of Rev. John Warham in Sept 1635, to found a plantation at Windsor, Conn. I copy from the original record at Windsor that: Isaac Sheldon owned there Jan. 10, 1640 a home lot of 3 acres, with house, barn and orchard "purchased of John Stiles;" another lot of 3 acres, "purchased of Richard Samwas," and another lot "purchased of Thomas Parsons." One of lots was bounded on two sides by "his own land;" which may have been given him in the original distribution. But these four lots were not original assignments, but were obtained by purchase.

"These particulars are given as evidence in a disputed case, and to prove that Isaac Sheldon was of full business age at this time. Some genealogists insist that this Isaac Sheldon was the same man who testified before a court in Northampton Mar. 25, 1679, that he was "about 50 yrs. old." If this be true, then he was but six when he went to Windsor, and but 11 when he held four pieces of real estate by purchase, and doubtless a large area by assignment. It is true that land was sometimes given to minors in the original division of plantations, but who ever heard of a boy of 11 buying house lots and meadow land? While being satisfied that Isaac of Windsor was of age, I can give no further account of him or his family. I assume that the Isaac of Northampton was his son, because in 1652 he is found in possession of this land in Windsor. Not unlikely Isaac had other sons and went away to live with them; am still (1886) engaged with H.S. Sheldon of West Suffield, Ct., in an exhaustive search for the original Simon pure Isaac."

"I choose to let the above stand as printed in 1886 as explanatory, and to prevent subsequent confusion; since 1886 it has been shown that the entries at Windsor given above as being headed, "Jan. 10, 1640," were really made at a later date to utilize a blank page; with this fact established, all evidence of the above Isaac disappears. Isaac (1) is the true head of this Sheldon family."

End of quote.

Well, I had to be proven, so I went to Windsor to see the originals and found them in the State Library at Hartford, Conn. There were 11 pages (p. 33, back of 36 to 44) each dated at the top Jan. 11, 1640. George Sheldon and others state Jan. 10th but it is really the 11th on the original book. The page on which Isaac Sheldon's transactions were recorded, was in the middle of those 11 pages on p. 40. After careful and lengthy examination of the 10 pages with the page of Isaac Sheldon's I asked a genealogist in the room at the time and the gracious librarian and we all three agreed that the date Jan. 11, 1640 should stand for the following reasons:

The ink was the same color.

The thickness of the quill pen used was the same.

The style of handwriting was the same - capitals and small letters.

The slant of the letters, and the size of the letters was the same.

The recorder of the later date had a different style, different slant, different size and form of letters, different thickness of pen, and different color of ink.

True, the recorders had gone back and utilized blank spaces at the bottom of the pages, in fact they not only went back once, but again the second time, making three entries to some pages. However, in once going back, the ink for a time was green, and in each case the size and style of writing was a distinct contrast from the early writing. One was smaller, in fact very tiny writing, and the other was much larger. So that page could not have been written in at a later date. It was done on Jan. 11, 1640 to the first Isaac Sheldon.

To their next point of argument. I, too, found the order, used by all to prove their arguments, passed at a meeting by the townsmen on Sept. 13, 1652 to allow Isaac Sheldon and Samuel Rockwell to keep house, as quoted above. But all failed to find, or at least mention in their arguments, a previous ruling on single men not being allowed in town over night.

Quote of date 1637. "The forefathers enacted: 'No master of a family shall give habitation or entertainment to any young man to sojourn in his family, but by the allowance of the inhabitants of the said town where he dwells, under the penalty of 20 shillings per week.'"

I wondered at such a ruling, until I found that a ship of prisoners were brought over and those jail-birds and vandils had been let loose in New England to rob, plunder, molest and attack the settlers. Then I could understand the law and the reason for its being made.

With that official order how could Isaac arrive in Windsor as late as 1652 and be allowed to stay in the town long enough for the townsfolk to establish his character and worthiness and to buy property and to secure permission to keep house. That would seem to point to the fact that he had lived in the town for some years — at least prior to the ruling of 1637. In other words he had grown up in Windsor.

To return to the deed proceedings! In one deed the land on two sides was bounded by his own land. When did he acquire that land? It can not be found because the first book of records did not begin until Oct. 15, 1640, *(Note below) and even then not all were recorded as in Oct. 1660 it was necessary to pass the following ruling:

"To prevent trouble and differences in time to come for not recording some exchange made of lands in times past", etc.

Evidently, trouble had arisen over ownership, boundaries, grants, etc. or it would not have been necessary to make such a ruling; and Isaac's deeds were among the missing. There had been no record kept of the grants of land to the holders during the first five years. Thus, Isaac Sheldon, the father of #5 Isaac, could have received a grant during that time which passed to his son when he became of age, which he did in 1650/1.

* Note!

Old Calendar — March was the first month.

In fact the year began on March 25th.

First entry in the Windsor Book of Record was Nov. 16, 1640
(old calendar)

Goes then to

Oct. 15, 1640
Oct. 10, 1640
Nov. 28, 1640
Oct. 28, 1640
Dec. 1, 1640
Dec. 25, 1640
Jan. 11, 1640
Feb. 2, 1640
Feb. 28, 1640
Aug. 30, 1641

{ Can not account for this going
back on dates. It seems strange
but it is true.

That the readers may have the Windsor record of the Isaac Sheldon deeds for their own study and consideration, they are quoted on the following page.

The land transactions in question are, as taken from the original book:

January 11, 1640

Isaac Sheldon hath by purchase of Richard Samways that was of Samuel Gaylords two acres of meadow, in breadth three rod and seventeen foot more or less, as it lyes bounded North by John Haes south by William Hannum east by the Great River west by the Water Corce, near the foot of the bank of the home Lotts.

Also purchased of Thomas Parsons two acres more or less as it lies bounded south twenty rod in length by Peter Tilton and Widow Gibbs also east by Peter Tilton nine rod one Quarter and likewise east by that which was William Rockwells, fifteen rods three quarters north by Joseph Clark twenty-four rod and ends at a point in the swamp west it bounden by a way that divides it and Abraham Bandal and Anthony Hawkins.

Also by purchase of Samuel Rockwell one parcel of land lying in the west side of the street being in breadth eight rod five foot and the length from the street to the west to his own land in quantity two acres and helfe more or less bounded north by the land of Susannah Grant south by Peter Tilton and his own land.

Also purchased of John Styles a dwelling house barnes orchard and home lot, being three acres more or less in breadth four rod, in length, a hundred and eighteen rods bounded by the land of Richard Olday north by the land of Robert Watson south.

- - - - -

In the first item it speaks of the home Lotts. Could these not have been the lots in the first grant (not recorded) where the family was living in 1640. It also speaks of being bounded "east by the Great River". The early assignments all bounded the river. Later ones did not.

In the 2nd item — quote: "east by that which was William Rockwells". Now William Rockwell died in 1640 and probably no settlement had been made at the time of this transaction, Jan. 11, 1640, so they could not use the name of the new owner. Certainly by 1652, the later date on which George Sheldon claims the lots were bought, they would not have referred to land owned by a man who died 12 years previously, but would have bounded it by the present owner. In 1640, it was the only way it could be written.

In the 3rd item — "south by Peter Tilton and his own land." Now Peter Tilton was one of the first in Dorchester to be a freeman and went with the great remove to Windsor in 1635/6. The land bordering Peter Tilton's was probably assigned to a first settler at about the same time that all lands were distributed and Peter Tilton and others received their grants. Isaac was probably one of the first settlers who received his grant at the same time Peter Tilton and others received their grants. It was to this grant that the newly acquired lot was bounded "by his own land".

Unfortunately, the 4th piece does not give the east and west boundaries. Being a dwelling house, it would be on the one street either east or west side. If on the east side, it would be on the river east and the street west. If on the west side of the street, the east boundary would be the street, and the west boundary on land not yet assigned in year 1640, which would have been assigned by the date of 1652. It might possibly be across the street from the lot in item one bounded "east by the Great River."

Those are the facts as found. Weigh them in your own scale of balance, and see what you come up with, but before you jump at a conclusion wait and read the next chapter on #1 Isaac. Then, see if you don't agree that

#5 Isaac is the son of not Ralph but of the first Isaac.

1 Isaac Riddle

What of #1 Isaac — often referred to as the "Phantom Isaac". Was he a Ghost of the Past, or did he really exist?

Material such as that found on the following pages leads me to believe that there must be some truth in all the references which point to the fact that there was a first Isaac Sheldon, else there would not have been so many early records, genealogical accounts and biographies written by many different people living in so many different sections of New England about the descendants of that first Isaac. The descendants couldn't all have been wrong in relating to the writers their ancestral background. There is never any smoke without some fire, and I don't believe they all made up that #1 Isaac for convenience sake to get a first Sheldon immigrant when more easily they could have used #5 Isaac. Why should we of later generations come along and say they did not know what they were talking about and that their first ancestor was not #1 Isaac, until we have found positive proof of #5 Isaac's English lineage.

Some of the following quotes have been conceded, by present day searchers for facts, not to be correct authorities because it has been proven that they made a few mistakes. We better not throw stones at glass houses. We all make mistakes. There is no genealogy printed that doesn't have some mistakes. The only person who makes no mistakes is the person who never does anything. They accumulated their facts the same as we are doing and from what they found they drew their conclusions. And they may have found in their search the true facts. I don't believe they made up the facts out of thin air. They may be more right than we think. So let us give each of the following quotes a just and equal judgment in our analysis of the facts found.

Even Vital Records are not all correct. An elderly man told me he was one of three boys born in his town in one winter. When the doctor got around to have them recorded in the town clerks office, he had forgotten the correct dates and gave them all the same birth date and not one of them was born on that date.

A professional genealogist discovered that some early records were often made when the members of a community were all assembled for a town meeting, a church meeting, a court session, or some such gathering, and the town recorder would say, come on let's get your family's birth, marriage and death records. Perhaps father could remember, perhaps not. Maybe Mary was born in May, maybe in June. Maybe it wasn't Mary, maybe it was Becky and Mary was born a year after or a year before. That explains why in searching through many town record books, in some towns all of one family are recorded together, while in other towns they are recorded chronologically by year and month. I had come to the same conclusion in regard to the recording of land records, or else transactions were all made on a town meeting day. Otherwise, there would not have been 11 pages of land transfers and sales on that questionable date of January 11, 1640 in Windsor, Conn.

With these comments in mind, let us now turn for consideration to the material found on #1 Isaac.

QUOTES on the FIRST ISAAC

"Isaac Sheldon, the American progenitor, born in England in 1629, son of Isaac Sheldon, Sr. and born at Essex near London. He took passage for the New England Colonies from the port of Plymouth."

"Isaac Sheldon, son of Isaac Sr., was born at Essex, near London."

Historic Families of America by Spooner
pub. by The Historic Families Publishing Association

"Sheldon, Isaac (son of Isaac Sheldon), b. England 1627
Came to Windsor, Conn. Then settled Northampton, Mass.

History of Ancestral Heads of New England Families
1620 - 1700 by Holmes

"Sheldon, Ebenezer. 4 Lieut, (John³, whose family was captured by the Indians from Deerfield,) Isaac², Isaac¹, one of the 3 brothers who came to this country about 1626.

History of Barnardston, Mass. by Kellogg
In giving this history the information was gathered from the families in the town whose ancestors had settled there in early days.

"Mindwell Sheldon (who married Capt. Moses Lyman) was daughter of Isaac Sheldon, Jr. of Northampton.
Isaac Sheldon, Jr. was son of Isaac Sheldon of Windsor, Conn. and Mary Woodford.
Isaac Sheldon of Windsor was son of Isaac Sheldon of Dorchester, Mass., the settler.

Strong Genealogy p. 1161

Isaac Sheldon (1) was the great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather of John A. Sheldon, came from Dorchester, (co. Dorset) England in 1634 and settled in Windsor, Conn. Isaac (2) Sheldon, son of Isaac (1), was born in England in 1629, coming with his father to Windsor, Conn.

Genealogical History of the State of Vermont
by Hon. Hiram Carleton

Checking the lineage of this family, the sixth great grand-father had to be #1 Isaac.

"Sheldon, Isaac, Dorchester, 1634, removed to Windsor as early as 1640 and perhaps to Northampton. The one at Northampton had 15 children.

Genealogical Register of the First Settlers of
New England by John Farmer

Note the subtle distinction between the Isaac of Northampton from the Isaac of Dorchester 1634.

"In 16__ three brothers named Isaac, John and William Sheldon, came from the town of Sheldon in Devon County, not far from the port of Weymouth in the south of England, and settled in Dorchester, near Boston, Mass., U.S.A. From them descended the families in America.

From notes found in my Grand-parent's Family Bible.
Family Bible of Charles Chapman Sheldon, E. Highgate, Vt.

Parkhurst Pedigree — Under 'Marriages' — in the middle of the list is found: Isaac Sheldon. Again near the end of the list is another Isaac Sheldon.

Lineage: 1 - Isaac Sheldon
2 - Isaac Sheldon of Windsor, Conn. and mar. Mary Woodford
3 - Ruth Sheldon, b. Aug. 27, 1663 - m. Joseph Wright

Sheldon Manuscript 32101 - Conn. Hist. Library

"William, b. 1597 (m. abt. 1618 Mary Clarke)
with his brothers Isaac and John arrived at Dorchester, Mass. on the vessel, Mary and John, May 1630.

Had children: John, m. abt. 1660 Sarah _____
had John, Jr. of So. Kings Town, R.I.
m. Sarah Sherman

William
And Others

The Rosier - Rosebush Family
by Waldo E. Rosebush

"Isaac Sheldon (1) came from England with Rev. Ephraim Hewitt of Windsor, 1639
d. July 27, 1708 aged abt. 79.

Judd Manuscript
Bought by and pub. by James Russell Trumbull

That would make him 10 years old when he came from England.

"Isaac Sheldon, the first of the name in America came from Weymouth, England
and is found at Windsor, Conn. in 1652.

Morton Ancestry by Josiah Granville Leach

"Isaac Sheldon, son of Isaac, b. 1629 came from Dorchester, England
to Plymouth, Mass.

"Isaac Sheldon, b. 1620 or 1628, came with his father Isaac from Dorchester, Eng.
to Plymouth, Mass. in 1634.

"Isaac Sheldon came from Dorchester to Plymouth, Mass., wife unknown,
with ch: John, Isaac and think a George.
John Sheldon to R.I. brother of Isaac of Northampton.

Vermont - Once No Man's Land
by Merritt C. Barden

"Sheldons came from Essex, co. England"

Collections of Maine Historical Society

"Isaac Sheldon was in Dorchester, Mass. in 1634. He removed to Windsor, Conn. in 1640."

History of Dorchester — Chapter VIII
by a Committee of the Dorchester Antiquarian
and Historical Society.

Chap 8 gives 8 pages of approx. 40 names of "people who were known to have been in Dorchester, but about whom little is known. Many of these removed to Windsor, Conn."

Top of page 93 is the above quote on Isaac Sheldon.

"Isaac Sheldon, founder in England, of the Sheldon family to which the branches of Conn. and Rhode Island trace their ancestry, was born and died in England. He had 2 sons:

1. Isaac - b. England 1627 (gives account)
2. John - b. 1630 d. 1708

Became the progenitor of the R. I. branch.

American Families — Genealogical and Heraldic
Wm. Richard Cutter

"Isaac Sheldon, a member of the congregation but not of the church went from Dorchester to Windsor with the great remove in 1635-36. Young Isaac probably had some backers at the outset, for it is hardly probable he could have accumulated his large estate unaided at 21 years.

History of Deerfield
by George Sheldon

"John Sheldon came from Warwickshire, Eng. with his brothers William and Isaac. They had some one in England who had plenty of money and bought land for them in New England.

Isaac (1) Sheldon (Dorchester, Mass.)
m. _____ ch. John (2) Billerica
Isaac (2) Windsor
1654

"The Sheldon Family is one of the oldest in the State, and descended from a Colonial family of English origin, that came from that part of the county of Essex nearest London.

Biographical Record of Hartford County, Conn.

"The Sheldon Line (1) Isaac Sheldon, English progenitor of the American family, had sons: John, born 1630, died 1708, settled in Providence.

and Isaac, mentioned below.

(2) Isaac (2) son of Isaac (1) Sheldon, was born in England in 1627, died at Windsor, Conn. July 27, 1708. He settled in Windsor and Northampton.

Genealogical and Family History
of the State of Connecticut
by Wm. Cutter

"Three brothers, Isaac, John and William, emigrated to America very soon after the Pilgrims — precisely what year cannot be ascertained; but Isaac, the elder, had 2 sons, John and Isaac. The latter born in 1629, a little more than eight years after the arrival of the Mayflower.

Hemenway - Vol. I

Mrs. Hemenway went to the towns and found some one in the town who knew its history and people to write up the account of their town. They did not have access to printed material in some historical library, neither did they take a trip to find out. They wrote what they knew and what the natives told them about their families. The man who wrote for my town died long before I was born, but I've often heard tell of him, so I know whereof I speak. The data used in the account of Sheldon, Vt., from which the above was taken was written from what the people living there knew which had been handed down to them from the pioneer, Col. Elisha Sheldon, and his family about his ancestors from Northampton and the three brothers.

Gives line of descent back to:

Isaac Sheldon of Windsor, Ct., b. 1629, d. July 29, 1703

Came from Weymouth, Eng. with his father in 1634 and settled in Dorchester, but moved to Windsor, Ct. 1635. Son of Isaac, born in England 1596. Came to America 1634.

Vol. VII

Isaac, Jr. b. 1629, came from Weymouth, Eng. 1634, son of Isaac, b. 1596.

Vol. IV

Son of Isaac of Windsor, etc.

Son of Isaac of Dorchester, Mass. 1634 - removed to Windsor, Ct. 1635.

Vol. III

American Ancestry by Joel Munsell, Sons
in 12 vols.

"Family was founded in this country by the three brothers, Isaac, John and William, who came from England and settled in Dorchester, Mass.

(1) Isaac Sheldon, eldest of the three brothers, married and was the father of 4 children, among whom were:

John - signed the Parker Whiting Agreement - Billerica.

Isaac who removed from Windsor, Conn. to Northampton in 1654.

Relating to Families of Boston and Eastern Mass.

by Wm. Richard Cutter, A.M.

The three brothers who immigrated from Essex, England were:

Isaac, born 1605, was in Dorchester, Mass. 1634

John, born 1608

William, b. 1611

The children of Isaac (1) Sheldon were:

Isaac (2) born 1629 - Windsor, Conn.

John (2) born 1631 - Billerica, Mass.

Transcript

Of the 26 quotes,

- 14 put #1 Isaac in New England before 1640,
- 17 make #5 Isaac the son of #1 Isaac, and
- 7 mention three brothers.

Against this only 2 (quoted elsewhere) disclaim this.

The authors do not agree on the information, thus they could not have taken their data from the same sources, but from individuals in widely separated locations retelling what had come down by word of mouth from generation to generation. In summary of the above quotes, the point of origin of the Sheldon immigrants seems to point to the three southern counties of Dorset, Devon and Essex. English records substantiate this fact that Sheldons lived in those districts in the early 1600s. To quote:

DORSET

Philip Sheldon sold his manor of Spetchley in 1606 and removed to Dorsetshire. That fact is established. Could he have had relatives already in Dorsetshire who might have had sons who came to America? Or did he go to a son, there? We do not have the names of his children, except "William, Richard and others." Could Isaac have been among "the others" who had our American Sheldons - Isaac, John and William; or could William have been one of the three brothers, and Isaac and John among "the others"?

In 1628, an Elizabeth Sheldon, widow, lived in Manston, Redlund Hundred, Dorset. Now, Philip, above, had married an Elizabeth Slade.

In 1624, Richard Sheldon, Esq., lived in Pimperne, Dorsetshire, according to the Lay Subsidies.

DEVON

There is a marriage record in Paignton, co. Devon, in 1622 of a William, which proves a Sheldon family was living in Devonshire in the early 1600s.

There is a memorial tablet to Sir John's wife in St. Andrew's Church, Plymouth, co. Devon, England.

ESSEX

William Sheldon's daughter, Ioan, is recorded in Essex Co. as having married in the late 1400s a William Kent. Thus a Sheldon family was living in Essex at an early date.

Another Essex item of interest is that of the tea merchant, William Sheldon, who built his house in the shape of a tea canister to commemorate his trade and the source of his fortune. There was no date given, and every effort so far has not been rewarded with the desired information. Wonder if the reason is that it was his ship whose cargo of tea was dumped in Boston Harbor. At least, this is a matter of "keep trying". Some day, who knows, it may be the plum of the search.

Under Essex Ship Money - 1636 - was a tenant of Mr. Sheldon. So a Sheldon had some connection at that date in Essex.

KENT

In the Kent Lay Subsidy List of 1623 - 1629 is Isaak Shedone et ux living in Canterbury City, Northgate Ward.

William de Sheldone had received a large grant in Kent in 1296. His descendants were living later at Rye House, Boxley and Chilton House. Could not Isaac have been of this line?

SURRY

Arms were granted to a Sheldon of Hampton Court, co. Surry in 1681. Could not that family line have lived there at an earlier date from whom came our three brothers? At least there were Sheldons in Kent, for in 1610 Robert Sheldon and Mary Leeson were married at St. Saviour's, Southward, Surry.

Back in 1215 Sir Nicholas de Shelldonne had a manor in Weybridge, co. Surry, just south of London.

John, son of William and Joyce, heiress of Ruding, lived in Weybridge.

LONDON

In London many Sheldon records of various sorts are found, to mention a few:
1614 - William Sheldon married Isabelle Jeffards.

1620 - Nicholas Sheldon was a householder receiving rents.

(The name Nicholas is a family name in the Providence line)

Also Richard Sheldon and several under the spelling of Shelton.

One of the many Williams was buried in London in St. Andrew's Church.

Nash in his pedigree gives, John, son of William and Joyce, heiress of Rading, as in London.

MIDLANDS

The Sheldons of Broadway sold all their property at the death of William who was Lieut. Governor of Guernsey. He had 9 children, who seem never to have been traced. It is hinted that he did a smuggling business of that highly taxed item of salt. Could his sons have been living along the southern coast of England receiving the salt, and at his death joined the company of adventurers to America?

There were plenty of Sheldons living all over England in the early 1600s any of whom may have come to New England. It has been said that "this ancient family was so numerous from their original, that an exact account of them in a regular pedigree cannot be fixed."

Therefore, the first Sheldons in America could have come from other counties besides Derbyshire of J. Gardner Bartlett's record, and Worcestershire and Warwickshire of Tapestry record.

The above counties were picked from all 24 counties in which Sheldons have been found to live, because they were all coastal areas from which the different expeditions sailed, and because certain lines of the family were ship owners and very wealthy merchants doing, later, a large sale of commodities with the colonies.

Sheldons have not been found on any ship list of passengers coming to New England. Could they not have come on their own family ships or those of their relatives? Why make the voyage on the crowded transport ships when they could come in more ease and comfort on a Sheldon merchant ship. Which may account for Isaac being seen in Dorchester in 1634, perhaps as a master of a ship or as a merchant transacting business with the colonists selling his English goods and buying fish, etc. to take back to England. Perhaps he stayed; or perhaps he went back with his boat and then returned bringing his sons who stayed. He may have stayed, too, for a time and later returned, as one record states he was born and died in England. Records show that of the number who came over, more returned than stayed. One writer states of the 60,000 who came, 40,000 returned before 1660. Taking it from that light, he need not have stayed in New England, but with plenty of money he could have established his sons, when they were old enough, on another trip over, and returned to England. Or, he could have stayed awhile and later returned to his homeland. Suppositions, yes! But, as possible and probable as any other solution. If he were a master of a ship, he could have had his family here. It has been found on records in accounts, wills, etc. that many wives and their children were living here while their husbands sailed the seas. Or he might have come over to learn of conditions, gone back to England and later come over with plenty of money to buy large holdings in the name of his sons, who came into their inheritance when of age. The family as a whole were very wealthy as proved in many records of the different lines, such as - The Elizabethan Tapestry Sheldons and their many manors, and the fact that Ralph who already owned 10 manors, bought the Manor of Steeple Barton for £ 24,000 - a lot of money in those days.

I am led to believe that some of the early Sheldons in America were representatives here for the Sheldon Merchant Trade. The ships still being owned by the English families. Then, after the Revolution and the break with England we find the American Sheldons building, owning, and master of their own ships. Such registrations are found in Marblehead, Gloucester, Salem and Newburyport in Massachusetts; Pawtuxet, Providence and Newport in Rhode Island; and one ship is on record as being wrecked off the Coast of Conn.

Isaac Sheldon could very easily have been in Dorchester in 1634, coming over on a Sheldon ship, staying, and gone with the migration to Windsor and owned property there in 1640. Not liking the hardships of American life left his estate to his son Isaac, established his son, John, in Kingston, R. I. and returned to England. His land in Windsor was on the Great River. He might even have done a merchant business there for a time and later returned to England. Just a little more food for thought and research.

So there are 4 ways in which the Isaac Sheldon line could have come to America:

Either he came over as a master of a ship

met and married a girl of the colonies and she made the home here and raised the children while he sailed the seas;

Or, he came over as a merchant and was thus seen in 1634 in Dorchester and later returned with his sons, when they were old enough, and established them with great land holdings -- having plenty of money -- and then returned to England, not liking the rugged life as his adventurous sons did;

Or, he may have come over to learn of conditions and later sent his sons over on another Sheldon ship;

Or, he came on a merchant ship, stayed, and either died or was killed, leaving his sons with plenty of money to grow up in the new country and inherit his share of property in the new settlements.

This latter brings us to the Windsor, Conn. story. But, for a moment, let us consider the history of Dorchester, Mass., the migration and settlement of Windsor, Conn.

In the "History of Dorchester", we find three ships sailed from the Isle of Wight (an island off the coast of Weymouth, Eng.) with 300 passengers from Weymouth and Dorchester, Eng. under the Massachusetts Charter, which was drafted for a company of stockholders represented by 3 men. Under this charter there was no political rights for the majority of the settlers. Measurers were soon negotiated to "extend the privilege of freemanship" to all qualified. The requirements of freemanship were:

To become a Freeman:

One had to be 20 years old of godly walk and conversation,
Member of a Congregational Church,
Be worth £ 200,
Take oath of allegiance to the government of Massachusetts Bay,
To hold office when elected or be fined 40 s., and
To vote at all elections or be fined.

The requirement of church membership existed from 1631 to 1692.

Out of the 108 men in the Dorchester settlement at the time, 24 men were in the first group to take the oath of freemanship on Oct. 19, 1630. By 1636 there had been a total of 84 become freemen. Isaac Sheldon was not one of those 84 freemen. Of the original 108 men, that leaves 24 men plus those who arrived in July 1633 and the 59 who came on the John and Mary ship. Of those 59 names 30 went to Windsor. One writer states it was those later arrivals who are listed on the 8 pages of names who were "known to have been in Dorchester but about whom

little is known." After each name it tells what became of them. The Dorchester Antiquarian Society published all the early Dorchester Records in order to preserve the originals from mutilation and complete loss. In that printed book are 9 pages of names, just referred to, of persons who were in Dorchester before 1636, but about whom little is known. In that list at the top of p. 98 is: "Isaac Sheldon was in Dorchester in 1634. He removed to Windsor, Conn. about 1640." Again those nine pages of names were not picked out of thin air but were taken from various sources. Out of those nine pages why should anyone pick one name — that of Isaac Sheldon — and say he was not there? If all the rest were, why wasn't he? Yet some readers may say, but Savage states: "Isaac, Windsor, 1640, perhaps not coming from Dorchester, where Dr. Harris thought he saw him in 1634." In the first place I don't believe Dr. Harris took a name like Isaac Sheldon out of thin air and "thought" he saw him in Dorchester in 1634. In the second place, I find no Dr. Harris in any list of people in Dorchester up to 1700. However, there was a Dr. Harris, minister in Dorchester, who delivered a centennial sermon on July 4, 1830. His sermon was printed along with notes on early Dorchester and that list of nine pages. Savage got mixed on his dates regarding when Dr. Harris lived. So the mistake in seeing Isaac could not have been that of Dr. Harris of 200 years later, as Savage infers, but Savage's own mistake in checking his source dates. And that bursts that bubble. There was no mistake in seeing Isaac Sheldon. He must have been there in 1634.

Now, in the book, "Good Old Dorchester", the Town Records have been copied. To quote one sentence may help solve why Isaac Sheldon can not be found in the Town records themselves but only in this other list. "The following list includes all the first settlers whose names are found on the Records previous to Jan. 1636, except those on the 2 missing sheets" (or 4 pages). Had we those 4 missing pages our search might be over and the riddle solved.

Those nine pages were taken from "The Town Records where names are incidentally mentioned, from Records of the General Court, and from Family Genealogies and by collating all these with the Genealogical Register published by Mr. Farmer."

In other words, Farmer had published his book in 1829, Dr. Harris his in 1830, both dates prior to that of the Antiquarian Society. When Farmer and Harris saw the original Dorchester records they must have found the name of Isaac Sheldon there, (before the 2 sheets or 4 pages had been lost), else they would not have included it. The two missing sheets had been lost between the publishing of Farmer's book and the one by the Antiquarian Society. (Possibly that is why the Society published the printed records before any more were lost and to keep researchers from handling the original.) Could those 4 missing pages be brought to light, and Isaac Sheldon's name be found thereon — who knows, science performs many wonders of awe. As every sound is carried on an ether wave, inventions of years to come may not only pick up and record and put on the air the programs in studios of the day, but pick up the sounds on the ether waves of the past centuries and give us the voices of other days. What revelations could be disclosed and baffling questions answered and — we might even hear #1 Isaac in conversation back in Dorchester in 1634. Laugh it off if you want to. They laughed at Columbus idea of sailing around the world. They laughed at the steam boat, telegraph, telephone, the horseless carriage, yes even at the radio and television and putting a man into space, until somebody was successful in their invention, and now everybody just takes it all for granted. Nothing is impossible.

From Dorchester a large group because of over-crowded conditions left the new arrivals to take their place and migrated to locations on the Great River, as the Connecticut River was then referred to. A look at a few facts and conditions in the early settlements on the River may help to understand #1 Isaac's situation.

In the History of Windsor, Conn. we have a very vivid description of the severe sufferings of that first group who made the difficult and dangerous trip in the fall of 1635 from Dorchester with their families, horses, cattle and swine through the wilderness to Conn. River. Their household goods and supplies had been sent on a ship to meet them at the Conn. destination on the Great River. Winter set in early before the settlement was prepared and their supplies did not arrive, for what reason it never was known -- either wrecked in the tempestuousness of the season or lost in the sea.

To quote from "Historical Collections of Every Town in Conn.":

"By the 15th of Nov. the river was frozen over, the snow so deep, and the weather so tempestuous the severity of the season such, that the sufferings of man and beast were extreme About the beginning of Dec. 1635 provisions generally failed in the settlements on the river, and famine and death looked the inhabitants in the face. In their distress, some of them in this severe season attempted to go through the wilderness to the nearest settlement in Mass. ...Such was the general distress by the 3rd and 4th of Dec. that a considerable part of the settlers were obliged in the severity of winter, to go down to the mouth of the river to meet their provisions, as the only expedient to preserve their lives. Not meeting the vessels which they expected, they all went on board of the Rebecca, a vessel of about 60 tons. This vessel, 2 days before, was frozen in, 20 miles up the river; but by the falling of a small rain, and the influence of the tide, the ice became so broken, that she made a shift to get out. She, however, ran upon a bar, and the people were forced to unlade her to get her off. She was reladed, and in five days reached Boston. Had it not been for these providential circumstances, the people must have perished from famine.

"The people who remained and kept their stations on the river, suffered in an extreme degree. After all the help they were able to obtain, by hunting and from the Indians, they were obliged to subsist on acorns, malt and grains.

"The Dorchester or Windsor people lost, in the animal property, about 200 lbs. sterling. Upon the breaking up of winter, and the summer following, the settlers came in large companies, and the settlements at Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield were firmly established.....

"For several years after the settlement of Windsor, the people were harassed with wars. Such was the fear which agitated the minds of the inhabitants, that they repaired to a fortress nights, and slept with their arms by their sides, and used to go to labor in the fields in companies, prepared for battle. It was the common practice on the Lord's day to go to meeting armed.

"The following is a list of the names of the settlers in Windsor which appear on the records of the town in 1640."

List of 56 names. Among them is
Isaac Sheldon

End of Quote

After reading the entire account of hardships, famine and trials from which the above was taken, I could not but wonder if perhaps our Isaac and his wife might not have been victims of such sufferings of climate, exposure, starvation and attack, that Isaac was weakened and died or was killed by the Indians. That, like his neighbor, William Rockwell, whose record we have, he, too, could not endure such privations, but died from illness or was killed by the Indians between 1640 and 1652. Then, when young Isaac became of age he came into his right of possession of the property.

Thus we have 1st a possible return to England

2nd a possible death between 1640 and 1652.

And 3rd — From another angle — A story told to me was: that his great-grand-father used to tell, that the story had come down in their family, that 2 sets of 2 cousins each came from England. To me that has some foundation. Godfrey going up into Maine and after being driven out by the Indians returning to William in Salem and settled for a time around that vicinity. Some of the family remaining there and others going to southern Massachusetts around Attleboro not far from the settlement at Providence. Possibly, because William's descendants may have gone that way to Pawtuxet or Providence with Roger Williams. Here is a point for further research.

Isaac and John, the other suggested set of brothers, cousins of Godfrey or William, struck out with the migration groups to Conn. River and southern New England coastal ports. I group these two because there are no descendants in the lines of Godfrey and William by the name of Isaac. All the Isaacs in Rev. H. O. Sheldon's Sheldon Magazine are descended from Isaac and #13 John of Kingston, R.I. There are 25 Isaacs in 8 generations. There are Williams and Johns in all lines. But William and John are the names of the earliest English Sheldons in every line of every family in every generation.

The above is not a proved solution. In fact, it is very doubtful if Godfrey and William were brothers, possibly cousins though that is questionable. The suggestion having been given, a discussion of the facts is presented, to conform to the entire write-up being a presentation, through comparison or argument, for consideration, which is hoped may someday lead to the true solution.

A 4th Suggestion — Still another thought for consideration. Did you ever hear of children not liking the name by which they were called and when they left home to live in another place, they used one of their other names? English children, especially of notable families were given many names. An example of this is found in the English record of Edward Ralph Charles Sheldon of Brailles House. Certainly would complicate the search to find the first American Sheldons had done just that and used other first names than the recorded ones in England. Until we find the solution the search can not end until we have examined every angle.

5th Then, we may not have come from England directly, but from either Holland, as many Sheldons fled to the continent, or from Ireland.

Sheldons at one time were so severely persecuted for their religious convictions and adherence to their church that many families fled to the continent to escape taxation, persecution and imprisonment, or crossed the Irish Sea to Ireland. At least 4 were Lord Mayors of Dublin, and there are many Irish records of Sheldon lineage. Who knows -- we may be able to wear the Blarney Green. Yes, the Irish were here before the Pilgrims. Long before the potato famine of the mid 1800s, which was to drive them here by the hundreds of thousands, the Irish had made an impressive mark on this country. Yes, the Blarney boys got here early. They settled where Newport News, Va. now is in 1621. They may also have come to New England indirectly from other settlements. Even before Va., William Sheldon was master of one of the ships in the fleet that brought John Smith on his famous voyage along the shores of the new continent.

6th Another possibility of how Sheldons came to America without being listed on a ship or having a license to come may be — as servants. Though with the wealth of the Sheldon families and their prestige through the centuries, it hardly seemed probable, though it might be possible if they were the brothers of the heir in the family and they without any inheritance; or, if they were one of the Sheldon families who lost their manor holdings and fortunes thru taxation, because of religious faith; or wasted their inheritance and their descendants were left with little or nothing and must stoop to service, and so wished to leave their English land and start anew in the new world.

In the Roxbury, Mass. Records is found:

Thomas Woodford, man servant and
Mary Blott, maide servant.

They were later married and became the parents of Mary Woodford, the wife of #5 Isaac Sheldon. Possibly the Sheldons came to America in a like capacity and so would not need a license.

When in Salem, Mass., I visited the site of the Orchard Farm of John Endicott, and saw where the house had been and also the building in back of it where the servants lived. If William (as will be shown later) came over with Gov. Endicott in 1628, he may have come as a servant and later been given the land adjoining the Orchard Farm which is found in 1692 in the possession of Widow Sheldon.

7th The reader may ask, if they came as servants, how did they acquire the funds to buy their extensive holdings at so young an age. Many a wealthy person, even members of the royal family, came incognito, to escape unrecognized from persecution. And the Sheldon family was persecuted by taxation, loss of manors, and some were thrown into prison for religious beliefs. Even Gilbert Sheldon, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, was put into prison for the stand he took. So, too, the Sheldon men may have come incognito to America to escape being thrown into prison, and stayed that way until all chance of being identified was passed. Thus, they did not establish any connections with England, nor leave any records to prove their connections.

Which of the above data will be proven to establish #1 Isaac remains for those interested to keep searching for the truth.

True, #1 Isaac has not been substantiated in the foregoing, but this discussion was not intended to give the proof, as the proven data has not yet been found. These were only suggestions of possibilities. J. Gardner Bartlett's backers may even say — just more suppositions. True! But they may be leads or clues, which, if traced, may give us the proof we are seeking. This was not written to solve the problem — merely to present the facts found in many places, records and books, that all Sheldons may have the facts which have not previously been easily assessible to every Sheldon, because of their location, hidden away, as they are, which in many cases had to be literally dug out.

Again, may it be stated, this was only to set forth the material found to date for others knowledge and consideration, and state possible conclusions that may lead to the solution of the

1 ISAAC RIDDLE

Riddle me, riddle me,
And let me go free,
The town do please tell me
Where our ancestors be.

I'll not rest in the search until the riddle is solved.

The Godfrey Line

The Godfrey-line is the only Sheldon line that, to date, can be traced with positive certainty to the first ancestor in America and his place of origin in England. Two wills give us the information as to where to further search the records and find the complete family record. One is that of Godfrey Sheldon of Scarborough, Maine, dated Mar. 13, 1653-4 at age of 65 or thereabouts and witnessed Apr. 3, 1670. He died in 1671. To quote:

"I, Godfrey Sheldon, of the town of Scarborough," etc.

"2ly I give unto my eldest sun, William Shellden the one halfe of my goods within doores and without, and the halfe of my Land and houseing, forth with to Injoy to him his heyres or assignes, and the other halfe after my decease I give unto my wife Alice during her natural life, both goods lands and houseing, and after her decease to my said eldest sun William, who I appoynt my executor and order him to pay unto His brother John Shellden foure pounds, and to each of his sisters tenn shillings, and give unto his Wife Rebecca Tenn shillings, and unto her brother Samuel Scarlett I give five shillings and I order out of the halfe part of Land, Houseing and goods I reserve to my selfe and wife the charge of my burying, debts and legacys abovesd, being payd to confirme the truth here of, I do here unto subscribe and sett my hand this thirteenth of March 1653/4.

The Mark of Godfrey Shellden

End of Quote.

The other will is that of Godfrey's sister-in-law, Ellen (Frost) Goodale, sister of his wife, Alice (Frost) Sheldon, filed in Bakewell, co. Derby, England, and dated June 29, 1646. Excerpts pertaining to the Sheldon family follow:

To quote:

"Then I bequeath unto Godfrey Sheldons eight children now living ourcie one of them 20^s Then I give unto Sarah Sholdon one of the aforesaid eight my Bible Then I give and bequeath unto David Frosts foure children now livinge every one 20^s Then I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth the wife of David Frost my side saddle and pilloon with the thereunto belonginge. Then I give and bequeath unto the said Elizabeth Frost my goods/ Then I giue and bequeath unto Alice, wife of Godfrey Sheldon one coverlid four blankets", etc. "at the house and yarne. Then I give and bequeath unto Sarah the wife of William Sheldon my sister my best gown and cassocks, my best smocks and best hand car chiefs. Then I give unto Mary Frost daughter unto David Frost my hood. Then I give unto William Frost son to the said David Frost one silver spoon. Then I give to Elizabeth daughter to the said David my best girdle. Then I give unto Rebecca Frost my purse. Then I give unto every child who is living who I was Godmother unto every one 12^s. Then I give and bequeath unto Abraham Sheldon 20^s. Then I give and bequeath unto Alice the wife of Godfrey Sheldon and unto her children all the rest of my moaringe clothes whatsoever which are unbequeathed. Then I give and bequeath all the rest of my goods whatsoever, when my debts are paid and my funeral expenses discharged, equally to be divided betwixt my brother David Frost, and Alice and Sarah, my sisters. Then I hereby ordain and make David Frost aforesaid and William Sheldon my executors of this my last will and testament, hoping that they will faithfully and conciously discharge execute and _____ the same according to my trust in them expressed. In witness whereof.

End of Quote.

Note, that 3 or 4 Frosts married 3 Sheldons and the Parish Register gives the dates:

1630 David Frost mar. Elizabeth Sheldon

1639 Sara Frost mar. William Sheldon

1620 Ann Frost mar. Godfrey Sheldon

the will gives Alice Frost wife of Godfrey Sheldon.

From the wills, Alice Frost was the wife of Godfrey Sheldon in 1646 and 1663. There is no record of their marriage in Bakewell. Either Ann and Alice is used for the same person, or else Godfrey married sisters for his first and second wives. The latter seems probable as the two families so intermarried, and he had one daughter named Ann; and as in Ellen Goodale's will she first gives to

Godfrey Sheldon's eight children: now living - not Alice Sheldon's eight children - and later to Alice Sheldon and her children, as though she were not the mother of all eight or more. There is no record in Bakewell Register of 8 or 10 children (2 at least were not living in 1646) only three, so the family must have lived in another town. The 3 recorded are:

1622 Guilielmus filius Godfredi
1624 Abraham filius Godfrey
1640 Radulphus f. Godfridi (Note spelling)

In the Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire by Libby is given the children of Godfrey with the birth dates as:

Ch: (4 at Bakewell) William bp. 5 Feb. 1622-3
Abraham bp. 29 Nov. 1624
buried at Bakewell 13 Dec. 1645
Son (still born) b. and buried 23 Oct. 1626
John bp. 8 May 1628

At Woburn, Mass. a Daughter, Anne b. abt. 1630
At Reading, Mass. a Daughter b. abt. 1632

That Godfrey and his family were in this country before 1630 is questionable, as the first records of him are in 1660, when he bought from Josselyn on July 19, 1660, 100 acres at Black Point in Maine territory. That would point to the fact that he did not leave England until after the death of Ellen Goodale and the family had received their inheritance. Also, his son Abraham b. 1624 d. in 1638 in England not in America where he would have been if the family had come to this country before 1630. The daughter, Anne, born in Woburn is unlikely as Woburn was not settled until 1640, and likewise the other unnamed daughter born in Reading, which town was not established until 1639. Back in 1630 and 1632 the settlers dared not venture that far into the woods. The children were all born in England.

As the dates of the Bakewell Register start in 1615 it is not possible to secure the birth records of the many Sheldons mentioned as marrying after 1615, nor the ancestors to connect the line to the early family. Like other lines it could be traced through the manor holdings, etc. were one in England assessible to the files.

According to Godfrey's will he was born in 1599 and according to the Bakewell Register was married at the age of 21 to Ann Frost in 1620, and he died in Scarborough, Maine in 1671. In 1660 he settled at Black Point, later Scarborough, Maine, where 1 son and 2 daughters, who came from England with him, were married into the families in the vicinity.

William married Rebecca Scarlett (See later)

Anne mar. 1 - Arthur Auger (Alger) m. 2 - Samuel Walker

In the Indian raid of 1675 Arthur Auger was wounded by the Indians. As he was dying of his wounds on Oct. 14, 1675 a deposition gives, to quote: he "desireth me and ye rest standing by to take notice y^t he did give all his goods moveable and immoveable to his wife Ann, only she should pay ye children their portions and further saith not."

Another daughter whose name is never given married Giles Roberts, she having died before he made his will dated Jan. 25, 1666. To quote:

"wt estate shall bee left after the bringing up of the sayd Children, I will that It shall be aequally divided amongst my five children, the 3 with me now, and the two y^t live with my brother Arthur Auger." End of quote

In the return of Arthur Auger's will, Anne mentions the share they held for Giles Robert's children giving their names as Abraham A., David and Gilas Roberts. They to have £5 12 s each. Also mentions a "parcall of upland and meadow which was brother Giles Roberts.

The Sheldon family along with other settlers were driven out of Maine in 1675 by the Indians, but returned after King Philip's War, as Wm. is listed in the Black Point Garrison in 1676. They remained until 1690 when again the settlement was driv-

en out and the Sheldons never returned. They went to Salem to live where William died in 1692/3. His wife, Rebecca, and son Ephraim sold the Scarborough property in 1694. William's will in part is as follows:

"Last will and testament of William Shildon of Salem.

"I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Rebackah: all my estate laying in Salem, houses and land and moveables for her own use and for the bringing up of my children and hers rey that are now living and after her death to be disposed among them as she shall so desire.

"Item. I give and bequeath unto my son Ephraim Shildon all my houses and lands and livings lying at ye eastward at Black Point or Scarborough; all my right and title to him his heirs and assigns: he paying five pounds to each of his sisters: After he shall enjoy and possibly improve ye said living After the opportunity of 4 years improvement then to pay to his eldest Sister five pounds, in or as money; Mary; Lidedr; Sarah Robackah Hepsibab it is to be understood ye said Ephraim shall pay his first payment to Mary; the year following to Ledi; and ye next year to Sarah; and the year following to Robackah; and the year following to that to Hepsibah; and my wish is if any of my Daughters die without issue; it shall be payd to the survivors equally between them and all those payments to be in or as money.

Will proved Sept. 3, 1694.

End of quote.

According to his wife, Rebackah's will: Made this sixteenth day of Feb. 1716. To quote:

"This last will and testament of Rebackah Shildon of Salem etc.

"Item. I give unto my Daughter Hepsibah my houses and all my land laying in Salem. She paying my doctor and funeral Charges and what I give to the rest of my children to be payd within two months after my decease.

"Item. I give unto my Daughter Mary Ray six pounds five shillings in money

"Item I give unto my daughter Lodia Boden three pounds five shillings in money and my hafor. (hassock)

"Item I give unto my daughter Sarah Goodale two pounds and five in money.

"Item, I give unto my son Ephraim Sholden five shillings and I appoint my daughter Hepsibah to be my Executrix of this my last will and testament as witness my hand and seal.

Will proved July 25, 1720

End of quote

William and Rebeacca(Scarlett) Sheldon's children were born:

Mary	b. 1667	mar. _____	Ray
Lydia	b. 1669	mar. Dec. 14, 1693	Ambrose Bowdoin
		d. March 1747	aged abt. 80 years
Ephraim	b. 1670	mar. April 30, 1694	Jane Peard (See Later)
Sarah	b. 1671	mar. _____	Goodale
Rebecca	b. 1673		
Hepsibah	b. 1675	mar. May 28, 1712	Skelton Felton.

Skelton and Hepsibah Felton's children were:

Lydia	b. Dec. 28, 1712	mar. Ebenezer Foster
Rebecca	bap. Feb. 7, 1714	mar. Joseph Houlton
Joseph	bap. Aug. 14, 1715	mar. Mary Trask
Anna	bap. 1717	mar. Jacob Shaw of Leicester
Benjamin	bap. May 8, 1720	not mentioned in father's will
Hepsibah	bap. Jan. 20, 1722	mar. Samuel Haywood
Ruth	bap. May 1725	mar. Mar. 8, 1717/18 John Grant of Rutland

Could it be Hepsibah married at 37 and had 7 children or was it another Hepsibah? They lived in Salem until 1744 when they moved to Rutland with son Joseph. Will dated Jan. 5, 1745. He died 1749, aged 70 yrs.

Ephraim Sheldon, son of William and Rebecca and grandson of Godfrey and Alice, b. 1670 married at Lynn April 30, 1694 Jane Peard. They lived at Boxford until 1708 when they sold several different pieces of property on Oct. 28, 1708 described as "on north side of river commonly called Ipswich River". Signed, Ephraim Shelding. They moved to Attleboro, Mass. where they bought property on

the Attleboro Dorchester Road, in Wrentham and Dorchester Line, in Wrentham and Stoughton Road. Their children were as follows:

William	bap. Oct. 20, 1700	b. 1694-5	1692183
Rebekkah	bap. " " "	b. 1697	
Ephraim	bap. " " "	b. 1699	
Lemuel	bap. Nov. 2, 1701		
Hepsibah	bap. Oct. 17, 1703	d. May 3, 1724 at Attleboro	
Nathaniel	bap. Apr. 7, 1706		

Recorded at Attleboro

Israel	b. at Norton	Aug. 6, 1709
Stephen	b. at Attleboro	Sept. 22, 1711
Benjamin	b. "	Feb. 28, 1714/15
Lidia	b. "	Dec. 29, 1717

The lineage hereon can be found in the 5 volumes of the Sheldon Magazine by Rev. H. O. Sheldon, pub. 1857-9, and now being republished with corrections and additions by the Sheldon Family Associations, or in the files of the Associations.

The Salem Story

The Salem Story is fantastic! In fact, so fantastic, it is not expected that anyone will really believe it. Yet, there have been found certain facts on Sheldons in the records of Salem, Massachusetts, which must be placed somewhere. They do not fit into the Isaac line, the Providence John line, the Kings Town John line, nor the Godfrey line. Where do they fit? That was the challenge that sent this writer searching every angle and the following Salem Story has evolved, but not completely solved. However, it is hoped that some will find enough truth in the data presented to continue the search and perhaps some day come up with the missing link.

In the Vital Statistics of Salem, Mass. is found:

William Sheldon, died Dec. 11, 1691 - age 80 years.

That would make him born in 1611.

In another account, William Sheldon came from England with Gov. Endicott in 1628 at the age of 17. That again makes him born in 1611.

In the Sheldon Magazine, he is #3 William. Supposedly the William of the Three Brother Story (#1Isaac, #2John and #3William). However the three brother story has long since become a question with the discovery of several other first Sheldons in America. Some of them may have been brothers, or perhaps some cousins. Regardless of relationship, we do find #3 William in Salem.

Many have tried to claim this William was the son of Godfrey, as descendants of this line were found in Salem after the Indian raids had driven the settlers out of Maine territory in the late 1600s. However, it can not be the same William, as Godfrey's William was born in 1622, not in 1611; he died in 1693, not in 1691 age 80; and his will, proved Sept. 1694, was dated Nov. 29, 1692 - a year after #3 William died. And the house which some claim Godfrey's William owned, according to records, was, in 1692, the home of Widow Sheldon and daughter Susannah. Godfrey's William was still alive in 1692, so it couldn't have been his widow, and he had no daughter Susannah.

So! Who was this William? Who were his ancestors? Who his descendants?

Going back into England to the 13th century is found a John Sheldon in Cumberland. Through several generations later and many different spellings is found a John Carleton, whose son, William, was matriculated at Cambridge University as, to quote: "William Shelton, son of John and Joyce Carleton of Walton-on-Thames." The Carleton is explained by the fact that in 1268 Sir Robert Sheldon was called to Parliament as Sir Robert de Carleton (see chapter on spelling). This William became rector at Coningsby, Lincolnshire. He had several sons also clergy, two of whom were George and Samuel. At the father William's death, George succeeded at Coningsby. Samuel, b. 1684, was graduated from Clare Hall, Cambridge, in 1605; received his master's degree in 1608 and joined the regular English Established Church in Lincolnshire as minister. To date no data on his life and ministry has been found for the next ten years between 1608 and 1619 when he married on April 27, 1619 Susanna Travis at Sempringham, a hamlet not far from Coningsby, where some records say he was rector. Where was he? Was there a first marriage and children during those years? In 1621 Rev. Samuel is found as Chaplain to the Earl of Lincoln at Tattershall across the river from Coningsby. Here several children were baptized. The Earl of Lincoln and other members of the family became interested in furthering the colonization across the ocean and were very influential in negotiating the formation and promotion of the Mass. Bay Colony, and many of the meetings were held at Sempringham. So it is not surprising that Rev. Samuel became enthusiastic to join the group, especially as he was a non-conformist - a Puritan adhering to the Church of England but not supporting its forms. Being John Endicott's spiritual advisor, it was thought prudent to appoint him as minister to the colony in New England, but he did not sail with the first expedition under Gov. Endicott. He

remained in England to gather more recruits and to receive the signed charter to carry to the new land. He sailed for America in May 1629 and became the first minister at Naumkeag, later renamed Salem, and also next in authority to Gov. Endicott.

Though his signature is written Rev. Samuel Shelton, he has come down in history as Rev. Samuel Skelton. The only explanation for this is the fact that there was a scarcity of learning among the early colonists. Though Rev. Samuel Shelton was a college educated man with more than one degree, his daughters could not even write their own names, as is shown by their marks in later deeds. Few could write, and as the earliest spelling was Schelldonne, the Sch probably still had the sch or sk sound to the ear, so the early writers wrote it as it was pronounced and as it sounded to them. Rev. Samuel Shelton only lived a few years after arriving in New England, so the spelling of his name had to be established not by him but by those who came after him and the historians.

Now, some who have searched the records of Sempringham, or may in the future, are going to say that in the registers it is spelt Skelton. But it is not in Rev. Samuel's own handwriting. In those days the recording was not written in the registers by the resident cleric, but was put into a paper covered book and at intervals a regular copier was hired to write the record into the big register. The old English H was written with a hook, and probably the resident cleric had made it look more like a K and when the copier transferred it Rev. Samuel was not around and he wrote it Skelton instead of Shelton. (as it was pronounced)

Writing it as it was pronounced developed a rather peculiar co-incidence. Rev. Shelton's daughter, Mary, married Nathaniel Felton and one of her grandsons carried on the name as Skelton Felton. He married Hepsibah Sheldon and had Hepsibah Felton who married into the Sheldon family and had Skelton Sheldon. Had they continued with the spelling of Rev. Samuel's signature, he would have been Shelton Sheldon — a good tongue twister.

There are three other records that give the spelling as Shelton. His wife's death was recorded as, to quote:

Travis-Shelton Susannah Travis, daughter of William and wife of Rev. Samuel Shelton, first minister to Salem, Massachusetts.

His son returned to England and died there as a Shelton.

In the records kept by Rev. John Fiske is found, to quote:

"Bringing Higginson and Shelton to it", printed Shelton not Skelton.

Thus, the first minister to Salem, Mass. was a Sheldon descendant with the spelling of Shelton.

There are many references suggesting he had a previous wife and children by that marriage. Savage states 2 sons — "Benjamin and Nathaniel at Salem, in the list of settlers but not church members". Only mention of them is when each had a son baptized. They were not sons of Susanna Travis. Their ages presuppose a previous marriage. A daughter Susannah baptized at Tattershall Apr. 3, 1625 became to quote: "the first and only wife of John Marsh". They were married at Salem in 1635 or early 1636 and her first child, a son, was born in 1637 and baptized Apr. 30, 1637, which concedes an earlier birth for Susannah, which is given as 1613-14 in other records; and thus a first wife for Rev. Shelton. Mary, baptized June 28, 1627, but probably born 1616, married Nathaniel Felton; and though her first child was baptized in 1644, she must have married before 1643 or else how would Nathaniel Felton be in possession of Rev. Samuel's house in Salem to be able to sell it in 1643. The baptism dates of Rev. Samuel's children have presumed a close birth date but possibly not so.

That leads to the possibility that William born in 1611 was son of Rev. Samuel and may explain the fact found in one book that William came over as the "spiritual advisor to Gov. Endicott." Each generation had passed the story on by

word of mouth and in the retelling had slipped on the extra word in the information which should have been related the SON of Gov. Endicott's spiritual advisor. He had sent his son-ahead with Gov. Endicott, knowing he would soon follow. That would correspond with the record that William Sheldon came over with Gov. Endicott in 1628, age 17 years. Also establish the William Sheldon who died in Salem in 1691, age 80 years.

What other data is found in Salem records and how is it put together to form the Salem Story?

In the early 1700s we find a William Shelton of Lynn marrying Mary Robarts of Reading. The record is found in four towns, all with the spelling of Shelton. His grandson was named Samuel and one might suppose after Rev. Samuel and he himself after Rev. Samuel's father, William Shelton. Could that 1700 William Shelton have been the grandson of Samuel, Jr. carrying the spelling of Rev. Samuel's signature, or a grandson of our #3 William and the great-grandson of Rev. Samuel?

It has always been supposed that Rev. Samuel's son, Samuel, Jr., returned to England and left no descendants in America; but Rev. Dwight W. Marsh, after giving in his book the same story of the return to England of Samuel, Jr., puts in an errata to his book that he has just found that after the death of Rev. Samuel Shelton, Samuel Jr. removed to Charlestown. That would seem logical as when he sold his father's land grant in 1663 the transaction was handled by John Brackenbury a lawyer of Charlestown. Later, Samuel, Jr. did return to England. He had at least one son, Joseph, and his marriage, family and descendants have been traced into different towns for many generations. Did he have another son using the spelling of Shelton who was ancestor of our William Shelton of Lynn and Reading? Or, was the William of Salem (born 1611 and dying 1691 age 80, son of Rev. Samuel and the same man as our #3 William of the Sheldon Magazine record) the ancestor of the other Sheldons in Salem in the late 1600s and our William Shelton of Lynn marrying Mary Robarts?

Further, there was in Salem a Bette or Elizabeth Sheldon and child. She is found 5 times on the widow rolls between Oct. 28, 1678 and Feb. 10, 1680, old calendar with the year beginning Mar. 25th. Her husband could have been son of #3 William. The name of the child is never given. It could have been a boy who became the father of our 1700 William Shelton of Lynn, using the d and t interchangeably as that William's first three children were recorded under the spelling of Shelton and his last 2 children with the spelling of Sheldon. That lineage has continued as Sheldon. From that William and Mary (Robarts) Shelton-Sheldon marriage descended a well established line found in part in the Sheldon Magazine and fully in the vital statistics of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and recorded in the files of the Sheldon Family Association. Among the descendants is the writer of this account.

Other miscellaneous data found in Salem on Sheldons proves there was a Sheldon line in Salem in the 1600s besides the Godfrey line, as the statistics, names, dates and facts do not co-incide with the family of Godfrey and their whereabouts during the same period. This extra information follows. See what you can do about fitting it into the Sheldon lineage.

In 1680 William Sheldon, surveyor, went to Gloucester to run a line.

In 1681 records speak of a Goodman Sheldon, carpenter of Marblehead, cut a frame of wood for Goodman Poate, who was not satisfied. He "told Marblehead men that if they were not Contented and could not give them a good title and did not make good what he sold them, that it was his Bargain to give them there money again which was a hundred pounds and to take the frame again."

Again is found a testimony by William Sheldon that the selectmen of Manchester refused to go with him to measure the bounds.

On Nov. 23, 1678 - paid to "baxters dafter Shelden 10^s" A baxter in early days was a baker, originally a woman baker.

In 1692 is found record of the home of Widow Sheldon and daughter Susanna, which land adjoined Gov. Endicott's Orchard Farm. That Orchard Farm is still open lands and tourists are shown the Apple Tree, still standing, which Gov. Endicott planted, the location of the homestead and the servant's quarters behind it. #3 William coming with Gov. Endicott and being the son of his spiritual advisor, may have been given that grant adjacent to the Orchard Farm for his services to the governor, and it had by 1692 come down to William's descendants. Supposition, Yes! But throwing out the thought may help some one some day to prove it. For who was that Widow Sheldon, and who was her daughter Susanna?

Susanna Sheldon and Samuel Sheldon are mentioned in connection with the Witchcraft Trials of 1692 in Salem, Mass. Do not let that disturb you. Witchcraft had been for a long time very prevalent on the Continent of Europe, so it was not surprising that it had spread into New England and had its hold in the new colonies, also, long before it came to a head in Salem. Gov. Endicott, Gov. Winthrop and Gov. Bradstreet had each sentenced a witch to death. Executions for the crime had already taken place in Charlestown, Cambridge, Dorchester, Hartford, and Springfield. Salem has had to take the notoriety all these years, when it was no worse there than elsewhere. It started in Salem when Rev. Harris, pastor of the church in Salem Village or Danversport, brought two slaves from the West Indies. One named Tibula told the children and young people of the neighborhood stories of superstitions which their imaginations carried too far. Susannah Sheldon, living near the pastor's home, was one of the nine girls who came under the influence of Tibula's stories and later figured in many of the cases brought to trial. She was 18 years of age. Samuel appears to be 20 or 22 years old. Ephraim Sheldon, who gave his age as 20, also testified. The court records can be read for proof. Ephraim may have been Godfrey's grandson (son of William and Rebecca, though his birth date has been given as 1670, which would make him 22 yrs., so probably not their son). But Susannah and Samuel certainly were not of their family. They were of another family.

In the Chronicles of Danvers, Godfrey Sheldon of the Village is reported killed by the Indians in the woods July 3, 1690, aged 24 years, leaving a wife and son. In the baptism records of the 2nd Church Salem is record of a son of Godfrey who was baptized Feb. 9, 1694/5. According to that data Godfrey would have been born in 1666. He might have been the 2nd son of William and Rebecca Sheldon of Maine, as there was a Nathaniel born 1665. But William made no provision in his will for the widow nor the grandson. Neither is there any mention in that will of a Samuel or Susannah who were still living, so they could not have been his son or daughter. So, they may have been the grandson and grand-daughter of #3 William, as may also Nathaniel, who died in Salem "1675, aged 10 years, son of William". #3 William, according to both Rozier and Higby, had a son William, who could have been the father of that 24 yr. old Godfrey and the other three; and it is this William's widow and daughter Susannah who lived in the house adjacent to the Orchard Farm in 1692. Samuel may also have been his son, a brother of Godfrey. But, to date, no record has been found to substantiate Rozier's and Higby's statements. The family names of William, Samuel, Nathaniel and Susannah certainly claim connection to Rev. Samuel Shelton and his son #3 William. In fact, Widow Sheldon and Susannah may be the Elizabeth Sheldon and child on the widow list in the years 1678-80, widow of William, Jr. Nathaniel having died, Samuel and Godfrey having been old enough at the father's death to have been apprentised, and so the mother had only one child, Susannah, to keep with her. If this is true, we have the connecting link which is missing in the Salem Story.

A chart of such a family, as it might look, is to be found on the following page.

Rev. Samuel Shelton

b. 1584 Arrived Salem 1629 Died 1635

↓
3 William

b. 1611 Came with Gov. Endicott 1628, age 17 yrs.
died Dec. 11, 1691, age 80 yrs.

↓
William, Jr.

died before 1678 wife Elizabeth

↓

Nathaniel	Godfrey	Samuel	Susannah
b. 1665 d. 1675	b. 1666	b. 1670-72	b. 1674
10 yrs.	Killed by Indians July 3, 1690		
	age 24 yrs.		

↓
A Son

(maybe William Shelton of Lynn)

who married 1714

Mary Robarts

Because of the signature of Rev. Samuel Shelton and the mere mention in one book of Susannah and Samuel Sheldon in Salem Witchcraft, which spurred the search, this Salem Story has evolved. It has been written merely for the consideration of those Sheldons who are interested in solving the Sheldon mystery of the first of the family in America, hoping some one with this information some day may find the one missing link or prove the above.

This story may be said to be only supposition -- just fantastic. But, don't give a snap judgement. Let it work on you for awhile. Mull it over in your mind. Then, see if it doesn't grow on you as more truth than fantasy. For, it may not be so fantastic as the reading of it sounds.

Other First Sheldons in America

There seem to be other Sheldons early in the colonies. — all under many different spellings, some clearly in the Sheldon lines, others more far fetched. Some are well founded, some not. The latter are not of immediate interest. The ones of pertinent concern at the moment are the many "Johns".

In the second generation there appear to be 4 Johns, whose first generation father can not be definitely established. Each of the first 4 Sheldons in America seem to have had a son named John. It is not surprising, even if none of the first Sheldon settlers were not closely connected, because John was the most used family name for generations in England.

According to the Rev. H. O. Sheldon Magazine,

#1 Isaac's son John was in Billerica, Mass.

#2 John's son John went to Providence, R. I.

#3 William's son John went to Kings Town, R. I.

In Billerica Town records, John and William (brothers) were in that town in 1658-9 having a land controversy with the town. Some seem to think they were the sons of Godfrey of Maine, making Godfrey's son John the one in Billerica instead of #1 Isaac's son John. There is no real evidence that the John and William of Billerica land dispute were the sons of Godfrey. The Billerica John's descendants died out in the male line in 4 generations, so it is of no real genealogical importance.

Then, there is a tradition, that seems to claim #1 Isaac's son, John, was the Kings Town, R.I. John and brother of #5 Isaac of Windsor and Northampton. In the Conn. State Library is an original letter stating #5 Isaac and John of Kings Town were brothers.

Again, is found that John of Billerica was the progenitor of a long line of Providence Sheldons.

The points in question for each John will now be considered separately.

The Billerica John

Some claim the John of Billerica to be the son of #1 Isaac. Another says he is the son of #3 William of Salem. Still another that he is the son of Godfrey of Maine. If the latter, why didn't the family return to brother John in Billerica when they fled Maine instead of going to Salem?

The only place in early records that suggest the brothers John and William of Billerica land controversy were the sons of Godfrey of Scarborough is by Hazen in his "History of Billerica". He gives no mention of Godfrey ever being in Billerica nor can he be found in any records. Hazen does not say John and William are his sons. Finding a record of Godfrey of Maine stating he had sons John and William, Hazen says: "who may be the Billerica brothers". By his mere suggestion, it seemed to become a fact to all later researchers.

In Scarborough records, it is mentioned that after the second Indian raid had driven the inhabitants away, that William and "his younger brother John" never returned again. That sounds as if John had been in Maine also up to 1590. As Arthur Auger, the brother-in-law of the Maine Wm. died of wounds received at the hands of the Indians, the younger brother, John, may also have been killed as well, and so no further record of him is ever found. Thus, the conclusion would be that the John of Billerica was not the son of Godfrey Sheldon of Scarborough.

As the son of #3 William of Salem, the only connection which might prove it, is the family names. John of Billerica had a grandson and a great-grandson named Samuel perhaps after Rev. Samuel. On the other hand no child was named William after #3 William, but there never were enough sons, perhaps. So your guess there is as good as any ones.

It has also been said that John of Billerica was the progenitor of a long line of descendants; while others say a long line of descendants in the Providence line. John had only one son, John, according to the Vital Statistics and other records in Billerica. Both father and son lived and died in Billerica. The son did not go to Providence as some writers suggest.

To correct the error of his being the progenitor of a long line of descendants (except on the distaff side) the Vital Statistics of Billerica, Mass. as taken from the original book follow:

John Sheldon was in Billerica by 1658 when he signed the Parker and Whiting agreement. He married Feb. 1, 1658-9 Mary (Converse) Tompson, widow of Simon Tompson of Woburn. In 1664, after the land dispute, he and his family left town and resided in Woburn for a time. He is on record there in 1672 as being taxed in the rate for the Second Meeting House. In Dec. 1675 he was one of 13 men impressed from Woburn for the Narragansett expedition. Soon after that he returned to Billerica where he lived the rest of his life, dying at age of abt. 63 years on May 24, 1690. His house stood South-East of the Andover Road, with the comans East and North. The house is still standing in good condition. He had one son, John, born April 24, 1660, who married Nov. 20, 1690 Deborah Hill, and he died, a deacon in the church, Jan. 11, 1729-30. His children were:

John	b. July 29, 1691	d. Aug. 24, 1691
Mary	b. Oct. 18, 1692	mar. Peter Hunt
Samuel	b. Apr. 9, 1694	d. May 14, 1777
		mar. Jan. 22, 1718-9 Sarah Hutchinsof of Charlestown. She died Feb. 23, 1773
Deborah	b. May 1698	d. Dec. 24, 1698
Hannah	b. Aug. 18, 1700	

The children of Samuel and Sarah (Hutchinson) Sheldon were:

Sarah	b. Oct. 6, 1719	mar. John Center
Mary	b. Aug. 1, 1721	
Deborah	b. Oct. 23, 1723	
Samuel	b. Jan. 1, 1725	d. Jan. 26, 1725
Rebecca	b. July 28, 1727	mar. Simon Blanchard
John	b. Nov. 27, 1729	d. Dec. 7, 1729
Prudence	b. Aug. 31, 1732	m. David Abbot

His eldest daughter, Sara Center, inherited his Billerica property.

His only 2 sons each lived only a few days. So there were no more male descendants in this Sheldon line. There, is then, really no genealogical interest as to whom this John of Billerica was.

The Kings Town John

Many present-day Sheldons would like to know who was the father of their Kings Town John line. Taking it backwards, who was the first John on record in the Narragansett Territory? July 27, 1679, 42 male settlers petitioned the King. Among the signers is found John Sheldon and John Sheldon, Jr. Again Dec. 21, 1696 is the first List of Freemen with the names of both John Sheldon and John Sheldon Jr. To be a freeman, a man must be 21 years of age. That means John Jr. had to be born by 1675. And no lad of 4 could have signed the Narragansett Petition. The birth date of a John Sheldon in Kings Town is 1660, which was probably the birth date of John Shelcon, Jr.

In the will of John Sheldon dated Aug. 15, 1704 and proved Jan. 16, 1706 he mentioned his children by name: John, Isaac, Joseph, Elizabeth, Abigail, Mary and Dinah; and also his "honoured mother, Sarah Sheldon". As the son John's birth date is 1685 and Isaac's 1687, that will was of John Sheldon, Jr. and his "honoured mother Sarah Sheldon" was the wife of John Sheldon, Senior, who was born abt. 1630. who was his father?

Some claim John Sheldon of Kings Town, R. I. was the son of #3 William, but according to the family names, he more likely is the son of #1 Isaac. There are no Isaacs in any other lines except the two lines of #5 Isaac and the Kings Town John. Thomas and Joseph are also found in both of these lines while not in any other line.

So, my vote goes to #1 Isaac as the father of John of Kings Town, R.I.

The Providence John

A little history to lead up to the Sheldons may help.

Roger Williams settled Providence, R.I. He came from England in 1630 and seems always to be in opposition with the Bay Authorities on religious issues, being refused a place in Boston and later at Plymouth. It was then at the death of Rev. Higginson, the teacher, at Salem, that Williams came to Salem to assist as the teacher. Rev. Samuel Shelton seems always to be in sympathy with him, and when the older pastor's health was failing allowed the teacher to preach as well. At Rev. Shelton's death Roger Williams was chosen pastor of the Salem Church over the protests of the Bay Authorities, who ordered him banished from Massachusetts. When Williams did not leave and continued to preach, the Mass. Magistrates planned secretly to seize him and put him on a ship to England. Friends of Williams learned of the plot and warned their minister who fled in the night leaving his wife and two infants behind. Gov. Winthrop seemed always to like Williams in spite of their differences of opinion in regards religious beliefs. He had advised Williams to leave Mass. and go to the Narragansett section. In the middle of a terrible winter somehow Williams found his way into the country of the Wampanog. While in Plymouth he had made friends with the Indians and they befriended him until spring when he and five companions who joined him set out to find a location and started to build on the east side of the River at Seekonk. That was Plymouth Territory and as the Pilgrims did not wish trouble with the Magistrates and yet still wanting to be friendly with a pastor they had liked suggested he cross the river and thus not come within their jurisdiction. This he did and named the spot Providence because of God's providence to him in time of need. The Seekonk location later was called Rehoboth. An excellent map of the old town lines of R.I. over the new is found in Richard LeBaron Bowen's "Early Rehoboth" © 1945 (Opposite p. 22)

Why this introduction? Because the people of Salem liked Roger Williams and many families left Salem and followed him to Providence. Why not the Sheldons? As Rev. Samuel was on the side of Roger Williams religious views, it would not be surprising if descendants of #3 William went to the Providence settlements. #3 William, son of Rev. Samuel, must have resented the treatment to his father's friend and associate and probably his friend, too. Whether he himself went or not can not be said, as the Sheldon name is not found on the early list of landholders and future grants until 1675. The only drawback to this conclusion is no family names in the Providence branch. In fact, that branch as far as any connections to the other lines, seems to be an outcast; but not a poor relation.

In "Representative Old Families of R.I. is found: "Sheldon (Pawtucket Family) The R.I. families belonging to the old stock descend from the two Johns — John of Providence and John of Kingstown. The former here as early as 1675 and the latter in 1670."

"The Compendium of American Genealogy" states that John Sheldon of Providence was the nephew of Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury. Gilbert had 2 brothers, Hughe and Ralphe; and four nephews with no Sheldon male descendants. Yet, strange as it may seem, the family names of Roger and Daniel are found in later generations of the Providence Sheldon family. While Timothy, Nicholas and Nehemiah, ch. of John, are not Sheldon names of any line in England or America.

They must have come from the Mother's side of Carpenter or Vincent; or else they were being individual for that age and named their children what pleased them.

There is only one other alternative, as the second generation Johns as credited to #1 Isaac, #3 William and Godfrey have already been discussed. By that process of elimination, there leaves only #2 John. Almost no mention has been made of him throughout this entire book, for the simple reason that no material has been found on him. The conclusion, then, might be drawn that the Providence John either came directly to Rhode Island, or was the son of #2 John.

There are the SHELDON JOHNS and all the information pertaining to them before 1700 that has been found to date. May you be able to decide the right first parent.

Gilbert Sheldon,
Archbishop of Canterbury

Survey of Staffordshire by Thomas Harwood, D.D., F.S.A.

P/ 485

STANTON, near Blöse, was the birth-place of Gilbert Sheldon
Archbishop of Canterbury.

In the room in which he drew his first breath, Bishop Hackett, who took a journey on purpose to visit it, left these iambs:

Sheldonus ille Praesulum primus pater
Hos inter ortus aspicit lucem Lares
O ter leatam Stantonis villae casam,
Cui cuorots possunt invidere marmora.

He was the youngest son of Roger Sheldon and born July 19, 1598.

The father of archbishop Sheldon was a menial servant to Gilbert earl of Shrewsbury, who gave him his name. The Archbishop redeemed the family estate, which his elder brother had consumed, for the children of the deceased. Though Sheldon was very assiduous in his professional duties, he placed the chief part of religion in the practice of a good life.

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Note of comment:

There are two conflicting statements in that biography — If, Roger Sheldon, father of Gilbert the Archbishop, was a 'menial servant' of the Earl of Shrewsbury, he would not have had an estate to leave to his eldest son, Hugh, to waste, which Gilbert could redeem for the use of the children of said eldest brother.

Therefore, it would seem that he would have been a vassal or tenant of the Earl of Shrewsbury — holding, or enfeoffed, of a manor for a fee. Said fee including so many days service to the Earl.

Parish Register — Ellastone, Staffordshire

Stanton is best known as the birthplace of Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury; who was born in 1598. His father was a servant of the Earl of Shrewsbury, who stood god-father to him and sent him to Trinity College, Oxford. He was elected Fellow of All Souls, and having attracted the attention of Lord Keeper Coventry, was by him introduced to Charles I, whose chaplain he became. He was appointed Warden of All Souls from which he was ejected in 1648, and imprisoned at Oxford for six months. After his liberation he retired to Snelston. On the return of Charles II, Sheldon met him at Canterbury, and by the King was made Dean of the Chapel Royal, and when Juxon was translated to the See of Canterbury, was appointed Bishop of London, and on Archbishop Juxon's death in 1663 was translated to Canterbury. He died at Lambeth in 1677, and lies buried in Croydon Church, where a monument was erected to him by his nephew, Sir Joseph Sheldon, son of his elder brother, Ralph. The Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford perpetuates his name.

Sheldon Entries in Parish Register, Ellastone, Staffordshire

1554 Oct. 21	Hugh Sheldon and Dorothe Hurte	Mar.
1557 Apr. 14	Thomas, s. of Hughe Sheldon	Bap.
1558 Oct. 9	Alice, d. of " "	"
1561 Aug. 11	Roger, s. of Hugh Sheldon	"
1565/6 Nov. 27	Hughe, s. of Hughe "	"
1579 May 24	Dorothe, d. of Thomas and Johane Sheldon	Bap.
1580 July 23	Dorothe, wife of Hugh Sheldon	Buried
1580 Sept. 15	Johane, d. of Thomas Sheldon	Bap.
1582 Sept. 2	Elizabeth, d. of Thomas "	"
1584/5 Jan. 17	Ellenour, d. of Thomas "	"
1587 Apr. 1	Roger, s. of Thomas and Johane Sheldon	Bap.
1589 June 29	William, s. of " " " "	"
1591 Nov. 17	Ralphe, s. of " " " "	"
1592 Nov. 27	Roger (torn out) (Sheldon?) and Helen Woodcooke	Mar.
1593 Aug. 12	Hughe, s. of Roger Sheldon	Bap.

The 21st day of Marche 1593, beinge Thursday was a terrible wynde which blew down houses and trees and did very much harme in Englande.

1594 July 14	Hugh, s. of Thomas Sheldon	Bap.
1595 Aug. 1	Ralphe, s. of Roger Sheldon	"
1596/7 June 22	Ann, d. of Thomas Sheldon	"
**1598 June 22	Gylbarte, s. of Roger Sheldon	"

Added in red ink: "This Gilbert Sheldon was made Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 1663, died in the year 1677."

1598/9 Jan. 19	Johane, d. of Thomas Sheldon	Buried
1598/9 Jan. 21	John, s. of Thomas Sheldon	Bap.
1602/3 Jan. 13	Thomas, s. of Thomas and Johane Sheldon	Bap.
1617 Mar. 16	William, s. of Roger and Janne Sheldon	"
1624 Dec. 29	Jonne, wife of Thomas Sheldon	Buried
1627 May 28	Gilbert, s. of Mr. Ralph and Marie Sheldon	"
1627/8 Feb. 6	Catherine, d. of John Sheldon	"
1628 Dec. 28	Joseph, s. of Ralph and Marie, gent.	"
1628/9 Jan. 28	Hugh, s. of Roger and Janne Sheldon	"
1630/1 Feb. 21	Benjamin, s. of Mr. Raph and Marie Sheldon	"
1631 Apr. 18	Ellen, wife of Mr. Roger Sheldon	Buried
1631/2 Feb. 12	Jonne, d. of Roger and Jane Sheldon	Bap.
1631/2 Feb. 25	Benjamin Sheldon	Buried
1632 Sept. 13	Daniell, s. of Mr. Raph and Marie Sheldon	"
1633/4 Jan. 16	Hugh, s. of Thomas Sheldon	Buried
1634 Nov. 2	Janne, d. Raph and Janne Sheldon	"
1636 May 18	Janne, D. " " " "	"
1635 Nov. 22	Thomas Sheldon	Buried
1636 June 6	Katherine Bott, servant to Mr. Hugh Sheldons	Buried small pox
1636 May 18	Janne d. of Roger Sheldon	Buried
1637 May 24	Ann, d. of Mr. Roger and Janne Sheldon	Bap.
1637/8 Jan. 11	Mr. Hugh Sheldon	Buried
1638 Apr. 15	Abelina, d. of Raph Sheldon	"
1638 July 6	Roger, s. of Thomas Sheldon (Died very suddenly)	"
1638/9 Jan. 14	William Sheldon and Alice Barton	Mar.
Jan. 26	Henrie, s. of Thomas Sheldon and Ann Tetlow	Bap.
Jan. 30	Henrie Sheldon " " "	Buried
1646 Sept. 13	John, s. of William Sheldon	Bap.
1654 Mar. 31	Thomas Sheldon, of Stanton	Buried

It appears from positive evidence now, that even the father of Gilbert Sheldon, the Archbishop — who made more than one retreat to Derbyshire during the troubled times of the Interregnum -- was but a menial, and that his education as a lad was owing to the Talbots. This famous divine had talents which should have made him the leader of an administration, not the chief dignity of the Church. After taking his degree and fellowship at Oxford, and becoming domestic chaplain to Lord Keeper Coventry, his divinity partook so much of Politics that it secured him a Chaplaincy to Charles I. It was to Gilbert Sheldon that this monarch (when disaster had come upon him from the Rebellion) solemnly vowed (and attested his vow by signature) that he would restore all Improvements to the Church which had been taken away from it. The words of the vow can be read in Ecard's History. The original document was preserved by Sheldon for 13 years underground. Parliament threw the Chaplain into the Tower, and afterwards released him on his word of honour, and then it was that he came to Derbyshire. At the Restoration he was made Dean of the Royal Chapel and Bishop of London. It was at his house in the Savoy that the celebrated wrangle was held between the Church and the presbyterians over the Liturgy, which resulted in the Act of Uniformity and Black St. Bartholomew's Day. Sheldon was very soon after that translated to the See of Canterbury. But it is the munificence of Gilbert Sheldon which should be remembered. Many of us have seen the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford: some of our hearts may have beat the quicker at its mention, but we ever forget the old Gilbert; how he employed Wren to build it at a cost of more than twelve thousand pounds, and how he left 2000 pounds more to keep it in repair. Then, again, he never budged from London during the Plague, which fact is worthy of note.

The Concise Dictionary of National Biography

Founded in 1882 by George Smith

Pub. Oxford University Press, London 1939

Sheldon, Gilbert (1598-1677) Archbishop of Canterbury; M.A. Trinity College, Oxford 1620, B.A. 1617; incorporated at Cambridge 1619; fellow at All Soul's College, Oxford 1622, D.D. 1634; chaplain to lord Keeper Coventry; vicar of Hackney, 1633, rector of Newington 1639; warden of All Soul's College, Oxford, 1626-48 restored to the wardenship 1659; friend of Hyde and Falkland; took part in Isle of Wight; imprisoned at Oxford, 1648; became bishop of London, dean of the Chapel Royal, London, and master of the Savoy, London, 1660, the Savoy conference being held at his lodgings; virtually primate during Juxon's old age; Archbishop of Canterbury, 1663-1677; prominent advisor to Charles II; severe against dissenters, but frequently protected them; remained at Lambeth during the plague; active and liberal promoter of rebuilding St. Paul's Cathedral, London; greatly interested in church beyond the seas; as chancellor of Oxford built the Sheldonian Theatre (1669) at his own expense, and encouraged Anthony à Wood.

Miscellaneous Data

Gilbert Sheldon is buried in Croydon in the church of
"John the Baptist"

It was Archbishop Sheldon who recovered Laud's papers and he commissioned William Sanford to translate and edit Laud's Diary.

Biography taken from "The National Biography" - Earliest Times to 1900
by George Smith pub. 1917

Gilbert Sheldon (1598-1677) archbishop of Canterbury, youngest son of Roger Sheldon of Stanton, Staffordshire, was born at Stanton, in the parish of Ellastone, on the 19 July 1598 (there is still an inscription by Bishop Hackett in the room where he was born). The father, although of ancient family, was a "menial servant" (Wood Athenae Oxon. 4-854) of Gilbert Talbot, seventh earl of Shrewsbury. He matriculated at Oxford on 1 July 1614, graduated B.A. from Trinity College on 27 Nov. 1617, and M.A. on 28 June 1620. In 1619 he was incorporated at Cambridge. In 1622 he was elected fellow of All Souls's, from which college he took the degree of B.D. on 11 Nov. 1628, and D.D. on 25 June 1634. In 1622 he was ordained, and shortly afterwards he became domestic chaplain to Thomas, lord Coventry, the lord keeper (g.v.). On 26 Feb. 1632 he was installed prebendary of Gloucester, in 1633 he became vicar of Hackney, and in 1636 rector of both Oddington, Oxford, and Ickford, Buckinghamshire (of the latter the crown was patron) and in 1639 rector of Nevington, Oxford. He had early been introduced by the lord keeper to the king, who appointed him his chaplain and 'designed' him to be master of the Savoy and dean of Westminster, 'but political disturbances hindered his settlement in them'. (Wood)

In his earlier years he appears to have been opposed to the 'American party' (Wood, *Annals*, 1623) and in 1635 he was prominent in resisting, though unsuccessfully, Laud's appointment of Jeremy Taylor to a fellowship at All Souls' (see Burrows, *Worthies of All Souls'* pp. 142 rqq.) But he was at least as early as 1635 a strong anti-puritan (Cal. State Papers, Dom. 16-26 April 1635). He was soon well known to the leaders of church and state, and was the friend of both Falkland and Hyde. The latter (Clarendon Life, P.25) says of him at this time that his "learning, gravity and prudence had in that time raised him to such a reputation that he then was looked upon as very equal to any preferment that the church could yield ... and Sir Francis Wenman would often say when the Doctor resorted to the conversation at Lord Falkland's house (at Great Tew), as he frequently did, that Dr. Sheldon was born and bred to be Archbishop of Canterbury." In Mar. 1626 he was elected warden of All Souls' on the death of Dr. Astley. He had already made the acquaintance of Laud and he occasionally corresponded with him on college business on matters concerning the University and on the conversion of Chillingworth from Roman catholicism. In 1634 and 1640 he was provice-chancellor. In 1638 he was appointed on the commission of visitation of Merton College, on the report of which several drastic reforms were inaugurated. (Broddrick, *Memorials of Merton College*, pp.78sqq; Laud, *Works*, v.546 sqq.) He heartily approved Hyde's conduct in parliament. On 6 Nov. 1640 he wrote to him, "If any good success happen in parliament, they must thank men of your temper and prudence for it." (cal. of Clarendon State Papers, i.209). After the War began he was from time to time in attendance on the king. He was summoned to take part in the negotiations for the treaty of Uxbridge in Feb. 1644, and Clarendon states that he there agreed so earnestly in favour of the Church as to draw on him the envy and resentment of the parliamentarians, which they made him afterwards sufficiently feel. It was on 13 April 1646, when he was in attendance on Charles in Oxford, that the king wrote the vow to restore all church lands and lay impropriations held by the crown if he should be restored to his 'just kingly rights'. This was entrusted to Sheldon's keeping and preserved by him 'thirteen years underground' (Le Neve, *Lives of Bishops since the Reformation*, ppl78-9). Sheldon was with the king again in 1647 at Newmarket, and later in the Isle of Wight.

Many letters during the years before the king's death show him in constant communication with the leaders of the royalist party, especially with Hyde (ib.) who made him one of the trustees of his papers. On 30 March 1648 he was ejected from the wardenship of All Souls' by the parliamentary visitors, after a stout fight against their pretensions. He had been member of a delegacy which had re-

sisted them at their first coming in 1647. On 12 April 1648 the visitors signed an order for his commitment to custody for refusal to surrender his lodgings, and he was removed by force. In prison at Oxford there was 'great resort of persons to him' (Wood, Annals), and he was ordered to be removed to Wallingford Castle with Dr. Henry Hammond (a.v.) but the governor refused to receive him. He was set free at the end of 1648 on condition that he did not come within five miles of Oxford or the Isle of Wight, where the king then was. He retired to Snelston in Derbyshire, and remained there or stayed with friends in Staffordshire and Nottinghamshire till the Restoration. He was constant in subscribing and in collecting for the poor clergy and for Charles II in exile. He corresponded with Jeremy Taylor, whom he largely supported, and with Hyde, to whom he severely criticised the conduct of the exiled court. On the death of Palmer, whom the visitors had made warden of All Souls' in his stead, on Mar. 1659, he was quietly reinstated. Already he had been mentioned for one of the vacant bishoprics, when it had been proposed to consecrate secretly in 1655, (July 1655, ib,iii 50, letter of Dr. Duncombe to Hyde).

At the Restoration he met Charles at Canterbury, was made dean of the Chapel Royal, and was from the first high in favour. 'You are the only person about his Majesty that I have confidence in, 'wrote the aged Brian Duppa, bishop of Salisbury, to him on 11 Aug. 1660, 'and I persuade myself that as none hath his ear more, so none is likely to prevail on his heart more, and there was never more need of it' (Tanner MSS in Bodl. Libr. vol XI.f.17). On 9 Oct. 1660 he was elected bishop of London in the place of Juxon. He was confirmed on 23 Oct. and consecrated on 28 Oct in Henry's chapel. He was also made master of the Savoy and sworn of the privy council. The Savoy conference was held at his lodging in the Savoy, and was opened by him with a direction that 'nothing should be done Till all the puritan objections had been formulated and considered. During the conference he appeared rarely and did not dispute, but was understood 'to have a principal hand in disposing'. He is said to have been strongly in favour of the enforcement of the uniformity laws, and his papers contain many letters from Statesmen, justices, and bishops on this point (Sheldon Papers, especially letters from English, Scots, and Irish bishops) A commission was issued to him to consecrate the new Scots bishops, 'so that it be not prejudicial to the privileges of the church of Scotland'; and he practically exercised the powers of the archbishopric, owing to Juxon's age and infirmities. On the primate's death he was elected his successor (cone d'elire, 6 June 1663, election 11 Aug., confirmation 31 Aug., restoration of temporalities 9 Sept.)

From this date his political activities increased. The state papers contain many references to his appointments as arbiter in difficult cases of petitions entrusted to his hands by the king, especially in connection with the navy. One of his first acts was to arrange with Clarendon that the clergy should no longer tax themselves in convocation. He built at Oxford, entirely at his own expense, the theatre known as "The Sheldonian", for the performance of the 'Act, or Encaenia'. It was opened on 9 July 1669. The total cost was 12,339 £. 4s. 4d. and 2000 £ was spent also in 'buying lands whose revenue might support the fabrick.' Wren, who was the architect told Evelyn that the cost was 25,000 £. Sheldon had long taken particular care of the antiquities of the university..... His relations with the university throughout appear to have been liberal and judicious both as visitor and as chancellor. In spite of his severity against dissenters and his share in the passing of the Corporation Act, he seems to have at times promoted, and frequently protected, nonconforming divines. Though he was long one of the prominent of the king's advisers, he did not hesitate to reprove Charles for his adultery and to refuse him the holy communion on that account. In 1667 his remonstrances are said to have cost him Charles's favour.

He was no less assiduous in the discharge of the spiritual duties of his office. His papers show him diligent in reproofing bishops for neglect of duty, in encouraging the deserving and in investigating all cases of hardship or scandal. During the plague he remained at Lambeth 'all the time of the greatest danger, and with his diffusive charity preserved great numbers alive that would have perished by their necessities; and by his affecting letters to all the bishops procured great sums to

be returned out of all parts of his province.' He was equally urgent in collecting for the rebuilding of St. Paul's, giving himself over 4,000 £ before and after the fire. In supervision of the work of the English church beyond the seas he showed an especial activity; one of his last acts was to interest himself in provision for the spiritual needs of Maryland (Cal. State Papers, Colonial Ser., America and the West Indies, passion); and in Scotland and Ireland he was the strongest supporter of the episcopalian establishment. During the whole of his life he was extraordinarily generous, and it is stated that he gave to public pious uses, in acts of munificence and charity' 72,000 £. He died at Lambeth on 9 Nov. 1677, and was buried at Croyden, where he had chiefly resided during the last years of his life. A monument was erected to his memory in Croyden parish church by his nephew, Sir Joseph Sheldon (lord mayor of London 1676). He was unmarried.

Sheldon was placed at the head of the English Church at a very critical time, for the Restoration settlement addicted all her future history. If he did nothing to minimise the differences between her and the protestant sects, he certainly confirmed her in the course which she had pursued since the Reformation. Characteristic of this position is the impetus which he gave to the preservation of the memory of Archbishop Laud (See Lau, works, iii 122, Wharton, Preface to the History of the Troubles and Trial).

Of his character contemporaries give very different judgement. He was no doubt a high tory of the school of Clarendon, and thus was never popular with the king's favourites or with the Whigs. Burnet speaks very bitterly of him as seeming 'not to have a deep sense of religion, if any at all,' and as speaking of it 'most commonly as of an engine of government and a matter of policy.' But it must be remembered that he was the warm friend of Clarendon, Falkland, Sanderson, Hammond, and Juxon, the spiritual counsellor of Charles I, and the honest advisor of his son. His chaplain, Samuel Parker (1640-1688) (qv) describes him as a man of undoubted piety, 'but though he was very assiduous at prayers, yet he did not set so great a value on them as others did, nor regard so much worship as the use of worship, placing the chief point of religion in the practice of a good life'. And he would say to the 'young noblemen and gentlemen who by their parents' commands resorted daily to him, "Let it be your principal care to become honest men ... and moral men". Of his high practical ability there is no doubt; even Burnet speaks of him as 'very dexterous', and of 'great quickness of apprehension and a very true judgement.'

Ecclesiastically he belonged to the school of Andrewses and Laud, 'holding fast the true orthodox profession of the catholique faith of Christ ... being a true member of His catholique within the communion of a living part thereof, the present church of England (Will in Codrington Library, All Souls College, Oxford).

His only published work is a sermon preached before the king at Whitehall on 28 June 1660 (for his manuscript remains at Lambeth see Wood, Athenae Oxon. ed. Bliss, iv, 858) Several portraits of him exist, notably one in the hall of All Souls' College, Oxford, which represents him as a thin man with a high colour and small dark moustache, and another at Bothwell Castle, Lanarkshire, the property of the Earl of Home. There are engravings by Loggan and Vertus.

(Much of the authority for the life of Sheldon in detail is still in manuscript, notably the Clarendon State Papers in the Bodleian, and the Sheldon Papers and Dolben Papers preserved in the same library. Of printed sources the most important are mentioned in the text. The most complete vindication based on manuscript, is that of Prof. Burrows Worthies of All Souls')

Prepared by The Rev. W. H. Hutton, B.D.

Early Anecdotes and Sheldon Stories

Massachusetts

In 1630 the Sachem who governed the country around Boston had his seat on a hill near Squantum. It lies in the shape of an Indian arrow-head which was called in their language - "Mos". A hill in the Indian tongue is "Wachusett". Hence the great sachem's seat was called "Moswachusett" from whence the province received the name -- "Massachusetts".

Andover, Mass.

It wasn't much to start with -- just a lot of land, forest land most of it -- worth to the Indians only 6 shillings and a coat.

Town est. 1646 - May - Indian Chief Cutshumache

In a centennial history of the town was found the following:

"Jewish history was made when Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; Andover history began when Cutshumache, Sagamore of Massachusetts sold his for six English pounds and a coat."

Dorchester, Mass.

Capt. Clap gave a vivid picture of the privation of the early colony in this description:

"Oh, ye hunger that many suffered and saw no hope in an Eye of Reason to be supplied, only by clams and Muscles and Fish -- and Bread was so Scarce, that sometimes ye very crusts of my Father's Table would have been very Sweet unto me; And when I could have meal and Water and Salt, boiled together, it was so good, who could wish for better? And it was not accounted a strange thing in Those Days to Drink Water, and to eat Samp or Homine without Butter or Milk. Indeed it would have been a strange thing to see a piece of Roast Beef, Mutton, or Veal, tho' it was not long before there was Roast Goat."

Records of the First Church at Dorchester, Mass.
in New England 1631 - 1734

Dorchester, South Carolina

From Dorchester, Mass. in the year 1695, some pious, enterprising persons went to Dorchester, So. Carolina, to settle the gospel there because they had heard about the spiritual destitution of that region. Early in the year 1696, they reached a site upon the Ashley river which they chose for a settlement, giving the place the name of the one they had left. The Independant or Congregational Church at Dorchester, S. C. was the first of that missionary enterprise. The house they then erected there for worship still remains. It was built a quarter of a century earlier than any other for a similar purpose in the neighborhood.

Strange as it may seem, though we can not find for sure an Isaac Sheldon in Dorchester, Mass., Rev. Mr. Sheldon preached the 150th Anniversary Discourse at Dorchester, S. Car. on Feb. 22, 1846, giving a history of the latter settlement.

Roxbury, Mass.

The second church in Roxbury was destroyed by fire in 1746. The fire caught, so the records say, from a foot-stove, and some thought it was a divine judgement upon the love of ease and luxury which was creeping into the settlement. Until this time the fire of devotion was the only warmth the old meeting-house had through the long services, although some of the worshippers would take their dogs to lie on the floor, while they put their feet upon them, the better to endure the winter's cold.

Some Interesting Vital Statistics

It is not much wonder that it is often difficult to find data on the early ancestors in America, when a marriage license was recorded in a dog license book.

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As the cattle were all grazed in a common field in the early days, each had to be marked, and in the Barnardston, Mass. Town Hall Records were the following:

Rem^u Sheldon's cattle mark was - Mark of Swallows tails in right ear.

Deacon Sheldon's mark was - Mark of crop in left ear and halfpenny inder side of right ear.

Moses Scott - a step y^e under side of right ear and slit in upper side of right.

Census Records

One genealogist in searching the Census Records found that in one family, they had named their children with an amazing collection of names:

Armenius Philadelphus

Almira Melpomena

Pleiades Arastarcus

Victor Millenius

Acravia Ammonia

and last of all was Encyclopedia Britannica

The last named, the compiler states was living unmarried at the age of 84. And the author adds, I am not surprised at her spinsterhood, for what man would want to marry an encyclopedia?

Will of Skelton Sheldon of Danvers

The inheritance of his widow, Elizabeth Sheldon, would be rather appalling to a widow of today. As for instance:

"Said widow is to hold the improvement of a fourth of the lower room; one third of the cellar that is under it, she is also to have a privilege in the chamber above said lowerroom, so much as to set a Bed, a Cafe of Draws in said chamber (if she needs it), she is also to have the use of one third of the Garret in said Dwelling house."

That was in the year 1793.

Going A-Courting in Early Days and The Dowery

It was a common thing in the late 1700s for the young people to cross the Lake of Champlain on the ice in Winter-Skating Parties. In this way Jane Sheldon of Ferrisburg, Vt., dau. of Edmund Sheldon, met and was courted by her later husband, Alanson Higby. So also did her sister Eliza Sheldon meet Levi Higby of Willsboro, N.Y., across the lake. The bride's dowery consisted of

1 Bed with furnishings

6 Chairs 1 Table

1 Cow 10 Sheep

which was a considerable dowry for a bride in those days.

They lived to celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary

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Teaching An Old Dog New Tricks

Amos Sheldon was over 80 and he thought he was weakening. He couldn't do the work that he wanted to do, got tired easily. So he called the doctor, or his wife did. After examining Amos the doc said, "Why, I don't see anything the matter with you, maybe it is your age. But, if you are bound to work all day, you will get tired along about 10 o'clock in the forenoon. I recommend you take a glass of whiskey. Get a bottle of whisky. Then take a glass the middle of the forenoon. If you get tired middle of the afternoon, take another one. That is what I'd recommend for you" he said. "You try it, and I think you'll go ahead pretty well." The Doctor picked up his medicine case and started out. Mrs. Sheldon followed. As soon as she had closed the door, she said, "Doctor, I would like to ask a question. You don't think he will contract the drink habit, do you?"

English Sheldon Quotes

When William Sheldon of Weston and Beoley died April 6, 1659 at the age of 70, there was an item of expense for the funeral of

1 s. 4d. paid for "8 pounds of piche"

It was probably for the torches, as the funeral would have been at the fashionable hour of midnight.

160 Descendants

At West Bromwich Manor on Feb. 26, 1802, Mr. John Sheldon died at the age of 102 years, leaving 9 children, 51 grand-children, 95 great grand-children, and 5 of the 4th generation.

Taken from "The Gentleman's Magazine"

The Sheldon Oak

Most of the records of the Shrewsbury family, in Shropshire, England, are spelt Carleton — many spelt Charlton — yet the old oak there is called the old "Sheldon Oak".

"About one mile and a half from Shrewsbury, where the Pool road diverges from that which leads to Oswestry, there stands an ancient decayed oak. There is a tradition that Owen Glendor ascended this tree to reconnoitre, and finding that the King was in great force, and that the Earl of Northumberland had not joined his son, Hotspur, he fell back to Oswestry, and immediately after the battle of Shrewsbury, retreated thru Wales.

Girt at bottom of tree, close to ground, is	44 ft. 3 in.
Girt at 5 feet from the ground	25 " 1 "
Girt at 8 " " " "	27 " 4 "
Height	41 " 6 "

Within the hollow of the tree, at the bottom, there is sufficient room for at least a half dozen to take a snug dinner.

Charles II Concealed in the Oak

Ralph of Beoley (died 1623 - a noble benefactor to the College of Arms) accompanied Charles II in his flight to Bosobel and was a party to his concealment in the Sheldon Oak, to the foot of which, he and three others attended their royal master.
(That is Ralph Sheldon of Beoley)

Coat of Arms

The following story is interesting, though is not authentic.

Sheldon Family tradition speaks of a boasted heraldry. An escutcheon still extant, and used by some of the Sheldons of the present day, as a seal, has the following devise and inscription: Upon the upper part of the bearing is the form of a shell-drake — Statant; upon a bar crossing the design beneath, and resting upon a broad band, are two more in the same position but with smaller contour; and still beneath another like the two last. Encircling the whole underneath, is the motto — "Hope, Sheldon to the Last."

Tradition gives the origin, as follows: In the olden time a ship was wrecked upon an island, and all on board perished excepting one Hope Sheldon. Here he lived a long time subsisting upon the flesh of the Shell-drake (which were so numerous that they were easily taken) till at last he was rescued from the island — "the loneliest in a lonely sea." and returned to his friends. From this alleged incident originated the above blazonry.

From History of the Town of Sheldon

So, for all of us

Hope, Sheldons, to the last.

