

Biography of William Macomber (1609-1670), Part 2: Dorchester, Dorset, England

By Niki Harrison McOmber,¹ ninth great grandson of William Macomber (1609-1670)

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Part 1 Synopsis: Bridport, Dorset, England.....	5
Part 2: Dorchester and Toller Porcorum, Dorset, England.....	8
Synopsis of Part 2	8
Significant Changes during the Adolescence of William	10
The Proliferation of the Printing Press.....	10
The Colonizing of British Colonial America	12
Religious Turmoil	15
The Seven-year Apprenticeship of William.....	16
Merchant and Craft Guilds in England	16
William was a member of the Coopers' Guild	17
Dorchester, Dorset, England	19
Charles I, son of James I, becomes the King of England on 27 March 1625	22
The Birth of William's Sister, Edith Macomber (1625-?).....	22
William's brother John was apparently a member of the Carpenters' Guild	24
The Birth of William's Brother, Robert Macomber (1627-1628).....	24
The Passing of William's Brothers, Thomas Macomber (1623 -1627) and Robert Macomber (1627-1628)	25
The Passing of William's Sister, Marie Macomber (1621-1632)	27
The Marriage of William and Ursilla.....	29
The Contemporary Bridport Parish Register (Notation 1 of 9).....	29
The Contemporary Prerogative Court of Canterbury (Notations 2 and 3 of 9).....	38
The Contemporary Toller Porcorum Parish Register (Notation 4 of 9)	47

¹ Nik McOmber is a retired police officer and retired accountant currently engaged in personal family history research and writing. Nik embarked on his passion for genealogy at age 20 in 1972, which was augmented in succeeding decades by training and practice in 1) evidence gathering, analysis, and presentation (police work); and 2) meticulous attention to detail (accounting). Nik currently strives to adhere to the guidelines of the *Board for Certification of Genealogists* while striving to fulfill five major objectives of this biography: 1) honor the life of William Macomber (1609-1670); 2) present evidence and well-reasoned conclusions about William's life and family; 3) dispel erroneous assertions that are prevalent in many online databases; 4) help turn the hearts of William's descendants to him and other family members; and 5) inspire other descendants of William Macomber who are more talented than this author to create many more works of sound family history.

The Contemporary Inventory of Estate of William (Notations 5 of 9)	53
The Contemporary Bond dated 8 June 1670 (Notations 6, 7, 8, and 9 of 9)	56
The Ancestry of William's wife, Ursilla Cooper	60
The Singular Person named Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?)	60
Ursilla and the Church of England	61
The Christening of Ursilla.....	61
The Early Married Life of William and Ursilla in England.....	74
The Birth of William's son, William Macomber (1634-1636)	74
The Birth of William's son, Thomas Macomber (1635-1711)	76
The Passing of William's Mother, Edith Locke (1587?-1636)	78
The Passing of William's son, William Macomber (1634-1636)	80
The Passing of William's Brother, Richard Macomber (1619-1637)	81
William and family were likely in England until January 1637	82
Chronology of Significant Events Pertinent to William Macomber	83
Part 3 Synopsis: Duxbury, Colony of Plymouth, British Colonial America	89
Part 4 Synopsis: Marshfield, Colony of Plymouth, British Colonial America.....	89
Appendix A: The Genealogical Proof Standard	90
Appendix B: Genealogical Maturity	91
Appendix C: The Old Style Julian Calendar	93
List of Images	94
Select Bibliography.....	96
Index of Select Names and Places.....	99

INTRODUCTION

In conjunction with the *Information Age* (also termed the *Computer Age*, *Digital Age*, or *New Media Age*) which has dawned during the past several years, there has been a corresponding proliferation of entities which have capitalized on the advances of the *Information Age* and facilitated family history like never before (FamilySearch, Ancestry, find my past, MyHeritage, Etc.), which in turn has resulted in a significant increase of individuals working on their family trees. And though we can loudly applaud the increased interest in and ease of family history, there is a corresponding challenge, which is that well-meaning individuals who are at Level 1 or Level 2 of Genealogical Maturity have a greater capacity to make and perpetuate mistakes like never before.²

In the past this author spent many hours, almost on a full-time basis, vigilantly monitoring his ancestors listed on FamilySearch.org and correcting errors which individuals at Level 1 and Level 2 of Genealogical Maturity were making on a regular basis, which was an almost constant battle, especially in regards to the Macomers and their in-laws in Plymouth Colony. Eventually, however, the author realized that his time could be much better spent researching and writing to promote accurate family history, which gave rise to this biography

² See *Appendix B: Genealogical Maturity*.

being written as four PDF files which individuals at Level 1 and Level 2 of Genealogical Maturity could not alter and thus mess up.³

An additional approach to advance accurate family history is for those who are at Level 1 or Level 2 of Genealogical Maturity to get themselves to Level 4 or Level 5, and then for those at Level 4 and Level 5 to apply the Genealogical Proof Standard to all family history assumptions, assertions, conclusions, and actions they post, which requires that they adequately elaborate on such for the benefit of others who can then weigh the suitability of their assumptions and changes.⁴ In the experience of this author, all actions and postings without adequate elaboration are at least dubious, and more often than not are erroneous.

Before the *information age* ‘original records’ were not readily available to family historians; instead, family historians relied on published indexes and other ‘derivative records’ and ‘authored works’ for genealogical research.⁵ Unfortunately, ‘derivative records’ and ‘authored works’ often contain errors, and for decades many errors existed in regards to William Macomber (1609-1670) and his family. However, with the advent of digital technologies, ‘original records’ are now readily available for viewing online, especially for Dorset County in southern England and Plymouth Colony in New England where William Macomber (1609-1670) lived, and as a consequence the significance of “derivative records” has greatly diminished. Unfortunately, many would-be family historians online do not give much consideration to the distinction between ‘original records’ and ‘derivative records’, and to the weight of evidence each provides, especially when the records conflict with each other. As a consequence, this biography displays images of the ‘original records’ whenever possible, and elaborates on the errors in ‘derivative records’ which can be seen with our own eyes as we compare images of the ‘original record’ with its corresponding ‘derivative record(s)’.

An important aspect of family history pertinent to William Macomber (1607-1670) is that he lived his entire life in Dorset County in southern England and in Plymouth Colony in New England where and when record keeping was a fundamental aspect of life. And significantly, all *major* extant ‘original records’ of Dorset County and Plymouth Colony have been identified and catalogued, and most have been digitized, indexed, and are readily available for research via Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org. And after an exhaustive

³ This biography is formatted for visual viewing as four PDF (Portable Document Format) files; footnoted citations are detailed by author name in the *Select Bibliography* at the end of each PDF file. General knowledge readily available from various encyclopedias is usually not cited, whereas specific assertions that are not general knowledge are cited.

⁴ See *Appendix A: The Genealogical Proof Standard*. There are five elements to the Genealogical Proof Standard, and *ALL FIVE* must exist for each assertion or conclusion to be considered proven.

⁵ For proper analysis and interpretation of genealogical evidence, the Board for Certification of Genealogists and other leading genealogical associations advise classifying all sources of family history information into one of three classifications: (1) original records, (2) derivative records, and (3) authored works. This biography uses these three classifications when presenting, analyzing, and discussing source information and evidence. In addition, for proper analysis and interpretation of evidence, information is classified as either primary or secondary *information*; often, a single source contains both primary and secondary information.

search of all available sources of information in Dorset County and Plymouth Colony, coupled with careful analysis and correlation of available evidence as detailed in this biography, it is clear that there is a singular person, William Macomber (1607-1670), who is the subject of pertinent entries in “original records” of both Dorset County and Plymouth Colony, and that there is NO credible evidence of any other plausible candidate as the subject of these entries until William Macomber “Junior” (1641?-1711) comes of age and begins to be mentioned in Plymouth Colony records.⁶ A similar situation exists for Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?). In other words, because of the advent of modern digital technologies and dedicated efforts by many individuals during the past several years, the universe of pertinent, contemporary individuals noted in Dorset County and Plymouth Colony has been made finite, which then enables entries pertinent to the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670) and his family to be identified, which in turn allows the story of William & Ursilla and their family to be told with reasonable accuracy.

This biography has been written, in large part, to facilitate and apply the Genealogical Proof Standard to all major family history conclusions about the lives of William Macomber (1609-1670) and his family; and to identify situations and assertions to which the Genealogical Proof Standard cannot be satisfied; and to post such as PDF files which cannot then be messed up by malevolent individuals or those who are at Level 1 or Level 2 of Genealogical Maturity.

Another very important consideration in regards to family history is the Old Style Julian calendar. In order to accurately interpret vital and non-vital events in the life of William Macomber and his family, a basic understanding of the Old Style Julian Calendar system that was in use in England and British Colonial America until 1752 is necessary.⁷ Otherwise, events can be easily taken out of context, misinterpreted, and misapplied, which then leads to erroneous conclusions.

This author, like everyone else, is not infallible. Therefore, if you encounter an error or concern, or have a question, please leave a comment so errors can be corrected or assertions more fully explained by this author and others. Thank you!

⁶ Two sons named William were born to William Macomber (1609-1670) and his wife Ursilla: (1) William Macomber (1634-1636) who was born and passed away in Dorset County, England, and (2) William Macomber (1641?-1711) who was born in Plymouth Colony and named in honor of the first son named William who passed away, which was the cultural norm of the time.

⁷ All dates expressed in this biography are based on the Old Style Julian Calendar system that was in use in England and British Colonial America until 1752 in which a new year starts on 25 March, which puts January, February, and most of March at the end of a year rather than at the beginning. See *Appendix C: The Old Style Julian Calendar*.

PART 1 SYNOPSIS: BRIDPORT, DORSET, ENGLAND

William Macomber (1609-1670) is a pivotal figure in Macomber/McOmber family history:⁸ he was primed from childhood for American colonization, and, as a consequence, became the first “Macomber” of record in America and one of two brothers from whom all “Macomers” born in Plymouth Colony between 1638 and 1692 are descended, which will become clearer as this biography unfolds.⁹

William lived for 60 years from 1609 to 1670 in southern England and Plymouth Colony where and when record keeping was an integral part of society; William is noted 79 or so times in extant ‘*original records*’ of southern England and Plymouth Colony.¹⁰ These 79 entries, in conjunction with other historical records, provide a distinct and apt illustration of William’s life, which is not the case for previous generations. Each of the 79 entries noted in ‘*original records*’ pertaining to William Macomber is presented and discussed in this biography, along with additional entries found in ‘*derivative records*’ and ‘*authored works*’.

⁸ During the Early Modern Era (commonly the period 1453-1789) spelling was phonetic in nature which contributed to various spellings of the *SAME* ancestral line as explained in Part 1 and further detailed in Part 4 as the descendants of William and John “Macomber” spread out from Plymouth Colony and began to appear in the records of other English colonies. As surname spelling became more standardized, several spelling variations of the same ancestral line became established which is evident in U.S. census returns from 1790 to 1990; namely, in order of frequency of the top seven spelling variations in 1990 per the United States Census Bureau: (1) Macomber, (2) McCumber, (3) McOmber, (4) Macumber, (5) McUmber, (6) McComber, and (7) Maycomber ([United States Census Bureau 1990](#)).

It is possible that a “Macomber” other than William Macomber (1609-1670) and his brother John Macomber (1613-1688) migrated from Europe to America outside of Plymouth Colony during the Colonial era; however, careful analysis shows that all “Macomers” born in Plymouth Colony are the descendants of William and John, and the vast majority, if not all, of “Macomers” in Colonial America are descendants of William and John who fanned out before and after Plymouth Colony was merged with the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1692.

⁹ All assertions noted in this biography conform to the ‘Genealogical Proof Standard’ as promulgated by leading genealogical organizations unless moderated with words such as ‘apparently’, ‘likely’, ‘reasonable to deduce’, Etc. As promulgated by leading genealogical organizations and various articles in the FamilySearch.org Wiki, to be credible, *ALL* genealogical assertions or conclusions need to be “proven” using an adequate standard of proof, which for genealogy is termed the Genealogical Proof Standard. There are five elements to the Genealogical Proof Standard, and *ALL FIVE* must exist for each assertion or conclusion to be considered proven. See Appendix A: The Genealogical Proof Standard.

It is common for family historians who are at Level 1 or Level 2 of genealogical maturity to not understand nor appreciate the Genealogical Proof Standard and other important aspects of genealogy and family history research and writing, which leads to considerable errors being perpetuated in compiled family trees. See *Appendix B: Genealogical Maturity*.

¹⁰ For proper analysis and interpretive purposes, the Board for Certification of Genealogists and other leading genealogical associations advise classifying all ***sources*** of family history information into one of three classifications: (1) original records, (2) derivative records, or (3) authored works. This biography uses these three classifications when presenting, analyzing, and discussing source information and evidence.

Original records indicate that William Macomber (1609-1670) lived at four major locations during his life:

1. Bridport, Dorset, England (which is detailed in Part 1 of this biography);
2. Dorchester and nearby Toller Porcorum, Dorset, England (which is detailed in Part 2 of this biography);
3. Duxbury Township, Colony of Plymouth, British Colonial America (which is detailed in Part 3 of this biography); and
4. Marshfield Township, Colony of Plymouth, British Colonial America (which is detailed in Part 4 of this biography).

To better appreciate Part 2 of this Biography it is helpful to review a few important aspects of William's life in Bridport that are detailed in Part 1.

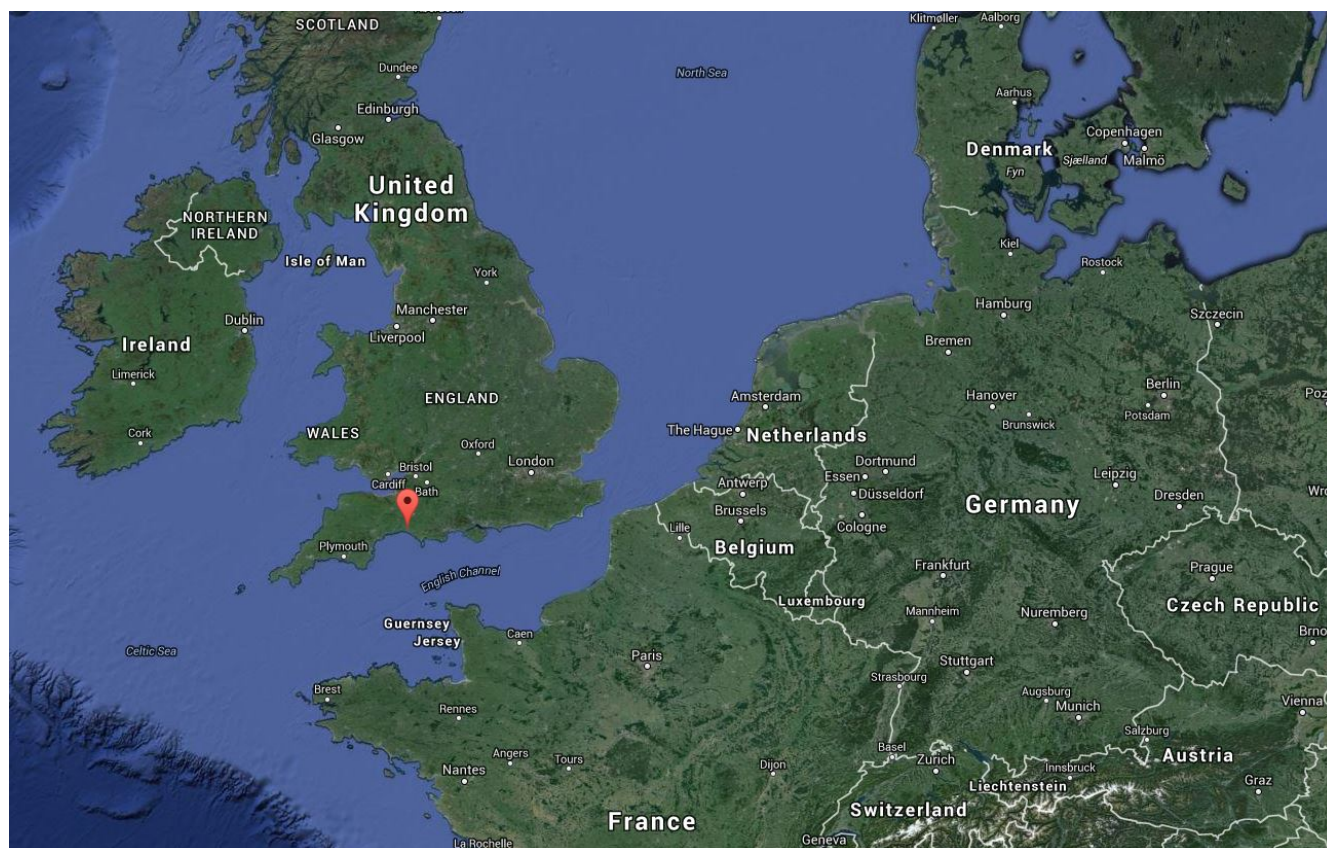


Image 1: Satellite image of Western Europe overlain with a Google map with a red marker pinpointing the relative location of Bridport, Dorset, England ¹¹

Bridport is situated about one mile inland from the English Channel at the southern edge of the island of Britain as shown in Image 1 above. As today, the English Channel was a major waterway during the life of William, and was the route used by most English ships sailing to America from eastern England after a stop at Plymouth.

There is definitive evidence that William Macomber was born in or around Bridport, Dorset, England on or between 6 March and 24 March 1609; or, in other words, circa 15

¹¹ Google Map © 2015 Nasa, TerraMetrica, map data © 2015 GeoBasis-DE/BKG, Google; used herein per *Google Maps/Earth Terms of Service* agreement dated 1 March 2012.

March 1609 in Dorset County as detailed in Part 1. William was subsequently christened in the Anglican Church of England at the Bridport Parish Church of Saint Mary on Lady's Day, 25 March 1610, which is the first day of the year 1610 in the Old Style Julian Calendar system. As detailed in Part 1, there is substantial evidence that William grew up in or around Bridport until about age 14. In 1622, when William was age 12, William's older brother Thomas passed away, which made William the oldest living child and son of William's parents, John Macomber (1585?-1650) and Edith Locke (1587-1636). William's father John was a member of the prestigious Mercers' Guild and ran a Mercer's shop in Bridport, which necessitated John being in good standing with Bridport town officials as well as with southern England's premier mercers' guild as discussed in Part 1. John's connections no doubt lead to his oldest living son William securing an apprenticeship in the Coopers' Guild in Dorchester, which is detailed in Part 2.

William's hometown of Bridport is only 15 miles west of Dorchester, and Dorchester was and is the civil and metropolitan center of Dorset County, formerly Dorset Shire, which is in southern England, and southern England is the region from whence came the majority of early English settlers in America. The region in and around Dorset was full of the families and friends of American colonizers, along with the adventurers who funded and actively promoted English colonization; hence, Dorset County was an ideal location for William and his younger brother John to be born and raised in preparation for their eventual migration to America in 1638. Stories about Jamestown (1608), Somers Isles (1609), New Plymouth (1620), Newfoundland (1620), Salem (1626), Massachusetts Bay (1629), Saybrook (1634), and other English settlements in America and the Caribbean no doubt touched the ears and penetrated the hearts of William and John as children and young adults.

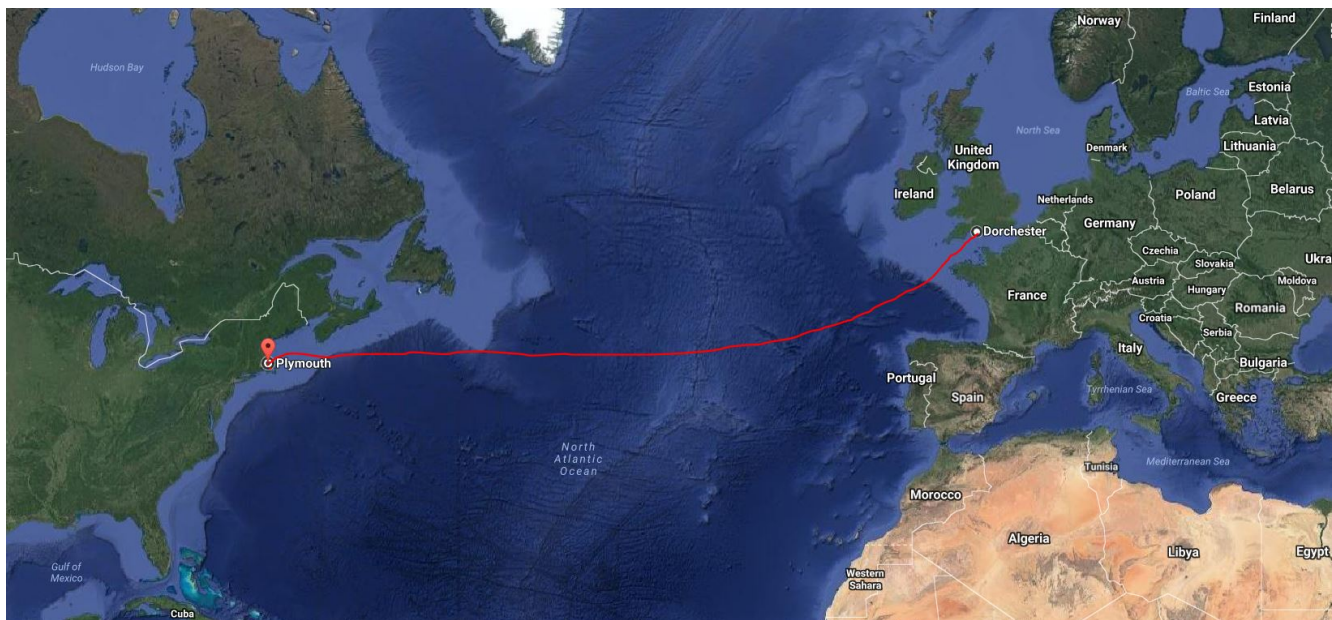


Image 2: Satellite image of the North Atlantic Ocean which shows the relative position of Dorchester, Dorset, England with the Colony of Plymouth in America.¹²

¹² Imagery © 2017 TerraMetrics, map data © 2017 Google; used herein per *Google Maps/Earth Terms of Service* agreement dated 17 December 2017.

PART 2: DORCHESTER AND TOLLER PORCORM, DORSET, ENGLAND

SYNOPSIS OF PART 2

Of the 79 or so times William Macomber (1609-1670) is noted in contemporary ‘original records’ of southern England and Plymouth Colony, the Plymouth Colony entry dated 2 April 1638 in which William Macomber is licensed to dwell in Plymouth Colony notes that William was a cooper by trade, which is substantiated by numerous subsequent Colonial entries. A cooper is a maker of watertight wooden barrels, casks, buckets, Etc., which were very important items during the early modern era and required significant skill and guild authorization to make and sell.

Per English law and norms, to be a cooper a person needed to be a member in good standing of a sanctioned cooper’s guild which by statute required a seven-year apprenticeship which typically started at age 14 and ended at age 21. During an apprenticeship, the apprentice would be “bound” by contract to a master cooper, and upon completing his apprenticeship, typically at age 21, an apprentice would become a “freeman” and would then be able to practice his trade, court a female, and eventually get married.

William turned age 14 circa 15 March 1623, which is only a few days before the end of the year 1623 in the Old Style Julian Calendar system; hence, it is likely that William entered into his apprenticeship at age 14 sometime in 1624. And seven years later in the year 1631 William would have most likely finished his apprenticeship and became a cooper and a freeman, which is corroborated by the fact that William was married in January 1633.

There are 5 contemporary ‘original records’ which note 9 times the name of the wife of William Macomber, which, when combined with other records, show using the Genealogical Proof Standard that William Macomber (1609-1670) married Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) on 16 January 1633 in the historic Bridport parish church of Saint Mary.¹³

William’s wife Ursilla is likely the daughter of Stephen Cooper of the village and parish of Ditchat about 29 miles north of the village and parish of Toller Porcorm. Toller Porcorm is a small village of about 300 inhabitants about 8 miles northeast of Bridport where Ursilla apparently went to live with relatives in her teenage years according to cultural norms. Ursilla was in the Bridport/Toller Porcorm area before she married William where she and the daughters of Thomas Knott are noted as witnesses to the will of Thomas who was the town and parish clerk of Bridport. The will of Thomas Knott is dated 2 January 1633, which is 2 weeks *before* Ursilla married William. Ursilla and Knott’s daughters were subsequently attesting witnesses to the validity of Knott’s will when it was probated on 28 September 1634 following Knott’s death, which is *after* Ursilla married William and which caused the probate record to note that Ursilla was then the wife of William Macomber.¹⁴

¹³ Some online family trees note an erroneous wife of William Macomber (1609-1670), namely Priscilla Thomas, which is discussed herein in Part 2 of this biography.

¹⁴ In the Old Style Julian Calendar system, the probate date of 23 September 1634 is only 7 months and 21 days after the will date of 2 January 1633, and only 7 months and 7 days after the marriage date of 16 January 1633.

Nine months after their marriage a male child was born to William & Ursilla who was christened William on 19 October 1634 in the village of Toller Porcorum where William & Ursilla were apparently residing for the first year or so of their marriage.

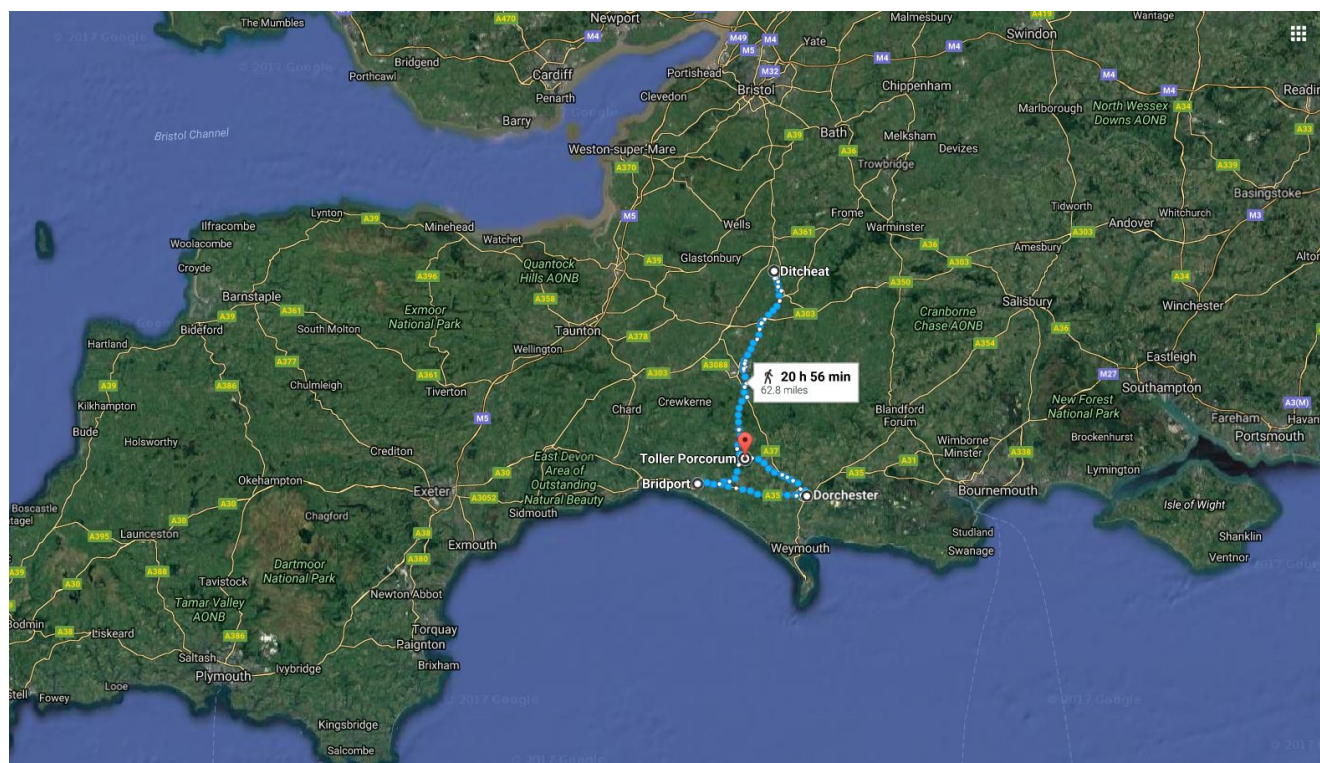


Image 3: Satellite image of southern England showing the relative locations of Ditchet which, via modern footpaths, is about 29 miles north of Toller Porcorum, which is about 8 miles northeast of Bridport, which is about 15 miles east of Dorchester, which is about 10 miles southeast of Toller Porcorum.¹⁵

About 16 months after William Junior was born to Ursilla and William Senior, a second son was born who was christened Thomas on 28 February 1635. When Thomas was six months of age, his 22-month-old brother William passed away and was interred in the cemetery of St. Mary's in Bridport on 30 August 1636, which left Thomas the oldest living son of William and Ursilla throughout their mortal lives. Thomas migrated to America with his parents, William and Ursilla, and with his uncle, John.

William and Ursilla apparently parented at least 9 children, the 2 boys in England and at least 7 additional children in America, 8 of whom reached adulthood and were contributing citizens to Plymouth Colony, some of whom married "Mayflower descendants", which is attested to by dozens of 'original records' and 'derivative records' which are detailed in Parts 3 and 4 of this biography.

¹⁵ Imagery © 2017 TerraMetrics, map data © 2017 Google; used herein per Google Maps/Earth Terms of Service agreement dated 17 December 2017.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DURING THE ADOLESCENCE OF WILLIAM

Like each generation during the past 600 years beginning with the Renaissance, William Macomber (1609-1670) grew up during a period when significant changes were occurring; three major facets of these changes are summarized in the following paragraphs.

The Proliferation of the Printing Press

The printing press was invented in the 15th century and quickly expanded to about 200 presses throughout Europe resulting in a proliferation of published knowledge like never before (see Image 4).¹⁶



Image 4: A woodcut image from 1568 showing four men working in conjunction with a printing press

It is estimated that by the year 1600 upwards of some 200 million copies of published works had been printed throughout Europe, which helped spur what has been dubbed the “scientific revolution” which was underway during William’s childhood, and which effectively “swept away the old and established the new”.¹⁷

The much revered King James Version of the *Bible* first came off the printing presses by November of 1611 when portions began to be sold on the streets of London when William was one year of age. The King James Version of the Bible became a common personal possession and guide in England and British Colonial America throughout William’s life, and was often the Bible listed in Inventories of Estate in Plymouth Colony.

English explorer and sea captain John Smith, funded by the Virginia Company of London, authored the book *A Description of New England*

which was first published in London in 1616 when William was 6 years of age. Smith authored other books and maps published at the time, all of which greatly stimulated interest in English colonization of America. Smith gave the name “New England” to the region which later became part of British Colonial America on the east coast of North America, and he gave the name “New Plymouth” to what later became Plymouth Colony. Many other names given to American places by Smith in the early 1600s still survive to the present day. Smith wrote, “*Here [in New England] every man may be master and owner of his owne labour and land... If he have nothing but his hands, he may... by industries quickly grow rich.*”¹⁸

¹⁶ The woodcut of Image 4 was made by Jost Amman (1539-1591) and is available in the public domain via Wikipedia Commons, the free media repository, and was taken from (Meggs 1998, p. 64)) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Printer_in_1568-ce.png

¹⁷ (Cohen 1976)

¹⁸ (Cressy 1987, 99).

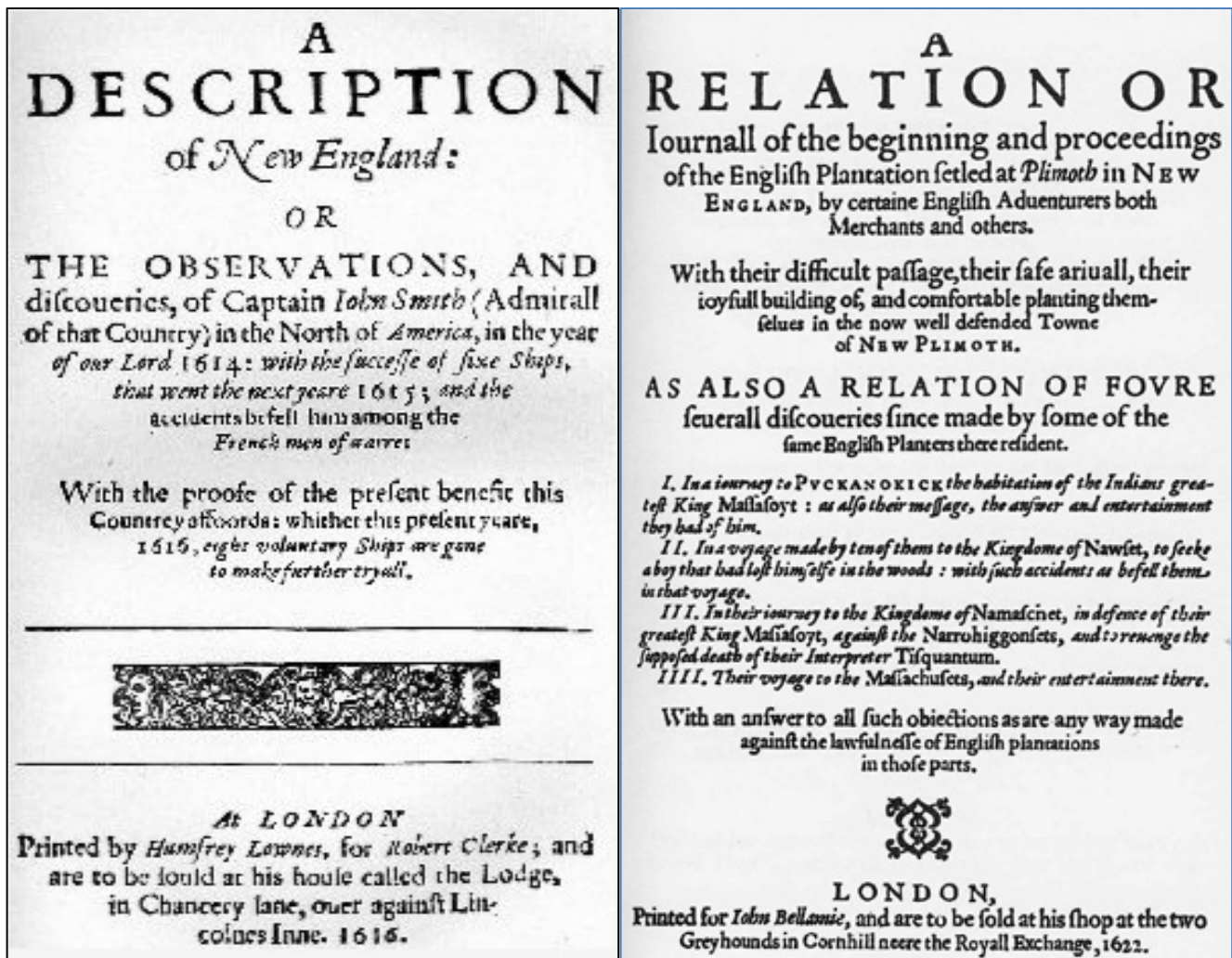


Image 5: Images of the title pages of Captain John Smith's book published in 1616 (left) and Edward Winslow's book published in 1622 (right).

There were several dozen publications in England which spurred investment and colonization in America besides those of John Smith. For example, Edward Winslow's book about Plymouth Plantation published in 1622 when William was age 12 was widely disseminated in southern England. The title page of Winslow's book shown above in Image 5 is informative and is transcribed below (spelling and punctuation modernized):

A Relation or journal of the beginning and proceedings of the English Plantation settled at Plymouth in New England, by certain English Adventurers both merchants and others. With their difficult passage, their safe arrival, their joyful building of, and comfortable planting themselves in the now well defended Town of New Plymouth. As also a relation of four several discoveries since made by some of the same English Planters there resident. ...1622.

It seems unreasonable to think that William and his wife Ursilla and brother John were unaware of Edward Winslow's 1622 book about Plymouth Colony before they made the monumental, life-changing voyage to Plymouth Colony in 1638; it seems much more likely that they were well aware of Winslow's book and its contents, and likely owned a copy of the book which they studied carefully and discussed frequently in the months preceding their departure from England.

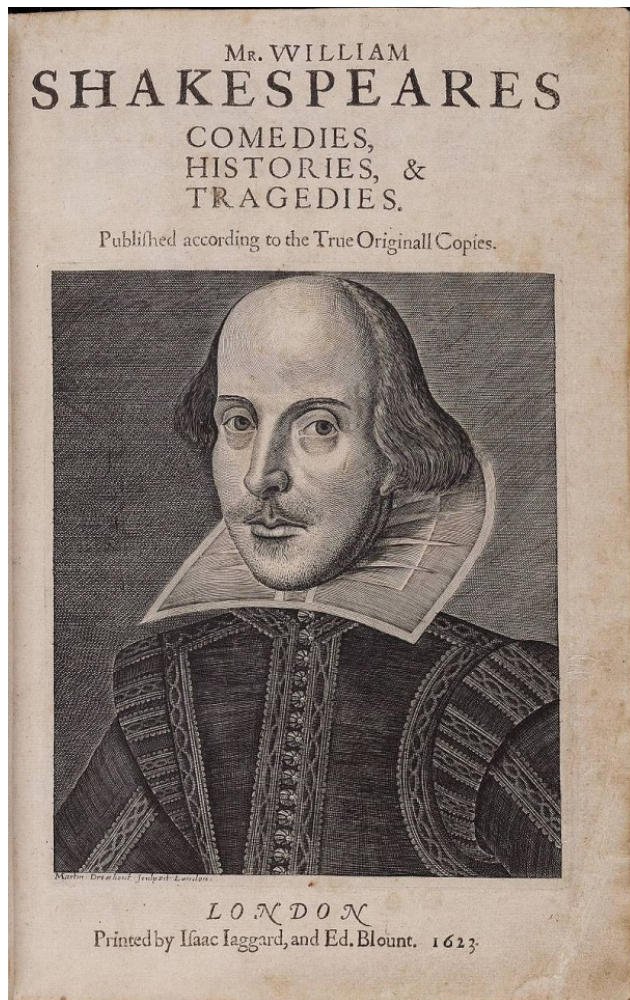


Image 6: Image of the front page of the 1623 publication containing many of Shakespeare's works.

The free market system functioned fairly well during the life of William Macomber (1609-1670) in southern England. In addition to publications promoting investment and colonization of British Colonial America during William's youth, many profitable religious, scientific, political, and literary publications surfaced as well, including the works of William Shakespeare (1564-1616) who is widely regarded as the "greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist". During the life of William Macomber (1609-1670) many of Shakespeare's 39 plays were profitably performed by various theatrical troops in several theaters in London, and likely in Dorchester. One wonders if William's parents, who were fairly well-off, and perhaps some of their children, attended a theater and watched one or more of Shakespeare's plays. In 1623 when William Macomber (1609-1670) was 13-years-of age many of Shakespeare's "Comedies, histories, and tragedies" were published.

Each week during the life of William Macomber (1609-1670) in southern England printing presses churned out profitable books, pamphlets, newspapers, and flyers.

The Colonizing of British Colonial America

English colonization of America was markedly different from Spanish, Portuguese, and other monarchial exploits in the "New World" due mainly to the Magna Carta Libertatum which was passed into law in England in the year 1215 and modified in subsequent years as discussed in Part 1 of this biography. The Magna Carta limited English monarchs from raising taxes for colonization and allowed joint stock companies and other proprietary entities of "the people", with authorization from the Crown, to form, invest, explore, promote, and colonize the "New World" and to justly benefit therefrom. During the life of William Macomber (1609-1670) several English companies promoted various ventures in the "New World" including the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Company of Plymouth, the Dorchester Company, the New England Company, the Massachusetts Bay Company, the British East India Company, the Society of Merchant Venturers, the Somers Isles Company, the London and Bristol Company, and the Plymouth Council for New England.

The first *successful* English settlement in America was that of Jamestown in 1607 funded by the Virginia Company of London. As detailed in Part 1 of this biography, the founding and development of Jamestown paralleled the courtship and marriage of William's parents, John Macomber and Edith Locke, and the subsequent siring, birth, and growth of

William Macomber (1609-1670). Following Jamestown, other successful English settlements in America followed. The major English settlements in the “New World” during William’s early life in southern England are shown below.

- **Jamestown** – first settled exclusively by males in 1607 funded by the Virginia Company of London, floundered greatly, and then on 10 June 1610, which was called “The Day of Providence”, Jamestown received further assistance and began to prosper as families arrived starting when William was 3-months-of-age.
- **Somers Isles (Bermuda)** – first settled by individuals bound for Jamestown in 1609 funded by the Virginia Company of London just before the birth of William; Somers Isles was administered by the Virginia Company of London until 1614 when the Somers Isles Company took over when William was 4-years-of-age.
- **Plymouth** – first settled by Puritan Separatists in 1620 funded initially by the Virginia Company of London when William was 10-years-of-age; was subsequently granted land patents by the Plymouth Council for New England in 1621 and 1630 when William was 11-year-of-age and 20-years-of-age.
- **Gloucester** – first settled by Puritans from Dorset County in 1623 recruited by John White seated in Dorchester and funded by the Dorchester Company when William was 13-years-of-age; the Gloucester settlement floundered and settlers moved to a new location subsequently called Salem but without legal authority in 1626 when William was 16-years-of-age and likely an apprentice in Dorchester.
- **Salem** – formally established by Puritans mostly from the counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset recruited by John White seated in Dorchester in 1628 funded by the New England Company when William was age 18 and likely in Dorchester;
- **Massachusetts Bay** – formally established in 1629 by Puritans, many of whom were recruited from the counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset by John White of Dorchester funded by the Massachusetts Bay Company (formerly the New England Company) when William was age 19 and likely an apprentice in Dorchester;
- **New Scotland** – (including Port Royal) successfully settled by Scotts in 1629 as a proprietary colony granted to and funded by Sir William Alexander when William was 19-years-of-age, but New Scotland was relinquished to France by England’s King Charles I in 1632 when William was age 22;
- **Maryland** – formally settled by English Catholics seeking religious refuge in 1632 as a proprietary colony granted to and funded by Cecil Calvert, 2nd Baron Baltimore, when William was 22-years-of-age;
- **Saybrook** – formally settled by Puritans in 1634 as a proprietary colony granted to and funded by John Winthrop, the Younger, when William was 24-years-of-age;
- **Connecticut** – informally settled by Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636 initially as a self-funded rogue settlement outside of any Royal Charter when William was 26-years-of-age;
- **Providence** – informally settled by dissident Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636 initially as a self-funded rogue settlement outside of any Royal Charter when William was 26-years-of-age.

- **Aquidneck Island (Rhode Island)** – informally settled by dissident Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 initially as a self-funded rogue settlement outside of any Royal Charter when William was 27-years-of-age. William's brother John at age 24 will join a contingent of this settlement on Aquidneck Island in the spring of 1638 when William is 28-years-of-age.
- **New Haven** – informally settled by Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 as a self-funded rogue settlement outside of any Royal Charter when William was 27-years-of-age.



Image 7: Map of the east coast of North America showing early European settlements.¹⁹

Increasingly throughout William's early life of 28 years in southern England, hundreds of individuals from southern England migrated to America. Most of the English settlements in America were founded by Puritans and Catholics seeking religious freedom from the Church of England; however, many subsequent settlers from England simply wanted to take

¹⁹ Image in the public domain via Trinity University
<http://www.trinityhistory.org/AmH/images/05Eurosettlement16th.jpg>

advantage of opportunities afforded to them in America, which seems to be the case for most of the ensuing settlers to Plymouth Colony after 1623. Plymouth Colony was not governed or marketed as a strict religious colony as was other English colonies including the Massachusetts Bay Colony seated at Dorchester, the forerunner of Boston, directly north of Plymouth; due to past negative experiences with religious extremists, outspoken religious zealots from Massachusetts Bay were not allowed to settle in Plymouth Colony, but had to establish new colonies at Providence, New Haven, and on Aquidneck Island instead. As a consequence, Plymouth Colony grew somewhat slowly after its initial founding, and it is not an insignificant fact that the majority of ensuing settlers to Plymouth Colony were from the southern England counties of Devon, Dorset, and Somerset. According to Aaron J. Palmer,²⁰

“Migration from England allowed the colony [of Plymouth] to grow, albeit slowly. In 1624 Plymouth Colony’s population stood at 124. By 1637 it reached 549.”

There is no definitive evidence which indicates why William and family migrated to Plymouth Colony in the spring of 1638 as did other Plymouth Colony settlers from southern England, but all of the available evidence in England and in Plymouth Colony suggests that it was not due to major dissatisfaction with the Church of England.

Religious Turmoil

There was significant religious turmoil taking place in England and throughout Europe during the life of William Macomber (1609-1670). The Roman Catholic Church grew to be the dominant Christian church in Europe, eventually being embraced by most Europeans and European monarchs in the centuries that followed. Opposition to Catholicism grew and in the year 1517 a Protestant Reformation movement against the Catholic Church caught hold and expanded greatly, resulting in several Protestant religions emerging. During the life of William, England and Wales were officially Anglican, Scotland was officially Presbyterian, and Ireland was mostly Catholic. Several of the other European nations were Protestant and the remainder were Catholic, which led to the “Thirty Years’ War” which formally began on 23 May 1618 when the newly elected Roman Emperor Ferdinand II attempted to impose Catholicism on his “dominions”. William was 8-years-of-age in May 1618. The Thirty Years’ War formally ended when William was in Marshfield in Plymouth Colony. It is estimated that eight million Europeans, mostly Catholics, perished in the Thirty Years’ War from military engagements, local violence, famine, and plague directly related to the war.

In England, The Church of England was the dominant state religion during William’s life, but increasingly Puritans –religionists who wanted to purify the Church of England– gained influence. John White, a moderate Puritan and a rector in 1 of 3 parishes in Dorchester, was a major recruiter in the adjoining counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset for Puritan colonization in America when William was likely an apprentice in Dorchester from 1624 to 1631, which is discussed later in this biography. In 1633 England’s King Charles I appointed the zealot William Laud as the new Archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Laud embarked on a campaign to rid England from Puritans and Scotland from Presbyterians, which led to “The Great Migration” of thousands of Puritans migrating to the Massachusetts Bay Colony and other American locations to avoid persecution.

²⁰ (Palmer 2003)

THE SEVEN-YEAR APPRENTICESHIP OF WILLIAM

Even though William Macomber (1609-1670) grew up in southern England during a period when significant changes were taking place and the monopolistic nature of local guilds was being challenged and diminished, the legal and traditional norm of apprenticeships was still being practiced throughout England during the teen years of William and his younger brother John. As a consequence, William and John, as youth, would have embarked on a vocation at or near the young age of 14 as summarized in the following paragraphs.

Merchant and Craft Guilds in England

Following the Norman Conquest of England in the year 1066 AD, the system of merchant and craft guilds that was prevalent in continental Europe became infused into the British Isles. Under the guild system, individual guilds were granted exclusive rights to conduct and control particular trade and craft in specific localities and to hold and protect various trade secrets, apparatuses, tools, import and export licenses, Etc. The granting of guild rights by monarchs and their vassals and overseen by town authorities, usually in mutually beneficial “quid pro quo” arrangements, was well established via various laws and customs during the life of William and John in England and in British Colonial America.



Image 8: painting by Emile Adan (1839-1937) of a master shoe repairman and his young apprentice

Under the guild system, an individual could not sell certain goods (food, cloth, armor, Etc.) or practice certain professions (carpentry, shoe repair, metallurgy, coopery, Etc.) unless the individual was a member of a pertinent trade or craft guild. There were strict laws which protected and governed guilds, and harsh penalties were imposed on individuals who violated these laws. For example, the *Statute of Artificers and Apprentices* was enacted by the Parliament of England in 1563 which, among other laws, forbade anyone from practicing designated trades or crafts without first serving a compulsory 7-year period as an apprentice to

a sanctioned guild master such as depicted in Image 6,²¹ (though in practice the sons of “freemen” could negotiate shorter terms than seven years); reserved the superior trades and crafts for the sons of selected groups; empowered magistrates to require the poor to work in agriculture and to regulate wages in agriculture; empowered local guilds to regulate wages of urban trades and crafts; restricted movement of workers; and required apprentices to be at least 14 years of age before entering into a contracted apprenticeship.

Typically, parents of a young male would negotiate an apprenticeship with a guild master and enter into a written contract for such. Sometimes parents would be required to pay a premium for preferred trades and crafts, and typically the guild master was responsible

²¹ Reproduction of painting by Emile Adan (1839-1937); original copyright by Braun & Co., N.Y., but now in the public domain following the expiration of the original copyright.

for the room, board, clothing, education, and basic rearing of the apprentice. During the term of the contract, the apprentice would be “bound” to the master, and once the apprentice completed his apprenticeship he would no longer be “bound” and would thus become what was termed a “freeman” and was then free to earn a day’s wage for his professional services, establish himself sufficiently to support a family, court a female, and subsequently get married. Extant court records in England are full of apprenticeship litigation cases for such things as an apprentice sluffing or running off, a master being abusive or negligent, Etc.

William’s father John was a member of the Mercers’ Guild

As detailed in Part 1 of this biography, in England, London was the major seat of guild power, and starting in the early 1500s and continuing for several centuries the Mercers’ guild was considered the premier trade association in London.²² Local mercers’ guilds in southern England were affiliated with the “Worshipful Company of Mercers” of London of which King James I, King of England, was the ceremonial head.²³ London is about 145 miles northeast of Bridport. William’s father was a member of the Mercer’s Guild in Bridport where he owned and operated a Mercer’s shop which sold fine cloth and other goods.

William was a member of the Coopers’ Guild

John’s son, William Macomber (1609-1670), rather than being a mercer like his father, apparently choose the profession of coopery which is well substantiated by various original records mentioned in this biography. In particular, of the 79 or so times William Macomber (1609-1670) is noted in extant original records of southern England and Plymouth Colony, the Plymouth Colony entry dated 2 April 1638 in which William Macomber is licensed to dwell in Plymouth Colony contains significant evidence about William’s life,²⁴ namely,

- William is noted as a cooper (“coop”) by trade, which is substantiated by numerous other Colonial entries presented in Parts 3 and 4 of this biography;
- William is noted as being “of Dorchester” which is the civil and metropolitan center of Dorset County 15 miles east of William’s hometown of Bridport; Dorchester had a larger market and a major inland port in the 1600’s unlike Bridport; hence, Dorchester would have likely been the seat of guild power in Dorset County; and
- William had in his possession in America a “*testimony of his good behavior hoe [which he] hath brought with him*”, which most likely per English law and custom was a document signed by a Coopers’ Guild official in Dorchester indicating that William was in good standing (“of... good behavior”) with the Coopers’ Guild and thus legally able to bear the title of “coop” and work in the trade of coopery in England and in Plymouth Colony.

²² (The Mercers' Company 2015, Year 1515) <http://www.mercers.co.uk/700-years-history>

²³ (Williamson 1889, xxvi); and (Guild of Scholars 2006).

²⁴ (New Plymouth (Colony: Massachusetts) 1855, Volume 1, page 82). “*Willm Maycumber, of Dorchester, coop, is lycensed to dwell within this goument, at Plymouth or elsewhere, vpon the testymony of his good behauir hoe [which he] hath brought with him. Henry Madsley, of the same towne, carpenter, is also lycensed within this colony.*”

There does not appear to be any conclusive evidence why William as the oldest living child did not follow his father's footsteps in the premier mercer trade. Perhaps the mercers' guild was already well established and well represented in Bridport and Dorset County, or perhaps William already had his sights set for America in 1623/24 at age 14 as many other residents of southern England did at the time, and he was aware that being a cooper would be a much better profession in America than being a mercer.

Typically, by law, in order to be a cooper, William would have had to complete a seven-year apprenticeship, and also by law William would have had to be at least age 14 to enter into such an apprenticeship. William turned 14 years of age circa 15 March 1623, and in the Old Style Julian Calendar system in which a new year began on March 25th, William would have been age 14 for a few days of 1623 and then for most of 1624.

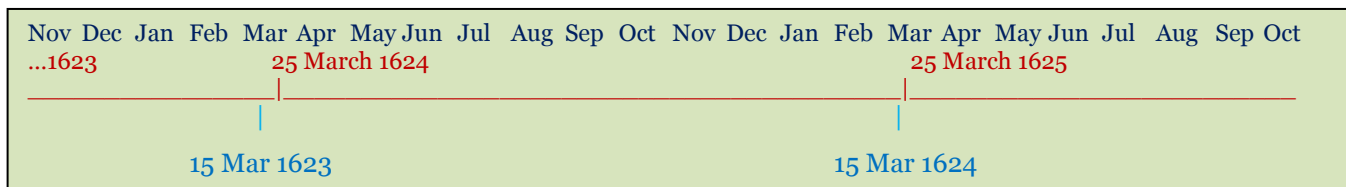


Image 9: Illustration of the relative time span between 15 March 1623 and 15 March 1624 in the Old Style Julian Calendar in which a new year starts on 25 March, which puts January, February, and most of March at the end of a year rather than the beginning

After his seven-year apprenticeship, William would have become a “freeman” and would then be able to practice his craft of coopership, establish himself sufficiently to support a family, court a female, and subsequently get married. Because William turned 14 in March 1623 and was married in January 1633, William would have had to enter into a seven-year apprenticeship sometime between March 1623 at the earliest and January 1626 at the latest. However, it is much more likely that William entered into his apprenticeship in the summer of 1624 which would have given William about 30 months after finishing a seven-year apprenticeship in 1631 to establish himself sufficiently to support a family as a cooper, court Ursilla, and then get married in January 1633.



Image 10: Image of shaped staves being assembled into a water-tight barrel.

The craft of coopership entails making water-tight wooden containers –such as barrels, buckets, tubs, and troughs– using staves which are narrow strips of wood shaped to form the sides, top, and bottom of the water-tight container such as shown in the image to the left.²⁵ The process of acquiring, handling, shaving, and shaping wood into staves, and then assembling and heating the staves into durable, water-tight containers, requires a degree of intelligence and significant knowledge and skill acquired over several years, along with physical strength and stamina; hence, William had to be of good health, strength, stamina, and wit, and had to undergo significant training over several years to acquire the necessary skills and credentials to be a successful cooper.

²⁵ Image by Bigsus in the public domain per the GNU Free Documentation License via https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Preparando_una_Barrica.jpg



Image 11: Photo of historic characters engaged in the craft of coopery at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Williamsburg, Virginia.²⁶

Dorchester, Dorset, England

As noted in Plymouth Colony records,

“At a Court of Assistants held the second day of April 1638 ...Willm Maycumber, of Dorchester, coop, is lycensed to dwell within this goument, at Plymouth or elsewhere, vpon the testimony of his good behauir hoe [which he] hath brought with him.”²⁷

William is noted as being “*of Dorchester, coop... vpon the testimony of his good behauir hoe [which he] hath brought with him*”, which indicates that William had in his possession in America a “*testimony of his good behavior hoe [which he] hath brought with him*”, which was most likely a document signed by a Coopers’ Guild official in Dorchester indicating that William was in good standing (“*of... good behavior*”) with the Coopers’ Guild seated in Dorchester and thus legally able to bear the title of “coop” and work in the trade of coopery in England and in Plymouth Colony. Hence, the evidence suggests that William served his requisite seven-year apprenticeship in Dorchester.

In addition to being the civil and metropolitan center of Dorset County 15 miles east of William’s hometown of Bridport, and the major market for coopery in Dorset County, Dorchester is an ancient city with a rich history.

²⁶ Image in the public domain via The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation at <http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/trades/tradecoo.cfm>

²⁷ (New Plymouth (Colony: Massachusetts) 1855, Volume 1, page 82).



Image 12: Photograph taken during the 1890s of High Street in Dorchester, Dorset, England

A photograph of Dorchester's High Street taken in the 1890s is shown in the image to the left.²⁸ The city grew over a period of several centuries. The earliest prehistoric settlement was two miles southwest of the town at Maiden Castle, a hilltop fortification inhabited by the Celtic tribal confederation known as the Durotriges who inhabited the region of Dorset along with neighboring lands extending into parts of modern Wiltshire, Somerset, and Devon counties in southern England.

Ancient Rome invaded the island of Briton (later termed Britain) in 43 AD

and eventually succeeded in establishing the Province of Britannia. By 70 AD the Durotriges were given "civitas" status by the Romans as opposed to "dediticii" status, meaning that the Durotriges were treated as citizens of a client kingdom of Rome with certain rights as opposed to mere capitulants without such rights. The civitas capital of the Durotriges was reportedly at the walled town of Durnovaria (present-day Dorchester). Roman roads fanned out from Dorchester and an aqueduct was constructed to supply Dorchester with water, and Dorchester became a major center while the Durotriges lived in relative peace with their Roman usurpers, and during the decades that followed a Romano-British culture emerged.²⁹

Rome was expelled from Briton by the Celtic Brits circa 383 AD, but Dorchester remained a local center. Following the Norman Conquest circa 1066 AD Dorchester grew to be a thriving commercial center and seat of local government. By 1624 when William likely began his apprenticeship in Dorchester it was the principle center of the region and likely had a population of about 10,000 inhabitants.

The colonizing efforts of John White of Dorchester

Pertinent to the period between 1624 and 1631 when William was likely an apprentice in Dorchester, John White (1575-1648), a prominent colonizer of New England active in recruiting colonists from the adjoining counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset, called "the father of the Massachusetts Colony", was a rector at the Dorchester Parish church of the Holy

²⁸ Photograph in the public domain via Dorset Online Parish Clerks at <http://www.opcdorset.org/fordingtondorset/>

²⁹ Even though Romans were present in southern England and in control of the Celtic tribal confederation known as the Durotriges, there was not much genetic intermingling; for example, MyHeritage™ DNA results for this author who is the ninth great grandson of William and Ursilla Macomber of Dorset County shows 0.0% southern Europe ethnicity which includes Italy and the region of Ancient Rome; but does show 67.4% English (including Celtic Brits and possibly Celtic Picts); and 28.2% northern Europe which includes France (where Scotts resided and where the Macomber surname may have originated) and includes Germany/Denmark (Anglo-Saxons and Normans which inhabited southern England).

Trinity from 1606 until his death in 1648. There were three parishes in Dorchester during the period when William was likely an apprentice there: All Saints, Holy Trinity, and Saint Peters. It is unknown which parish William may have been affiliated with while he was in Dorchester.

John White was a moderate Puritan who in 1623 was involved in organizing a group of nonconformists from Dorset County to settle in America where they would have more liberty of conscious. White worked with the Dorchester Company and the Plymouth Council for New England to establish the 1623 settlement of Gloucester at Cape Ann. The settlement of Gloucester floundered, however, and the settlers moved to a new location later called Salem, but without any authority to settle at the new location.

The Dorchester Company folded in 1625, so John White worked with additional investors and began to recruit potential settlers from the counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset for a larger settlement in New England. White made several trips to London and helped secure a land patent in 1628 for settlements in New England between the parallel lines 3 miles south of the Charles River (modern Boston) and 3 miles north of the Merrimack River (about 35 miles north of modern Boston). Thus, in 1628 the settlement at what became Salem was legally established and White helped organize a new group of about 100 settlers from the counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset to join the settlers at Salem in 1628. William was age 18 and likely in Dorchester as an apprentice in 1628.

In 1629, due in part to competing land patents, investors in the New England Company obtained a new charter for a new company called the Massachusetts Bay Company. John White was an active member of the new Massachusetts Bay Company and actively recruited potential settlers from the counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset. In 1629 six ships set sail for the settlement at Salem filled with some 350 Puritan settlers mostly from four English counties: settlers from Leicestershire County recruited mostly by Francis Higginson, and settlers from the counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset recruited mostly by John White. In addition to some 350 settlers the six ships carried substantial provisions, 115 head of cattle, 41 goats, and unnumbered horses, cows, oxen, and rabbits. Due to the threat of Pirates and hostile Spanish ships, the English ships were armed with cannon and armed crews. The fleet arrived safely at Salem on 29 June 1629. William was age 19 and likely in Dorchester in 1629.

John White never sailed to America, but remained seated at the Dorchester Parish church of the Holy Trinity in Dorchester and actively recruited additional settlers from the counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset. In 1630 a flotilla of 11 ships funded by the Massachusetts Bay Company was hired and, led by John Winthrop, sailed at various times for the region of Salem. John Winthrop sailed on the ship “Arbella” and John White offered a sermon aboard the ship before it sailed. The ship “Mary and John” sailed carrying about 150 settlers recruited by John White and upon landing at Salem in June 1630 established the nearby settlement called Dorchester, which was a forerunner to Boston. During 1630 the flotilla carried upwards of 1,000 settlers along with substantial provisions, animals, Etc. to the Massachusetts Bay area directly north of the Colony of Plymouth. William Macomber (1609-1670) was age 20 in 1630 and likely a senior apprentice in Dorchester.

In the years that followed John White continued to recruit settlers from the adjoining counties of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset as he remained seated at the Dorchester Parish church of the Holy Trinity in Dorchester as many ships from all around England set sail for America carrying thousands of new English settlers.

There is little doubt that William Macomber (1609-1670) was aware of the recruiting efforts of John White (1575-1648) during the likely seven years between 1624 and 1631 that William was an apprentice in Dorchester. Interestingly, however, William did not choose to settle in the settlements promoted by White, but rather choose the nearby settlement of Plymouth Colony.

Charles I, son of James I, becomes the King of England on 27 March 1625



Image 13: Painting depicting King Charles I (center in blue sash) and other prominent individuals on the eve before the battle of Edgehill, 1642.

Charles I, the son of King James I of the House of Stewart, (shown in the image to the left)³⁰ became the King of England, Scotland, and Ireland on 27 March 1625 when his father, James I, passed away at the start of the year 1625 per the Old Style Julian Calendar. William Macomber (1609-1670) was 15 years of age when Charles I became king. During his reign, Charles I issued several royal charters for English settlements in North America and in the Northwest Atlantic such as the Caribbean islands, Bermuda, Etc., most of which were successful

settlements. Never-the-less, there was a lot of controversy during the reign of Charles I who was increasingly at odds with most of the English people including Anglicans, Catholics, Puritans, Presbyterian Scots, the English Parliament, and neighboring monarchs during the life of William Macomber (1609-1670). Charles was eventually beheaded on Tuesday, 30 January 1649, during the English Civil War (1642-1651) when William Macomber (1609-1670) was in Plymouth Colony.

The Birth of William's Sister, Edith Macomber (1625-?)

During the period when William Macomber (1609-1670) was likely "bound" to a master cooper and engaged in his apprenticeship in Dorchester, William's sister, Edith Macomber (1625-?), was christened at the Bridport Parish church of Saint Mary on 27 December 1625. William was 15 years and 9 months of age when Edith was christened. Edith was apparently named after her mother, Edith Locke (1587?-1636).

The following image is of the contemporary entry made in the original parchment record titled *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* which notes the christening of Edith. Careful examination of the image shows that the parish clerk, most likely Thomas Knott, who recorded the christening used the common brevigraph which is somewhat similar to the modern letter 'y' in place of the letters 'th' in the name "Edeth" (Edey) and in the word 'the'

³⁰ Painting by Charles Landseer (1799 - 1879) in the public domain from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_I_of_England#/media/File:Charles_Landseer_-_The_Eve_of_the_Battle_of_Edge_Hill,_1642_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

(ye) and for the ‘th’ suffix following the Roman numeral ‘xxvii’ (xxvii y); hence, the entry recording the christening of Edith written in Old English script reads,

“[1625]... Decemb: [December]... Edeth the daughter of John Macumber was baptized the xxviith [27th] day”.³¹

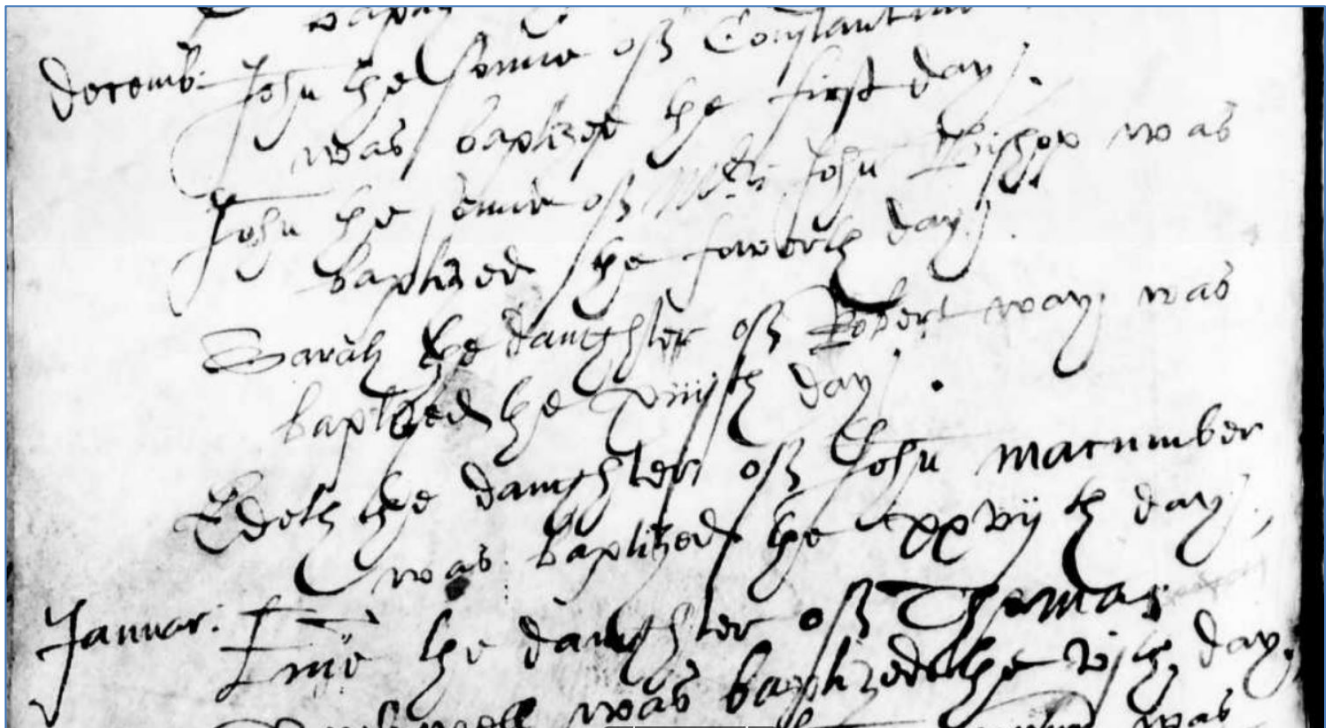


Image 14: Image of the original contemporary entry in the Bridport parish register noting the christening of Edith, the daughter of John Macomber, on 27 June 1617.³²

In regards to the father “John Macumber” noted in the original entry, after a thorough search of extant contemporary records of Dorset County, there is no plausible candidate mentioned in extant records for the father of Edith christened on 27 December 1625 other than the singular person John Macomber (1585?-1650) as detailed in Part 1 of this biography. Hence, it is appropriate to conclude that Edith Macomber (1625-?) is the daughter of John Macomber (1585?-1650) and Edith Locke (1587?-1636).

Because Christmas, 25 December, was a very important Holiday in Anglican England, it is highly likely that William was at home with other family members during Christmas and was present at the 27 December 1625 christening of Edith. It is also reasonable to assume that little Edith was a major center of attention in the home of John & Edith Macomber during Christmas of 1625 as it was the religious norm and apparent tradition of the Macomber family to christen their children soon after birth.³³

³¹ Note that “xxvii” is the Roman numeral for 27.

³² (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 214 of 1315).

³³ An analysis of marriage and christening dates coupled with other evidence reveals both explicit and implicit evidence that John Macomber (1685?-1650) and his wife Edith Locke (1587?-1636) had a family tradition of christening their children soon after birth (which was also the law in 1600 Anglican England).

Other than the christening of Edith on 27 December 1625, there is no apparent mention of Edith Macomber –or a phonetic spelling variation of her name– in extant Dorset County records.³⁴ The fact that Edith is not mentioned further in parish registers of Dorset County suggests that Edith (1) did not pass away as a child or young adult in or near Bridport, nor (2) did she pass away as a single adult anywhere in Dorset County, nor (3) was she married in Dorset County; hence, based on available evidence, it is likely that Edith moved outside of Dorset County later in life.

Edith's mother, Edith Locke (1587?-1636), passed away in May 1636 when Edith the younger was but 10-years-of-age, and her father, John Macomber (1585?-1650) passed away in July 1650 when Edith was 24-years-of-age; hence, there may have been no compelling reason for Edith the younger to remain in Dorset County. Although there was a tradition and cultural norm in the Church of England that marriages occur in the home parish of the bride, this was not always the case, especially if the bride had no living parents at the time of the marriage and the parish of the groom was distant from that of the bride.

William's brother John was apparently a member of the Carpenters' Guild

As detailed in Part 3 of this biography, Colonial records show that William's brother John Macomber (1613-1688) was in British Colonial America circa April 1638 as was William, and that John was noted as a carpenter by trade and subsequently a co-founder of a major sawmill in the important Plymouth Colony township of Taunton. John was christened at the historic Church of St. Mary in Bridport on 26 October 1613. Hence, John would have been age 24 in April 1638.

By English law, which applied to British Colonial America and was typically honored in Plymouth Colony in the early 1600s, in order for John to be accepted as a carpenter in Plymouth Colony he would have had to complete a seven-year apprenticeship and been a member of a Carpenters' guild while in Dorset County, England.

John turned age 14 in October 1627, and if John entered into a seven-year apprenticeship in 1627, he would have likely finished his apprenticeship in 1634, which is consistent with John being sanctioned as a carpenter in British Colonial America in 1638 and beyond. It would be inconsistent with law and cultural norms, and thus a conflict of available evidence, if John did not complete an apprenticeship but was nonetheless noted and accepted as a carpenter in Plymouth Colony.

The Birth of William's Brother, Robert Macomber (1627-1628)

During William's apparent apprenticeship in Dorchester, William's brother, Robert Macomber (1627-1628), was christened at the Bridport Parish church of Saint Mary on 2 December 1627. William was 17 years and 8 months of age when Robert was christened.

³⁴ Edith Macomber (1625-?) was NOT buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery on 21 July 1632 as many online family trees allege; rather, Edith's older sister Mary Macomber (1621-1632) was buried on 21 July 1632, which is clearly evident upon a careful examination of the original 1632 Bridport Parish burial entry presented and detailed in Part 1 of this biography.

The following image is of two portions of the same page separated by a modern orange line showing the contemporary entry made in the original parchment record titled *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* which notes the christening of Robert Macomber (1627-1628).

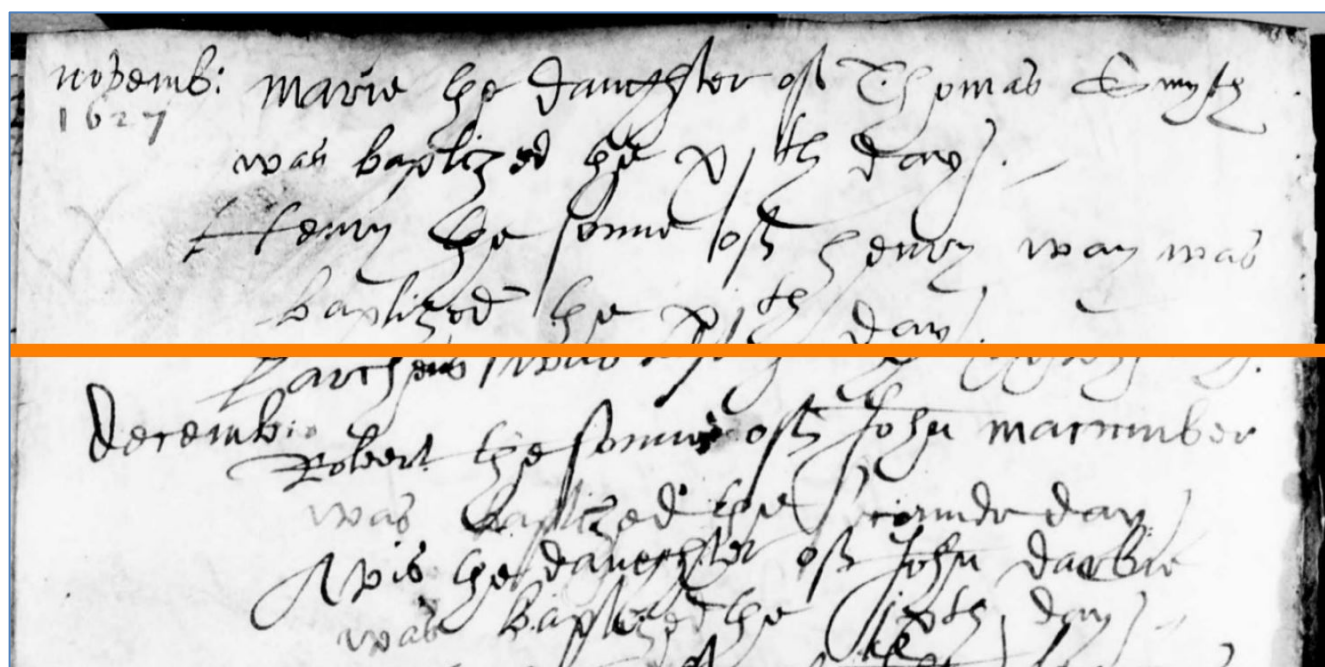


Image 15: Image of 2 cropped portions of the same page of the Bridport Parish register showing the contemporary entry for the Christening of Robert Macomber.³⁵

Careful examination of the above image shows that the parish clerk who recorded the christening used the common brevisgraph which is somewhat similar to the modern letter ‘y’ in place of the letters ‘th’ in the word ‘the’ (ye); hence, the entry recording the christening of Robert written in Old English script reads,

“... 1627... Decemb: [December]... Robert the sonne of John Macumber was baptized the Second day”.

Robert lived for only about four months and was buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery on 5 April 1628 as discussed in the following section.

The Passing of William’s Brothers, Thomas Macomber (1623 -1627) and Robert Macomber (1627-1628)

Near the end of the year 1627 and the beginning of the year 1628 in the Old Style Julian calendar in which a new year begins on 25 March, two of William’s younger brothers passed away and were buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery of Saint Mary’s 15 days apart: namely, Thomas Macomber (1623-1627) at 3-years-and-6-months of age on 21 March 1627, and Robert Macomber (1627-1628) at 4-months of age on 5 April 1628. William turned 18-years of age near the end of March 1627.

³⁵ (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 221 of 1315).

There were periodic epidemics which struck coastal towns and regions during the 1600s, which is suggested by the Bridport Parish register which notes the burials of several children in early spring near the end of 1627 and beginning of 1628.

The following image shows the burials entries for Thomas and Robert.

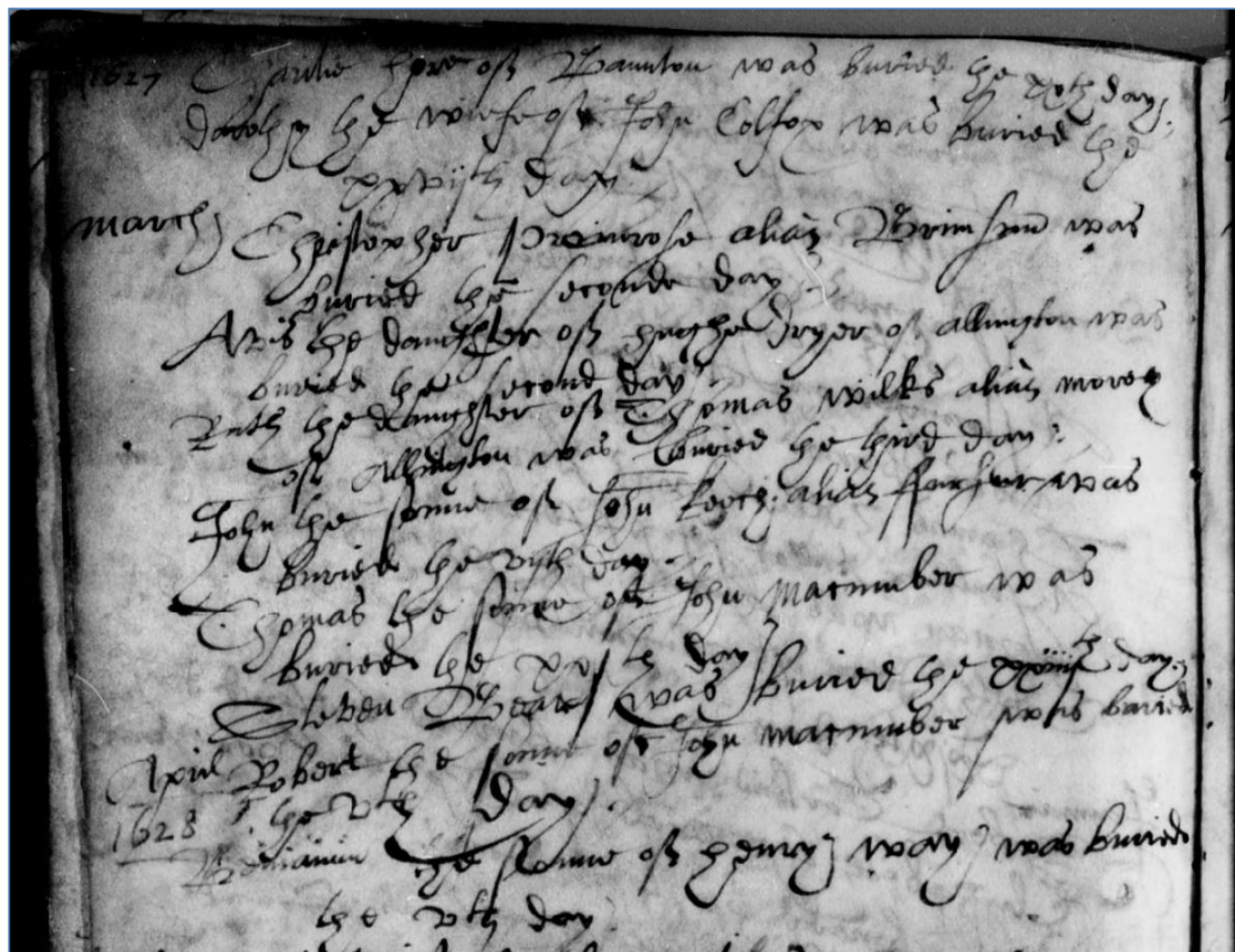


Image 16: Image of the original Bridport Parish register showing the contemporary burial entries for Thomas Macomber on 21 March 1627 and Robert Macomber on 5 April 1628.³⁶

Careful examination of the previous image shows that the parish clerk (likely Thomas Knott) who recorded the burials of Thomas Macomber on 21 March 1627 and Robert Macomber on 5 April 1628 15 days later used the common brevigraph which is somewhat similar to the modern letter 'y' in place of the letters 'th' in the words 'the' (ye) and for the suffixes following the Roman Numeral "xxi" (xxi y) and "v" (v y); hence, the entries recording the burials of Thomas Macomber and Robert Macomber written in Old English script read as follows:

"1627... March... Thomas the sonne of Jahn Macumber was buried the xxi th [21st] day."

³⁶ (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 332 of 1315).

“April 1628 Robert the sonne of John Macumber was buried the vth [5th] day”.³⁷

William’s parents had no further male children born to them after little Robert and little Thomas passed away; otherwise, they would have likely named the next male child Thomas to honor their two deceased sons named Thomas, namely Thomas Macomber (1608-1622) and Thomas Macomber (1627-1628), which was the tradition and cultural norm of the period. William and Ursilla, after their marriage, would name their second son Thomas, however, and William’s and Ursilla’s Thomas would survive and migrate with his parents to Plymouth Colony where Thomas would grow to adulthood, become a cooper by trade, marry, and have several children, which is detailed in Parts 2 and 3 of this biography.

The Passing of William’s Sister, Marie Macomber (1621-1632)

Likely after William had completed his apprenticeship and was working as a cooper in Dorchester, William’s sister, Marie, passed away at 10-years-and-9-months of age and was buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery of Saint Mary on 14 July 1632. William was 22-years-and-4-months of age in July 1632.

The contemporary entry in the Bridport Parish register noting the burial of Marie is shown in the following image.³⁸

Careful examination of the following image shows that the parish clerk (likely Thomas Knott) who recorded the burial of Marie on 14 July 1632 used the common brevigraph which is somewhat similar to the modern letter ‘y’ in place of the letters ‘th’ in the words ‘the’ (ye) and for the suffix following the Roman Numeral “xiii” (xiii y); hence, the entry recording the burial of Marie Macomber written in Old English script reads as follows:

“1632... Julio [July] Marie the daughter of John Macumber was buried the xiii th [14th] day.”³⁹

³⁷ Note that the letters “xxi” and “v” are the Latin Roman numerals for the numbers 21 and 5 respectively. After the Celtic Brits expelled the Latin-speaking Romans from England circa 383 AD, the remaining Celtic Brits, Normans, and Saxons who resided in southern England continued to use Latin for legal documents and for numerals for several centuries during the Early Modern Era.

³⁸ Note that some online family trees erroneously apply the burial of the singular person Marie Macomber (1621-1632) to Marie’s younger sister, the singular person Edith Macomber (1625-?). The Bridport Parish register clearly notes the christening of both Marie and Edith, and to careful observers clearly notes the burial of Marie. Edith’s marriage and burial are NOT noted in the Bridport Parish register; hence, it is likely that Edith moved away from Bridport after her parents passed away in 1636 and 1650.

³⁹ Note that the words Juno and Julio are Latin words for the months of June and July, and the letters “xiii” is the Latin Roman numeral for the number 14.

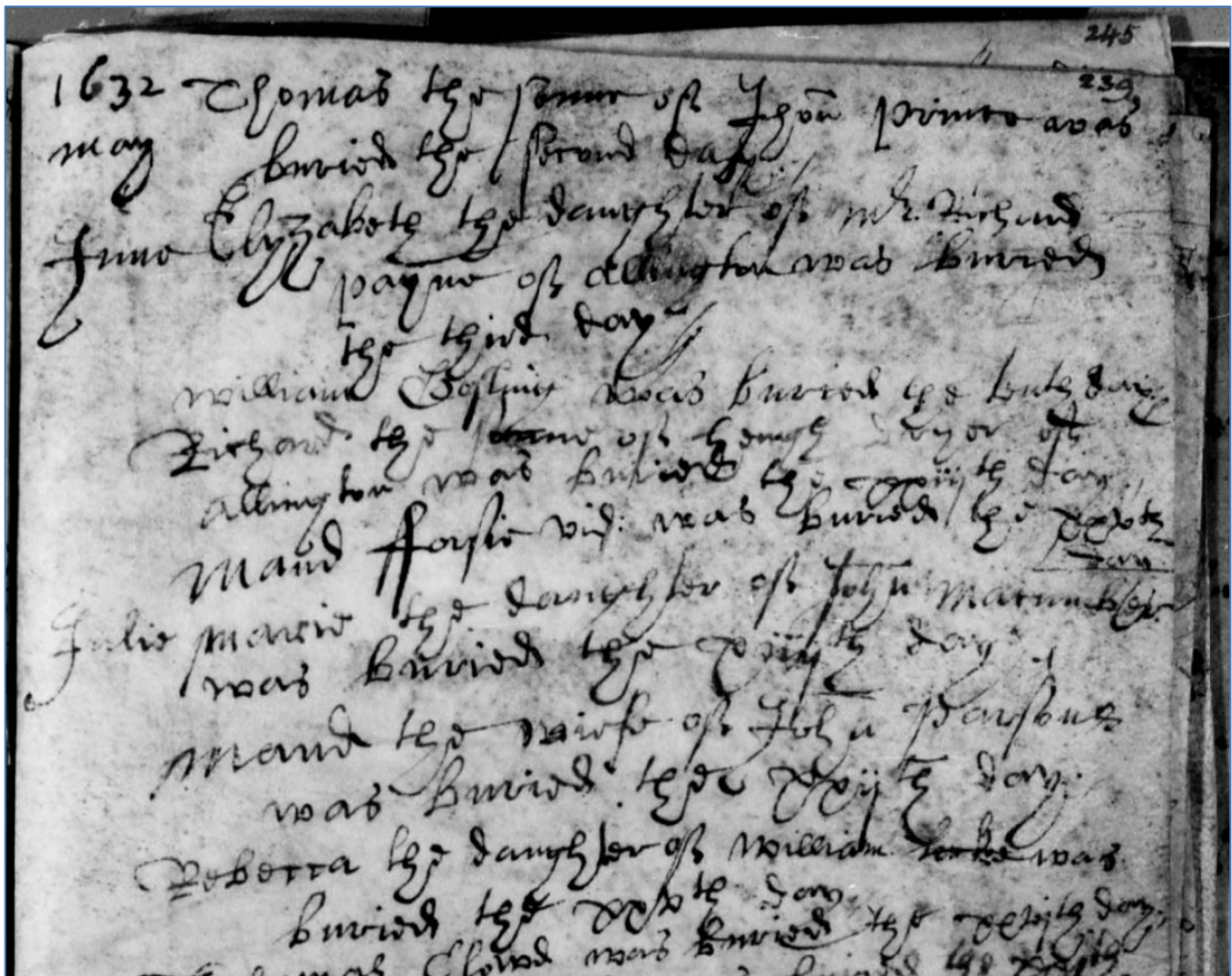


Image 17: Image of the original Bridport Parish register showing the contemporary burial entry for Marie Macomber on 14 July 1632.⁴⁰

So far in William's life before his marriage to Ursilla Cooper in January 1633, William has experienced the passing of five of his siblings:

- 5-year-old Zeporah Macomber (1611-1617) passed away when William was age 7;
- 14-year-old Thomas Macomber (1608-1622) passed away when William was age 12;
- 3-year-old Thomas Macomber (1623-1627) passed away when William was age 18;
- 4-month-old Robert Macomber (1627-1628) passed away when William was age 18;
- 10-year-old Marie Macomber (1622-1632) passed away when William was age 22.

In 1632 William has yet to experience the passing of his mother Edith Locke (1687?-1636) in 1636 and the passing of his first son William Macomber (1634-1636) in 1636 and the passing of his 17-year-old brother Richard Macomber (1619-1637) in 1637, which are each detailed later in this biography as part of the early married life of William.

⁴⁰ (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 343 of 1315).

THE MARRIAGE OF WILLIAM AND URSILLA

As stated previously, there are 5 contemporary ‘original records’ which note 9 times the name of the wife of William Macomber, and without exception all nine notations record her common name as “Ursilla”, spelled phonetically in several ways. In addition, the first of the five sources record Ursilla’s maiden name as “Cooper” and the remaining sources record her married name of “Ursilla Macomber” (spelled phonetically in various ways). These five ‘original records’, combined with pertinent and credible ‘derivative records’, show using the Genealogical Proof Standard that William Macomber (1609-1670) at age 23 years and 10 months married Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) on 16 January 1633 in the historic Bridport Parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England. The evidence for this conclusion is presented, analyzed, correlated, and discussed in the following pages, including resolution of conflicts between the five ‘original records’ and several inaccurate ‘derivative records’.⁴¹

The Contemporary Bridport Parish Register (Notation 1 of 9)

The first of five contemporary ‘original records’ which note 9 times the name of the wife of William Macomber is the parish record of William’s and Ursilla’s marriage.

As detailed in Part 1 of this biography, there is an original parchment register titled Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 that is currently housed at the Dorset History Centre located in Dorchester, Dorset, England which is a contemporary record of christenings, marriages, and burials occurring at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England between the years 1600 and 1638. Apparently, there is no other extant parish register for Bridport *prior* to this 1600-1638 parchment register.

A joint effort by Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. and the Dorset History Centre was undertaken circa 2011 to publish images from *ALL* extant Dorset County parish registers of the Church of England. These images are viewable online via Ancestry.com in the digital collection titled Dorset, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1812. Images from the parchment Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 are a part of the digital collection. The Dorset Record Office of the Dorset History Centre has designated the Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 as PE/BT: RE 1. A modern index and partial transcription of PE/BT: RE 1 was made and is titled PE/BT: RE 28. These two records, PE/BT: RE 1 and PE/BT: RE 28, can be viewed via Ancestry.com by going to the digital collection and selecting Bridport.⁴² Care must be taken when viewing these records, however, because the individual images of PE/BT: RE 1 and PE/BT: RE 28 have been separated, rearranged, and interspersed by categories (baptisms, marriages, and burials) and sometimes by date ranges in the online digital collection, and the modern transcription and index contains many errors which do not match the original parchment record. Note also that in the Old Style Julian Calendar system that was used in the 1600-1638 register, the months of January, February, and most of March are at the end of a year rather than at the beginning.

⁴¹ There are five elements of the Genealogical Proof Standard, all five of which have been completed for various conclusions pertaining to the marriage of William and Ursilla, including (#3) analysis and correlation of collected information, (#4) resolution of any conflicting evidence, and (#5) soundly reasoned and coherently written conclusions,.

⁴² (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011).

As shown in the following image, the marriage of William Macomber and Ursilla Cooper was recorded contemporaneously in the original *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638*.

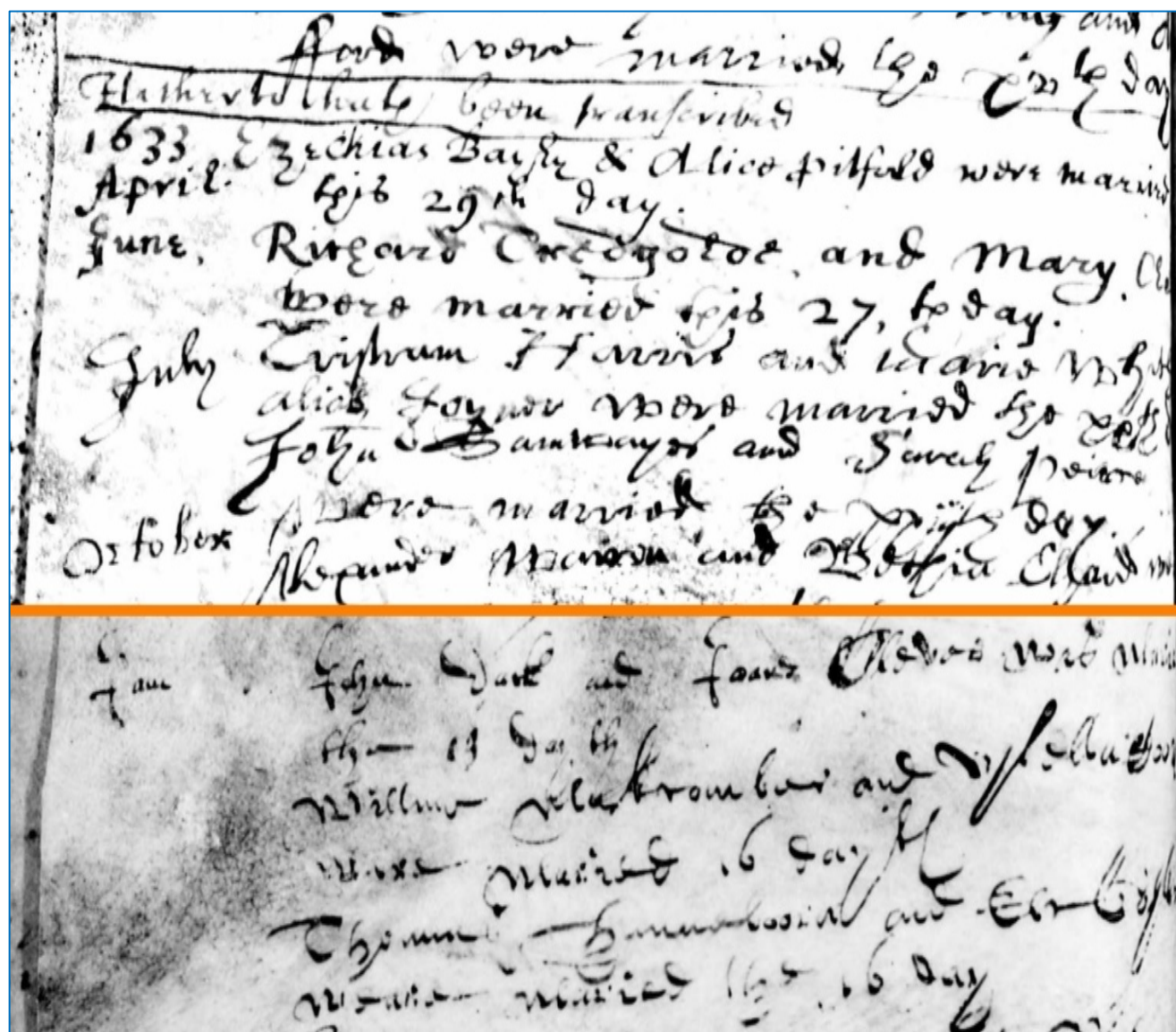


Image 18: Image of 2 cropped portions of page 184 of the original parish register titled *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* showing the marriage of William and Ursilla.⁴³

The top portion of the above image notes the year 1633 and several marriage entries for the months of April, June, July, and October. The lower portion notes three marriages in the month of January 1633, including two on the 16th, one of which is the marriage of William Macomber and Ursilla Cooper which reads as follows:

“1633... Jany [abbreviation for January but the ink in the “y” is faint]... Willm Makcomber and Vssella Coop... were married 16 day”.

Note the following: in the Old Style Julian Calendar January is near the end of a year rather than the beginning; the Old English letter “c” is written similar to the modern “r”; the clerk reversed the common phonetic “ck” convention to “kc” (Makcomber rather than

⁴³ (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 286 of 1315).

Mackomber); the capital letter “U” is written like the modern “V” in the name “Ussella”; the double “ss” is written similar to a modern cursive “f”; and the tight binding cuts off part of the surname Cooper in the digital image (which was verified by two experienced genealogists to be “Cooper” in 1938 and 1981 as documented hereafter).



Image 19: Modern side view from the rear of the historic Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England with burial headstones visible in the foreground.⁴⁴



Image 20: Modern interior view of the historic Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport. Portions of the church were erected circa 1265 A.D.; most of the church seen today was erected in the mid-1450s; and the interior was renovated in the mid-1800s.

⁴⁴ The image is in the public domain via the blog “Dorset Allsorts” maintained by local residents Nick & Karen, and the pertinent photo was taken circa July 2011. <http://dorset-allsorts.blogspot.com/search/label/St%20Mary%27s%20Bridport>

A careful reading of the contemporary entry made in the original parchment *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* noting the marriage of “Willm Makcomber and Vsella Coop...”, shown in Image 17 provides significant evidence which, when analyzed and correlated with other pertinent evidence, leads to several important conclusions as discussed under various subheadings in the following pages.

About William Macomber

From available evidence we can make several assertions in regards to the groom noted as “Willm Makcomber”.

- It was common during the Early Modern Period to abbreviate the name William as “Willm”; hence, Willm is simply an abbreviation for the common name William.
- The common phonetic letter-combination “ck” which is used in such words as “back”, “black”, “sack”, and “mackerel”, was reversed as “kc” by the 1633 Bridport Parish clerk; hence, the surname spelled phonetically as “Makcomber” can be interpreted to be “Mackomber” using a more standard phonetic spelling.
- During the Early Modern Period surnames were spelled phonetically; hence, Mackomber (or “Makcomber”), is simply a phonetic spelling variation of the common Bridport Parish surname often spelled Macomber or Macumber.
- The use of the common phonetic letter-combination “ck” in the surname Mackomber (or “Makcomber”) does not appear in the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* prior to the 16 January 1633 marriage entry, but it appears two more times in subsequent entries, which is due to a change of parish clerks in the previous month of December 1633 as detailed hereafter.
- The Macomber surname appears 24 times in the *Bridport Parish Register...:*
 - 15 times the family surname is spelled phonetically as Macumber;
 - 5 times the family surname is spelled phonetically as Macomber;
 - 1 time the family surname is spelled phonetically as Macoomber; and,
 - 3 times the family surname is spelled phonetically as Mackomber/Makcomber.
- There is an apparent change in the register in December 1633 which is undoubtedly due to the illness and death of Thomas Knott who was the town and parish clerk of Bridport from circa 1617 to December 1633. The first Bridport parish clerk who started the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* in the year 1600 was very neat with well-defined penmanship who initially spelled the family surname as Macomber. A second clerk with more cursive and sloppy penmanship, most likely Thomas Knott, began to make entries in the register circa 1617 and apparently stopped making entries in December 1633. This second clerk often spelled the family surname as Macumber. There were apparently at least a third and fourth clerk who occasionally made entries in the register as well.⁴⁵ Thomas Knott passed away

⁴⁵ This author was unable to readily find a record of Bridport town and parish clerks, and rather than deviate from the main purpose of the biography, this author has not embarked on a comprehensive study of penmanship in the Bridport Parish register other than a cursory observation in relation to the surname Macomber, which is sufficient for our current analysis.

shortly before the marriage of William and Ursilla and was buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery of Saint Mary on 15 January 1633, which is the day before the marriage of William and Ursilla at Saint Mary on 16 January 1633, which is detailed in the subsection dealing with the Prerogative Court of Canterbury hereafter.

- As further evidence of the change of parish clerks in December 1633, the main clerk before December 1633, likely Thomas Knott, consistently used Latin Roman numerals to record the day of a vital event (i, ii, iii, iiij, v...); however, after mid-December 1633 forward the main clerk typically used Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 5...) to record the day of a vital event. A subsequent clerk used Latin Roman Numerals also.
- As shall become more clear in Part 3 and Part 4 of this biography, *ALL* credible evidence from Dorset County and Plymouth Colony records, of which there is a substantial amount, is consistent with the phonetically spelled “*Willm Makcomber*” marriage record being that of the singular person designated William Macomber (1609-1670); and just as important, using the process of elimination, after exhaustive research, there is simply no other pertinent and plausible candidate mentioned in contemporary records of Dorset County and Plymouth Colony for the 16 January 1633 groom other than the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670).

As a sampling of the evidence about a singular person William Macomber (1609-1670), the characteristics noted in Plymouth Colony records about “William Macomber”, spelled phonetically in various ways and mentioned often in Colonial records, are as follows:

1. He came to Plymouth Colony from Dorset County, England;
2. He was born soon after 5 March 1609;
3. He came to Plymouth Colony in 1638 as a sanctioned cooper by trade, which necessitated by law that he had completed a seven-year apprenticeship in England in order to be so sanctioned and in order to possess the necessary knowledge and skills to function successfully as a cooper;
4. He had a wife named Ursilla (spelled phonetically in various ways);
5. He had a son named Thomas who was born in England and who became a cooper by trade like his father while in Plymouth Colony;
6. He had at least three sons born in Plymouth Colony, William, Matthew, and John, all of whom became coopers by trade;
7. His son William in Plymouth Colony did not come of age (which is age 16) until 1657 when Colonial records began to use the “Sr.” designation, which precludes the William Macomber in Plymouth Colony being born significantly before 1641, which in turn precludes the William in Plymouth Colony being born in England.
8. He had a younger brother named John who was born in England and was a carpenter by trade initially, but later co-founded and operated a major sawmill in Taunton, the sons of whom were carpenters by trade and none of whom were coopers by trade;
9. He had close ties with individuals named Holloway (spelled phonetically in various ways) whose names appear alongside Macomers in Colonial records.

10. There is no other plausible candidate for William Macomber noted in Plymouth Colony records other than the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670) until his second son named William, William Macomber (1641?-1711), comes of age in Marshfield.

The above characteristics are consistent with Dorset County records which indicate the following about William Macomber:

1. He was born in or around Bridport, Dorset, England;
2. He was born on or shortly before 24 March 1609;
3. He disappeared from Dorset County records at the same time he is noted in Plymouth Colony records;
4. He married a girl named Ursilla (spelled phonetically in various ways);
5. He had a first son who was named William (Junior) per tradition, but the first son William (Junior) passed away as an infant in England after the second son Thomas was born, which set the stage per cultural norm for the next son born in Plymouth Colony to be named William in honor of the first William;
6. He had a son named Thomas born in Dorset County who disappeared from Dorset County records at the same time he was in Plymouth Colony;
7. He had a younger brother named John born in Dorset County in 1613 who disappeared from Dorset County at the same time he appeared in Colonial America;
8. He had an uncle-in-law and first cousins named Holloway who were born and raised in or around Bridport along with William and his brother John.
9. There is no other plausible candidate noted in contemporary 'original records' or credible 'derivative records' of Dorset County other than the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670).

About the name Ursilla

Image 17 shows that William married "Vssella". As detailed in Part 1 of this biography, the letter "v" was not a separate letter in the English alphabet apart from the letter "u" until the late 1600s; rather, by convention in the Early Modern Era, the pointed-bottom "V" was used in place of the rounded-bottom "U" when the first letter of a word was a "U" such as in the word "united", which would be written as "vnited" prior to the late 1600s, or similarly the phonetically spelled name Ursella would be written as Vssella; hence, "Vssella" is the same as "Ussella". And the spelling of "Ussella" is totally consistent with Old English phonetic spelling variations of the common name Ursilla, as also are Ursella, Ursila, Ussila, Ursula, Ussula, Etc.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ In Plymouth Colony the common name of William's wife is ultimately and consistently spelled "Ursilla"; and Ursilla's descendants who were named after her were often noted as "Ursilla"; and "Ursilla" is the most-common modern spelling convention for the name; hence, this author uses the spelling of "Ursilla" for the wife of William rather than some previous one-off phonetic spelling variation no matter how quaint or appealing other spellings might seem.

About the Surname Cooper

As can be seen in Image 17, due to the tight binding of the original parchment register, the digital image that was created in 2011 did not capture the last two letters of Ursilla's maiden name, but only captured the first 4 letters "Coop..." as our own eyes can see in Image 17. Fortunately, we have the testimony of two independent, experienced genealogists, F. Vaughn Crowell and Mrs. S. M. Campbell, who viewed the original parchment Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 in 1938 and 1981 respectively and recorded that the maiden name is not merely "Coop" as is visible in Image 17, but rather the maiden name is "Cooper", which was documented by Jane Fletcher Fiske as shown hereafter. We also have corroborating evidence from a modern 'derivative record' which is discussed hereafter as well.

Jane Fletcher Fiske (1931-___), a professional genealogist, editor, and popular historical author, wrote an article titled The English Origins of the Macomber Family that was published by the Association for the Promotion of Scholarship in Genealogy in the periodical titled The Genealogist in the fall of 1981.⁴⁷

In April 1981 Fiske was in London viewing transcripts of Dorset parish registers and she saw the surname of Macomber which she knew to be an early surname in Massachusetts (Plymouth Colony became part of Massachusetts in 1692). Fiske states the following:

"In the registers of the parish of Bridport [Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638], copied [transcribed] in November 1938 by F. Vaughn Crowell, I found the surname of Macomber. At that time I knew only that a family of that name had been in Massachusetts very early, and I did not have with me enough information to know whether or not their English home had already been discovered. However, I copied the entries relating to them, and when I returned home I could find nothing to indicate that this information had been previously published. The entries in the Bridport registers fit just about perfectly what is known of William Macomber, who settled in Marshfield with his wife Ursula, and John Macomber, who was in Taunton at the same time.

"...When it appeared that I had the correct Macomber family, I asked Mrs. S. M. Campbell, an experienced researcher in Dorset, to check my information against the original registers of St. Mary's, Bridport [Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638], which are in the County Records Office in Dorchester. She did so, correcting only one date, but adding baptismal records for the children of William and Alice (Macumber) Holway. The findings are herewith presented. ...

"Marriages... 1633/4 William Mackomber and Vssella Cooper, 16 January."

From the foregoing, we learn that two experienced researchers had viewed the original Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 and noted that the maiden name of Vssella was Cooper; to wit, F. Vaughn Crowell "copied in November 1938" the "registers of the parish of Bridport" and recorded the maiden name of "Ussella" to be Cooper; and in April 1981 Jane Fletcher Fiske made a list of the names recorded by Crowell and gave that list to "Mrs. S. M. Campbell, an experienced researcher in Dorset", and in 1981 Campbell reviewed the Bridport Parish

⁴⁷ (Fiske 1981).

Register 1600-1638 housed in Dorchester and confirmed the maiden name of Cooper listed in the register. Jane Fletcher Fiske subsequently published an article in the fall of 1981 which explained the above scenario.

Hence, we can see with our own eyes that the 2011 digital image of the original Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 notes the maiden name of “Coop...”, and that due to the tight binding the rest of the maiden name of “Coop...” is not visible in the digital image, but from the documentation from Fiske we can appropriately conclude that the maiden name is indeed “Cooper”. This is further corroborated by a ‘derivative record’ explained hereafter.

Modern Indexes

As all experienced genealogists know, modern indexes, which are ‘derivative records’, are often wrong when the ‘original record’ that the ‘derivative record’ is derived from is written in Old English using ancient quill pens and ink that bleeds and fades. Often, modern indexers are gracious volunteers or low-paid employees with little experience in reading Old English script, many of whom work in haste or are not by nature conscientious to detail; and sometimes for economic reasons modern indexing projects are outsourced to India where English is not the primary language of the indexer, let alone Old English. Meanwhile, those who are experienced in Old English are often supervisors or instructors of indexing projects and are thus rarely an indexer themselves. Hence, it is understandable that modern indexes contain errors. And common sense dictates that when a conflict exists between an ‘original record’ and its ‘derivative record’, the ‘original record’ trumps the ‘derivative record’ unless accompanied by “soundly reasoned and coherently written conclusions”.

Several modern indexes have been made for the Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638, ALL of which contain errors in regards to the original 16 January 1633 marriage entry for William and Ursilla. Our own eyes can see the errors when we compare images of the ‘original record’, such as Image 17, with the various ‘derivative records’ presented hereafter.

Modern Index and Transcription Titled PE/BT: RE 28

The pertinent portion of the semi-modern ‘derivative’ index labeled PE/BT: RE 28 by the Dorset History Centre pertaining to the ‘original’ marriage entry of “Willm Makcomber” and “Vsella Coop[er]” is displayed below.

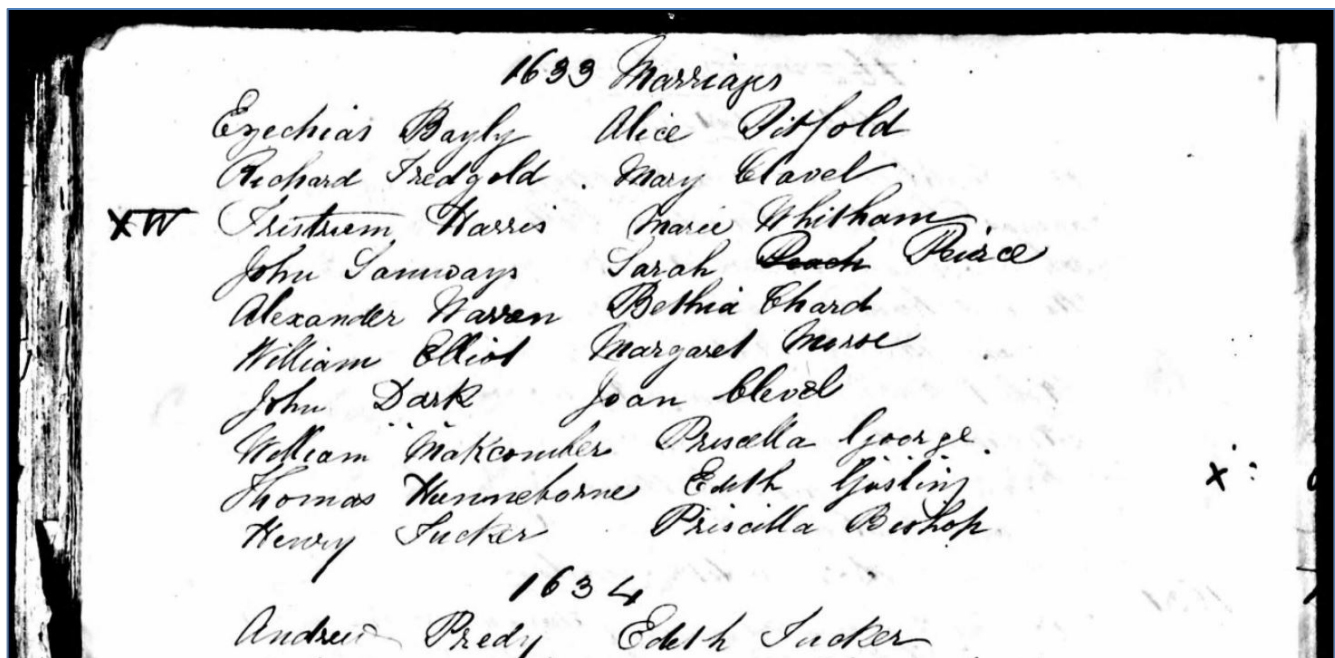


Image 21: Image of the derivative index titled [PE/BT: RE 28](#) listing 1633 marriages and noting “William Makcomber” and erroneously noting his bride as “Priscilla Goerge [sic]”.⁴⁸

As seen in the previous image, the index (Image 20) clearly conflicts with the original record (Image 17) from which the index is derived and erroneously notes the bride of “William Makcomber” as “Priscilla Goerge [sic]”. It is understandable why the index differs from the original record from which the index is derived because the original record is written in old English, and Old English lettering is different than modern English lettering, thus it is easy to see why the indexer, likely inexperienced and working in haste, misinterpreted the fancy Old English lettering of “Vssella” to be the common name “Priscilla”.

Likewise, it is easy to see why the indexer misread the fancy Old English “C” in the surname Cooper as a “G”, and misread the letters “ooper” as “oerge”, especially when the surname George appears in other entries. Also of importance is the fact that the indexer apparently could see the full name Cooper, including the letters “er” which do not appear in Image 17 due to the tight binding; otherwise, the indexer would have noted the surname as “Goer” rather than extend the surname beyond four letters to be “Goerge” [sic].

This erroneous index entry has caused a slew of errors being perpetuated in online family trees, including, apparently, the erroneous belief that William married “Priscilla Thomas”. Of course there is no real person named Priscilla Goerge [sic] because it is an erroneous name as our own eyes can see. Apparently, a would-be online family historian, finding a real person named Priscilla Thomas, assumed that Priscilla Thomas was the wife of William Macomber rather than the fictitious Priscilla Goerge [sic]. Thanks to the *Information Age*, however, we can now see the original record with our own eyes and know that the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670) did NOT marry a bride named Priscilla, let alone Priscilla Goerge [sic] or Priscilla Thomas.

⁴⁸ (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 66 of 1315).

Ancestry and FamilySearch Indexes based on PE/BT: RE 28

The error in the index titled PE/BT: RE 28 detailed previously does not end with that index; understandably, the initial digital index which Ancestry used for the Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 is based on the index titled PE/BT: RE 28 which contains the Priscilla Goerge [sic] error. Likewise, FamilySearch created a digital index based on PE/BT: RE 28 as well, and the “Priscilla George” error in PE/BT: RE 28 is perpetuated with FamilySearch also, which can be seen in the following FamilySearch citation:

"England, Dorset, Parish Registers, 1538-1936," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VC5Y-6GL> : 7 December 2017), William Makcomber and Priscella George, 1633; Marriage, citing Bridport, Bridport, Dorset, England, Record Office, Dorchester; FHL microfilm 2,427,422.

Summary of the Contemporary Bridport Parish Marriage Entry

It would be nice if the contemporary 1633 Old English marriage entry for “Willm Makcomber” and “Vssella Cooper” that was made in the original parchment Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 were easier to read, had no human slip-ups, and was consistently indexed so that individuals at Level 1 or Level 2 of Genealogical Maturity would not get bamboozled, but unfortunately that is not the case. Never-the-less, when properly analyzed, correlated, and explained, the original 1633 marriage entry which we can see with our own eyes provides definitive evidence that the wife of William Macomber is Ursilla Cooper, spelled phonetically, which is corroborated by other ‘original records’ discussed in the following pages. Also, as shown in the following pages, there is no ‘original record’ among extant ‘original records’ of Dorset County, England or Plymouth Colony, New England, which contradict this conclusion.

The Contemporary Prerogative Court of Canterbury (Notations 2 and 3 of 9)

The second of five contemporary ‘original records’ which note 9 times the name of the wife of William Macomber is that of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury which lists two times the common name of the wife of William Macomber, which both times is noted as “Ursula”.

As presented in the following pages, Thomas Knott was the town and parish clerk of Bridport, Dorset, England during the early life of William Macomber (1609-1670). Thomas Knott made his will on 2 January 1633, most likely in Bridport, which was then probated after Knott’s death at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury seated in London on 28 September 1634. Ursilla, the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670), was a witness to Knott’s will in Bridport in 1633 and was subsequently an attesting witness in probate proceedings in London in 1634.

The Prerogative Court of Canterbury

According to the United Kingdom’s National Archives in Kew, England, and the London Lives project...

“Prior to 12 January 1858, wills in England and Wales were proved in ecclesiastical courts. The largest one was the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1384–1858. ...Until 12 January 1858 all wills had to be proved by the church and other courts. The PCC [Prerogative Court of Canterbury] was the most important of

*these courts dealing with relatively wealthy individuals living mainly in the south of England and most of Wales.”*⁴⁹

*“The Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) was a church court under the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which was responsible for the probate of wills and trials of testamentary causes where the value of the goods involved was greater than five pounds, and the property was held in two (or more) dioceses within Great Britain. While wills might also be proven at York, Canterbury's jurisdiction covered Southern England (including London) and Wales.”*⁵⁰

The Archbishop of Canterbury is the functional head of the Church of England. And even though the Prerogative Court of Canterbury was under the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury seated in the city of Canterbury some 62 miles east-southeast of London, the Prerogative Court of Canterbury was seated and functioned in London rather than in Canterbury. London is about 145 miles northeast of Bridport by road, which between Bridport and London is a two-day overland trip one-way by a horse-drawn coach,⁵¹ or a three-day sailing voyage one-way via the English Channel and the River Thames.⁵²

During the 1980s the Public Record Office of the United Kingdom photographed the records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. In 2013, Ancestry.com Operations Inc. added to their online database digital images of the Public Record Office photographs of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury records which Ancestry.com titled England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858, which includes series PROB 11: Will Registers. Series PROB 11: Will Registers is a collection of contemporary probate entries recorded by court clerks into various volumes/folios. The will and probate record of Thomas Knott is noted in PROB 11: Will Registers, 1624-1643, year 1634, and is presented hereafter.

The Will and Probate Record of Thomas Knott

The following image shows that two entries were made in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury register in 1634 when Thomas Knott's will was probated:

1. A 1634 entry written in Old English about the original 1633 will of Thomas Knott, modified by contemporary entries made by the court clerk who recorded the will into the register; and
2. A probate entry written in Latin dated 23 September 1634.

⁴⁹ (The National Archives 2018).

⁵⁰ (London Lives 2018).

⁵¹ A typical horse travels at 3-5 MPH (miles per hour) walking, 5-8 MPH trotting or pacing, 10-16 MPH at a canter, and 16-19 MPH at a gallop. Hence, 145 miles / 8 MPH = 18+ hours; and 18+ hours / 9 hours per day = 2 days of travel with periodic stops.

⁵² Sailing ships of the 1600s typically traveled 5-9 miles per hour depending on wind, currents, Etc. The travel distance by water between Bridport and London is about 350 miles; hence, 350 miles / 6 miles per hour = 58 hours; and 58 hours / 24 hours per day = 2.5 days not counting port stops, boarding, and embarking time.

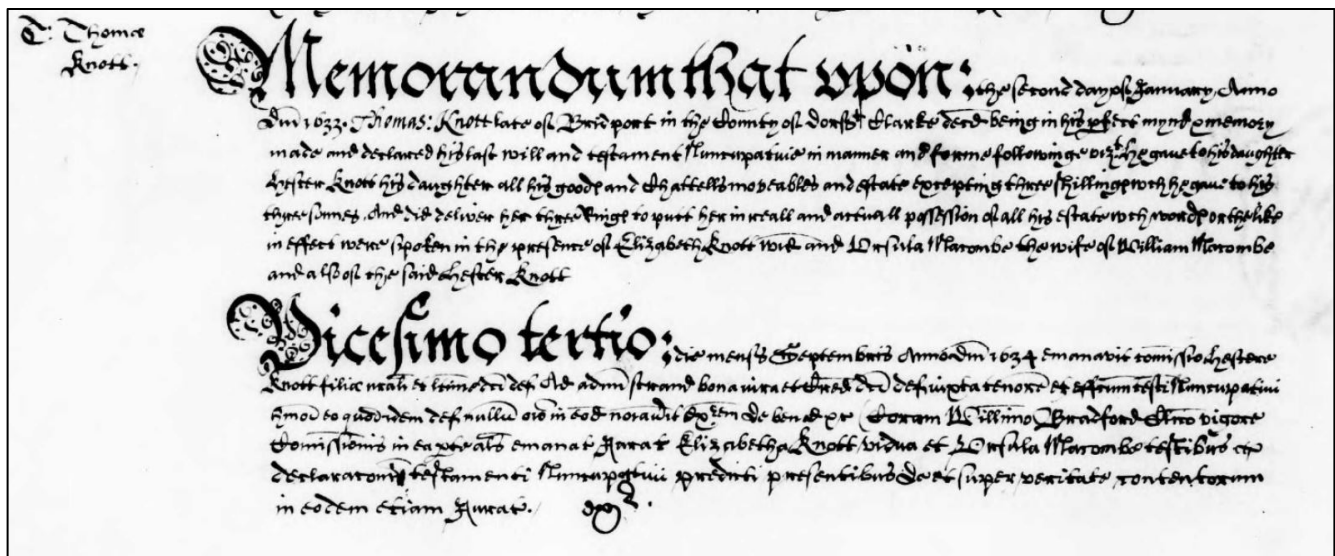


Image 22: Digital image of the original 1634 probate entry in the [PROB 11: Will Registers](#) of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury concerning the Will of Thomas Knott.⁵³

The actual will of Thomas Knott is not among the records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, only the two entries displayed above, which is typical. Court clerks were charged with recording wills into court registers whether the actual will was retained by the court or returned to the family. During the Early Modern Age, the only way clerks could record documents such as wills, deeds, mortgages, Etc. into registers was by transcribing them by hand onto register pages. It was the convention of the day, both in England and in British Colonial America, to ignore most formatting and punctuation when transcribing documents into registers.

Following is a modern transcription –as far as possible by this author– of the original English entry pertaining to Thomas Knott written in 1634.⁵⁴ Note that by convention most punctuation was excluded in the 1634 court register entry.

“Memorandum that upon: the second day of January Anno dm [domini] 1633. Thomas: Knott late of Bridport in the county of Dorset Clarke [clerk] and being in his perfect mind e [and] memory made and declared his last will and testament Muncipatuio [mancipatio – Roman law legal term explained hereafter] in manner and form e [and] following {__?__} he grant to his daughter Hester Knott his daughter [repeated] all his goods and chattells [sic] {__?__} and estate excepting three shillings worth he gave to his three sonnes [sons]. And did deliver to her these things to put her in totall and actual possession of all his estate with words or thoughts in effect were spoken in the presence of Elizabeth Knott none [with an arc above the word “none”] and **Ursula Macombe**, the wife of William Macombe, and also the said Hester Knott.

The Latin entry which follows the English entry is dated 23 September 1634 and notes “...signa ef **Ursula Macombe**...”

⁵³ (Prerogative Court of Canterbury (England) 2013, [Digital collection] > PROB 11: Will Registers > 1624-1643 > Piece 166: Seager, Quire Numbers 65-114 (1634) > Image 328 of 816)

⁵⁴ This author could not decipher two of the words in the Old English script.

Note that in the middle of the last line of the English entry the court clerk apparently left a space after the name “*Elizabeth Knott*” and before the words “*and Ursilla Macombe*”, and then he used an arc across the space to apparently join the word “Knott” with the word “and” and wrote the word “none” in the space between as if to indicate that there was nothing more waiting to be written in the space. Note also that it was common in England and in British Colonial America to place a colon “:” between a common name and a surname such as the notation “Thomas: Knott”.

From the foregoing we can see several important particulars which, when analyzed and correlated with other evidentiary information, lead to several soundly reasoned conclusions which are presented in the following pages.

Calendar Considerations

It is important to note that Thomas Knott “*made and declared his last will and testament*” on 2 January 1633, but both the English and Latin entries were posted in the probate court register after the probate hearing of 23 September 1634. In the Old Style Julian Calendar that was in use at the time, the will date of 2 January 1633 is only 7 months and 21 days before the probate date of 23 September 1634 as displayed in the image below.

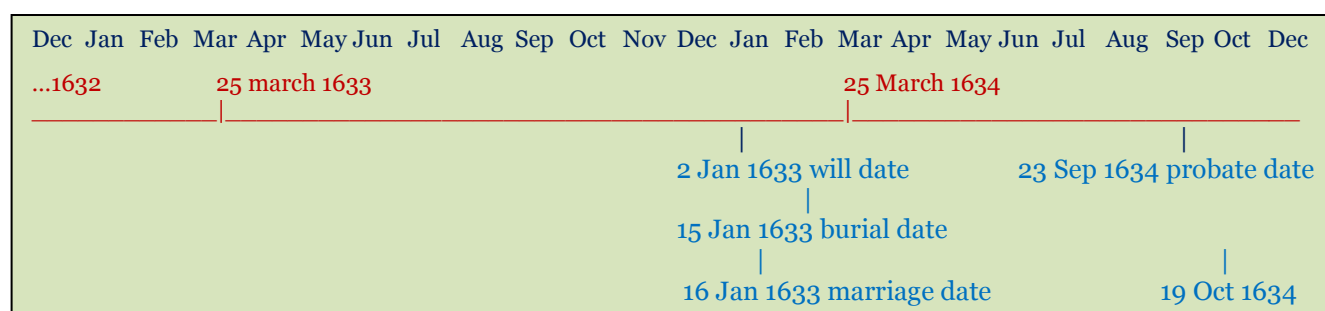


Image 23: Illustration of the relative time span between various dates in the Old Style Julian Calendar in which a new year started on 25 March, which puts January, February, and most of March at the end of a year rather than the beginning.

Also pertinent to the 1633 will and 1634 probate proceedings of Thomas Knott is Thomas’s burial on 15 January 1633, the marriage of William and Ursilla on 16 January 1633, and the christening of the son of William and Ursilla on 19 October 1634, which are listed below and detailed in the following pages.

- 02 January 1633: Thomas Knott’s will was witnessed by Ursilla, most likely in Bridport
- 15 January 1633: Thomas Knott was buried in Bridport
- 16 January 1633: William and Ursilla were married in Bridport
- 23 September 1634: Thomas Knott’s will was probated and attested to in London
- 19 October 1634: William and Ursilla’s son William Junior was christened in Toller Porcorum just outside of Bridport

The Probate Entries were made on or after 23 September 1634

Noticeably, per our own eyes viewing the image of the contemporary original probate entry, and per convention, the will of Thomas Knott was recorded in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury register on or after formal probate proceedings occurred on 23 September 1634,

which was after the death of Thomas Knott as the notation “*Thomas Knott late*” asserts. The will was NOT recorded contrary to convention *before* Thomas passed away.⁵⁵

As is the case today in common law courts of the United States, there would have been no requirement for Thomas, Hester, Elizabeth, and Ursilla to travel to London to have Thomas’s will witnessed and recorded at the courthouse before Thomas’s death. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury conducted *probate* proceedings, which are legal proceedings conducted in front of a judge *after* a testator has passed away. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury recorded wills in conjunction with required probate proceedings rather than operate a will registration program before probate. Even if an unusual situation existed and a will had been recorded by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury before a testator passed away, by law the will would still have to be proved in formal probate proceedings after the testator’s death, and witnesses would still have to appear before a judge and attest to the will’s validity.

The 3 January 1633 Will of Thomas Knott may have been Verbal

It is possible that the court clerk was recording in the register a verbal will of Thomas Knott rather than a written will as explained hereafter.

The court clerk recorded “*Thomas Knott late of Bridport in the county of Dorset... made and declared his last will and testament Muncipatuio [sic]*”.

The court clerk also noted “*...with words or thoughts in effect were spoken in the presence of Elizabeth Knott... and Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe, and also the said Hester Knott.*”

The word mancipatio (phonetically spelled “*Muncipatuio*” by the court clerk), is a Latin Roman law term. In Ancient Rome, mancipatio “*was a solemn verbal contract by which the ownership of certain types of goods, called res Mancipi, was transferred*”.⁵⁶ Mancipatio was not the actual transfer of the goods, but was a “*solemn verbal contract*” made in the presence of witnesses to transfer the goods later; the transfer of goods was a separate act.

Ambiguously, however, Mancipatio “*was also the legal procedure for drawing up wills, emancipating children from their parents, and adoption*”.⁵⁷

Hence, it is unclear whether the will was verbal or written. Regardless of whether the will was a written document dated 2 January 1633 or was simply verbal statements made by Thomas Knott on his deathbed on 2 January 1633, the entries made on the register of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury still provide valuable evidence as discussed hereafter.

The 3 January 1633 Will of Thomas Knott was likely “made and declared” in Bridport

As discussed in the following paragraphs, the will of Thomas Knott was most likely “*made and declared*” in Bridport. The probate entry states,

⁵⁵ The term “late” is a common and polite way of saying “deceased”.

⁵⁶ (Farlex 2018).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

“Thomas Knott late of Bridport in the county of Dorset Clarke [clerk - spelled phonetically]”.

Jurisdiction is an important legal principle, and the jurisdiction of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury was based, in part, on the location of the estate being in southern England; thus, the notation that Thomas was *“of Bridport in the county of Dorset”* is critically important. Also of relevance to help differentiate between two people with the same name is the common court practice of noting a person’s profession; hence, the record notes that Thomas was a clerk, spelled phonetically in the record as *“Clarke”*; and because court ledger entries excluded most punctuation, no coma was used between the words Dorset and Clarke.

Further, from the English transcription we can see that on 2 January 1633 Thomas Knott *“made and declared his last will and testament... with words or thoughts in effect were spoken in the presence of Elizabeth Knott and Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe, and also ... Hester Knott.”* A fundamental aspect of probate proceedings is to prove the validity of a will, written or verbal, to ensure that the assets and estate of the testator are distributed the way the testator truly wanted; hence, the witnesses to Knott’s will (Elizabeth, Ursula, and Hester) are an essential part of the record. And having *“Ursula”* be a witness to Knott’s will as someone who is not an immediate family member like Elizabeth and Hester adds additional weight to the will’s authenticity.

As explained previously there was no reason for Thomas, Hester, Elizabeth, and *“Ursula”* to travel to London to make, declare, and witness Knott’s will; rather, per convention and common sense, wills are made, declared, and witnessed at a location convenient to the testator, usually at home or at a local lawyer’s office.

Also, as detailed hereafter, Thomas Knott passed away only a few days after he *“made and declared his last will and testament”*; he was buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery of Saint Mary on 15 January 1633 as detailed hereafter, which is 13 days after 2 January 1633; hence, it is reasonable to conclude that Thomas made his last will and testament on 2 January 1633 because he was dying.

Thus, from the foregoing, it is reasonable to deduce and prudent to conclude that Thomas *“made and declared his last will and testament”* on 2 January 1633 in Bridport where he and his daughters lived and where Thomas served as the town and parish clerk and where Thomas was apparently very ill, and where Thomas was buried a few days later, and where Hester, Elizabeth, and Ursula would have likely been readily available to witness Knott’s *“last will and testament”*; and it is unreasonable to think that Thomas, Hester, Elizabeth, and Ursula would have traveled far from Bridport to make and witness a will while Thomas was dying, especially when they were not required to do so.

The 1634 Probate Entry is not a Verbatim Transcription of the 1633 Will of Thomas Knott

It is clear from the English portion of the probate record that the court clerk did not make a verbatim transcription of the will for several reasons in addition to excluding format and punctuation. For example, the clerk recorded *“Thomas Knott late”* for the name of the testator. The term *“late”* means *“deceased”*, and clearly the term *“late”* would not be on the original will of Thomas Knott because Thomas could not have made his last will and testament if he was dead.

In addition, the clerk used past tense and third person terms such as “*made and declared his last will and testament*” rather than “do make and declare my last will and testament”; and also the phrase “*And did deliver to her these things*”; and noted, “*with words or thoughts in effect were spoken in the presence of Elizabeth Knott...*”.

Hence, it is clear that the court clerk’s mindset was in the present as he was recording contemporary probate facts as opposed to his mindset being focused exclusively on recording a written will verbatim, which is a very common occurrence for modern family historians to be aware of and which lends sound reason to the notation that “*Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe*” was a contemporary probate condition in 1634 and was not a past 1633 will-witnessing condition, which will be elaborated on in the paragraphs that follow.

Hester, Elizabeth, and Ursula were Present in London during Probate Proceedings

The probate entry written in Latin and dated 23 September 1634 notes “...*signa ef Ursula Macombe...*”. Similar notations were made in Latin for Hester Knott and Elizabeth Knott. Hence, by law and convention, the record asserts that “Ursula Macombe”, Hester Knott, and Elizabeth Knott were present in London at the 23 September 1634 probate proceedings to attest to the will of Thomas Knott in addition to them being present on 2 January 1633 when Thomas “*made and declared his last will and testament... in the presence of Elizabeth Knott... and Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe, and also the said Hester Knott.*”

It is highly likely that William accompanied his bride who was 8 months pregnant to London. It is also highly likely that William was well acquainted with the family of Thomas Knott as discussed in the following pages.

About the Person “Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe”

The probate entry for Thomas Knott makes mention of “*Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe*”. As discussed previously and hereafter, Thomas Knott was “*of Bridport in the County of Dorset*” where Thomas was the town and parish clerk and one of the Rectors of the Bridport parish; and as family members, Knott’s two daughters, Hester and Elizabeth, were of Bridport also; and as discussed previously the will of Thomas Knott was most likely made and declared in Bridport “*in the presence of ... Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe*”, which implies that “*Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe*” was affiliated with Bridport as well. However, after an exhaustive search, there is no “William Macombe” nor “Ursula Macombe” noted in extant ‘original records’ of Dorset County.

Because names were written phonetically, and those in London have an accent and phonetic spelling conventions that are different than Dorset County, it is totally within reason to believe that the surname Macombe that was recorded in London is simply a phonetic spelling of the common Bridport surname Macomber; and the only plausible candidate noted in extant records of Dorset County for “William Macomber” is the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670) who married the singular person Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) at the Bridport Parish Church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England on 16 January 1633. And as explained previously, because the court clerk’s mindset was clearly in the present as he was recording contemporary 1634 facts instead of exclusively 1633 conditions, which is a very common occurrence, it is totally within reason that “*Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe*”, is Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) who married William Macomber (1609-1670) in

Bridport on 16 January 1633. Hence, using clear evidence and sound reasoning, the conflict of Ursilla being single on 2 January 1633 but being noted as married when recording the will in 1634, is suitably and reasonably resolved.

As shown on the bond dated 8 June 1670 presented on page 58 hereafter, Ursilla Macomber, the widow of William Macomber, signed the 1670 bond with a modified “X”, which suggests that she could not read nor write. Many witnesses were unable to read or write during the Early Modern Era, and the fact that a person signed a document with a signature or with an “X” was irrelevant per law as long as the identity of who made the mark was noted in the record; hence, an “X” for the “*signa ef Ursula Macombe*” would be considered the same as a “signature”, which is a very common legal occurrence in both England and New England.

The soundly reasoned conclusion that “*Ursula Macombe, the wife of William Macombe*” is none other than Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?), the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670), is consistent with all available evidence; and just as important, there is no unresolved inconsistency, credible evidence, or sound reasoning to the contrary.

About Thomas Knott

Pertinent to the will of Thomas Knott dated 2 January 1633 is an entry in the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* of the burial of Thomas Knott on 15 January 1633 as seen in the following image.

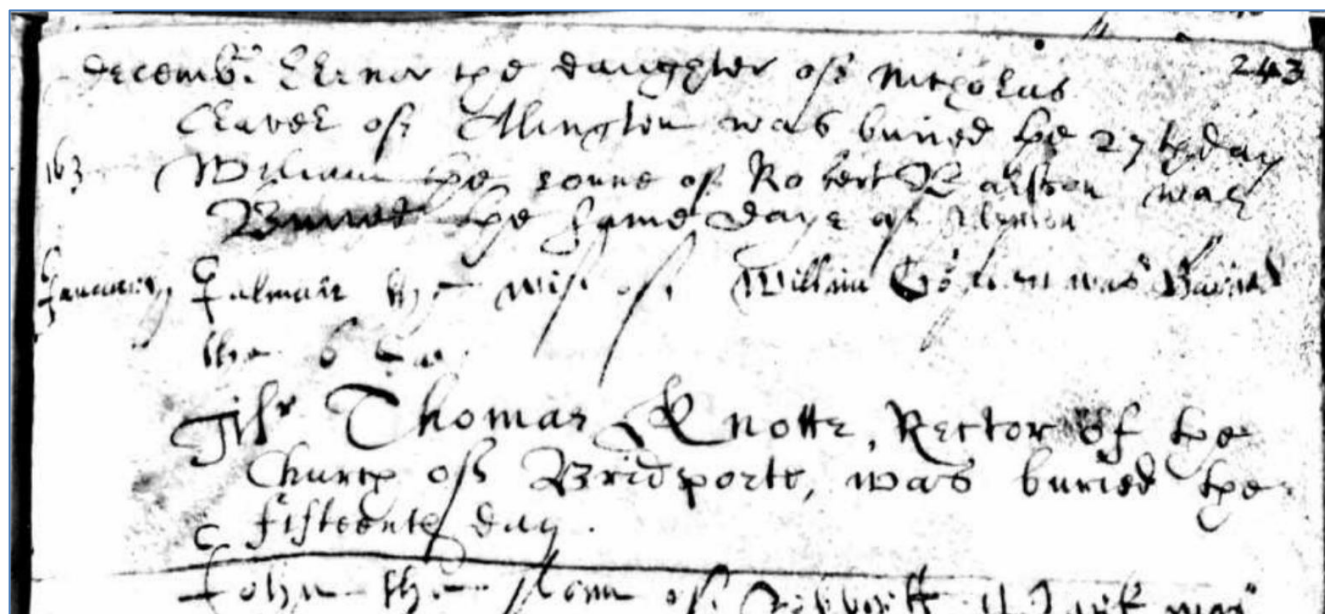


Image 24: Image of the original entry in the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* of the burial of “*Mr. Thomas Knott, Rector of the Church of Bridport*” on 15 January 1633.⁵⁸

Careful examination of the previous image shows that the parish clerk who recorded the burial of Thomas Knott used the common brevigraph which is somewhat similar to the

⁵⁸ (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital database] > Bridport > Image 347 of 1315). Note that a modern indexer employed by Ancestry.com who apparently did not understand the Old Style Julian Calendar erroneously placed January-March 1633 entries as being in 1634 in the modern Ancestry.com index.

modern letter ‘y’ in place of the letters ‘th’ in the word ‘the’ (ye) and in the word ‘fifteenth’ (fifteeny); hence, the entry recording the burial of Thomas Knott written in Old English script reads,

“Mr. Thomas Knotte, Rector of the Church of Bridport, was buried the fifteenth day.”

There is significant evidence that Thomas Knott who was buried on 15 January 1633 is the same Thomas Knott who made his will on 2 January 1633 as explained hereafter.

In regards to the will and probate record of Thomas Knott “*of Bridport in the county of Dorset*”, clerk, the will was dated 2 January 1633 and the probate proceedings occurred on 23 September 1634; hence, the testator Thomas Knott passed away between 2 January 1633 and 23 September 1634. However, there is no entry in the Bridport Parish register of the burial of a Thomas Knott between the will date and probate date other than the 15 January 1633 entry of the burial of “*Mr. Thomas Knotte*” (spelled phonetically), which is significant evidence that the Thomas Knott of Bridport, clerk, who made his will on 2 January 1633 is the same Thomas Knott of Bridport who was buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery on 15 January 1633 as further explained hereafter.

A rector in the Church of England is a paid administrative position; it is not necessarily a priest or priesthood position. For example, a person who was responsible for managing a parcel of land for the Church of England, and who received a stipend for his management services, would have the title of Rector even though he was not a priest and never officiated in any baptism, marriage, burial, or other Church function. Hence, from the probate entry in the ecclesiastical Prerogative Court of Canterbury in which Thomas Knott’s profession is noted as clerk (spelled phonetically as “*Clarke*”), and the burial entry in which Thomas Knott is noted as “*Rector of the Church of Bridport*”, we can conclude that Thomas was the parish clerk, which in 1600-England is the same as the town clerk, and that he received a stipend for his services which meant that his profession was clerk as the court record indicated.

Further, it is apparent that there was a change of clerks who made entries in the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* in mid-December 1633, which in the Old Style Julian Calendar was a few days before 2 January 1633 and which is further discussed beginning on page 32. In particular, the main clerk before mid-December 1633, likely Thomas Knott, consistently used Latin Roman numerals to record the day of a vital event (i, ii, iii, iiiii, v...); however, after mid-December 1633 forward the main clerk typically used Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 5...) to record the day of vital events, or he spelled out the day such as in the entry for the burial of Thomas Knott. There were apparently substitute clerks who made entries also.

The Affiliation of Ursilla Macomber with the Knott Family

The fact that Ursilla, the wife of William Macomber, is mentioned in the will and probate proceedings of Thomas Knott is prima fascia evidence that she was affiliated with the Knott family; however, it is unclear what that affiliation was. The will of Thomas Knott mentions three unnamed sons and two daughters, Hester and Elizabeth, one of whom could have been a close friend of Ursilla. In addition, Thomas Knott apparently had a son named Samuel who was christened at the Bridport Parish Church of Saint Mary on 4 June 1609, which in the Old Style Julian Calendar is six months before March 1609 when William Macomber (1609-1670) was born. It is reasonable to assume that Samuel Knott and William Macomber knew each other growing up in the relatively small town of Bridport during the

1600s, and it is unreasonable to presume that they did not know each other. And with their fathers holding rather prominent positions in the community, it is possible that Samuel Knott and William Macomber were good friends, which may have led to Ursilla being affiliated with the Knott family during her courtship with William, or vice versa, Ursilla's relationship with the Knott family may have led to William and Ursilla meeting each other and subsequently entering into courtship and marriage.

The Contemporary Toller Porcorum Parish Register (Notation 4 of 9)

The third of five contemporary 'original records' which note 9 times the name of the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670) is the parish record of the Toller Porcorum church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter some 8 miles northeast of Bridport. The Toller Porcorum Parish register notes the christening of William's first child on 19 October 1634, which, in addition to noting the name of the child, William, and the name of the child's father, William "Macumber", the parish record also notes the name of the child's mother, "Ussella", as detailed hereafter. The evidence that the child christened on 19 October 1634 in Toller Porcorum is the son of William Macomber (1609-1670) and his wife Ursilla Cooper is very strong and satisfies the Genealogical Proof Standard as discussed in the following pages.

The Original Parchment Toller Porcorum Parish Sheets 1615-1658

Pertinent to our discussion herein, nine months and three days after the marriage of William Macomber and Ursilla Cooper, their first child whom they named William according to common custom, was christened on 19 October 1634 in the Toller Porcorum Parish Church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter; as a consequence, a contemporary entry was made in the original parchment Toller Porcorum Parish register in regards to the christening.

As detailed beginning on page 74, the Parish of Toller Porcorum consists of the village of Toller Porcorum which has had a population of about 300 inhabitants for centuries, and the surrounding small hamlets in the Toller Valley. Toller Porcorum was also known as Swyne Toller and Great Toller. The ancient church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter was confiscated from the Catholic Church circa 1534 in conjunction with the Dissolution of the Monasteries and functioned as a parish church for the Church of England during the mid-1500s forward. Unfortunately, the earliest parish records prior to 1615 are no longer extant. The following excerpt describes what was the earliest extant parish register for Toller Porcorum for the years 1615 forward, which is titled Volume I:

*"Note – Vol. I. consists of 35 parchment sheets almost black with age. It was long lost and was finally discovered partly eaten away by mice, at Maiden Castle; and then restored to its rightful custody. It consists of Baptisms and Burials from 1615 to 1658. Marriages to 1653. ...These entries were copied by the courtesy of the Rev. D. Clarke, Vicar of Toller Porcorum, by Mr. Bartelot and Mr. Nevill."*⁵⁹

The transcription project undertaken by Bartelot and Nevill was commenced in 1904 and was completed in 1905, and the resulting manuscript was titled *Vol I 1615-1658 Great Toller Transcript 1905* and was labeled *PE/TRP: RE 6/1* by the Dorset History Centre. In

⁵⁹ (Toller Porcorum Parish, Church of England (Toller Porcorum, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital Collection] > Toller Porcorum > image 56 of 62).

addition, marriage entries from the 1905 transcript were subsequently published, and the publication was labeled PE/TRP: RE 6/2 by the Dorset History Centre. A joint effort by Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. and the Dorset History Centre was undertaken circa 2011 to publish images from ALL extant Dorset County parish registers of the Church of England. These images are viewable online via Ancestry.com in the digital collection titled Dorset, England, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1812. Images of PE/TRP: RE 6/1 and PE/TRP: RE 6/2 are parts of the digital collection and can be viewed by going to the digital collection and selecting Toller Porcorum. Images of the original “35 parchment sheets almost black with age” that were transcribed in 1904 and 1905 are not part of the digital collection.

Derivative Records Corroborating the Original Parchment Record

Even though the original “35 parchment sheets almost black with age” are not available for viewing, the ‘derivative records’ which are available provide evidence that a contemporary entry was *indeed* made of the christening of a child at the Toller Porcorum Parish church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter on 19 October 1634 whose name was William and whose parents were named William and “Ursilla” “Macomber” (spelled phonetically and deduced accordingly as explained hereafter).

The outside cover of the 1904-1905 transcription project is titled Vol I 1615-1658 Great Toller Transcript 1905. The title page notes “*Transcript of Vol I of Register of Swyne Toller or Toller Porcorum*”. The pertinent portion of Vol I 1615-1658 Great Toller Transcript 1905 which notes the 19 October 1634 christening entry is displayed below.

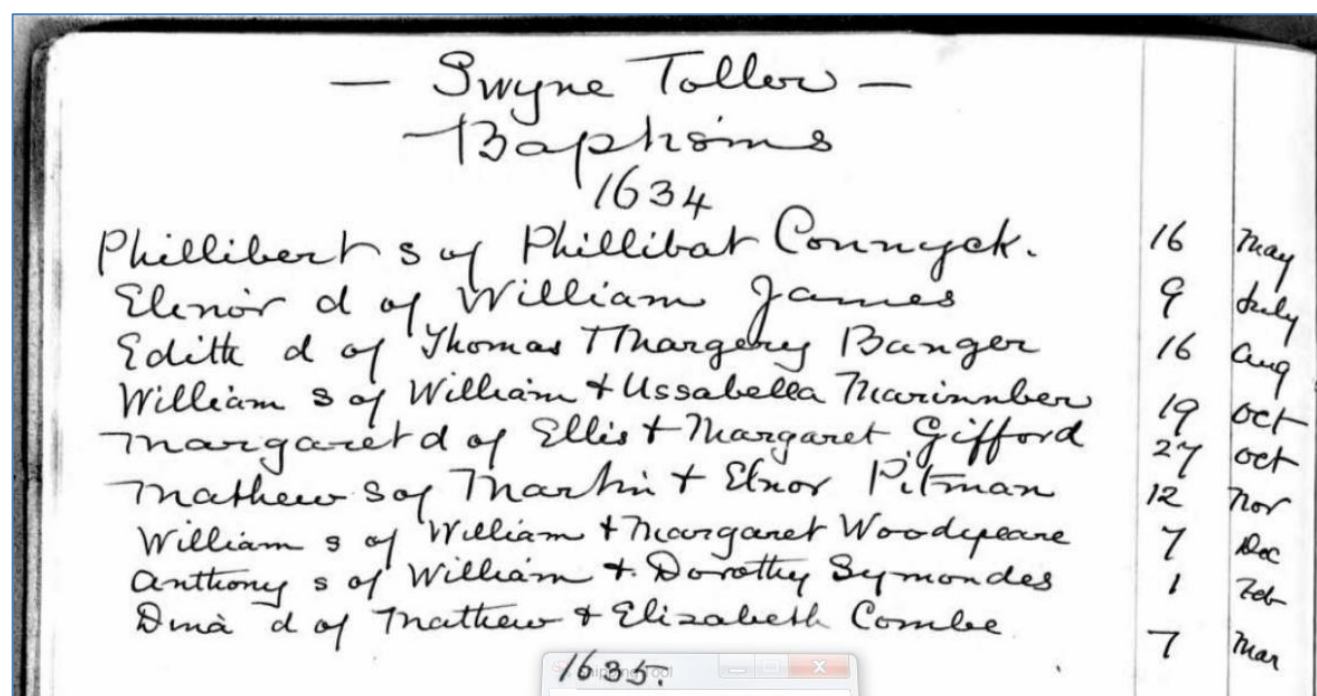


Image 25: Image of entries in Vol I 1615-1658 Great Toller Transcript 1905 derived from the “35 parchment sheets almost black with age” and noting the 19 October 1634 christening of William, deduced to be the son of William and “Ussella” “Macumber”.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ (Toller Porcorum Parish, Church of England (Toller Porcorum, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital Collection] > Toller Porcorum > image 44 of 62).

The above image, which is a ‘derivative record’ of the original “35 parchment sheets almost black with age”, indicates that William, the son of William and Ussabella Marinnber, was christened on 19 October 1635 at Swyne Toller. Swyne Toller is another name for Toller Porcorum. The transcribed common name “Ussabella” is irregular and the family surname “Marinnber” is irregular; hence, further investigation and analysis is warranted.

From the foregoing, there is definitive evidence that a child named William was christened at the Toller Porcorum Parish church on 19 October 1634; and there is definitive evidence that the common name of the child’s father was also William. There is, however, due to an irregularity in spelling, a question about the common name of the child’s mother; and, due to an irregularity in spelling, there is a question about the precise family surname.

Reading Old English script is very challenging, especially when spelling was phonetic rather than standardized, and even more particularly when the original 35 parchment sheets are black with age; hence, significant leeway must be given to the semi-modern transcription titled *Vol I 1615-1658 Great Toller Transcript 1905*.

The family surname “Marinnber” is unique; no entry outside of the 19 October 1634 christening exists in digital databases of Dorset County parish records; which suggests that the transcription is an error and presses for another possible reading of the surname. Because the Old English letter “c” is very much similar to the modern letter “r”, it is common for modern transcribers to “see” a modern “r” rather than an Old English “c”. Likewise, the letters interpreted to be “inn” could easily be “um” in the original text, which would then give us the common Bridport surname of “Macumber” rather than the non-existent surname “Marinnber”. FamilySearch apparently recognizes the possibility of the surname anomaly and offers the surname “Macumber” as a possible candidate as seen in the following image.

No image available

Name	William Marinnber Or Macumber
Gender	Male
Christening Date	19 Oct 1634
Christening Date (Original)	19 OCT 1634
Christening Place	TOLLER PORCORUM,DORSET,ENGLAND
Father's Name	William Marinnber Or Macumber
Mother's Name	Ussella

Citation

"England Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," database, *FamilySearch*
 (https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/V5KL-M6G : 11 February 2018, William Marinnber Or Macumber, 19 Oct 1634); citing TOLLER PORCORUM,DORSET,ENGLAND, index based upon data collected by the Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City; FHL microfilm 0962786 IT 6.

Image 26: Image of the FamilySearch database reference to the 19 October 1634 christening of “William Marinnber or Macumber” whose father is “William Marinnber or Macumber” and whose mother is “Ussella” at Toller Porcorum, Dorset, England.

The above image shows that the actual surname Macumber is a possible substitute for the irregular surname recorded in 1905 as “Marinnber”. The above image also shows the common name of “Ussella” as a substitute for the irregular name of “Ussabella” recorded in

1905. The 1905 recorded name of “Ussebella” is unique; historically, there is no common name Ussebella, or a phonetic variation thereof. Hence, the regular common name “Ussella” is a reasonable substitute per the FamilySearch database.

Evidence that the Parents of William Christened on 19 October 1634 are William and Ursilla Macomber

There is substantial evidence, along with strong arguments, that the parents of the child christened in Toller Porcorum on 19 October 1634 is none other than William and Ursilla Macomber who were married nine months and three days earlier on 16 January 1633 in nearby Bridport as presented hereafter.

- There is no credible doubt that the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670) was christened and married at the Bridport Parish Church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England as discussed in this biography. And there is no credible doubt that William Macomber (1609-1670) was born and raised in or near Bridport, Dorset England as discussed in this biography.
- After careful and exhaustive research there is no plausible candidate for contemporary entries in ‘original records’ of Dorset County and Plymouth Colony pertaining to the name William Macomber other than the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670) until 1657 when William’s son, William Macomber (1641?-1711), becomes of age (16) and Colonial records begin to use the designation “Sr.” in regards to the name of William Macomber.
- As detailed starting on page 79, a contemporary entry was made in the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* that “*William the son of William Macomber was buried the 30th day of August 1636*”. The only plausible father noted as “William Macomber” is the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670).
- The burial of “*William the son of William Macomber*” at the Bridport Parish cemetery is real and cannot sensibly be ignored; indeed, the evidence is clear and very strong that William Macomber (1606-1670) had a son named William who was buried in the Bridport Parish cemetery on 30 August 1636!
- William Macomber (1609-1670) was married on 16 January 1633. Between the marriage date of 16 January 1633 and the 30 August 1636 burial date of “*William the son of William Macomber*” (or between any other dates), there is no entry in the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* for the christening of a child named William who is the son of William Macomber; hence, prudence dictates that we search nearby for such a christening.
- The only plausible candidate listed in ‘original records’ of Dorset County for the christening of “*William the son of William Macomber*” is that of the nearby rural parish of Toller Porcorum which notes the christening of William, the son of William and “Ussella” “Macumber” (spelled phonetically and deduced accordingly as discussed previously) at the Toller Porcorum Parish church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter on 19 October 1634.
- There is no evidence that William Macomber (1609-1670) or members of his immediate family were affiliated with the Toller Porcorum parish other than in relation to William’s wife Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?). As explained in the

following section titled *The Ancestry of William's wife, Ursilla Cooper* starting on page 59, there is a preponderance of evidence that William's wife Ursilla was from the village of Ditchet 29 miles north of Toller Porcorum, and there is evidence that before she married William Macomber, Ursilla likely lived in the parish of Toller Porcorum where several families with the surname of Cooper resided.

- The village of Toller Porcorum is only 8 miles northeast of Bridport, which, even in the horse-and-buggy era is a relatively short distance of only 2 hours on foot or 30 minutes by horse.⁶¹ In addition, the village of Toller Porcorum is only 10 miles northwest of Dorchester.
- There is *definitive* evidence that William Macomber (1609-1670) was a cooper by trade. And there is credible evidence that William underwent a seven-year apprenticeship in order to be recognized and to have the requisite knowledge and skills to function as a cooper in Plymouth Colony. Hence, there is good reason to believe that William worked as a cooper after his apprenticeship and after his marriage to Ursilla; and there is good reason to believe that William worked as a cooper in Dorchester; if so, living in the parish of Toller Porcorum which is only 10 miles from Dorchester would be a better commute than living in Bridport which is 15 miles from Dorchester.
- Hence, from the foregoing, it is not only reasonable that William and Ursilla could have lived in the parish of Toller Porcorum after their marriage and that their first son, William Macomber (1634-1636), was christened at the Toller Porcorum Parish church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter, it is highly likely that they did so due to the absence of any other plausible record for the christening of their first son named William who was buried in 1636, which is consistent with all available evidence including the evidence presented hereafter.
- It was the cultural norm during the Early Modern Era in southern England and in British Colonial America to name a newborn child after a recently deceased child, which was clearly practiced by the parents of William Macomber (1609-1670), namely John Macomber (1585?-1650) and his wife Edith Locke (1587?-1636). Following the burial of "*William the son of William Macomber*" on 30 August 1636, if William and Ursilla were to follow cultural and family tradition, they would have named their next male son William in honor of their deceased son, which apparently occurred circa 1641 as discussed hereafter.
- There is definitive evidence that William Macomber (1609-1670) had an adult son named William in Plymouth Colony as detailed in Parts 3 and 4 of this biography. There are at least 26 entries in Plymouth Colony records between 2 April 1638 and 16 November 1657 which note the name of William Macomber without any "Sr." designation; however, beginning with an entry on 7 January 1657 the designation of "Sr." began to be used in subsequent entries. The use of the "Sr." designation in 1657 suggests that William Macomber, Junior came of age, which in British Colonial America was 16-years-of-age when males were considered able to bear

⁶¹ A typical horse travels at 3-5 MPH (miles per hour) walking, 5-8 MPH trotting or pacing, 10-16 MPH at a canter, and 16-19 MPH at a gallop.

arms and were often listed as such, which suggests that William Macomber, Junior was born circa 1641 in Duxbury before the family moved to Marshfield circa 1645, which is consistent with the daughter of William and Ursilla, namely Edith Macomber (1639-1719), being born in Duxbury in 1639, and is consistent with all other pertinent records of Plymouth Colony.

- The fact that the “Sr.” designation was *not* used in Plymouth Colony records in regards to William Macomber until 1657 suggests that William Macomber, Junior noted in Plymouth Colony records was not of age before 1657, and thus was NOT born in 1634, which is corroborating evidence of the burial of the first William in Bridport in 1636 and the birth of the second William in 1641, all of which is totally consistent with cultural norms, family tradition, the ages of family members, and evidence gleaned from pertinent ‘original records’ of Dorset County, England and Plymouth Colony, New England.
- Further, to believe that the William Macomber, Junior who is listed often in Plymouth Colony records, who joined the Society of Friends (Quakers) and moved to Dartmouth in southern Plymouth Colony, was married, fathered several children, owned land, and passed away in Dartmouth in 1711, is the same William Macomber who was born in England in 1634 rather than in Duxbury circa 1641 requires (1) that the 1636 burial entry in the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* of “William the son of William Macomber” be dismissed, which would be genealogical heresy; and (2) that the 1657 coming-of-age issue in Marshfield be ignored, which would be stupid; and (3) is inconsistent with the tradition that three male Macomers came to Plymouth Colony, namely, William Macomber (1609-1670), John Macomber (1613-1688), and Thomas Macomber (1635-1711), which Stackpole recognized in his work but erroneously thought were three brothers rather than two brothers and a son.⁶²

The evidence presented heretofore, taken collectively, amounts to more than a mere preponderance of evidence that the male named William who was christened on 19 October 1634 in Toller Porcorum is the son of William Macomber (1609-1670); and, correspondingly, is further evidence that the common name of the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670) is Ursilla (spelled phonetically in various ways). All five essential elements of the Genealogical Proof Standard have been applied to the above evidence, and there are no unresolved conflicts with the assertion that the male named William who was christened on 19 October 1634 in Toller Porcorum is the son of William Macomber (1609-1670) and Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1670), and there is no other plausible couple noted in contemporary ‘original records’ of Dorset County to be the parents of William who was christened on 19 October 1634 other than William and Ursilla Macomber.

⁶² (Stackpole 1908).

The Contemporary Inventory of Estate of William (Notations 5 of 9)

The fourth of five contemporary ‘original records’ which note 9 times the name of the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670) is the Inventory of Estate of William Macomber dated 27 May 1670. The inventory notes the name *Ursilla Maycomber* as detailed hereafter.

Comments about the Inventory of Estate of William Macomber

Consistent with all other contemporary sources which note the common name of the wife of William Macomber, the 1670 Inventory of Estate of William notes her common name as Ursilla. Other important aspects of the Inventory of Estate of William Macomber (1609-1670) are discussed in part 4 of this biography, including the erroneous sum total.

Of pertinent note for our discussion so far is that on 27 May 1670 three men, Thomas King, William Ford Senior, and Mark Eames, made “*A trew Inventory of the goods and Chattles of William Macomber of Marshfield, deceased*”; hence, we know that William passed away prior to 27 May 1670, likely circa 10 May 1670.

William was a long time resident of Marshfield from circa 1645 until he passed away in 1670; In Marshfield William owned land, had a large house that was noted as a garrison for the township, worked as a cooper and served in various community activities, and is where the inventory of his estate took place. The three men who made the inventory are residents of Marshfield which is evident by their names appearing often in the Marshfield Township meeting minutes.

Eleven days after the inventory was made in Marshfield, it “*was exhibited to the Court held att Plymouth*” on 7 June 1670 “*on the oathes of Vrsilla Maycomber, Thomas Macomber, and Mathew Maycomber*”. The town of Plymouth is about 12 miles south of Marshfield. The next day, 8 June 1670, Ursilla, Thomas, and Matthew entered into a bond in regards to the estate of William Macomber (1609-1670), which is discussed in the next major section.

Image and Transcription of the Inventory of Estate of William Macomber

A modern transcription made by the *Plymouth Colony Archive Project* of the Inventory of Estate of William Macomber dated 27 May 1670 is presented on the following page with punctuation modernized by this author. The image of the Inventory of Estate of William Macomber on file with the Plymouth Colony Court is displayed on page 55 thereafter. Note, however, that the inventory of estate on file is NOT the original inventory, but is a transcribed copy of the original inventory made by a clerk of the Plymouth Colony Court on or after 7 June 1670. The original inventory was likely returned to the family and the court made a copy for its records on or after 8 June 1670 when the original inventory was presented to the court, which is standard court practice in regards to wills, deeds, mortgages, Etc. It is obvious that the inventory on file is a copy because the penmanship is consistent throughout the document including the six “signatures” noted near the bottom, especially for the three “signatures” with the surnames “Maycomber” and “Macomber”. Further, as seen in the original bond dated 8 June 1670 presented in the next section, Ursilla “signed” the bond with a modified “X”; hence Ursilla apparently could not read or write or “sign” her name.

Note also in the following transcription that during the 1600’s spelling was phonetic and not standardized, and a pound was 20 shillings, and a shilling was 12 pence, and a pence is the plural of penny. Also note that 6 pence is half a shilling.

“A trew Inventory of the goods and Chattles of William Macomber of Marshfield, deceased, taken the twenty seauenth [seventh] day of May, Anoo: domine: 1670, by vs whose names are heer vnto subscribed;

[Pounds:shillings:pence]

<i>Impr: his wearing apparrell</i>	<i>06:15:00</i>
<i>Item in beding</i>	<i>01:19:00</i>
<i>Item 2 baggs and a winowing sheet</i>	<i>00:06:00</i>
<i>Item 2 yards of hommade Cloth</i>	<i>00:05:00</i>
<i>Item a warming pan</i>	<i>00:06:00</i>
<i>Item a brasse kettle</i>	<i>00:10:00</i>
<i>Item two Iron potts and a frying pan</i>	<i>01:12:00</i>
<i>Item a brasse skillett</i>	<i>00:04:00</i>
<i>Item in pewter</i>	<i>01:00:00</i>
<i>Item a paire of pothookes and pothangers</i>	<i>00:02:06</i>
<i>Item the armes [firearms] of the house</i>	<i>01:00:00</i>
<i>Item a saddle, a bridle, and a pillion</i>	<i>01:05:00</i>
<i>Item in sope [soap].....</i>	<i>01:00:00</i>
<i>Item in Caske</i>	<i>00:18:00</i>
<i>Item in tubbs and other wooden vessells</i>	<i>01:17:00</i>
<i>Item a Grindstone</i>	<i>00:10:00</i>
<i>Item his shopp tooles</i>	<i>03:00:00</i>
<i>Item a Crosscutt saw with axes, pitchforks, and other tooles</i>	<i>01:14:00</i>
<i>Item a Cart and plow with the plowjrons [plow irons], 2 yoakes & a Chaine</i>	<i>02:00:00</i>
<i>Item for hoopess and Cooper stuffe and hoope timber</i>	<i>01:11:06</i>
<i>Item in bricke</i>	<i>00:02:00</i>
<i>Item in Corne and a bushell of salt</i>	<i>01:04:00</i>
<i>Item 2 wheels</i>	<i>00:06:00</i>
<i>Item debts due to the estate</i>	<i>06:04:00</i>
<i>Item in yarne</i>	<i>01:10:00</i>
<i>Item a mare</i>	<i>04:00:00</i>
<i>Item a younge horse</i>	<i>03:00:00</i>
<i>Item 2 oxen</i>	<i>09:00:00</i>
<i>Item 2 steers</i>	<i>07:00:00</i>
<i>Item 4 Cowes</i>	<i>13:00:00</i>
<i>Item 4 yearlings</i>	<i>05:10:00</i>
<i>Item Calues [calves]</i>	<i>01:00:00</i>

The sume totall 102:01:00

*Thomas Kinge
William Foard senir
Marke Eames*

“The aboue written Inventory was exhibited to the Court held att Plymouth in New England the seuuenth [seventh] day of June, Anno domine: 1670 on the oathes of

Vrsilla Maycomber
*Thomas Macomber
and Mathew Maycomber”*

22

A true Inventory of the Goods and Chattels of William Macomber of Marshfield
deceased taken the twenty seventh day of May Anno. Dom: 1670 by us whose names are here
unto subscribed

From his wearing apparel	06	15	00
From his bedding	01	19	00
From 2 barrels and a running sheet	00	06	00
From 2 yards of hemmsted cloth	00	05	00
From a warming pan	00	06	00
From a brass boiler	00	10	00
From two iron pots and a frying pan	01	12	00
From a brass skillet	00	04	00
From his tools	01	00	00
From a pair of pocketed and pot hangers	00	02	06
From the harness of the horse	01	00	00
From a saddle a bridle and a pillion	01	05	00
From his shoes	04	00	00
From his tubs and other wooden vessels	00	18	00
From a grindstone	01	17	00
From his three tools	00	10	00
From a brass saw with axes withforked and other tools	03	00	00
From a cart and yoke with the collar and 2 yoked ga chains	01	14	00
From four horses and oxen stuff and horse timber	02	00	00
From his britches	01	11	06
From his corn and a bushell of salt	00	02	00
From 2 wheels	01	04	00
From tools due to the estate	00	06	00
From his yare	06	04	00
From a mare	01	10	00
From a young horse	04	00	00
From 2 oxen	03	00	00
From 2 steers	09	00	00
From 4 cows	07	00	00
From 2 two year old	13	00	00
From 4 yearlings	04	10	00
From calves	05	10	00
From his swine	01	00	00
	06	00	00
Thomas Kings			
William Howard bond.			
Walter James			
This sume totall	102	01	00

This above written Inventory was exhibited to the Court held
at Plymouth in New England the twenty day of June Anno. of
June Anno. Dom: 1670: on the oaths of Ursula Macomber
Thomas Macomber
and Matthew Macomber

Image 27: Image of the original Inventory of Estate of William Macomber taken in Marshfield in Plymouth Colony dated 27 May 1670.⁶³

⁶³ (Plymouth Colony 2012, [Digital collection] > Wills 1633-1686 Vol 1-4 > image 309 of 616)

The Contemporary Bond dated 8 June 1670 (Notations 6, 7, 8, and 9 of 9)

The fifth of five contemporary ‘original records’ which note 9 times the name of the wife of William Macomber is a bond that the widow and two adult children of William Macomber (1609-1670) entered into on 8 June 1670 following the passing and during the administration of the estate of William Macomber (1609-1670). The bond notes four times the name of the widow of William, and consistently, each time, the name is recorded as Ursilla Macomber as detailed hereafter.

Setting the Stage for the 8 June 1670 Bond

There is definitive evidence that the singular persons who were husband and wife, William Macomber (1609-1670) and Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?), were the parents of at least five sons, four of whom reached adulthood and became coopers by trade like their father, which is detailed in Parts 3 and 4 of this biography and is summarized below:⁶⁴

1. William Macomber (1634-1636) – passed away in England;
2. Thomas Macomber (1635-1711) – was born in England, was a cooper by trade, and resided in Marshfield his entire adult life except for *perhaps* a short stint in Taunton circa 1670;
3. William Macomber (1641?-1711) – named in honor of his deceased younger brother, was a cooper by trade, became a member of the Society of Friends (Quaker), and moved to Dartmouth about 60 miles south-southwest of Marshfield with other Quakers to avoid persecution by northern Puritans, and he was residing in Dartmouth in 1670;
4. John Macomber (1647?-1716) – was a cooper by trade and moved to Taunton where he was residing in 1670;⁶⁵ and,
5. Matthew Macomber (1649-1676) – after 1670 became a cooper by trade and moved to Taunton where he made a will before going off to war, was killed in the 1675 Indian War, but was only age 20 and likely under the tutelage of his father as a cooper apprentice in Marshfield in 1670.

⁶⁴ It is possible that Ursilla gave birth to more than the five sons and four daughters whom we have record of, and the other possible births were of children who passed away at young ages in Plymouth Colony and thus no extant record of their births and deaths exists.

⁶⁵ There were three contemporary males named John Macomber residing in Taunton: (1) John Macomber (1613-1688) who was the brother of William Macomber (1609-1670) and who was a carpenter by trade and the co-founder of a major sawmill in Taunton, but was never a cooper by trade; (2) John Macomber, Junior, the son of John Macomber (1613-1688) and the nephew of William Macomber (1609-1670) who apparently was also a carpenter by trade like his father and was never a cooper by trade; and (3) John Macomber (1641?-1711) who was the son of William Macomber (1609-1670) who grew up in Marshfield but moved to Taunton where he was a cooper by trade like his father. Several ‘authored works’ written by individuals with limited understanding of the two major Macomber families in Plymouth Colony have confused various records pertaining to the three contemporary John Macomers living in Taunton and as a result have made many erroneous assertions, and these erroneous conclusions have then been perpetuated in many online family trees.

As discussed in the following pages, the bond dated 8 June 1670 mentions three of the four adult sons of William and Ursilla, namely, Thomas, John, and Matthew. Because the other son William was residing in Dartmouth some 60 miles south-southwest of Marshfield he was likely not present when the bond was being written, and thus was not mentioned.

Image and Transcription of the 8 June 1670 Bond

An image of the actual original bond dated 8 June 1670 is shown on the following page. Obviously, the bond was retained by the court rather than returned to one of the parties likely due to the condition that the participants would “*keep harmles the said Gou [Gov. – Governor] and court from any danger which may arise unto them...*”. A modern transcription, for the most part, of the original bond by this author is presented below. Note that punctuation has been modernized for clarity in the following transcription, and the letter “v” was not a separate letter of the English alphabet in 1670, but was a form of the letter “u”, and the capital letter “U” was written similar to the modern letter “V”.

*“Know all men by these presents that wee, **Vrsilla Macomber**, widdow of the town of Marshfield in the possission of Plymouth in New England in America, and ~~John~~ [crossed out with one line through name] Thomas [written above the name John that was crossed out] Macomber of the towne of Taunton [likely pertains to John and not Thomas] in the possission of New Plymouth, Cooper, and Mathew Maycomber of the Town of Marshfield in the possission aforesaid { _ ? _ } doe acknowlidg[worn edge] ourselves to be bound and foramly obliged in the sume of two hundred pounds Sterling for the payment of which said sume, well and kindly to be made, wee bind ourselves, our heirs & [Etc.]; { _ ? _ } & [Etc.]; adminnestrators joyntly and severally, firmly sealed and given this **eighth day of June one thousand six hundred and seventy.**”*

*“The condition of the above written obligation is firstly that wheras the above **Vrsilla Macomber** hath obtained letters of Administration to administer on... [worn edge of paper] ...estate of William Macomber of Marshfield aforesaid; if therefore the said **Vrsilla Macomber** shall pay or cause to be payed all just debts and legacies as are... [worn edge of page] owing unto any from the said estate so farre and { _ ? _ } possessions as the said estate will amount unto and keep a faire and just account of her said administration from time to time and at all times faire and keep harmles the said Gou [Gov. – Governor] and court from any danger which may arise unto them by the said administants [?] [worn edge of page] and be reddey to give ~~an aee~~ [the word “an” and the letters “acc” crossed out with a single line] a faire account of the same when therento [?] { _ ? _ } by the [torn edge] ...that then the above written obligation to be void and of none effect or efficacy to [torn edge] ...remain in full force and vertue.”*

“Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of

“Joseph { _ ? _ } [signature]”

“the mark of ‘S H’ Samuel hallwey [sic-spelled phonetically]”

*“the ‘x’ mark of **Vrsilla Macomber** [followed by a seal]”*

“Thomas Macomber [signature followed by a seal]”

“Mathew Macomber [signature followed by a seal]”



⁶⁶ (Unknown Attorney 1670, [Digital Collection] > Plymouth > Case no 13456-13543

Comments about the 8 June 1670 Bond

The original contemporary bond dated 8 June 1670 is, by itself, decisive evidence that the common name of the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670) is Ursilla. And the original contemporary bond dated 8 June 1670 gives credence to the other contemporary sources which consistently note the common name of William's wife as Ursilla as well (spelt phonetically in various ways). But most importantly, the bond adds important evidence that the wife of the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670) is the singular person Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?).

Other important aspects of the bond dated 8 June 1670, including information about the 200 pounds of debt that the estate of William Macomber incurred and the land dispute and legal fees associated therewith, are discussed in Part 4 of this biography in conjunction with many other 'original records' of Plymouth Colony and the subsequent Province of Massachusetts concerning the family of William Macomber (1609-1670) and Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?).

THE ANCESTRY OF WILLIAM'S WIFE, URSILLA COOPER

There is no *definitive* evidence, singularly or collectively, known to this author that identifies the parents of William's wife Ursilla Cooper, and it is highly unlikely that any such evidence exists as discussed hereafter. Likewise, as detailed in the following pages, there is no current collection of evidence which satisfies the *Genealogical Proof Standard* as to the parentage of Ursilla Cooper. There is, however, a *preponderance of available evidence* detailed in the following pages which suggests that Ursilla is the daughter of Stephen Cooper of the parish of Ditchet 29 miles north of Toller Porcorum. There is also an unlikely possibility that Ursilla is the daughter of William Cooper of the parish of Toller Porcorum 8 miles northeast of Bridport which is also discussed hereafter.⁶⁷

The Singular Person named Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?)

It is apparent from available evidence which satisfies the Genealogical Proof Standard that from 1633 forward there is a singular female named Ursilla Cooper (spelled phonetically in various ways) who did the following:

- Was a witness to the will of Thomas Knott in Bridport, Dorset, England in 1633;
- Married William Macomber (1609-1670) in Bridport, Dorset, England in 1633;
- Was an attesting witness to Knott's will probated in London in 1634;
- Gave birth to two boys who were christened in Dorset County in 1634 and 1635, one of whom was buried in Bridport in 1636;
- Migrated to Plymouth Colony circa January 1637;
- Gave birth to at least seven children in Plymouth Colony;
- Had four sons who were coopers by trade in Plymouth Colony like their father;
- Dealt with her husband's estate and a land dispute in 1670 when her husband passed away;
- Was noted as "my honored mother" in the will of her son who died in 1675 as a result of the "1675-1676 Indian War";
- Was affiliated with individuals with the surname Holloway in England and in Plymouth Colony; and,
- Passed away in Plymouth Colony after 7 March 1676.

For the following reasons this author uses the designation "Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?)" to identify the above described singular person. Consistently, without exception, the above described person's common name is noted contemporaneously in 'original records' as Ursilla (spelled phonetically in various ways), and her maiden name is noted

⁶⁷ It was felt appropriate to include in this biography a research outline for the parentage of William's wife Ursilla Cooper. It is possible that further research will satisfy the Genealogical Proof Standard in regards to the parentage of Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?); however, this author is not aware of any such research and has not taken time away from the main purpose of this biography to conduct such research. Never-the-less, the evidence that currently exist merits mentioning herein to guide further research and to promote soundly reasoned conclusions.

contemporaneously as Cooper and nothing else despite erroneous ‘derivative records’ and ‘authored works’ to the contrary. And we know from contemporaneous ‘original records’ of Plymouth Colony that the above described singular person passed away after 7 March 1676, but we do not know the precise year of her passing, which merits representation but with the use of a question mark “1676?”. And we do not know with certainty when the above described person was born; however, there is a preponderance of evidence presented hereafter which suggests that she was born in the year 1616, which merits representation but with the use of a question mark “1616?” to indicate the uncertainty; hence, following convention, this author uses the designation “Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?)” to identify the above described singular person.

Ursilla and the Church of England

There is strong evidence that Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) was a member of the Anglican Church of England before she migrated to Plymouth Colony as listed hereafter:

- She was married in the Church of England’s Bridport Parish Church of Saint Mary, which typically required good standing with the Church of England;
- Her first two sons were christened in parish churches of the Church of England in Bridport and nearby Toller Porcorum as detailed hereafter;
- She was closely associated with the family of Thomas Knott who was a rector in the Church of England’s Bridport parish and she was chosen to be a witness to Knott’s will that was probated in a Church of England ecclesiastical court;
- Her in-laws were members of the Church of England;
- Her apparent paternal relatives in Toller Porcorum were members of the Church of England as discussed hereafter; and,
- She was not listed in any extant Catholic, protestant, or dissident roles;
- There is no evidence that contradicts the evidence that Ursilla was a member of the Church of England.

Hence, it is reasonable to presume that Ursilla was christened in the Anglican Church of England and that her christening was recorded in a local parish register.

The Christening of Ursilla

In regards to the *date* of christening of Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) we have the following guidance and corresponding considerations.

- For genealogy, the typical maternal age range is 15-45 years of age although there are exceptions beyond one or two standard deviations: most girls complete puberty by age 15 and most women finish bearing children by age 45; Ursilla gave birth to at least 9 children between 1634 and 1653; hence, to be consistent with *typical* maternal ages, Ursilla’s birth and christening would be circa 1608-1619 ($1634 - 15 = 1619$; and, $1653 - 45 = 1608$).
- The most *common* ages at marriage in southern England for bride and groom is 22 and 24 years respectively, with most younger brides being 19-22 years of age; Ursilla married William Macomber (1609-1670) on 16 January 1633 when William

was age 23 years and 10 months; hence, to be consistent with historical norms Ursilla's age at marriage would be 19-22 years which equates to a likely year of birth and christening circa 1611-1615, which is within the 1608-1619 maternal range.⁶⁸

- Ursilla passed away in 1676, which is consistent with a birth year of circa 1611-1615 and death at age 61-65 compared to William's age at death being 60 years.

Consequently, from the foregoing, it is reasonable to deduce that Ursilla would have likely been born and christened circa the years 1611-1615, but possibly within the range of 1608-1619, or in the extreme at least after the year 1599 and before her sanctioned marriage in the Church of England in the year 1633.

As presented in the previous paragraphs, there is strong evidence that Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1670) was christened in the Anglican Church of England sometime after 1599 and before her marriage in 1633 in a broad. However, after extensive research there is no record of a female named Ursilla Cooper or a variant spelling thereof being christened in extant Church of England records of Dorset County between 1600 and 1633, which leads to four possibilities:

6. It is possible that Ursilla was christened in a parish in Dorset County, but there is no extant record of the Christening; or,
7. It is possible that Ursilla was christened in a nearby parish in southwest England outside of Dorset County; or,
8. It is possible that Ursilla was christened in a distant parish beyond southwest England; or,
9. It is possible that Ursilla was not christened in the Church of England but simply went along with various Church of England events.

Each of these four possibilities and the research pertinent to each is presented and discussed in the following pages.

The Possibility that Ursilla was christened in Dorset County

All known extant parish registers of the Church of England in Dorset County have been identified, catalogued, indexed, digitized, and are readily available for research via Ancestry.com. Unfortunately, early parish registers for several parishes in Dorset County are no longer extant; for example, the earliest parish register for Bridport is for the period 1600-1638, and similarly in nearby Toller Porcorum where Ursilla Cooper was affiliated the earliest parish record is for the period 1615-1658 as detailed hereafter. Hence, even though there is no mention of Ursilla's christening in extant 'original records' of Dorset County, it is possible that she was christened in Dorset County but the record of her christening is no longer extant.

⁶⁸ (Laslett 1965, p. 82). Laslett studied marriage in the archdiocese of Canterbury which includes southern England for the years 1619 to 1660 and found the following: the median age of brides was 22 years and nine months and the median age for grooms was 25 years and six months; the average age of women was 24 years and the average age of men was just under 28 years; the most common ages at marriage were 22 years for women and 24 years for men; and a large majority of brides were at least age 19. The Church of England dictated that a bride or groom had to be age 21 years to marry *without* parental consent, or at least age 14 with parental consent, and only one bride in a thousand was thirteen years of age or younger.

There is *definitive* evidence that Ursilla was in Bridport and nearby Toller Porcorum in the years 1633, 1634, 1635, and 1636 as detailed hereafter; and there is a possibility that Ursilla was in Toller Porcorum before 1633 as discussed hereafter; and there is no evidence linking Ursilla with any other parish of Dorset County; all of which presses further research in Bridport and Toller Porcorum for the parentage of Ursilla Cooper.

In regards to Ursilla's paternal family, the surname "Cooper" is a common surname in England, and the mere mentioning of the Cooper surname in contemporary 'original records' of a particular parish is not, by itself, conclusive evidence of immediate family relationship; further research is needed to show familial patterns, Etc., especially when young adults have a tendency to venture beyond their hometowns and settle elsewhere. Often, in the absence of conclusive evidence, family historians who thoroughly and carefully apply sound research, analysis, and correlation techniques can either satisfy the Genealogical Proof Standard or at least establish a preponderance of evidence in regards to a pertinent family relationship.

The Cooper Surname in the Parish Register of Bridport

We know from several sources that Ursilla was affiliated with the town of Bridport where she was married and where her in-laws lived and where she was present to witness the will of Thomas Knott and where a son was christened and a son was buried as detailed previously and hereafter. However, there is *not* a strong presence of the Cooper surname in the Church of England's *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* as noted in the following list which is apparently the extent of the surname Cooper in the Bridport Parish register:⁶⁹

- Richard Cooper – buried 18 February 1603;
- Phillip [sic - Phillipa] Cooper (female) – married George Parkins (male) 28 October 1605;
- Grace Cooper – married Robert Morris 24 November 1606;
- Widow Perke Cooper – buried 1610;
- Ursilla Cooper – married William Macomber 16 January 1633; and
- Marie, daughter of William Cooper – buried 24 March 1645.

From the above list we can see that of the 6 entries, 3 are burials and 3 are marriages and none are christenings. The fact that no christenings with the surname Cooper were noted in the register is consistent with the fact that the only Cooper male noted in the register is Richard Cooper who passed away in 1603, which further corroborates Ursilla not being noted as christened in Dorset County between 1600 and 1633. There is no extant Bridport Parish register prior to 1600, so we do not know more from parish records about these individuals.

Without further evidence we cannot be sure of the relationship of these six individuals; however, from the evidence available solely from the Bridport Parish entries it is possible that

⁶⁹ This author reviewed images of the original parchment *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* to verify entries noted in the index *except* for the widow "Perke" which is noted in the semi-modern "PE/BT: RE 28" index not readily visible in the original register. In regards to the *female* named "Phillip" marrying the *male* named "George Parkins", this author verified that the original register reads "Phillip" suggesting an error on the part of the parish clerk in recording the feminine name "Phillipa" or a female was indeed dubbed "Phillip".

the widow “Perke” Cooper who was buried in 1610 is the wife of Richard Cooper who was buried in 1603 as their burials are somewhat contemporary with each other and consistent with historical trends of a husband passing away a few years before his wife. In addition, during the 1600s adult deaths typically occurred after age 60 and marriage commonly occurred at age 22 for females; hence, based on typical and implied ages, Richard and/or “Perke” could be one or both of the parents of Phillip and Grace. However, Ursilla was married in 1633 which is 27 and 28 years after Phillip and Grace were married, suggesting that Phillip & Grace are not likely siblings of Ursilla. Further, Ursilla was likely born after 1603 and after 1610; hence, Richard and “Perke” are not likely to be the parents of Ursilla.⁷⁰. Hence, from the Bridport Parish register there is no evidence which links Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) with the Coopers in Bridport; rather, the evidence suggests NO *immediate* family relationship.

Further, the person named Marie who is noted as the daughter of William Cooper and buried in 1645 is likely a *christened child*. The Bridport parish register typically mentions the name of the custodial father of *children* buried in the parish, even if the father is deceased which is demonstrated by several entries noting “deceased” after the father’s name, which is evidence that burials which do not note the name of a father are burials of adults. Also, if a person were not christened their burial would typically not be recorded in a parish register. And because neither the christening of Marie nor a person named William Cooper is noted in the Bridport register, it is reasonable to presume that Marie was christened elsewhere, such as in Toller Porcorum where several Cooper families existed, including a William Cooper.

The Cooper Surname in the Parish Register of Toller Porcorum

There is *definitive* evidence that Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) was affiliated with the parish of Toller Porcorum 8 miles northeast of Bridport where her first son was christened in 1634 as detailed beginning on page 47. Unfortunately, the earliest Toller Porcorum Parish records are for the years 1615 forward. An examination of the Toller Porcorum Parish register shows that the Cooper surname was prevalent in the parish between 1615 and 1640 (and beyond) as the chronological list below displays (Note that in the Old Style Julian calendar a new year started on 25 March which puts January, February, and most of March at the end of a year):

- **Joane** [1st], daughter of **William Cooper** – christened on 14 January 1615
- Mary, daughter of **William Cooper** – christened on 16 August 1617
- Mary Cooper [adult ?] – buried on 18 September 1619
- **William Cooper** – **married Honor Annet on 23 April 1620** [Not the same William as above as explained hereafter]
- **Joane** [2nd], daughter of **William Cooper** – christened on 27 January 1620

⁷⁰ For example, if Phillip and Grace were circa age 22 in 1605-06 when they were married, they would have been born circa 1583, and if Perke was age 70 in 1610 when she passed away, she would be age 43 in 1583; and if Perke were age 50 in 1610, she would be age 23 in 1583; and being age 23-43 is within a possible child-bearing period for Perke to be the mother of Phillip and Grace, but not likely the mother of Ursilla who was married 27-28 years later unless the ages at marriage and death are beyond 2-3 standard deviations.

- **Joane** [1st or 2nd ?], daughter of William Cooper – buried on 17 March 1620
- Matthew, son of **William Cooper** – christened 24 February 1621
- ***Eleonore Cooper – married John Dunford on 3 August 1622***
- Giles, son of **William Cooper** – christened on 8 August 1624
 - Giles, son of William Cooper – buried on 11 September 1624
- Bridget, daughter of **William Cooper** – christened in January 1627
- Honor, daughter of **William Cooper** – christened on 20 June 1630
- ***Mathew Cooper – married Katherin Combe on 20 April 1630***
- Mary, daughter of Matthew Cooper – christened on 20 November 1631
- ***Isett Cooper – married Thomas Stazie on 10 August 1635***
- ***Agnes Cooper – married Richard Harelstone on 20 September 1635***
- Willian, son of Mathew & Katherine Cooper – christened on 1 January 1636
- Thomas, son of Mathew & Katherine Cooper – christened on 15 November 1640

The previous list shows that the surname Cooper was prevalent in the Toller Porcorum Parish between 1615 and 1640: there were five marriages, 10 christenings, and 3 burials. There were 3 households/families with the surname Cooper who had children christened at the Toller Porcorum Parish between 1615 and 1640: (1) the children of William Cooper before the marriage of William Cooper & Honor Annet in 1620, (2) the children of William Cooper and Honor Annet after their 1620 marriage, and (3) the children of Matthew Cooper & Katherine Combe.

The evidence suggests that the 1st noted **William Cooper** who was the father of Joane and Mary christened before 1620 is a different person from the 2nd noted **William Cooper** who married Honor Annet in 1620. The 1st William had a daughter named Joane and apparently so did the 2nd William. The 2nd christened Joane was christened on 27 January 1620 which is 9 months and 3 days after the marriage of the 2nd William on 23 April 1620 in the Old Style Julian Calendar. There is no entry indicating that the 1st Joane was buried before 27 January 1620 when the 2nd Joane was christened,⁷¹ and it would be unconventional for the 1st William to name another daughter Joane in 1620 if the 1st Joane had not passed away; hence, the evidence suggests that both the 1st William and the 2nd William had a daughter christened Joane and thus are two distinct fathers rather than a widower who remarried. This apparent propensity for the name Joane is also present among those with the surname Cooper in the parish of Ditchet 29 miles north of Toller Porcorum as discussed later.

Of particular note in Toller Porcorum is the christening of Honor, the daughter of William Cooper, who was christened on 20 June 1630; perhaps the child named Honor was named after her mother Honor Annet who married William Cooper on 23 April 1620. The children of the three marriages of *females* with the maiden name of Cooper would not be

⁷¹ Parish registers tend to mention the name of the custodial father of *children* buried in the parish, even if the father is deceased which is demonstrated by common entries noting “deceased” after the father’s name, which is evidence that burials which do not note the name of a father are burials of adults.

christened with the Cooper surname, but they would still be first cousins to pertinent individuals in related Cooper households.

There is no conclusive evidence from the Toller Porcorum Parish register which links Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) to the individuals with the surname Cooper listed in the register; however, the fact that Ursilla's first child was christened at Toller Porcorum suggests a link of some sort, which presses further research.

About Ursilla being christened in Toller Porcorum

As discussed previously, Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) was strongly affiliated with the Church of England and was likely born and christened circa the years of 1611-1615; consequently, because Ursilla was affiliated with the Toller Porcorum parish, and because Toller Porcorum parish registers prior to 1615 are no longer extant, the situation allows the possibility that Ursilla was christened in Toller Porcorum in the years 1611-1614, but no record of that christening is extant today. However, there is a significant conflict with this possibility. There was a strong tradition and cultural norm in the Church of England during the 1600s for marriages to occur in the bride's home parish rather than the groom's home parish. The fact that Ursilla was married in nearby Bridport rather than Toller Porcorum in 1633, coupled with Ursilla's first child being christened in Toller Porcorum in 1634, suggests that Ursilla was affiliated with and had no animosity toward the Toller Porcorum parish, but was not likely born and raised there, but rather is from a different parish, and Ursilla did not have a significant connection with that different parish at the time of her marriage, which will become clearer as our study continues.

Despite the evidence to the contrary, if Ursilla were born in Toller Porcorum before 1615 she would likely be the daughter of the 1st noted William Cooper in the previous list who is the father of Joane and Mary christened in 1615 and 1617. The 1st noted William in 1615 is the only plausible candidate mentioned in the Toller Porcorum parish register. Also, because the average number of children born to a particular mother in Europe during the Early Modern Era was 5 due to health issues, and there were exceptions of healthy women bearing more than 5 children, and because there were apparently only two children born to William after 1614, it is consistent with historical norms to presume that there were more children born prior to 1615 whose father is the 1st noted William.

Another very plausible possibility for the presence of Ursilla in the Bridport/Toller Porcorum area other than being born in Toller Porcorum prior to 1615 is that Ursilla came to Toller Porcorum as a young adult. The Toller Porcorum Parish register for the period 1615-1658 clearly shows that there were children being born and raised with the surname Cooper in the Toller Porcorum parish circa 1630 and beyond in addition to the likely children of the three married females with the maiden name of Cooper. It was very common during the Early Modern Era for teenage girls to live in the home of an aunt or uncle with small children to help with household chores, Etc., and to "spread her wings". Hence, it is totally consistent with the evidence so far and consistent with historical trends to believe that Ursilla was from a nearby parish and as a teenager came to Toller Porcorum when her nieces and nephews were being born and raised. There is no evidence which links Ursilla to any other parish in Dorset County, but there is evidence which links Ursilla to the nearby Ditchet parish in Somerset County directly north of Dorset County, which presses further research as detailed hereafter.

The Possibility that Ursilla was Christened in Southwest England

Due to the lack of convincing evidence that the singular person Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) was born and christened in Dorset County, it is appropriate to expand pertinent research to neighboring counties. There are four counties that surround Dorset County in southwest England: Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire. Apparently, all extant parish registers for the counties of Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire have been identified, catalogued, indexed, digitized, and are readily available for research via Ancestry.com; however, currently only a portion of the parish records of Devon and Hampshire counties have been so digitized and made readily available for research. After several hours of reasonably exhaustive research conducted by this author in May 2018 using various functions of the digital search engines of Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org, the only plausible candidate for the christening of Ursilla listed in extant ‘original records’ of the Church of England in the four counties surrounding Dorset County that are in the Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org databases is the christening of “Ursula Cooper” on 12 May 1616 noted in the parish of Ditchet a mere 29 miles north of Toller Porcorum. Details of this christening and evaluation of the evidence linking this christening to the singular person Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) are presented in the following pages.

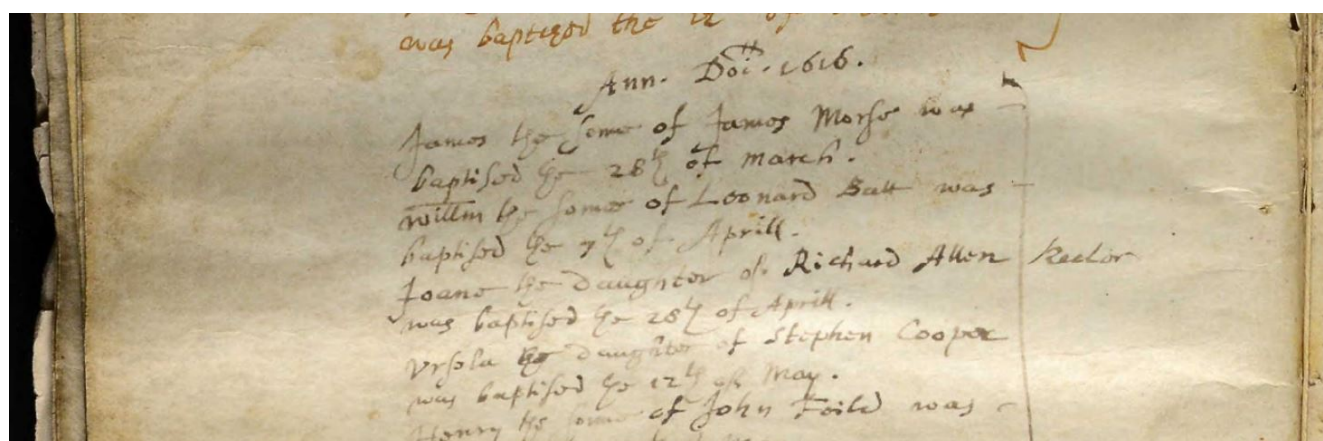


Image 29: Image of the original parchment “Ditchet Register 1562-1653” which notes the christening of Ursula, daughter of Stephen Cooper, on 12 May 1616.⁷²

Careful examination of the image displayed above shows that the parish clerk who recorded the christening of Ursilla used the common brevigraph which is somewhat similar to the modern letter ‘y’ in place of the letters ‘th’ in the word ‘the’ (ye) and for the ‘th’ suffix following the numeral ‘12’ (12^y), and per convention used the pointed-base “V” for the letter “U” in the name Ursula; hence, the entry recording the christening of Ursilla written in Old English script using phonetic spelling reads,

“Ann. Doi. [Anno Domini] 1616. ...Ursula the daughter of Stephen Cooper was baptized the 12^y of May”.

If Ursilla Cooper, the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670), was born circa 12 May 1616, then she was 17 years and 8 months of age per the Old Style Julian Calendar on 16 January 1633 when she married William who was age 23 years and 10 months, which is

⁷² (Ditchet Parish, Church of England (Ditchet, Somerset, England) 2016, [Digital collection] > Ditchet > 1562-1653 > image 11 of 37).

within reason and consistent with pertinent evidence and inconsistent with none even though the age difference is above the average. None-the-less, this information is not *definitive* evidence that Stephen Cooper of Ditchheat is indeed the father of the singular person Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) which presses further research to either corroborate or negate the link.

Ditchheat is a rural village located a mere 29 miles north of Toller Porcorum, which is a journey of about 9 hours on foot with periodic rests, or about 4 hours by horse with periodic rests. In the aerial view image that follows the modern countryside surrounding Ditchheat is shown which is similar to the countryside of Toller Porcorum to the south.



Image 30: Modern aerial view of Ditchheat village behind the Ditchheat Parish Church of Mary Magdalene (center right) and the modern residence that was previously the Priory (center).⁷³

The Cooper Surname in the Parish Register of Ditchheat

The original Church of Mary Magdalen in Ditchheat was built by Roman Catholic abbots from the nearby Glastonbury Abbey in the 12th century, and was expanded and remodeled in subsequent centuries as the village of Ditchheat grew. The church passed back and forth between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of England during the tumultuous years between 1534 and 1558. Finally, upon the demise in November 1558 of Queen Mary I who was Roman Catholic, the Ditchheat Church of Mary Magdalen became and subsequently remained an Anglican Church of England edifice and the center of the Ditchheat parish of the Church of England. The previous 1534 order by Thomas Cromwell that all Church of England parishes keep a record of christenings, marriages, and burials began to be

⁷³ Image in the public domain via <http://www.ditchheatvillage.co.uk/blog>

implemented anew in 1558, and these records became known as "parish registers". In 1598 an order was made that all old parish registers were to be copied onto more durable parchment registers, which seems to have occurred in the parish of Ditcheat.

The Ditcheat Parish has a parchment register which has been titled *Ditcheat Register 1562-1653*. The first page of the original parchment register is shown in the following image. Note that the entry in heavy black ink in the upper-left corner which says "1. 1562-1653" is a more modern notation and is not part of the initial entry made by the parish clerk. The initial entry written in Old English using phonetic spelling and brevigraphs reads,

"The names of all christinings that are to be found in the olde register booke beginning at the yeare of our Lord god: 1562: proceeding forward with the like for burialls as followeth in the next table:"

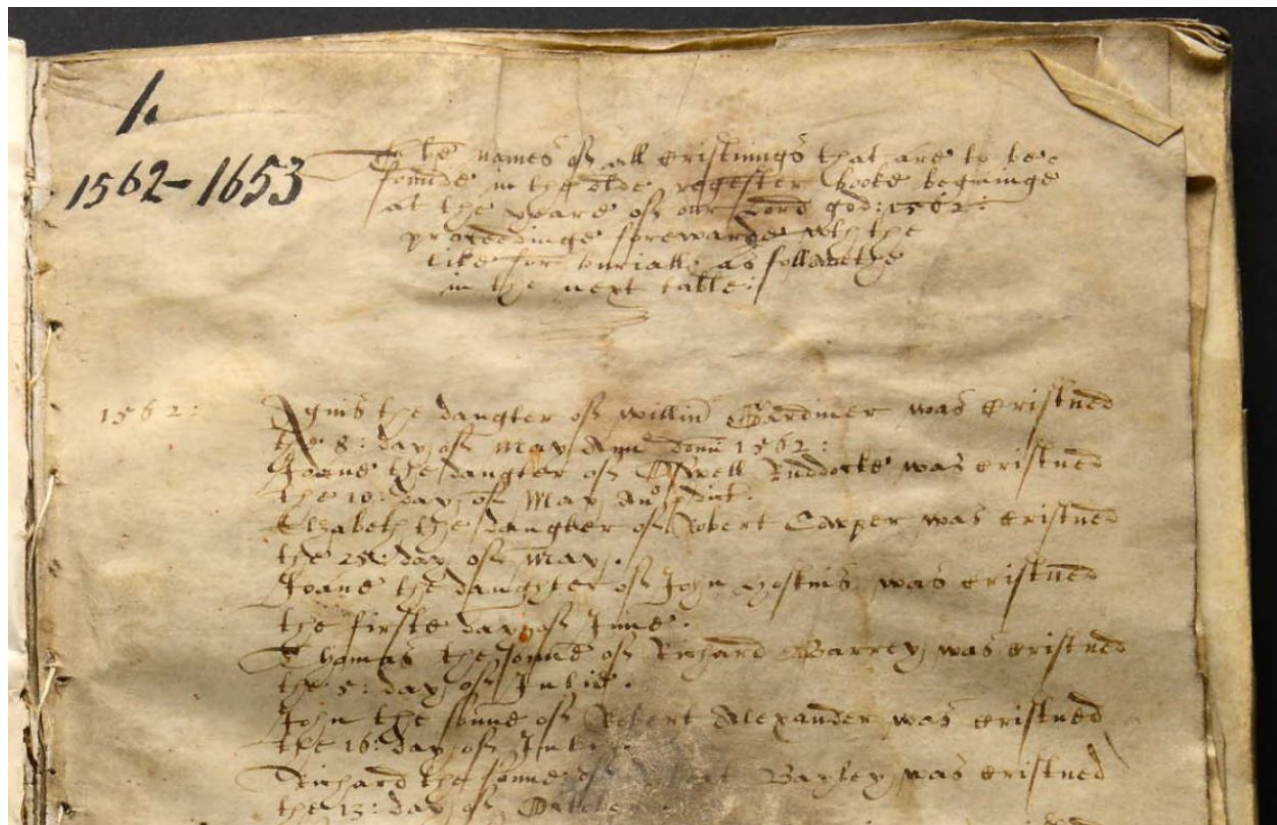


Image 31: Image of the first page of the original parchment Ditcheat Parish register titled *Ditcheat Register 1562-1653*.⁷⁴

In 2016 Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. published digital images of Somerset County parish registers held by the Somerset Archives & Local Studies, South West Heritage Trust, located in Taunton, Somerset, England. Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. titled the digital image collection *Somerset, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1531-1812*, which includes digital images of the *Ditcheat Register 1562-1653* mentioned previously.

⁷⁴ (Ditcheat Parish, Church of England (Ditcheat, Somerset, England) 2016, [Digital collection] > Ditcheat > 1562-1653 > image 2 of 37).

The following table shows the individuals with the surname of Cooper who are listed in the modern Ancestry.com digital index of the original parchment parish record titled *Ditcheat Register 1562-1653*.⁷⁵

Table of individuals with the Surname of Cooper Listed in the Modern Ancestry.com Digital Index of the Original Parchment Parish Record Titled “Ditcheat Register 1562-1653”				
Name	Event	Date	Parish	Parent/Spouse
John Cooper	Marriage	30 Dec 1564	Ditcheat	Cristy
James Cooper	Marriage	10 Dec 1566	Ditcheat	Alice
Steven Cooper	Marriage	1566	Ditcheat	Alice
Elizabeth Cooper	Marriage	19 Jul 1573	Ditcheat	James
Steven Cooper	Marriage	29 May 1574	Ditcheat	Margaret
Robert Cooper	Burial	24 Nov 1578	Ditcheat	
John Cooper	Marriage	30 Jan 1580	Ditcheat	Margery
Robert Cooper	Baptism	9 Sep 1582	Ditcheat	John
William Cooper	Burial	22 Jun 1583	Ditcheat	
Joane Cooper	Marriage	18 Apr 1597	Ditcheat	Donfond
Katheren Cooper	Marriage	24 Apr 1598	Ditcheat	John
Mary Cooper	Burial	8 Sep 1599	Ditcheat	
Marjory Cooper	Burial	2 Jun 1600	Ditcheat	
Marie Cooper	Marriage	5 Jul 1601	Ditcheat	John
Steven Cooper	Burial	10 Apr 1605	Ditcheat	
Joane Cooper	Marriage	9 Nov 1605	Ditcheat	William
William Cooper	Baptism	23 Jan 1607	Ditcheat	Steven
Joane Cooper	Baptism	18 Sep 1608	Ditcheat	John
Howard Cooper	Baptism	13 Jul 1610	Ditcheat	Robert
Thomas Cooper	Baptism	5 May 1611	Ditcheat	John
Thomas Cooper	Baptism	11 Aug 1611	Ditcheat	Stephen
Susan Cooper	Baptism	13 Oct 1611	Ditcheat	Robert
Grace Cooper	Marriage	6 May 1613	Ditcheat	Christopher
John Cooper	Baptism	12 Dec 1613	Ditcheat	Stephen
Alice Cooper	Burial	19 Sep 1614	Ditcheat	
Robert Cooper	Burial	26 Mar 1616	Ditcheat	
Ursula Cooper	Baptism	12 May 1616	Ditcheat	Stephen
Grace Cooper	Burial	7 Jul 1616	Ditcheat	

⁷⁵ (Ditcheat Parish, Church of England (Ditcheat, Somerset, England) 2016). This author has not verified each entry with the Cooper surname noted in the Ancestry.com digital index of the “Ditcheat Register 1562-1653” with images of the original register except for a couple weird spellings in the index; but the information as listed herein is sufficient for our purposes.

Stephanie Cooper	Baptism	7 Jul 1616	Ditcheat	Robert
James Cooper	Marriage	14 Nov 1616	Ditcheat	Charitio
Stephen Cooper	Baptism	20 Feb 1616	Ditcheat	Thomas
Dorothie Cooper	Baptism	3 Oct 1617	Ditcheat	Josias
Marie Cooper	Baptism	7 Feb 1618	Ditcheat	Thomas
John Cooper	Baptism	1 Aug 1619	Ditcheat	Josias
John Cooper	Baptism	30 Apr 1620	Ditcheat	Thomas
Grace Cooper	Baptism	6 May 1621	Ditcheat	Thomas
William Cooper	Baptism	26 Jan 1622	Ditcheat	William
William Copper	Burial	8 Feb 1622	Ditcheat	
Joan Cooper	Baptism	9 Mar 1627	Ditcheat	Thomas
Sarah Cooper	Baptism	14 Oct 1632	Ditcheat	Thomas
Widow Cooper	Burial	9 Nov 1632	Ditcheat	[Adult widow]
Joane Cooper	Marriage	27 Oct 1634	Ditcheat	William
Thomas Cooper	Marriage	5 Mar 1634	Ditcheat	Edith
William Cooper	Burial	14 Mar 1634	Ditcheat	
Margaret Cooper	Burial	25 Oct 1639	Ditcheat	
John Cooper	Marriage	8 Apr 1641	Ditcheat	Marie
Maxie Cooper	Baptism	1641	Ditcheat	John & Maria
John Copper	Baptism	17 Mar 1643	Ditcheat	John & Mary
Elizabeth Cooper	Baptism	9 Feb 1644	Ditcheat	Thomas
Richard Cooper	Baptism	14 Feb 1654	Ditcheat	

From the above table it is obvious that several families with the surname of Cooper were affiliated with Ditcheat Parish fairly consistently for at least four generations during the 90-year period from 1564 to 1654:

- There were 8 Cooper males married;
- There were 7 Cooper females married;
- There were 23 Cooper christenings; and,
- There were 12 Cooper burials noted in the parish register.

Upon close examination it becomes apparent that the first four married Cooper males had no children listed as christened in the Ditcheat Parish register; the christenings that are listed are simply too late to reasonably be their children; nonetheless, there were many christenings of children taking place in the first dozen years or so of the parish register which were not Coopers, which suggests that the four Cooper males were married in the Ditcheat Parish church but did not reside in the Ditcheat parish, which is consistent with the Catholic and Anglican tradition in England that marriages often occur in the parish of the bride.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Another possibility for no children being christened is that one or more of the husbands or wives were infertile, but it is unreasonable to believe all four couples were infertile.

It is also apparent upon close examination that there were two Cooper fathers who are not listed as married in Ditcheat Parish but had children christened in Ditcheat, suggesting that the two were married in another parish but resided in the Ditcheat parish, which is also consistent with the tradition that marriages often occurred in the parish of the bride.

Pertinent to our research are four individuals christened at the Ditcheat Church of Mary Magdalen between 1607 and 1616 who are the children of **Stephen Cooper**, including Ursilla:

1. William, son of Steven Cooper (spelled phonetically), christened on 23 Jan 1607;
2. Thomas, son of Stephen Cooper, christened on 11 August 1611;
3. John, son of Stephen Cooper, christened on 12 December 1613;
4. **Ursula**, daughter of Stephen Cooper, christened on 12 May 1616.

Due to the christenings being spaced in a manner consistent with typical birth patterns, it is reasonable to deduce that the four christened individuals are children of the same father and are thus members of a single family unit and were born circa their christening dates. It is further reasonable to deduce that the family residence was within the Ditcheat parish during the period of the christenings. And because no pertinent marriage is listed in the Ditcheat Parish register for the father, Stephen Cooper, it is reasonable to assume that Stephen and his wife were married in the wife's home parish which is not Ditcheat Parish but is close enough to preclude their marriage in Ditcheat. Also of note, there is no record of the burial of Stephen Cooper in Ditcheat Parish records, suggesting that Stephen either moved outside of the Ditcheat Parish prior to his passing, or he left the Church of England and was thus not noted further in the local parish record.

Because of the relative proliferation of individuals with the Cooper surname in both the small parishes of Ditcheat and nearby Toller Porcorum, and due to common migration patterns, and due to the implicit evidence of marrying in one parish and residing in another, it is totally within reason to believe that those with the Cooper surname in Ditcheat are related to some or all of the individuals with the Cooper surname in nearby Toller Porcorum. Another possible element of implicit evidence is a propensity for the common name of Joane among both Ditcheat and Toller Porcorum Coopers; however, without further research the only explicit evidence linking Ditcheat Coopers with Toller Porcorum Coopers is the 1616 christening of Ursula Cooper in Ditcheat and the 1634 christening of William, the son of William and Ursilla (Cooper) Macomber, in Toller Porcorum.⁷⁷

The Possibility that Ursilla was Christened Outside of Southwest England

Because there is only a preponderance of available evidence that the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670), namely Ursilla Cooper, was christened in the Ditcheat Parish church of Mary Magdalen on 12 May 1616, it leaves open a slight possibility that she may have been christened outside of southwest England; however, because there is no evidence which links Ursilla Cooper with any distant English county, and because not all extant parish registers in

⁷⁷ This author has not diverted time away from publishing this biography as soon as possible by researching the Cooper families noted in Ditcheat and Toller Porcorum, but it is possible that doing so would shed further light on the connection between the Ditcheat Coopers and the Toller Porcorum Coopers.

many counties of England have been digitized, indexed, and made readily available for research, it seems irrational to spend time searching for something that would very likely be inconclusive. It seems much more rational to spend time engaged in an exhaustive search gathering evidence about the Cooper families in the nearby parishes of Ditchheat and Toller Porcorum first, which would more likely provide convincing evidence about the parentage of Williams's wife Ursilla Cooper.

The Possibility that Ursilla was not Christened in the Church of England

For the reasons presented on page 61, it is highly unlikely that Ursilla Cooper, the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670), was not christened in the Church of England; however, without decisive evidence about Ursilla's christening, there is, none-the-less, the *possibility* that Ursilla was not christened in the Church of England. During the lives of William Macomber (1609-1670) and his wife Ursilla Cooper there were dissidents of the Church of England living in England including Dorset and surrounding counties; however, most individuals in England remained members of the Church of England despite the growing opposition. There is no evidence that Ursilla was a member of any dissident group which opposed the Church of England, and unless any such evidence surfaces, it seems counterproductive to think that Ursilla was not christened in the Church of England simply because there is no conclusive evidence of her christening, especially given all the evidence which suggests that she was christened in the Church of England.

Summary about the Parentage of Ursilla Cooper, the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670)

Further research is needed to show beyond a mere preponderance of evidence that Ursilla Cooper, the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670), was either christened on 12 May 1616 in the Ditchheat Parish church of Mary Magdalen, or that she was not. It is possible that further research in regards to the Cooper families in the parishes of Ditchheat and Toller Porcorum will provide more conclusive evidence about the 1616 christening of Ursilla in Ditchheat. Time will tell. However, because some pertinent parish registers in southwest England are no longer extant, and because not all extant parish registers are readily available for research, it may be that barring further evidence from the Ditchheat and Toller Porcorum families with the surname Cooper, we will never know conclusively who the parents of Ursilla Cooper are. In the meantime, therefore, it is still appropriate to designate the wife of William Macomber (1609-1670) as the singular person Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?).

THE EARLY MARRIED LIFE OF WILLIAM AND URSILLA IN ENGLAND

As detailed in the following pages, after their marriage on 16 January 1633 William and Ursilla remained in Dorset County for four years, apparently until January 1637. During these four years William apparently worked as a cooper in Dorchester or perhaps Bridport while Ursilla gave birth to and cared for two boys, William “Junior” who was born in 1634 and passed away in 1636, and Thomas who was born in 1635 and migrated with his parents and uncle to Plymouth Colony likely circa January 1637 when almost two years of age.

The Birth of William’s son, William Macomber (1634-1636)

The evidence is quite clear that nine months and three days after the marriage of William and Ursilla they had a son whom they named William after his father per common tradition who was christened at the Parish church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter in the parish of Toller Porcorum 8 miles northeast of Bridport.

The Village and Parish of Toller Porcorum

Toller Porcorum is a small, rural village and parish about 8 miles northeast of Bridport and 10 miles northwest of Dorchester. The village of Toller Porcorum has only about 300 inhabitants, which apparently has been the case for centuries. The Toller Porcorum Parish also includes small hamlets in the Toller Valley as shown in the following image.



Image 32: Modern view showing the rural village of Toller Porcorum (center) and the Toller Porcorum Parish church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter (center left).⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Image by Maurice D Budden dated 16 September 2005 and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 license via Wikipedia: Toller Porcorum.



Image 33: Modern image of the River Hooke which was called the River Toller anciently.

To the north of Toller Porcorum is a creek, which in England is called a river (see image to the left).⁷⁹ The creek flows easterly past the Toller Porcorum parish and joins the River Frome. The creek was named the River Toller in ancient times, which apparently gave rise to the names of local villages such as Toller Porcorum, Toller Whelme, and Toller Fratum, and to the name Toller Valley. It is believed that the name Toller is derived from the name of the daughter of the Saxon king Ethelred who reigned in the region between 978 and 1016 AD. The creek is called the River Hooke today, which reportedly was so named in the 1400s.

The word Porcorum is Latin; ‘porcorum’ is the Latin plural form of ‘porcus’, meaning pork, or hogs. The name was given to the area either because of the abundance of hog farms that once covered the valley, or because of the abundance of wild boars that once populated the area which made the region a popular boar hunting ground for royalty and other hunters. The village of Toller Porcorum is also known as Swyne Toller and Great Toller while Toller Fratum is known as Little Toller.

The historic church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter that was established at Toller Porcorum in the 13th Century was confiscated from the Catholic Church circa 1534 in conjunction with the Dissolution of the Monasteries under the reign of Henry VIII. The church apparently passed back and forth between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of England during the tumultuous years of 1534-1558. Finally, upon the demise in 1558 of Queen Mary I who was Roman Catholic, the Toller Porcorum church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter became and subsequently remained an Anglican Church of England edifice and the center of the Toller Porcorum Parish of the Church of England. Unfortunately, the earliest parish records of the Toller Porcorum Parish prior to 1615 are no longer extant, but records for 1615 forward exist as discussed previously in the section titled *The Contemporary Toller Porcorum Parish Register (Notation 4 of 9)* starting on page 47, and also under the subheading *The Cooper Surname in the Parish Register of Toller Porcorum* starting on page 64.

The Christening of William Macomber (1634-1636)

As discussed previously, on 19 October 1634 in the Toller Porcorum Parish church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter, which is nine months and three days after the marriage of William Macomber and Ursilla Cooper, a child named William who was the son of William and “Ussella” “Macumber”, was christened. There is no credible doubt that the parents of the christened child William are none other than the singular parents William Macomber (1609-1670) and Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) as detailed starting on page 47.

⁷⁹ Photograph of the River Hooke by Ian Andrews and in the public domain via the Creative Commons Attribution Share-alike license 2.0.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:River_Hooke,_Kingcombe_Meadows,_DWT_geograph_-_3515602.jpg

There is no *conclusive* evidence that William and Ursilla resided in Toller Porcorum before or after the birth of William Junior; however, it is consistent with all available evidence that they did.

- The christening of William Junior occurred nine months and three days after the marriage of William and Ursilla, suggesting William Junior was born only a few days before. It was common for newborns to pass away during the 1600s, and it would be dangerous for a newborn to travel several miles during the cold month of October 1634 in order to be christened at a favorite parish; rather, it is likely that William Junior was born in Toller Porcorum, and that his parents resided in Toller Porcorum when he was born and when he was christened.
- There is *definitive* evidence that William Macomber (1609-1670) was a cooper by trade: He was noted to be a cooper when admitted into Plymouth Colony on 2 April 1638, and he successfully functioned as a cooper as evidenced by several entries in Plymouth Colony records. And there is credible evidence that William underwent a seven-year apprenticeship which was required by law in order to be recognized and to have the requisite knowledge and skills to function as a cooper in Plymouth Colony. Hence, there is good reason to believe that William worked as a cooper after his apprenticeship circa 1631 and after his marriage to Ursilla in 1633; and there is good reason to believe that William worked as a cooper in Dorchester; if so, living in the parish of Toller Porcorum which is only 10 miles from Dorchester would be a better commute than living in Bridport which is 15 miles from Dorchester. It would be possible to make the commute between Toller Porcorum and Dorchester daily, but more likely 1-3 times per week.
- There is reason to believe that Ursilla had paternal relatives with the surname of Cooper in Toller Porcorum, and because it is common for newly married couples to reside with family members until they have the means to acquire their own house, especially for a new journeyman cooper at minimal wage, it is reasonable to believe that William and Ursilla were residing in Toller Porcorum during at least the first year or so of their marriage.

The Birth of William's son, Thomas Macomber (1635-1711)

Sixteen months after the birth of the first child of William Macomber (1609-1670) and Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?), their second child was christened on 28 February 1635 in the Bridport Parish Church of Saint Mary. As seen in the following image, the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* notes in Old English Script and in partially fading ink that,

“Thomas the sonn of William Makcomber was baptized the xxiiith [28th] day of Febarie [February] 1635”.

There is no credible doubt that the Thomas christened on 28 February 1635 is the son of William Macomber (1609-1670); there is simply no other plausible candidate for the father of Thomas listed in contemporary ‘original records’ of Dorset Country other than the singular person William Macomber (1609-1670), and the christening is consistent with all available evidence from dozens of ‘original records’ of Plymouth Colony pertinent to Thomas, William, Ursilla, and other family members as detailed in Parts 3 and 4 of this biography.

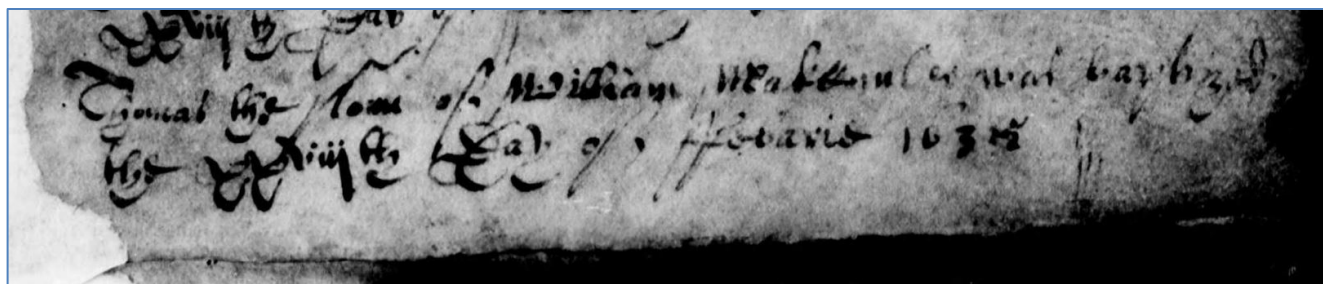


Image 34: Image from the original parchment [*Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638*](#) noting the christening of Thomas Macomber, the son of William Macomber, 28 February 1635.⁸⁰

Careful examination of the above image shows that the parish clerk did NOT use the common brevigraph for the letters “th” which the previous clerks often did, and that he reversed the common phonetic letters “ck” (often found in such words as back, black, sack, Etc.) to the letters “kc” in the surname “Makcomber”, and the clerk used Latin Roman numerals which differs from other recent entries in [*Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638*](#) which sometimes note Arabic numerals.

It is highly likely that William’s and Ursilla’s son Thomas was named after his apparent great grandfather, Thomas Macomber (1560?-1622), and his deceased uncles Thomas Macomber (1608-1622) and Thomas Macomber (1623-1627). As discussed previously, the parents of William Macomber (1609-1670), namely John Macomber (1585?-1650) and Edith Locke (1587?-1636), named their first son Thomas in 1608 apparently after John’s father Thomas. However, John and Edith’s first son Thomas passed away at age 14 in 1622, and per tradition John and Edith named their next male son born in 1623 Thomas in honor of their first son and in honor of John’s father. Unfortunately, the second son of John and Edith named Thomas also passed away as a child in 1627; and after the second Thomas passed away, John and Edith had no more male children.

As detailed in Parts 3 and 4 of this biography, the son of William and Ursilla named Thomas migrated to Plymouth Colony with his parents and uncle, became a cooper like his father, married and raised a family, owned substantial land, had an African slave, and passed away testate in 1711.⁸¹

There is no conclusive evidence where William and Ursilla and their sons William and Thomas lived during the four years they were in England as a family, or where William worked during this period; however, an analysis of available evidence gives us some clues.

- The Plymouth Colony entry dated 2 April 1638 notes that William was a cooper by trade, was of Dorchester, and that he had with him a testimony of his good behavior which is most likely a document signed by a master cooper from Dorchester attesting to William’s behavior as a cooper; hence, it seems reasonable that William served as an apprentice in Dorchester or worked as a cooper in Dorchester for a period of time.

⁸⁰ (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 245 of 1315).

⁸¹ The term “testate” means a person who has passed away leaving a will, whereas the term “intestate” means a person who has passed away without leaving a will.

- The small, rural parish of Toller Porcorum seems too small of a market for a cooper. It is much more likely that William worked as a cooper in Dorchester, or perhaps Bridport.
- It seems reasonable, due to the christening of William in Toller Porcorum in October 1634, that the family lived with relatives of Ursilla in Toller Porcorum for the first year or so while William worked as a journeyman Cooper in Dorchester, or perhaps in Bridport.
- And it seems reasonable that the family was living in Bridport when Thomas was born and christened in February 1635. Thomas was christened on 28 February 1635, which is a cold winter period; hence, it seems highly unlikely that Thomas would have been transported as a newborn or as an infant 8-15 miles to and then fro to be christened. And if the family was living in Bridport in 1635, it seems more likely that William was working as a cooper in Bridport rather than Dorchester. Perhaps William worked as a cooper in Bridport immediately after his apprenticeship in Dorchester; or perhaps William worked at first in Dorchester and after gaining experience as a journeyman cooper in Dorchester, William secured a position as a more experienced cooper in Bridport.

The Passing of William's Mother, Edith Locke (1587?-1636)

Two months and ten days after the christening of William's and Ursilla's second son Thomas, Edith Locke (1587?-1636), the mother of William Macomber (1609-1670), passed away and was buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery of Saint Mary on 10 May 1636. Edith was likely about 50-years of age at the time of her passing. As seen in the following image, the *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* notes in Old English Script and in partially faded ink that,

“Edeth the wife of John Makcomber was buried the Xth [10th] day of May 1636”.

At the time of her passing, Edith's immediate family consisted of the following members:

- Widower, John Macomber (1585?-1650), about 52-years of age.
- Deceased son, Thomas Macomber (1608-1622).
- Oldest living son, William Macomber (1609-1670), 26-years-2-months of age.
 - Daughter-in-law, Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?), likely 20-years of age.
 - Grandson, William Macomber (1634-1636), 19-months of age.
 - Grandson, Thomas Macomber (1635-1711), 2-months of age.
- Deceased daughter, Zeporah Macomber (1611-1617).
- Son, John Macomber (1613-1688), perhaps not at home, 22-years-7-months of age.
- Daughter, Alice Macomber (1615-1662), not yet married, 20-years-6-months of age.
- Son, Edmond Macomber (1617-?), perhaps not at home, 18-years-9-months of age.
- Son, Richard Macomber (1619-1637), 16-years-5-months of age.
- Deceased daughter, Marie Macomber (1621-1632).
- Deceased son, Thomas Macomber (1623-1627).

- Daughter, Edith Macomber (1625-?), 10-years-4-months of age.
- Deceased son, Robert Macomber (1627-1628).

In addition to the immediate family members noted above, the Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 notes the names of dozens of individuals with the surname of Locke, which are most likely the paternal relatives of Edith Locke (1857?-1636).

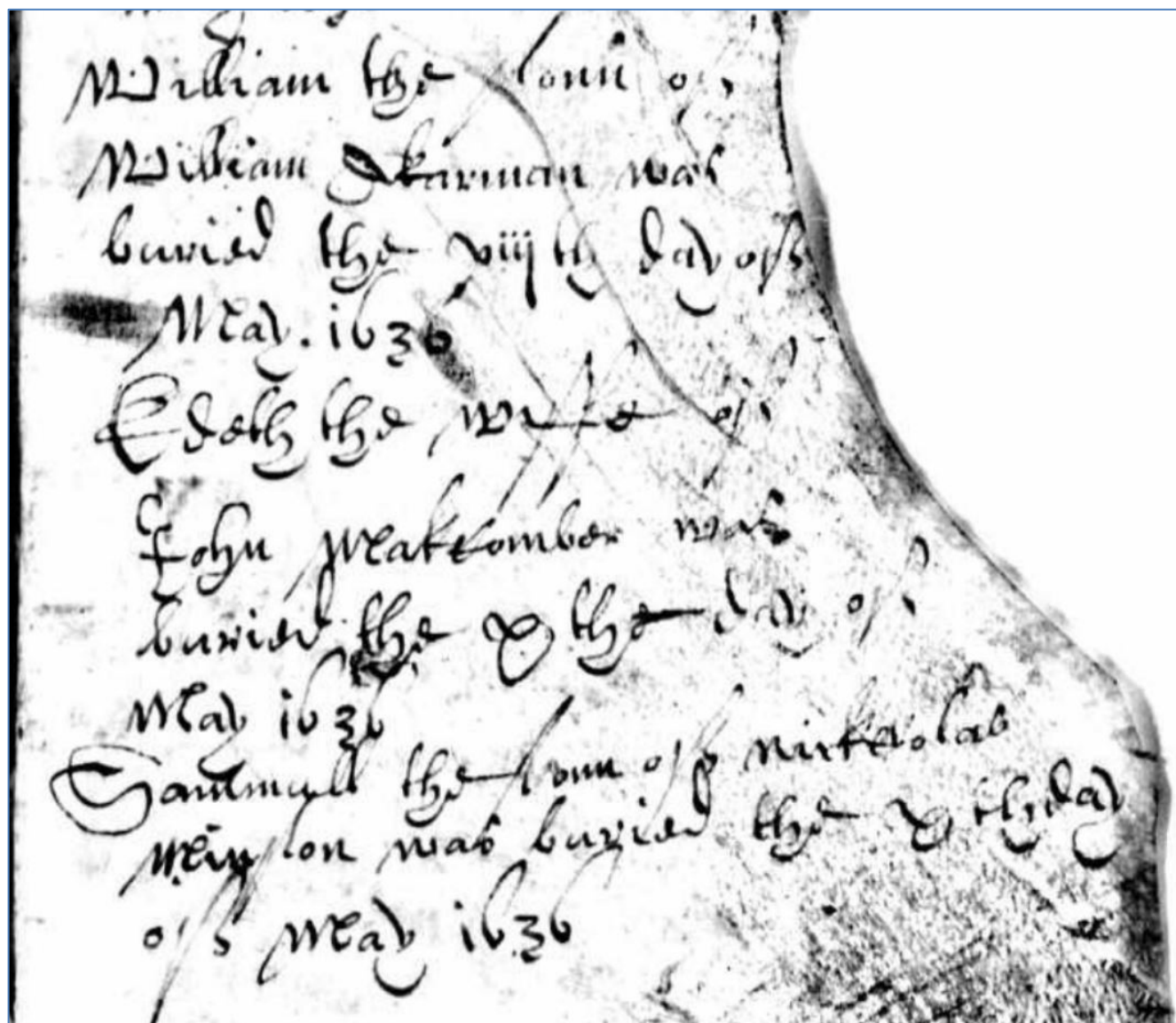


Image 35: Image of the original Bridport Parish register showing the contemporary burial entry for Edith (Locke) Macomber on 10 May 1636.⁸²

Careful examination of the above image shows that the parish clerk did NOT use the common brevigraph for the letters “th” which the previous clerks often did, and that he reversed the common phonetic letters “ck” (often found in modern words such as back, black, sack, Etc.) to the letters “kc” in the surname “Makcomber”, and the clerk used Latin Roman numerals which differs from other recent entries in Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638 which sometimes note Arabic numerals.

⁸² (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 353 of 1315).

The Passing of William's son, William Macomber (1634-1636)

Three-and-a-half-months after Edith Locke was buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery of Saint Mary, William's and Ursilla's first son William was buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery on 30 August 1636. William Junior was 22-months of age when he passed away. As seen in the following image, the [Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638](#) notes in Old English Script and in partially fading ink that,

"William the sonn of William Macomber was buried the XXXth [30th] day of Agust 1636".

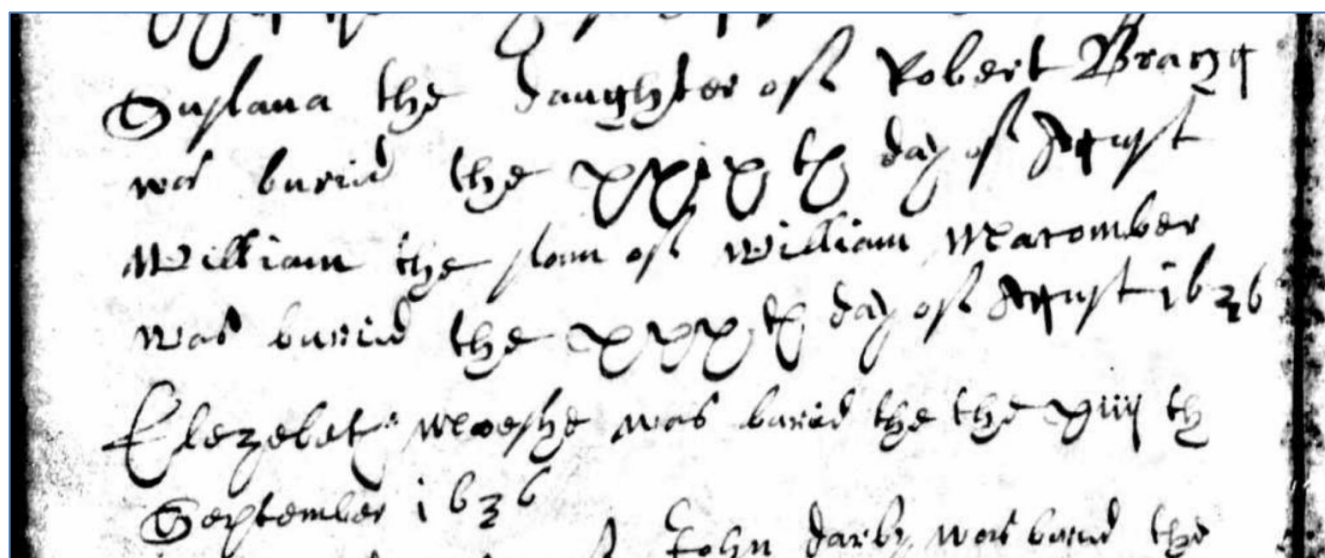


Image 36: Image of the original parchment [Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638](#) noting the burial of William, the son of William Macomber, on 30 August 1636.⁸³

Careful examination of the above image shows that the parish clerk did NOT use the common brevigraph for the letters "th" which the previous clerks often did in previous years, and the clerk used Latin Roman numerals which differs from other recent entries in [Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638](#) which sometimes note Arabic numerals.

After the passing of William, Thomas became the oldest living child of William and Ursilla throughout their lives.

Following family and cultural tradition and norm, the next male child of William and Ursilla would be named William in honor of the deceased son, which occurred when William Macomber (1641?-1711) was born in Duxbury circa 1641 following the birth of Edith in 1639, which is detailed in Part 3 of this biography. As discussed in detail in the last four bullet points under the heading *Evidence that the Parents of William Christened on 19 October 1634 are William and Ursilla Macomber* starting on page 50, it is clear that William and Ursilla, per tradition, had two sons named William: William Macomber (1634-1636) and William Macomber (1641?-1711). To believe that William and Ursilla did not have two sons named William requires a failure to apply clear genealogical evidence and very unsound reasoning.

⁸³ (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 358 of 1315).

As discussed previously, there is no conclusive evidence where the family of William and Ursilla lived during the four years they were in England following their marriage other than they were clearly living in Dorset County; however, available evidence suggests that they lived in Toller Porcorum during the first year or so of their marriage where William Junior was christened in October 1634; and that they were living in Bridport where Thomas was christened in February 1635, which is near the end of the year 1635 in the Old Style Julian Calendar system. It is possible that the family of William and Ursilla moved to Bridport sometime in mid-1635 to assist John and Edith when Edith's health was failing. However, Ursilla would have been 6-months pregnant with Thomas in November 1635, and the household of John and Edith likely included their daughter Marie near 20 years of age, their son Richard near 16 years of age, and their daughter Edith near 10 years of age, along with possibly two *adult* sons, John and Edmond, who if they were living at home would have likely been working fulltime outside of the home like their father John.

The Passing of William's Brother, Richard Macomber (1619-1637)

About seven months before William, Ursilla, and Thomas, along with William's brother John, apparently embarked for Plymouth Colony, Richard Macomber (1619-1637), the brother of William and John, passed away and was buried at the Bridport Parish cemetery of Saint Mary on 23 May 1637. Richard was age 17-years-and-5-months of age when he passed away. The following image shows the contemporary entry made in the original parchment *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* which notes in Old English script that,

"Richard Makcomber was buried the xxiii^l of May 1637".

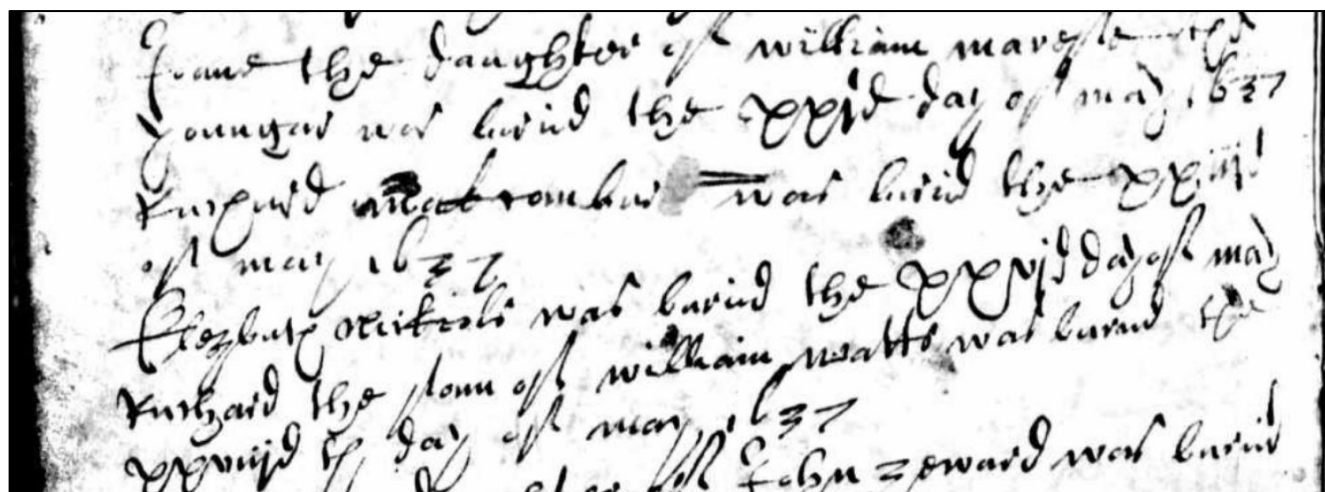


Image 37: Image of the contemporary entry in the original parchment *Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638* which notes the burial of Richard Macomber on 23 May 1637.⁸⁴

Careful examination of the above image shows that the parish clerk simply made a vertical line after the Latin Roman numerals xxiii [23] rather than write the name "day" near the edge of the page. Also note that Richard was not noted as the son of John, which suggests that Richard was employed and on his own and no longer a ward of his father. There is no credible doubt however that Richard is the son of John Macomber and Edith Locke.

⁸⁴ (Bridport Parish, Church of England (Bridport, Dorset, England) 2011, [Digital collection] > Bridport > image 360 of 1315).

William and family were likely in England until January 1637

There is definitive evidence that the singular persons William Macomber (1609-1670) and his wife Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) were in Dorset County in the years 1633, 1634, and 1635 where they were married and where their two sons William Macomber (1634-1636) and Thomas Macomber (1635-1711?) were sired, born, and christened.⁸⁵ And there is strong evidence that both William and Ursilla were in Bridport on 30 August 1636 when their son William was interred at the Parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport.⁸⁶

There is no apparent extant contemporary record in either southern England or Plymouth Colony which mention William, Ursilla, or Thomas after 30 August 1636 and before 2 April 1638 to definitively show where they were during this period; however, as discussed in Part 3 of this biography, there is strong explicit and implicit evidence that William Macomber (1609-1670), and thus Ursilla and Thomas, were NOT in Plymouth Colony before the 6 March 1637 Plymouth Colony Court session, which in the Old Style Julian Calendar is one month before April 1638, but they were in Plymouth Colony by the 2 April 1638 Plymouth Colony Court session.

Hence, from available evidence, and because transatlantic voyages from England to Plymouth Colony during the 1600s typically took from 8 - 12 weeks depending on wind, storms, seasonal ocean currents, ship draft, navigation and tacking skills of the crew, Etc., it can be reasonably deduced that William, Ursilla, and Thomas were in southern England until they embarked on a several-week voyage from England to Plymouth Colony circa January 1637.⁸⁷ For example, if they departed from the port of Plymouth in Devon County, England on 5 January 1637, and took 10 weeks to cross the ocean, they would have arrived at Plymouth Colony in America on 16 March 1637, which is 2 weeks and 3 days before 2 April 1638 in the Old Style Julian calendar. As discussed in Part 3 of this biography, transatlantic voyages from England to America were often begun in the months of December and January so arrival in America occurs in the early spring.

⁸⁵ There is simply no realistic evidence suggesting any plausible candidates for the parents of William Macomber (1634-1636) and Thomas Macomber (1635-1711) other than the two singular persons William Macomber (1609-1670) and Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?) who are mentioned regularly in contemporary and correlated “original records” of Dorset County, England and shown using the Genealogical Proof Standard to be husband and wife and the parents of the two boys.

⁸⁶ It is unlikely and would be atypical for the period for William to leave behind his young wife Ursilla and infant son Thomas, especially after the recent death of their first son, while William migrated to Plymouth Colony first, thus leaving Ursilla and Thomas to make the transatlantic voyage without him later.

⁸⁷ In genealogy, the meaning of the word ‘deduce’ has a different connotation than the meaning of the word ‘assume’. ‘Deduction’ implies a logical conclusion based on an analysis of available evidence, whereas ‘assumption’ implies simply taking something for granted and not thinking things through. See the FamilySearch Wiki article titled “Success Using Genealogical Analysis (National Institute)”.

[https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Success_Using_Genealogical_Analysis_\(National_Institute\)](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Success_Using_Genealogical_Analysis_(National_Institute))

CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS PERTINENT TO WILLIAM MACOMBER

More detailed explanations and documentation for the events noted in the following chronology are presented in previous sections of this biography. For a chronology of significant events beyond 1637 see Parts 3 and 4 of this biography. The following dates are per the Old Style Julian Calendar system which was in use in England and English Colonial America until 1752 in which a new year started on 25 March, which places the months of January, February, and most of March at the end of a year rather than at the beginning.

Date of Event	Age of William	Subject, event, and location pertinent to William Macomber
250 BC		The Celtic tribal confederation known as the Durotriges occupy the region of modern Dorset and expand Maiden Castle 14 miles west of modern Bridport, Dorset, England
43 AD – 383 AD		Ancient Rome consisting of Etruscans, Ancient Latins, and other European peoples invade and occupy the region of modern Dorset; A civitas state is established by the Celtic Durotriges with Ancient Rome and modern Dorchester is established as the Durotriges capital
383–410		Rome is expelled from southern Britain by Celtic Brits
By 519		Saxons from Germany establish the kingdom of Wessex east of modern Dorset
By 690		Saxons from Wessex invade Celtic lands in modern Dorset and expand Wessex to include the newly acquired “Dorset Shire”
By 990		A Saxon fortification called a Burh is built to repel invading Vikings at present-day Bridport and the Saxon town of Bridport emerges at present day Bridport, Dorset, England
1066		Normans (Norsemen from Scandinavia inhabiting Normandy in northern France) invade England and Dorset Shire becomes Dorset County; the nations of Scotland, England, and France subsequently emerge
1295–1603		Scotland and France enter into the ‘Auld Alliance’ in 1295; Scots reside in France to support the Scot House of Stewart, supplement the French army, serve as merchants, and guard Scot diplomats; the Scot-French surname of ‘Macomber’ apparently emerges in France
Mid-1500s		The Macomber surname appears in extant ‘original records’ of southern England, possibly as a result of Scots residing in northern France in support of the Scot-French Auld Alliance
Circa 1585		John Macomber, William’s father, is born, likely at or near Bridport, Dorset, England
Circa 1587		Edith Locke, William’s mother, is born, likely at or near Cerne Abbas, Dorset, England

Date of Event	Age of William	Subject, event, and location pertinent to William Macomber
Circa 1600		John, William's father, likely at age 14, enters into a 7-year apprenticeship to be a mercer in or near Bridport, Dorset, England
24 Mar 1603		King James VI of Scotland is dubbed James I in England and becomes the King of England and Ireland in addition to Scotland
Year 1603		Over 600 scholars are assembled in London by King James to work on a new and improved translation of the Bible
1605/6		Squanto, an American Indian from the Wampanoag village of Patuxet is taken to England and taught to be an English interpreter; Squanto is hired to be an English and American Indian language interpreter and crosses the Atlantic Ocean six times in the years that follow
Year 1606		The Worshipful Company of Mercers of which other mercers' guilds are affiliated invests 200 pounds in the Virginia Company of London for the founding of a successful English settlement in America
Oct 1606		Three ships funded by the Virginia Company of London set sail from England in hopes of establishing an English settlement in America
Circa 1607		John Macomber, William's father, likely at age 21, completes a 7-year apprenticeship and becomes a "freeman" in a mercers' guild at or near Bridport, Dorset, England; James Fort in America is founded
8 Jun 1607	–33 months	John Macomber & Edith Locke, William's parents, are married in the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
12 Sep 1608	–18 months	Thomas (#1) Macomber, William's elder brother, is christened in the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
2 June 1609	–9 months	Seven relief ships bound for James Fort funded by the Virginia Company of London set sail from Plymouth 80 miles west of Bridport
Circa 15 Mar 1609	0	William Macomber (1609-1670) is born on or between 6 March and 24 March 1609 at or near Bridport, Dorset, England
25 Mar 1610	circa 10 days	William is christened on New Year's Day, which is Lady's Day, at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
23 May 1610	2 months	The relief ships Deliverance & Patience arrive at James Fort in America
10 Jun 1610	3 months	Additional relief ships unexpectedly show up on the James River as survivors at James Fort set sail to return to England; the settlers return to James Fort and Jamestown grows as does young William
1611	circa 18 months	The translation of the King James Version of the Bible is completed and manuscripts are given to King James' printer, Robert Barker; loose-leaf sheets and complete folios become available for sale.

Date of Event	Age of William	Subject, event, and location pertinent to William Macomber
1 Nov 1611	19 months	Zeporah (a biblical name), William's sister, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
26 Oct 1613	3 years 7 months	John, William's brother, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
23 Nov 1615	5 years 8 months	Alice, William's sister, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
12 May 1616	6 years 2 months	Ursilla, William's likely future wife and the daughter of Stephen Cooper, is christened at the Ditcheat Parish Church of Mary Magdalen in Ditcheat, Somerset, England
1616	6 years	Captain John Smith's book "A description of New England..." is published and disseminated to promote American colonization
Years 1616–1619	6–9 years	An epidemic hits American Indians in Eastern North America which decimates 30-90% of the populations of most Indian villages and clears the way for subsequent successful English colonization of Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, and Connecticut
19 Jun 1617	7 years 3 months	Zeporah, William's 5-year-old sister, is buried in the Bridport parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
14 Jul 1617	7 years 4 months	Alice, William's apparent aunt, marries William Holloway at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
24 Aug 1617	7 years 5 months	Edmond, William's brother, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
24 May 1618	8 years 2 months	Marie Holloway, William's apparent first cousin, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
1619	9 years 3 months	Squanto returns to his homeland, he finds his home village of Patuxet abandoned following the 1616-1619 epidemic that hit North America
3 Dec 1619	9 years 8 months	Richard, William's brother, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
6 Sep 1620	10 years 5 months	The ship Mayflower sets sail from Plymouth 80 miles west of Bridport bound for America with 102 passengers and about 30 crewmembers
29 Oct 1620	10 years 7 months	Alice Holloway, William's apparent first cousin, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
9 Nov 1620	10 years 7 months	The ship Mayflower arrives near Cape Cod some 500 miles north of their intended destination; due to prevailing winds the Pilgrims are unable to sail south; the Pilgrims spend the next several weeks aboard ship and scout for an appropriate new location where they can spend the winter ashore; they draft a new compact for settlement

Date of Event	Age of William	Subject, event, and location pertinent to William Macomber
21 Dec 1620	10 years 9 months	The first group of Pilgrims disembark the Mayflower at the new site chosen for settlement, which is near the abandoned Patuxet village vacated by Wampanoag Indians during the 1616-1619 epidemic; which was also the home village of Squanto
12 Oct 1621	11 years 6 months	Marie, William's sister, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
22 Mar 1621	12 years	Wampanoag Chief Massasoit and Squanto are introduced to the Pilgrims; The Pilgrims are granted land by Massasoit; Squanto remains with the Pilgrims at New Plymouth and teaches the Pilgrims how to successfully fish, hunt, and farm in the region
30 Nov 1622	12 years 8 months	Squanto passes away after successfully negotiating peace between Plymouth colonists and local Algonquian Indians; he fell deathly ill and is believed to have been poisoned by Algonquian Indian militants
13 Jan 1622	12 years 10 months	Thomas (#1), William's 14-year-old brother, is buried in the Bridport parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
21 Feb 1622	12 years 11 months	Thomas, William's apparent grandfather, is buried in the Bridport parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
23 Feb 1622	12 years 11 months	Elizabeth Holloway, William's apparent 1 st cousin, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
1623	13 years	Gloucester at what became northern Massachusetts is first settled by Puritans funded by the Dorchester Company; the settlement flounders and settlers move to "Salem" without authority in 1626
14 Sep 1623	13 years 6 months	Thomas (#2), William's brother, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
1623	Circa 13 years	Officers of Arms of the College of Arms visit Dorset County to investigate and record legitimate and false claims of British "nobility" and related coats of arms, pedigrees, signatures, Etc. William's apparent maternal ancestors are recorded among the Gentry class
Circa 1624	Circa 14 years	William apparently begins a 7-year apprenticeship for the trade of coopery in Dorchester, 15 miles east of Bridport, Dorset, England
27 Dec 1625	15 years 9 months	Edith, William's sister, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
27 March 1625	16 years 0 months	Charles I, son of King James I, becomes the King of England, Scotland, and Ireland; Charles I was increasingly at odds with most of the English people, Parliament, Puritans and neighboring monarchs during William's life in England
2 Dec 1627	17 years 8 months	Robert, William's brother, is christened at the Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England

Date of Event	Age of William	Subject, event, and location pertinent to William Macomber
21 Mar 1627	18 years 0 months	Thomas (#2), William's 4-year-and-6-month-old brother, is buried in the Bridport parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
5 Apr 1628	18 years ½ month	Robert, William's 4-month-old brother, is buried in the Bridport parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
1628	18 years	Salem is formally established by Puritans funded by the New England Company, which legally trumped the Gloucester settlers who moved there in 1626, which was in what became northern Massachusetts
1629	19 years	The Massachusetts Bay Colony is formally settled by Puritans funded by the Massachusetts Bay Company (formerly the New England Company) at what became Boston, Massachusetts
1629	19 years	New Scotland (including Port Royal) is successfully settled by Scotts as a proprietary colony granted to and funded by Sir William Alexander, but New Scotland was relinquished to France by England's King Charles I in 1632 when William was age 22
Circa 1631	21 years	William apparently completed a 7-year apprenticeship for the trade of Coopery, likely in Dorchester, Dorset, England
1632	22 years	The Maryland Colony is formally settled by English Catholics seeking religious refuge as a proprietary colony granted to and funded by Cecil Calvert, 2nd Baron Baltimore, near the Virginia Colony
21 Jul 1632	22 years 4 months	Marie, William's 10-year-old sister, is buried in the Bridport parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
2 Jan 1633	23 years 9 months	Thomas Knott, the parish and town clerk, makes his will which is witnessed by Ursilla Cooper in Bridport, Dorset, England
15 Jan 1633	23 years 10 months	Thomas Knott, the parish and town clerk, is buried in the Bridport Parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
16 Jan 1633	23 years 10 months	William Macomber and Ursilla Cooper are married at the Bridport Parish Church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
1634	24 years	Saybrook is formally established by Puritans as a proprietary colony granted to and funded by John Winthrop, the Younger, at the mouth of what became the Connecticut River southwest of Plymouth
28 Sep 1634	24 years 6 months	Ursilla, William's wife, testifies in probate proceedings in regards to the will of Thomas Knott, the Bridport town and parish clerk, at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in London, England
19 Oct 1634	24 years 7 months	William (Junior), William's first son, is christened at the Toller Porcorum Parish church in Toller Porcorum, Dorset, England
28 Feb 1635	25 years 11 months	Thomas, William's second son, is christened at the Bridport Parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England

Date of Event	Age of William	Subject, event, and location pertinent to William Macomber
1636	26 years	Connecticut informally settled by Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay Colony initially as a self-funded rogue settlement outside of any Royal Charter southwest of Plymouth Colony
1636	26 years	Providence is informally settled by dissident Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay Colony initially as a self-funded rogue settlement outside of any Royal Charter southwest of Plymouth Colony
10 May 1636	26 years 1 months	Edith Locke, William's mother, is buried in the Bridport parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
30 Aug 1636	26 years 5 months	William (Junior), William's first son, passes away and is buried in the Bridport parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
1637	27 years	Aquidneck Island (Rhode Island) is informally settled by dissident Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay initially as a self-funded rogue settlement outside of any Royal Charter. William's brother John at age 24 will join a contingent of this settlement on Aquidneck Island in the spring of 1638 southwest of Plymouth Colony
1637	27 years	New Haven is informally settled by Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay Colony as a self-funded rogue settlement outside of any Royal Charter southwest of Plymouth Colony
23 May 1637	27 years 2 months	Richard, William's 17-year-old brother, is buried in the Bridport parish cemetery of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England
Circa Jan 1637	27 years 10 months	William, Ursilla, and Thomas, accompanied by William's brother John, apparently set sail from the port of Plymouth, Devon, England for New Plymouth, Plymouth Colony, British Colonial America
2 Apr 1638	28 years	William is licensed to dwell in Plymouth Colony and is noted as a Cooper in New Plymouth, Plymouth Colony, British Colonial America

This biography is written using Microsoft Word, which is then converted to PDF (Portable Document Format) files to accommodate visual viewing via the World Wide Web; and because of current PDF size limits of various websites such as *familySearch.org* and *Ancestry.com*, the biography is divided into four parts, each of which is a separate PDF file as outlined below.

PART 1: BRIDPORT, DORSET, ENGLAND

William's parents, John Macomber and Edith Locke, are married at the historic Bridport Parish Church of Saint Mary in June 1607; they name their first son Thomas who is christened at Saint Mary's in September 1608. William is the second son and is born on or between 6 March and 25 March 1609 and is christened on New Year's Day 25 March 1610 in the Old Style Julian Calendar system. William grows up in or near Bridport where several siblings are christened at Saint Mary's, some of whom pass away. William's father was a mercer by trade and owned a mercer shop in Bridport. William chooses coopery as a career.

PART 2: DORCHESTER AND TOLLER PORCORM, DORSET, ENGLAND

Per law and custom, circa age 14 in 1624 William apparently enters into a seven-year apprenticeship for coopery in Dorchester, 15 miles west of Bridport. He grows up amid many changes in England and in the New World. Shortly after completing his apprenticeship, William marries Ursilla Cooper. Ursilla is apparently from the parish of Ditchet 29 miles north of Toller Porcorm which is 8 miles northeast of Bridport. William and Ursilla apparently live initially in Toller Porcorm where their first son, William, is born and christened. William and Ursilla apparently move to Bridport circa 1635 where their second son Thomas is born and christened. In Bridport William's and Ursilla's first son William is buried. William, Ursilla, and Thomas, along with William's younger brother John, set sail for Plymouth Colony in British Colonial America apparently circa January 1637.

PART 3 SYNOPSIS: DUXBURY, COLONY OF PLYMOUTH, BRITISH COLONIAL AMERICA

Upon arriving in America in the spring of 1638, William Macomber (1638-1670), his wife Ursilla, and his son Thomas first settle in the township of Duxbury located directly north of the township of Plymouth. William is granted land and serves Plymouth Colony as a cooper and in other capacities as noted in colonial records. William's family grows. William's younger brother, John Macomber (1613-1688), is noted to have first settled on the island of Aqueedneck 45 miles west-southwest of Duxbury in the spring of 1638. John subsequently settles in the merging township of Taunton where he acquires land, cofounds a major saw mill, and is noted as one of Taunton's original proprietors.

PART 4 SYNOPSIS: MARSHFIELD, COLONY OF PLYMOUTH, BRITISH COLONIAL AMERICA

Circa 1645 William Macomber (1638-1670) and family move to the merging township of Marshfield located directly northwest of Duxbury. John Macomber (1613-1688) remains in Taunton. The families of William and John grow and their children acquire land and as first cousins interact with each other as evidenced by various Plymouth Colony records. All four sons of William become coopers by trade, while the sons of John do not. The children and grandchildren of William and John fan out from Marshfield and Taunton and settle in various parts of British Colonial America.

APPENDIX A: THE GENEALOGICAL PROOF STANDARD

Absolute proof is rare and often unfeasible and impractical in criminal law, civil law, and genealogy; as a result, standards of proof lower than *absolute proof* are employed. In criminal law, the standard is “proof beyond reasonable doubt”, which is lower than “proof beyond any doubt”. In civil law, the standard is “the preponderance of evidence”, which is basically 51%-yea versus 49%-nay. In genealogy, the proof standard is higher than a mere “preponderance of evidence”, and is often lower than “beyond any doubt”, and sometimes lower than “beyond reasonable doubt”.

Leading genealogical organizations and various articles in the FamilySearch Wiki promulgate that *ALL* genealogical conclusions, to be credible, must be “proven” using an adequate standard of proof, which in genealogy is termed the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS). There are five elements to the Genealogical Proof Standard, and all five elements must exist for each conclusion or assertion to be considered credible or “proven”. Each of the five elements contribute to a conclusion's credibility in a different way, but all five are necessary to establish adequate proof, which is described in the following table from the Board for Certification of Genealogists.⁸⁸

Element of the GPS	Contribution to Credibility
1. Reasonably exhaustive research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes examination of a wide range of high quality sources Minimizes the probability that undiscovered evidence will overturn a too-hasty conclusion
2. Complete, accurate citations to the source or sources of each information item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates the extent of the search and the quality of the sources Allows others to replicate the steps taken to reach the conclusion. (Inability to replicate the research casts doubt on the conclusion.)
3. Tests—through processes of analysis and correlation—of all sources, information items, and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates sound interpretation of the data contributed by <i>each</i> source Ensures that the conclusion reflects <i>all</i> the evidence
4. Resolution of conflicts among evidence items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantiates the conclusion's credibility. (If conflicting evidence is not resolved, a credible conclusion is not possible.)
5. Soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminates the possibility that the conclusion is based on bias, preconception, or inadequate appreciation of the evidence Explains how the evidence led to the conclusion

⁸⁸ (Board for Certification of Genealogists 2007).

APPENDIX B: GENEALOGICAL MATURITY

Genealogical Maturity is a system of self-evaluation and self-improvement which measures at five levels a family historians understanding and use of the Genealogical Proof Standard and the associated Evidence Analysis Research Process. The system encourages improvement in five categories: sources, citations, information, evidence, and conclusions.

The following table summarizes the five levels of Genealogical Maturity in each of the five categories of the Evidence Analysis Research Process.

Maturity Level	Category	Typical understanding and behavior
1. Entry	Sources	Typically relies on compiled genealogies
	Citations	Sees no need to record citations
	Information	Typically does not realize the need to judge information quality and has no basis for doing so
	Evidence	Limited understanding of evidence and the role it plays; typically ignores conflicting evidence
	Conclusions	Accepts without thought or hesitation the first existing conclusion found
2. Emerging	Sources	Mostly relies on compiled genealogies and online sources
	Citations	Realizes the need for citations, but rarely records them. Sometimes captures URLs and film numbers
	Information	Emerging realization that information quality differs; muddles evaluation by thinking of primary/secondary sources instead of primary/secondary information, leading to muddled evaluation when sources contain both
	Evidence	Captures direct evidence and increasingly depends upon it
	Conclusions	Makes conclusions based upon minimal research and minimal reasoning, often based upon a single piece of poorly documented, direct evidence
3. Practicing	Sources	Uses a limited number of record types and repositories; mostly relies on online and microfilmed sources
	Citations	Cites books and online copies of sources; begins to learn about citing manuscript sources
	Information	Judges information by source type, informant knowledge, and record timing; applies "primary/secondary" to information instead of sources
	Evidence	Additionally, captures (without resolving) conflicting evidence
	Conclusions	Makes conclusions based upon several sources found after moderate research, with reasoning and documented direct evidence; sometimes resolves contrary evidence

4. Proficient	Sources	Uses a wide variety of record types; often contacts record custodians to obtain copies of high-quality sources
	Citations	Gives complete and accurate source citations; for online sources, specifies the source-of-the-source and indicates source strength
	Information	Additionally, learns history necessary to recognize and evaluate all explicit information in a source
	Evidence	Insightfully pursues research at multiple, targeted repositories, making use of a plethora of record types. "Burned counties" are not roadblocks
	Conclusions	Forms conclusions based on well-reasoned and thoroughly documented evidence gleaned from sound research
5. Stellar	Sources	Insightfully pursues research at multiple, targeted repositories, making use of a plethora of record types; "Burned counties" are not roadblocks
	Citations	Overcomes limitations of genealogical software to create well organized, industry-standard reference notes and source lists
	Information	Additionally, utilizes implicit information in a source; finds information in cases like illegitimacy that stump most researchers
	Evidence	Additionally, publishes, teaches, and inspires others to fully utilize evidence of all types
	Conclusions	Additionally, publishes clear and convincing conclusions; teaches and inspires others



See the FamilySearch Wiki article titled “Genealogical Maturity” and associated links stemming therefrom for more insight.

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Genealogical_Maturity

APPENDIX C: THE OLD STYLE JULIAN CALENDAR

Calendar systems changed in Europe and Colonial America during the Early Modern Age which greatly affected how events were dated. The *Old Style* calendar system (also termed the *Julian* calendar after Julius Caesar) was used throughout Europe and other parts of the world from Roman times until 1582. In 1582, however, the Roman Catholic Church and parts of Europe adopted the *New Style* calendar system (also termed the *Gregorian* calendar after Pope Gregory XIII who issued a related papal decree in 1582). The monarchies of Spain, Portugal, and France, which were significantly affiliated with the *Roman Catholic Church*, adopted the *New Style* calendar system in Europe and in their colonies in the Americas starting in 1582. Other monarchies and civil jurisdictions gradually adopted the *New Style* in the decades that followed. However, England, Scotland and the English colonies in America did not adopt the *New Style* calendar system until 170 years later, in 1752. Some organizations, such as the Society of Friends (nicknamed Quakers), never adopted the Gregorian Calendar, and rather than use the names of Roman gods used numbers for months (1-12) based on the *Old Style* system.

The main difference between the Old Style Julian Calendar system and the New Style Gregorian Calendar system is the first day of a year. In the Old Style a new year started on 25 March which put January, February, and most of March at the END of a year rather than at the beginning as seen in the following image.

Old Style Julian Calendar (New year starts on 25 March and ends 24 March)																							
Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
...1606				1607								1608											
New Style Gregorian Calendar (New year starts 1 January and ends 31 December)																							
Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
...1606				1607								1608											

Image 38: Comparison of the Old Style Julian Calendar with the New Style Gregorian Calendar systems

In addition, the *New Style* corrected a flaw in the *Old Style* that miscalculated leap years, which caused the *Old Style* calendar to lag the solar year by about three days every four centuries. When a country switched to the *New Style* calendar system, several days were omitted to bring the calendar in synch with the current solar year; the number of days omitted depended on when the transition from the *Old Style* to the *New Style* occurred; hence, in 1582 ten days were omitted, and in 1752 eleven days were omitted.

The proper convention when recording English dates prior to 1752 is to use the Old Style Julian Calendar dates rather than omitting a specified number of days and then use the New Style Gregorian Calendar, which would then not jive with the Old English records. Because parts of Europe adopted the *New Style* calendar system in 1582, but Anglican England and its colonies did not do so until 1752, from 1582 to 1752 English dates between January 1 and March 25 are often written with the *Old Style* calendar date, but with both the *Old Style* and *New Style* years separated by a slash; for example, January 16, 1633/4). Dates after March 25 would be the same year in either the *Old Style* or the *New Style*.

LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1: Satellite image of Western Europe overlain with a Google map with a red marker pinpointing the relative location of Bridport, Dorset, England	6
Image 2: Satellite image of the North Atlantic Ocean which shows the relative position of Dorchester, Dorset, England with the Colony of Plymouth in America.	7
Image 3: Satellite image of southern England showing the relative locations of Ditcheat which, via modern footpaths, is about 29 miles north of Toller Porcorum, which is about 8 miles northeast of Bridport, which is about 15 miles east of Dorchester, which is about 10 miles southeast of Toller Porcorum.	9
Image 4: A woodcut image from 1568 showing four men working in conjunction with a printing press	10
Image 5: Images of the title pages of Captain John Smith's book published in 1616 (left) and Edward Winslow's book published in 1622 (right).	11
Image 6: Image of the front page of the 1623 publication containing many of Shakespeare's works.	12
Image 7: Map of the east coast of North America showing early European settlements.	14
Image 8: painting by Emile Adan (1839-1937) of a master shoe repairman and his young apprentice	16
Image 9: Illustration of the relative time span between 15 March 1623 and 15 March 1624 in the Old Style Julian Calendar in which a new year starts on 25 March, which puts January, February, and most of March at the end of a year rather than the beginning	18
Image 10: Image of shaped staves being assembled into a water-tight barrel.	18
Image 11: Photo of historic characters engaged in the craft of coopery at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Williamsburg, Virginia.	19
Image 12: Photograph taken during the 1890s of High Street in Dorchester, Dorset, England	20
Image 13: Painting depicting King Charles I (center in blue sash) and other prominent individuals on the eve before the battle of Edgehill, 1642.	22
Image 15: Image of the original contemporary entry in the Bridport parish register noting the christening of Edith, the daughter of John Macomber, on 27 June 1617.	23
Image 16: Image of 2 cropped portions of the same page of the Bridport Parish register showing the contemporary entry for the Christening of Robert Macomber.	25
Image 17: Image of the original Bridport Parish register showing the contemporary burial entries for Thomas Macomber on 21 March 1627 and Robert Macomber on 5 April 1628.	26
Image 18: Image of the original Bridport Parish register showing the contemporary burial entry for Marie Macomber on 14 July 1632.	28
Image 19: Image of 2 cropped portions of page 184 of the original parish register titled <i>Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638</i> showing the marriage of William and Ursilla.	30
Image 20: Modern side view from the rear of the historic Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport, Dorset, England with burial headstones visible in the foreground.	31
Image 21: Modern interior view of the historic Bridport parish church of Saint Mary in Bridport. Portions of the church were erected circa 1265 A.D.; most of the church seen today was erected in the mid-1450s; and the interior was renovated in the mid-1800s.	31

Image 22: Image of the derivative index titled <i>PE/BT: RE 28</i> listing 1633 marriages and noting “William Makcomber” and erroneously noting his bride as “Priscilla Goerge [sic]”. ...	37
Image 23: Digital image of the original 1634 probate entry in the <i>PROB 11: Will Registers</i> of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury concerning the Will of Thomas Knott.....	40
Image 24: Illustration of the relative time span between various dates in the Old Style Julian Calendar in which a new year started on 25 March, which puts January, February, and most of March at the end of a year rather than the beginning.	41
Image 25: Image of the original entry in the <i>Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638</i> of the burial of “Mr. Thomas Knotte, Rector of the Church of Bridport” on 15 January 1633.....	45
Image 26: Image of entries in <i>Vol I 1615-1658 Great Toller Transcript 1905</i> derived from the “35 parchment sheets almost black with age” and noting the 19 October 1634 christening of William, deduced to be the son of William and “Ussella” “Macumber”	48
Image 27: Image of the FamilySearch database reference to the 19 October 1634 christening of “William Marinnber or Macumber” whose father is “William Marinnber or Macumber” and whose mother is “Ussella” at Toller Porcorum, Dorset, England.	49
Image 28: Image of the original Inventory of Estate of William Macomber taken in Marshfield in Plymouth Colony dated 27 May 1670.....	55
Image 29: Image of the original bond dated 8 June 1670 “signed” by Ursilla, Thomas, and Matthew Macomber and by Samuel Holloway.	58
Image 30: Image of the original parchment “ <i>Ditcheat Register 1562-1653</i> ” which notes the christening of Ursula, daughter of Stephen Cooper, on 12 May 1616.....	67
Image 31: Modern aerial view of Ditcheat village behind the Ditcheat Parish Church of Mary Magdalene (center right) and the modern residence that was previously the Priory (center).	68
Image 32: Image of the first page of the original parchment Ditcheat Parish register titled <i>Ditcheat Register 1562-1653</i>	69
Image 33: Modern view showing the rural village of Toller Porcorum (center) and the Toller Porcorum Parish church of Saint Andrew and Saint Peter (center left).	74
Image 34: Modern image of the River Hooke which was called the River Toller anciently.	75
Image 35: Image from the original parchment <i>Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638</i> noting the christening of Thomas Macomber, the son of William Macomber, 28 February 1635.....	77
Image 36: Image of the original Bridport Parish register showing the contemporary burial entry for Edith (Locke) Macomber on 10 May 1636.	79
Image 37: Image of the original parchment <i>Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638</i> noting the burial of William, the son of William Macomber, on 30 August 1636.	80
Image 38: Image of the contemporary entry in the original parchment <i>Bridport Parish Register 1600-1638</i> which notes the burial of Richard Macomber on 23 May 1637.	81
Image 39: Comparison of the Old Style Julian Calendar with the New Style Gregorian Calendar systems	93

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INDEX OF SELECT NAMES AND PLACES

Not every incident of a name or place appearing in this biography is cited in the index; only those names or places associated with a noteworthy event, relationship, or evidence of genealogical value is cited in the index.

Bridport, Dorset, England	
♦Hometown of William Macomber	7
♦Shown on map	6, 9
About Bridport parish register	29
Bridport Parish church	
Saint Mary.....	31
Cooper surname in parish register	63
Thomas Knott was town clerk	46
Ditcheat, Somerset, England	
♦Hometown (?) of Ursilla Cooper.....	67
♦Shown on map	9
About Ditcheat Parish registers.....	68
Cooper surname in parish registers	68
Ditcheat Parish Church	
Mary Magdalen.....	68
Dorchester, Dorset, England	
♦Brief history of.....	20
♦Shown on map	7, 9
♦William was an apprentice in	19
John White resident of	20
Edith Locke (1587?-1636)	
♦William's mother	7
Burial at Bridport Parish church	79
Burial on 10 May 1636.....	79
Family members at her passing.....	78
Wife of John Macomber (1585?-1650)	7
Edith Macomber (1625-?)	
♦William's sister.....	22
Christened at Bridport Parish church	22
Christened on 27 December 1625.....	22
Not noted in Bridport as an adult.....	24
John Macomber (1585?-1650)	
♦William's father.....	7
Father of Edith Macomber (1625-?).....	23
Father of Marie Macomber (1621-1632)	27
Father of Richard Macomber (1619-1637)..	81
Father of Robert Macomber (1627-1628)	24
Father of Thomas Macomber (1623-1627) ..	25
Husband of Edith Locke (1587?-1636)	7
John White (1575-1648)	
♦Parish Rector in Dorchester	20
♦Recruiter for American colonization	20
Helped establish Gloucester settlement....	20
Helped establish Salem settlement	20
Helped establish Dorchester settlement.....	21
Helped establish Massachusetts Bay	20
Marie Macomber (1621-1632)	
♦William's sister.....	27
Burial at Bridport Parish cemetery	27
Burial on 14 July 1632.....	27
Matthew Macomber (1649-1676)	
♦William's son	54
Noted in father's Inventory of Estate	54
Resident of Taunton, Plymouth Colony.....	57
Signed bond dated 6 June 1670.....	57
Visited New Plymouth in June 1670	54
Richard Macomber (1619-1637)	
♦William's brother	81
Burial at Bridport Parish cemetery.....	81
Burial on 24 May 1637	81
Robert Macomber (1627-1628)	
♦William's brother	24
Burial at Bridport Parish cemetery.....	25
Burial on 5 April 1628.....	25
Christened at Bridport Parish church	24
Christened on 2 December 1627	24
Thomas Knott (1575?-1633)	
♦Bridport Parish clerk.....	46
♦Bridport Town Clerk	46
Burial at Bridport Parish cemetery.....	46
Burial on 15 January 1633	46
Rector in Bridport Parish.....	46
Will probated at Prerogative Court of Canterbury	40
Thomas Macomber (1623-1627)	
♦William's brother	25
Burial at Bridport Parish cemetery.....	25
Burial on 21 March 1627	25
Thomas Macomber (1635-1711)	
♦William's son	54
Christened at Bridport Parish church.....	77
Christened on 28 February 1635	77
Likely January 1637 voyage to America.....	82
Noted in father's Inventory of Estate	54
Signed bond dated 6 June 1670.....	57
Visited New Plymouth in June 1670	54
Toller Porcorum, Dorset, England	
♦Brief history of	74

◆Shown on map	9	Vistited New Plymouth in June 1670	53
Cooper surname in parish register	64	Why designated Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?).....	60
Toller Porcorum Parish church		Witness to will of Thomas Knott	40
Saint Andrew and Saint Peter.....	74	William Macomber (1609-1670)	
Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?)		♠Son of John Macomber (1585?-1650)	7
♠William's wife.....	29	◆Evidence of a singular person.....	33
◆"Ursilla" common name		Cooper by trade.....	17
Consistent use of	29	Father of Thomas Macomber (1635-1711) .	77
Phonetic variations of	34	Father of William Macomber (1634-1636)	47
◆About the ancestry of.....	60	Friend (?) of Samuel Knott (1609-?)	46
◆Evidence of a singular person.....	60	Grew up in and around Bridport	7
Affiliated with the Church of England.....	61	Inventory of Estate displayed	53
Christened (?) at Ditchat Parish church ..	67	Likely an apprentice in Dorchester.....	19
Christened (?) on 12 May 1616	67	Likely January 1637 voyage to America.....	82
Daughter (?) of Stephen Cooper.....	67	Likely visited London in September 1634 .	44
Family members (?) noted	72	Lived at four major locations.....	6
Likely January 1637 voyage to America	82	Married at Bridport Parish church	30
Married at Bridport Parish church.....	30	Married on 16 January 1633	30
Married on 16 January 1633.....	30	Married Ursilla Cooper (1616?-1676?).....	30
Married William Macomber (1609-1670) .	30	Noted in Thomas Knott's probate entry	40
Noted as widow of William Macomber	57	Noted on bond dated 6 June 1670	57
Noted in husband's Inventory of Estate ...	53	Passed away before 27 May 1670.....	53
Potential (?) of being born in Toller		Potential affiliation with Knott family	46
Porcorum	66	Resident of Marshfield, Plymouth Colony .	54
Potential affiliation with Knott family.....	46	Resident of Toller Porcorum, Dorset,	
Potential date of birth.....	61	England.....	76
Potential locations of birth	62	Witnessed the passing of family members	28
Potential move to Toller Porcorum	66	William Macomber (1634-1636)	
Resident of Marshfield, Plymouth Colony .	57	♠William's son	47
Resident of Toller Porcorum, Dorset,		◆Evidence of two sons named William	51
England.....	76	Burial at Bridport Parish cemetery.....	80
Signed bond dated 8 June 1670	57	Burial on 30 August 1636	80
Signed name with a modified "X"	57	Christened at Toller Porcorum Parish church..	47
Surname noted as Cooper explained.....	35	Christened on 19 October 1634	47
Testified to validity of Knott's will.....	40	Evidence of christening	50
Visited London in September 1634	44		