

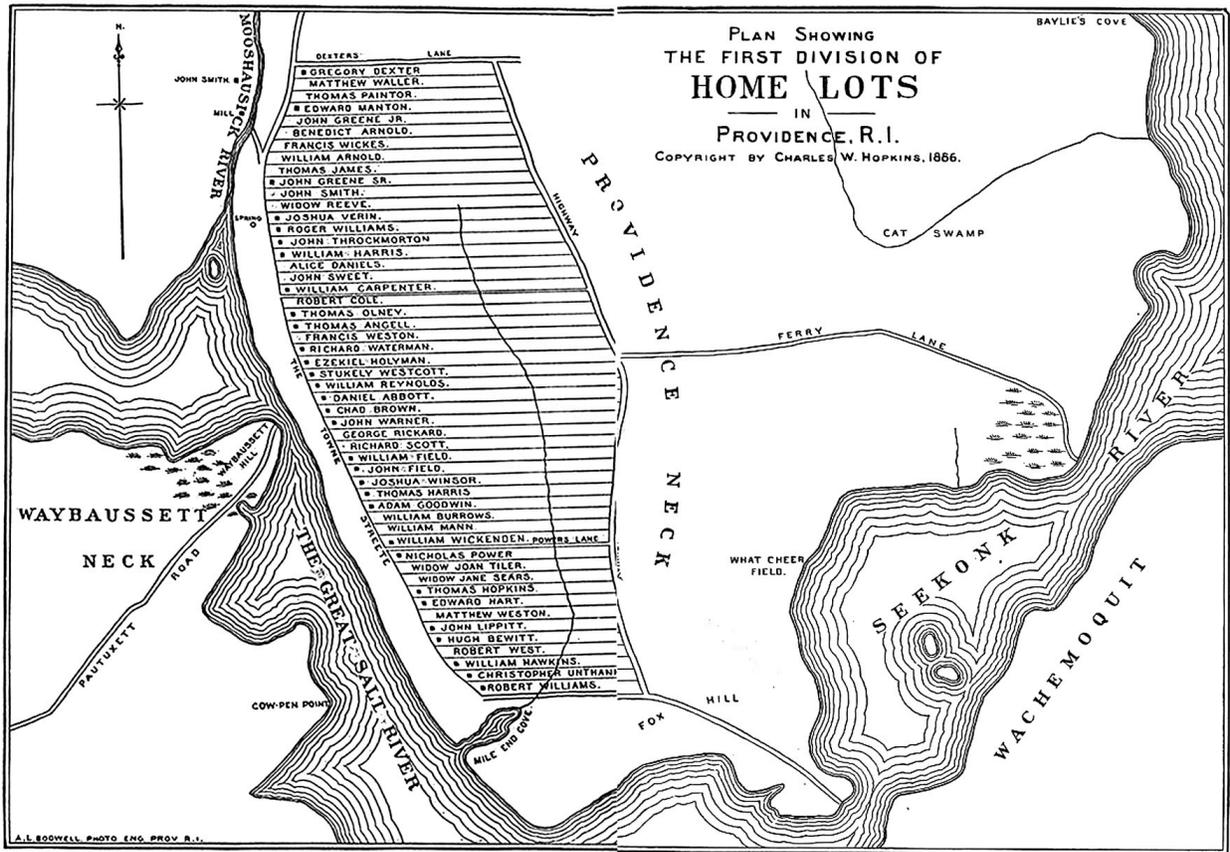
William Carpenter born about 1610, a 1635 immigrant

William Carpenter, born about 1610, was an early *English immigrant* to New England and a co-founder of the Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. He was likely born in Amesbury, Wiltshire, England, the son of Richard Carpenter, possibly with Alice Knight as his mother^{[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6]}. William immigrated to America in 1635 or early 1636 and settled in Providence, Rhode Island, arriving soon after Roger Williams and being among the earliest permanent settlers in the region^{[7] [2] [4]}.

Key facts about him:

- **Birth:** Circa 1610, probably Amesbury, Wiltshire, England^{[1] [2] [8] [3] [4] [5] [6]}.
- **Immigration:** Arrived in New England in 1635 or early 1636, settling at Providence Plantation^{[7] [2] [3] [4]}.
- **Family:** Married Elizabeth Arnold (b. 1611, Ilchester, Somerset, England), daughter of William Arnold and sister to Benedict Arnold, the first governor of Rhode Island^{[2] [3] [4]}.
- **Children:** They had eight children: Joseph, Lydia, Ephraim, Priscilla, Timothy, Silas, Benjamin, and William^{[2] [4]}.
- **Role in Providence:** Not among the first six settlers, Carpenter arrived the following spring and was vital in the colony's early development, holding various public offices and signing foundational documents^{[7] [2] [4]}. He built the colony's first block house for defense, which became crucial during King Philip's War^{[7] [2] [4]}.
- **Death:** Died September 7, 1685, in the Pawtuxet section of Providence (now Cranston), Rhode Island^{[2] [8] [4]}.
- **Legacy:** Holds distinction as the first person named "Carpenter" to make a permanent American settlement. Recent genetic studies connect his male-line descendants to Y-DNA Haplogroup R1a1a1b1a (R-Z282)^[2].
- **Relationship to Other Carpenters:** Despite longstanding traditions asserting close ties to the Carpenter family of Rehoboth, genetic evidence and research largely disprove a near relation—any common ancestor was likely many generations earlier^[2].

Below is a historical map showing the distribution of the first home lots in Providence, including William Carpenter's property:



Map showing the first division of home lots in early Providence, R.I., copyrighted by Charles W. Hopkins in 1886.



How reliable are the sources about William Carpenter's origins in Amesbury

The identification of William Carpenter's origins in Amesbury, Wiltshire is based on a combination of *indirect, circumstantial, and limited documentary* evidence; as a result, most reputable sources characterize this identification as **probable but not absolutely confirmed**.

Key points regarding the reliability:

- **No known baptism or birth record exists** for William Carpenter directly linking him to Amesbury^{[9] [10]}. This means there is no single definitive primary source confirming his birthplace.
- The main evidence relies on *Providence Town Records from 1671*, where William Carpenter (then in Rhode Island) gave his dwelling house on Frogg Lane in Amesbury to his sister "ffridgsett Vinsent." The same record notes the house originally belonged to his father, Richard Carpenter^{[9] [10]}.
- Parish records independently show a Richard Carpenter being buried at Amesbury in 1625, and a Robert Carpenter of the nearby parish of Newton Toney referencing Richard

Carpenter of "Aymsbury" in his will. These details strongly suggest the family's presence in Amesbury during William's likely childhood years^{[9] [11] [10]}.

- Most respected genealogical accounts (including those by Eugene Cole Zubrinsky—widely regarded in modern Carpenter research), as well as curated websites and collaborative public genealogies, repeat the Amesbury theory but consistently use terms like "probably" and "say 1610" for William's place and year of birth, again underlining the lack of direct evidence^{[9] [11] [12] [10] [13] [14]}.
- Older published genealogies tend to be less critical and more assertive in their claims, sometimes overstating the evidence for Amesbury or muddying the distinction between documented fact and inferred likelihood.

In summary:

The *Amesbury origin* for William Carpenter of Providence is supported by strong circumstantial evidence—especially the 1671 bequest to his sister in Amesbury—but is not ironclad due to the absence of a direct birth or baptism record. Modern genealogical standards regard the identification as *probable, well-supported, but not proven beyond doubt* and caution against repeating it as established fact without clarifying the evidentiary context^{[9] [11] [10] [14]}.



1. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/41892759/william-carpenter>
2. https://isogg.org/wiki/William_Carpenter_of_Providence
3. <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Carpenter-1122>
4. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Carpenter_\(Rhode_Island_colonist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Carpenter_(Rhode_Island_colonist))
5. <https://www.carpentercousins.com/carplink.htm>
6. [https://www.werelate.org/wiki/Person:William_Carpenter_\(7\)](https://www.werelate.org/wiki/Person:William_Carpenter_(7))
7. <https://www.geni.com/people/William-Carpenter-of-Providence/6000000006713541159>
8. https://www.myheritage.com/names/william_carpenter
9. <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Carpenter-1122>
10. [https://www.werelate.org/wiki/Person:William_Carpenter_\(7\)](https://www.werelate.org/wiki/Person:William_Carpenter_(7))
11. <https://www.carpentercousins.com/carplink.htm>
12. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Carpenter_\(Rhode_Island_colonist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Carpenter_(Rhode_Island_colonist))
13. https://isogg.org/wiki/William_Carpenter_of_Providence
14. https://www.carpentercousins.com/RichardA_Amesbury.pdf