

Samuel Mills of Dedham, Massachusetts, and His Descendants

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[Editor: The author prepared a paper with more detail on Samuel Mills's descendants in the third generation and beyond, planned to be presented in Special Collections, online at AmericanAncestors.org and on FamilySearch.org.]

There are three earlier compilations of material on descendants of Samuel Mills of Dedham. The first, by William Prescott Greenlaw, is a manuscript in the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections Department of the New England Historic Genealogical Society [NEHGS], "Descendants of Samuel Mills" Mss A 4650 (1921). The second is "A Genealogy of the Mills Families of Needham with Chart of the Fuller Families with Historical Data, 1619–1953," compiled by Frederic A. Jones in 1953, also in the Special Collections Department, Mss A 9414. The third, by Betty Post, began with Greenlaw as her source and continued into Vermont, published as *Early Mills Families of Vermont* (Lakewood, Colo.: the author, 1992).

1. SAMUEL¹ MILLS was born in England, about 1619. The earliest known trace of him in New England was recorded about November 1640 when Thomas Lechford, among other court records, wrote

Samuell Milles of Weymouth in New England aged about 21 years servant of Mr. Henry Waltham sworne saith upon his oath that about two months since Morgan Craver singing in the mill house by the fire one of Scituate came into the house . . .^[1]

Samuel died in Dedham on 7 January 1694/5.^[2] He married first in Dedham on the 11th of the 1st month [March] 1644/5, **FRANCES PIMBROOK**^[3] who died in Dedham on 14 May 1684.^[4] Samuel then married second in Dedham on 3 February 1684[/5], Mary Twitchell,^[5] probably **MARY (RIGGS) TWITCHELL**. One might think she was Mary, born in Dorchester 1 September 1658, or Marie,

¹ *Note-book Kept by Thomas Lechford, Esq., Lawyer, in Boston, Massachusetts Bay, from June 27, 1638, to July 29, 1641*, Edward Everett Hale, Jr., ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: J. Wilson and Son, 1885, repr. Picton Press: Camden, Maine, 1988), 373. Unfortunately, Henry Waltham's origins are unknown (Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England 1634–1635, Volume V, M–P* [Boston: NEHGS, 2007], 209–216).

² Don Gleason Hill, *The Record of Births, Marriages and Deaths and Intentions of Marriage in the Town of Dedham, Volumes 1 & 2, with an Appendix Containing Records of Marriages before 1800, Returned from Other Towns, under the Statute of 1857, 1635–1845* (Dedham, Mass.: Dedham Transcript, 1886), 25.

³ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*

born in Medfield, Massachusetts, in 1667, both daughters of Benjamin and Mary (Riggs) Twitchell,^[6] although it seems unlikely that Samuel married a woman so much younger than himself. It has been suggested that Benjamin Twitchell, baptized in Chesham, Buckinghamshire, on 10 June 1599, was probably killed by the Indians in Medfield in 1675/6,^[7] but he actually died in Sherborn, Massachusetts, on 17 December 1681.^[8] Thus it seems most likely that Samuel Mills's second wife was Mary (Riggs) Twitchell, baptized in Nazeing, Essex, 1 July 1622, daughter of Edward and Elizabeth (Holmes) Riggs, and widow of Benjamin Twitchell.^[9] She died in Dedham on 30 October 1694.^[10]

Samuel is said to have been a "townsman" in Dedham as of "11-11-1644."^[11] Samuel must have joined the church because he was made a freeman in May 1645.^[12] On the 16th of the 7th month [September] 1647, Samuel Mills of Dedham granted to Thomas Dudley of Roxbury, Esq., 12 acres of fenced-in land in Dedham "whereof 4 Acres are broken vp," lying on the south side of the Charles River near Mr. Parker's farm on the south. The condition (revealing that this was a mortgage) was that Mills should pay Thomas £8, i.e. 20s in "good dry cleane wheate the first of May next coming" and 20s in "good butter well salted . . . putt vp in a vessell the 16th of September 1648" and to pay the same each May and September for three years, "& if he will he may pay halfe cheese instead of butter."^[13]

Dedham town records show "Sam^{ll} Milles" paying taxes in 1659 and in many years thereafter.^[14] On 18 July 1660, the town granted "libertie" to Samuel "to take his deuision in a pcell of land need about the falles."^[15]

On "31:1:69" [31 March 1669] at a town meeting "Samll Mills came this daye, desiring that himselfe, and some other neighbours might have libertie to build a Carte Bridge over Charles River at that place where passage haue bene used to be made by Canooes, and that Liberty also might be giuen

⁶ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *Genealogy of the Twitchell Family* (New York: the author, 1929), 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

⁸ Suffolk County Probate, File 1208, Benjamin Twitchell, Sherborne, inventory dated 29 December 1685. He died 17 December 1781; son Joseph posted bond 29 December 1681.

⁹ Twitchell, *Twitchell* [note 6], 4; Robert Charles Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620–1633*, 3 vols. (Boston: NEHGS, 1995), 3:1584.

¹⁰ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 25, "the wife Samuell Mills"; William Richard Cutter, *New England Families Genealogical and Memorial*, 4 vols. (New York: Lewis History Co., 1914), 4:1946.

¹¹ William Prescott Greenlaw, "Descendants of Samuel Mills," manuscript (1921), in the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections Department of NEHGS, Mss A 4650, image 1 on a scan created by Judith Lucey, Senior Archivist at NEHGS, in January 2021; Cutter, *New England Families* [note 10], 4:1946.

¹² Robert Brand Hanson, *Vital Records of Dedham, Massachusetts, 1635–1845: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Camden, Maine: Picton Press, 1997), 687; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 5 vols. (Boston: William White, 1853–1854), 2:294.

¹³ *Suffolk Deeds, Liber I* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1880), 83, image 99, online at FamilySearch.org.

¹⁴ Don Gleason Hill, ed., *The Early Records of the Town of Dedham, Massachusetts, 1659–1673* (Dedham, Mass.; Dedham Transcript, 1894), 33, etc.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

them to make vse of Timber in the Common Lands sufficient for the vse. This left to further consideration.”^[16]

Among other deeds, on 4th day of the tenth month [December] 1674, Samuel Mills of Dedham, yeoman, for love and affection gave 20 acres of upland, meadow, and swamp on the Charles River and the right in two “Cow Commons” in Dedham to his son Benjamin Mills. Benjamin had this deed recorded on 19 February 1694/5, about six weeks after his father’s death.^[17] On 29 July 1673, 25 April 1676, and 30 July 1678, Samuel Mills served on juries at the Suffolk County Court.^[18] At the 29 October 1678 session of the Suffolk County Court, Samuel and Benjamin Mills were listed among those who had taken the Oath of Allegiance.^[19]

A number of deeds from and between Samuel’s descendants refer to land inherited from him. In particular there is a deed dated 4 March 1746/7 from Jonathan Mills of Needham to Joseph Mills of Natick which mentions, among other pieces, his right to a 60-acre lot in Dedham granted to “my great-grandfather Samuel Mills” in 1676, bounding north on the Charles River and south on the line between Medfield and Dedham.^[20]

On 7 March 1694/5, the Suffolk County Probate Court appointed Benjamin Mills, son of Samuel Mills late of Dedham, administrator on Samuel’s estate. Benjamin posted bond with John Aldis, yeoman and William Deane, carpenter, all of Dedham. The inventory, dated 30 March 1695 and presented in court on 6 June 1695, states that Samuel died in Dedham in January 1694/5, and it totaled £99-10-0. Besides various household items, tools and a mare, there were “The House and Barn, Orchards, Upland and Meadow at home, . . . 15 acres of upland at y^e old landing place below Kindricks, . . . 2 Cow Common Rights” and “An acre & half of Swamp at thee Brooks & Cedar Swamp.” Oddly however, on 3 February 1699, Benjamin petitioned the court saying that his father had made a will in 1694 and given it to Thomas Batelle of Dedham for safekeeping. Batelle had then given it to William Deane who was now living in Rehoboth, but Deane refused to give it up. Deane was then summoned on 3 February 1699 to appear on 29 February [*sic*, must be 1700, which would be a leap year], but evidently he did not appear.^[21] Benjamin then instigated a case in the Suffolk County Inferior Court of Common Pleas in April 1700. The court summoned Deane to appear at the Inferior Court of Common Pleas at Boston on the first Tuesday of April in 1700,^[22] but when the case came up, the petitioner Mills failed to appear.^[23] Nor is there any indication of how the assets were distributed. The inventory lacks any suggestion of a feminine presence. But it is possible that “Wearing

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 169.

¹⁷ Suffolk County Deeds, 17:15, acknowledged 12 March 1664/5 and recorded 19 February 1694/5, image 513.

¹⁸ *Records of the Suffolk County Court, 1671–1680*, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, vol. 29–30 (Boston: the Society, 1933), 29:270, 680, 924.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Publications 29:976.

²⁰ Suffolk County Deeds, 73:133–134, image 143.

²¹ Suffolk County Probate, 13:559, 612; 18 [new series]:23, 25. File 2215.

²² Suffolk County Court Files, document 4630 [FHL 0,910,807].

²³ Suffolk County, Court of Common Pleas, 1699–1701 [FHL DGS 8,297,325], 38.

Apparrell Linnen and Woollen” could include his wife’s clothing, but it was only valued at £2. On the other hand there was only “one pewter platter, a pint pot and porringer.”

Children of Samuel¹ and Frances (Pimbrook) Mills, born in Dedham:

- i. SAMUEL² MILLS, b. 20 1st month [March] 1646 [1645/6];^[24] bp. 29 March 1646;^[25] d. “ye next month” “1 of the 2 mo” [April] 1646.^[26]
- ii. SAMUEL MILLS, d. 15 10th month [Dec.] 1649.^[27]
- 2 iii. BENJAMIN MILLS, b. 20 1st month [March] 1651 [1650/1],^[28] bp. 13 2 mo [April] 1651;^[29] m. (1) MARY THORNE; (2) SARAH TAYLOR.
- iv. ELIZABETH MILLS, b. 10 9th month [Nov.] 1652,^[30] bp. 5d 10m [Dec.] 1652.^[31]
- v. STEPHEN MILLS, d. 3 10th month [Dec.] 1653.^[32]
- vi. SARAH MILLS, b. 5 9th month [Nov.] 1654;^[33] m. in Dedham 7 6 [month], 1676 SAMUEL BARBER.^[34] An inventory of the estate of Samuel Barber of Dedham was taken on 29 April 1690, “Sarah Barbur,” administratrix, making her oath.^[35] On 5 Dec. 1701, Benjamin Mills of Dedham sold land described as bounding on “the heirs of Samuel Barber Late of sd Dedham.^[36] Thus, he was not the Samuel, son of George and Elizabeth (Clarke) Barbour, b. 6 11 [Jan.] 1646[/7], who m. 22 Dec. 1674, Mary Harding, and d. in Medfield, Mass., 29 Dec. 1736.^[37]

Sarah Mills’s husband Samuel’s origins are obscure. On 24 Feb. 1672/3 a Samuel Barber was “allowed to sojourn with Michael Metcalf” in Dedham, and on 4 August 1674 he was “allowed to sojourn at Nathaniel Gay’s house for [the] present.”^[38] Both these items suggest that he was not the son of George Barbour, although he may have been a near relation. A Samuel Barber made his mark [like a “C”] as a witness on a

²⁴ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 3.

²⁵ Don Gleason Hill, *The Record of the Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths and Admissions to the Church and Dismissions Therefrom . . . Town of Dedham, Massachusetts 1638–1845 and also All the Epitaphs . . .* (Dedham, Mass.: Dedham Transcript, 1888), 29; Hanson, *Vital Records of Dedham* [note 12], 149.

²⁶ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 128.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.* 5; Cutter, *New England Families* [note 10], 4:1946, says 13 April 1651.

²⁹ Hill, *Record of the Baptisms . . . Dedham* [note 25], 32, “some of our sister Mills.”

³⁰ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham*, 5; Cutter, *New England Families* [note 10], 4:1946, says 5 December 1652.

³¹ Hill, *Record of the Baptisms . . . Dedham* [note 25], 33, “daughter of o’ sister Mills.”

³² Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 128, spelled “Stefeny Mills.”

³³ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14. This name has often been transcribed as “Millens” but the original is rather clearly written “Milles” [Dedham original vital records on FHL 0,593,353].

³⁵ Suffolk County Probate, File 1724, Samuel Barber, only the inventory; Records 2 (new series):455.

³⁶ Suffolk County Deeds, 20:590, image 521.

³⁷ Edmund Dana Barbour, “Descendants of Captain George Barbour of Medfield,” typescript (Boston: 1907), in the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections Department of NEHGS, also online at FamilySearch.org. This erroneously says George married second Sarah Millens.

³⁸ Hanson, *Vital Records of Dedham*, [12], 494.

deed from Benjamin Mills, Sr., to his son Ebenezer on 28 April 1704.^[39] This Samuel was probably a son of Samuel and Sarah (Mills) Barber.

A contemporary Sarah Mills married in Dedham on 27 6th month [Aug.] 1678, John Fuller,^[40] probably the son of Robert Fuller of Dorchester and Dedham, b. 26 Nov. 1649.^[41] Sarah and “her Father John Mills of Brantery” posted bond on the estate of John Fuller on 24 Dec. 1678.^[42] Sarah then died on 26 May 1679.^[43]

Children of Samuel and Sarah (Mills) Barber, born in Dedham:

1. *Hannah Barber*, b. 25 July 1676.^[44]
 2. *Joseph Barber*, b. 9 April 1680.^[45]
 3. *Samuel Barber*, b. 8 Aug. 1683; d. 28 Oct. 1683.^[46]
 4. *Samuel Barber*, b. 26 June 1685.^[47]
 5. *Sarah Barber*, b. 3 April 1687.^[48]
- vii. REBECCA MILLS, b. 10 2nd month [April] 1657,^[49] bp. 17 3m [May] 1657;^[50] m. 5 10th month [Dec.] 1682, SAMUEL RICE,^[51] b. Dedham ca. 1658, d. Woodstock, Conn., 2 Sept. 1711, son of John and Ann (Hackly) Rice. They went to Woodstock about 1688 or 1689.^[52]

2. BENJAMIN² MILLS (*Samuel¹*), son of Samuel and Frances (Pimbrook) Mills, was born in Dedham on the 20th of the 1st month [March] 1651 [1650/1],^[53] He died in Needham, Massachusetts, on 18 June 1734.^[54] He married first in Dedham on the 1st of the 5th month [July] 1674, **MARY THORNE**.^[55] Given her age at death, she was born about 1653, so she is probably the “Marye

³⁹ Suffolk County Deeds, 23:208, image 221.

⁴⁰ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham*, [note 2], 17; *Massachusetts, Town and Vital Records, 1620–1988*, original Dedham records, 78, image 20 of 1916, online at Ancestry.com.

⁴¹ William Hyslop Fuller, *Genealogy of Some Descendants of Captain Matthew Fuller, John Fuller of Dedham, John Fuller of Lynn, John Fuller of Ipswich, Robert Fuller of Dorchester and Dedham*, vol. 3 of a series (n.p.: the author, 1914), 247; William Hyslop Fuller . . . (Palmer, Mass.: the author, 1919), 212.

⁴² Suffolk County Probate, File 1017, John Fuller; *ibid.*, Records, 12:1, 247; New Series, 1:142.

⁴³ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 19 (birth), 20 (death).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁰ Hill, *Record of the Baptisms . . . Dedham*, [note 25], 34.

⁵¹ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 17.

⁵² Clarence Winthrop Bowen, *The History of Woodstock, Connecticut, Genealogies of Woodstock Families*, 8 vols. (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1943), 8:205-206. Edward F. Everett in “John Rice of Dedham,” *Dedham Historical Register* 9 (1898):5-7, says Samuel Rice’s family is not known. Bowen probably had other evidence not known to Everett.

⁵³ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 5; Cutter, *New England Families* [note 10], 4:1946, says 13 April 1651.

⁵⁴ Massachusetts State Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, “Vital Records of Needham, Massachusetts,” typescript (1959) at NEHGS, 146; Robert Brand Hanson, ed., *Vital Records of Needham, Massachusetts, 1711–1845* (Camden, Maine: Picton Press, 1997), 187.

⁵⁵ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 13.

daughter of our brother Thorne” baptized at the First Church in Boston on the 29th of the 5th month 1655. “Willyam Thorne a laborer” had been admitted to the church there on 17 April 1647, having had children baptized earlier in Roxbury.^[56] Mary died in Needham on 7 May 1718 aged 65 and was buried in the Old Burying Ground in Needham.^[57] Benjamin was “of Needham” when he married second in Marlborough, Massachusetts, on 10 November 1718, **SARAH TAYLOR.**^[58]

On 4 October 1674, Benjamin’s father Samuel gave him 20 acres of upland meadow and swamp on the Charles River in Dedham and the right of two “Cow Commons.”^[59] In “the next year the town of Dedham granted Benjamin a small parcel adjoining.”^[60]

This would be the Benjamin Mills credited with £1–3–6 on a list of soldiers under Capt. Thomas Brattle dated 19 October 1675, and he was on a similar list dated 24 August 1676, in a section of names credited to Dedham.^[61] A list of “Indian Children Put to Service. 1676” included “to Benjamin Mills of Dedham, a boy aged about six yeares named Joseph Spoonant late Marlborow [Marlborough].” He was to be “religiously educated and taught to read the english tounge.”^[62] Benjamin must have joined the church before 8 May 1678 when he was made a freeman.^[63]

Apparently it was in 1697, if not before, that Benjamin’s career as a miller developed. Benjamin was called before the Inferior Court of Common Pleas in the January 1698[/9] term to answer to Samuel Parker of Newton “for that the said Benjamin Mills in 1697 did erect a dam across Charles River runing betwixt the townes of Dedham and Newton . . . the natural course of the water stopt . . . arose so high that in ye sd year 1697 and in this present year 1698 it did over flow . . . the meadow ground of the sd Parker lying in Dedham . . . betwixt the upper and lower Falls containing about two acres so that he hath not onely been deprived of the benefit of ye grass that grew thereupon but . . . of a passage to go unto his other meadow and woodland . . .”^[64]

Benjamin owned considerable land in Dedham, probably most, if not all, in the section which was set off as the new town of Needham in 1711. On 12

⁵⁶ Robert J. Dunkle and Ann S. Lainhart, *The Records of the Churches of Boston*, CD-ROM (Boston: NEHGS, 2002). Other baptismal records for William’s children before he joined the church at Boston appear in *Vital Records of Roxbury, Massachusetts, to the End of the Year 1849*, 2 vols. (Salem, Mass.: Essex Institute, 1925), 1:340. One says he was of Muddy River [Brookline] and another “of Boston Church.”

⁵⁷ Hanson, *Vital Records of Needham* [note 54], 188, from her gravestone; Charles Curtis Greenwood, *Epitaphs from the Old Burying Ground, Needham, Massachusetts, with Notes* (Dedham: H. H. McQuillen, 1898), 1; photograph of the gravestone online at FindaGrave.com, memorial #60202405.

⁵⁸ *Vital Records of Marlborough, Massachusetts, to the End of the Year 1849* (Worcester, Mass.: Franklin P. Rice, 1908), 285; reported to Needham, as in “Needham Marriages,” *Register* 56 (1902):36.

⁵⁹ Suffolk County Deeds, 17:15, image 513.

⁶⁰ George Kuhn Clarke, *History of Needham, Massachusetts, 1711–1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: University Press, 1912), 44.

⁶¹ George M. Bodge, “Soldiers in King Philip’s War,” *Register* 41 (1887):277–278; *ibid.*, 43 (1889):272.

⁶² Joseph Willard, “Indian Children Put to Service. 1676,” *Register* 8 (1854):272.

⁶³ Shurtleff, *Records of the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay* [note 12], 5:538.

⁶⁴ Suffolk County Court Files, document 3809 [FHL 0,910,801].

November 1697, Benjamin Mills of Dedham bought from James MacKanab [sic] of Dedham 9 acres “as laid out to Daniel Mackia near the lower falls in Dedham.”^[65] On 31 October 1699, he bought various cow common and sheep rights.^[66] On 5 December 1701, Benjamin Mills Sen^r of Dedham sold for £83 to Jonathan Gay of Dedham, “the whole of that tract of land that was in the possession of my Late Hon^d Father Sam^l Mills Late of Dedham,” bounded by the Charles River, running along to land “belonging to the heirs of Samuel Barber Late of sd Dedham.”^[67] [This Samuel Barber was probably the husband of Benjamin’s sister Sarah.] On 2 March 1702/3, Benjamin Mills of Dedham, miller, sold to John Parker 4 acres of upland in Dedham.^[68] Also on 2 March 1702/3, Benjamin Mills, Sr., miller, for the liberty of taking up 20 acres in Natick Dividend “as by deed under the hand & seal of George Robin will more fully appear,” sold to George Robin of Watertown, planter, 19 acres in Dedham on the Watertown line.^[69] On 2 May 1704, he sold 100 acres in Dedham, on the Watertown line, to Jonathan Gay,^[70] and on the same day Jonathan sold Benjamin Mills, miller, 15 acres at the “landing place in Dedham” near Kendrick’s bridge.^[71]

Benjamin was a surveyor of highways in 1702, ’07, and on July 2, 1705, was licensed by the selectmen of Dedham to keep a public house at the Lower Falls, although most of the Mills land was at the Upper Falls, and east of the present Central Avenue . . . Benjamin, and his son of the same name, repeatedly received the usual bounty of ten shillings for killing a wolf . . .^[72]

A major deed from Benjamin Sen^r to his son Benjamin Jun^r of Dedham, blacksmith, is dated 7 August 1703. In this he conveyed 20 acres of meadow, 6 of upland and swamp and another 6 of upland, 70 rods of “rocky land,” and a third of his sawmill on the Charles River.^[73] On 18 August 1703, Benjamin Mills, Sen^r of Dedham, Miller, gave his son Joseph a house and barn with 50 acres bounded northeast by the Charles River, which had been given him by his father, Samuel Mills of Dedham.^[74] On 28 April 1704, Benjamin gave his son Ebenezer 50 acres in Dedham, part meadow, part upland and swamp. Samuel Barber, probably Benjamin’s nephew, made his mark.^[75] There are other deeds between Benjamin and his sons that do not mention the relationship. Benjamin gave several more pieces of land to his son Joseph on 12 February 1705/6, with some complex provisions designed to ensure that Joseph was able to take possession of another 20-acre lot. All seven other sons are named in the deed.^[76] On 6 March 1705/6, Benjamin gave his son William 50 acres in

⁶⁵ Suffolk County Deeds, 53:212, image 508, recorded 8 March 1736.

⁶⁶ Suffolk County Deeds, 59:215, not recorded until 2 September 1740.

⁶⁷ Suffolk County Deeds, 20:590, image 521.

⁶⁸ Suffolk County Deeds, 38:17, image 318.

⁶⁹ Suffolk County Deeds, 49:21, image 374, recorded 27 August 1734.

⁷⁰ Suffolk County Deeds, 21:563, image 844.

⁷¹ Suffolk County Deeds, 23:208, image 221.

⁷² Clarke, *Needham* [note 60], 44–45.

⁷³ Suffolk County Deeds, 23:39, image 49.

⁷⁴ Suffolk County Deeds, 22:436, not filmed, viewed at the Massachusetts State Archives.

⁷⁵ Suffolk County Deeds, 23:208, image 221.

⁷⁶ Suffolk County Deeds, 22:437, not filmed, viewed at the Massachusetts State Archives.

Dedham, bounding north on the Charles River.^[77] On 6 June 1718, Benjamin, Sr., now of Needham, gave his son Isaac 60 acres of land in Needham.^[78] And on 10 June he gifted two parcels in Needham, the acreage not specified, to his son Jacob.^[79] On 6 August, still in 1718, he made a further gift to his son Benjamin, again no acreage given.^[80]

Benjamin served as one of the first selectmen for the new town of Needham in 1711 and probably served again in 1719 as no “Jr.” appears with his name.^[81] Benjamin Mills, again without the suffix “Jr.” and sometimes as “Sener,” also served in other offices over the years, as constable in 1712 and again as constable as well as collector and tythingman in 1714 and as surveyor of highways in 1715. In 1713 he was on a “Committee to the Great and General Court” in place of a representative.^[82] On 16 August 1728, Benjamin Mills testified in Superior Court in Boston regarding a land dispute. Not only the autograph, but the whole document, appears to be in Benjamin’s hand and orthography:^[83]

Benjamin mills of near seaventy eight years of age testefieth saieth that my farther and I facht wood of the neack of upland and allso to turne Catteal to feading on the aforesaid upland that lies on the wedst Side of the meadow formerly belonging to thomas Paine: and formerly there wase a haye prarie[?] betwene the meadow and the upland: and when this haye feance was dec..ed Thomas Paine: made two peices of Deech: one piece joined to the deich & was the uper end neare the upland: the othere pece feining to a natral Crike tords the lore End of the meadow; and when Thomas Paine was deiching I hapnd to com and see him: and when I had veued the two peceses of dichs: I asked him why he deed not tacke in that . . . corner: as I supposed to be neare six Rods: that is betwene the short dich and the old Cart way: and he said it was not worth a fenceing: then I asked him why he Deid not Deige alitel nearer the upland at the uper Deich: and he ancred that it was as neare as wasse Conuenent and he thought it was bgowns[?] a nouf: and I uary weal Remember that there wase three tackes Stied[?] Sum Rouds be low the natral Crike: that stude betwene Meadcalf and Paine:

beniemin mills

A number of deeds among Benjamin’s children serve to verify their identities. For example, on 5 June 1706, Benjamin Mills, Jr., and Samuel Mills, both of Dedham, for “divers good causes” quitclaimed to their brother Joseph Mills of Dedham their right to a certain messuage given by a “Deed of entailment . . . from our Hon^d grandfather Samuel Mills . . . unto our father Benjamin Mills of Dedham . . . now in possession of our brother Joseph.” Benjamin, Sr., Jonathan Gay and Ebenezer Mills witnessed. Benjamin, Jr., and Samuel did not acknowledge the deed until 29 November 1710 and it was

⁷⁷ Suffolk County Deeds, 55:114, image 414, acknowledge 24 February 1712[/?], recorded 22 November 1737.

⁷⁸ Suffolk County Deeds, 34:62, image 354.

⁷⁹ Suffolk County Deeds, 35:27, image 37.

⁸⁰ Suffolk County Deeds, 71:157, image 167, recorded 8 February 1746.

⁸¹ Clarke, *Needham* [note 60], 648; Needham Old Town Book [FHL 0,968,019], 5, 52.

⁸² Needham Old Town Book [FHL 0,968,019], 7, 12–14, 19, 27.

⁸³ Suffolk County Court Files, document 21919 [FHL 0,913,343].

recorded on 4 November 1715.^[84] Some years later, on 17 April 1721, Joseph quitclaimed this same right to his brothers Zachariah and Israel and the heirs of his brother Benjamin.^[85]

On 20 May 1710/1, Benjamin, Jr., sold 50 rods of land on the Charles River and the land where the smith shop stood to his father.^[86] On the same day, Benjamin, Sr., gave to his son Zechariah Mills of Dedham, blacksmith, several parcels of land in Dedham, including the “rocky land where the smith shop now standeth.”^[87] On 28 March 1713, Benjamin Sen^r sold for a “valuable sum” to his son Joseph Mills “land between the towns of Medfield, Wrentham, Mendam [*sic*, Mendon] and Providence . . . being 9 Cow Commons,” etc.^[88] And on “the last day of April” 1713, he gave another 6 acres to Zachariah.^[89] On 12 February 1716/7, Benjamin, Sr., of Needham, miller, again for love and affection, gave many pieces of land, including his house, barn “Calash house with one half of my Sawmill, One half of my Corn mill, the Bunching Mills with One half of the Dam that is on Our Side of the River, with half of the Dam” and many other pieces of land to his son Israel Mills of Needham, miller. Mary made her mark.^[90] On 3 June 1718, Benjamin gave another two tracts of land in Needham to his son Zachariah.^[91] On 10 June 1718, Benjamin, Sr., of Needham gave his son Jacob two tracts of land there.^[92] A few weeks later, on 6 August 1718, Benjamin, Sr., gave land, the acreage not specified, to his son Benjamin, miller.^[93] The family had a custom of marking trees on the boundaries between their land with their initials.

On 18 December 1711, Benjamin was appointed to a committee of nine men assigned to locate a meeting house in Needham. At a March meeting in 1711/2, Benjamin Mills, Sr., was on the committee “to treat with Rev^d Demming.”^[94] Benjamin was dismissed from the Dedham church to the Needham church on 6 March 1719/20.^[95] On 20 December 1731, Benjamin Mills of Needham, miller, gave to his son Isaac Mills “eight of my Cow Commons Rights in undivided or Wast land in the township of Dedham” and his right to five other cow common rights in Dedham, “late the rights of my hon^d father Samuel Mills.”^[96]

There is no probate record for Benjamin in Suffolk County. However, two files for his son Israel serve as a good substitute, and the disputed probate of another son, Samuel, provides a good comparison. On 10 November 1735, the

⁸⁴ Suffolk County Deeds, 30:62, image 649.

⁸⁵ Suffolk County Deeds, 36:93, image 397.

⁸⁶ Suffolk County Deeds, 39:266, image 278.

⁸⁷ Suffolk County Deeds, 36:92, image 397.

⁸⁸ Suffolk County Deeds, 48:299, image 329.

⁸⁹ Suffolk County Deeds, 39:267, image 278.

⁹⁰ Suffolk County Deeds, 35:30, image 39.

⁹¹ Suffolk County Deeds, 39:266, image 277.

⁹² Suffolk County Deeds, 35:27, image 37.

⁹³ Suffolk County Deeds, 71:157, image 167, not recorded until 8 February 1745, the same day his grandson son Nehemiah recorded the land he received by dividing his father’s estate with his brother Josiah. The deeds probably dealt with the same land, or much of it.

⁹⁴ Needham Old Town Book [FHL 0,968,019], 6, 8.

⁹⁵ Cutter, *New England Families* [note 10], 4:1946.

⁹⁶ Suffolk County Deeds, 47:137, image 489.

probate court directed the selectmen of Needham to determine whether Israel Mills of Needham, miller, was “an Idiot or Non Compos person . . . Uncapable of managing his own affairs.” The report back on 5 December 1735, signed by Robert Fuller [his son Benjamin’s widow’s second husband], Zechariah Mills [his brother], and Jonathan Huntting said he was not capable. Zechariah and another brother, William, were appointed guardians on 6 December 1735. An inventory, totalling £764-5-6, revealed that Israel owned considerable land and other assets. Then on 28 April 1737, there was some objection to Zechariah’s and William’s management. On 1 January 1737[8], Ebenezer Woodward and Michael Dwight of Dedham and William Mills of Needham posted bond, and another inventory was taken on 6 February 1737[8].^[97]

However, when Israel died in 1752, a whole new file was started. On 29 May 1752, the court appointed Zechariah administrator. On 27 April 1753, the estate was divided among brothers William, Zechariah, Isaac, and the heirs of brothers Benjamin and Joseph. Items sold at a “Publick Sale” were itemized.^[98]

The son Samuel’s probate dragged on for years. On 12 December 1733, his brothers William Mills of Needham as administrator and Isaac Mills of Needham and Michael Dwight of Dedham as sureties posted bond. An inventory dated 2 March 1734 totaled £611-19-5. On 16 March 1736, Zachariah, Isaac, Nehemiah (son of Benjamin), and Josiah all objected to William’s account that the judge had allowed on 25 April 1735, claiming that many of the items were not supported by proper vouchers and others were “extravagantly charged.” A division was made on 27 April 1739 and another division on 7 June 1749, but on 27 December 1749 Nathaniel Dewing of Weston, who had bought some of the shares, with Isaac and Jacob Mills, appealed again. The final outcome is not apparent, but clearly many pieces of land in Needham were in dispute.^[99] There are many deeds and a number of court cases in Suffolk County records, but it does not seem necessary to describe them all as the structure of the family is not in doubt.

After Benjamin’s death his widow moved to Southborough in Worcester County where she brought suit against his son Israel. About the first of July 1734 (about two weeks after Benjamin’s death) she “was possessed of two cows about eight years old of a Dark spotted colour both of the value of twenty four pound, one Large Brass Kettle of the value of Eight pounds, all of the value of thirty two pounds as of her own estate and casually lost them and they came into the def^t Hands and he knew them to be the plant yet the Def^t at a place called Needham in Southborough [*sic*] aforesaid Converted them to his own use.” On 13 August 1735, the jury awarded Israel costs of court, but Sarah appealed to the next Superior Court of Judicature, saying she had not expected any opposition so had not summoned witnesses. Various witnesses testified that Benjamin had often said that they were his wife’s cows, and that the kettle was his. Benjamin’s son Zechariah said that they were “the produce of the

⁹⁷ Suffolk County Probate, File 6795, Israel Mills; also in Records 19 [new series]:50–57; 32:281, 378; 33:396.

⁹⁸ Suffolk County Probate, File 10055, Israel Mills; also Records, 46:205, 279; 47:528; 48:66.

⁹⁹ Suffolk County Probate, File 6512, Samuel Mills; also Records, New Series 17:442-450 and 42:471.

Stock of Catt^{ll} which my Honrd Mother in Law [i.e., stepmother] brought with her about the time of her marriage.” The papers even include the Marlborough Town Clerk, James Woods’s, testimony of Benjamin and Sarah’s marriage. The Superior Court awarded Sarah £28 and £12-1-6 costs, which were paid by Israel’s brother William.^[100]

Children of Benjamin² and Mary (Thorne) Mills, all born in Dedham:

- i. BENJAMIN³ MILLS, b. 7 4th month [June] 1675;^[101] d. Needham 10 Sept. 1720 aged 46, bur. Old Burying Ground, Needham;^[102] m. ca. 1711 SARAH LEARNED.^[103] On 14 Oct. 1728, Benjamin and Sarah’s son Josiah chose “my uncle Ebenezer Learned of Oxford” his guardian. This must be Col. Ebenezer⁴ (*Isaac*³⁻², *William*¹) Learned who d. in Oxford, Mass.^[104] Thus, Sarah (Learned) Mills was Sarah⁴, b. Sherborn, Mass., 6 March 1682, daughter of Isaac³ (*Isaac*², *William*¹) and Sarah (Bigelow) Learned.^[105]
- ii. MARY MILLS, b. 25 2nd month [April] 1677;^[106] d. 6 May 1677.^[107]
- iii. SAMUEL MILLS, b. 7 March 1677/8;^[108] d. 4 Nov. 1733;^[109] unmarried. Suffolk Co. Court files contain many papers relating to his dispute with Josiah Smith over 24 acres of swampy land,^[110] and Samuel’s estate was the subject of prolonged litigation (see above).
- iv. JOSEPH MILLS, b. 10 1st month [March] 1680;^[111] d. Needham 14 Dec. 1745;^[112] m. Dedham 1 May 1706, HANNAH GAY,^[113] b. Dedham 12 March 1683/4, daughter of Jonathan and Mary (Bullard) Gay.^[114]

¹⁰⁰ Suffolk County Court Files, document file 40393 [FHL 0,913,648 (18 papers)], the execution on 42455 [FHL 0,913,800]; Worcester County Court of Common Pleas, Proceedings & Executions, 1731–1737, 1:203 [FHL 0,838,526].

¹⁰¹ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 14.

¹⁰² Greenwood, Old Burying Ground, 2; Hanson, *Vital Records of Needham*, [note 54], 187; photograph of the gravestone online at FindaGrave.com, memorial #60202082.

¹⁰³ First child was born 24 August 1712 (Hanson, *Vital Records of Needham* [note 54], 70).

¹⁰⁴ Suffolk County Probate, File 4754, Records, 13 [new series]:22, 24; 26:463, Josiah Mills’s guardianship, 1712. Suffolk County Probate, Josiah Mills’ guardianship, File 4754, Records, 13 [new series]:22, 24; 26:463; William Law Learned, *The Learned Family* (Albany: J. Munsell’s Sons, 1882), 27–30.

¹⁰⁵ *Vital Records of Sherborn, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* (Boston: NEHGS, 1911), 59 (birth), 149 (parents’ marriage); Learned, *Learned Family* [note 104], 17–18. The family moved to Framingham where Isaac died on 15 Sept. 1737 (*Vital Records of Framingham, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* [Boston: NEHGS, 1911], 448). See also William Barry, *A History of Framingham, Massachusetts* (Boston: James Munro & Co., 1847), 315, names Sarah but with no husband.

¹⁰⁶ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 14.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰⁹ Hanson, *Vital Records of Needham* [note 54], 189.

¹¹⁰ Beginning with the grant to Samuel in 1705 (Suffolk County Court Files, 6385 [FHL 0,911,430]).

¹¹¹ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 19, in a group after 1684.

¹¹² An inquisition decided that he “came to his Death in the course of Divine Providence in a fainting Fit at His work near his Dwelling in Needham” (Suffolk County Court Files, document 61274 [FHL 914,447]).

¹¹³ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 36.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 19; Joseph Mills’s probate (see below); Frederick Lewis Gay, “John Gay, of Dedham, Massachusetts, and Some of his Descendants,” *Register* 33 (1879):46; Hill, *Births, Marriages,*

- v. WILLIAM MILLS, b. 2 May 1682;^[115] d. Needham 9 July 1759;^[116] m. (1) 28 May 1714, MARY WARE;^[117] b. 6 April 1691, daughter of Ebenezer and Martha (Herring) Ware. Mary must have d. in 1722 or 1723, and William m. (2) at the Second Church in Roxbury, Mass., 17 June 1724, MARY (MOREY) WATSON,^[118] b. Roxbury 11 Aug. 1682,^[119] bp. there 20 Aug. 1682,^[120] daughter of Thomas and Susanna (Newell) Morey, and widow of Charles Watson. Mary d. in Needham 3 Oct. 1759.^[121]
- vi. EBENEZER MILLS, b. 12 5th month [July] 1684;^[122] d. perhaps Needham 1731–1733 as he was in court in 1731 but is not mentioned in his brother Samuel's 1733 probate file (see above). Ebenezer left no probate in Suffolk Co. He was often a defendant in court, several times in cases involving sheep and lambs, but he was never a plaintiff.^[123]
- vii. MARY MILLS, b. 29 Dec. 1686;^[124] d. Dedham 5 Nov. 1694.^[125]
- viii. ZECHARIAH MILLS, b. 3 June 1689;^[126] m. ca. 1719 MARGARET KENDRICK,^[127] b. Newton 15 Nov. 1696, daughter of John and Esther (Hall) Kendrick,^[128] d. Newton, Mass., in Feb. 1771;^[129] He is called Zachary in Greenlaw, "Descendants of Samuel Mills" [note 11], image 4.
- ix. ISRAEL MILLS, b. say 1692,^[130] d. Needham 15 April 1752;^[131] unmarried. See the discussion of his probate records above. On 12 Feb. 1716/7, Israel's parents gave him a great deal of property, his dwelling house,

Deaths, Intentions, Dedham [note 2], 17 (parents' marriage); Bowen, *History of Woodstock* [note 52], 5:299.

¹¹⁵ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 18.

¹¹⁶ First Church records as in George Kuhn Clarke, "Deaths Recorded by the Rev. Jonathan Townsend, A.M., Minister of the First Church in Needham, 1749–1762," *Register* 56 (1902):269.

¹¹⁷ Emma F. Ware, "Genealogy of Robert Ware of Dedham, Mass.," *Register* 41 (1887):29–30; Clarke, *Needham*, [note 60], 50.

¹¹⁸ *Vital Records of Roxbury* [note 56], 2:282; "Second Church of Roxbury," in Dunkle and Lainhart, *Records of the Churches of Boston* [note 56]. Mary Watson's identity as William's second wife is supported by Suffolk County Deeds, 81:251.

¹¹⁹ *Vital Records of Roxbury* [note 56], 1:251 (birth as Mory or Morey), 2:289 (parents' marriage). Thomas Morey's will, signed as "Morry," dated 24 December 1717 and proved 20 January 1717[18], named his wife Susanna and gave his daughter Mary Watson £60 (Suffolk County Probate, File 3930, Records, 20:189).

¹²⁰ [Sixth] *Report of the Record Commissioners Containing the Roxbury Land and Church Records*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1884), 137.

¹²¹ Clarke, "Deaths Recorded by the Rev. Jonathan Townsend," [note 116], *Register* 56:269.

¹²² Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 19, says "son of Benjamin Miller," but Hanson corrected it to "Milles."

¹²³ Suffolk County Court Files, documents 15008a, 16023, 19634, 19691, 19879, 19952, 20007, 20330, 20447, 22972, 23997, 23998, 29049, 29050, 31811, 32363 (1731).

¹²⁴ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 22.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 25, "daughter of Benjamin Mills."

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 23, spelled "Zachary."

¹²⁷ First child born 13 November 1720 (Hanson, *Vital Records of Needham* [note 54], 68).

¹²⁸ *Vital Records of Newton, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* (Boston: NEHGS, 1905), 125, under "Kenrick." Esther's maiden name is from Elizabeth Blodgett Hall, "Genealogy of John⁸ William Kendrick back to his Immigrant Ancestors" (1979) [FHL 929.273/K347h], 36.

¹²⁹ *Vital Records of Newton* [note 128], 480.

¹³⁰ There are no published 1692 births.

¹³¹ Hanson, *Vital Records of Needham* [note 54], 188.

barn “Calash House,” half of his sawmill and cornmill and half of the dam along with other pieces of land.^[132] He was in court a number of times, usually for debt or as a creditor,^[133] but the most interesting case is the one brought by his stepmother, detailed above. On 12 June 1738, Israel being “non compos mentis,” his guardian, Ebenezer Woodward, sold Israel’s share of his brother Samuel’s estate as well as his interest in the sawmill to their brother William Mills.^[134] Shortly before his death, on 23 Nov. 1751, Israel himself sold 1½ acres near the Lower Falls to Ebenezer Bartlett.^[135]

- x. JOANNA MILLS, b. 24 Sept. 1694.^[136] She must have d. without heirs before her brother Jacob’s probate in 1723.
- xi. JACOB MILLS, b. 24 July 1697;^[137] d. at George’s Fort, Maine, 8 May 1723;^[138] unmarried. A Jacob Mills was on the muster roll of Col. John Wheelwright & Company from 22 Aug. to 27 Nov. 1722. Most of the men were listed as being from York, some from Wells and a few from Massachusetts.^[139]

Jacob’s father, for love and affection, gave Jacob two tracts of land in Needham on 10 June 1718.^[140] On 8 Sept. 1721, Jacob Mills of Needham, cordwainer, sold 30 acres of land in Needham to [his brother] Isaac.^[141]

On 18 Sept. 1723, the Suffolk Co. Probate Court summoned seven brothers, Benjamin, Samuel, Joseph, William, Ebenezer, Zechariah and Israel to appear, saying that Isaac Mills of Needham, had presented Jacob’s nuncupative will in court. George Philips and Jonathan Stratton testified that they were soldiers with Jacob at Georges Fort when Jacob was taken ill the previous April and that he had died there on 8 May. Jacob had said that his brother Isaac should have all his estate. Benjamin, Zechariah and Israel signed their agreement, but no assent by the other brothers appears. The court allowed the will on 23 Sept. 1723, and Isaac posted bond with Israel Mills and Eleazer Kingsbury. Jacob’s inventory included a small house, some land and his cordwainer’s tools. Over thirteen years later, on 14 June 1737, the court approved Isaac’s account.^[142]

¹³² Suffolk County Deeds, 35:30, image 39.

¹³³ Suffolk County Court Files, documents 23998, 24039, 24099 [all on FHL 0,901,287], 29050 [FHL 0,901,327].

¹³⁴ Suffolk County Deeds, 56:126, image 694. See also Suffolk County Court Files, document 43555 [FHL 0,913,821] and 46651 [FHL 0,913,836].

¹³⁵ Suffolk County Deeds, 81:234, image 247.

¹³⁶ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 26.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹³⁸ Suffolk County Probate, Jacob Mills, File 4792.

¹³⁹ William Blake Trask, “Letters of Col. Thomas Westbrook,” *Register* 48 (1894):285.

¹⁴⁰ Suffolk County Deeds, 35:27, image 37, online at FamilySearch.org.

¹⁴¹ Suffolk County Deeds, 40:203, image 217.

¹⁴² Suffolk County Probate, Jacob Mills, File 4792; Records, 10 [new series]:323; 23:94; 33:201.

- xii. ISAAC MILLS, b. 9 Jan. 1699/1700;^[143] d. Needham 15 Sept. 1793 aged 93 years, “the youngest of 9 sons”;^[144] m. Newton 24 Oct. 1722, ABIGAIL WARD,^[145] b. Newton 22 Jan. 1698/9, daughter of Edward and Grace (Lovering) Ward.^[146]

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¹⁴³ Hill, *Births, Marriages, Deaths, Intentions, Dedham* [note 2], 30.

¹⁴⁴ Boston Athenaeum, *Index of Obituaries in Boston Newspapers, 1704–1795*, 3 vols. (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1968), 3:137, citing the *Columbian Centinel*, Boston, 2 October 1793, p. 3, “At Needham, Mr. Isaac Mills, Æt 94 [sic].

¹⁴⁵ *Vital Records of Newton* [note 128], 340.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 197 (birth); Lucius R. Paige, *History of Cambridge, Mass. 1630 to 1877* (Boston: H. O. Houghton and Co., 1877), 676 (parents’ marriage); Charles Martyn, *The William Ward Genealogy . . .* (New York: A. Ward, 1925), 20.