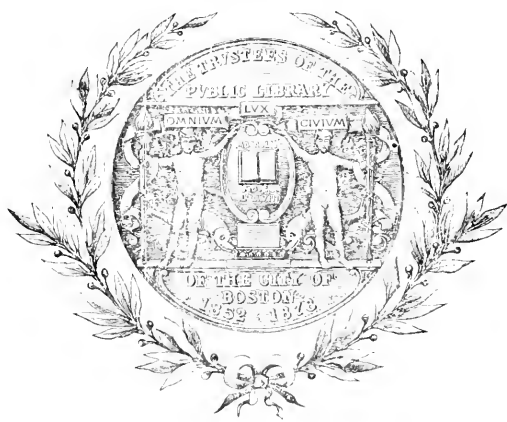


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A HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF  
WILLIAM COLLIER

COMPILED BY  
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FOR  
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# HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WILLIAM COLLIER

WILLIAM COLLIER was one of the early Merchant Adventurers who had identified themselves with the Plymouth Colony, 1 June 1621, at which time the first patent was granted them by the "President and Council of New England." It was taken out in the name of John Pierce, "Citizen and Cloth-worker of London." The Adventurers discovered that Pierce, after taking out the second patent, 20 April 1622, intended "to keep it to him selfe and allow them what he pleased, to hold of them as tenants and sue to his courts as cheefe Lord." He asked £500 for its surrender, after obtaining it for £50, but they refused to pay him anything for it, finally inducing him to assign the patent over to them.

Letters passed between the Adventurers, located in or near London, and the Plymouth "planters" as they were sometimes called. The first letter known to have borne the name of William Collier was one written by James Shirley, Thomas Brewer, William Collier, Joseph Pocock, Thomas Fletcher, John Ling, William Thomas, Robert Reayne, and reads as follows:—

"To our beloved and right well esteemed friend Mr William Bradford Governour these, but inscribed thus:

To our beloved friends Mr. William Bradford, Mr. Isaac Allerton, Mr. Edward Winslow, and the rest whom they think fit to acquaint therewith.

Two things (beloved friends) we have endeavoured to effect, touching Plymouth plantation, first, that the planters there might live comfortably and contentedly. 2d that some returns might be made hither for the satisfying and encouragement of the adventurers, but to neither of these two can we yet attain. . . . At a word, though we be detected of folly, ignorance, want of judgment, yet let no man charge us with dishonesty, looseness or unconscionableness; but though we lose our labours or adventures, or charges, yea our lives; yet let us not lose one jot of our innocence, integrity, holiness, fear and comfort with God.

And, thus ceasing for this time to trouble you further; praying God to bless and prosper you, and sanctify all your crosses and losses, that they may turn to your great profit and comfort in the

end, with hearty salutations to you all, we lovingly take leave of you, from London, Apr. 7, 1624.

Your assured lovers and friends

James Sherley	Thomas Fletcher
Thomas Brewer	John Ling
William Collier	William Thomas
Joseph Pocok	Robert Reayne "

The letter book of Bradford gives four of the signers to a letter dated Dec. 18, 1624, James Shirley (sick), William Collier, Thomas Fletcher, Robert Holland. This was written after a breach between the Planters and Adventurers had taken place.

In 1625 a letter was written by some of the Adventurers, William Collier among them, stating that "joint-account" had been closed, that £1400 remained due on it, and that goods to meet this should be shipped to them as trade permitted. They had consigned to Edward Winslow and Isaac Allerton a stock of cloth, hose, shoes, leather, etc., and four black heifers which were to be sold on the account of these Adventurers at seventy per cent profit. The line of dry goods was poor in quality and did not sell well. The names of three of the black heifers, which sold very readily, were Raghorn, the Smooth-horned Heifer and the Blind Heifer. One of the Adventurers, James Shirley, sent as a gift a red heifer to be kept for the benefit of the poor of the colony. Arber, in his *Story of the Pilgrim Fathers*, states that these Adventurers who were about seventy in number were from different walks in life, "not a Corporation; but knit together by a voluntary combination, in a Society, without constraint or penalty; aiming to do good, and to plant Religion." The year 1626 marked a change in the manner of negotiations between the Adventurers and the Planters. In November of that year a "Composition" was signed by forty-two Adventurers, William Collier among them, agreeing to recover from the Planters £200 a year for nine years. These names are preserved in Gov. Bradford's letter-book heretofore mentioned. Shirley, writing from Bristol, Eng., 19 March 1629/30, says of William Collier, "For Mr. Collier verily I could have wished it would have sorted his other affairs, to have been one of us, but he could not spare money, and we thought it not reasonable to take in any partner, unless he were willing and able to spare money, and to lay down his portion of the stock; however, account of him as a sure friend, both ready and willing to do you all the offices of a firm friend." In 1631, James Shirley, in a letter, mentions putting a certain sum into the brew-house of William Collier in London.

Evidence as to the time that William Collier arrived in the Plymouth Colony is furnished by three letters from England in 1633,—one from Emmanuel Downing and another from Francis Kirby, dated 18 June, and the third from James Shirley, 24 June of that year. The letter written by Emmanuel Downing is “To his very loving cozen Mr. John Winthrop at the Mattachusetts in New England,” and subscribed “Your very lovinge Uncle Em: Downinge.” He sent love to Mr. Collier among others. Francis Kirby, in his letter to his friend John Winthrop, Jr., writes, “I hope you have received the goods I shipped in the Mary & John per Mr. Collier, wherein I sent all the things you wrote for but sope ashes & old musket barreles, which were not to be had;” Shirley, too, stated, 24 June 1633, that his last letter was “sente in y<sup>e</sup> Mary & John by M<sup>r</sup> William Collier,” etc.

The inventory of estate of Peter Brown, of New Plymouth, 10 October 1633, contains debt “M<sup>r</sup> Collier for 1/2 bushell of pease.” That of Godbert Godbertson and wife, 24 October of the same year, has item “To M<sup>r</sup> Collier for comforts in sicknes 01—00—00.”

William Collier was made freeman, taking the oath of fidelity, January 1633/4 and that same month was rated for public use at £2 5s in corn. The list numbered eighty persons. Of these he and Edward Winslow had the same rate, the highest. The rates of the other seventy-eight were all under £2. In October 1634 William Collier was appointed with others on a committee to treat with the partners about trade, and, with Capt. Miles Standish, Jonathan Brewster, William Palmer and Stephen Tracey for Duxbury side to lay out highways.

In less than a year after Collier arrived in Plymouth Colony he was chosen Assistant to Gov. Bradford, viz., Jan. 1633/4. From that time until 1665 he was appointed to that position of trust, with the exception of three years, 1638, 1652 and 1653, serving twenty-eight years in all. On 19 Sept., 1634, Gov. Bradford and William Collier went to Boston to attend a meeting on the Hocking affair. With Capt. Standish, John Doane and John Winslow, William Collier served as a committee to collect money for the building of a mill “as also to agree with workmen, and order other all things for y<sup>e</sup> dispatch thereof.” At the same Court, that of 5 July 1635, to Mr. William Collier, was granted “a parcell of land lying up in y<sup>e</sup> woods, called by the name of y<sup>e</sup> North Hill, with some tussicke march ground lying neere vnto or aboute y<sup>e</sup> same.” The bounds to this land were set by John Alden, Christopher Wadsworth and William Bassett as late as Feb. 1638/9. The Governor, Mr. Prence, Mr. Collier,

Mr. Alden, Mr. Browne and Mr. John Howland were appointed, 2 March 1635 6, "to view that porcion of ground on the north side the Sowth River, and if they finde it more beneficiall for farmes to Scituate then to these p̄ts, then to allot them; if not, to reserue it." To Mr. William Collier and Christopher Wadsworth ground at Morton's Hole was assigned, 14 March 1635 6. This land was in what became, 1637, Duxbury, and was near Captain's Hill, where Elder Brewster and Capt. Miles Standish had farms. In this vicinity Collier had his home all or the greater part of his life, at least. A committee of nine were appointed, 21 March 1635 6, to confer about "the neerer uniting of Plymouth & those on Duxburrrough side," . . . . "to view Jones his river & Mortons Hole, w<sup>ch</sup> were thought the fittest place, & to render a reason for their judgment." Seven of the nine decided in favor of Jones River. As Edward Bangs, one of the nine, did not confer with them, William Collier was alone in the choice of Morton's Hole. It was therefore decided to build a meeting house and town at Jones River, which was known as the North Precinct of Plymouth. William Morris of Royston, Hartford Co., formerly, but then servant to William Collier, was, by the consent of Mr. Collier, 6 August 1637, assigned to "dwell and abide as a servant w<sup>th</sup> Love Brewster, of Ducksborrow, yeom," for the residue of the five years of service due to Mr. Collier. Love Brewster had become the son-in-law of Collier by marriage to his daughter Sarah, 15 May 1634.

The Court ordered, 7 May 1638, "that the lands on Duxborrow side shall not be disposed to any but to such new commers as M<sup>r</sup> Collyer, Mr. Partrich, Jonathan Brewster, & Willam Basset shall approve of to be fitt for their societie, as also the lands lying betwixt the North Riuer and the South Riuer (except those lands w<sup>ch</sup> are graunted to Captaine Standish & M<sup>r</sup> John Alden,)." When Christopher Wadsworth, 2 July 1638, requested a parcel of land in the woods at the head of the Great Marsh, he described it as "nere M<sup>r</sup> Collyers wooll trap." On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1638 9, the Court ordered Mr. Edward Winslow and Mr. William Collyer "to take a view of the heigh wayes towards Greenes Harbor and Scituate from Plymouth, and to cause them to be amended that are in decay, or to alter them to more conveniency and either of them to call one or two w<sup>th</sup> them to do yt."

As representing the inhabitants of Duxbury, 7 Nov. 1639, W<sup>m</sup> Collier, Jonathan Brewster, Christopher Waddsworth and Miles Standish, agreed to allow George Polland, "late inhabitant of the Towne of Stokeclere in the Realme of England yeoman & Wm

Hiller of the Towne of New Plymouth Carpenter" to build a mill at Stony Brook for grinding corn. In 1640 Collier was called upon with others to view and lay out lots at Green Harbor or north of the South River. Among those to receive lands were William Bassett, William Wetherell, the Southworth brothers, Thomas Prence and Daniel Cole. The name of Rexhame was given to the Green's Harbor lands by 1641, but in 1642 that locality became known as Marshfield. The southeastern part of Marshfield retains the name of Green Harbor, the portion of the town, probably, to be first developed.

The relations between James Shirley and others in England with the partners in Plymouth had become trying. To the end of coming to an agreement, Shirley wrote a letter to Mr. John Atwood and Mr. William Collier, two of his special acquaintances, in 1641,—

"S<sup>r</sup>. My love remembered, &c. I have writte so much concerning y<sup>e</sup> ending of accounts betweente us, as I profess I know not what more to write, &c. If you desire an end, as you seemeth to doe, ther is (as I conceive) but 2. waise, that is to perfecte all accounts, from y<sup>e</sup> first to y<sup>e</sup> last, &c. Now if we find this difficulte, and tedious, haveing not been so stricte & carefull as we should and oughte to have done, as for my owne parte I doe confess I have been somewhat to remisse, and doe verily thinke so are you, &c. I fear you can never make a perfecte accounte of all your pety viages, out, & home too & againe, &c. So then ye second way must be, by biding or compounding; and this way, first or last, we must fall upon, &c. If we must warr at law for it, doe not you expecte from me, nether will I from you, but to cleave y<sup>e</sup> heare, and then I dare say y<sup>e</sup> lawyers will be most gainers, &c. Thus let us set to ye worke, one way or other, and end, that I may not allways suffer in my name & estate. And you are not free; nay, y<sup>e</sup> gospell suffers by your delaying, and causeth y<sup>e</sup> professors of it to be hardly spoken of, that you, being many, & now able, should combine & joyne together to oppress & burden me, &c. Fear not to make a faire & reasonable offer; beleeve me, I will never take any advantage to plead it against you, or to wrong you; or else let M<sup>r</sup> Winslow come over, and let him have such full power & authority as we may ende by compounding; or else, y<sup>e</sup> accounts so well and fully made up, as we may end by reconing. Now, blesed be God, y<sup>e</sup> times be much changed here, I hope to see many of you returne to you<sup>r</sup> native countrie againe, and have such freedom & libertie as y<sup>e</sup> word of God prescribs. Our bishops were never so near a downfall as now; God hath miraculously confounded them, and turned all their popish & Machavillian plots & projects on

their owne heads, &c. Thus you see what is fitt to be done concerning our perticulere greevances. I pray you take it seriously into consideration; let each give way a little that we may meete, &c. Be you and all yours kindly saluted, &c. So I ever rest,

Your loving friend,

(Signed) James Shirley

Clapham, May 18, 1641”

On the 15th of the following October articles of agreement were made between the partners, James Shirley, John Beacham and Richard Andrews, of London, merchants, and William Bradford, Edward Winslow, Thomas Prence, Myles Standish, William Brewster, John Alden & John Howland, with Isaac Allerton in a trade of beaver skins and other furs of New England. Differences had arisen about the charge of two ships, “y<sup>e</sup> White Angele, of Bristow,” and “y<sup>e</sup> Frindship, of Barnstable.” John Atwood, with the advice and consent of William Collier, for and in behalf of James Shirley, and with William Bradford, agreed that Shirley should give release and William Bradford and others be bound for the payment of £1200 in satisfaction of all demands. The following year this “long and tedious bussiness came to some issue . . . . though not to a finall ende with all y<sup>e</sup> parties.”

Mr. Edward Winslow and Mr. William Collyer were elected by the Court, 7 Mch. 1642/3, to treat with the Massachusetts Bay court and government with regard to the union of the four colonies. The following June they were granted full commission and authority “in name of the whole Court, to subscribe the articles of confederacion . . . . w<sup>th</sup> the Massachusetts, Conectacutt, and New Haven, and to subscribe the same in name of the whole and to fix thereto the coimon seale of the goument.” In August, the same year, the same two commissioners were ordered to procure a standard bushel and half-bushel measure, according to the Massachusetts Bay standard, that the measures be uniform. At the same August Court two each from Plymouth, Duxbury and Marshfield were appointed to revise the laws of the Plymouth Colony, “that such as are necessary may be established, such as are vnnecessary may be repealed, and such as are defective may be altered, and such as are wanting may be ppared, and penalties to be fixed to eich law as far as may be; that vpon the approbacon of them by the Court they may be confirmed at the Genall Court.” William Collier was the one chosen from Duxbury to select whom he would to serve with him. As late as September

1651 the position taken by Edward Winslow and William Collier as commissioners in 1643 was upheld as follows:—

“The Commissioners of Plym: taking knowlidge of the long Declaration of the Massachusetts Comissioners Collected out of peeces of passages of many years and being vnsatisfied therwith thought meet to declare themselves that what was done by M<sup>r</sup> Winslow and M<sup>r</sup> Collyare then Comissioners of Plym: in Anno 1643 Concerning the Resignaçon vp of any lands which Plym: had enterest in was not at all in their power to Resigne vp any pte of Plymouths Jurisdiction to the Massachusetts Neither could the Massachusetts Receive any such Resignaçon without being Iniurius to the third and sixt articles of Confederaçon (if any had been made) And Mr. Winslow and M<sup>r</sup> Collyare have seuerall times publickly denied that they either did or entended to Resigne any pte of the Jurisdiction of Plym: to the Massachusetts.”

A letter from Gov. Edward Winslow to Gov. John Winthrop, dated Marshfield “(2) 6. 44” contains mention of a letter written by Winthrop to Winslow dated “21 (1) 1643” which had been imparted by Winslow to his “prtner mr Collier.” As the letter was in relation to early matters in Connecticut the term partner was doubtless synonymous with associate or commissioner.

Again, 4 June 1645, Mr. Collier was appointed in the making of laws. This time the committee consisted of fourteen and the purpose was “for the ppareing of some psent lawes for redresse of some psent abuses, and for pventing of future.” A year later, 7 July 1646, Mr. Collier was appointed one of four to draw up the excise into “due forme of an act, and also to pscribe a way and meanes how it shalbe gathered, w<sup>th</sup> penalties vpon the delinquents, and psent it to y<sup>e</sup> Court to be confirmed.” In 1648 William Collier received as apprentice one John Balden for the term of five years beginning with the 20th of December, agreeing to furnish him with “meat Drinke and Cloathing lodging and washing and at the end of fouer yeares servis to give the said John Balden a heaiffer of two years old.”

In June 1650 William Collier was on a committee with Thomas Prence and others to treat with the commissioners and settle the controversy “concerning the title to the lands called Shawwamett and Pautuxet, and the protexion of the English and Indians, &c.” They determined to relinquish to the government of Massachusetts all claim and title to the lands which were the right of Pumham and Socanoco, and also the “lands held by William Arnold, Robert Coale, and such of the other English as att that time together with

themselves did in like manor subiecte to the Massachusetts as aforesaid" but the lands belonging to "the towne or inhabitants of Providence vnto this day by any just title shall not be included in this relinquishment above specified, but shall notwithstanding remayne and wholly belonge to the inhabitants of Providence, freely to inioy as formerly they have done." The first signature to this document was that of Willam Bradford, followed, second, by that of Tho: Prence, and, third, Willam Colliare. With his sons-in-law Thomas Prence and Constant Southworth and five others, William Collier was on a committee to determine concerning laws of the Court. In October, land of Constant Southworth was to be viewed and laid out which was "sometimes M<sup>r</sup> Collyars, lying over against Duk Hill."

William Thomas of Marshfield, in his will dated 9 July 1651 has the following item, "I bequeath unto M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Collyare an Hefer which he shall chuse out of three which I now have and to his Wife a Diaper Table Cloth of nine foot in leanth." Edward Buckley, also a beneficiary by the will, with William Collyare were constituted overseers.

Dartmouth, which had been common land until 5 Oct. 1652, was then purchased. It was first known as Acushena, Ponagansett, and Coaksett. At their meeting at Plymouth, 7 Mch. 1652/3, thirty-four shares were allotted to the Purchasers. Among these appear the names of William Collyar and Sarah Brewster, his daughter, widow of Love Brewster, who received one whole share, and Constant Southworth, son-in-law of William Collier, who likewise received one whole share. The land allotted is described as follows,— "all that Tract and tracts of lands lying from the Purchassers bounds on the west side of Acoughcusse to a river called Accusshananeck and three miles to the Eastwards of the same,"

In April 1653 William Collier's name appeared on the Council of War as it had as early as the year 1643. In March 1655/6 he was one of those to appear in Court, acting in behalf of the country in regard to trade at Kennebeck. Again, 3 June 1657, he was called upon as one of a committee appointed by the Court "to reviewe the lawes, and to reduce them to such order as they may conduce to the benefitt of the goument."

The Court records of 29 June 1652 show that the sum of forty pounds had been promised to be paid to Mr. Collyare, some of which still remained unpaid. The sums due from the several towns were:—

Plym . . . . .	04:04:00
Duxburrow . . . . .	03:06:08



Scittuate . . . . .	06:00:00
Sandwidge . . . . .	04:06:08
Taunton . . . . .	03:06:08
Yarmouth . . . . .	03:06:08
Barnstable . . . . .	03:10:00
Marshfield . . . . .	03:06:08
Rehoboth . . . . .	05:14:04
Eastham . . . . .	02:13:04

At the two sessions of the Court, 15 March and 4 May 1657, William Collier presided as acting Governor in the absence of Governor Bradford because of illness. Governor Bradford died 9 May 1657 and Thomas Prence, son-in-law of William Collier, succeeded to that office 3 June 1657. If the deposition giving his age "85 or thereabouts" in 1668 is to be approximated, Mr. Collier must have attained at least to his "three score years and ten" at the time he presided at Court.

Court entries of 1657 and 1658 reveal the fact that William Collyare, John Alden, Josias Winslow and Thomas Southworth were on a committee for apprehending a Quaker, Robert Huchin, who had been producing "great disturbance in this goument."

"Mr. Collyare, M<sup>r</sup> Alden and Constant Southworth" were appointed, 29 Sept. 1658, to take some speedy course to reduce "Goodwife Thomas, a Welch woman, liueing att the North River, to liue more orderly, soe as shee bee not for the future indangered to come to missery and extremity, as formerly shee hath bine." Further, 1 March 1658/9, "Vpon the complaint of William Tubbs, that Goodwife Thomas, a Welch woman, that shee dwelleth on his land without his leaue, the Court hath appointed M<sup>r</sup> Collyare and M<sup>r</sup> Alden to take some speedy course to remoue her vnto her owne land." She was ordered, 6 Oct. 1659, to repair to Mr. Collier and Mr. Alden, at Duxbury, that they may "heare and determine what is meet in the case."

Among the publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts is a copy of an item from a manuscript volume as kept by John Saffin. It is a record of his marriage as performed by Mr. William Collier, one of the magistrates, and reads as follows:—

"New England Anno 1658

In the Year of o<sup>r</sup> Lord one thousand Six Hundred Fifty Eight on the third Day of Decemb<sup>r</sup> (being fryday) I Jn<sup>o</sup> Saffin Eldest Son to Simon Saffin of the City of Exceter Merchant by Grace his Wife onely Daughter to Mr. Jn<sup>o</sup> Garrett sometime of Barnstable in y<sup>e</sup>

County of Devon; was in or about the 26 year of my age Married to my Dearly Beloved Wife Martha ye 2d Daughter to Capt Tho: Willett at Plymouth in N- England; By Mr. William Collier one of the Magistrates."

Upon the Court records of 6 Dec. 1659 appears the following:— "M<sup>r</sup> Willam Collyare oweth the state of England the sume of 20<sup>li</sup>." Goodwin designated him as "the richest man in the Colony."

By record of 7 June 1659, "In regard that M<sup>r</sup> Collyare, by reason of age and much busines on him, can not attend the countreyes busines att Courts but with great difficulties, the Court have appointed the Treasurer to procure him a seruant, and doe alow him for that purpose the sume of ten pounds." A grant of thirty or forty acres of land, with some meadow, to Mr. Collier, 2 July 1667, for his grandchild "whoe is now serviceable vnto him" may indicate that the "servant" of 1659 was the "grandchild" of 1667.

It was not uncommon for the best citizens to be granted the permission to sell liquor. At the Court of 13 June 1660, William Collier was given liberty "to sell stronge waters to his naighbours, or any others, as hee shall thinke meet."

With Mr. Alden, Lieutenant Southworth and Mr. Hinckley, Mr. Collier was deputed to "give meeting to other att Taunton the fourth day of the last weeke in July 1660 to endeauor the settleing of such differences as are amongst them."

"In reference vnto a desire of M<sup>r</sup> Collyare about his . . . . of meadow att the North Hill, in the township of Duxburrow, the Court haue ordered Major Winslow and M<sup>r</sup> Aldin to view and settle the bounds of the said meddow." This was dated 3 June 1662. At the Court of 3 Oct. 1662 the following is recorded, "Wheras M<sup>r</sup> Collyare complaineth that the records of his graunt att the north hill are lost and cannot bee found both of the vpland and meddow the Court hath ordered, that M<sup>r</sup> Aldin and Major Winslow shall view the same land, and bring report of it to the next March Court, that soe it may be recorded as neare as may bee according to the first graunt." The bounds were accordingly made to the meadow "containing about two acres" at North Hill, and the Court ordered, 1 June 1663, that it be recorded. On the same date, William Collyare and John Alden, two of the Assistants who had been appointed to lay out the bounds to the land of William Bradford, gave their report. This land is noted as having been granted to Bradford but not laid out nor bounded to him in his lifetime.

A conference was held at Mr. Collier's, at Duxbury, in 1662,

between Sachem Alexander and several of the magistrates. A rumor had spread that Alexander was plotting with the Narragansetts for the destruction of the whites.

A commission was signed by Thomas Prence Gou, William Collyare, John Alden and Josias Winslow dated Plymouth "the 30th of June 1665" addressed to Samuel Nash, chief marshal, Barnard Lambert and Joseph Howes. It calls attention to an order of Court dated 7 June 1665 by which they are to repair to Mannamoiett "to lay out to William Nicarson, M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Hinckley, all such portions of land att Mannamoiett, both vpland and meddow, according to your best descretion." This record on the Court files is dated 31 Oct. 1666.

On the 2d of March 1668/9, "In reference vnto a former graunt of land graunted vnto M<sup>r</sup> Collyare, the Court haue ordered, that hee shall haue fifty acres of land in that tract of land purchased by M<sup>r</sup> Prence and Francis Combe att Namassakett, now Middleboro, in any place of it not yett disposed off."

William Collier was frequently called upon to witness deeds of his friends and neighbors, as in the cases of William Bassett and Francis Sprague in 1637, in which instances he wrote his name "Willam Collyer." Besides witnessing wills he took inventories of estates, notably those of William Kemp, 1641, of his son-in-law Love Brewster, 1651, of Ralph Partridge, 1658. He most commonly signed himself "Willam Collyare," which was the usual spelling of the name upon the Colony records, although in his letter from London, 1624, the name appeared "Collier." Other spellings of the name were Collyer, Colyer, Collyar, Colyare, Collyiar, Colliare, Coliare, Coliar, Colliar. In England there was equal variation in the spelling of the name. Considering the number of documents to which Mr. Collier affixed his signature, it is strange that scarcely an original paper bearing his autograph has been found to be in existence today. Such records as are to be found at Plymouth, of the Colonial period before the counties were established, are volumes of very old copies of the original papers, and a very few originals.

Through the kind permission of George Ernest Bowman, editor of "The Mayflower Descendant," a reprint of a certificate which appears in that publication of January 1923 is shown in this sketch. The original is in possession of Rev. Roderick Terry, D.D., of Newport, R. I. It is of interest as bearing the signature, not only of Wm. Collier, but of Myles Standish and William Thomas, all Assistants. It reads as follows:—

“These Are to Certyfe,

That Att A gen<sup>r</sup>all Court houlden Att Plimouth For the Jurisdiction of Plimouth, the first Day of the fourth moneth 1647.

M<sup>r</sup> William Bradford; And M<sup>r</sup> John Browne weare Chosen Comissioners for this Jurisdiction for a full And Compleat yeare; As Anye occasion; or exigent, may Require, And p<sup>t</sup>iculerly for the next yearly meeting Att Plimouth the first thursday in september 1647: And were intrusted w<sup>th</sup> full power And Authoritye; to treat of; And Conclude of All things According to the tenure, And true meaning of the Artickles of Confederation for the United Collonyes of New England Concluded Att boston the 29 of May 1643:

Myles Standish

W<sup>m</sup> Collier

william Thomas ”

One of the last public services rendered by Mr. William Collier was a testimony given by him, 16 April 1668. A copy of this is among the early Court files of the Sup. Court of Judicature, #857, at the Suffolk Courthouse, Boston. It will be seen to be of great value from the fact that it is the only document so far as known in New England which gives any idea as to the time of his birth. It reads as follows:—“M<sup>r</sup> William Collier aged 85 or thereabouts Testifieth That being appointed by the Court with M<sup>r</sup> Winslow & M<sup>r</sup> Alden for the laying out of M<sup>r</sup> William Thomas his lands. That he always understood That all the meadow comprehended by Green Harbor River abutting upon his upland within his line was by us laid out to him.

The oath of M<sup>r</sup> William Collier

Taken this 16.2.68 before me

John Alden assit”

The earliest writers upon genealogical matters in this country give but little of his family. All that Savage offers is, “Whether he brought wife from home, or had any here is doubtful; but four daughters came, of excellent character.” The files of Plymouth Colony, however, show clearly that Mr. Collier had a wife there as early as 18 Feb. 1634/5, at which time the inventory of the estate of Thomas Evans mentions a debt owing to “Mrs. Colier,” the amount not being stipulated.

The deeds of Plymouth Colony show that by 11 June 1653 the wife of William Collier was Jane. On that date the following obligation was appointed to be recorded,—

These are to certify

That at a certain Court holden at Plymouth  
for the justification of captives the first day  
of the fourth month 1674.  
The certain Bradford and Mr. John Brown  
swore before the Commission for this justification  
for ships and commodities therein  
on occasion or exigent, may require, and  
thereunto the first of instant in September 1674.  
and were induced and put under  
to write of, and subscribe and subscribe  
to the same, and have of the said  
of the Court observation, or the meaning of the articles  
then England to conclude, at Boston the 27 of  
May 1674:

Moses Stoughton  
Wm Collier

Attest my hand



“Wheras there hath been a Difference Depending betwixt M<sup>is</sup> Elizabeth warren and her sonn Nathaniel Warren about certaine lands which the said Nathaniell conceiveth hee hath right unto as heire unto the lands of M<sup>r</sup> Richard Warren Deceased; These are therfor to Declare and certify unto all whom it may conserne That wheras a late petition hath been prefered unto the court by M<sup>is</sup> Jane Collyare in the behalfe of her grandchild Sara the wife of the said Nathaniell Warren and an other petition formerly prefered to the court by Robert Bartlett sonninlaw of the said Elizabeth Warren by each petitions the prties requesting Justice in the p<sup>r</sup>mises; the said M<sup>is</sup> Elizabeth Warren and M<sup>is</sup> Jane Collyare and Nathaniell Warren haveing agreed to refer the said Difference unto such of the bench as they have chosen; viz M<sup>is</sup> Elizabeth Warren hath chosen M<sup>r</sup> Willam Bradford and captain Willett and M<sup>is</sup> Jane Collyare and Nathaniell Warren haveing Chosen M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Prence and capt. Myles Standish and they the said Elizabeth Warren in the summe of an hundred pounds and the said Jane Collyare and Nathaniell Warren in the summe of an hundred pounds to stand to whatsoever they shall Doe and finally Determine in the p<sup>r</sup>mises or the Maior prte of them; and incase they can not agree they are to chose a fift to bee Umpire in the case.” Elizabeth Warren signed by mark and Jane Collyare and Nathaniell Warren signed their names.

Nathaniel Warren's marriage to Sarah Walker is on the Plymouth Colony records, 19 Nov. 1645.

On the 2d of December 1661, William Collier gave a deed of land to Benjamin Bartlett who had married Sarah Brewster, granddaughter of William Collier, and daughter of his daughter Sarah (Collier) Brewster. The deed was freely given with the consent “of Mistris Jane Collyare his wife,” to take effect upon the death of William Collier and his wife Jane. This deed was made null and void and another deed made the 28th of June 1666.

As there was a “Mrs. Colier” in the Colony, by 18 Feb. 1634/5 as previously mentioned, it seems apparent either that William Collier brought his wife with him in 1633 or that she came soon after. Had he married her here the marriage would have been recorded, probably, as were those of his four daughters. The question naturally arises as to whether Jane Collier was the wife of 1634/5 or a later wife. No doubt would have crept in as to her being the wife of 1634/5 and the mother of his daughters born in England were it not for the document in which Mrs. Jane Collier represents the interest of her “grandchild” Sarah (Walker) Warren as though this grandchild was kin to her and not to her husband William Collier.

The deed to Daniel Cole, elsewhere quoted, where he is called by Collier "soninlaw" has given rise to the natural supposition that Ruth, the wife of Daniel Cole, was a fifth daughter of William Collier. If she were Collier's daughter, her age at death, 15 Dec. 1694, in her 67th year, would place her birth 1627-8. That there is no record of the marriage of Daniel Cole to wife Ruth, which must have occurred before 15 July 1644 when the son John Cole was born and when Ruth was but 17 or 18 years of age, seems incredible for a daughter of the magistrate, the marriages of whose four known daughters were painstakingly recorded. Daniel Cole died six days after his wife Ruth, or 21 Dec. 1694, aged 80 years. This would make him some thirteen years his wife's senior. May it have been that Daniel Cole had married previously in England a daughter of William Collier, and that this Ruth was a second wife? Other possible explanations of the relationship "son-in-law," meaning usually in those days "stepson" would be that Jane, wife of William Collier, had married the father of Daniel Cole or else had married the father of Daniel Cole's wife Ruth before her marriage to Mr. Collier. Jane was, however, grandmother of Sarah (Walker) Warren whose birth must have occurred about the same time as Ruth's, so that if Ruth were her daughter and Sarah Walker her granddaughter she would have become a mother and a grandmother at about the same time, not an uncommon occurrence in those days. Jane must have been born not much later than 1592, and probably somewhat earlier than that, to have had a granddaughter of marriageable age by 1645.

The will of John Cole which was proved 7 Jan. 1637/8 bears no date of signature. After the statement that he was sick and weak in body but in perfect mind and memory it goes on to state, "I give and bequeath unto my brother Job Cole my beding and all my cloathes and my Sow and I give unto my sister Rebecca one of my sheepe and unto Elizabeth Collyer five shillinges and unto eich of master Collyers men half a crowne a peece as namely unto Edward II<sup>s</sup> VI<sup>d</sup> unto Joseph II<sup>s</sup> VI<sup>d</sup> & unto Arthur II<sup>s</sup> VI<sup>d</sup> & also to Ralph II<sup>s</sup> VI<sup>d</sup> and unto John II<sup>s</sup> VI<sup>d</sup> these prticulars above named being payd and given the remaynder I would have devided betweene my brother Job and my brother Daniell and if my brother Daniell should be dead before his part can be deliv<sup>r</sup>ed unto him then my brother Job shall have it all And I doe ordayne and make my brother Job Cole my sole executor." It is reasonable to suppose that the Elizabeth Collier remembered by John Cole was the daughter of William Collier. In the absence of the date of signature it is likely that the will was made before Nov. 2, 1637, when Elizabeth Collier



became Elizabeth Southworth, by marriage to Constant Southworth.

It is unfortunate that the identity of Jane Collier has not been determined. Besides the possibility that she had married a Walker previous to her marriage to William Collier there is the possibility that her daughter by a former husband had married a Walker, becoming the mother of Sarah (Walker) Warren. There is even another possibility for the identity of Jane Collier. William Collier subscribed to the following, 6 March 1649, "Know all men by these p<sup>r</sup>sents y<sup>t</sup> I Willam Colliar have made over vnto my kinsman Willam Clark all my Right title & Enterest of & into a pcell of vpland ground lying att North hill in the Township of Duxburrow being Esteemed at about ten acars bee it more or less lying on the south east side of the said North hill; being bounded on the south with the hieway & otherwise bounded as it is now Inclosed The said ten acers of vpland bee it more or les with all & singular the appurtenances . . . ." (Signed) Willam Colliar. This William Clark is supposed to have been the son of the Thomas Clark who served as administrator with the other three on the estate of William Collier. In a deed from Thomas Southworth and Constant Southworth of Duxbury to Nathaniel Warren and Joseph Warren of New Plymouth, dated 1 May 1666, a farm at Eel river sometime the land of their uncle William Wright, deceased, was conveyed as also land that had been granted to their father-in-law William Bradford, deceased, which land abbutted on land belonging "to M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Clarke; now in the Occupation of his son Willam Clarke."

May it have been that the kinship of William Clark and William Collier came through Mrs. Jane Collier? In Nottingham, Eng., Parish Registers are several marriages of Thomas Clarks to women by the name of Jane,—

Thomas Clarke & Jane Drurye, 23 Sept. 1583, at St. Anne's of Sutton in Bonington.

Thomas Clarke & Jane Wright, 20 Dec. 1584, at St. Mary's.

Thomas Clarke & Jone Resonn, 24 Sept. 1593, at St. Mary's.

William Gisburne & Jane Clarke, 29 Oct. 1560, at St. Michael's of Sutton in Bonington.

May it have been that Mrs. Jane Collier was a daughter of one of the above marriages and may Thomas Clarke of New England have been her brother or nephew?

The name Walker also appears frequently among the Nottingham marriages. Two early ones were of Francis Walker and Jane Tompson, 4 May 1614 in Radford; and of Robert Walker and Jane Thorp, 26 Nov. 1580, So. Collingham.

There is another mention of kin of William Collier upon the Plymouth Colony records. On the 6th of December 1659, Joseph Prior was summoned and appeared "to answare for pilfering and p'loyning practices, and other vnworthy carriages relateing ther-vnyo, viz &, in alluring a younge maide, a kinswoman to M<sup>r</sup> Willam Collyares, to healp him, the said Prior, to sundry thinges ptaining to the said M<sup>r</sup> Collyare, without knowlidg of or leave from M<sup>r</sup> Collyare or M<sup>rs</sup> Jane Collyare, his wife."

While the name of Collier is to be found in Lancashire and Cheshire, Wiltshire and other places in England, it is more probable that the early home of William Collier, the Adventurer, was in or near London where we at least know he had a brew-house. Two marriages near London seem worthy of investigation, the one at St. Saviour's, Southwark, 13 May 1610, of William Colliar and Margaret Timmes; the other at Hayes, Middlesex, 21 June 1612, of Wm. Collier and Isabel Parrett. They are suggestions for genealogical research, provided, only that Jane was a second wife of William Collier and not the mother of his four daughters, all of which points need proof as yet.

Descendants of William Collier may well be pleased with the following tribute paid by Morton in his New England Memorial:— "This year likewise Mr. William Collier arrived with his Family in New-England 1633, who as he had been a good Benefactor to the Colony of New-Plimouth before he came over, having been an Adventurer unto it at its first beginning; so also he approved himself a very useful Instrument in that Jurisdiction after he arrived; being frequently Chosen, and for divers years serving God and the Country in the place of Magistracy; and lived a godly and holy life untill old Age which to him is a Crown of Glory, being found in the way of Righteousness."

Mr. Collier was probably buried in the old cemetery noted by Laurence Bradford in his history of Duxbury as on what is now Chestnut Street, between Bailey's and Hall's Corners. There were, in 1900, but one hundred twenty graves that were marked, in that cemetery. The oldest of these stones bears the year 1697. Without doubt there were other stones there which have crumbled away. Two triangular stones, according to tradition, enclosed the grave of Miles Standish. These were removed some years since and replaced by the monument to the worthy Capt. Standish which adorns Captain's Hill. In this cemetery are stones to Aldens, Brewsters, Bradfords, Partridges, Southworths, Westons, Wadsworths and Winslows, descendants of the original settlers of those names. Another

old burial place near Harden Hill was supposed by Winsor, Duxbury historian, to have been the first burial place. In view of the fact that Collier, Alden and Standish lived near the Chestnut Street burial place, at a place called Morton's Hole, northwest from it, and that Standish was buried there, stronger evidence would seem to be for Chestnut Street than for Harden Hill as the resting place of Mr. William Collier.

Strange as it may seem, William Collier left no will. On the 5th of July 1671 the Court empowered Gov. Thomas Prence, Mr. Constant Southworth, Mr. Thomas Clarke, and Benjamin Bartlett, "or any three of them, to administer on the estate of M<sup>r</sup> Willam Collyare deceased" and the four were appointed by the Court 29 Oct. 1671. Of the four administrators, Gov. Thomas Prence had married Mary, daughter of Mr. Collier; Constant Southworth had married another daughter, Elizabeth Collier; Benjamin Bartlett had married Sarah Brewster, daughter of Love and Sarah (Collier) Brewster, and granddaughter of Mr. Collier; while Mr. Thomas Clarke was probably the father of the William Clark to whom William Collier gave deed of land, 6 March 1649/50, designating him as "my kinsman." On the same date, 29 Oct. 1671, that the administrators were appointed the following mention is made of Daniel Cole, "Daniell Cole shall have and enjoy all such particulars of the estate of the said Willam Collyare, that are extant, which are specified in the first paper given by him, the said Willam Collyare." There is on record among the early Plymouth Colony deeds one from William Collier to this same Daniel Cole, in which deed Cole is called "soninlaw." It reads as follows,—

"A writing appointed to bee Recorded

Memorandum that I Willam Collyare have given to my soninlaw Daniel Cole all my Right and title to my pte of Purchase land upon Cape Codd of upland and meddow; being att Sautuckett Namscekett and about Paomett; and the appurtenances appertaining therunto as of wood Comons and the graunt of blubber onely Reserving for my life time a Right therin to have my horses mares and Coult's Pasture therupon Witnessse my hand"

"A Deed appointed to bee Recorded to the like effect as above expressed since made according to the p<sup>r</sup>mises

To all people to whom these p<sup>r</sup>sents shall Come Willam Collyare of the Towne of Duxburrow . . . . Gent<sup>tl</sup>: sendeth Greet &c

Know yea that I the said Willam Collyare have freely and Absolutely given graunted allianated enfeofed and Confeirmed and Doe

by these p<sup>r</sup>sents give graunt allianate enfeofe and Confeirme unto my soninlaw Daniel Cole of the Towne of Eastham . . . . yeoman all that my Right title and Interest of and into the Purchase land comonly soe Called lying and being upon Cape Cod viz: all my Right title and Interest of and Into the land Comonly Called and knowne by the Name of Purchase land lying and being att Satucquett Namscekett and Paomett both upland and meddow land; with all and singulare the Appurtenances Rights priviledges and emunities belonging therunto or to any pte or pcell therof viz: all the woods Comons and priviledges of blubber which may by Gods providence att any time acrew unto the said lands or any pte or pcell therof as appertaining unto mee the said Willam Collyare by vertue of my Interest in the said lands;" . . . . "Reserveing notwithstanding unto my selfe; this libertie and priviledge that my horses and mares and Coultts shall as occation shalbee . . . . pasture upon the said lands Dureing the time of my life.

Dated 16 Day of Oct. 1659

Willam Collyare  
and a (seale)"

Of the children of William Collier we know positively of but four. Further evidence should be procured before accepting Ruth, wife of Daniel Cole, as a fifth and much younger sister of the four known daughters of William Collier, the order of whose births is uncertain:—

1. Rebecca, born, England, about 1610; married Job Cole, Plymouth Colony, 15 May 1634; she died, widow of Job Cole, Eastham, Mass., 29 Dec. 1698, aged about 88 years; as late as 1710 real estate of Job Cole was settled upon his widowed daughter Rebecca Nickerson who had been at some charge in care of her mother after her father's decease; children,
  - i. Daniel Cole, "the son of Job Cole", fined for cursing, 10 s. 1672; married Mercy Fuller, dau. of Rev. Samuel Fuller of Middleboro; 3 children; died July 1713, Eastham
  - ii. Rebecca Cole, born, Eastham, 26 Aug. 1654; married a Nickerson
  - iii. Job Cole (probably), freeman, Eastham, 1670
  - iv. Samuel Cole (probably), of Eastham and Harwich; died Harwich, Dec. 1717. Children Samuel, Stephen, Elizabeth(?), Mary(?)
2. Sarah, born, England, about 1615; married (1st) Love Brewster, son of Elder William Brewster, 15 May 1634; he died, soon

after will dated 1 Oct. 1650; married (2d) Richard Park of Cambridge, after 1 Sept. 1656, who had children by a former marriage; he died between date of will 12 July 1665 and inventory of estate 8 Oct. 1665; she died, Plymouth, 26 Apr. 1691 in her 76th year; Children

- i. Sarah Brewster, who married Benjamin Bartlett about 1656 and died about 1676
- ii. Nathaniel Brewster, probably unmarried; died between Dec. 1673 and Nov. 1676.
- iii. William Brewster, married Lydia Partridge, 2 Jan. 1673; died 3 Nov. 1723
- iv. Wrestling Brewster, married Mary ———; died 1 Jan. 1697

3. *MARY*, born, England; married Thomas Prence, Plymouth Colony, 1 April 1635, as his 2d wife; died before 8 Dec. 1662 at which time Apphia ( ) Freeman had become the wife of Thomas Prence; Children

- i. Jane Prence, born, Duxbury, 1 Nov. 1637; married Mark Snow as his 2d wife; died May or June 1712
- ii. Mary Prence, date of birth unkn.; married John Tracy who died, Windham, Conn., 30 May 1718; she died before 25 Jan. 1696/7
- iii. Sarah Prence, born 1643-6; married Jeremiah Howes of Yarmouth who died, Dennis, 9 Sept. 1708; she died, 3 March 1704-6

(It is not known whether Elizabeth Prence who married Arthur Howland, Jr., 9 Dec. 1667; and Judith Prence who married Isaac Barker, 28 Dec. 1665, were the daughters of Mary (Collier) Prence or of subsequent wife Apphia of Governor Thomas Prence.)

4. Elizabeth, born, England; married Constant Southworth, Plymouth Colony, 2 Nov. 1637; who died March 1678. 9 in Duxbury; Children:—

- i. Mercy Southworth, married Samuel Freeman, 12 May 1658; he died, 25 Nov. 1712; 9 children
- ii. Edward Southworth, married Mary Peabody, Duxbury, 16 Nov. 1671; he died before 7 Nov. 1727; Mary survived him; 7 children
- iii. Alice Southworth, married Col. Benjamin Church, Tiverton, R. I., 26 Dec. 1667; he died 17 Jan. 1717, 18; she died, 5 Mch. 1719; 8 children

- iv. Nathaniel Southworth, married Desire Gray, Plymouth Col., 10 Jan. 1671/2; she died 4 Dec. 1690, Plymouth; he died, Middleboro, 14 Jan. 1710/11, in 62d yr.; 6 children
- v. Mary Southworth, married David Alden about 1670; he died before 22 May 1719, appraisal of his est.; number of children uncertain, probably 8 or 9
- vi. Elizabeth Southworth, married Lieut. Wm. Fobes (?) and removed to little Compton, R. I.
- vii. Priscilla Southworth, called Priscilla Southworth in will of father 27 Feb. 1678/9
- viii. William Southworth, married (1st) Rebecca Peabody, sister of Mary above; she died, 3 Dec. 1702; married (2d) Martha (Kirtland) Blaque, Saybrook, Conn., 14 Nov. 1705; he died 25 June 1718; 9 children by 1st m., 2 by 2d m.

William Emery Nickerson, of Boston, traces his line of ancestry in two ways through Mary (2), William (1) Collier, viz.—

MARY COLLIER (2) who married Gov. Thomas Prence;  
 MARY PRENCE (3) who married John Tracy;  
 APPHIA TRACY (4) who married John Sparrow;  
 REBECCA SPARROW (5) who married Joseph Collins;  
 SARAH COLLINS (6) who married Stephen Atwood;  
 MARTHA ATWOOD (7) who married Seth Nickerson;  
 JONATHAN NICKERSON (8) who married Bethiah Young;  
 JONATHAN NICKERSON (9) who married Sally Miller;  
 AMOS NICKERSON (10) who married Mary Abbie Emery;  
 WILLIAM EMERY NICKERSON (11) who married Nellie Rosalie Partridge.

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SARAH PRENCE (3) who married Jeremiah Howes;  
 SARAH HOWES (4) who married Daniel Mayo;  
 DANIEL MAYO (5) who married Mary Mulford;  
 ANNA MAYO (6) who married Barnabas Young;  
 BETHIAH YOUNG (7) who married Jonathan Nickerson;  
 JONATHAN NICKERSON (8) who married Sally Miller;  
 AMOS NICKERSON (9) who married Mary Abbie Emery;  
 WILLIAM EMERY NICKERSON (10) who married Nellie Rosalie Partridge.

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