

## William Spencer



No Picture Available

Born: 11 Oct 1601 Stotfold, ENG

Married: Agnes Harris

Died: 4 May 1640 Hartford, CT

Parents: Gerard Spencer & Alice Whitbread

### Spencer Family Migration

*Added by [rkvanwyk](#) on 10 Oct 2008*

*Originally submitted by [cmclain81](#) to [Charles Lee McLain Family Tree](#) on 9 Feb 2008*

The Spencer migrated without their parents. There were four brothers and one sister that migrated. Williams, Thomas, Michael, Gerald and their sister, Elizabeth Spencer Tomlin about 1631- 1634. William and Thomas founded Hartford, Connecticut. William married Agnes Harris which was a direct royal descent. Gerald first settled in Cambridge until 1637. He moved to Lynn, Massachusetts in 1637 and lived there until 1660, when he moved to Hartford, Connecticut. He then founded Haddam, Connecticut in 1662, and lived there for 23 more year until he died in 1685. He was made a Freeman in 1637, Ensign of the Lynn Train Band in 1636, Deputy from Haddam to the General Court from 1674 - 1680. He died in 1685 in Haddam at the age of 71. His first wife was Hannah one source says it was Hills.

Information from online research at Ancestry.com

For more on William Spencer we copy freely from the following standard works:

*Genealogical Dictionary of New England*, Vol. I, p. 345; Vol. IV, p. 150, etc.

*Genealogical Notes*, by Dr. Goodwin, 1856, pp. 275, 310.

*History of Ancient Windsor*, Stiles, Vol. 2, pp. 194 and 566.

*Massachusetts Collections*, Vol. I, p. 265.

*Holmes' Directory of Ancestral Heads of New England*.

*Cutter's Genealogy and Family History*, p. 265.

From the above we deduce the following: "William Spencer Cambridge, Massachusetts, brother of Thomas and Jared Spencer, was much betruusted; he was one of the committee appointed May 9, 1632, at a meeting of the whole people to confer with the assistants about raising a common stock which soon led to the erection of a House of Representatives, of which he was from the first, in 1634, a member and continued to serve until 1638.

"He was one of the committee on fundamental laws in 1638.

"He moved to Hartford, Conn., in 1638 and was immediately selected as one of the Representatives in that colony. Along with Mr. Wyllis and Mr. Webster, he was selected to prepare the first Code of Laws for Connecticut.

"He died in 1640 and in his will, probated March 4, 1641, he partitioned his estate as follows: To his son, Samuel, one third; to his widow, Agnes, one third; to his daughters, Sarah and Elizabeth, one third.

"After the death of William Spencer, his widow, Agnes, married William Edwards and so was the happy instrument of diffusing that illustrious name, of which Farmer's manuscripts say a great number had graduated at the New England Colleges."

The last sentence in the above quotation suggests a new line of interest. A careful investigation brings out the fact that Agnes Spencer was the maternal ancestor not only of the Aldermans, as we shall see, but also of the great Edwards family of Connecticut and New England. First, her son, Richard Edwards, by her second marriage, then her grandson, Timothy Edwards, then Timothy's son, Jonathan Edwards, Senior, and his son, Jonathan Edwards, Junior, attained international fame. This Edwards family gave to the world scholars, authors, ministers, college presidents and professors, from which it may be readily seen that Agnes Spencer-Edwards was indeed the happy instrument of bringing diffused blessings to our country.

While William Spencer was still in Massachusetts he was appointed by Governor Winthrop to serve as judge in Ipswich and Newberry in order that he might hold the courts in those precincts. William Spencer was one of the founders of "The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston," which has continued to be the oldest military organization in America. He was appointed by Governor John Winthrop with four others to raise a military company for the protection of the people of the colony.

An inventory of the estate of William Spencer, taken after his death, reveals the fact that he had accumulated a large fortune for those times. The inventory may be found fully itemized in the public records at Hartford. For more on the activities of William Spencer, see Appendix, Item No. 2.



**WILLIAM SPENCER (pg 36)***ORIGIN:* Stotfold, Bedfordshire*MIGRATION:* 1631*FIRST RESIDENCE:* Cambridge*REMOVES:* Hartford 1639*CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:* Admission to a Massachusetts Bay church (probably Watertown) prior to 4 March 1632/3 implied by freemanship.*FREEMAN:* 4 March 1632/3 [MBCR 1:367].*EDUCATION:* Cambridge town clerk, 1632-1635 [WP 4:74-75].*OFFICES:* Deputy from Cambridge to the General Court, 9 May 1632, 4 March 1634/5, 3 March 1635/6, 8 September 1636, 18 April 1637 (as "Lieut. Spencer"), 17 May 1637, 26 September 1637, 12 March 1637/8 [MBCR 1:95, 135, 164, 178, 191, 194, 204, 220].

Observer to committee on bounds between Cambridge & Watertown, 4 March 1634/5 [MBCR 1:139]. Committee on bounds between Boston & Charlestown, 28 March 1636 [MBCR 1:162]. Committee to "set out bounds of the new plantation above Charles Ryver," 3 March 1635/6 [MBCR 1:166]; report of above committee rendered on 13 April 1636 [MBCR 1:173]. Committee on colony debts, 8 September 1636 [MBCR 1:179, 184]. Committee on compensation of soldiers who made the expedition to Block Island, 9 March 1636/7 [MBCR 1:188]. Committee to "view Shaushin, & to consider whether it be fit for a plantation," 1 August 1637 [MBCR 1:200]. Committee on "plantation upon the river which runs to Concord," 20 November 1637 [MBCR 1:210]. Committee on codification of laws, 12 March 1637/8 [MBCR 1:222].

Cambridge town clerk, 1632-1635 [CaTR vi]. Committee to "survey the town lands and enter [mutilated] a book appointed for that purpose," 3 February 1634/5 [CaTR 12]. On 27 October 1636 "Newe Towne presented a book of their records under the hands of Will[iam] Andrews, constable, John Beniamin, & Will[iam] Spencer" [MBCR 1:182]. A Cambridge general meeting ordered that "William Spencer and Georg[e] Steele should measure all the meadow ground undivided belonging to the Newtowne" and allot "to every man his proportion," 20 August 1635 [CaTR 12]. Cambridge selectman, 23 November 1635 [CaTR 13].

Lieutenant of the Cambridge train band, 9 March 1636/7 [MBCR 1:190]. Charter member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company [HAHAC 1:40; MBCR 1:250-51].

Deputy for Hartford to Connecticut General Court, 11 April 1639, 8 August 1639, 10 September 1639, 16 January 1639/40, 9 April 1640 [CCCR 1:27, 29, 34, 41, 46].

Surveyor of "armor and other military provisions" for Hartford, 8 August 1639 [CCCR 1:30].

*ESTATE:* Granted three roods for a cowyard in Cambridge, 5 August 1633 [CaTR 5]. Granted "the swamp on the other side the creek," 2 March 1633/4 [CaTR 7]. Granted "that corner of ground by Joseph Myat's between the swamps," 1 December 1634 [CaTR 10]. Received a proportion of 2½ in the undivided meadow, 20 August 1635 [CaTR 13]. In the list of houses in Cambridge, William Spencer was credited with two in the Westend, 8 February 1635/6 [CaTR 18].

In the Cambridge land inventory on 1 May 1635 William Spencer held at least eleven parcels (entry partially mutilated): "one dwelling house with other outhouses and a garden and backside, about one rood"; "more in old field about five acres and a half"; "more on small lot hill about three acres"; "more in the neck about seven acres"; "more in Long Marsh about fifteen acres"; "more in Great Marsh about nine acres"; "more in the Great Marsh about two acres"; "more in the Great Marsh about two acres"; "[mutilated] west end one house with other [mutilated] houses garden backside and other [mutilated] about three acres"; "more by the pine swamp about six acres"; and "more in Cowyard Row about one rood" [CaBOP 5-6].

On 1 April 1636 William Spencer of New Towne acknowledged that he had sold to Nicholas Danforth his right in three and a half acres [CaBOP 38]. In an undated record, Symon Crosby purchased from William Spencer one house with three acres of ground [CaBOP 58].

On 20 November 1637 "[t]hose that are to view the new plantation of Watertowne are to view the place which Mr. Spencer desireth, & if it be convenient, to certify the Court" [MBCR 1:211]. On 2 May 1638 "Mr. Willi[am] Spencer is granted 300 acres of ground beyond Concord, by the Alewife Ryver" [MBCR 1:228].

In the Hartford land inventory in 1640 William Spencer held six parcels: two acres "on which his dwelling house now standeth with other outhouses, yards & gardens ... which he bought of John Halles"; sixty-three acres in the Middle Oxpasture "part whereof he bought of Edward Stebing & another part he bought of William Kelse & another part thereof he bought of Thomas Spenser"; four acres in the Pine Field "which he bought of John Halles" (annotated "sold [to] Jno. Moris"); ten acres in the Pine Field "part whereof he bought of Edward Stebing & another part of John Beddell"; eleven acres and two roods of meadow and swamp in the North Meadow; and ten acres of meadow and swamp on the east side of the Great River (annotated "mead sold [to] Calsey" and "swamp sold [to] Barding & Pantry") [HaBOP 352-53].

In his nuncupative will, dated 14 March and 4 May 1640 and 4 March 1640/1, William Spencer bequeathed that

the estate that he hath in New England, and also that which may come to his wife hereafter, that is, any part of his wife's portion if any do come, that all the estate be divided as followeth: ...to my wife one third part of all my estate ... to my son Samuel one third part ... to my two daughters Sarah and Elizabeth one third part ... the children to be brought up with the improvement of the whole estate that I leave both to my wife and children. Also my mind is my Cousin Matthew Allyn, my brother John Pratt and John Taylcoate, that these three parties or any two of them shall have the oversight of my estate, and in case that they shall see in their



judgement the estate to be wasted, that they shall have power to take the children and their portions [blank] for their bringing up, and to pay the children their portions that remain at the several times above written. Also my mind is that my wife shall have no power to alienate or make sale of my house or any part of my land I leave without the consent of two of the parties that are to oversee my estate [CCCR 1:449-50; [Manwaring 1:36-37](#)].

The undated "inventory of the estate of the said Will[iam] Spenser" totalled £67 12s. 2d. in moveables; there were "several debts ... owing in the Bay, the which the most of them are denied, and those that are confessed are very doubtful whether much of it will be paid, being in the hands of some of his kindred that are poor." The supplement to this inventory also included "the house and houselot containing about 2 acres, with some outhouses; also several parcels of upland lots, to the value of [blank] 74 acres, as may appear by the records to that purpose, whereof, besides the right which he had in any other lands to be divided"; "also, eleven acres of meadow and swamp, lying in the North Meadow"; "also, one parcel lying on the east side of the Great River, containing ten acres"; "also, there is land yet remaining at Concord in the Bay, which while he lived he esteemed at £120" [CCCR 1:450-51].

It was agreed that if any of the children died before they came of age, "the survivor & survivors shall receive it at the time when it should have been paid to the deceased, if he or she had lived, and if they all die before the said time, then it shall be paid to Agnes Edwards or her lawful attorney of the said Agnes, the mother of the said children" [[Manwaring 1:37](#)].

The estate of William Spencer, deceased, was brought to court 24 June 1650 and, "with the information of the overseers in the presence of Thomas Spencer, brother to the said William, with the consent of the wife of William Edwards, they do judge that £30 is as much as the estate here will bear to be sequestered for the use of the children, which is to be paid to them according to the will of the said William Spencer ... provided also that whatsoever shall be paid here or in England of any estate due to the wife of the said William Spencer while she was the wife of William Spencer, or that shall come from Concord, two thirds thereof shall be and remain to the proper use of the children aforesaid" [ [RPCC 85-86](#)].

**BIRTH:** Baptized Stotfold, Bedfordshire, 11 October 1601, son of Gerrard and Alice (Whitbread) Spencer [ [TAG 27:162](#)].

**DEATH:** Hartford after 4 May 1640 [[Manwaring 1:36-37](#)] and probably before 22 May 1640 [ [Aspinwall 141](#)].

**MARRIAGE:** By about 1633 Agnes Harris, baptized Barnstaple, Devonshire, 6 April 1604, daughter of Bartholomew and Elizabeth (Collamore) Harris. She married (2) Hartford 11 December 1645 William Edwards [[TAG 63:33-45](#)].

**CHILDREN:**

i ELIZABETH, b. say 1633; m. (1) by about 1650 William Wellman [[TAG 37:7-9](#)]; m. (2) by 1672 Jacob Joy (Jacobus gives the date of marriage as 23 May 1671 and McCracken as 23 May 1672, in Killingworth, but the Killingworth vital records do not contain an entry for this event [[TAG 37:7-9](#); [FOOF 1:348](#)]).

ii SARAH, b. about 1635 (of full age [18] in the year 1653 [[Manwaring 1:37](#)]); m. by 1656 John Case [[TAG 34:66-69](#)].

iii SAMUEL, b. about 1639 (of full age [21] in the year 1660 [[Manwaring 1:37](#)]); m. by about 1668 Sarah \_\_\_\_\_ (estimated b. of first child [[TAG 27:165-66](#)]).

**ASSOCIATIONS:** William Spencer was brother of THOMAS SPENCER of Cambridge and Hartford, and of Michael Spencer and Gerard Spencer of Lynn [[TAG 27:79-87, 161-65](#)].

**COMMENTS:** William Spencer appeared on a list of early inhabitants of Cambridge, apparently dated 1632 [[CaTR 2](#)].

On 29 November 1638 William Spencer wrote from Hartford to John Winthrop asking why Winthrop had made suggestions regarding arguments to support the union between the Bay and "the plantations here," and yet when men came to treat with him regarding it, many using the very arguments suggested by Winthrop at Spencer's prompting, all were met with "a prejudice in the spirits of some men" and forced to go away unsatisfied [[WP 4:74-75](#)].

On 4 July 1648 Aspinwall certified "copies of five letters unto Edmund Angier - 3 letters from John Talcot & John Pratt, one dated 22 May 1640, another August 10th 1640, & another 15th June 1641, a fourth from Anne Spenser dated 2 May 1642 and the fifth from W[illia]m Edw[ards] no date. Also unto a copy of a writing under W[illia]m Spenser's name dated 3 July 1639. Also to a letter [of] attorney from Ed[mund] Angier to Joseph Mayet dated 5 July 1648" [[Aspinwall 141](#)]. From the chronology and the persons involved, it would seem that these letters pertained to the estate of William Spencer in England.

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE:** In 1988 Douglas Richardson ably demonstrated the identity of Agnes Harris, wife of William Spencer [[TAG 63:33-45](#)].

Information from online research at: [Ancestry.com](#)