

The truth about William Sherwill, the Conestoga Fur Trader, as of June 2011, at least until another document is found changing everything. Copyright June 2011 LaRae Free Kerr M Ed

When I started this project, my family group record on William Sherrill the Fur Trader, gave his wife as Mary Egford/Higford with a question mark. His proven children were Mary, Margery, William Jr and Adam. Children with question marks were Avington, two Samuels born in different years, John, Ute/Uriah/Yont, David, Amanda and Reuben. Perusing available records left a streamlined, solid family as shown below.

After carefully reading this document, if you have any true sources that support, refute or enhance the following information, I would appreciate your sharing them with me. Please do not quote "family sources," "ancestry.com's familytree [unless there are real sources]," "new.familysearch.org [unless sources are attached]" or any other cut-and-paste resource, for they are not sources. But do share court and land records, family Bibles, diaries, letters, etc. To follow our discoveries about the Sherrills, Perkins and Frees, please follow the blog at www.alfreefamily.blogspot.com . You may email me at itsallrelatives@sfcn.org .

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Further, I reserve the right to modify anything and everything in this document as you send me new information, and as Jill and I find new information. Look for the book: the working title is *American Ancestors and Descendants of Mary Pennington and Andrew Free*.

Names are funny things. No matter how unusual the name you are searching may be, there will be other people with the same or similar names in the same or similar time periods and places. Remember, too, please, that all spelling must be done phonetically. The surname Sherrill has been found in varying documents as well as sometimes in the same documents spelled in these and other ways: Sherrill/Shirwell/Sherrel/Sherwill/Shearwell/Sherel/Sherett/Cheril/Sherville/Sheral/Shurl/Cherral/Sarill/Sherrerd, pronounced Sherry in parts of England.

Documents are funny things, too. Thousands of records are destroyed each year, yet many make it through the natural disasters, the mice and rats, the burned house or courthouse, the trips to the dump, and end up in a library or on a microfilm or book or even onto the Internet.

Consequently, the appearance of just one record can change all that a family believed about their family heretofore. Such is the case with the William Sherrill pedigree. Please remember these three things as you peruse the following much abbreviated information: no name is unique; names must be read phonetically; and with the advent of digital technology, "lost" or at least previously unfound, ancient records are coming to light.

Why Long Island, New York's Samuel Sherrill [identified as Shipwreck Sam] is not William Sherrill, the Conestoga Fur Trader's, father.

A better question than this is: Why did anyone think Samuel Sherrill was William Sherrill's father in the first place?

It was because of proximity. Those wonderful early researchers who gave us such great genealogical heritages had very few records to work with, so their modus operandi was to look around for the closest person with the same or similar last name. Still works today, but it must be accompanied by records, and it must fit known dates.

In addition, consider that genealogy rule that if you can't prove a relationship, attempt to disprove it. The wills of Samuel Sherrill of Long Island and his wife disproved any connection to William.

Neither Samuel Sherrill's will nor that of his wife mentioned a son named William Sherrill. In fact, the only son mentioned is Recompence. There were some daughters.

Sometimes sons are not mentioned in probates because they have already received their inheritances or are cut off. My Perkins line has examples of both. Still there are other records connecting the father and son. In the case of Samuel and William there are no connecting records found thus far, not one. Further, William lived in Maryland and just across the border into Pennsylvania while Samuel lived in Long Island, New York.

In Hudson-Mohawk Genealogical and Family Memoirs, Vol III, edited by Cuyler Reynolds and published in 1911, in an article titled "The Sherrill Line," p 1065, it says "Recompence, only son of Samuel and _____(Parsons) Sherrill, was born in Easthampton, Long Island, about 1678 [underlining is my own]." So for at least one hundred years, Sherrill researchers have known Samuel was NOT William's father.

Wanda Clark, in her Sherrill Saga, p 17 in my version, says, "There is no doubt that William Sherrill, the Conestoga fur trader pre-dated the Long Island Samuel Sherrill." Therefore, Samuel Sherrill could not be William's father just simply because he was too young to be.

Further, there were other Sherrills in the Americas: Samuel Shewell, Samuel Share, John Sherle, Thomas Shirle, Thomas Sherwill, William Sherrill/Sheriff who immigrated in 1659, for example, from Virginia to New Hampshire to list just a few. [See Clark, Wanda L. The Sherrill Saga. Photocopy of rough draft in possession of LaRae Free Kerr, p/s 27. McAlester, OK. 1 Jan 1987. p 26. and Shoemaker, Jill. June Research, email 17 June 2011 10:48 pm. See also Sherrill immigrants/emigrants on Ancestry.com](#)

A new-found record seems to indicate William Sherrill, the Fur Trader, was the emigrant and is not the son of any colonial Sherrill by any spelling or domicile.

Why neither Maryland Samuel Sherrill is the Fur Trader's father.

If proximity sent early researchers into Long Island, New York in search of William Sherrill's parents, it sent some researchers even closer to William's domicile when a Samuel Sherrill was found in Maryland itself. One of William Andrew Sherrill's thousands of Sherrill note cards said: "Samuel Sherrill d. Charles County, Md 1676. B. England 1635. Married an Ashbrook. Supposed to be the father of William Sherrill. B. Charles County, Maryland, 1675." [Clark, Saga. P 36](#) Please note there is NO source for this information and neither of those great Sherrill researchers, William Andrew Sherrill or Wanda L Clark credit it, though in his thoroughness, Bill recorded it. The source for the death year is shown below.

Nor is there any known document connecting William Sherrill to this Samuel Sherrill of Charles County, Maryland. Records indicate this Samuel Sherrill was in Charles County, MD in 1663. Deed records then jump to 1674-1677 when this Samuel was dead. But none of these deeds, nor the estate appraisement seem to mention wife or children. [Clark, Saga pp 23-25](#). See notes below:

Samuel Sherrill

1670 9 Aug. Samuel Serrell of Charles Co also Samuel Serell of Petuxent River in Calvert Co MD was pd 1000 lbs tobacco to cut and mail 14 foot logs.

1673. Samuell Sherrell sells Ashbrooks Rest to John Boyden

1674, 6 Nov. Samuell Sherrell of Charles Co MD? Swears about William Lewis

1676 24 Jul. Benjamin Roger (Roser?) adm his estate. Samuel Sherrill is of Charles, MD.

1678 13 Apr Robert Benjar of Baltimore Co MD administers Margaret's estate.

Why would these non-related people administer the estates of Samuel and Margaret, his wife, if they had living children? Especially since William Sherrill, the Fur Trader, was nearby? [Kerr, LaRae Free. Notes and Timeline. Personal Ancestral File under Samuel Sherrill d 1676 Md.](#)

Still another Samuel Shewell/Showell can be found in Maryland records, in Somerset County. This one's wife was Mary; his children were Johnathan, Mary and Charles, and his will was drawn 18 Apr 1695 and proved 13 Oct 1698 through 18 Jul 1713. [Clark, Saga. P 38](#). No known record connects this man to William Sherrill, the Fur Trader.

CONCLUSION: No records connect William Sherrill the fur trader to any Samuel Sherrill. Both the Long Island, NY Samuel Sherrill and the Somerset County, MD Samuel Sherrill were too young to be William's father. The Charles County, MD Samuel Sherrill is of an age where he might be William Sherrill's father, but it appears from both his and his wife Margaret's estates, that there were no children. No document has yet been found connecting this Samuel Sherrill with William Sherrill the Fur Trader.

Why William Sherrill the Fur Trader's wife is not Margaret, Rudisil or Reutzel.

The bottom line on William Sherrill's wife is that she is not mentioned in any record found thus far. That William did have children he claimed as his own and met the requirements to be considered "English" therefore qualifying for land ownership and taxation, can be found in Maryland and Pennsylvania land records where he deeded parcels to his sons Adam and William Jr. The much litigated Margery Sherrill is listed as William Jr's sister in court records. Mary Sherrill's daughter is given as the granddaughter of William Sheerwill, servant, in the parish registers. But there is no evidence of marriages or wives for William, though obviously there was at least one. So for the time being, his wife must be called by that ubiquitous and meaningless name, Mrs. William Sherrill.

To understand why neither the forename Margaret nor the surname Rudicil or Reutzel can belong to her [except coincidentally and outside the following parameters], consider the source of those names.

First, the Long Island Samuel Sherrill's wife, first name unknown by the editor, Reynolds, of the entry above, has often been given as Margaret Parsons. When Sherrill researchers were compelled to remove "Shipwreck" Samuel Sherrill from their pedigree charts as William's father for lack of evidence, they might have forgotten to also remove Samuel Sherrill's wife as his mother. Hence the name Margaret Parsons stayed on some records even though she almost certainly never met the William Sherrill she was supposed to have birthed.

Second, there is a Margaret Therrell/Sherrell/Thurrold, who left a will mentioning daughters and a grandson, nothing concerning a son William, yet her name comes up as a possible mother to William. See Clark, Wanda L. *The Sherrill Saga. Photocopy of rough draft in possession of LaRae Free Kerr, p/s 27. McAlester, OK. 1 Jan 1987. Pp 8, 18-22.*

Third, William Sherrill Jr's wife's name was listed as Margaret in various deeds. He was not always, nor even often called Jr in the land records, and it is difficult to tell which William Sherrill is which. However, deeds make it clear that the wife of William Sherrill, the son of William Sherrill the Indian trader, was named Margaret.

Fourth, someone once read the name Samuel as Rudil in one or more early documents – old cursive is often confusing, and then someone assumed it was his mother's surname; hence Rudisil. As near as I can tell, the supposition about Rudil began in 1957. However, the Rudicel family claims no one by that surname was in the Americas early enough to be William Sherrill's wife. In other words, and I really hate to say this, but someone made Margaret Rudicell up. She did not exist.

Fifth, the William Sherrill 1702 deed transferring land from William Price to William Sherrill contains information about Margaret, but it is Margaret Price that is named, not Margaret Sherrill.

And finally, William Sherrill's known daughters are Mary and Margery, a shortening of Margaret. Surely one of those daughters would be named for their mother? Perhaps. But in the old Scotch-Irish naming pattern, the first daughter would be named for the mother's mother, and the second for the father's

mother. So it is more likely that their mother's mother was named Mary, and their father's mother was named Margery; the latter turns out to be true.

Some have claimed a Margaretha Reutzel, daughter of Elias, as his wife. However, the original researchers for the family of Elias do not list a daughter named Margaret or any of its variations. All of the children of this family have complete birth [chr?] dates from church records [?] in Wolferborn, Germany, except the oldest child, Margaretha,. She has been plunked in with only a birth year and the place as Cecil, MD. Further, the ship that brought them is supposed to be the US Butler. The US didn't even exist at that time. The only source is oneworldtree at ancestry. Of course, oneworldtree is not a source. After checking this family, I am convinced Margaretha Reutzel is another person who never did exist.

The earliest Rudisil I noticed as I worked on this information was: A Philip Rudisili appears in Anson Co NC in a 28 Jun 1756 deed. Clark, Saga, p 64. Thank you, dear Wanda Clark, for your hard work.

Two great Sherrill researchers have independently discounted both Samuel Sherrill and Margaret Rudisil [by any spelling] as William Sherrill's parents as shown by this quote: "This Ermington Parish family is the strongest candidate so far for our William, the conestoga fur traders line. Bill Sherrill of Arizona had discounted Samuel Sherrill whom he called 'Sinking Sam' as our ancestor & in his book on Jacob which he put out just before he died he removed Margaret Rudisil as William's wife...Note that I show no wife's name [for the fur trader] & show only 4 children as proven William Jr, Adam Sr; Margeret Perkins; & Mary Perkins – and while I list Wm Sherwell & Margery Upright as his parents I show this as 'not proven.'" [Clark, Wanda. Letter to Helen VanderBeek dated 13 Sep 1991 from McAlester, OK. In p/s 27, handwritten, tan lined paper.](#)

Why William Sherrill's wife is not Mary Egford/Higford [or sometimes given as Gregory].

The William Sherrill/Mary Egford marriage took place 11 May 1693 in Exeter, Devon, England. When William Sherrill the Fur Trader married about 1692, he would have just completed working off a prison sentence plus, perhaps, a transportation fee [see book text for explanations]. It is almost impossible to conceive that he might return back to England to get a wife in view of his disgrace as a prisoner, his lack of funds, as well as the fact that Exeter is some little distance from Ermington/Modbury. Further, as shown elsewhere, his wife's name is not given in any known new world document.

Why Rudil Sherrill is not William Sherrill's son.

The name Rudil was a misreading of Samuel in one of the old records. There never was a Rudil; he couldn't be anyone's son because he did not exist.

Wanda Clark wrote on page 8 of her Sherrill Saga: "Adam, Rudil and Samuel join William Sherrill in Lancaster County tax records in 1720." Her hand-written note in the margin states: "read original microfilm - this appears to be a mis-reading of Samuel." This is the complete quote.

Why Samuel may be William Sherrill's son.

A Samuel, much younger than the one listed above, may be William's son just because he is in the same tax lists in Conestoga Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania with William, William [Jr] and Adam from about 1719-1721. Samuel is NOT listed in known William Sherrill deeds as a son or anything else. He does pay a considerably bigger tax than William, William Jr or Adam. He might be an "orphan" Sherrill. Because surnames are just not that unique, quite often someone with the same or a similar surname will appear in the middle of a conclave of the same name.

However, he did seem to disappear from Conestoga Township about the time William and Adam did, while someone of that name appeared in North Carolina, not necessarily with members of this family. Some good hard research needed here. See below.

Why the Lancaster County, PA Samuel Sherrill may not be William Sherrill's son.

Two entries in the Lancaster County, Conestoga Township, PA tax list show a Samuel Sherrill: 1719-1720 he is found [at one time transcribed as Rudil, but the name is Samuel; there is no Rudil] assessed 30 pounds while William is assessed 20 pounds and Adam and William [Jr] are both assessed 12 pounds. Samuel and William both appear in the 1721 tax list. This Samuel would almost certainly be born by or before 1698. These are the only two entries for him. He does not appear, apparently, in any land or court record with William Sr, William Jr or Adam anyplace including VA and NC.

The problem with this tax list is that it is alphabetized, by the original tax taker or by later transcribers is unknown. Hence, we later researchers cannot tell if Samuel's property was near that of William, William and Adam or not. And that unknown proximity is all we have from which to ascertain a relationship. This Samuel does not appear in later records in VA or NC with this Sherrill family. Therefore, he should not be added as a child of William Sherrill at this time for lack of evidence.

Please note that the first documented Samuel Sherrill in the family is the son of Adam Sherrill. [Gray, William grandson of William and Sarah Sherrill Gray copied these entries in 1860., Old Sherrill Bible., Mrs Richard W Harris Rt 3 Oxford, NC donated these papers as part of the Allen/Laney Papers. Paine to H V/B 24 Jan 1979., copy in poss LaRae Free Kerr, 2969 East Somerset Drive, Spanish Fork, UT 84660.](#)

Why is Ute/Uriah/Yont Sherrill listed as a child of William Sherrill, the Indian trader?

The short answer is there is no Ute/Uriah b 1705, but the man of that name born 1728 is the son of Adam Sherrill. Adam's son Uriah was born 1 Mar 1728 and fits all known deeds. Further he is listed in the Sherrill Family Bible records as Adam's son.

After reviewing the literature about William Sherrill as well as newly noticed records, I have yet to find him even in the same place as a Ute/Uriah/Yont Sherrill. William Sherrill does have a grandson named Uriah b 1728, a son of Adam [some claim this Uriah is the son of Samuel]; plus a great grandson named Uriah b 1757, son of Jacob.

Why Avington/Abenton/Abraham Sherrill is not William Sherrill, the Fur Trader's, son.

Avington is another story. He does not appear in Pennsylvania records with the William Sherrill family. He does appear on the Catawba River with the Sherrills in North Carolina, meaning that he would have been, most likely, 21 or older by 1748, thus born before 1727. It is most likely he is a grandson of William. See the following deed abstract for more about Avington.

“Anson County, North Carolina Deeds, Vol A.

Page 103: 1 May 1752, WILLIAM SHERRILL, to his son ABBENTON SHERRILL...cattle other half to son in law JAMES ROBINSON...WILLIAM SHERRILL [X] [SEAL]. Wit: JOHN WODSON, JOHN CLARK, JAMES HUTCHINS.” [Abstract in Clark, Wanda, The Sherrill Saga, p 63.](#)

Important identifiers in this deed show that Abenton must meet these requirements:

1. He was born before 1731 – would probably be 21 or older in 1752 or the deed's language would have been different.
2. His father's name was William Sherrill
3. William Sherrill was alive in 1752
4. Half of William Sherrill's cattle went to his sister, via her husband James Robinson
5. There may not be other children in the family, since the cattle were divided into two herds only
6. William Sherrill lived in Anson Co NC in 1752

These criteria define the family of William Sherrill Jr thusly:

1. Avington Sherrill's birth is estimated at about 1730 in Virginia.
2. His father's name was William Sherrill [Jr]; his mother was, perhaps, Margaret Wilson [another Margaret!].
3. His father, William Sherrill, died 14 Jan 1774 in Sherrill's Fort, GA; he was killed by Indians. So he was alive in 1752, thus able to bequeath his children these cattle.

4-5. There may have been only the two children or the cattle would have been divided into smaller groups. [There are also reasons why this may not be true, but looking at the most obvious circumstance first can be helpful.] The family record I have of William Sherrill Jr shows only three children: Avington [with a middle name of William?], Catherine and a David. I have no data nor sources whatsoever for David. Catherine was married to James Robinson. It is entirely possible that the name James Robinson originated with this deed since I do not have a marriage record for Catherine. This family is not one of my main research families but one I gather data on only. Nevertheless, much of what I collect is primary.

7. Even though this William Sherrill Jr was with his father and brother Adam in Md and PA, there are deeds for him in Anson Co NC 1750, 1750, 1752, 1752, 1757, 1762. He and other family members later went to GA for a time where he was killed. [Clark, Saga. Pp 63-4.](#)

8. Deeds for James Robinson and Avington Sherrill, and Avington's wife Perhanna Sherrill can also be found in Anson Co NC. [Clark, Saga, pp 63-4.](#)

CONCLUSION: This Avington Sherrill is the son of William Sherrill, Jr.

Why David, Amanda and Reuben Sherrill are not William Sherrill the Fur Trader's children.

There is no evidence, no source, nada. These names were taken from a website that is fraught with errors, and though source names are scattered throughout they don't seem to bear any relationship to the information listed nearby.

Where did the other children come from?

Some family group records list as many as 11 children for William Sherrill, the Indian trader. I've looked hard for days without finding a single source that would make me add a name to the four known children given above. Further, I've seen no source of any kind for any of the other names. Where did they come from?

CONCLUSION: Only Mary, William Jr, Adam, and Margery should be listed as William Sherrill's and Mrs. William Sherrill's children. If future research warrants it, Samuel may eventually be included in the family.

So, as of June 2011, feel free to make the following changes to your William Sherrill the Fur Trader family group record.

1. Remove both Samuel Sherrill and any Margaret as his parents. The book will reveal those most likely to be his parents.
2. Remove Mary Egford/Higford/Gregory as his wife. Also remove any Margaret and any surname. Remember that Margaret Rudicil did not exist, at least as William Sherwill's wife. So don't even keep her in the database. The only name we have at this time is Mrs. William Sherrill [use any Sherrill spelling that works in your database.]

Margaretha Reutzel is another apparently made up name. This woman also does not appear to have existed.

3. Put the four known children in this order, if you choose to follow the traditional naming order: the first daughter will be Mary, named after her mother's mother [whose name we don't actually yet know and may never know]; the second daughter will be Margery, named after her father's mother [this turns out to be true]; the first son will be named William after the father's father [which is also true]; the second son will be named after the mother's father. However, in this case, Mary is named after her great grandmother on her father's side and Adam is named after his great grandfather on his father's

side. [Of course, it's always possible Mary and Adam are indeed their mother's parents' names.] However, there is a reason the mother's name was never used in any of the records: she died young; she was all or part Indian and could not legally be included; she was of another nationality whose names were difficult; she was not married to William Sherrill but a common law wife. Who knows?

The most likely answer is that she died young and therefore did not need to be named in the deeds and court records.

4. As I've done this analysis, it has become clear that Mary, William, Adam and Margery, who can all be documented as William Sherrill the Fur Trader's children with court and land records were born in MD and/or PA. The other children attributed to him appear only in VA or NC records where he may never have gone. This analysis has made it clear that those erstwhile children belong in other families. William Sherrill the Fur Trader may have never left PA/MD but died there.

This leaves only Samuel who is in Lancaster Co PA for only 1719-1721 with William, William Jr and Adam. If someone would like to pursue this Samuel to see if he is indeed a William Sherrill child, I would applaud the action. But no other Sherrill meets the requirements to be William Sherrill's offspring.

5. Move Avington to his proper position as the grandchild of William Sherrill and the son of William Sherrill Jr.

6. Delete David, Amanda and Reuben outright. They do not belong in this family if they even existed.

7. I find no document mentioning John Sherrill in the MD/PA area or the right time period. So delete him.

8. Match/merge Ute/Uriah/Yont Sherrill with the Uriah b 1728, son of Adam the pioneer or Uriah the son of Samuel the son of Adam the pioneer b 1757, depending on the event.

9. The Samuel Sherrill who has been assigned the birth date of 1709 had a brother Adam. So what other Sherrill family has sons named Samuel and Adam? That would be the family of Adam Sherrill and Elizabeth Biggen/Bigger or Corzine. The deed dates assigned to Samuel Sherrill b 1709 work even better for the Samuel Sherrill b 1725. So match/merge Samuel Sherrill whose birth is given as 1709 with Adam's son Samuel b 1 Oct 1725. The Samuel Sherrill b 1709 never did exist. All his references were actually for those of 1725.

10. Now, as to the remaining Samuel: If you want to leave him in the William Sherrill family, I recommend putting him last and adding a question mark to the database, so that you are always reminded that he may not be William's son.