

Notes from the "A Genealogical history of the Rehoboth Branch of the Carpenter Family in America" by Amos Carpenter, Amherst, Mass. 1898

Benjamin II was born in Northampton, MA, on Oct. 3, 1695. He was the fourth child of Benjamin and Hannah (Strong) Carpenter of Northampton. The family moved to Coventry, CT, in 1709. He married Rebecca Smith, Apr. 12, 1726 or 27, in Coventry, and they settled in North Coventry, near the Bolton line, on the lot of land lying between Isaac Keeney's and the West school house. (*This is on the west side of Cedar Swamp Road in Coventry*) He died May 1785. He was a Corporal in the 1st Co. 2nd Regiment French & Indian war. Buried Silver St. Cemetery. Rebecca died 3 Feb 1788 age 83.

They had 12 children.

Benjamin b 1727, d 1756

Don b 1730, d 1804

Elijah b 1732, d 1733

Mabel b 1734, d 1742

Joseph b & d 1736,

Esther b 1737, d 1827

Mary b 1739, d 1776

Comfort b 1740, d 1832

Lois b 1742, d 1808

Levy b 1744, d 1795

Ruben b 1744, d 1746

Jonathan b 1748, dy

The distance to the church in Coventry was so great that in 1739, Benjamin, his brother Jedediah and several of their neighbors, wishing to be in the (*adjoining*) town of Bolton, petitioned the people of that town to assist them in having the dividing line between the towns changed. This was not done, but about 1745, a church was built in North Coventry. The early records of the church have been lost, so that little is known about some of the families of this district.

Benjamin II was a corporal in the Connecticut militia during the French & Indian War, assigned to the 1st Company of the 2nd Regiment, under Col. Nathan Whiting. Benjamin and Rebecca died in North Coventry and were buried at the old Porter Farm Cemetery, now called the Silver Street Cemetery, just South of Route 44 in North Coventry. Interments were made in this cemetery from 1773 to 1810, when the people decided to abandon it because of the flooding of the graves by springs. By 1912, "the little cemetery was completely covered with trees, with a tangle of underbrush hiding the prostrate tombstones." However, the cemetery has been restored and now is in good repair.

One large double stone bears the following:

"In Memory of Mrs. Rebeckah wife of Mr. Benjamin Carpenter.

She died Feb 3rd 1788 in ye 83 Year of Her Age"

"In Memory of Mr. Benjamin Carpenter who departed this life

May y 29th A.D. 1785 in ye 90th Year of His Age"

Coventry Land Records, Volume 1 note Benjamin Carpenter receiving and selling land, including 15 acres on today's Main Street in 1709, 220 acres on today's Cedar Swamp Road in 1714, and several transfers among the family up to 1734. Some of the early deeds were to Benjamin's father (Also Benjamin)

In *The Early History of Coventry, Connecticut* by John Scarchuk (1995) there is mention of "a family named Carpenter" as part of the group of "the earliest white settlers of Coventry." Scarchuk also provides the following quote attributed to Mrs. William Minor [original source unidentified].

"However, a description of the old Connecticut Path, which was most probably followed by the residents of Northampton, when they migrated to Hartford and that area, indicates that it came through this territory, through the cut in Bolton, or Bolton Notch. This would, in my mind, give credence to the claims that a family named Carpenter made the first settlement here."

Scarchuk provides an excerpt from the minutes of the first town meeting held on 3 December 1714. These minutes identify that Thomas Root was elected Town Clerk and Benjamin Carpenter was elected an Inspector. Benjamin Carpenter (Sr.) and Thomas Root were brothers-in-law [married to sisters Hannah and Thankful Strong]. The sisters, Hannah [born 3 February 1671] and Thankful [born 15 April 1672], were married at Northampton, Massachusetts in a double wedding on 4 March 1691 to Benjamin Carpenter and Thomas Root respectively. It is believed that the lives of these two families remained close throughout their lifetimes.

Both the Carpenter and Root families lived in Northampton, Massachusetts prior to removing to Coventry, Connecticut. The vital records of both places identify that the eldest children in both families were born in Northampton as late as December 1707 [Elizabeth Carpenter born on 15 June 1707 and Miriam Root born on 24 September 1707] followed by the younger children in both families being born in Coventry as early as November 1709 [Ebenezer Carpenter born on 9 November 1709 and Ephraim Root born on 6 December 1709]. This would suggest that the Root and Carpenter families migrated from Northampton to Coventry sometime likely in 1708 or 1709. It is also possible that these two men had earlier visited the area while traveling between Northampton, Massachusetts and Hartford, Connecticut transporting trade goods, etc. Also, it is possible that these two men [along with some of their older sons] may have begun clearing land and building houses and barns prior to moving their large families from Northampton to Coventry around 1708. With their wives being sisters, it would seem logical that these two sisters could have provided support to one another while their husbands may have been away for extended periods of time on a common mission of preparing their new homes. Therefore, it is certainly possible that Benjamin Carpenter was the head of the "family named Carpenter" who was part of the group of "the earliest white settlers" who "made the first settlement" at Coventry.

The will of BENJAMIN CARPENTER signed Dec. 26, 1782, bequeathed:

"to his wife Rebecka, and to his sixth son Levi Carpenter, who now lives in the house with me, all my land, dwellings, and buildings I die possessed of in Coventry". "Unto Dan Carpenter, Elijah Carpenter, Comfort Carpenter, Levi Carpenter, Reuben Carpenter, Esther Porter, Lois Baker, the heirs of my son Benjamin and the heirs of my son Joseph Carpenter, deceased, and the children of my daughter Mary Jewett, (wife of Ichabod) all my moveable estate to be equally divided considering the heirs of my dead children as one of my children. My sons Dan and Levi Carpenter sole executors." Witnesses: Daniel Badger, Ichabod Marshall, Olive Pierce. Will probated: June 1785.

Windham Probate District (CT) Vol. 11, page 401 & 402 (1785)

BENJAMIN CARPENTER'S WILL (signed Dec 1782)

Know all men by these presents that I Benjamin-Carpenter of Coventry in the county of Windham and in the state of Connecticut, considering my infirm state as to my body & but yet in my right understanding have thought fit now while I am in my right understanding and memory to settle & dispose of worldly goods and estate by this my last will and testament in manner and form following and faithfully after my just debts and funeral charges are paid and discharged, I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Rebecca Carpenter one third part of my real and one third part of my movable estate, to use and improve for her own use and benefit so long as she remains my widow.

Item: I give and bequeath unto my sixth son Levi Carpenter the son that now lives in the house with me at this time, all the lands belonging to me in Coventry Second Society together with the incumbrance of the one third part heretofore mentioned to my widow and she deceased to be my widow then for him to have the whole free from all other incumbrances.

Item: I give and bequeath unto Dan, Elijah, Comfort, Levi and Reuben Carpenter and Esther Porter, Lois Baker and the heirs of my son Benj. Carpenter dec. the heirs of Joseph Carpenter dec. and the children of my daughter Mary Jewett dec. all my movable estate that I die possessed of to be equally divided between them, considering the heirs of my dec. children each family of them, as one of my children now living, for them to use and improve for their own use.

Finally, I do hereby make, constitute and appoint my said son Dan Carpenter and my said son Levi Carpenter to be my sole executors of this my last Will and testament, who shall be paid out of my estate for their charge and troubles and I do hereby solemnly revoke make null & void all other wills, testaments and bequests by me heretofore made, ratifying and allowing this and no other to be my last Will & Testament. In witness whereof the said Benjamin Carpenter have hereunto set my hand & seal this 26th day of Dec. A.D. 1782.

Signed, sealed, published & declared by the said Benjamin Carpenter as his last Will & testament in presence of us the Subscribers Daniel Badger, et al.

ORDER OF DISTRIBUTION EST. BENJAMIN CARPENTER

We the subscribers, being appointed by the Honorable Judge of probate for the district of Windham, to make distribution of the estate of Mr. Benjamin Carpenter, late of Coventry in said district described have done the same according to order as by said will described Viz. set out 16-1/2 acres of land to the widow, bounded as follows- butting north on land deeded to Levi Carpenter 160 rods, butting East on Amos Novey's land 16-1/2 rods; butting south on sd Carpenter's land given to him by will 160 rods, and West on a highway 16-1/2 rods; and also one third of the dwelling house, that is to say, one bedroom. The NW corner of sd house and one large room the west side of sd. house, that sd widow now lives in together with a privilege in the cellar & well of water near the said house with liberty to pass & repass as necessity shall require, & the long scaffold over the long stable & the short stable & so much of the bam floor as wanted to use; the sd. Levi Carpenter to have privilege to pass & repass over the land set out to the widow, to open his part of the barn, and also five pounds worth of moveables at inventory price it being the one third of sd. movables to be divided-- Set out to Dan Carpenter articles to the amount twenty shillings lawful money. Set out to each of Elijah Carpenter, Levi Carpenter, Comfort Carpenter, Reuben Carpenter, Lois Baker (2nd dau), Esther Cook (wd dau), heirs of Benjamin Carpenter, heirs of Joseph Carpenter, heirs of Mary Jewett dec (dau of Benj.), movables to the amount of twenty shillings lawful money. Amounting in the whole to the sum of £15.0.0 being the whole be divided according to orders given by the Hon. Judge before mentioned, Sept 13th 1794, Ephraim Kingsbury & Amaziah Rust under oath