

# THE BENEDICT FAMILY

At the end of this account is a list of references from which I derived information about the Benedicts. I wish to emphasize that the chief source was Genealogy of the Benedicts in America, published by Joel Munsell, 82 State Street, Albany, in 1870. From a copy of this rare book I made notes in the library of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin, July 1946. The author, Henry Marvin Benedict, early became an invalid. His enforced leisure allowed him time to become our chronicler and genealogist. Our Latin family motto, Benedictus qui patitur, which might be translated Blessed is he who endures, truly applies to this man, to whom we owe much for his labor in organizing and preserving the family records up to his time.

The introduction to Genealogy of the Benedicts in America, was written by Erastus C. Benedict, lawyer in the city of New York, author, and trustee of William's College, who had contributed to the work considerable material which he had himself accumulated. In speaking of this "interesting volume", Erastus Benedict wrote:

"When I say interesting, it will of course be understood that I am speaking only to our little family, on a family matter. The outside world will please consider that it is none of their affair, and we are not bound to interest them. We may get ourselves together in our own way and in our own time, and fill up our family record and album without apology. We have a right to be kindly affectioned one to another. We are blood relatives, and like all well constituted families we are a mutual admiration society and no one can complain while we keep our mutual admiration within our own little circle.... In all these dead generations we see ourselves. They are our family mirror."

The family name Benedict is of ancient origin. It is derived from the Latin Benedictus, meaning Blessed, and in various forms is common in those languages of modern Europe which are derived from the Latin. It was undoubtedly first applied as a designation of ecclesiastics, but after a time it became secularized and adopted as a family name of those who had no special connection with the church.

A family tradition states that the benedicts were anciently in the silk manufacturing district of France, and of Latin origin. They are believed to have been originally Huguenots who at some time in the persecutions had removed from France, first to Germany, then to Holland, and finally to England. As far back as the beginning of the sixteenth century, William Benedict is mentioned in the records of Nottinghamshire, England, as a man of substance and member of a family that for several generations had been resident in the same county.

Concerning the Huguenots, Ridpath's History of the World says, "The French Protestants known by this name had their origin in certain anti-Catholic influences antedating the Lutheran Reformation in Germany. The origin of the word Huguenot is unknown. It was first used by the Catholic writers as a term of reproach and contempt. The great Arian heresy had had in no other country a firmer foothold than in Southern France. Through the whole period of the Middle Ages the people of Languedoc were disposed to sympathize with the opposition to Rome.... A series of persecutions were instituted against the Huguenots, which for heartless cruelty, are hardly to be paralleled."

## THE BENEDICT FAMILY

The genetic value of the Huguenots is emphasised by Esther Forbes in Paul Revere and the World he Lived in (Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston 1942). They were France's "well-to-do, well behaved Protestant minority.... The Huguenots went to the Lowlands, to England, Switzerland, America. France had opened her own veins and spilt her best blood when she drained herself of her Huguenots, and everywhere, in every country that would receive them, this amazing strain acted as yeast - even upon Boston."

In the History of Waterbury, Connecticut, the author, Dr. Henry Bronson, says in referring to the Benedict family, "The early generations of this family are taken from a parchment record, now in possession of the family, which has the appearance of being an ancient document."

The following account of the early Benedicts is a summary of statements which I have read in a number of references.

The first Benedict of whom we have a definite record is William Benedict, who lived in Nottinghamshire, England, about A.D. 1500. He had an only son, William, who resided in the same shire. This William also had an only son named William. The third William was twice married. By his first wife he had an only son, Thomas, born in Nottinghamshire in 1617, who became the original Benedict immigrant to the New World, and the "pater omnium Benedictorum", - father of all the Benedicts. William's second wife was a widow, a Mrs. Bridgum.

Concerns the mother of Thomas, who apparently died when he was young, I have found no statements whatever in any of the extensive writings about the Benedict family. In the genealogy department of the library of the City of Denver, I took from a shelf a book called Genealogical Gleanings in England, by Henry F. Waters, A.M., published by the New England Historic Genealogical Society in 1901. The name of Benedict in the index referred me to Vol. 2, p. 1047, from which I copied the following will:

Henry Hunlocke the elder of Wingerworth, Derby, gentleman, 13 July 1610, proved 1 February, 1612. To be buried in the chancel of the parish church of Wingerworth, by Margaret my first and dear loving wife. To Edith my now wife my interest in the lease of the parsonage of Eaton in full extinguishment of all her right, title, interest, etc. of all my goods etc.; but my son Henry shall have and enjoy the rents etc. until the feast of St. Martin the Bishop in winter which shall be in the year of our Lord God 1611. I give and bequeath unto John Hunlocke, Denham Hunlocke and Thomas Hunlocke, the three sons of my cousin Thomas Hunlocke, twenty nobles apiece. To Henry Bywaters children, which he now hath by my cousin Alice, twenty shillings apiece. To John Boare his son, which he hath by my cousin Margaret, twenty shillings. To Richard Wharton his three children, which he hath by Catherine his now wife, twenty shillings apiece. To my cousin Raphe Crich his children twenty shillings apiece. To Christopher Hunlocke and to Edward Hunlocke, sons of my brother Christopher Hunlocke, twenty shillings apiece. To Isabell Dakyn her two children twenty shillings apiece. To Rose Hopkinsons daughter twenty shillings. To Thomas Caltons children, which he had by Grace Northedge, twenty shillings apiece. To Francis Brayelsford his children, which he had by Elizabeth Northedge, twenty shillings apiece. To my loving son Mr. William Benedicke

## THE BENEDICT FAMILY

forty shillings to buy him a ring for remembrance. To my daughter Ann Benedicke twenty pounds, at one and twenty years of age. To my son Henry Felles, twenty pounds at one and twenty. Elizabeth Willy of Chesterfield, widow. My brother Mr. Anthony Bradshawe his children. My cousin Exuperius Bradshaw. My cousin Ralph Clarke. Rosamond, Elizabeth, and Anne Markeham, three of my wife's daughters. Bedding my wife brought from Eaton. My son Henry to be executor and my brothers in law Mr. Godfrey Clarke and Master Anthony Bradshawe overseers.

I copied the above will because I think it likely that the Ann Hunlocke Benedicke referred to was the mother of Thomas. Since there had been three generations of Williams who were only sons, this William who was to buy a ring for remembrance was probably William the third. The name Benedict was variously spelled, even by members of later generations. Ann would have been a young wife in 1610, because she was not yet 21. Thomas was born in 1617, so as far as time goes, he may well have been the grandson of Henry Hunlocke. No mention is made of daughters in these early generations. There may have been none. It is interesting to note that Nottingham and Derby are neighboring counties in the central part of England, slightly north. Wingerworth appears to be about two miles south of Chesterfield, probably ten miles south of Sheffield, and close to the border of Nottinghamshire. I do not know exactly where in Nottinghamshire the Benedicts lived, but it is not at all impossible that William may have gone a few miles into the next county to get his wife. The fact that Henry Hunlocke, gentleman, requested burial in the chancel of the parish church may indicate that he was a clergyman.

About the early life of Thomas I have found nothing except that he was apprenticed to a weaver. When he became of age, he took his inheritance, whatever it was, and to escape the oppressions of King Charles and Archbishop Laud, exiled himself to America. According to family tradition, apparently verified, he was the only living representative of his family when he came to America in 1638. Upon the vessel in which he came to New England, in 1638, was a fellow passenger, Mary Bridgum, daughter of the widow who had been his father's second wife. Thomas and Mary were married soon after their arrival in Boston in 1638.

# THE BENEDICT FAMILY

Not many families can look back to a pair of ancestors with finer genetic qualities!

In Prominent Families of New York the following statement is made:

"In each successive generation of the Benedict family the bearers of the name have been distinguished by industry, intelligence, and success in practical matters, while among this number have been some who have attained eminence in public and professional life or in the higher ranks of business. During the Revolution members of the family were prominent and active patriots both in the army and in civil offices of honorable character. In fact, while the family is not as extensive as many of those who trace their descent from Puritan worthies of the early New England type, it has produced an unusually large number of men of the highest character and corresponding standing and influence in the community."

I have been pleased at discovering among the essential leaves on the sturdy branches of the Benedict tree a goodly number of fine flowers: soldiers, statesmen, writers engineers, editors, business executives, ministers, doctors, lawyers, teachers talented women. Salud!

It would be interesting to know about the young love of Thomas and Mary. We are not told whether or not anyone objected to Mary's sailing away toward the infant city of Boston and the raw new world about it. It is sure that the love which united the pair at the beginning kept them united to the end; and his Will, probably one of the last acts of his life, is full of evidences of thoughtful affection for his wife, his great concern seeming to have been to secure her comfort when he should be able to provide for it no longer. He died in his seventy-third year; she lived to be one hundred.

Erastus Benedict wrote:

"Our first American grandmother, who walked in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless, till she looked over the brow of a hundred years into the happy land, must not be omitted as the author of the first Benedict genealogy, and our first teacher of the moral lesson of family pride. Like an old chronicler she told the traditionary story of the family in England, and of its first generation here, to her grandson James, afterward one of the seven deacons of the seven churches.... He reduced the tradition to writing and in due time it passed from him, by a copy, to his grandson Abner, then a student in college, and afterwards the first clergyman of the family thence to me, his grandson. My inquiries showed that many copies of it were extant in the original form."

The above mentioned account of Beacon James Benedict, recorded in 1755, concludes as follows:

"All those were the children and grandchildren of our honoured predecessors, Thomas Benedict and Mary his wife who walked in the midst of their house with a perfect heart. They were strict observers of the Lord's day from even to even, and I think it say be said of them as it was of Zacharias and Elisabeth, that they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, and obtained a good report through faith. Their excellent example had a good effect, by the blessing of heaven, upon their children. He was made a deacon of the

# THE BENEDICT FAMILY

church at Norwalk, and used that office to the good satisfaction of that church to his death, which was in the 73d year of his age....

James Benedict

Kidgefield, March ye 14, 1755

I have not found a very satisfying description of the eight year old city of Boston to which Thomas and Mary came in 1638. In Crooked and Narrow Streets of the Town of Boston 1630-1822, John Josselyn is quoted as saying that in 1637 there were not many houses in Boston, among them two houses of entertainment called ordinaries. In 1664 the Royal Commissioners say: "Their houses are generally wooden, the streets crooked with little decency and no uniformity." Though there are many other descriptions of the town, this last one is more likely to be correct than those written in rosy colors.

Colonial records contain numerous references to the life and activities of Thomas Bennydick. He was a farmer, but he seems to have been seldom or never without some public employment. The offices of public trust hold by him wherever he lived indicate his ability, and the confidence and esteem he inspired in his community.

After living for a short time in the "Bay Parts," settled then for some eighteen years, Thomas and Mary sought the more thinly populated region of Long Island, then comparatively inaccessible from the mainland in winter. They made their home in Long Island for a number of years. Here their five sons and four daughters were born. In the New World there was no more of that business of generations of only sons! About 1640 they moved to Southold, Long Island, which was under the jurisdiction of New Haven. Thomas purchased a large tract of land there. In 1649 he purchased with three others a tract of land near Southold called Hassamamac, where he remained a while. Later he took his family to Huntington, where he owned land. On his own affidavit Thomas Benedict stated that he was a resident of Huntington in June 1657, and he was one of those appointed to exercise certain functions of government in that town. In 1662 the family moved to Jamaica, L.I. There in that same year Thomas was one of the founders of the first Presbyterian church in America. (I've seen conflicting dates about this.)

The Records of the Town of Jamaica, Long Island, New York, 1656-1751, contain a number of references to this ancestor of ours. For example:

At ye Town Meeting of December ye 12th 1662 it is voted & concluded upon by ye Town yt Goodman Benedick, Goodman Whitney & Daniell Denton shall lay out ye South Meadows as soon as ye can & to have 3rd an acre ffor their Labour.

December ye 3d 63: A Town Meeting called; Voted & agreed upon yt Goodman Benedick shall bee Lieutenant off ye Town. Further voted & concluded upon yt all ye inhabitants of this our Town shall pay towards ye Maintenance off ye Ministry according to what ye possesse:

Ffurther voted & concluded yt John Baylies lieutenant Benedick & Daniell Denton shall meet ye deputies off ye severall Towns to Agitate wt ym or act about such things as may bee for ye Generall good of ye Towns :

Ffrancis Ffinch chosen ffor Constable.

## THE BENEDICT FAMILY

In these early records Thomas Benedict is often referred to as "Goodman" Benedict. The dictionary says that a "Goodman" was a man of property who was of lower rank than that of gentleman. Make of it what you will.

On March 20, 1663, Thomas Benedict was appointed a magistrate by the Dutch Governor Stuyvesant.

When the little train band "exercised" on the plains at Jamaica, we cannot doubt that some of the Lieutenant's sons were in the ranks, while his youngest son, Daniel, with other boys, looked on with childish delight. Ten years later young Daniel volunteered for the "Direful Swamp Fight."

Thomas Benedict held the office of commissioner when the Dutch Governor Stuyvesant surrendered New York and its dependencies to the English under Col. Richard Nicolls. Gov. Nichols issued an order for an election, dated Feb. 8, 1664, at James Fort, N. Y., to the magistrates of the towns of Long Island to elect two delegates in each town, sober, able, and discreet persons, to meet at Hampstead on the last of February to enact "Good and Known Laws for the Inhabitants of Long Island." Thomas Benedict and Daniel Denton were chosen delegates from Jamaica. This was probably the first English legislature held in what is now the state of New York.

On the 26th of Sept., 1664, Benedict, Bailey, D'I Denton and others applied for liberty to settle at a place which is now Elizabethtown N.J., and the petition was granted. Thomas Benedict received a Lieutenant's commission in a foot company at Jamaica, from Gov. Nichols dated at Fort James in New York, April 7, 1665.

During the year 1665 Thomas Benedict removed to Norwalk in the colony of Connecticut, with his family. He had been honored and trusted both Dutch and English governors of New York, but he seems to have considered the new governor of New York a lineal representative of the persecuters who had driven the Puritans from the mother country. His heart always had been with the government of Connecticut, and to Norwalk he took all in whose veins his blood ran, including his oldest son Thomas, who had married Mary Messenger of Jamaica and had settled near his father.

In February 1666 Thomas Benedict was chosen town clerk and selectman of Norwalk. The office of town clerk he held many years at 20 shillings a year, and was deputy to the General Court in May 1670, and in 1675. He was listed among the 42 freemen of Norwalk in 1669. (Only the freemen were endowed with political franchises.) The office of deacon he held many years in the church at Norwalk, and "used the office to the satisfaction of the church until his death."

In 1669 Thomas purchased of Samuel Campfield his home lot, which had been granted to him by the town of Norwalk. At the session of the General Court in May, 1672, Richard Olmstead, Thomas Benedict, etc. "gave in their names for beginning a plantation neare the backside of Norwalke, and by their deputies desired the countenance of the court therein." The petition was granted, and a committee appointed "to make a plantation."

To sum up the usefulness of this man in the words of Erastus Benedict:

"He was the arbitrator of differences civilized and savage; the pacifier of the

## THE BENEDICT FAMILY

offended Indian Chief. He was an officer of the little train band of the neighborhood. He was a member of the legislative body to create and codify the system of law on the island after the conquest from the Dutch, and afterwards of the Colonial Legislature. He aided in the organization and sending out of little colonies to plant new neighborhoods. Entrusted with these functions by the voice and choice of his neighbors, whose entire confidence he enjoyed... His good sense and general intelligence, some scientific knowledge and his skill as a penman made him the recourse of his friends when papers were to be drafted, lands to be surveyed and apportioned, or disputes to be arbitrated. (His signature exists on a number of papers, deeds, etc.) It is evident that very general respect for his judgment prevailed and that trust in his integrity was equally general and implicit... Where the church records of any town in which he lived are preserved, they furnish abundant evidence of his seal and diligence in establishing and maintaining the public worship of God. Whether It was settling or supporting a minister, repairing the church edifice or building a new one, providing seats or allotting them, Thomas Benedict's name is almost certain to appear on the records in connection with it."

No record can be found that indicates the exact date of his death. His will was executed Feb. 28, 1690. An inventory of his estate in which he is described as "late deceased" was taken on the 18th of March in the same year. It is therefore quite certain that he died at Norwalk, aged 73, in the interval between these two dates.

The will of Thomas Benedict is recorded in Probate Records, 1689-1701, deposited in the Probate Office, Fairfield, Connecticut.

I, Thomas Bennidick of Norwalk, in ye County of Fairfield, in ye Colony of Connecticut, aged aboute 73 years, being weak of body, yet of perfect mind and memory, do make and declare this as my last Will and Testament.

Imprisis. I do commend my Soule into ye hands of my gracious God yt hath made it, and do give my body to ye Earth from whence it was, to be decently buried, in hope of a happy and gracious Resurrection at ye last day; As for my temporal Estate, I do despose of as followeth:

I do will and bequeath to my loveing wife Mary Bennidick my whole Estate, house and households, Lands, Cattle to use and despose according to ye controll and advice she, with my overseers afterwards mentioned, shall judge (e) most ( ) during ye Time of her naturall Life, and after ye decease if ye said Mary my wife, I do will and bequeath to my Sonn, Daniell Bennidick, my dwelling house barns and houseing, orchard and four ewes- ye whole of my homestead to be to him and his heirs, to have and to howld forever.

I do will and bequeath my Sonn, John Bennedick, my calve pasture Lot- he to pay to my grandson Thomas Slauson, ye Son of my daughter, Elizabeth Slasson, ye sum of ten pounds - which I give him as a legacy in time convenient.

I do also give to my said Son, John Bennedick one third part of my Sticky plaine Lott, which is half broken up. I also bequeath to him ye part of salt meadow lying by ye bridge at ye Indian Feild. Also, unto him, I bequeath eight acres of upland laid out above ye Long Swamp beyond ye New feild- All these

# THE BENEDICT FAMILY

lands to be to him and his heirs forever.

I do will and bequeath to my son, James Bennedick, my Long Lot of Salt Meadow- over ye River- lying between Keloge and Bets- I do also bequeath to ye said James, my son, half my fruitfull Spring Lot- ye Lyeth sideing by ye meadow, provided ye said James shall pay to my Grandchild Elizabeth Slausson, ye sum of five pounds, in time convenient, the afforesaide Land to be James and his heirs forever.

I do will and bequeath to my grandchild Thomas Bennedick, one 3d part of my Sticky plaine Lot which he hath in part improved and is in part unbroken. I also bequeath to ye sd Thomas, my second division of meadow called Mamathemans- the lands to be to him and his heirs forever.

I do will and bequeath to my Grandchild Samuell Benedict, ye other half of my fruitfull Spring Lot lying next to Nathaniel ( ) I do also bequeath to ye sd Samuell a small parcel of meadow which is salt ( ) Kellogg's Swamp runs through- also one 3d part of my sticky plaine Lot on ye (side) I have broken up. I do also bequeath to my sd grandchild Samuel, half of my comonage which is 50 pounds; and the other half I do give to my grandchild John Bennedick ye oldest son of my son John Bennedick. I also will and bequeath to my Grandchild Samuell Bennedick my ould Horse and one yearling Calf. I do also bequeath to ye sd Samuell, my Carts and Iron plows and chains and irons belonging to plow and cart. Also ye bed and bedsted- yt in ye chamber with what belongs to it leauving it to his Grandmother and ye overseers to give him of ye moveables what they can spare, provided he carry and behauve himself dutefully and louvingly towards his Grandmother- so doing, I do, also, will and bequeath to ye sd Samuell half of my sheep.

I do will and bequeath to Joanna Bennedick, One Cow, one half of my sheep- the trukle bedstead with ye bed thereupon and the furniture of it, and what else of household her Grandmother shall bestow upon her, provided she live with her and be tender of her while she shall continue in this world.

As for my Out Lands, undesposed of, it is my will that my Son James and Daniell divide ye Upland between them equally except ye peace of boggy meadow which I will to be equally divided between my son James and grandchild Samuell Bennedick.

I do will and bequeath to my daughter Rebecka Wood (the) mare yt is now running in ye wood; and I leauve it to my wife to give to my Daughter Sarah and Rebecka what of ye moveables she shall see meet and can spare.

I do will and bequeath to my Grandchild Mary Olmstead, a legacy of twenty shillings; I also give to Hannah Bennedick, my grandchild, ten shillings the (same) to be paid out of ye estate after my decease.

Finally is is my will and I do hereby appoint my Son John and my Son Samll Bennedick to be joynt overseers of this my last will and testament- willing these my loveing sons to be carefull of their Mothers comfortable liveing and to counsell her in ye ordering her affairs and desposall of goods; and to see carefully to ye payment of all lawfull debts.



# THE BENEDICT FAMILY

In confirmation of ye premises of this my Will and Testament, I do set my hand and seal this eight and twentieth feb<sup>r</sup> Ano dominy 1689-90.

(Signed) Tho<sup>s</sup> Benedick, Senr.

Signed and Sealed In presents of us,  
Thomas Hanford  
John Platt, Jr.

Memorand: in ye twentieth line Elizabeth is bloted out and Mary put in ye Marjent accordin to ye will of ye testator- ye name mistaken by the writer

Thos. Hanford.

## Children of Thomas and Mary Benedict.

All were born on Long Island.

- I. Thomas, of Norwalk, Married Mary Messenger of Jamaica L.I., in January 1664; moved to Norwalk, 1665. Propounded for freeman of Norwalk, 1667. Died Nov. 20, 1668, aged about 48, leaving sons and daughters under age.  
6 children: Mary b. Dec. 4, 1666; Thomas, b. Dec. 5, 1670; Hannah b. Jan. 1 1676; Esther, b. Oct. 5, 1679; Abigail, b. 1682, and Elizabeth.
- II. John, of Norwalk. Born In Southold, about 1643. Removed to Norwalk with his father. Freeman of Norwalk, May 1674; selectman 1689-92-94-99; representative in Connecticut legislature 1722-25; succeeded his father as deacon of the church in Norwalk. Married Phebe, daughter of John Gregory of Norwalk on Nov. 11, 1670. She died in 1749, aged 72. He died after 1727.  
9 children: Sarah; Phebe b. Sept. 21, 1673; John, b. Mar. 3 1676; Jonathan; Benjamin; Joseph, James, b. Jan. 15, 1645; Mary; Thomas.
- III. Samuel, of Danbury. Lived in Southold and Norwalk. Freeman of Norwalk, 1674. By his first wife, whose name is not known, he had two children, Joanna and Samuel. On July 7, 1678, married (second) Rebecca, daughter of Thomas Andrews of Fairfield. In 1685 he purchased with his brother James, brother-in-law James Beebe, and others, lands in Danbury, and began a settlement there. Deacon of the church in both Norwalk and Danbury. Died 1719.  
7 children: Joanna, b. Oct. 22 1673; Samuel, b. March 5, 1675; Thomas, b. Mar. 27 1679; Rebecca; Esther; Nathaniel; Abraham, b. June 21, 1681.
- IV. James, of Danbury. Born at Southold, Feb. 6 1650 removed with his parents to Norwalk; was one of the 8 who purchased and settled Danbury; sold his property In Norwalk, Mar. 26, 1691. Married (first) May 10, 1676, Sarah, b. Dec. 3, 1652, daughter of John and Sarah Gregory of Norwalk, and had seven children; married (second) 1707, Sarah, b. Dec. 20, 1657, daughter of Robert Porter and widow of Abraham Andrus. Deputy for Danbury, Oct. 1712. Died after 1717.

## THE BENEDICT FAMILY

7 children: Sarah, b. June 16, 1677; Rebecca, b. 1679; Phebe, b. 1682; James, b. 1685 (first white male child born in Danbury); John, b. Oct. 1689; Thomas, b. Nov. 9, 1694; Elisabeth, b. July, 1696.

- V. Daniel, of Danbury. Born at Southold; removed with his father to Norwalk, where he was granted land on Feb. 16, 1677, because of his service in the "Direful Swamp Fight" of King Philip's War, on Dec. 19, 1675. This land he sold on March 25, 1690. He married Mary Marvin of Norwalk, and moved to Danbury to live. Died after 1723.

4 children: Mary; Daniel; Mercy; Hannah.

- VI. Elizabeth (Betty). Married after 1676 John Slauson of Stamford.

2 children: Mary and Thomas,

- VII. Mary. Married Liet. John Olmstead of Norwalk on Nov. 10, 1670.

10 children: John; Mary; Jane; Sarah; Rebecca; Elizabeth; Daniel; Richard; Eunice; Deborah.

- VIII. Sarah. Married James Beebe of Stratford, Dec. 19, 1679. They were among the original settlers of Danbury.

3 children; Sarah, b. at Norwalk, Nov. 13, 1680; James; Samuel.

- IX. Rebecca. Married Dr. Samuel Wood, who was born and educated in England, an early settler at Danbury, and a valuable citizen.

No children mentioned.

I see fit to write a little here concerning the participation of Daniel Benedict in the "Direful Swamp Fight." The history of the Indians' struggles to keep their lands against the white man are not proud paragraphs in American history, but there seems to have been no other way. A destiny was to be fulfilled. In those early days the armies and battles were small, but the bravery and the victories and the consequences were great. Daniel was probably about 25 years old in that fear-ridden year when King Philip and his allies, the proud and powerful Narragansetts, were making their strongest threat against the tenure of the white settlers in this land of promise. In the winter of 1675 Canonchet and 2000 warriors had taken refuge in a fort which they had built on a little island in the midst of a pine and cedar swamp, three or four miles west of South Kingston, R. I., for the protection of their winter store of food and of their women and children. The fort was a formidable affair with palisaded walls 12 feet across, and a single entrance over a log that crossed a miry lagoon and led to a gate guarded by two block houses. The settlers raised an army of 1127 men in 3 groups: Massachusetts, Plymouth, and Connecticut, for a surprise attack on the Indians. After days of marching in the bitter weather, feet gashed by icy ruts, they came up to the gloomy forest in the swamp and lay down in the snow for one more shivering rest. In the gray of the morning they were on their way, and at noon entered the swamp proper. The bitter cold was for once their friend; it had stiffened the morass so that with caution a man could walk on it, though many a one broke through

## THE BENEDICT FAMILY

to his armpits in the icy muck. The Connecticut men had taken a back way, and under attack from two sides the fort was breached. Both sides fought with the courage of despair, but victory went to the bearded avengers in cocked hats. Until the sun went down the grim Puritans welded their weapons in the cause of civilization; never again was there any doubt that the English could maintain themselves in New England against the Indians. 1000 Indians were left dead, and the rest escaped. 100 white men were left dead and about 130 more were wounded. Through the night and a snow storm the victors marched away. Some wounded and over-wearied lay down to die in the snow.

And Daniel? He made it out. We can read in the records of Norwalk that its citizens "out of respect and thankfulnesse to the sayed souldiers doe with one consent and freely give and grant unto so many souldieres as were in the service at the direful swamp fight twelve acers of land." Daniel got his twelve acres on Feb. 16, 1677.

In all our wars the Benedicts from Daniel on down have been the fightin'est people! Benedicts qui patitur! From Vol. I of the French and Indian War Rolls of Connecticut I took the following list of names of Benedicts who served their country between 1755 and 1757: Aaron, Benjamin, Bushnal, Daniel, Elijah, Elisha, Ezra, Francis, Israel, James, John, John 3rd, Jonathan, Joseph, Lemuel, Matthew, Nathaniel, Noble, Samuel, Seth, Silas, Theophilus, Zadock!! Many Benedicts served in the Continental Army in the War of the Revolution. Danbury was raided by the British because supplies were stored there, and some of the Benedicts lost heavily at enemy hands. There were some of the Benedicts who, like thousands of their fellow citizens, believed that the colonists had no right to strike against the mother country, and who persisted in that difficult Loyalist conviction. Some later removed to Canada. There were Benedicts on both sides in the War of 1812. First Lieutenant Edward Benedict was with Sherman on his "March to the Sea." One who looks through the Genealogy of the Benedicts "will find its pages thick with the names of chaplains and officers and soldiers who at the call of their country have left the pursuits of peaceful life to tight the battles of every war."

Any of the descendants of Thomas Bennydict, who, mellowed by years to a point where they find themselves disposed to rest for a while after the hill climb, and look back along the path worn by feet of a size and shape like their own, will find it interesting to sit in some genealogy library on a rainy afternoon and read History of Danbury, by James M. Bailey and Susan Benedict Hill. In 1685 "the original eight" left Norwalk with their families and went to build a town on land purchased from the Indians. About the site there were fir trees and along the stream alders in profusion. East of Main Street and west of Town Hall Ridge there was a swamp so impressive that the first settlers had their hearts set on calling the town Swampfield, and were only deterred therefrom by the arbitrary action of the General Court, which substituted the name Danbury after a town in England settled by Danes. The original eight families lived near together at the south end of Town Street; Thomas Taylor, Francis Bushnell, Thomas Barnum, and John Hoyt lived on the west side; Samuel and James Benedict, their brother-in-law James Beebe, and Judah Gregory on the east side. The records would suggest that in later years there was considerable intermarrying among the non-related children of the neighborhood. This book is a remarkably clear pocket mirror of the life of our Benedict kin. The chapter headed "in the First Hundred Years" begins:

## THE BENEDICT FAMILY

"The only incidents of note that occurred in the century were the dysentery and the War of the Revolution; and the former destroyed more of our citizens than the latter, but it caused no loss of property. The epidemic came the year before the Declaration of Independence, and caused the death of 130 persons."

So far it has not been possible to find out from which of the five family lines established by the five sons of Thomas the ancestor of our family of Benedicts in Canada came. I am sure this information exists somewhere, and it should be possible to unearth it.

In various records I have come upon the names of several Benedicts who went to Canada. Abijah of Danbury, who had served in the Continental Army in the War of the Revolution, died in Canada in 1823. Capt. Elisha Benedict and his three sons, Ensign Caleb, Elias, and Felix (descendants of James Benedict) were taken prisoner by the British in a night attack on their home in Oct. 1780, and carried to Canada where they were prisoners for 2½ years. Capt. Elisha afterwards removed to Canada and died there August 26, 1798. His children were Caleb, Elisha, Ira, Elias, and Felix. Ensign Caleb moved to the Bay of Quinta [*sic. Bay of Quinte*], near Toronto, where he died about 1800. His children were Caleb, Eli, Harriet, and Marian.

I distinctly remember that years ago my mother told me that her mother had said that the Canadian ancestor was a Loyalist from some town in Connecticut founded largely by Benedicts, and that he "went to Halifax" and was given a grant of land in Canada. I am sorry that I did not become interested in this problem while there were those living who knew details.

I have information from the Public Archives of Ottawa that on the lists of the United Empire Loyalists there appear the names of John and Joseph Benedict, formerly of New York, and Eli Benedict of Danbury, Connecticut, who settled in New Brunswick. I have considerable information about Eli Benedict and it may be that he was our ancestor. He served as a Second Lieutenant in the Guides and Pioneers of the British army in War of the Revolution. He went to St. John, New Brunswick, in 1787. Applied for a grant of land. Died in 1799. In point of time, he could have been Ard Benedict's father, but lacking proof of that, I have omitted the considerable data that I have about Eli Benedict.

The first Benedict of whom I have definite knowledge was my great-grandfather, Ard Benedict. Some information about him was given me by his descendants John W. MacCallum, Allen James McCallum, Mary Benedict Spafford, and Franklin M. Benedict. I do not know the name of his father, nor where nor when he was born. Both my McCallum uncles mentioned above remembered that he had told them about serving in the war of 1812. Uncle John wrote that Ard Benedict was an aide-de-camp to General Brook at Queenston Heights, and was standing nearby when the General was killed.

Either at this battle or that of Lundy's Lane occurred an incident related to me by Uncle Allen at Saskatoon, in the summer of 1946. As I recall the story, an American outpost sniper, sheltered behind a tree, through the crotch of which he was firing, was picking off entirely too many of Ard Benedict's fellow soldiers. So, immediately after a shot and before the sniper had time to re-load, Great-grandfather dashed across to the tree, cracked the offender on the head and then, noticing that the latter's boots

## THE BENEDICT FAMILY

were better than his own, exchanged footwear in relative safety of being shot at by either side, since each had a man in that vulnerable spot. Anyhow he lived to get away with the boots and to tell about it.

Uncle John wrote:

"In Bridgeport, Conn., I called on an old Dr. Benedict who remembered his Uncle Ard, who was my grandfather. He told me how the Congregational Conference asked him to make a list of the Benedicts who had served in the Congregational Church. He found that the Church had an unbroken line of Benedicts in the ministry for over 250 years, and he was one of the oldest, about 80 years old."

Ard Benedict was by trade a cooper, that is, he made barrels, buckets, etc. He lost a leg in a bear trap. In his later years he lived with his son Elias, about 35 miles north of Belleville. Mrs. Mary Spafford wrote, through her great-granddaughter Jean M. Arnold, that Ard Benedict died of a stroke while sitting in his chair, and is buried in Parks Burying Ground at Stoco, near Tweed. The date of his death is not known. I hope some time to get more information about him from the War Office in London.

Ard Benedict's wife was Hannah Pringle. She had a brother Anson Pringle, about whom Uncle Allen heard someone say that he was the finest scholar in two counties. I believe he was a teacher. She also had a sister, Polly Pringle, who married John Bonn, and is buried in the plot of William and Amanda McCallum at Tweed, and near the graves of her son John and his wife Maggie. If Anson Pringle had a sharp mind, the chances are that his sisters did too. Hannah Pringle Benedict died at the home of her daughter Amanda McCallum, in 1879, and is said to be buried at Bancroft. My mother, who was born in 1872, remembered her grandmother as a little old lady who didn't see very well because of cataracts in her eyes. Upon one occasion she covered a piece of bread for her granddaughter with unseasoned pumpkin instead of the expected apple sauce. Susan had to be obedient and eat it but she never liked pumpkin pie as long as she lived! Uncle Allen remembered that his grandmother was an expert knitter. When she wished to do something for one of her grandchildren, she could begin in the morning to make the knitting needles fly, and finish a pair of stockings by evening. Uncle Ed remembered that once as small children he and my mother took their grandmother's pillows when she was making up her feather bed. She toddled around and around the house after them; finally they hid under her bed covers and she couldn't find them anywhere!

The children of Ard and Hannah Benedict were Albert, Phoebe, Susan, Charles, Elias, Amanda, William and Almira Jane.

- (1) Albert was killed as a small boy by a rolling log.
- (2) Phoebe married (first) Mills, and (second) Langman.

Her children (all Mills) were Anson, Charles, Mary, Blanche, Mina, Annie, Eliza, and Maggie. The children of Charles Mills were Frances (Mrs. Allen J. McCallum of Saskatoon; see McCallum line); Charles Edward, whose children were Helen, Dorothy, Jean, and Raymond; Clara (no children); Harry (no children). Mary Mills Garrison had an only son, Frank Garrison, who lives at

## THE BENEDICT FAMILY

106 Central Chambers, Saskatoon, Sask. Maggie Mills married John Benn.

- (3) Susan Benedict married and had three sons.
- (4) Charles Benedict was born in Richmond County, Ontario, Oct. 16, 1829; died April 10, 1897. As a young man he lived for some time in California where he was foreman on a ranch for a man named Clauber. Upon his return to Ontario he married Martha Pittman. They had two sons, Frank and Clayton.

Franklin M. Benedict was born on Oct. 5, 1872. His address is RR 5, Belleville Ontario (near Foxboro). He and his wife have one daughter, Martha Elizabeth. She taught in the Public Schools and in the Ontario School for the Deaf; married William Phillips and lives at 65 Cedar Street, Belleville; has two sons.

Clayton Benedict was born in 1877 and died in 1930, in Thurlough Township near Belleville. He had two sons, Gordon, of Frankford, Ont., and Miles, of Belleville, R. R. 5.

- (5) Elias Benedict married Minerva Mills. They lived in Hungerford Township, Hastings County. She died in 1923 at the age of 100 years and 1 month. Their only child was Mary, born Dec. 4, 1848; died in 1937. She married Abijah Pratt Spafford on Jan. 17, 1872. They celebrated their fifty-fifth anniversary on the farm at Warwick where they had resided for fifty-three years. They had three daughters: Minerva (Mrs. W. H. Porter) of Warkworth, RR2; Nettie (Mrs. Fred Simmons), of Brighton, Ont., and Huldah, who died at the age of 16 of consumption. Mrs. Porter has a daughter Ina, whose daughter, Jean M. Arnold, is a teacher in the Public Schools of Campbellford.
- (6) Amanda Benedict was born in New Haven, Conn., Aug. 14, 1834. I do not know how long Ard and Hannah Benedict lived in Connecticut, nor any of the circumstances attending their residence there. My mother once said that she was under the impression that there had been considerable visiting back and forth between Canadian and American Benedicts. Amanda married William McCallum at Lonsdale, Sept. 10, 1857. See McCallum family record for further details.
- (7) William Benedict. Uncle Allen said that he was married and had several daughters. He disappeared while on a trip, and nothing further was ever heard about him.
- (8) Almira Jane Benedict married Duncan James McCallum, son of Duncan and Margaret Legget McCullum, and brother of William McCallum who married Amanda Benedict. See the McCallum record.

# THE BENEDICT FAMILY

## Bibliography

American Ancestry.

Albany, N. Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons. Vols. 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Bailey, J. M. and Susan Benedict Hill. History of Danbury, 1684-1896.  
New York: Burr Printing House, 1896.

Benedict, Henry Marvin. The Genealogy of the Benedicts in America.  
Albany: Joel Munsell, 1870.

Bronson, Henry. History of Waterbury, Connecticut.  
Published by Bronson Brothers, 1858.

Connecticut Historical Society.  
French-Indian War Rolls. 1735-1757.

Finley, Walter S. Benedict and Allied Families.  
Americana (American Historical Magazine).  
Vol. XXX, Jan. -Dec. 1936. pp 157-195.

Forbes, Esther. Paul Revere and the World he Lived in.  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1942.

Genealogical and Family History of Southern New York and the Hudson River Valley.  
Vol. 2.

Hinman, Royal R. Hinman's Catalogue of First Puritan Settlers of Connecticut.  
Hartford, 1852.

Jacobus, Donald L. Families of Old Fairfield.  
The Eunice Dennie Burr Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.  
Fairfield, Conn.

Prominent Families of New York.  
The Historical Company, New York, 1897.

Records of the Town of Jamaica, Long Island, New York, 1656-1751. Vol. 1.  
Brooklyn, N. Y.: Published by the Long Island Historical Society.

Society of Colonial Wars.  
First Supplement of Ancestors, 1741.

Thwing, Annie Haven. Crooked and Narrow Streets of the Town of Boston, 1630-1822.  
Marshall Jones Co.

Waters, Henry F. Genealogical Gleanings in England, Vol. 2.  
Boston: New-England Historic Genealogical Society, 1901.

# THE BENEDICT FAMILY

## Benedict Coat-of-Arms

The Benedict Coat-of-Arms is illustrated in color in Americana, Vol. XXX, 1936. It is described thus:

Arms- Gules, a lion rampant holding in his paws the head of a hammer pierced in the center, all or.

Crest- The lion issuant, (Rietstap: "Armorial General").

Frances Becker  
Grass Valley, California  
February 15, 1948

The above sixteen pages were transcribed from a photocopied set of hand typewritten legal-sized sheets, originally prepared by the above Frances Becker. The sheets were mailed to the undersigned on March 11, 2005 by a Donald C. Criaghead in Ontario. Donald is a researcher at the Marilyn Adams Genealogical Research Centre near Kingston, Ontario. His accompanying letter reads in part:

You probably have already received the package of information from the Marilyn Adams Genealogical Research Centre in response to your email request of 4 March\_ I'm a volunteer at the MAGRC [Marilyn Adams Genealogical Research Centre] and I noted the references in your email to an Ard Benedict. My sister-in-law is Dorothy Benedict, her father Miles Benedict, and her great-great grandfather Ard Benedict. I've been gathering information on the Benedicts and there are several references in our library but all are in the genealogies of other families and none directly on the Benedict families. However, I haven't had time to record this information as yet but will be doing that in the near future.

In 1961, a Ralph Benedict, who was living in Lima, Peru, at that time, spent some time in this local area searching his ancestors. He visited Mites Benedict and gave him a photocopy of a document prepared in 1948 by a Frances Becker of Grass Valley, California. I've enclosed a copy for your information. It presents the genealogy of the Benedicts through America and into Canada. On pages 9 & 10 he refers to Ard Benedict and mentions Miles Benedict However, he does not give the direct family line of connection to the earlier Benedicts of Connecticut.

Per: Jim Benedict, Calgary Alberta. 26 March, 2005.