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About the Eldridge surname

The name ELDRIDGE or ELDREDGE is an uncommon name of English extraction. The name Eldred referred to several Saxon kings who ruled England in the 8th and 9th centuries. Eldson C. Smith in his book *American Surnames*, claimed the name originated in the area of Kent, England and meant "plank bridge".

Variations of the name have been found in the American colonies. John Eldred, Great Saxham, England, was for 15 years, a director of the Virginia Company of London. The Mayflower pilgrims received their patent for land from this company. It is possible that William, Robert, Samuel, John and Nathaniel Eldred or Eldredge who came to the new colonies between 1635-1645 were related to John Eldred. Descendants became numerous in the Cape Cod region before migrating to Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey.

The name John Eldridge appears in 1680 as one, along with William Penn, to whom the Duke of York conveyed all his interest in West New Jersey.

Prior to the Revolutionary War, families with the name or its variations were living in 8 counties in New Jersey and by 1790, Eldridge had become the 1,276th most common surname in America with 22,115 bearing that name.

The ancestor's identity who settled in Davenport, Scott County, Iowa, United States, in 1836 is still shrouded in mystery. Professional genealogists have searched for Duncan Campbell Eldridge's ancestor, who most certainly came to the New World before the Revolutionary War. This person may or may not have been a Quaker and, if not, converted to the Friends' way through marriage into prominent Quaker families.

Research by New Jersey's Roger Joslyn, CG, has been very helpful in gathering evidence in Pennsylvania and NJ to help reconstruct the Duncan Eldridge family. We know that William Eldridge who married Deborah Malander in Pennsylvania in 1761 was Duncan's grandparents. The only clues we have about William's father are scraps of hearsay.

In 1926, Theophilus Burt Eldridge prepared a typewritten family history. William was the son of Thomas and that William was born 1 April 1738, no birthplace given. Theophilus Eldridge gave us no cites.

Mr. Joslyn, in his Pennsylvania Genealogy Society research in Philadelphia, discovered in the Collections of Gilbert Cope and Mrs. Mae E. Enders, several references which re-assert the descent from Thomas Eldridge.

1. JONATHAN ELDRIDGE may have come from England to Burlington County in 1678; or he may have been the one who sailed from London on the

“Success” and arrived in West New Jersey in April 1679 and served as a member of the Council in 1708. This latter Jonathan may have been the partner of Martha Wagstaff who were both condemned at the Burlington County Quaker meeting in 1679/80 for adulterous practices. The couple married and a record of Martha Eldridge’s burial on 4 mo 1, 1713, was recorded by the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting.

Jonathan lived in Evesham, Burlington County, NJ in 1704, when he was named father of Thomas Eldridge in the marriage records of the Phila MM. His name appears on a letter to the PMM dated 12 mo 23, 1735/6 stating son Obadiah’s intention to marry. .

It is possible that Joseph Eldridge who died in Sussex County, DE, leaving a will proved in 13 May 1762 was the son of Jonathan Eldridge. On 2 March 1736, Jonathan Eldridge’s will was proved. He named a wife, Elizabeth, dtr Phoebe, sons Jonathan, Joseph, James and Obadiah. A son, Thomas, was not mentioned. Parents often made early financial settlements with their older married children. Jonathan, father of Thomas, appears to have been a Quaker at his death.

2 THOMAS ELDRIDGE: the son of Jonathan, was born abt 1684 probably in Burlington County, NJ. His marriage witnessed by Jonathan, Martha and Mary Eldridge, to Mary James on 3 mo 11, 1704, is recorded in the Phila MM records. He settled in Phila, PA where he was granted freeman status on 1 June 1705. A freeman was one who “took out his freedom’ and was granted by the City of Philadelphia, certain rights and privileges of a citizen. One requirement was to be at least 21 yo, hence we can estimate his birth to be 1684. Thos and Mary Eldridge made their home in Philadelphia where the births of 2 children were recorded in the Quaker Monthly Meeting records. A son, James, was born on 12 mo 2, 1704/5 and a dtr, Mary, was born 3 mo 11, 1710. From notes in the Cope and Ender Collections, it appears Thomas and Mary also had a son, Joseph, who was named in a deed along with siblings James and Mary.

Also found in these collections, Thomas and Mary produced a certificate from the Phila MM to the Concord MM on 4 mo 1, 1717 and settled in Calm Township, Chester, County, PA. Thomas Eldridge’s son, Jonathan, of East Malburrow, Chester County, married 10 mo 3, 1771, a second wife, Sarah Davis at the Goshen Meeting. Jonathan died and his widow Sarah married William Allen. Their grandson, Eldridge Allen, married in Davenport, Iowa in 1859.

Notes indicate that Mary James Eldridge died and Thomas was married a second time to Hannah Duncan, although no official record of the marriage has been discovered. Hannah Duncan Eldridge could have been the great-grandmother of Duncan C. Eldridge of Davenport, IA.

3. WILLIAM ELDRIDGE: son of Thos and Hannah Duncan Eldridge may possibly be the grandfather of Duncan Campbell Eldridge.. William may or may

not have been a Friend, but it is certain that several of his children did marry Quakers. Several of the alleged sons of Thos and their descendants lived near one another in NJ, where records of land transactions between family members are found. Family research is complicated by the repetitious first names given to children. Eldridge children frequently married into the same families, especially the Middleton, Matlack / lock and Lippincott lines.

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WILLIAM ELDRIDGE, b 18 Feb 1749, Evesham, Burlington, NJ, d.31 Aug 1823 Gloucester, NJ

This name first appears on the marriage license with Deborah Malander issued by the Provincial Secretary of PA 6 November 1761.

Deborah Malander was the dtr of Swedish teacher and would-be pastor, Olof Malander, aka William Malander. Record of her birth on 23 February 1741, at Piles Grove, NJ and of her baptism the next month, are found in the Swedish Lutheran Church records at Raccoon and Penn's Neck, NJ. William, son of an Englishman and possibly a Quaker, married to the dtr of a Swedish Lutheran Minister was curious.

Henry Hudson discovered the Hudson and Delaware Rivers in 1609 while in the employ of the Dutch East India Co. and until 1664, the land that lay along these rivers was developed under the auspices of the Dutch who encouraged settlement by other nations.

In 1638, the first Swedish colony was established along Delaware's coast. Under the direction of their Lutheran pastors, the Swedish colonists purchased land from the indigenous people and built the principal town and fort at Christiana Creek near Wilmington. The colony flourished until about 1654. All of the original clergy who accompanied the first colonists had died and the people

were without leadership. They applied to the King of Sweden for aid, which he supplied until the Revolutionary War ended the Swedish colonial movement.

The Swedish colony was divided into 3 Rectorships, one in Pennsylvania, one in Delaware and one in Raccoon and Penn's Neck in western New Jersey. The Swedish King supplied the Rectors, paid them handsome yearly salaries and rewarded them with pensions and choice parishes upon their return to Sweden.

In 1664, King Charles of England captured the entire area and made it a gift to his brother, James, the Duke of York. James divided the land into 2 parts - East and West Jersey and used these to satisfy his creditors. The creditors threw open the territory to settlers. East Jersey became home to the New England Colonies and Long Island, including the Eldridge descendants. West Jersey, mainly Dutch and Swedes, met with a hoard of settlers from every section of the British Isles - particularly the Quakers.

These settlers had strong ideas about government, taxation and religion. The proprietors, disgusted with the lack of financial returns, sold their interest to William Penn and his Quaker followers in 1682. Penn was the wealthy benefactor of the Quaker movement, a land promoter. King George granted title to the territory which became Pennsylvania. Penn wrote a series of letters and booklets translated into three languages and distributed in England and the new continent. He wrote practical, honest and glowing descriptions of the land and climate, promising the rights and freedoms of England. This was understood by most Europeans to mean peace and freedom to pursue whatever business / religion without fear of persecution.

Each man was allowed to purchase 5,000 acres of land for only 100 English pounds, [190 Jan 2007]. If this was not affordable, land could be rented for 1 cent per acre per year. Each servant that came with a family would be awarded 50 acres of land when his period of contracted service expired.

The population of the colonies in 1660 was 75,000 and by 1775 - 2,500,000. Penn welcomed ships loaded with immigrants; Scotch Presbyterians, Irish Catholics, French Huguenots, Jews, German and Swiss Mennonites and large numbers of Quakers. Business opportunities were the prime motive for immigration. Pennsylvania soon became a peaceful, prosperous colony, Philadelphia was its hub, with an international favor which rivaled any city in the world.

In 1737, the Reverend Johann Dylander arrived from Sweden to take charge of the Gloria Dei Church near Philadelphia. With him came Olaf (William) Malander, a student of divinity who came from Roslagus in eastern Uppsaland and who had graduated in 1730 from the University of Uppsala in Sweden. Olaf Malander was to teach school until he would be ordained by Rev. Dylander and assigned to a church in the Swedish Colony. However, Pastor Dylander died before the ordination could take place, leaving only one ordained pastor and making the ordination ceremony not possible. The members of the churches at Raccoon and Penn's Neck were reported to be "libertine and accustomed to living without the law" and at first refused to pay Olaf

Malander as their unordained minister. Eventually they agreed to accept him and promised to pay him a yearly salary for his services. However, the two churches failed for several reasons, to keep their promise and consequently, in 1742, Mr. Malander was forced to leave the Swedish colony to seek employment elsewhere. He moved to Philadelphia where he worked in Benjamin Franklin's print shop. Swedish records state that Olaf Malander left the Lutheran Church and became a Moravian minister and moved to Rhode Island where his parishioners built a church. Olaf died in 1744 and his wife apparently returned to Philadelphia, Montgomery County, PA, where their daughter, Deborah, was married to William Eldridge in 1761.

Theophilous Burt Eldridge, born 1859, a great-grandson of William and first cousin twice removed to Duncan C. Eldridge, claimed in his brief family history, that William was born 1 April 1738, the son of Thomas Eldridge. He also claimed that William and Deborah settled and raised their family at Dennis Creek, Cape May County, New Jersey, where several other families named Eldridge previously made their homes since early times. Deed records do not seem to reflect his statement, but from the time of their marriage in 1761 until just before the Revolutionary War in 1774, the whereabouts of this family is not known.

It is ironic that the two colonies founded by Quakers on the principles of peace and non-violence should be the site of the most fierce and prolonged battles of the Revolutionary War. Quakers believed in prohibiting members from supporting either side at the outbreak of the War. (William was 38 at this time, his oldest son, Enos, was 12). The penalty for violating this tenet was expulsion. Quakers who were naturally sympathetic to the colonial cause held to this and refused to serve or support the Continental Army in any way. In the same neighborhood where Washington's troops were starving, Quaker barns bulged with supplies. Eventually, large numbers of Friends broke with the faith to help the colonies gain independence.

The first known residence for the William Eldridge family is shown in a Gloucester County deed dated 18 April 1791. William, yeoman of Gloucester and Deborah sold land in Greenwich Township which they acquired through a sheriff's sale on 29 October 1774. Tax records from 1773 for Greenwich, Gloucester County, list William as well as David and Little John Eldridge. In 1786, Greenwich taxed two William Eldridges, one identified as "saddler", plus David, Enoch and Enos Eldridge. By 1797, only one William remains to be taxed in Greenwich. Tax records for Gloucester Township for 1789 list a William Eldridge as well as an Obadiah and Joshua, thus indicating the family moved to its residence about 1787.

Deborah Malander Eldridge probably died in Gloucester between 22 March 1806 and 3 June 1897 as reflected in deed records. William made his will on 18 November 1812, giving his residence as Gloucester Town; the will was proved 26 February 1816.

other versions of this surname (not mentioned above)

- Aelrici
- Aldred
- Aldrich
- Aldrick
- Aldridge
- Aldrige
- Allderidge
- Alldridge
- Alrich
- Alrige
- Alrych
- Alurici
- Arledge
- Arlidge
- de Alrewic
- Elderidge
- Eldrich
- Elrick
- Oldridge