

NORFOLK RECORD OFFICE

COUNTY ARCHIVIST: MISS JEAN M. KENNEDY, B.A.

NORFOLK RECORD OFFICE

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TELEPHONE 22233 EXT. 599

7th March, 1979

Dear Mrs. Wells,

Thank you for your letter of 28 February.

There seems to be no doubt that William Wells the son of the rector of St. Peter Mancroft was ordained and died as vicar of North Elmham in 1680. According to Venn's Alumni Cantabrigiensis* he was admitted to Caius College, Cambridge, on February 12, 1620-21, and became a B.A. in 1624-25 and an M.A. in 1628. He was ordained by the bishop of Norwich on 18 December, 1625; in 1647 he became rector of Bawdeswell, and was vicar of North Elmham from 1659-1680. The will of William Welles his father, proved in the Consistory Court of Norwich in 1620 (100 Williams) mentions his wife Elizabeth, his sons, William and John, and his daughters Susan, Elizabeth, and Anne.

A William Wells did, however, travel to America on the Truelove in 1635. The ship's passenger list dated 10 June, 1635, and published in J.C. Hotten, The Original Lists of Emigrants to the American Plantations, 1600-1706 includes William Wells aged 17 years. If William gave his age fairly accurately, his date of birth would have been approximately 1618, more than ten years later than the Rev. William Wells' birthdate. Wells is, unfortunately, a common name all over Norfolk, and it would not be easy to trace which family William belonged to. Norfolk includes some 700 parishes, each of which kept separate registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials, and no indexes to these exist. Probate records and the indexes to these can give a useful guide to which parishes a name was associated with, but it is not possible for us to undertake this kind of extensive search for you. I am, however, enclosing a list of record searchers who may be able to carry out research on your behalf.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Kennedy

County Archivist

* which identifies him as the son of William Wells the rector of St. Peter's,.

Mrs. J. W. Wells,
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Riverhead,
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Enc.