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Ordinary Keeper, Norwich, Conn. 1678-1690

Thomas Waterman, son of Robert and Elizabeth (Bourne) Waterman, was born in Marshfield, Mass., 30 November 1644; died in Norwich, Conn., 19 June 1708 and was buried in the old burying place at Norwich Town, where his rough granite stone survives. He married November 1668, Miriam Tracy, daughter of Lt. Thomas Tracy, born c. 1649/50 in Saybrook. She predeceased him.

At its May meeting in 1659 the General Court of Connecticut approved a petition from a group in Saybrook for permission to establish a settlement at what is now Norwich. In 1659 Thomas Waterman, then aged about 15, apparently went to Norwich with John and Martha Bradford. Martha Bradford was a sister to his mother. Thomas is listed as one of the 35 first proprietors of the new town, although he was a minor. He drew one of the best home lots, 7 acres and meadow west of the land of Major Mason. The Bradfords were childless, and on their deaths Thomas received part of their estate.

Thomas Waterman became a freeman on 11 May 1671 and was selected as Townsman in 1675, 1681 and 1684. As early as 1669 he held the post of sergeant of the Norwich train band. He was Ensign for New London County during the French and Indian War of 1689-90 and of the flying army of dragoones chosen from the train band in April 1690 to fight against the French if necessary, in Canada. Thereafter he was identified by the military title of Ensign.

On 11 December 1679 Sgt. Thomas Waterman was "desired to keepe the orgynary" for which he received recompense of four acres of pasture land near the valley, from his house to the woods. He is the first Norwich ordinary keeper of whom there is notice. He

remained in that office of honor and responsibility until 1690. During 1674, 1679 and other terms, he served as Juror for New London County.

The inventory of the estate of Ensign Thomas Waterman totaled £ 855.11.04. It devised his house and barn and homelot and 22 other parcels of land totaling 311 acres. Among the livestock were ten oxen, ten cows, and household goods contained two pistol barrels and one cutlass. Seven of the eight heirs signed a mutual agreement, evidence of their having been educated.

-Ethel Marianne (Gillison) Rittenburg
77-38

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