

## *Pulcher-vir – Handsome Man*

Benedict Pulsipher (who spelled his name Pulsephar) was the first of this name to appear in America. He owned land in Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1655 and raised several children there. He was a man of some means and had a considerable education in a period when educated Englishmen were rare.<sup>1</sup>

It has been claimed by some that Benedict changed his name when he reached America from Pulford, a well known English family name, to Pulsipher. This pattern was followed by several English families in order to escape the emissaries of Charles II, who was beheaded at Whitehall, England during the English Civil War. The name he chose was derived from the Latin words *pulcher*, meaning beautiful, and *vir*, meaning man, according to some authorities.

However, the name could also be of Anglo-Saxon origin, being derived from the verb *pullian* and the adverb *infere*, meaning pulls-together.<sup>2</sup>

Benedict and his first wife had at least three children: Benedict, John and Elizabeth. Elizabeth's birth can be found in the Ipswich town records in 1669. His wife died at Ipswich on July 16, 1673. John moved to Gloucester where he became a yeoman farmer and a mason. Benedict was referred to as a *Roving blade*.<sup>3</sup>

After the death of his first wife, Benedict married Susanna A. Waters on February 2, 1674 at Ipswich. She was born at Salem, Massachusetts on February 1, 1649, the fifth daughter of Richard and Joyce Waters. The records show that his young wife was rather vain. She liked to adorn herself. "She, among others, braved the laws in 1675 by appearing in the meeting house with a silk hood and scarf. She and the others were arrested, tried and fined ten shillings each for yielding to their vanity."<sup>4</sup>

Benedict was a planter and lived on an estate which was situated on the north side of the Tom River. This estate was previously owned by Moses Pingry of

Ipswich who acquired the land in 1652 from Richard Scofield. Richard Scofield was the first owner and came to New England in 1635.<sup>5</sup>

The sixth child of Benedict and Susanna was David. This David was a sailor of Boston. His travels took him to Pomfret, Windham County, Connecticut where he married Elizabeth Stoel (Stowell), the daughter of David Stowell and Patience Herrington on October 2, 1740. She was born on August 21, 1719 at Newton, Massachusetts.<sup>6</sup>

David and Elizabeth moved to Ware River, Massachusetts first and then moved to Rockingham, Windham County, Vermont in 1766. The history of Rockingham states that he came "with wife" Elizabeth and five children. They settled on the Meadows opposite South Charleston, New Hampshire, and later moved to Rockingham village.<sup>7</sup>

He built the first log cabin *Inn* in the town, located on the site of the dwelling now standing next to the old church on the west side. Town meetings were held in his home, also church meetings previous to the building of the first meeting or town house.<sup>8</sup>

When the first church was organized in October of 1773, David and Elizabeth Pulsipher were among the first nineteen members. Later David joined with others in presenting the town with the land which has been occupied by the old meeting house and adjacent burial grounds for over 200 years.<sup>9</sup>

Directly after the battle of Lexington, news reached Rockingham as well as the surrounding towns. David and his son, John, joined a band of patriots gathered on both sides of the Connecticut River on the morning of April 21, 1775 and they were assigned to Captain John Marcy's company in Colonel James Reed's regiment. This regiment took an active part in the battle of Bunker Hill.<sup>10</sup>

David died a few weeks after the battle with cramp rheumatism in his breast. His son, John, served his time and returned home.

The family of David Pulsipher remained in the

old log cabin for several years keeping it as a public tavern.<sup>11</sup>

After the first church, organized in 1773, was discontinued in 1839, the record book as well as the communion service, the table cloth and one napkin were preserved by members of the Pulsipher family to whom much credit is given for their faithful care.<sup>12</sup>

John Pulsipher was born on July 8, 1749 at Pomfret, Connecticut and married Elizabeth Dutton in Rockingham in 1773. She was born on December 18, 1751 in Lunenburg, Massachusetts, the daughter of Thomas Dutton and his first wife, Mary Hill. she was a descendant of the Thomas Dutton and his wife, Susanna, who settled in Reading, Massachusetts, and were the fourth great-grandparents of Joseph Smith. This same Dutton family are said to be the family of Duttons who came to Chester, England, in 1066 with William the Conqueror.<sup>13</sup>

Elizabeth Dutton Pulsipher joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1832 while living with her son, Zerah, and his family, her husband having died some years previous. Her husband was one of the founders of the first Baptist Church in Rockingham, Vermont, in 1789. Elizabeth died on December 2, 1838, of persecutions in a land of liberty, according to her grandson, John Pulsipher.

1. Terry and Nora Lund, *Pulsipher Family History Book*, (Salt Lake City), p.5.

2. Ibid., p. 3,4.

3. Ibid., p. 5.

4. Ibid., p. 5.

5. Ibid., p. 5,6.

6. Ibid., p. 6.

7. Ibid., p. 6,7.

8. Ibid., p. 7.

9. Ibid., p. 7.

10. Ibid., p. 7.

11. Ibid., p. 7.

12. Ibid., p. 7.

13. Ibid., p. 7.