

SARAH (MOORE) (HOW) GIBBS AND HER MOTHER,  
SARAH (GOODENOW) (MOORE) GOODENOW,  
OF SUDBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

By Michael J. Leclerc

Many assume that Massachusetts research is easy because the early vital records of many towns have been published. While these works do provide easier access, they are far from complete, even for the published towns. Sudbury in Middlesex County is a perfect example. There are numerous instances in the published volume of births of children with no record of marriage (and *vice versa*), suggesting that many events were never recorded.

Tracing females can be difficult to begin with, but under these circumstances it is even more trying. Fortunately, vital records are not the only sources of information available. Middlesex County probate records provide the evidence to establish the identity not only of Sarah, wife of Asahel Gibbs, but also of her mother, another Sarah.

SARAH, WIFE OF ASAHEL GIBBS JR.

Sarah How married in Sudbury on 29 April 1798 Asahel Gibbs Jr.<sup>1</sup> Vital records, used alone, suggest only one likely candidate for Sarah. Sally, daughter of Ezekiel How Jr. and his wife, Sarah, was born on 22 November 1779.<sup>2</sup> However, the probate for Ezekiel How's estate shows that his daughter Sarah likely died young, as she was not named in Ezekiel's will in 1796.<sup>3</sup>

Was Sarah perhaps the widow How, instead? Vital records suggest a candidate. Sally Moore married Israel How at Sudbury on 9 May 1786.<sup>4</sup> They had four children, all born at Sudbury: *Elizabeth How*, born 2 January 1787; *Harry How*, born 7

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<sup>1</sup> *Vital Records of Sudbury, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* (Boston, 1903), 220 (hereafter cited as *Sudbury VRs*).

<sup>2</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 74.

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel How's will, dated 24 Aug. 1796, names his wife, Rebeckah; eldest daughter, Ruth Gibbs of Sudbury; 2nd daughter, Anna Brown; 3rd daughter, Hepzibah Brown, and her daughter Hepzibah; the children of his deceased daughter, Bathsheba, the wife of Daniel Loring of Sudbury; 5th daughter, Molly Brown, wife of Reuben Brown of Concord, Mass.; 6th daughter, Olive Morse, the wife of Uriah Morse of Sudbury; 7th daughter, Jenny Eames, wife of Phineas Eames of Clinton Co., N.Y.; eldest son, Ezekiel of Framingham; 2nd son, Eliphalet of Barre, Mass.; and 3rd son, Adam of Sudbury, who was named executor of the estate (Middlesex Co., Mass., Probate, #12021 [Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City, film #397,100]).

<sup>4</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 219.

February 1789; *Sarah How*, born 23 October 1791; and *Ruth How*, born 6 August 1794.<sup>5</sup> There is no birth record for a Sarah Moore in Sudbury in the 1760s.

Israel How died in Sudbury by 10 November 1794, when his widow, Sally, requested that Joseph Goodenow be appointed administrator of her husband's estate. Among the estate's creditors were Elijah Moore and Ruth Moore. Some of the property of the estate was sold to cover the debts owed by the estate, including the debts to Elijah and Ruth. David Smith was appointed guardian to Israel's children: Elizabeth, Harry, Sarah, and Ruth.<sup>6</sup>

Effective research often requires searching in ever-widening rings. In this case, the next ring represented the individuals named in the probates. Elijah Moore, yeoman of Sudbury, died by 13 November 1792, when Sarah Moore declined the administration of the estate of "my late husband" and Elijah Moore declined the administration of the estate of "my honored father," both requesting that Joseph Goodenow be appointed administrator. This Sarah Moore cannot be the wife of Israel How, whose marriage occurred six years earlier. After paying the debts of the estate, the remaining £1 12s. 1d. was ordered to be paid to the widow for her support, which she attested was paid to her on 8 December 1792. Other than the son Elijah, no mention is made of children in the probate file.<sup>7</sup>

Once again the circle expanded, this time to the individuals named in the probate of the son Elijah. He was not married. The estate of Elijah Moore, yeoman of Sudbury, was entered into probate on 3 December 1823.

It being inconvenient for us to administer on the estate of our Brother Elijah Moore, late of Sudbury Deceased; we hereby signify the same to your Honor and request that Asher Goodenow be appointed to that trust.

28 day of Nov' AD 1823

Ruth Moore  
Sally Gibbs<sup>8</sup>

A comparison of the signatures for Sally How in her husband's probate file and Sally Gibbs in her brother's probate file finds that they are exceedingly similar, with small changes being allowed for the passage of thirty years' time.

This confirms that Sarah, wife of Asahel Gibbs, was the widow of Israel How and the daughter of Elijah Moore.

#### A MOTHER FOR SARAH (MOORE) (HOW) GIBBS

The birth in Sudbury of Elijah Moore on 6 August 1735 to Edward and Keziah Moore is recorded.<sup>9</sup> Edward Moore married Keziah Goodenow on 19 February

<sup>5</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 73-74. This source has no death records for any of the children.

<sup>6</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #12045 [FHL film #397,100].

<sup>7</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #15342 [FHL film #421,470].

<sup>8</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #15343 [FHL film #421,470].

<sup>9</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 92.

1722/3.<sup>10</sup> There are no recorded marriages in Sudbury for Elijah Moore, but three children of Elijah and Sarah Moore are recorded: *Ruth Moore*, born 8 April 1760; *Elijah Moore*, born 1 July 1762; and *Edward Moore*, born 26 October 1764.<sup>11</sup> Sarah (Moore) (How) Gibbs was aged 26–45 in the 1800 census of Sudbury.<sup>12</sup> Her first marriage in 1786 suggests that she was the next child, born about 1766.

Who was Elijah's wife Sarah? Once again, widening the search ring provided the answer—and an amazing tangle of relationships. Sarah (Moore) (How) Gibbs relinquished administration to Joseph Goodenow in 1794 and to Asher Goodnow in 1823. Her apparent mother, Sarah, also relinquished administration to Joseph Goodenow in 1792. The Goodenow Family Association sponsored the publication of a family genealogy in 1994. The genealogy shows that Elijah Moore's mother, Keziah (Goodenow) Moore, was the daughter of John<sup>5</sup> Goodenow (*John*<sup>4</sup>, *Edmund*<sup>3</sup>, *Thomas*<sup>2</sup>, *John*<sup>1</sup>) and Ruth (Willis), but it only gives her marriage to Edward Moore and does not name their children or provide any other information about their family.<sup>13</sup>

Three of the children of Elijah and Sarah Moore appear to be named after their father (Elijah), paternal grandfather (Edward), and mother (Sarah) respectively. Perhaps the eldest daughter, Ruth, was named for her maternal grandmother. A search of the Massachusetts Vital Records to 1850 database on <[www.NewEnglandAncestors.org](http://www.NewEnglandAncestors.org)> for women named *Sarah* born to a woman named *Ruth* in the town of Sudbury, between 1730 and 1740, revealed one possibility: Sarah Goodenow, the daughter of Daniel and Ruth (Woods) Goodenow, born on 14 October 1738.<sup>14</sup>

The Goodenow genealogy shows Sarah's birth to Daniel and Ruth, but no additional information.<sup>15</sup> Again, the evidence needed to confirm the connection is found in the probate records. Daniel Goodenow died intestate before 14 January 1778, when his estate was inventoried. A dispute arose among the heirs over the distribution of the estate, and on 25 March 1779, the probate court was petitioned to reexamine the division. Among the petitioners were Elijah Moore and his wife Sarah, daughter of Daniel Goodenow. On 11 November 1779, Judge Oliver Prescott ordered a new inventory to be made of the estate and a new distribution of assets to the heirs. On 15 January 1785, Elijah Moore and his wife, Sarah, signed

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<sup>10</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 236.

<sup>11</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 93, 96.

<sup>12</sup> 1800 U.S. Census, Sudbury, Middlesex Co., Mass., p. 200, household of Asahel Gibbs.

<sup>13</sup> Theodore James Fleming Banvard, *Goodenows Who Originated in Sudbury, Massachusetts, 1638 A.D.* (Baltimore, 1994), 19 (hereafter cited as Banvard, *Sudbury Goodenows*). For additional information on early generations of the Goodenow family, see "English Origins of the Goodenow Family," TAG 52(1976):208–9, and "The Ruddock–Goodenow Connection," TAG 59(1983):5–10, both by Douglas Richardson.

<sup>14</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 54.

<sup>15</sup> Banvard, *Sudbury Goodenows*, 42.

a document with her mother and siblings testifying that they had received their proper share of the estate.<sup>16</sup>

During his lifetime, Daniel Goodenow made gifts to his children, including £60 2s. paid to his daughter Sarah in 1758.<sup>17</sup> This would appear to be a gift made to his daughter and son-in-law on the occasion of their marriage, fitting with their dates of birth and the birth of their eldest child.

Sarah Goodenow, like her daughter Sarah (Moore) (How) Gibbs, married twice. After the death of Elijah Moore, Sarah married in Sudbury on 16 June 1793, as his third wife, Elisha Goodenow.<sup>18</sup> Elisha, a trader, died during the summer of 1798, and Joseph Goodenow was appointed administrator of the estate on the following 18 September. Among those owing money to the estate were Sally How (\$10.67) and Elijah Moore (\$2.41). Among the pieces of real estate owned by Elisha was one that was bounded in part on "Israel Hows widows dower" and partly on land "formerly owned by Isaac Gibbs." The estate also owed \$76.50 to Ruth Moore.<sup>19</sup>

Again, a comparison of signatures in the probate documents allows us to be comfortable that we have only one Sarah. Sarah Goodenow signed for the distribution of her dower on 16 September 1799. A comparison of her signature with that of Sarah Moore, the wife of Elijah, on the petition for the readministration of Daniel Goodenow's estate<sup>20</sup> shows that the signatures of the first names are virtually identical.

#### FAMILY TIES

As shown in the Goodenow genealogy and this article, the Goodenow connections for Sarah (Goodenow) (Moore) Goodenow go beyond the obvious connection of her maiden and married surnames.<sup>21</sup>

Sarah Goodenow's husbands, Elijah<sup>7</sup> Moore (*Keziah<sup>6</sup> Goodenow, John<sup>5</sup> [and wife Ruth Willis], John<sup>4</sup>*) and Elisha<sup>7</sup> Goodenow (*Aaron<sup>6</sup>, John<sup>5</sup> [and wife Sarah—], John<sup>4</sup>*), were half first cousins.

Sarah<sup>7</sup> Goodenow (*Daniel<sup>6</sup>, Joseph<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>*) was a second cousin of her first husband, Elijah<sup>7</sup> Moore (*Keziah<sup>6</sup> Goodenow, John<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>*).

<sup>16</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #9363 [FHL film #397,074].

<sup>17</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #9363 [FHL film #397,074].

<sup>18</sup> Elisha m. (1) 26 April 1769, Sarah Vickery, and (2) 17 July 1776, Deborah Adams (*Sudbury VRs*, 239).

<sup>19</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #9336 [FHL film #397,074].

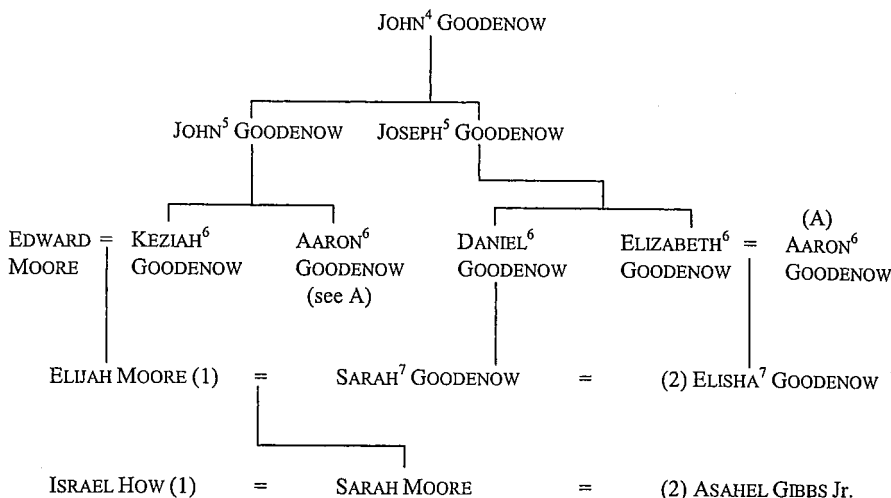
<sup>20</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #9363 [FHL film #397,074].

<sup>21</sup> Sarah's Goodenow connections are shown in Banvard, *Sudbury Goodenows*, 11–12, 19, 36, 37, 42, 71, and are supported by the *Sudbury VRs* and by information presented in this article.

Sarah<sup>7</sup> Goodenow (*Daniel<sup>6</sup>, Joseph<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>*) was a second cousin of her second husband, Elisha<sup>7</sup> Goodenow, through his father (*Aaron<sup>6</sup>, John<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>*) and a first cousin through his mother (*Elizabeth<sup>6</sup> Goodenow, Joseph<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>*).

Sarah<sup>7</sup> Goodenow's second husband, Elisha<sup>7</sup> Goodenow, was his own second cousin through his father (*Aaron<sup>6</sup>, John<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>*) and his mother (*Elizabeth<sup>6</sup> Goodenow, Joseph<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>*), who were first cousins.

## GOODENOW RELATIONSHIPS



## GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY

1 ELIJAH MOORE was born at Sudbury, Massachusetts, on 6 August 1735, son of Edward and Keziah (Goodenow) Moore.<sup>22</sup> He married SARAH<sup>7</sup> GOODENOW, probably in 1758 at Sudbury.<sup>23</sup> Sarah was born at Sudbury on 14 October 1738, the daughter of Daniel<sup>6</sup> Goodenow (*Joseph<sup>5</sup>, John<sup>4</sup>, Edmund<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>*) and Ruth (Woods).<sup>24</sup> Elijah was a farmer and died at Sudbury by 15 November 1792, when Joseph Goodenow was appointed administrator of his estate.<sup>25</sup> Elijah and Sarah appear as heirs to the estate of her father, Daniel, testifying in a dispute among the heirs as to the distribution of the estate. Sarah and her siblings won

<sup>22</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 92.

<sup>23</sup> Year of marriage estimated from the probate file of Sarah's father, Daniel Goodenow, which shows that she was given £60 2s. (Middlesex Co. Probate, #9363 [FHL film #297,074]). This date also works with the birth of her first known child, Ruth, in 1760.

<sup>24</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 54.

<sup>25</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #15342 [FHL film #421,470].

judgment against their brothers Jotham and Micah Goodenow and the estate was redistributed.<sup>26</sup>

Sarah married second at Sudbury on 16 June 1793, as his third wife, ELISHA<sup>7</sup> GOODENOW (*Aaron*<sup>6</sup>, *John*<sup>5</sup>, *John*<sup>4</sup>, *Edmund*<sup>3</sup>, *Thomas*<sup>2</sup>, *John*<sup>1</sup>).<sup>27</sup> Elisha died by 18 September 1798, when Joseph Goodenow was appointed administrator of his estate.<sup>28</sup> Sarah appears in tax lists and property valuations for the town of Sudbury consistently through 1817. She is often listed as a trader, the same occupation as her second husband, Elisha.<sup>29</sup> It is probable that she died sometime around 1817, when she would have been 79 years old.

Children of Elijah and Sarah (Goodenow) Moore, all b. Sudbury:

- i RUTH MOORE, b. 8 April 1760,<sup>30</sup> d. after 1823, when she appears as an heir to her brother Elijah's estate; apparently never married.
- ii ELIJAH MOORE, b. 1 July 1762,<sup>31</sup> d. Sudbury, by 28 Nov. 1823, when his sisters Ruth and Sally declined administration of his estate; apparently never married.<sup>32</sup>
- iii EDWARD MOORE, b. 26 Oct. 1764,<sup>33</sup> probably d. young, as he does not appear in any of the probate records involving his parents and siblings.
- 2 iv SARAH/"SALLY" MOORE, b. probably ca. 1766; m. (1) ISRAEL HOW, (2) ASAHEL GIBBS Jr.

2 SARAH/"SALLY" MOORE (*Elijah*) was born probably about 1766 in Sudbury. She married there on 9 May 1786 ISRAEL HOW.<sup>34</sup> Israel was born at Sudbury on 15 March 1762, the son of Samuel and Elizabeth (Haynes) How.<sup>35</sup> He was a farmer, residing in Sudbury his entire life. He died by 10 November 1794, when his wife requested that Joseph Goodenow be given administration of his estate.<sup>36</sup> Sally married second at Sudbury on 29 April 1798 ASAHEL GIBBS Jr.<sup>37</sup> Asahel was born at Sudbury around 1770<sup>38</sup> and was probably the son of Asahel and Mindwell (—) Gibbs, but this is a complex argument that will not be discussed here.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #9363 [FHL film #397,074].

<sup>27</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 239.

<sup>28</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #9336 [FHL film #397,074].

<sup>29</sup> Town of Sudbury, Mass., Historic Archives online, Tax and Assessors' lists 1722–1849 <[www.town.sudbury.ma.us/archives/](http://www.town.sudbury.ma.us/archives/)>.

<sup>30</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 96.

<sup>31</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 93.

<sup>32</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #15343 [FHL film #421,470].

<sup>33</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 93.

<sup>34</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 219.

<sup>35</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 74.

<sup>36</sup> Middlesex Co. Probate, #12044 [FHL film #39,700].

<sup>37</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 220.

<sup>38</sup> Birth year calculated from age at death (Mass. Vital Records, Deaths, 1848, vol. 40, p. 258).

<sup>39</sup> Among the debts the estate of the younger Elijah Moore owed in 1823 was fifty cents to Mindwell Gibbs. When his personal estate was sold at public auction, Ruth Moore, Harry How, and Mindwell Gibbs were among the individuals purchasing items (Middlesex Co. Probate, #15343 [FHL film #421,470]). The purchase is surely by Sarah's mother-in-law, as Mindwell, daughter of Asahel and Sally (Moore) (How) Gibbs, was then only 17.

About 1819 the Gibbsses moved from Sudbury to Newton, Massachusetts. Asahel died there on 15 June 1848.<sup>40</sup> Sally likely outlived him, as he was listed as married at the time of his death and no other marriage records for him have been found. No death record has yet been found for Sally.

Children of Sarah (Moore) with her 1st husband, Israel How, all b. Sudbury:

- i ELIZABETH HOW, b. 2 Jan. 1787;<sup>41</sup> m. Sudbury, 18 Aug. 1805, SAMUEL PANE Jr.<sup>42</sup>
- ii HARRY HOW, b. 7 Feb. 1789,<sup>43</sup> d. 1827;<sup>44</sup> m. Framingham, Mass., 21 April 1819, CLARISSA FROST.<sup>45</sup>
- iii SARAH HOW, b. 23 Oct. 1791;<sup>46</sup> m. Sudbury, 23 Sept. 1810, DAVID TOWER.<sup>47</sup>
- iv RUTH HOW, b. 6 Aug. 1794.<sup>48</sup>

Children of Sarah (Moore) (How) with her 2nd husband, Asahel Gibbs, probably b. Sudbury:

- v ELIJAH GIBBS, b. ca. 1804,<sup>49</sup> d. Newton, Mass., 7 July 1851;<sup>50</sup> m. Waltham, Mass., 15 Oct. 1835, MARY MEAD.<sup>51</sup>
- vi MINDWELL GIBBS, b. 18 April 1806,<sup>52</sup> d. Framingham, Mass., 25 May 1866;<sup>53</sup> m. (int.) Framingham, 12 March 1825, SAMUEL AUSTIN BULLARD.<sup>54</sup>
- vii (prob.) son, b. between 1806 and 1810.<sup>55</sup>
- viii RUTH GIBBS, b. between 1806 and 1810;<sup>56</sup> m. (int.) Newton, Mass., 20 March 1831, ELIJAH ADAMS.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Mass. Vital Records, Deaths, 1848, vol. 40, p. 258 [FHL film #959,812].

<sup>41</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 73.

<sup>42</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 219.

<sup>43</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 73.

<sup>44</sup> On 23 Dec. 1827, Harry's widow, Clarissa, requested that Samuel Knight of Sudbury be appointed administrator of the estate (Middlesex Co. Probate, #12034 [FHL#397,100]).

<sup>45</sup> Thomas W. Baldwin, comp., *Vital Records of Framingham, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* (Boston, 1911), 315 (hereafter cited as *Framingham VRs*).

<sup>46</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 74.

<sup>47</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 220.

<sup>48</sup> *Sudbury VRs*, 74.

<sup>49</sup> Year of birth calculated from age at death.

<sup>50</sup> Mass. Vital Records, Deaths, 1851, vol. 58, p. 90 [FHL film #959,814].

<sup>51</sup> *Vital Records of Waltham, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* (Boston, 1904), 157.

<sup>52</sup> Date of birth extrapolated from age at death.

<sup>53</sup> Mass. Vital Records, Deaths, 1866, vol. 193, p. 122.

<sup>54</sup> *Framingham VRs*, 290.

<sup>55</sup> There is a male child under the age of 10 living in the Asahel Gibbs household in 1810 (1810 U.S. Census, Sudbury, Middlesex Co., Mass., p. 332).

<sup>56</sup> Birth years calculated from 1810 U.S. Census.

<sup>57</sup> *Vital Records of Newton, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850* (Boston, 1905), 290.