

## Joseph Bridger's Baptism: 28 April 1631, Dursley, Gloucestershire, England

by Janet Morgan Ross of the Bridger Family Association  
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Joseph Bridger would have been born about 1628 if calculated from his death date (15 April 1686) and his age at death (58 years), as shown on his ledger stone. His ledger stone is now in the Chancel of St. Luke's Church, Smithfield, VA. Boddie<sup>1</sup> stated that Joseph Bridger was likely born in Dursley, Gloucestershire, England, because his father Samuel Bridger owned the manor of Woodmancote in that Dursley Parish at that time. However, Boddie did not find a record of his birth or baptism. [Insert photo file **ledger1.png** here]

In 1997, John A. Brayton<sup>2</sup> stated that he had found Joseph Bridger's baptismal record in the Bishop's Transcripts for Dursley Parish, Gloucestershire, England, which was 28 February 1631. Brayton's exact transcription was "1631, ffeb 28, Josephus filius Samuelis Bridger, bapt."

When the COVID-19 pandemic locked down the population in the United Kingdom, various Archives in the United Kingdom began to post digital copies of parish records online at such web sites as Ancestry.com and FindMyPast.com, etc. As a result of this wonderful gift to genealogists all over the world, the parish records for Dursley Parish, Gloucestershire, were posted, and I accessed them through Ancestry.com.<sup>3</sup> The parish register for Dursley in the first part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is fragmentary, with only a few pages surviving from the 1620s and 1630s. The page with Joseph Bridger's baptismal record did survive and shows that he was baptized on 28 April 1631. Specifically, "28 April, Josephus filius Samuelis Bridger, bapt." The year 1631 was written at the top of this page. (Images of his baptismal record are attached, as shown on Ancestry.com on 29 January 2023, in the database whose title is also shown. In one image, I've indicated his entry with an arrow. Note: this baptismal record is image 34 of a total of 749 images in this database of Dursley Parish Records.) [Insert photo files **Baptismal\_full.jpg** and **Baptismal\_large\_arrow.pdf** here]

I contacted John Brayton and told him about finding the baptismal record for Joseph Bridger in the Dursley Parish Records posted at Ancestry.com. I also asked him which date he trusted best. He said the Parish Register was closer to the event and so more trustworthy than the Bishop's Transcripts.

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<sup>1</sup> Boddie, John Bennett, *Seventeenth Century Isle of Wight County, Virginia*, 1938, Chicago, reprinted Genealogical Publishing, Baltimore, 1994, p. 423.

<sup>2</sup> Brayton, John A., "Joseph Bridger of Bursley, Gloucestershire," published in *The Virginia Genealogist*, vol. 41, #3, July-September 1997, pp. 183-184.

<sup>3</sup> The Image of Joseph Bridger's Baptismal Record from the Parish Register of Dursley, Gloucestershire, England, image 34 of 749 images, was posted on Ancestry.com. Source Citation: Gloucestershire Archives; Gloucester, Gloucestershire; *Gloucestershire Church of England Parish Registers*; Reference Number: *Gdr/V1/89*. Source Information: Ancestry.com. *Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1813* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014. Original data: Gloucestershire Anglican Parish Registers. Gloucestershire Archives, Gloucestershire, England. Last accessed January 29, 2023.