When William Ellis was born in 1757 in Albemarle Parish, Surry County, Virginia, his father, John, was 47 and his mother, Mary Wiggins, was 32. He married Nancy Sims (1761-1812) about 1775 in Bute County, North Carolina.

He performed patriotic service in support of the American Revolution by signing an Oath of Allegiance and receiving a Land Grant in 1778.

On April 4, 1778, Benjamin Ellis and William Ellis made entry for adjoining tracts of land in Bute Co.; Benjamin's tract was on waters of Hawtree Creek, adj. Young's line, said Ellis, Towns, Jesse Ellis and Glover; William's tract adjoined Benjamin's entry, Glover's line, Persons, Nicholson, Thompson, Edwards and Johnson (N. C. Land Entries, l778- 79). Grant for 302 (320?) acres was issued 12 Feb. 1779 and registered 4 May 1780. On 12 Aug. 1780, William sold this land to John Ballard of Mecklenburg Co., Va. Wits.: Micheail Ellis, Abigail Ellis. (Deed Bk. 7, p. 413).

On Nov 29, 1780, he had moved to Warren County, NC and in Deed Bk. 7, p. 420, 29 Nov, 1780 (8l?), John Ellis to William Ellis, 180 acres on waters of Hawtree...Thompson line thence down road to Jans line. Wits.. Benja. Ellis, Charles Hulks (?).

On February 27, 1794 he was the executor on a will for Benjamin Ellis.
He is identified in the 1800 Federal Census of Warren County, NC.
He is named on deeds in Warren County, NC on 8 December 1800, 5 January 1804 and 17 August 1809.
He is named on a deed in Robertson County, TN on 19 Sep 1809
They had three children during their marriage, Sims, Lucretia and William.
He died before November 1812 in Robertson County, Tennessee, at the age of 55.