

JAMES HAMLIN (abt. 1610-1690)  
 ANN \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

James Hamlin came to Cape Cod and founded the family from which most of the Hamlins in America are descended, including the line to Abigail, his great, great granddaughter, who married Zephaniah Babbitt. (7-4)

"The pioneer Pilgrims who came to this continent in 1620, as a result of religious persecution, were followed by a second group of English men and women who shared their convictions. The men were mostly graduates of Cambridge, and held about the same social status as Cromwell, Hampden, and Prynne. It was a remarkable body of men and women; they voluntarily gave up comfortable homes and good social positions in England in exchange for a hazardous life in the wilderness. James Hamlin, of Devonshire, was one of this number. Not much is known about him, but his acts tell their own story. He was the son of Giles Hamlin of Devonshire, and a brother of Thomas Hamlin, of London, who had the privilege of inscribing himself "gentleman". James is the immigrant ancestor of the larger part of the Hamlin families in America." 1

The English shires of Devon and Cornwall are considered a region apart from the rest of the southern coast of England. In this extreme southwestern peninsula (see map 1 #s 35, 36), the land is hilly and in places wild and uninhabited. The cliffs on the coast are not chalk as the more easterly coastline, but rock. In fact, Land's End - the tip that projects out into the Atlantic - is a mass of granite. The climate is exceptionally mild, and semi-tropical plants flourish. This is in marked contrast to the severe winters to be endured at Barnstable in Cap Cod, where the Hamlins made a home in America.

Exeter, the county seat of Devon, is one of the oldest towns in England. Here the Britons came out of hiding in Dartmoor and Cornwall after the Romans left. They lived peacefully side by side with the Saxons for several centuries until they were driven out again by King Athestan early in the tenth century.

Exeter Cathedral is justly celebrated. Inside the cathedral is a plaque in memory of Richard Blackmore, author of "Lorna Doone". In the lovely valleys of Devon there are unspoiled villages, dreamlike in the spring when the fruit orchards around them are in bloom. Devon cattle are a prized breed; and the soured cream of Devonshire is an epicure's delight.

Plymouth, on the coast, which was, no doubt, the departing port of James Hamlin in 1634, fourteen years after the Mayflower set sail from the same port, was the starting point for many expeditions of the Elizabethan sea roving era. Drake, Humphrey, Hawkins - as well as the later Captain Cook left from Plymouth's quay called the Barbican.

In Devonshire and especially in Cornwall there are still heaps of stone standing that were once baronial castles of the ancient Britons and the Druids. Many of the legends of King Authur are associated with this area of England and the eldest son of the English monarch always bears the title duke of Cornwall.

Here in Devonshire the pressures of religious conflicts were felt as surely as in other shires of England during the early years of the seventeenth century. The report of the privations and sufferings of the Mayflower Pilgrims



tended to delay any immediate migratory intentions but within a few years following, England saw many of its citizens taking courage and leaving their homeland to escape the persecutions meted out to those who adopted Puritanic doctrines and customs.



Puritans

"James Hamlin first made a voyage to Cape Cod (1634) unaccompanied by his family, and there made a home for them at Barnstable, Mass. He then returned to England, and in 1639 brought back his wife and several children

. . .

"Cape Cod was a bleak and desolate spot when James Hamlin and his companions took up their lives there. The country was flat and sandy, and the soil was hardly capable of cultivation. The land was apportioned among the settlers and after much toil they founded the ancient and historical town of Barnstable, and James Hamlin was one of the thirteen incorporators. The land that he received came to be called Hamlin's Plains, and his house remained standing for many years after his death. Hamlin was

also a friend and a follower of the famous Pilgrim preacher, John Lothrop, who managed to supply the needs of the church at Barnstable from the years 1639 to 1653, in addition to his duties at Scituate. Hamlin is supposed to have come to this country in the same ship "Griffin" with Rev. Lothrop. In 1690, James Hamlin died, full of years, - he must have been fully eighty, - leaving a good name and a large family of children, most of whom were born at Barnstable. Five sons are supposed to have survived their father; and an amusing tradition has been handed down concerning them that illustrates the indifference people of this period showed about family names. It is said, and the story appears well borne out by facts, that when James made his Will and spelled his surname Hamlin, his sons agreed that each should spell it differently.

"When the Pilgrims settled in Massachusetts the Indians were disposed to be friendly. There were five hundred or more living around the neighborhood of Cape Cod, and they gave the people of Barnstable no trouble. But as the English began to get a foothold, to multiply and extend their interests, the Indians became alarmed and jealous. The old story of a weaker people retiring before a stronger people was repeated. The Indian was wronged by the freebooters of all nations that ravaged these shores, but he was never destined to be civilized. He was a passing phase, a picturesque figure in the human family. Contact with Anglo-Saxon civilization shivered and finally broke him. While the Indian was shamefully treated in many respects by the whites, his cruelty and treachery toward his own race must not be forgotten. He had noble qualities, but at the same time he had also the nature of a savage. To the honor of the Pilgrims it must be recorded that their treatment of the Indian was in the main generous and humane, albeit they were guilty of some high-handed acts. The conflict between the Pilgrims and the Indians, in the Narragansett war, was precipitated by Philip, king of the Wampanoags, to check the advance of the English, not to retaliate on them for any acts of cruelty or oppression.

"Philip was a great warrior, the Vercingetorix of his people. In 1675, during the lifetime of James and Ann Hamlin, he formed the tribes of New England into a league to exterminate the English. It was a war to the knife, and the English, calling their best fighters, prepared to break the Indian's power in New England. The Narragansett war was a period of terrible tension and suffering for the English; an experience with a new kind of warfare, lurking foes and ambushes, with one brilliant battle which, judged by results, should be ranked among the great battles in history. The English decided that to put the war to an



end they would have to find Philip and strike him an unexpected blow. Philip was in camp in a large swamp, where the town of Kingston, R.I. is now located. In the bitterest of December weather, the English, over a thousand strong, marched all one day and night through forests and swamps to Pattyswamscott. Over four hundred of their number were over-come by the piercing cold, but the remainder of the English pressed on . . . They completely surprised Philip, and routed him after a desperate battle of six hours. Seven hundred Indian warriors were killed, and probably over three hundred died from their wounds. Philip was killed not long after. He was chased to the southern shoreline of what is now Connecticut, captured and executed at New Haven. The battle of Pattyswamscott destroyed all hopes the Indians had of success and they gradually withdrew until forced out completely, seventy five years later, by the French and Indian wars." 2

James Hamlin lived to see the termination of King Philips war with its subjection of the Indians. Two of James' and Ann's sons were engaged in the armed forces of this war; Bartholomew and Eleazer Hamlin, who marched in Captain Gorham's company of one hundred. Of this company, thirty were killed including the captain, and forty were wounded. Bartholomew and Eleazer luckily escaped tragedy. In 1685 the Massachusetts General Court paid grants of lands to the soldiers and their survivors. "The land the Hamlin's received is now the site of the town of Gorham, Maine, but it does not appear that they ever claimed it." Ships carrying New England bound immigrants steered a course into the more enticing coves of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The early settlers saw Maine as an untamed, desolate wilderness and few attempted to colonize there except in some cases of free land grants. 3

It is said of a Revolutionary War descendant, Major Eleazer Hamlin, on receiving grants of land in the District of Maine in return for his services in the war, "that he visited his land, and wrote a sarcastic letter to the General Court, in Boston, advising it to "return the land to its' original inhabitants, who happened to be bears." 4

Another author gives further details on the life of James, the immigrant, in these words:

". . .The presumption is that James was forced to flee from England on account of religious persecution, and that his family came to this country at a later date, in the Spring of 1639. He was a Puritan and a member of Mr. Lothrop's church in Barnstable and is thought to have come to America with him in 1634.

"His home lot, which consisted of eight acres of land was bounded north and west by Coggin's or Cooper's Pond, and he was also owner of various other lots of land. His name appears frequently on the Plymouth Colony records, the first mention being on March 1, 1641/2, when he was made freeman. He served as constable at Barnstable . . .His name appears on the list of freeman in 1670 and in 1689. The following commentary on Mr. Hamlin was made by Mr. Otis: 'Goodman Hamblen was not much in public life. He was an honest man, a good neighbor and a sincere Christian; he was industrious and prudent in habits and brought up his children to walk in his footsteps.' Mr. Hamlin's Will was dated January 23, 1683. He mentioned his wife Anne, making her his executrix. It seems that no other record of her has been found . . ." 5

The children as listed in William Richard Cutter's record (above) and in the DAR record are:

- "1. James Hamlin, bp. 21 Oct. 1630; died Oct. 24, 1633 in England
2. Sarah Hamlin, bp. in Eng. Sept. 6, 1632, probably died young.
3. Mary Hamlin, bp. in Eng. 27 July 1634
4. James Hamlin, bp. 10 April 1636 in England; md. 20 Nov. 1662 Mary Dunham, dau. of John and Abigail Dunham (7-35)
5. Hannah Hamlin, probably born in Eng. in 1638 or 39
6. Bartholomew Hamlin, b. 11 Apr. 1642, Barnstable, Mass.; md. 20 Jan. 1674, Susannah, dau. of John and Abigail Dunham (see p. 581 child #6)
7. John Hamlin, b. 26 June 1644, Barnstable; md. Aug. 1667, Sarah, dau. of Austin Bearse
8. child, stillborn, buried 2 Dec. 1646
9. Sarah Hamlin, b. 7 Nov. 1647, Barnstable
10. Eleazer Hamlin, b. 17 March 1649; md. Oct. 1675, Mehitable Jenkins
11. Israel Hamlin, b. 25 June 1652; md. Abigail \_\_\_\_\_ " 6

The baptisms of the first four children are recorded in Lawrence, Reading, Berkshire County, England. The fourth child, James, our ancestor, was three years of age on his arrival to New England and Hannah, the fifth child was probably a baby still in her mother's arms. The other six children were born in Barnstable.

James' Will, witnessed by Governor Hinkley and Jonathan Russell, Jan 23, 1683, was proved Oct. 22, 1690, the only record we have to date of his death which may have been a few days earlier.

"The Hamlins continued to live in and around Barnstable a long time as an unbroken family, and their numbers rapidly increased. They are spoken of in the history and chronicles of Cape Cod as good citizens, church-going and patriotic people." 7

1. #54 p. 4
2. ibid pp. 4, 5
3. ibid p. 6
4. ibid p. 11
5. #21 p. 1622
6. #71 p. 53 54 also #21 p. 1622
7. #54 p. 7