

JAMES HAMLIN (abt. 1636-1718)  
 MARY DUNHAM (1642-1715)

"James II Hamlin, son of James and Ann Hamlin, was baptized April 10, 1636, in St. Lawrence Parish Reading, Berkshire, England (map 1 #31), died, according to one authority, at Tisbury, Massachusetts, May 3, 1718. He came to this country with his parents probably near the year 1639, as a child of about 3 years. He followed the occupation of farming, conducting his operations at Hamlin Plains, in West Barnstable. He was admitted an inhabitant of the Plymouth Colony and freeman, October 3, 1663; his name appears on the list of freeman, May 29, 1670; and on June 5, 1671, he was appointed an inspector of the "ordinaries" (places where lodging and wines could be provided for the towns people and for travelers), an inn; he was a member of the grand inquest, June 6, 1682; he and his wife were members of the church in 1683; he was named in his father's Will, Jan 23, 1683; he served as representative in the Great and General Court for her Majesty's Province of Massachusetts Bay in Boston, May 13, 1705. His Will was dated 1717 and it stated, at that time, that he resided in Tisbury. He married at Barnstable, November 20, 1662, Mary, born 1642, died April 19, 1715, daughter of John and Mary Dunham." <sup>1</sup>

The DAR report lists John Dunham's wife as Mary and Abigail as a second wife (see 7-40). <sup>2</sup> All fourteen children of James and Mary (Dunham) Hamlin were born in Barnstable, Mass.

- "1. Mary Hamlin, b. 24 July 1664; md. 22 Feb..1692 at Barnstable, John Davis
2. Elizabeth Hamlin, b. 14 Feb. 1665/6; md. John Scudder
3. Eleazer Hamlin, b. 12 April 1668; md. Lydia, dau. of John Sears (through Eleazer's line - a grandson, Eleazer became the grandfather of Hannibal Hamlin, a man of prominence in revolutionary times, see further)
4. Experience Hamlin, twin of Eleazer (3) b. 12 April 1668; md. 24 Aug. 1687, Thomas Jenkins
5. James Hamlin (3) b. 26 Aug. 1669; md. 8 Oct. 1690, Ruth Lewis
6. Jonathan Hamlin, b. 6 Mar. 1670/1; md. 6 Mar. 1705, his cousin, Esther Hamlin
7. a son, b. 28 Mar. 1672, died 7 April 1672
8. Ebenezer Hamlin, b. 29 June 1674, md. April 4, 1698, Sarah Lewis, daughter of George and Mary (Lombard) Lewis of Barnstable; died April 8, 1755, ae 81 yrs. (7-36)
9. Elisha Hamlin, b. March 5, 1676/7, died, 20 Dec. 1677
10. Hope Hamlin, b. March 13, 1679/80; md. 9 May 1712, William Case
11. Job Hamlin, b. 15 Jan. 1681
12. John Hamlin, b. 12 Jan. 1683; died before 1717
13. Benjamin Hamlin, bp. 6 Mar. 1684/5
14. Elkanah Hamlin, bp. 16 Mar. 1685; md. (1) 13 April 1711, his cousin Abigail Hamlin (2) 11 Aug. 1734, Margaret Bates." <sup>3</sup>

Eleazer, #3 above, was the great, great grandfather of Hon. Hannibal Hamlin, Vice President of the United States during Abraham Lincoln's administration, for many years a member of the National Senate from Maine, afterwards a minister to Spain and a man of prominence in America's revolutionary times.

James II, grew up on his father's farm in Barnstable and after he married Mary, he remained on the Hamlin Plain where he and Mary had their family and

carried on after the death of James, Sr. in 1690. Later, in 1702, when James Jr.'s son Ebenezer and his wife Sarah occupied the Coggin's Pond homestead on Hamlin Plain, he and Mary moved to Tisbury, Mass. where he served on several civic committees there as he had done in Barnstable. Their daughter, Hope, had married William Case of Tisbury and this fact could have been a motive for the move to that town to spend the remaining years of their life.

Though the date of James' Will, 13 Sept. 1717 is a certainty, his death date is a probable, 3 May 1718. His wife Mary died three years earlier, April 19, 1715. It seems most probable that they were both buried at Tisbury.

Of James' sons it is stated that they were large, powerful and energetic men, with kindly but decidedly independent dispositions. By nature they had the gift of originality in all their doings. They were well educated considering the opportunities of their time and place and had a strong common sense and a shrewd knowledge of men. While they supported the church as their parents and grandparents had done before them, it is quite evident that they had their own ideas about Puritanism and thoroughly enjoyed life. Their sense of humor often outruled the customary piety of a puritan's countenance. <sup>4</sup>

A story, told of Eleazer, a grandson of James, has lived on in Hamlin traditions and was preserved through the printed pages of Charles Eugene Hamlin, portrays the Hamlin love of fun.

"...One day he ordered two of his boys to do some work on his farm. Presently he heard them shouting with laughter and preceded to investigate the cause. A stream of water with high banks ran through his farm. On one of the banks were the boys, and a short distance away was a large ram, that belonged on the farm. The boys had a red handkerchief, and when they waved it the ram would rush at them, full tilt; then the boys would drop quickly on the ground, and the ram, carried on by his weight, would go flying into the stream below. In stentorian tones Hamlin shouted, 'Boys, what are you 'kiveering' around here for? Begone about your work, sirs!' While the crestfallen lads were slinking off to their work, their father stood on the bank, meditating on the ram and wondering if he enjoyed the boy's fun as much as would appear. There seemed byt one way to find out, and that was to make a test himself. He took out his own red 'kerchief and signaled to the ram, who accepted the challenge and started for his master. But, alas for Mr. Hamlin; he did not move as quickly as his sons; the ram struck him fair and square and the ram and Eleazer went over the bank together, unable to stop. The boys, hearing the ram charge, ran upon the scene just in time to see their astonished parent throw up a veritable geyser as he struck the water full force. The boys shrieked with laughter, and one of them shouted: 'Oh, father, what are you kiveering around here for?' Mr. Hamlin was at first disposed to resent this, but his sense of humor led him to see the affair in its right light. He joined his sons in their laugh, and told the story himself. . .

"One amusing illustration of his originality was his attack on the nomenclature that had been handed down and preserved with a clannish-like tenacity in the Hamlin family for many generations. In the annals of the grim Cape Cod era of his family, Eleazer Hamlin found an array of Biblical and symolical names like Job, Thankful, Desire, Shobal, Ichabod, Deliverance, Content, Zaccheus and others. He made his departure in the matter of nomenclature in the naming of his children. . . He was well read on the history of war, and being a great admirer of Scipio Africanus, he named his eldest son for that Roman general. But everyone insisted on calling the lad Africa. This gave Hamlin a hint and the children that followed Africa were named America, Europe and Asia. Twin sons were finally born, and these

received the names of Hannibal and Cyrus, in honor of the Carthaginian and Persian generals." 5

Of James' wife, Mary Dunham, mother of their fourteen children, much could be said where little has been recorded. Life in those days of early New England brought an unusual measure of difficulties that only a Titan could subdue, where situations peremptorily demanding a gentle hand, a big heart and the stamina of an ox. Women of the wilderness were women of strength and courage. For those pioneers like James and Mary a final thought might be this: "To live and die is the saga but the material of an inheritance that is left lives on and will never die."

1. #21 pp. 1622-3
2. #71 p. 61
3. ibid pp. 61, 62 also #21 pp. 1622-3
4. #54 p. 7
5. ibid pp. 7, 8