

EBENEZER HAMLIN (1674-1755)
 (1) SARAH LEWIS (1660-)

"Deacon Ebenezer Hamlin, son of James Hamlin II, was born at Barnstable, Massachusetts, July 29, 1674. He resided on his father's homestead in Barnstable, at Coggins or Cooper's Pond until his removal to Rochester, now Wareham, Massachusetts, probably in the 1720s . . ." ¹ (map 2)

He was born at the time of the great disruptions incident to the onslaught of Indian terrorism that terminated in the King Philips War of 1675. He grew to manhood on the farm of his parents with his 8 brothers and 4 sisters. The farm came to be called the 'Hamlin Plains.' His grandparents, James I and Ann Hamlin had immigrated to Cape Cod from England prior to 1642. (7-34). His mother, Mary, was the daughter of John and Mary Dunham (7-40), who were among the early arriving Pilgrims at Plymouth Bay.

Ebenezer's parents remained on the original homestead until about 1702 when they removed to West Barnstable, or Tisbury, after which Ebenezer took over his father's farm.

" . . .He (Ebenezer) married (1) 4 April 1698, Sarah Lewis, daughter of George Lewis and Mary (Lombard) Lewis . . ." ²

He and Sarah occupied the old home on the 'Hamlin Plains' where all of their children were born. Sarah had been born Jan. 12, 1659/60, at Barnstable, Mass. She was the third child of twelve children in her parents family (7-42). Her grandparents on both her father and mother's line were immigrants to America, choosing to be with the brethren and sisters of a faith not tolerated in the mother country, England. Her father, George Lewis was born in England and came with his parents as a child who, when he was ten years of age, moved to Barnstable in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Her mother was born in Scituate, an area within the Plymouth Colony, (see map #2) whose parents had migrated to New England for the same reason as the Lewis family. (7-44) Both families, Lewis and Lombard, lived first at Scituate where they had enjoyed the seclusion found in the worship services of Rev. Lothrop. Sarah's grandparents had followed closely the first arrival of the Pilgrims to the Plymouth Harbor. (7-41)

It is well at this point to be reminded that it was in 1620 that the vessel named 'Mayflower, bound for Virginia, made its first landing in the new world at present day Provincetown on the Cape. After signing the Mayflower Compact - the first written agreement on self-government in America - the Pilgrims crossed the Bay to found the Plymouth Plantation. Sarah had only to consult her grandparents to hear, first hand, the stories as they really were, and to know the autocratic conditions that existed in the motherland.

It is a proud fact for us today that many of our direct ancestors were among those who, followed closely, or, were among the first arrivals to the shores of the New England coast lines of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

When Rev. Lothrop moved his congregation from Scituate, Mass. to Barnstable, Cape Cod, Mass., it is not surprising that the Lewis family (7-41) were among those who followed their beloved pastor.

It was here, in the picturesque place on the shore of Cape Cod Bay that George and Sarah grew up. Their parents had learned strict Christian principles for they had worshipped within the range of the oratory of Bro. Lothrop. It is of particular interest that we linger awhile in the Barnstable area to meditate and confirm whatever went into the fiber that wove so intimately the environment that held our ancestors there for a few generations.

There is a lure of magic in Cape Cod. One cannot help but feel a hope that the progress of time's ever rolling wheel will not rut too deeply the Barnstable that Sarah Lewis once knew. It has a quiet subtle beauty; it has a feel of a relaxed way of life, a security of isolation. Perhaps this is the fiber that kept the people so settled and satisfied.

Cape Cod was born of glaciers, shaped to the whim of wind and wave. On the map it seems a thorn in Neptune's side as it juts crookedly into the Atlantic from mainland Massachusetts. Its shape had further suggested it as a strong arm which accounts for its title, "The strong arms of Mass." No where on the Cape is the sea more than six miles away, continually exerting its power to make the land one of exceptional beauty.

Barnstable is, today, the same leafy town of steeples and rambling country roads. It is nestled near the shore in the hilly, pond-pocked realm of a harbor crowded with cranberry bogs, and sea captain houses. Here one can see many weathered wood shacks set like an Andrew Wyeth painting amid low, sculptured dunes fringed with sun-coppered beach grass. The sea, sand and salt air merge in a haunting panorama of elemental beauty. Still one can see that the old Barnstable is readily losing what is left of its past. The serenity that had always been savored is somewhat changing. The town has recently been acclaimed as the fastest growing town in Massachusetts. The county of Barnstable is seeing a boom in the building of both summer and permanent homes. While visiting the area in 1973, the writer, however, felt those lasting impressions of a lingering past. Perhaps the thought of Sarah (Lewis) Hamlin was a reminder of a never ending memory of that time long ago when she must have felt the joy that a mother has in her growing family; when the world is kind and life is full of rewards. One cannot help but feel a hope that the past will linger yet awhile so that those of the present can feel the serenity that once was there. There remains a note of sadness in these recollections for Sarah died leaving Ebenezer a widower with their motherless children. She was the last of the line left to rest in the strong arm of Cape Cod. Ebenezer saw fit to leave the home of his youth for other pastures.

There are reasons, however, for other people to long for the haunting strangeness of Cape Cod. One reason remains even today - the avoidance of the social whirl of other places. It remains the haven of creative people who like to be left with the personal freedom and privacy that they want for writing, for painting, or for pursuing their favorite interests.

The legends of the many long-dead seamen who were supposed to haunt the wind-swept shores of the Cape persisted in story telling episodes for many years but are slowly fading into oblivion. One of these spine shuddering tales is of Goody Hallet, a Cape Cod witch, who liked to lure ships to perdition with a lantern hung from the tail of a whale. It is good to know that such tales were

a part of the mysterious that belonged to those children of Barnstable who sat wide-eyed and stiff as they listened so intently; for there was a natural blending of those stories to the surroundings of their home with the ever sounding roar of the ocean beating upon the shore.

After the death and burial of Sarah, Ebenezer looked toward other lands where he could plant his Hamlin family in newer areas. He had left his mark as a well respected man in Barnstable and as Mr. Cutter stated ". . . Ebenezer Hamlin was a prominent man in the community, his influence for good being felt and recognized . . ." 3

His children are listed in the above source with birthdates of each but a more complete listing was found in the DAR account as follows:

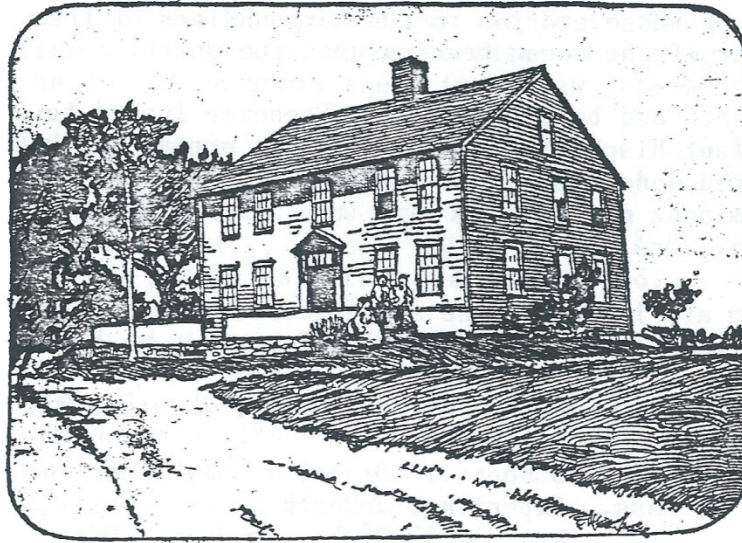
- "1. Ebenezer Hamlin, b. 18 Mar. 1698/9; bp. 7 July 1701. Went to Farmington Conn.
2. Mercy Hamlin, b. 10 Sept. 1700; bp. 7 July 1701; md. 18 April 1728 Rochester, Mass., Experience Johnson
3. Hopesstill Hamlin, b. July 1702; bp. 26 July 1702; md. 27 Nov. 1729, Rochester, Jonathan Hunter.
4. Cornelius Hamlin, b. 13 June 1705; bp. 17 June 1705; md. 5 Dec. 1732, Colchester, Conn., Mary Mudge, dau. of Ebenezer and Abigail (Skinner) Mudge. (7-37)
5. Thomas Hamlin, b. 6 May 1710; bp. 12 June 1710; md. (1) 6 Feb. 1734, Rochester, Mass., Ruth Gibbs, (2) Mary Crowell of Oblong, Dutchess County, N.Y.
6. Isaac Hamlin, b. 1 July 1714; md. 24 Sept. 1737, Rochester, Mass., Mercy Gibbs.
7. Lewis Hamlin, b. 31 Jan. 1718; md. 12 Apr. 1739, Barnstable, Mass., Experience Jenkins; went to Lebanon, Connecticut." 4

The birth of #7, Lewis, in 1718 places the mother, Sarah, at the age of 52 which would lead one to assume that there had been a second wife who was the mother of at least - the younger children. However, recorded sources credit Sarah as being the mother of Cornelius, our ancestor.

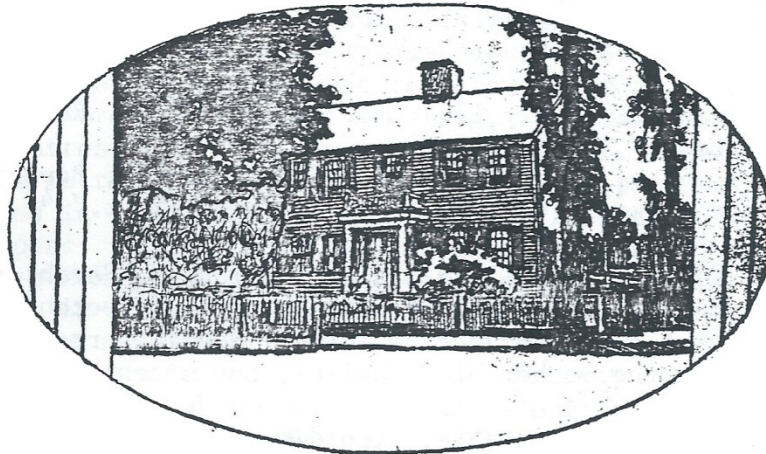
Ebenezer remained in Barnstable, according to William Richard Cutter, until after his father died in 1718. We do not have the death date of Sarah but she evidently died prior to the time that Ebenezer sold the Hamlin Homestead to Col. Gorham and is known to have removed to Rochester, Massachusetts with most, if not all, of his family.

". . . Ebenezer married 20 Sept. 1729, Elizabeth, widow of Samuel Arnold of Rochester, Mass. . . . He and his family settled in that part of Rochester which is now Wareham, Mass. He and his children were original members of the Church at Wareham, established Dec. 25, 1739. He was chosen deacon Feb. 18, 1740, a position that assured his title of "Deacon Ebenezer Hamlin" for his remaining years." 5

Rochester is about thirty miles to the west of Barnstable and the distance takes one out of the arm of Cape Cod and through a wilderness to the west of Mattapoissett Harbor. (see map #2). "Old Rochester" included seventy or eighty square miles of territory that the earliest settlers had bought from the Old Colony Court of Plymouth. The King Philips War had exterminated many of the



Deacon Barnabas Bates House



Former Residence of Gen. Isarel Fearing

The upper picture of the Deacon Barnabas Bates house was built in 1734, not far from the Burying Acre in Agawam. It was occupied by him and his descendants for nearly two hundred years. It was vacant when destroyed by fire in 1934 or 1935.

The lower picture shows the home of Israel Fearing, located in the Fresh Meadow Village near Wareham. He was the first person in the area to be commissioned a Justice of the Peace.

Indians in that area and only a few remained who seemed willing to be peaceful.

Ebenezer was living in Rochester at the time the area, then called the Agawame (the Indian name) Plantation, made a petition to the General Court in Boston to set Rochester off as a separate and distinct precinct. Israel Fearing was the first person in the area to be commissioned a Justice of the Peace under King George the First. It was Israel Fearing who was entrusted to carry the towns petition to Boston and deliver it to the Plymouth representative in 1738. His experience of journeying from Rochester to Boston is interesting from the fact that the descriptions taken from Mr. Fearings diary brings us to a close range view of things as they were at this early time in America.

". . .Early in the morning, May 29, his mare newly shod and carefully saddled, Israel Fearing started on the momentous journey to Boston. The way was narrow and rough, a path through a forest, with rocks and quagmires and long reaches of sand making it almost impassable for cart wheels. Branches of large trees shut out the sunlight, occasionally a deer bounded across the path, and foxes and bears were seen in the thickets. His nimble mare, accustomed to such ways, carried her rider up through Scituate, reaching Roxbury Neck above five in the afternoon where a half hour's pause was made at the St. George "Ordinary" (an inn or tavern for the convenience of travelers).

"From this elevated site the traveler could see the steeples of Boston, its harbor lively with vessels, the King's ships riding before the town, Cambridge and the shores of the mainland in the distance; and, journeying on into the great town the most prominent object to attract his attention was a gallows standing at the gate! In the town what a contrast to the quiet plantation of Agawame, - the streets were paved with cobblestones, and thronged with hackney-coaches, sedan-chairs, four-horsechays, and calashes, in some of which gayly dressed people were riding, the horses being driven by negro-slaves. Also there were familiar sights, a flock of sheep, oxcarts laden with firewood, fagots and hay. He noticed with amazement the stately brick houses and their pleasant gardens where pear trees and peach trees were blooming. In the mall gentlemen dressed in embroidered coats, satin waistcoats, silken hose, and full wigs were taking an after-dinner stroll with ladies attired in bright silks and furbelowed scarfs and adorned with artificial flowers and "beauty patches on their cheeks. Boston was an active thrifty trading town with its shops, distilleries, windmills and ropewalks all agoing. Israel turned his mare into King St., pulled up at the 'Bunch of Grapes' tavern, that being near the Town House, and so, convenient for his business, and having met James Warren, the Plymouth Colony representative, he entrusted the petition to him, paid him the fee of twenty shillings and rode back to Agawame, now Rochester." 6

On July 10, 1739, after a second petition had been made, the Court granted their wish and the bill was signed by Gov. Jonathan Belcher. At that time, a town had to contain forty qualified voters to be entitled to a representative in Boston. It was not until forty years later that Rochester gained a seat in the General Court but they could be heard by sending an agent to confer with the Plymouth Colony representative.

The Menchoisett region is largely a sandy plain, the deposit apparently of a great lake formed under glacial influences. Along the shores are the valuable deposits of quahaugs, scallops, and other shell fish, which have been of large food value to the inhabitants from Indian times to the present. The fishing rights to the shell-fish of the shores and the fish in the bay, as well

as to the herring of the rivers, have been the subject of much town legislation, and in all town divisions the rights in these fisheries to all the inhabitants of Old Rochester have been carefully preserved.

The grassy land of the necks and the shore lands in general furnished to the colonists "hey grounds"; and here salt hay is still harvested yearly though less valued than of old. They were also used for pasturage, and for years these Necks in general were held as a "common field" for the stock-raising inhabitants of the old town.

But there are in Old Rochester large swampy tracts that have never been populated though they are valued for timber. Besides the sandy and swampy tracts there are large sections where the light, sandy soil is closely filled with huge boulders and smaller rock deposits, showing how mighty were the glacial forces that were once active in shaping the natural conditions of the region. There are many interesting single rocks. Of these the one deserving of first mention is the great "Minister's Rock" where outdoor services were held by the early colonists. In the Mattapoissett Bay area is a ledge of the famous "pink granite" which is still being quarried. It is impossible to enumerate all the natural features of the Old Rochester lands, which are, after all, not peculiar to Old Rochester, but are similar to those of all the other parts of Southeastern New England. ⁷

"In the seventy years since the Pilgrims stepped from their shallop onto Plymouth Rock the Colony had grown and spread out into prosperous self-reliant communities.

"These men and women were all of pure English blood, of an even social status, descended from those who had come to the coasts of Massachusetts between the years 1620 to 1650. Their farm labors were too exacting to allow many opportunities for mental culture, but they were people of good sense, who feared God and honored the King, who wrote the English language better than some of their descendants. Books they had few. The Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, first printed in Boston in 1681, and the Catechism were their principal reading matter, and they read them faithfully, over and over.

"In their common necessity and community interests they found their true neighborliness, and their social life. The men in their leather breeches and leggings, cutting and piling wood, building, farming, hunting, fishing, all to provide the common necessities of life. They cleared their land, and with the rocks they pried out of it they laid up their stone walls and building foundations. They planted their corn as Squanto had taught them using two alewives to each hill for fertilizer. For other crops seaweed and rockweed were used as fertilizer. They planted flax, rye, oats, wheat, beans, peas, and other vegetables. And barley, -

"When the oak is as big as a mouse's ear,
Then to sow barley, never fear"

And a weather prediction, -

"If the oak is out before the ash,
'Twill be a summer of wet and splash'
If the ash is out before the oak,
'Twill be a summer of fire and smoke."

And the women? How that old rhyme fits them!

"Man works from sun to sun,
But woman's work is never done." 8

Cooking, washing, ironing, mending, knitting, spinning, weaving, making clothes for the whole family, and through it all, bearing children, caring for them and teaching them, and caring for their sick. With only candles, or perhaps pine fagots for light, their days began before dawn and often into the nights. Yet with all this, they found time and strength to help a neighbor. Though the "house-lotts" were large and the houses far apart, they gathered together often to sweeten their labors with sociability, wit and humor, and to share news of town affairs. If a neighbor lacked a commodity another could and would supply it. One might even need to borrow fire. Friction matches did not come into use until 1835. When someone's fireplace went out, dead, it was a common practice to borrow a brand from a neighbor and hurry home to rekindle it.

"There were no hospitals, and few doctors. Every family knew the medicinal value of herbs, and gathered balm of Gilead buds and leaves, sage, mullein leaves, thoroughwort, snapwood, tansy, everlasting, sassafras - you name them - they had them all, in bunches hanging heads down from the attic rafters, - ready to conquer coughs, colds, fevers, skin eruptions, rheumatism - . The various "greens," dock, dandelions, brakes, milkweed, were spring tonic foods. For linament there were goose greese, skunk's grease and even turpentine. . .

"Those who died in old age were said to have died of "a hectic decay." Other causes of death noted in Church records were, - "of the numb palsie," "of a dropsical consumption," of "quimsey," "of a putrid fever," "of a carbuncle," "a cramp," or "of a mortification."

"After those first lean years they did not lack food. Waterfowl, wild turkeys, pigeons, hares, rabbits, quail, partridges, and deer were plentiful; and the sea and fresh streams and ponds provided a bountiful supply of fish and shell-fish.

"Combining work with pleasure they held husking-bees, sawing-bees, quilting-bees, paring-bees. In the winter there were sleighing parties.

"And always their Church was the centre of their lives. It was of first importance. Regardless of wind or weather or distance, Church support and Church attendance were obligatory. By boat, or ox cart, or shanks-mare, they went to Church. . ." 9

One might wonder why man's desires should lead him into new areas of endeavor when what was had seemed so favorable but the Hamlins were bent on seeking land to the west in Connecticut. It appears that the oldest son, Ebenezer and his wife and the next oldest son, Cornelius, our ancestor who was not yet married, preceded their father in leaving Rochester, Mass.

"Ebenezer's wife, Elizabeth, probably died prior to the year 1742, as on May 30, 1742, Deacon Ebenezer Hamlin, and two sons, Thomas and Isaac and their wives, Ruth and Mercy (Gibbs), respectively, were dismissed to Sharon, Connecticut." 10 (dismissed is a clerical term that refers to a forwarding of church membership from one locality to another.)

It follows, according to the data of the families of both Thomas and Isaac, that they settled and remained, as did their father in Sharon, Connecticut. (see map #14) They, no doubt, passed through the areas of Farmington and Colchester on their way west to be reunited with the older boys, Ebenezer and Cornelius. Cornelius had married Mary Mudge in Colchester, Conn., in 1732 and Ebenezer had settled in Farmington, Conn.

The youngest son, Lewis, had married in Barnstable in 1739 but had settled in Lebanon, Conn (see above map). Both of Ebenezer Sr.'s daughters were married in Rochester, Mass., and it is not known if they ever left that area.

It is apparent that Cornelius and his wife and family of four children had moved on to Sharon, Connecticut prior to the time that Ebenezer, his father, and Thomas and Isaac, his two younger brothers had traveled from Rochester Mass. to Sharon Connecticut in 1642. The fifth child of Cornelius and Mary was born Mar. 8, 1741 in Sharon, Conn., after their arrival. We know then that Ebenezer had three sons and their families with him in Sharon.

They were among the earliest settlers there and no doubt were proprietors of the town of Sharon. They were, actually, located on a western outpost of civilization, but could they have gone further they would not have found a more beautiful setting for a home. Were you to visit the place at a recent time as did the writer of this review, you would agree that the place is like a Paradise. From every hilltop the view is new, the landscape being varied by plains, rivers, and lakes, all framed by ranges of mountains along the horizon line. Sharon's beauty and attractiveness have been pictured by the pen of many writers, her fame has been spread in song and story. About her in a semi-circle is a chain of lakes. Between and around these lakes are big, broad, green fields, wooded knolls, shady groves, winding lanes and the happy homes of many people. Here and there, standing out in open field alone, is some tall stately oak, such as the one beneath which Walt Whitman reclined when, looking up into its branches, he gave to humanity his inspiring verses of poetry.

Somewhere in this 'Garden Beautiful,' half enveloped in the green mantle of oak, elm and maple, a home was raised where Ebenezer Hamlin spent his declining years. In his Will he bequeathed "Twenty-four pounds old Tenor toward the worship of God, in the neighborhood where I now dwell; viz in or near the new-erected meeting house on the Oblong, near Sharon." ¹¹ This was the Presbyterian Church at Amenia Union, Dutchess County, N.Y., across the line from Sharon (now South Amenia) of which Rev. Kimbloe was the first pastor, whose church records were consulted by the DAR for further records of some of the descendants of Deacon Hamlin. The district of Sharon could early have included the area of Amenia before state lines existed between Connecticut and New York and the Hamlins could have resided on or across the line into what is now New York state.

During the time of the reign of King George the Second (1683-1760) the insults of the British establishment began to burn in the brains of alert Americans. Men living in the heart of this empire found themselves promoters of individual rights with a buoyancy belying the years since this lands British birth.

Whether or not our Ebenezer concerned himself with the economic and political pressures that were pushing the country into change, we may not know, but the likelihood of his interest in current events is unquestionable. He was a descendant of patriots who had strong convictions about the dangers of giving a few people too much power. Most of the settlers had not forgotten the forces that had convinced them or their immigrant forefathers to move away from despotism. Like all great leaders, they had been dissenters; not the rock throwing kind, but the responsible opponents of injustice.

Ebenezer had moved to the more western frontier of his time, so he must have missed much of the turmoil and fervor that existed in the more centralized areas of the east, though, for sure, news must have reached his ears. Boston was an exhilarating city of 8,000 and was about to unlace the somber vest of its Puritan heritage. Philadelphia was being promoted to becoming the meeting place for nation makers. The printing press was putting out 240 sheets an hour, one every 15 seconds. Social commentaries were voicing the resentments felt regarding arbitrary Government and unlimited powers. Religious hypocrisy was being attacked, schools for girls and women were being promoted. Discussions of economic impact were on the lips of a new kind of citizenry. The spirit of '76 was well on its way during the lifetime of Ebenezer Hamlin. This we know, he drank deep of the Protestant ethics of his time, for he was a church goer and a church supporter. During his declining years, Ebenezer knew of the growing disturbances resulting in the French and Indian Wars. George Washington, in 1754, then a young man of 21, was commanding a force at Fort Necessity and was defeated by the French of Fort Duquesne. The year that Ebenezer died, 1755, General Braddock was mortally wounded in the expeditions against Crown Point and Fort Niagara. The turning point of the war came in 1757. Quebec was taken in 1759 and both Montcalm and General Wolfe lost their lives and the French empire in America was at an end.

Ebenezer's death came after 81 years of honest living; it came in the quiet seclusion that he had founded in the western outpost of Sharon, Connecticut, on April 8, 1755.

1. #21 p. 1623
2. #71 p. 47
3. #21 p. 1623
4. # 71 p. 48
5. ibid
6. #142 pp. 34-5
7. #143 pp. 30-35
8. #142 pp. 27-8
9. ibid p. 28-9
10. #21 p. 1623
11. ibid