

CORNELIUS HAMLIN (1705-1794)
 MARY MUDGE (1711-abt. 1754)

Cornelius Hamlin was born June 13, 1705, the fourth child in a family of seven born to Ebenezer and Sarah (Lewis) Hamlin. He spent his boyhood in the home that had been occupied by his grandfather and his immigrant great grandfather Hamlin. His mother died and he moved to Rochester with his widowed father, who sold the homestead on Hamlin's Plain, Barnstable, to Col. Gorham. Four brothers, Ebenezer, Thomas, Isaac and Lewis and two older sister, Mercy and Hopedstill made up the family who made the trek in the wilderness about thirty miles to the west of their childhood home in Cape Cod. Here, in Rochester, his father met and married Elizabeth Arnold, widow of Samuel Arnold of Rochester.

It appears that Cornelius, when about 24, went into Connecticut with his older brother, Ebenezer and his wife, who settled in Farmington, Conn. Cornelius must have stopped at Colchester, Conn. for it was in Colchester that he married Mary Mudge, the daughter of Ebenezer and Abigail (Skinner) Mudge (7-47), on Dec. 5, 1732. Mary's birthplace was in Lebanon, Connecticut, a town several miles to the north and east of Colchester. Her family moved many times as her father went into new settlements to build grist mills. The Mudge family moved to Sharon, Connecticut when Cornelius and Mary decided to go with others of the Hamlin family to that new area. ¹

The DAR report gives the following information along with the listing of the children of Cornelius and Mary:

"It is supposed he (Cornelius) removed with his father's family from Barnstable to Rochester, Mass.; thence to Westchester, Conn. where he was a member of the Church in 1729. He and Mary were dismissed to the church in Sharon, May 18, 1740. The History of Sharon stated that he was an early settler there, from Wareham, Mass., earlier called Rochester, and also lived for a while near the head of Mudge Pond near Colchester, Connecticut. (maps #7 & 8-#)

"He was a carpenter; was chosen highway surveyor at the first election in Sharon, Dec. 11, 1739. The births of his four older children were recorded in Colchester, Conn. The births of all the children were found recorded in Sharon but that town was not inhabited until 1739 so only the last two children, Mercy and Sarah were born after the family moved from Colchester, Conn. to Sharon, Conn.

"He had extensive holdings as land records reveal. He sold land to Calkins, Skinner, Stebins, Mudge. He removed to Spencertown, N.Y., 1760, but soon returned to Sharon where he spent his remaining years. (map #14)

Children:

1. Cornelius Hamlin b. Sept. 25, 1733, Colchester; md. 14 Aug. 1755, Hannah, dau. of Ebenezer Mudge and Patience Full
2. Mary Hamlin, b. 25 Feb. 1735, Colchester; md. 13 Mar. 1755, Richard Treat
3. Ruth Hamlin, b. 2 Dec. 1736, Colchester; md. 13 Mar. 1755, Timothy Treat
4. Abigail Hamlin, b. 8 Oct. 1738, Colchester; md. about 1755, Zephaniah Babbitt, son of Elkanah and Mahitable (Crane) Babbitt of Berkley, Bristol, Mass. (see 7-4)
5. Mercy Hamlin, b. 8 Mar. 1741, Sharon, Conn.
6. Sarah Hamlin, b. 20 Oct. 1743, Sharon, Conn.; md. 17 Feb. 1773 New Milford, Conn., Gilbert Gregory." ²

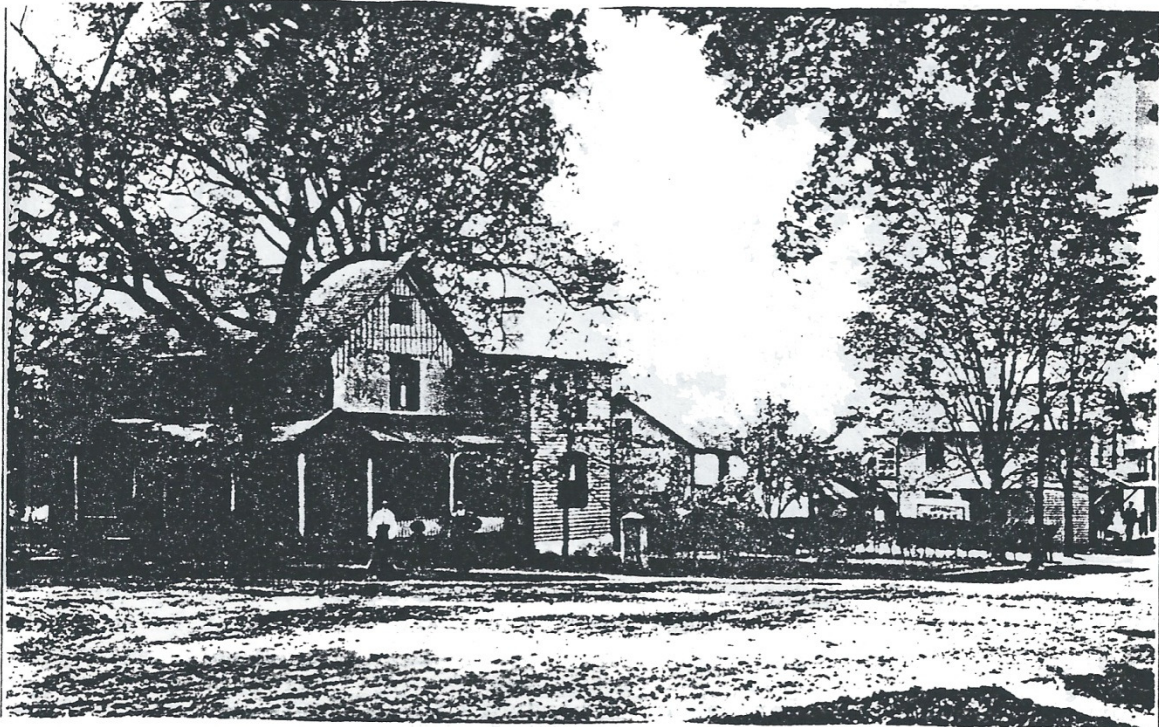
"Sharon is situated on one of those long sweeping terraces of the Toghkanic Range which reach from the summit of the mountain down to the very waters of the winding Webotuck. It is famous for its broad streets, its stately elms, its wide, proverbial New England "village green." Also for its fine roads and magnificent drives. Winding in and around Sharon is like following one's way through some great, broad, richly diversified park, designed not by the hand of some landscape artist but by the great Artist above . . . Mountain ranges in a circle are all about, until it seems as if we are in a world of our own up here in the lake country of Connecticut; America's Switzerland in miniature. . . The streets of ancient Athens, which were designed by landscape artists whose religion was Beauty itself, are not comparable to Sharon's mainstreet laid out by our fathers.

". . . The air of the street is quiet, dignified, conservative. It speaks of culture and refinement. Rome's conquering army never marched down this Appian Way, but George Washington's did and halted at the southern end of the street, with their British and Hessian prisoners, remnants of Burgoyne's army." ³

Cornelius Hamlin lived to see the conclusions of two wars in America; the French and Indian Wars (1754-1763) and the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and we might say he was there in Sharon when Washington marched through on his way to New York and points south to Philadelphia.



A LANDMARK ON THE WEBOTUCK
George Washington stayed here over night in Revolutionary days.



A COLONIAL HOMESTEAD
Built in 1783



SHARON STREET, LOOKING NORTH TOWARD SOLDIERS' MONUMENT



ANOTHER TYPE OF THE COLONIAL HOME
Built in 1775

Cornelius had the misfortune of losing his wife, Mary, while his children were yet unmarried and the following year, 1755, his aged father, Ebenezer, died. That same year his four older children; Cornelius, Mary, Ruth and Abigail were married. His youngest daughter did not marry until 1773 when she was about 30 years of age. It is not known that his daughter, Mercy, ever married, and it is possible that she died young. Perhaps Cornelius, who outlived his wife by thirty years, had to live alone the eleven remaining years of his life after Sarah married in 1773. He died Feb. 21, 1794, and it is supposed he was buried beside his wife in Sharon, Conn.

The Hamlins were familiar with the struggle between France and England for colonial expansion and power in America; a struggle which eventually terminated in the French and Indian Wars (1754-1763). This war was fought by the colonists with great motivational force. The threat of a French domination with its Catholic dogmas was enough to put fears into the hearts of all freedom loving people. The western lands of New England were heavily involved in the conflict aroused by the ambitions of both France and England. The Indians were exploited by both powers, adding to the suffering and confusion of the settlers in many areas.

Most sympathy in New England was with the British. England was considered the motherland and much patriotic sentiment was yet felt and so New England rallied to assist the British in their cause; realizing that their own security was at stake. The French had been steadily dominating the lands to the north and were pressing further westward in their expansion. The close of the war brought about the fall of French power in America.

England expected America to assume the expense of the war and taxation without representation was thought an injustice. Other grievances, too, provoked much dissention among the colonies. During the years between the French

and Indian Wars and the War for Independence, Americans were in a state of mental turmoil. The wheels of change were rolling this land into a spirit of proud nationalism. Individuals were torn by the great decision. Shall I be loyal to my English heritage or shall I be patriotic to the cause of a new nation's desire for freedom and independence? There arose two factions in America, the loyalists and the patriots and the conflicting issues caused much dissention and persecution. Some loyalists moved north into Canada and some into Maine and New Brunswick to avoid the pressures brought to bear by the patriots. To be on the winning side in case of a war seemed to make sense and the well organized British appeared to have the advantage over the colonies. George Washington who had held British military rank in the French and Indian Wars, by the 1700s, was ready to take command on the side of freeing the country of British domination.

Cornelius lived to see America's separation from England. Whatever might have been his feelings regarding the issues that caused people to be either patriots (those who felt that independence was the only solution), or loyalists (those who wanted to remain British), we may never know. His western habitation may have rendered him less likely to have been as vitally aware of the severity of oppression that existed further east as did his many cousins who still lived in the Boston and other eastern communities. He was descended from a line of forefathers who had strong convictions about the evils of despotism and the dangers of too much power in the hands of a few. His great grandfather, James I had left England because of English oppression so it seems most likely that Cornelius would have placed his loyalty with the Patriots.

The Hamlin patriotism can best be revealed in the portrayal of one, Eleazer, the son of Cornelius' cousin Benjamin Hamlin. Eleazer, with three of his sons, was actively engaged in the War of Independence, as were many other eastern Hamlin cousins. (Of note, it might well be mentioned that Eleazer was the grandfather of Hannibal Hamlin who became vice-president of this nation under Abraham Lincoln's administration.)

"Eleazer was a large farmer in Pembroke, Mass. He married Lydia Bonney, who bore him eleven children. She died and he married a widow named Bryant, who presented him with six more children, so that when the War of Independence broke out, Eleazer Hamlin had a family of seventeen children and a large farm to take care of; but he was a sturdy countryman and the service that he and his sons rendered in the Revolution makes the war come to life for us, the descendents of James Hamlin, the immigrant.

"The real Hamlin stuff was revealed in Eleazer's story. He was one of the first to favor separation; his home was the center for the yeomanry of Pembroke, Mass., (map #2) an inland town between Plymouth and Boston. There the men of the town heard the latest news of the growing troubles between the colonies and the mother country, - the appointment of mercenary colonial governors, the selfish exactions of the London merchants, compulsory trade with England alone, taxation without representation, and the obstinate denial of George III to listen to true English demands for fair play. The climax of oppression was reached when British soldiers were stationed in Boston to enforce obnoxious laws. Patriots began to arm themselves; minute men prepared for action. The night Paul Revere spread the alarm, Eleazer Hamlin, his two elder sons and his son-in-law, marched in Captain Hatch's company, Eleazer as a lieutenant, to Scituate, ready for duty. Pitcairn's attack on Lexington and Concord aroused the country; minute-men poured in from all sides. Eleazer Hamlin was appointed

captain in May 1775. . .His two sons, aged seventeen and sixteen and his son-in-law served in his company, and with him marched into Cambridge on July 3, to join the army of fifteen thousand men assembled there to receive Washington as their commander . . . The three Ham-
lins fought in the disastrous battle of Long Island . . .in the New Jersey campaign, - at
Trenton and Princeton, - which Frederick the Great pronounced to Washington's credit as
"The most brilliant campaign of the century. . .

"Captain Hamlin at this time, to his great regret, had to return home; his wife had fallen
ill, and she died shortly afterwards. With a family of fourteen or fifteen children, and
a large farm to take care of; the situation demanded his presence at home . . .When he
tendered his resignation, Washington gave him several hundred dollars as a token of his
personal regard, the gift signifying more than the money itself . . .

"When Eleazer Hamlin returned to Pembroke, he entered the state militia and was appointed
a Major, a title he retained for the rest of his days . . .(A third son, Merrick, aged 17,
replaced his father in the Continental armies.)

"Only a minority of the American people openly advocated separation from the mother country
at the outbreak of the war. The majority thought that armed resistance would bring the
English Parliament to its senses . . .The war was fought with serious obstacles, but Wash-
ington bound his men to him with hooks of steel, and, half starved, half frozen at times,
always inadequately armed, they followed him wherever he led. Washington's personality and
warmth of affection for his men was an immense factor in his success.

"Eleazer's oldest son remained in the war throughout and wrote a voluminous diary that was
widely read and used for historical research for many years. The original script was final-
ly lost.

"After the war was over, the Massachusetts Court gave Major Hamlin and his sons some grants
of land in the District of Maine in return for their services." 4

Major Hamlin visited his land, and wrote a sarcastic letter to the General
Court, advising it to "return the land to its original inhabitants who happened
to be bears." Colonists had openly been avoiding the land of Maine. Its shore
line was objectionable, its wilderness looked barren. However, Eleazer's three
sons pushed into Maine to claim land there and in some cases their descendants
made fortunes.

Most Americans had hoped that armed resistance at the beginning of the war,
would bring favorable results without a complete break with England. The inde-
pendence established by great dissenting leaders as a result of the Revolution
brought about the many freedoms enjoyed in this land by future generations.

It was soon to follow that Sharon, Connecticut and western outposts in
Berkshire County, Mass., ceased to be 'far-west,' as waves of migratory groups
went on to claim lands for the new nation - further and further west, even to
the Pacific Ocean.

The transitions of change from one generation to another are often not
evident unless we see them in retrospect. The immigrant forefathers had no
thought of a complete break with their motherland. The dangers of a French
domination brought the colonies together in a cause that showed their love and
patriotism to their English homeland. Then in the next breath came a genera-

tion, in the life time of Cornelius, that yearned for independence from that same motherland. The success of the French and Indian Wars had given the colonists a lot of confidence in their own abilities to rule without subjection. Independence was not easily earned, however, and it is hoped, will not be easily lost.

We leave the Hamlin name to be carried on by paternal cousins. When Abigail Hamlin married Zephaniah Babbitt (7-4), from whom a line of Babbitt descent takes us to Elizabeth Almira Babbitt, we connect to the Rice line. She married Leonard Gurley Rice (1-7) and our pedigree, then can be traced from John Hamelyn who was living in Cornwall, England in 1570 to our Rice ancestor, Leonard Gurley Rice. Four more generations bring us to the present (1985), inclusive of 414 years plus.

1. #56 p. 63
2. #71 pp. 45, 46
3. #121, pp. 13-17
4. #54 pp. 8-11