

GEORGE LEWIS (abt. 1600-1662)
 SARAH JENKINS (abt. 1600-before 1654)

The Lewis and Lombard ancestors were not among the Mayflower group of the 'Pilgrim Fathers'. They arrived several years later and though they settled first at Plymouth they removed to settle that part of the Plymouth Colony that became known as Scituate, Massachusetts (map #2). They came as followers of the Rev. Lothrop from their homes in the County or Shire of Kent (map 1 #34). The Lewises arrived in 1633 and several of Rev. Lothrop's congregation in Kent came that year and the Reverend, with more of his followers, came in 1634. Whether they landed in the Boston Harbor or at Plymouth Bay is a matter of conjecture but most arrivals of that early date made Plymouth their first settlement.

While the Pilgrims were overcoming the obstacles and hardships incident to their new residence, religious dissenters and merchant adventurers in England were engaged in plans to organize themselves in such a way as to assure a successful venture in the New World. You have probably heard the saying, "Men of Kent" in reference to some of the early settlers along the Massachusetts shore line. This term was given to many who came as did George Lewis and Thomas Lombard and his son, Bernard, from Kent County, England. Those who went first to Plymouth as did the Lewises and Lombards were soon settled in the new area of Scituate. They established themselves as a little community in anticipation of the arrival of their pastor in London who arrived in 1634.

"On September 18th 1634 Reverend John Lothrop with some thirty members of his congregation, whom he had brought from Egerton in the County of Kent arrived in Boston in the "Griffin." They immediately came to Scituate. Included among the group from Plymouth was George Lewis who sought and obtained dismissal from the church at Plymouth 'in case they join in a body at Scituate.' " 1

The most complete write-up of the Lewis family was found in "New York Guide to the Empire State " - Writers Program:

"Most of the Lewis families were of Welsh origin, though many of the early immigrants came from England to the colonies. The name is particularly difficult to trace, both on account of the great number of immigrants of this surname and of a marked tendency to frequent changes of places of residence. From the first they appear to have been exceptionally venture - some and enterprising. The name finds various spellings, and the immigrant ancestor of the family, George Lewis Sr., invariably wrote his name Lewes.

"George Lewis (Lewes), of East Greenwich, county of Kent, England, a clothier, probably resided for a time in London and was a member of Mr. Lothrop's church there in 1632. The next year found him in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and in 1634 he was dismissed from the church in that town to the church at Scituate, where he became a member, September 30, 1635. Before October, 1636, he built his house on Kent Street, Scituate, which was so called because of the number of Kentish men living there. His home lot, consisting of five acres, was the first south of Meeting House Lane, and his house was the eighteenth built in the town. He was made a freeman of the colony, January 14, 1637 and in 1639 he removed to Barnstable. At this time he sold nine and three quarter acres of land in Scituate, and his right in commonage, for nineteen pounds . . ." 2

Religious conflicts arose among the inhabitants of Scituate and it soon seemed advisable for part of the group to settle elsewhere. Rev. Lothrop with part of his group decided to go to Barnstable on Cape Cod. George and Sarah chose to remove with their pastor to Barnstable.

There had been a few trials made by earlier people to settle Mattacheese (now Barnstable) but their land grants had been declared void by the Plymouth Court so the way was cleared for Lothrop's company to obtain and make purchase of land from the Indians. This company of religious people are usually considered as the first settlers of Barnstable even though there were houses and several families still there to welcome Lothrop's group on their arrival. The Lombards (7-43, 44) were members of Rev. Lothrop's group and moved to Barnstable at the same time.

"Mr. Lothrop's flock came, appropriately by land and by water. The former was the harder journey. It was sixty up-and-down miles from Scituate, driving their livestock. One group arrived in July. By mid-October the whole contingent had arrived: Mr. Lothrop, traveled by land, was here by October 10; those who sailed from Scituate did so apparently in a vessel owned by a settler already in Barnstable. It is possible that the offer of this transportation was one reason for the choice of Barnstable over another place of settlement, for there had been much debate in Scituate as to the possibility of removing to Sippican (now Rochester, Mass.)" ³

As land allotments were made in Barnstable, the Lewis' "home lot was situated the second west of Hyannis road and George and Sarah owned the highway still known as Lewis Hill, besides many other parcels of real estate. His great lot used as pasturage included sixty acres. He tilled the farm of one Dimmock, who was an invalid. George Lewis was a surveyor of highways in 1648-50, juryman, 1649, constable 1651, and died in Barnstable 1662/3. He married (first), about 1626 in England, Sarah, sister of Edward Jenkins, who was among the early settlers of Scituate. She probably died before 1654, and his second wife, Mary, was living in 1670." ⁴

According to the birth dates of the children of George and Sarah, three or four of their ten children were born in England, three were born in Scituate and the last three were born in Barnstable; the youngest born in 1645, all children of Sarah, George's first wife.

The DAR lists the children in the following order:

- "1. Mary Lewis, b. England; md. 14 Nov. 1643 in Scituate, John Bryant.
2. Thomas Lewis, b. England; md. 15 Jan. 1653, Mary Davis
3. George Lewis Jr., b. 1629, England; md. 1 Dec. 1654, Mary Lombard, dau. of Bernard Lombard, died 20 Mar. 1709 (7-42)
4. James Lewis, b. 1631; md. 31 Oct. 1655, Sarah Lane of Hingham
5. Edward Lewis, md. Hannah Cobb
6. John Lewis, b. 2 Mar. 1637/8; killed 26 Mar. 1676, Rehoboth. (This was occasioned by the King Philip's Indian War of that year)
7. Joseph Lewis, md. 1671, Mary Jones. killed by Indians, King Philip War, 1675; was living in New London, Conn.
8. Ephraim Lewis, b. 23 July, 1641, Barnstable, Mass.

9. Sarah Lewis, b. 2 Feb. 1643/4, md. (1) James Cobb (2) Johathan Sparrow
10. Nathaniel Lewis, b. 1645, d. 13 Oct. 1683 at Swansea, Mass. md. Sarah Marsh" 5

From this large family of eight boys and two girls came many descendants. George Lewis Jr. (#3 above) had twelve children and his third child, Sarah, became the last Lewis progenitor on our line of kin when she married Ebenezer Hamlin. The Hamlin, Lombard and Lewis families were some of the earliest pioneers of Cape Cod and the town of Barnstable, Mass.

Because of the constant flow of immigrants crowding themselves into the vicinity of Boston during the years following the arrival of the Pilgrims, the colonists became dissatisfied. Before moving from Scituate, the settlers there had petitioned the government at Plymouth, complaining that "the place is too strait for them, the lands adjacent being stoney, and not convenient to plant upon." 6

The name of George Lewis was included with several others, who had petitioned the court that more lands be given the township. This petition was granted. Only those, of course, who had been admitted as freeman prior to 1636 had a voice in the affairs of the colony.

There were remarkable periods of emigrations, however, from Scituate. In 1639/40, to Barnstable, when nearly half the population departed with Rev. Lothrop. In 1650, to York and its vicinity. In 1658, to Barbadoes. In 1670, to Rehoboth and Swansie. In 1690, to Norwich, Conn. and other locations. Scituate, however, felt no great loss in population. The influx of immigrants was ever constant.

The settlement of Barnstable on the Cape was commenced chiefly by people from Scituate. A grant was obtained in September of 1639 by Joseph Hull and Thomas Dimoc, who, "with their associates," were to erect a plantation or town at, or about, a place called by the Indians Mattacheese, between Yarmouth and Sandwich (see map #27). "Many persons of character and note were embraced under the term "associates," among whom was the distinguished pastor, Rev. John Lothrop. . . George Lewis, Bernard Lombard . . . and others. Indeed, nearly all the members of Rev. Lothrop's church at Scituate removed with their pastor, or soon followed." 7

"The first purchase of land was negotiated August 26, 1644 from the Indian Serunk. This was the northerly lands of the West Barnstable area on the bounds of Sandwich. Up until 1644 the attention of the settlers was directed to a division of the land on the north shore and they seem to have had little time to be concerned about the vast Indian domains to the east, south or west. Several purchases from the Indians were made as colonists increased in the area." 8

The map (#27) shows that the area of the incorporated town by 1685 met the bounds of Sandwich and Yarmouth and included the shoreland of the Nantucket Sound on the south.

It seems, according to Frederick Freeman, that even though purchases of land were made of the Indians, the right of the Indians to the soil was still acknowledged and he frequented the areas as he pleased. Settlers had requested audience before the Governor and others, in reference to the religious improvement of the Indians and instructions were given to them. The natives were permitted and encouraged to enter into church fellowship. They often would seat themselves in church services.

There were several clergymen who came to Barnstable with their church following between 1637 and 1639 besides the Reverend John Lothrop, which influenced the religious atmosphere of the settlement. During the fourteen years that Rev. Lothrop lived and carried out his religious pastorage, little conflict arose but after 1653 great disunity in the community was experienced. In some cases strife resulted between the church groups and the presence of a "Quaker" was considered the greatest of evils by all Puritan standards.

Conflicts can have a leveling effect and terminate in an improvement in personal tolerances but in the early days of this country the very lives of the people depended upon unity and cooperative endeavors. Their safety against Indian uprisings depended upon a closely bound people in small areas with well organized methods of guard and in charitable activities between households. Once this kind of unified effort is torn apart the success of any one settlement was endangered. The proceedings of the government toward restrictions made on church groups and on individuals was deemed justifiable even to the extent of making punishment for offenses very severe.

The restrictions placed upon churches which promoted views contrary to the dominating beliefs, seemed destined to produce an almost entire revolution in the religious character of the towns of Sandwich, Barnstable and Yarmouth. The stories of the Allens of Sandwich (7-11) reviews some of the conflicts aroused between the clergy of the ruling Puritan powers and the "Quaker" differences that were challenging the stability of communities. Under the laws such offenses as,

"...speaking reproachfully of the court, and saying the law enacted about ministers maintenance was a wicked and devilish law, and that the devil sat at the stern when the law was enacted, brought fines and prison terms upon offenders. The extraordinary proceedings of the government of the Plymouth Colony, whose power lay in the clergy to regulate the conduct of the people and especially any offenders in church and civil affairs, did not always meet the approval of all citizens.

"In order to prevail against such evils as was thought to be a dishonor of God, the courts had to take into consideration God's displeasure that might be manifested in serious calamities and scourges upon them. The fear that the weather might not be favorable 'for the gathering of the fruits of the earth for our own food, and stover for our cattle . . . and not hitherto so effectually blessing our endeavors' was a matter of serious concern, and any act or conviction that was contrary to the prevailing rules of the clergy was declared punishable by very stern methods. The result amounted to the very kind of persecution they had come to America to avoid. Friction of such a sensitive nature as can be had when religious differneces exist, can arouse division and disunion which the colonists could not tolerate. Their very lives depended upon the cooperation of each member of a community and upon their worthiness of God's blessings 9

It is easily understood that when the emotional sensitivities of people are under such stress as becomes intolerable to either the body or the soul that the consequences get out of control. The problem of religious strife was an overall problem for all the colonies and much of the migrations into new areas resulted from such strife.

Even though the troubles at Barnstable, like many of the other plantations in Massachusetts, were satisfactorily settled as time passed, still Barnstable was labeled, unfortunately, as a place of discord for several years. The General Court at Plymouth had more than its share of cases of civil and ecclesiastical trials. Most of the offenses were those which today would be considered trivial and of small consequence. The statutes were numerous and the piled up restrictions grew higher and higher.

"The Colonial Court met for three sessions each year for the trials of cases civil and criminal; the court to be composed of the governor and at least three magistrates . . . Selectman were required to present to the court all persons who absented themselves from public worship.

"A census was ordered in each town of all male inhabitants, from sixteen to sixty years of age, capable of bearing arms. Laws were provided also for the support of public worship; and towns that neglected to have a minister, were to be taxed by court for the support of public worship. . ." 10

This last ordinance met with objections by the "Quakers" who did not believe in a paid ministry and refused to be taxed when they rejected the services of the Puritan or Pilgrim clergy.

The Lewis family like the Allen (7-10, 11), the Hamlins (7-34, 35), and the Lombards (7-43, 44), lived through this period of disunity and strife. Many church doctrines were being tossed from one extreme to another. We might assume that since neither the Lewis nor the Hamlin name appears in any court matters of conflict that they must have been faithful members of the Puritan faith or otherwise took a neutral stand or a path of moderation and good judgment. Perhaps they were the better for it all.

Mary (Jenkins) Lewis died some time before 1654. Not all of her children had reached maturity. George Lewis died about eight years later in 1862/3. They were undoubtedly buried at Barnstable but markers of that early day are no longer visible.

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| 1, #135 p. 26 | 6. #135 p. 28 |
| 2. #152 Vol. 3 p. 1413 | 7. #137 p. 139 |
| 3. #138 p. 28 | 8. #138 p. 9 |
| 4. #152 Vol. 3 p. 1413 | 9. #137 pp. 228-9 |
| 5. #71 p. 69 | 10. ibid p. 257 |