



A New Clue to the Lee Ancestry

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male and female. Item. I give unto my loving wife all my Hoggs male and female. Item. I give unto my loving wife aforesaid all my Household goods whatsoever and all my wearing apparel and all my books. Lastly I give unto my loving wife this my now dwelling plantation, both Housing and Ground. I give likewise unto my Brother, Leonard Dunster, half a crown, and to his son, William Dunster, half a crown after my Decease, and all this to be fully accomplished according to the true Intent and Meaning hereof. Witness my hand.

ROBERT DUNSTER.

Witness us—

Wm. Travers, Wm. Jux, Thomas T Wright.

Mark.

[Probated May 17, 1656. He was the minister who was a witness to the will of Robert Watson on November 6, 1651. William Jewry, in 1651, directed his body to be buried in the Parish Church, and Robert Dunster directs his body to be buried in the usual burying place. The "usual burying place" was at the Parish Church from 1623-4, if not from 1619. *I Hening*, page 123. The usual burying place for the Upper Parish was at the Old Bay Church, and for the Lower at the Old Brick Church built in 1632.]

A NEW CLUE TO THE LEE ANCESTRY.

LETTER FROM LANCELOT LEE, OF COTON, ENGLAND, TO
THOMAS LEE, OF STRATFORD, VA.

(From copy in Collections of Virginia Historical Society.)

[The letter printed below throws new light on the subject of the English ancestry of the Virginia Lees, as it shows who was the person from whom Hon. Thomas Lee claimed descent. This letter is evidently in reply to one from Thomas Lee, of Stratford. And it is also evident that Lancelot Lee has understood his correspondent to state that the Richard Lee, named as being ances-

tor of the American family, went to Virginia in 1616. This, of course, as far as it refers to the settlement of Thomas Lee's family in Virginia, is an error; and it seems probable that it is a misunderstanding of Lancelot Lee. Thomas Lee was twenty-four years of age when his father, Richard Lee 2d, died, and the latter was sixteen when his father, Colonel Richard Lee, the immigrant, died. There can be no doubt that Thomas Lee would know perfectly well about what time his grandfather settled in the Colony. He must also have been familiar with the titles to his own lands, which had descended from his grandfather, and these would show him that his ancestor was not in Virginia as early as 1616. So it may be concluded, with a fair degree of certainty, that Thomas Lee did not state that Richard, brother of Thomas Lee, of Coton, came to Virginia in 1616, or that his emigrant ancestor came in that year. The chief value of the letter is that Hon. Thomas Lee, who could readily, after he reached manhood, have received the information from his father, who was born in 1647, claimed descent from a Richard Lee, whose father died in 1605. It seems highly probable that this Richard Lee (the son of John Lee, of Coton) was father of Colonel Richard Lee, the immigrant to Virginia.

This letter was unknown to Dr. Edmund J. Lee; but Mr. William Blackstone Lee, of Seend, Wilts., England, in his sketch of the Lees of Langley and Coton, contained in Dr. Lee's admirable book, says, after naming the sons of John, of Coton, and accounting for several of them: "But what of Edward, Richard and Jasper? The question is very interesting, in view of the problem as to the immediate parentage of Colonel Richard Lee, the first of the Virginia branch, as either of the brothers might, in point of time, have been his father."

The first letter here printed was addressed to General Robert E. Lee.]

Fair Fountain, August 1, 1866.

My dear General:

Permit a stranger to trouble you with a few interrogatories respecting the Lee family. I herewith enclose you a letter from Lancelot Lee to Hon. Thomas Lee, President of the Colony of Virginia, which I thought might be of some interest to you, in

connection with the early history of your family. The letter is dated as far back as 1745 and it traces the Lee family back to the early part of the reign of William the Norman. This is the most authentic account we have of the Lee family before it immigrated to this country.

You would very much oblige me if you could find time in your vacation, by giving me a brief sketch of the Lee family after it reached this country—both of those who settled in Virginia, and those who settled in this State. I am descended from that branch of the family which settled in Maryland. My mother was a Miss Clerklee, her father was named James Clerk and married Margaret Russell Lee, and they for some reason combined their names and made it Clerklee. Richard Lee of Blenheim, my ancestor, who acted for a short time as Proprietary Governor of Maryland in 1772, vice Robert Eden, who had gone to England at that time, had two sons, Richard and Philip Thomas. Of what became of Richard I have no account, but Philip Thomas was the father of Margaret Russell Lee—the mother of Caroline Ashton Clerklee, my mother, Clerklee was my mother's maiden name. She married Josias Hawkins, of this county, known as Judge Hawkins.

I have just completed a "family tree" of my father's family, tracing it as far back as we have any certain account, I want now to make a similar one of my mother's family, and if you could help me with any records or reminiscences that can be relied on as correct, you will do me a favor that I will not know how to requite.

You may make any disposition you like of the letter I enclose. I am with great respect, my dear General,

Your obedient servant,

JOSIAS HAWKINS.

Please address:

Josias Hawkins, Port Tobacco, Charles county, Maryland.

LETTER OF LANCELOT LEE TO THE HON. THOMAS LEE.

Copy of a letter from Lancelot Lee of England, to the Hon. Thomas Lee, President of the Colony of Virginia, dated, Coton, Shropshire, May 21st, 1745:

The first of our family came into England with the Saxons. One of the descendants was High Sheriff of this county in the 19th of William the Conquerer. Till the year 1327 there is no mention where they lived and then John Lee is called Dominie de Boden. Robert, his grandson in 1385, married Margaret, daughter and co-heiress of Thomas Astley, of Nordley (which estate we have possessed ever since), and in her *right quarter* the Astley arms, as you see on my seal. By her he had two sons, Roger and John. Roger is called Dominie de Langley. This place is near Shrewsbury—it continued in the elder Branch of our family till it was extinct. Humphrey, one of Roger's descendants, was created a Baronet. In Gibon's edition of Camden's *Britannia*, after a description of Shrewsbury, is this account: "Near this town is situated Langley, the seat of the ancient family of Lees, which is now extinct." They knew nothing of the second son John, from whom we are descended.

John married Locosa Packinton (of a Worcestershire family), and had by her one son, Thomas, who married Elizabeth Corbine. They had an only son, Thomas, who married Johanna Minter, of Haughton. Humphrey, his son, built a house about a half mile from Nordley, and called it Coton—the family seat ever since. He married Catharine Blount. This marriage produced an only son, John, the father of our ancestors. He married Locosa Rowney (of a Worcestershire family), who was a fruitful example to her descendants, about the year 1560, and had by her eight sons—Thomas, his heir, William, who died an infant, Edward, Gilbert, Jasper, Richard, Ferdinand and Tobias. We have no account of what became of any of them, so that some of their posterity may still be living as well as yourself. Thomas married between the years 1584 and 1590; at that time he must have been between twenty and thirty years old. Your ancestor, Richard, you see, was the sixth son, so that he must have been at least that number of years younger than his brother Thomas. By this computation, in the year 1616 (at which time you say he came to Virginia), he must have been between thirty and forty years old. A fine time of life, when the understanding and body are in full perfection, to undertake the settlement of a colony. By the desire I have myself to know the particulars of your branch of the family, since the separation, I judge

that the following particulars, relating to my own, will be agreeable to you:

Thomas married Dorothy Patty, of Pockford, in their county, and had the following children: Lancelot, his son and heir, Elinora, Jocosa, Jane, John (extinct), Catharine, Mary, Anne and Martha. Of what became of the daughters, I have no account. Lancelot had two wives, Jane Hempson and Elizabeth Gough (both of Staffordshire families). He died in 1663, aged 70. By his first wife he left three children—John, who died unmarried, Thomas, his heir, and Richard; by his second wife he left seven children—Lancelot, Thomas, Humphrey, Dorothy, Elizabeth, Ann and Jane. Thomas had three wives; the first was mother to my father; she brought him Eldred, Lancelot, John, Thomas and Dorothy. Her name was Dorothy Eldred, of a Suffolk family. His second wife was Lady Mary Hewit, widow of Doctor Hewit and daughter of the Earl of Lindsey; she brought no children. The third wife was Charity Rivers, of a Kentish family; by her he had George, James and John. My father, Eldred Lancelot Lee, married the youngest daughter of Sir Harry Gough, of a Staffordshire family. She is now alive. We are at present a numerous family—seven daughters and three sons. My Uncle Thomas' widow is still living, and she has one son, who has changed his name and has a good estate in Wiltshire. My Uncle John left behind him one son, who is a clergyman and has a living in Oxfordshire. It is very extraordinary that any family, considering the great revolutions that have so frequently happened in England, should remain for nearly 700 years in the same state which our family has done. The last two or three generations must certainly have been very frugal, or they could not have preserved the estate. Variety of wives and a large number of daughters are a very heavy weight upon land, and can only be balanced by very prudent management. The estate has been increased only in proportion to the value of money. By this may very fairly be collected that we are not an avaricious people. From the first part of this letter you will readily discover me to be a talkative young man, who has not had the cares of a family to compose his mind; curiosity has thrown me a good deal abroad in the world, but at present I live in the country, entirely taken up with the diversions my gardens

and fields afford me, and endeavoring to make Mahomet's Paradise by *Art*, which you enjoy by Nature. Your fruits and shades are indeed delightful. I have tasted them in the Eastern though not in the "Western" World. In both I imagine they are equally perfect; but Mahomet's own black-eyed girls could not excel our English women. At least I would think so, had I once fixed my choice. I have proportioned the length of my letter to the length of the journey it must go; by the length of your return, I shall measure your approbation.

After all give me leave to beg a small favor of you—the following trees are, I believe, native of Virginia, which I have endeavored to procure the seeds of, but have hitherto been unsuccessful—the Virginia Cypress (it grows on wet, marshy land), the scarlet oak and the Paria, or scarlet flowering horse chestnut. The cones of the Cypress should be sent entire; the acorns and chestnuts will easily keep so short a voyage. Pardon this trouble, which if I can return with anything this Island affords within my power, you may fully command.

Your humble servant,

(Signed) LANCELOT LEE.

Mr. Thomas Lee.

CARTER PAPERS.

AN INVENTORY OF ALL THE S * * * AND PERSONAL
PROPERTY OF THE HON'BLE ROBERT CARTER OF THE
COUNTY OF LANCASTER ESQ., DECEASED, TAKEN AS DI-
RECTED IN HIS LAST WILL, VIZT.

(Continued from last number.)

R. N. 6. A Box abt. half full of Ditto.

A Box qt. two Coach Glasses, 1 of them broke, A small box with some Jesuits Bark in it, A Cask qt. 10 p' wool cards, 3 Chests with Medicines in them, A Box qt. 23 Beer Glasses, A D° qt., Some Indigo, A Do. qt., Some gun flints, 6 loaf Double