

Letter from Sir Henry Barrett-Lennard to Elisha Clark Leonard

The following are extracts from letters written to Mr. Elisha Clark Leonard by Sir Henry Barrett-Lennard of England. The two elderly gentlemen, both widowed early in their married lives, were of similar tastes and interests and carried on their correspondence for several years. Just before Mr. E. C. Leonard's death in 1894, Sir Henry sent him as a gift a rare first edition of Sampson Lennard's translation of "Charmion's Book of Wisdom." This book had been laid away in a tin box for several years until the present writer, learning of its rare value, there being but three other copies (British Museum, Canterbury Library, and Folger Library), gave the book to his Alma Mater, Harvard's Widener library, where is now among the Houghton section of the rare books.

7 Walls Walk
Hemstead
May 5

Dear Mr. Leonard:

Thank you much for the gratifying Memorial of your brother whose features in the wood-cut resemble those on J. Lennard's tomb at Chevening. Also for the highly interesting and suggestive pamphlet and lastly your letter on which, as I have 8 folios of ms. Letters and documents about the family, copied, many years ago from some of the infinite papers and parchments at Belhus, you may imagine that I could write you months together. Would that you could be here to inspect them. The lady you refer to whom you supposed to be my daughter-in-law is the widow of Capt. Charles Lennard, my first cousin.

For reasons too numerous to mention here, I am convinced you are descended from the Kentish Lennards, but your family has failed to establish the connections, having been on the wrong track.

The starting point must be the valuable petition of James Leonard of Taunton dated 1687 as he says he was an early settler, and you allude to an agreement of 1652. He must have left England in the time of Charles I and born probably in 1610. It is therefore useless to refer to John Lennard of Chevening, who died in 1590 and whose two sons (only) births are registered as are all those of their progenies. The enormous estates Sampson from his father and wife – daughter of a rich Lord Mayor of London – were too well looked after to leave a bone of finding a contemporary clue in those quarters for a descent for the petitioner. Neither does the date of Sampson the Herold offer encouragement. You must look elsewhere for the missing link.

Sometime after the last Lennard, Lord Dacre, has compiled his family history and furnished Collins, Seager, and Drysdale with materials for their s..., the Earl of Egmont made him aware of the existence of a branch of the family of which he had no suspicion. He forward to him a vellum "5 p. visitation of Sussex by "Lilly Rouge Croix pourservant" tem. James I in which appears the pedigree of the Lennards of Heathfield in Sussex, showing their descent from Lennard of Chephead temp Henry VI. Through Thomas

Lennard, Lord Dacre in 1770, was ignorant of his kinsman's existence, Francis, Lord Dacre in 1635 was not. In that splendid volume, the Herstmonceaux household book (at Belhus) where the principal events, visitors, etc., are recorded, the name of "Master Thomas Lennard of Bayley with his serving men" appears amongst the constant guests at the Castle. Now Bayley Park (?) is the Manor House of Heathfield and that Estate was sold with the other Sussex properties of his family by Thomas Lennard, Lord Dacre, Earl of Sussex. So it is evident that Bayley Park had been hired from Dacres at long lease by one of the offshoot branch. In the Parish Church at Heathfield is a bronze plate to Catherine, the widow of the above Thomas Lennard of Bayley Park with a crescent with a crescent...

I enclose herewith an from the pedigree with and dates which will undoubtedly interest you as they are not to be found in books but come from private records and parish registers also, that of the new branch in which you will observe two interesting and perplexing points. Francis is described as the second son and on his daughter's tomb are the arms with the crescent which he need not have borne if his elder brother had been alive. What became of him and his progeny?

Again, the first of this branch – William – is placed as the eldest son of John – is it likely that a "Rouge Croix" would make a mistake in the pedigree of a contemporary "Blue (Sampson) that indefatigable Herald whose works are so copiously represented in the British Museum? You will remark that four names are cited of whose deaths and whereabouts there is no notice. I sincerely hope that your family may find some descent from some of those so that it may be presented the elder branch of the Kentish Lennards and bear the arms with the label. But you must use another "n" and discard the "o" which never has appeared in documents, ms., or printed. I am frequently addressed with an ("o"). The name Leonard (from the Saint Leonard) was often used by the Dacres as a Christian name but not for connection with ours. It may be that Francis of Chevening and Thomas of Heathfield were reveling at Herstmonceaux Castle their contemporary relative James Leonard (Lennard) was preparing to seek his fortune in the New World. If so, we may hope for the honor of the name that his wealthy kinsman assisted him in his venture and bade him Godspeed.

The Vale of Heathfield as has been somewhat celebrated by Turner (famous painter of the time) in one of his pictures beautifully engraved in folio in the Sussex view by Cook. There is a distant view of Bayley Park Manor. This mansion and It was possessed sometime by Lord Heathfield who took his title from the place. This personage is better known as General Elliot, the Gibraltar hero. In the National Gallery there is a superb portrait by Reynolds of the grim old warrior grasping two keys.

As you are aware that Lady Anne Lennard sold the Kentish Estate including Chevening and Cepsted houses to Mr. Stanhope of Chevening Place. There are several views printed, some of which you may have seen Lord Stanhope sent to my grandfather Sir Thomas Lennard – a pen and ink drawing of the old house which he found on an ancient map...

And now, a word or two as to your welcome letter. The information about Sampson Lennard is important in giving the name of his son, of which we had no record, which must have been by his first wife, Creswell, two years after whose death he must have married the widow Cook, whom you speak of, the second wife who is mentioned in the enclosed pedigree as dying in 1641. You have made additions to it, and it seems to know what became of this Thomas (?) from his having been in London in 1624. As I have before observed, these dates do not encourage research for your descent from that quarter. The Hammersmith you speak of is only a mile from Picadilly is now incorporated in London. Since the time of Edward III it has always been occupied by prosperous and even noble people. The London Histories speak of St. Benets as having contained monuments of distinguished persons and several Heralds were buried there. By "Hallows Church" you must mean "All Hallows" of which there are nine but now styled the less (---?) by Pennant, nearly all have been rebuilt and one taken down, though all the records are preserved. I shall be glad to know if you have received this and if it interests you.

From Yours Truly,

H. B. Lennard

P.S. It is not improbable that Sampson may have had another son, by his first wife, but this is guess work – his will ought to be searched for. You were misled by some dates. In Sampson's Waldeness his address (1624) to Lord Pembroke, he speaks of the kindness shown him for the sake of his favorite friend my beloved cousin Henry Lennard, deceased, whose place you supply and for your Uncle Sir Philip Sydney's sake with whom I was present at his death." The explanation of all this is – John Lennard's daughter Mary married a Walsingham, nephew of Sir Francis Walsingham. Sir Philip Sydney married the daughter of of Sir Francis Walsingham and the Earl of Essex married the widow of Sir Philip Sydney in 1591, five years after Sir Philip's death. We find now (from your date 1566) that he was three years older than his kinsman, Sir Henry Lennard, who was born in 1569. Hence at age 20, Sampson went as page or squire with Sydney to Flanders and was with him when he died at Sutphen in 1586. in 1591, owing to these Sydney and Walsingham connections, there being to regular army, Sampson and Henry accompanied Essex in the Cadiz Expedition. If we could find the date of Sampson's first marriage and his will, having his portrait, printed works, and Herald's ms, all dated, we might compose an interesting biography of him.