

SAMUEL¹ LEVIS, QUAKER IMMIGRANT TO PENNSYLVANIA

His Descent from Edward III

By Leslie Mahler

Samuel¹ Levis, a Quaker yeoman, emigrated from Leicestershire to Pennsylvania in 1684 and settled in Chester County. He served a number of times in the Assembly and was a member of the Provincial Council 1692-93. His father was Christopher Levis, but the surname of his mother, Mary, was not known to the editors of *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*.¹ However, a genealogy of the Need family of Arnold, Nottinghamshire, identified her as Mary Need, daughter of Humphrey Need, married at St. Peter's, Nottingham, 22 July 1648, to Christopher Levis. Mary Need was shown as the granddaughter of Humphrey Need and his wife, Mary, daughter of Thomas Melford.² From an analysis of published visitation records for co. Nottingham and of wills from the Prerogative Court of York, it has been possible to trace Samuel Levis's ancestry through the Melfords to King Edward III.

DESCENT FROM EDWARD III

In the following lineage of Samuel Levis from Edward III, the initial generations are based on entries from *The Complete Peerage*, which cites primary sources. For the later generations, contemporary sources and works based on contemporary sources have been cited and analyzed to establish each link.

1 EDWARD III, King of England, 1327-1377, born Windsor 13 November 1312, died Sheen Palace, co. Surrey, 21 June 1377, buried Westminster Abbey, married York 24/25 January 1328 PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT, daughter of William III, Count of

¹ Craig W. Horle and Marianne S. Wokeck et al., eds., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania: A Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 1, 1682-1709 (Philadelphia, 1991), 484. George Norwood Comly, *Comly Family in America . . .* (Philadelphia, 1939), 922, identified Samuel Levis's mother as Mary Neid, although he did not give the date or place of her marriage or her parents.

² Michael Walker, *The Need Family of Arnold, Nottinghamshire* (London, 1963), Appendix 2. This is a carefully documented work with abstracts of pertinent wills at Appendix I.

Hainault and Holland, born 24 June 1311, died Windsor 15 August 1369, buried Westminster Abbey.³

2 LIONEL OF ANTWERP, Duke of Clarence, born Antwerp 29 November 1338, died Alba, Italy, 17 October 1368, married London 9 September 1342 ELIZABETH DE BURGH, daughter of William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, born 6 July 1332, died Dublin, Ireland, 1363.⁴

3 PHILIPPA OF ENGLAND, Countess of Ulster, born Eltham 16 August 1355, died between 21 November 1378 and 9 February 1380/1, married ca. May 1368 EDMUND DE MORTIMER, Earl of March, born Llangoed in Llyswen, co. Brecon, 1 February 1351/2, died Cork, Ireland, 27 December 1381.⁵

4 ELIZABETH MORTIMER, born Usk, co. Monmouth, 12 February 1370/1, died 20 April 1417, married first before 10 December 1379 Sir HENRY PERCY (“Harry Hotspur”), born 30 May 1364, slain at Shrewsbury 21 July 1403. She married secondly Thomas, Lord Camoys.⁶

5 ELIZABETH PERCY, died 26 October 1437, married first 1404 JOHN DE CLIFFORD, Lord Clifford, born ca. 1388, slain at the siege of Meaux, France, 13 March 1421/2. She married secondly 1426 Ralph Nevill, Earl of Westmorland.⁷

6 THOMAS DE CLIFFORD, Lord Clifford, born 25 March 1414, slain St. Albans 22 May 1455, buried Abbey church, St. Albans, married March 1424 JOAN DACRE, daughter of Thomas, Lord Dacre.⁸

7 JOHN DE CLIFFORD, Lord Clifford, born Conisborough Castle 8 April 1435, slain Towton 28 March 1461, buried there, married MARGARET DE BROMFLETE, daughter and heir of Henry de Bromflete, Lord Vessy. She married secondly Sir Lancelot Threlkeld, and died 12 April 1493, buried Londesborough, co. York.⁹

8 HENRY CLIFFORD, Lord Clifford, born ca. 1454, called “The Shepherd Lord” because as a child he was concealed in a shepherd’s house for security against the reigning Yorkists, his title and estates were restored in 1485 upon Henry VII’s

³ *Dictionary of National Biography* 6:466-88, 15:1050-53; Detlev Schwennicke, *Europäische Stammtafeln*, new ed., 2 (Marburg, 1984): 4, 84. The birth date for Queen Philippa is from *The Genealogist* 1 (1980): 138-39.

⁴ G. E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, new ed., Vicary Gibbs, ed., 13 vols. in 14 (London, 1910-59), 3:257-58, 12 pt. 2:178-80.

⁵ *Complete Peerage* [*supra* note 4], 8:445-48, 12 pt. 2:180.

⁶ *Complete Peerage* [*supra* note 4], 9:713-14.

⁷ *Complete Peerage* [*supra* note 4], 3:293.

⁸ *Complete Peerage* [*supra* note 4], 3:293.

⁹ *Complete Peerage* [*supra* note 4], 3:293-94.

accession; he fought at Flodden 1513 and mounted three captured cannons from that battle at his castle of Skipton, but resided chiefly at Bardon Tower, where he devoted his energies to astronomy and astrology. He died 23 April 1523. He married first before 1493 ANNE ST. JOHN, daughter of Sir John St. John, of Bletsoe, co. Bedford. He married secondly before 11 July 1511 FLORENCE (PUDSEY) TALBOT, widow of Sir Thomas Talbot, daughter of Henry Pudsey, of Berforth, co. York.¹⁰

9 ANNE CLIFFORD, daughter by the first marriage, married by 1515 [based on son's age] ROBERT CLIFTON of Clifton, Nottinghamshire.¹¹ He had houses and estates at Hodsock, Blyth Parish, and at Clifton, near Nottingham. He died 9 September 1517, leaving her a widow with a daughter, Dorothy, and a son, Gervase, not yet two years old.¹² A letter from Anne dated 6 March [1518] to her brother, later first Earl of Cumberland, has survived.

Right wrychypfull brodere, I hartly recowmawnd me unto yow, besechyng yow to be gud brodere to me . . . for here hays bene all my husbandes hu[n]kkylls & broders and I hayd nobody to speke in all my cawse bot my selfe. And my husbandes frendes [relatives] thynkes that my frendes ys unkynd, or elles they sete lytyll price by me. . . . I am lycke to be pute [out] bothe fro[m] Hodsoke & Clifton. . . . And Sir, ye knawe that yt ys halfe a yere sene my husband departyd, wo Jhesu pardon . . . and her I ly & kepys hows to my grete coste & charge; and my unkyll dotore [Gamaliel Clifton, her late husband's uncle] schowys me I must pay for al manere of thyng . . . sene my husband departyd. And that [I] ame not abyll for to do, for ye know howe I was left in grete trobyll . . . & lytyll to helpe my selfe with all. . . . and therfor, Sir, [I] beseche yow to send me word by the berer her of qwat ye can do for me in al my matters. . . . No mor at thys tyme, bot Jhesu preserve yow. Wrytyn the sexte day of Marche,

By yowr loffyng syster, Anne

Clifton.

[Endorsed] To my ryght wrychypful brodd[er] Sir Harry Clyfforthe . . . deliveryd in haste.¹³

¹⁰ *Complete Peerage* [supra note 4], 3:294-95.

¹¹ *Visitations of Nottingham, 1569 and 1614*, Harleian Soc. Pubs., 4 (London, 1871): 17-18. G. D. Squibb, *Visitation Pedigrees and the Genealogist*, 2nd ed. (London, 1978), 9, points out that this volume is printed, not from the actual Visitation records, but from a transcript made by Richard Mundy in the seventeenth century. However, the items cited for this article appear to be based on the original Visitation. Anne Clifford is identified in the Harleian Soc. volume as Anne, dau. of Henry, Lord Clifford, and sister of the Earl of Cumberland. Her son is shown as Sir Gervase Clifton of Clifton, Knt., and her daughter Dorothy as wife of Christopher Pickering. No second marriage is shown for her. Of the children of his sister Anne, Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, in his will names only his niece, Dorothy Clifton, to whom he leaves £40 (Will, Prerogative Court of York [PCY], vol. 11, folio 664, printed at Surtees Soc., Pubs. 106 [1902]: 127-29).

¹² A. G. Dickens, ed., *Clifford Letters of the Sixteenth Century*, Surtees Soc., Pubs. 172 (1962): 54; Inquisition *Post Mortem* of Robert Clifton, W. P. W. Phillimore, ed., *Abstracts of the inquisitiones post mortem relating to Nottinghamshire*, Thoroton Soc., Record Ser., 3 (Nottingham, 1905), 1:94-97.

¹³ *Clifford Letters* [supra note 12], 93-94.

About two years after her first husband's death, Anne married secondly RALPH MELFORD, esquire.¹⁴ This has been determined from an analysis of the wills of Ralph Melford and of her son Gervase Clifton, along with published visitation records of co. Nottingham.

In his will, dated 6 January 1546 [*sic*] and proved 7 October 1546, Ralf Melford describes himself as "Rauf Milford of Arnehall [Arnold] within the countie of Nottingeham esquier." He asks to be buried in the church of Arnold. He bequeaths to his son George Melford his gold ring with the seal of his arms and all his lands and tenements in co. Devon, which were his by right of inheritance; to his son Thomas Melforde his house and lands within "the lordeship of Arnehall," along with implements and furnishings; to his daughter Mary Meringe a gold ring; to his daughter Agnes three marks; to his son Antony Melford four marks; to his daughter Wenefride items of clothing, his "seconde crosse of golde" and twenty marks. He arranges for a priest at the church of Southetoton [South Tawton], co. Devon, "where my living lieth," to "singe for my soule and my wifes soule." He appoints "the righte worshipfull Sr Gerves Clifton knight" as supervisor, and appoints his sons George and Thomas Melford his executors.¹⁵ He was buried at Arnold 22 April 154[6].¹⁶

This appointment by Ralph Melford of Sir Gerves [Gervase] Clifton as supervisor, led to my examination of his will, which established the connection of the Melfords to the Cliftons. Sir Gervis Clifton of Clifton, co. Nottingham, Knight, dated his will 15 October 1587, which was proved 13 March 1587[/8]. Among other bequests, he gives "to my brother Thomas Melford £20 and to my [*sic*] George Melford £10." To his nephews John and Gervase Wastnes, he grants £20 apiece.¹⁷ Thomas Melford, named as a son in Ralph Melford's will, would have been a half-brother of Sir Gervase Clifton through his mother, as was George Melford. John and Gervase Wastneys are listed as living 1575, in the published record of the visitation of co. Nottingham. They are shown there as sons of George Wastnes of Hedon and his wife, Mary Melfford [*sic*].¹⁸ Mary Melford, called Mary Meringe in her father's will, would have married secondly George Wastneys. Based on her sons being called nephews by Sir Gervase, it is evident that she was his half-sister. The only published record located that mentioned Anne (Clifford) Clifton's

¹⁴ The marriage was probably in about 1520. When he made his will in 1546, Ralph Melford had two sons of age and a married daughter.

¹⁵ PCY, vol. 13, folio 224, FHL microfilm 0099466. The will was dated 6 January 1546 and in the thirty-seventh year of Henry VIII, which would be 1546. From his will, it can be seen that his wife, Anne (Clifford) (Clifton) Melford, predeceased him. The editor of *Clifford Letters* [*supra* note 12], 55, n. 178, 131, n. 19, presents evidence to reject the tradition that she married a Robert Metcalfe.

¹⁶ Arnold Parish Register. Dr. Stephen Wallwork of Beeston, Notts., the local historian, provided extracts from the register. The sixteenth-century registers are transcripts made in 1605 and have some errors and gaps. Michael Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], 19, discusses the problems with these transcripts.

¹⁷ PCY, vol. 23, folio 686, FHL microfilm 0099482.

¹⁸ *Visitations of Nottingham* [*supra* note 11], 4:68.

second marriage to a Melford was an article on the Cliftons in Betham's *Baronetage*, where it is stated that after Robert Clifton's death, she was married to Robert [*sic*] Melford.¹⁹

10 THOMAS MELFORD, born say 1524, second son, was of age in January 1546 when granted by his father's will estates and houses in Arnold and appointed an executor. He was granted £20 in the 1587 will of his half-brother, Sir Gervase Clifton. In his will, dated 25 March 1602 and proved 28 January 1602/3, he calls himself Thomas Melford, of Arnold, co. Nottingham, gentleman, names his wife, DIONISE —, his children Elizabeth Charlesworth, Winifred Haughton, George, Robert, and Gervase, and his grandchildren Humfrye Neyd and Agnes Neyd, to whom he gives five shillings apiece.²⁰ He was buried as Thomas Melford, gent., at Arnold 9 April 1602.²¹

11 MARY MELFORD, youngest child, born say 1565, married at Arnold on 15 May 1586 HUMPHREY NEED, husbandman of Arnold.²² She was named as "my daughter Mary Ned" in the will of Humphrey's mother, Agnes Need the elder of Arnall, dated 19 May 1588, proved 14 October 1588.²³ Mary was buried at Arnold 27 June 1631.²⁴ His will was dated 25 July 1591 and proved 7 October 1591. He was sick in body and asked to be buried in the Arnold Churchyard. To his son Humphrey he left half a score of ewes and lambs and to his daughter Agnes half of his residual goods. He left his wife Mary half of his residual goods, appointed her executrix, and gave her the tuition, governing and bringing up of children Humphrey and Agnes during their minorities.²⁵ He was buried at Arnold 8 September 1591.²⁶

12 HUMPHREY NEED, of Arnold, yeoman, baptized Arnold 15 August 1590, named 25 March 1602 as grandson in the will of Thomas Melford (see above), died [intestate] 8 November 1668, and was buried in Quakers' Burial Ground, Arnold. He married first DOROTHY —, who was buried at Arnold 29 August 1640. He

¹⁹ Rev. William Betham, *The Baronetage of England*, 1 (Ipswich, 1810): 49-57 at 53. The latest general reference on the Cliffords gives the Clifton marriage but does not mention the second marriage to Ralph Melford (Hugh Clifford, *The House of Clifford from Before the Conquest* [Chichester, Sussex, 1987], 85.

²⁰ PCY, vol. 28, folio 861, FHL microfilm 0099491. The will of Gervas Melford, yeoman, dated 16 March 1637/8, proved 9 May 1639, mentions among others George Melford, brother Robert Melford, to whom he left 5s., Thomas Charlesworth, children of William Haulton, and Mary Need, dau. of Humphrey Need (PCY, Original Wills, May 1639, FHL microfilm 0099525). This Mary Need would seem to be the granddaughter of Gervas's sister Mary (Melford) Need and the future wife of Christopher Levis.

²¹ Arnold Parish Register [*supra* note 16].

²² Arnold Parish Register [*supra* note 16]. He was son of William and Agnes (—) Need, of Arnold (Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], Appendix 2).

²³ Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], 24-25.

²⁴ Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], Appendix 2.

²⁵ Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], 25 [abstracted from PCY, vol. 24, folio 722].

²⁶ Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], Appendix 2.

married secondly by license at St. Peter's, Nottingham, 10 July 1641, ANN (—) HAWTON, of Mansfield, a widow. She died 26 October 1671 and was buried in Quakers' Burial Ground, Arnold.²⁷ In 1660, Humphrey Need had been imprisoned in Nottingham Gaol for refusing, as a Quaker, to take the Oath of Allegiance.²⁸

13 MARY NEED, baptized Arnold 18 April 1625, died Harby, co. Leicester, 16 May 1664. She married at St. Peter's, Nottingham, 22 July 1648 CHRISTOPHER LEVIS.²⁹ He was baptized at Beeston Parish, co. Nottingham, 20 September 1621, the son of Richard Levis.³⁰ As recorded by Besse in his *Quaker Sufferings*, Christopher Lewis [*sic*] of Harby was cited in 1652 "before a Justice by the Priest of that Parish (who had before taken out of his Fields what Corn he pleased) for 18s. 2d. pretended to be yet due for Tith: The Justice granted a Warrant, by which the Officers took from him a Cow worth 3l. 10s."³¹ In his will, dated 19 October 1677, he describes himself as Christopher Levis of Harby, co. Leicester, yeoman. He was weak in body but of sound memory, commended his soul to almighty God, bequeathed to daughter Mary Levis £45, bequeathed to daughters Sary and Hanna Levis £50 each, and appointed as executors his son Samuel Levis and Nathaniel Need, to whom he left the remainder of his estate.³²

14 SAMUEL¹ LEVIS, born Harby, Leicestershire, 30 7m [September] 1649, son of Christopher Levis.³³ He was married 4 May 1680 to ELIZABETH CLAYTOR.³⁴ He received a Quaker certificate of removal in July 1684 and arrived in Pennsylvania

²⁷ Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], Appendix 2.

²⁸ Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], 7, citing P. J. Cropper, *Sufferings of the Quakers in Nottinghamshire 1649-1689* (1892), 46.

²⁹ Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], Appendix 2. Her death is recorded in Quaker Registers, Leicester Monthly Meeting, 1648 to 1837, FHL microfilm 1484596. She is probably the Mary Need mentioned in the will, 16 March 1637/8, of her grandmother's brother, Gervas[e] Melford [*supra* note 20].

³⁰ Beeston Parish Register, extracted by Dr. Stephen Wallwork. The Levis family was in Nottinghamshire as early as 1510, so they were certainly not Huguenots as some have stated.

³¹ Joseph Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of a People Called Quakers . . .*, 2 vols. (London, 1753), 1:330.

³² Original wills, Archdeaconry of Leicester, 1677, folio 208, FHL microfilm 288857. His executor, Nathaniel Need, a Quaker, was brother of his wife Mary. Nathaniel Need was a prosperous yeoman, according to his will and the inventory of his goods (will dated 29 March 1701, proved 16 May 1701). His eldest son, Joseph Need, bp. Arnold 14 Feb. 1648/9, also a Quaker, emigrated to Pennsylvania, and in 1718, was of Darby, near Philadelphia, with wife Rebecca and two daughters, one married with two sons and the other unmarried. In a letter from Darby dated 29 Oct. 1718, to his brother John Need in England, he mentioned that his cousin Levis was in good health, presumably Samuel Levis, son of his aunt, Mary (Need) Levis (Walker, *Need Family of Arnold* [*supra* note 2], 1, 7, 8-9, 20-21, Appendix 2).

³³ Quaker Registers, Leicester Monthly Meeting [*supra* note 29].

³⁴ Quaker Registers, Derbyshire Monthly Meeting, FHL microfilm 1484596.

by 4 November 1684. He died between 4 October 1728 (date of will) and 13 April 1734 (date of probate).³⁵

The discovery of the Melford descent from the Cliffords opens a possibility for royal ancestry to many people. George Melford (eldest son of Ralph Melford) is listed at the head of the Milfords in Vivian's visitation of Devonshire.³⁶ The male descendants of Thomas Melford continued in Nottingham into the late 1600s. There are wills at York for members of the family living at Clifton in the 1660s. The Wastneys line continued for at least a few more generations, as given in the published visitation of Nottingham. Daughters of these families would also have left descendants. To follow all of these would be a large project in itself.

I would like to thank Dr. Stephen Wallwork of the University of Nottingham, who has continuously assisted me over the years; without him, much of this research would have been much more difficult.

Leslie Mahler, a descendant of Samuel Levis, has an interest in Quaker immigrant origins, as well as in western European and southeast Asian genealogy.

³⁵ *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania* [*supra* note 1], 1:484-86. For some of his descendants, see *Comly Family in America* . . . [*supra* note 1], 922-25, and John W. Jordan, ed., *Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pennsylvania*, 3 vols. (New York and Chicago, 1911), 1:393-94.

³⁶ John Lambrick Vivian, *Visitations of the County Devon in 1531, 1564 and 1620* (Exeter, 1895), 563.