

The numerous families of the names, LILLY, LILLEY, LILLIE are descended from a very ancient and illustrious line of French, English and Scotch peoples. The writer (J.W. Lilly, 44 W. 128 Street, N.Y.C.) has been unable to locate the country or place from whence our ancestor, George Lilly came. There are strong circumstances pointing to one of two places; one in County Hertfordshire, England, and the other County Berwick, Scotland; perhaps in the vicinity of Polworth, where are recorded births of some of the name in the Parish Registers.

One LILLY tradition is; "That a remote ancestor died in France, during the Huguenot persecution, previous to 1600; leaving three sons who inherited a handsome property. That one settled in Ireland, one in England, and the other in Scotland, and that two sons of the latter came to America, one of whom was our ancestor, George LILLY; who first appears in Reading, Mass. in 1658." (Related by the late John Booth LILLIE of Lodi, California. His father was Turner Lilly who died in Vermont, about 1800.

The English name of LILLY, LILY, LILLEY, LILLIE carries garden-lilies in the shield in reference to the name. (From "Genealogy and Surnames." by William Anderson; Edinburgh, 1865) Attention is called to a full page article on the "Fleur de Lis" (page 7) Ladies Home Journal, Mar. 1896. We find in the "Dictionary of Names of the United Kingdom" by Mark A. Lower, 1860, the following: "Lill, see Lille, (1) the French town Lille, (2) same as Lisle; Lilly, lilley or lillie, same as Lille, Lisle, or Lilley. Lilly is a parish in County Hertfordshire, England."

A John Lillie is first mentioned in history, as being at Wethersfield, Conn. in 1640. Wethersfield was first settled in 1634, by persons from Dorchester, Newton and Watertown, Mass. John's name appears about 1640, along with those of Thomas Standish, William Swain and Nathaniel Foster and others. John Lillie and wife had born to them, at Wethersfield, Ruth born 1647 and Hannah born 1650; so it would appear that John resided there from 1640 to 1650 at least. Owing to Church dissensions, several of the settlers removed to other places. Some of them going back to Watertown, Mass., from whence they came. It is possible John is one of those who returned to Watertown, Mass.

George LILLIE, who was one of the first settlers who lived in Reading, Mass. in 1658, married in 1659 to Hannah SMITH, the daughter of Francis SMITH, who it is said came there from Watertown. Hannah Smith's sister, a Swain, and, as the Fosters and Standishes and Lillies were later connected by marriages, it is very easy to believe that this John, was George's father.

Benjamin LILLIE says our first American ancestor came over on the Mayflower. Be this as it may, it is a matter of history that the vessel made several voyages after it's first trip to America. (This story is handed down thru Roswell LILLIE who was born at Bethel, Vermont in 1783.)

There is also extant, "The Lillie Bear Story;" as told to Benjamin Lillie deceased of New Iberia, La. born 1821, by his father Roswell Lilly.

"Winter was coming on and John Lillie and an Irishman went into the woods to cut logs for a cabin. They brought their dinner pail along and sat it down at the foot of a tree. During the forenoon a bear came along and was about to eat up their dinner, Lillie went for him with his ax; but the bear chased him around the big hemlock tree, but Lillie out ran him and struck the bear on the back with the edge of his ax, and broke the beast's back. He then had the brute so he could handle him, but he kept on chopping him with the edge of the ax. The Irishman who was behind a tree, stuck out his head and says to Lillie, to turn the head of the ax, for the pelt will make a good warm covering for the snowy weather and the cold." This same story is related by Mrs. Sophia LILLY Bannister, born 1798, at the age of 80 years as she remembered it, but it varies in this respect, as she says it was George Lillie and one George Boutwell who had the experience, otherwise the tale is the same.

A Henry LILLIE was a "Freeman" at Newport, R.I. in 1668. As a "Freeman"

was first required to be a church member, we well suppose him to be born 1644 or earlier. In 1676, he was Marshall. In 1677, Keeper of the Prison and in the same year one of the several founders of East Greenwich, R.I. 5000 acres being granted them. It may be that he was a brother of George, as dates come O.K. approximately. A John Lillie and wife Dorothy has a son, Israel, born at Concord, Mass. in 1660. He too may have been a brother to George.

In some Lilly notes, Alanson Lilly born Dec. 12, 1817 in Allegan, Mich. says; "So far as my knowledge extends, the Lillys' have all make a good living by working for it. I have seen the 7th generation from Jonathan(4) who with Jessie, Austin, Albinus and Bethuel removed in 1832 from Ashfield, Mass. to Dover, Ohio. The Lillys accumulated something for a rainy day, none given to speculation. Have always paid their debts and never knew one to be sued, or was considered to be unjust. Have not the least idea that any of the name will be President of the U.S.A. They will in my opinion pass as good citizens and all are church going people."

George C. Williams, Atty. W. Woodstock, Conn. says, "Until recently the Lilly family have been represented in this town from it's settlement. They were uniformly of very respectable characters generally small land holders, and in the early part of the century attendants of the Baptist Church at West Woodstock, Conn."

The Lilly families have representatives in Ontario, N.Y., Vermont, Mass., Conn., Ohio and La. and elsewhere and also in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War.

John LILLY came to Wethersfield, Conn. about 1640. Perhaps from Watertown, Mass. He remained there until 1650, as he had two daughters by his wife Ruth, born there. Ruth in 1647 and Hannah in 1650, but no trace is found after the latter date. There also came to Wethersfield, at the same period, Thomas Standish, William Swain and Nathaniel Foster all connected by marriages to the LILLIES.

William Swain married Mary Smith, sister of Hannah Smith of Watertown, (now Waltham, Mass.) Hannah Smith was married in 1659 to George LILLY, who if first found in Reading, Mass. in 1658, who were thr ancestors of numerous families of the name in this country.

It is possible that John LILLY was the father of George LILLY, but no proof so far has been found. A tradition is handed down through Roswell Lillie, who was born at Bethel, Vt. in 1783, to the effect that; "John Lillie came to America in the Mayflower." His name certainly does not appear on the list of passengers of that vessel's first voyage in 1620; but it is a matter of history that this vessel made several voyages to America later on bringing passengers hither. This tradition seems to be an indication that George of Reading may have been a son of John Lilly of Wethersfield.

Copied from "LILLY/LILLEY/LILLIE FAMILY HISTORY" by Julius Whiting Lilly. dated 1930 and found in the Los Angeles Public Library who published the work as a report on Project 8121 conducted under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration.