

## Chapter 57

### Capt. George Lamberton – My Eighth-Great Grandfather

[originally written 11 August 2020]

#### ***Introduction***

A few months ago, I was using the Geni.com website to help my cousin Don Baker with his genealogy. At that time, I found several ancestors that Don and I have in common, and my line back to one of those common ancestors went through Capt. George Lamberton (1604-1646), who was an English immigrant. When I looked at his profile on Geni.com, I learned that he was lost at sea and that this event was memorialized by Longfellow in his poem *Phantom Ship*. See Appendix B in my narrative at:

[http://www.burksoakley.com/genealogy/DEB-JohnPettit\\_22Jun20.pdf](http://www.burksoakley.com/genealogy/DEB-JohnPettit_22Jun20.pdf)

Capt. George Lamberton had a fascinating life, and I want to present more about him in this chapter. I started writing about him earlier this month, but then I got sidetracked – see:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/56-ChampernonLines.pdf>

#### ***Capt. George Lamberton***

Here is the profile for Capt. George Lamberton on Geni.com:

	<b>George Lamberton</b>
Birth:	1604 St. Mary's Whitechapel, London, Middlesex, England
Death:	1646 (41-42) North Atlantic Ocean (Lost at sea aboard the ship "Fellowship", immortalized by Longfellow in his poem "Phantom Ship".)
Immediate Family:	Son of <a href="#">Christopher Lamberton</a> and <a href="#">Mary Denis</a> Husband of <a href="#">Mercy Lamborten</a> and <a href="#">Margaret Lewen</a> Father of <a href="#">Patience Lamberton</a> ; <a href="#">Elizabeth Lamberton</a> ; <a href="#">Hannah Lamberton</a> ; <a href="#">Hope Lamberton</a> ; <a href="#">Deliverance Lamberton</a> and 3 others

<https://www.geni.com/people/Capt-George-Lamberton/6000000002975671995>

Note that his profile states that he was “Lost at sea aboard the ship *Fellowship*, immortalized by Longfellow in this poem *Phantom Ship*” when he was only 41 or 42 years old.

Capt. George Lamberton was my 8<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather. Here is my line on the Geni.com website going back to him:



This line goes through my ancestors who lived in southwest Connecticut for many generations.

George Lamberton appears to have had an incredibly interesting life. Here is a timeline (with minor edits) that I found online at:

<https://www.scrapbookyourfamilytree.com/category/isaacs-story/>

### **Capt. George Lamberton's Timeline**

About 1604 – Birth of George to Christopher Lamberton & Mary Margaret Denis in London, England.

6 January 1628/29 – George married Margaret Lewen in St. Mary's Whitechapel, London, England.

About 1632 – Birth of daughter Elizabeth, born about 1632, died 1716 (married first Daniel Sellivant, second William Trowbridge). [Note from Burks – She was my 7<sup>th</sup>-great grandmother.]

About 1634 – Birth of daughter Hannah, born about 1634 (married first Samuel Wells, second Capt. John Allyn).

It seems that in 1635, George Lamberton came to Boston with the Davenport and Eaton company, afterward returned to England.

About 1636 – Birth of daughter Hope, born about 1636 (married first – Herbert, second William Cheney).

About 1637 – Move to America.

About 1638 – Birth of son Deliverance (his only son), born about 1638. Died after 1662, without children.

Winter 1638/1639 – Capt. Lamberton, who had a house in Boston, presumably for his family, defected from the Rowley Puritans and threw in his lot with the New Haven settlers. Lamberton was one of the original founders of the Colony of New Haven. There he was allotted land in block 7 and owned over 266 acres.

1639 – Capt. Lamberton made a profitable voyage to Delaware Bay where he traded furs with the Indians. The Delaware Company was formed and sent Capt. Lamberton and Nathaniel Mason on a second trip to Delaware

Bay. On this voyage the permanent settlement of Cape May was accomplished in 1640.

1640 – Birth of daughter Mercy Lamberton – baptized 17 Jan 1640/41

About 1642 – Birth of daughter Desire, baptized 14 Mar 1641/42 (married Lt. Thomas Cooper Jr.).

1643 – Lamberton attempted another permanent settlement near Salem, New Jersey, after purchasing the region south of Trenton from the Indians. The Swedes resented this intrusion into their territory by dysentery and caused the effort to be abandoned. Later Lamberton started a fur trading post at the mouth of the Schuylkill, now the site of Philadelphia, but the Dutch seized his men, burned down his buildings and took his property. The Swedish Governor Printz also tried him for trespassing, conspiring with the Indians and other trumped-up charges. Lamberton, of course, was convicted in a Swedish court and severely fined.

About 1644 – Birth of daughter Obedience, baptized 9 Feb 1644/45 (married Lt. Samuel Smith).

1644 – As New Haven grew, it sold its products to England, but used the Massachusetts Bay ships to get their goods to England. To save time and money, they decided to build their own ship to transport goods. As early as 1644, Theophilus Eaton,<sup>1</sup> Stephen Goodyear, Thomas Gregston and perhaps other merchants at New Haven entrusted the construction of an ocean-going vessel to John Wakeman, Joshua Atwater, Jasper Crane and Richard Miles. They built or had built a ship in Rhode Island (about 150 tons) to be used in trade with England and other countries.

Winter of 1645/6 – the “Great Shippe” was chartered by “The Company of Merchants of New Haven” with Captain George Lamberton in command. The ship carried saleable goods: peas, wheat, hides from West India, beaver pelts, peltry (raw undressed skins), and manuscript writings of John Davenport at New Haven and Thomas Hooker at Hartford.

Because the loading of the ship was delayed, it was not ready to sail until winter.

January 1646 – Seventy persons boarded the ship, among them were Thomas Gregson, Nathaniel Turner, George Lamberton, the wife of Stephen Goodyear, and Francis Austin. The vessel was iced in so solidly at its pier, that in order to get to sea every able man and boy had to help hand-chop a three-mile channel out of Long Island Sound. Then the ship had to be towed stern-first through the ice out to the waters of the North Atlantic. This was a chillingly bad omen, and the crew members almost mutinied because of it.

Once the ship made its three-mile journey out to the choppy ocean waters, it rolled badly in any amount of swell. The ship’s master, George Lamberton, an experienced mariner, predicted many times that the “walty”<sup>2</sup> ship would “prove their grave.” But, the “Great Shippe” finally

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<sup>1</sup> Theophilus Eaton was the first Governor of the New Haven Colony.

<sup>2</sup> “Walty” is a nautical term meaning insecure or wobbly, used when speaking of a ship.

sailed into the icy mists of Long Island Sound. The spiritual leader of New Haven, Rev. Davenport, assured them that Divine Providence would protect the loved ones on the ship.

The ship was never heard from again.

In the following year, Lamberton's widow, Margaret, married Deputy-Governor Stephen Goodyear, whose wife also perished on the "Great Shippe".

## ***The New Haven Colony***

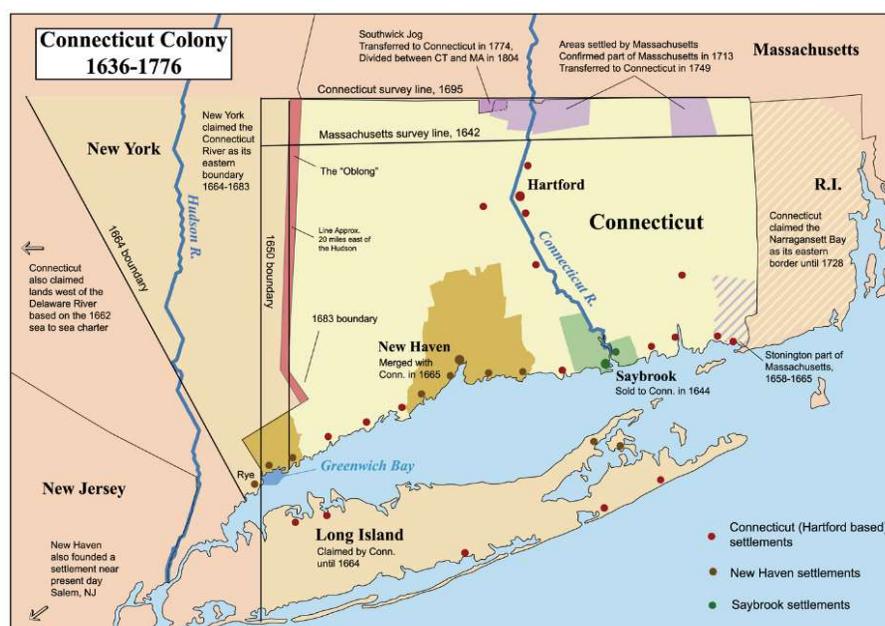
In the previous section, I mentioned that Capt. George Lamberton was one of the founders of the New Haven Colony. If you don't know anything about this colony, here is an excerpt from the Wikipedia article:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Haven\\_Colony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Haven_Colony)

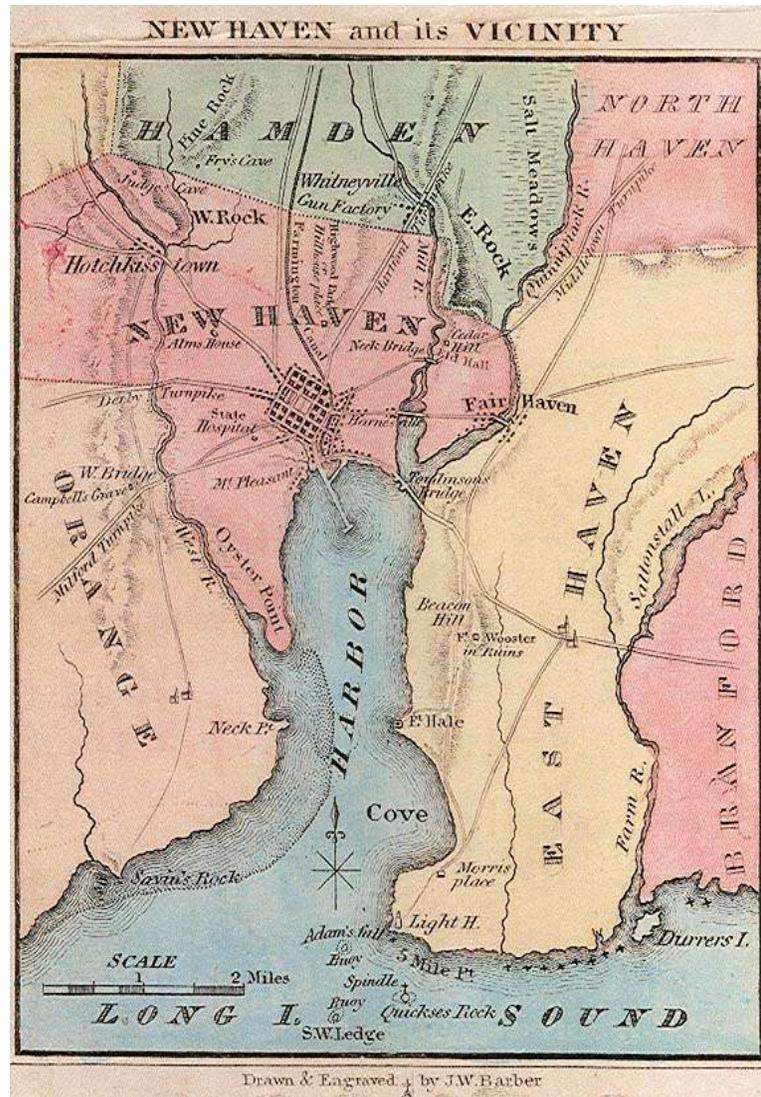
The New Haven Colony was a small English colony in North America from 1637 to 1664 in what is now the state of Connecticut.

The history of the colony was a series of disappointments and failures. The most serious problem was that New Haven colony never had a charter giving it legal title to exist. The larger, stronger colony of Connecticut to the north did have a charter, and Connecticut was aggressive in using its military superiority to force a takeover. New Haven had other weaknesses, as well. The leaders were businessmen and traders, but they were never able to build up a large or profitable trade because their agricultural base was poor, farming the rocky soil was difficult, and the location was isolated. New Haven's political system was confined to church members only, and the refusal to widen it alienated many people.

Oliver Cromwell recommended that the New Haven colonists all migrate to Ireland or to Spanish territories that he planned to conquer, but the Puritans of New Haven were committed to their new land. One by one in 1662-64, the towns joined Connecticut Colony until only three were left, and they submitted to Connecticut in 1664. It became the modern city of New Haven.



Here is an old map showing the location of New Haven and its harbor:



### ***The Story Behind the Longfellow Poem***

George Lamberton's claim to fame did not come until more than 200 years after his death, when the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote about Lamberton in his poem *Phantom Ship*.

Recall that when Capt. Lamberton and about 70 others sailed from New Haven in January 1646, "the ship was never heard from again".

Again, here is more from the web:

<https://www.scrapbookyourfamilytree.com/category/isaacs-story/>

In today's time, with our electronic and communication devices, we would have known within minutes what happened to the ship. But in those days, family waved goodbye to their loved ones, and hoped to see them back in a few months. Other ships came from England, but no one had heard of the "Shippe", it had never reached England, no one had heard of it. It was probably difficult to go on with life, with such uncertainty, and not knowing if your loved one was dead or alive. People prayed to God for a sign.

As one chronicler of this tale wrote:

“With the fate of the New Haven colony – not to mention the lives of many of her most influential citizens – riding on a successful voyage, little wonder that news of their trading ship was awaited with the keenest anticipation by the people of New Haven. Each new arrival from England was questioned anxiously, but the winter months passed, spring moved toward summer and no tidings of the vessel’s fate reached the Connecticut settlement. A contemporary at the time said, “New Haven’s heart began to fail her: This put the godly people on much prayer, both publick and private, that the Lord would (if it was his pleasure) let them know what he had done with their dear friends.”

Six months later, some would say that the Lord did let them know what He had done with their dear friends. On a humid June afternoon, heavy thunderstorms descended upon New Haven harbor. Excitement overtook the town as person after person saw their ‘Great Shippe’ emerging from the cloudbanks and sailing into the harbor. However, it was sailing against the winds and above the waves-in the fogged clouds and not touching the waters below.

As it approached the shore, and as dusk fell, the main topmast broke off, fell and entangled other sails on the deck. Pieces of the ship seemed to break off. Many watching from the harbor saw a human figure on the bow, sword raised and pointing to the sea, just before the ship, ragged, broken and haunted, rolled over on her side and disappeared into the mists.

Thirty minutes had passed. No debris-wood, casks, sails– from the ship was ever found. The water calmed and the mists lifted. The ship had vanished. Disbelieving at first, soon, all came to believe that Divine Providence had shown them what had happened to their loved ones.



*Vision of the Phantom Ship*, painted by Jesse Talbot in 1850 – New Haven Museum



A portion of *Vision of the Phantom Ship*.

### ***The Phantom Ship***

Here is an excerpt from the Wikipedia article about Longfellow:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Wadsworth\\_Longfellow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Wadsworth_Longfellow)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) was an American poet and educator whose works include *Paul Revere's Ride* and *The Song of Hiawatha*.

Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine, which was then still part of Massachusetts. He studied at Bowdoin College and became a professor at Bowdoin and later at Harvard College after spending time in Europe. His first major poetry collections were *Voices of the Night* (1839) and *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841). He retired from teaching in 1854 to focus on his writing, and he lived the remainder of his life in the Revolutionary War headquarters of George Washington in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Longfellow wrote many lyric poems known for their musicality and often presenting stories of mythology and legend. He became the most popular American poet of his day and also had success overseas.

In 1847, Longfellow published a collection of poems entitled *Birds of Passage*.

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Birds\\_of\\_Passage\\_\(Collection\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Birds_of_Passage_(Collection))

Included in this collection was his poem *Phantom Ship*.

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Birds\\_of\\_Passage\\_\(Collection\)/The\\_Phantom\\_Ship](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Birds_of_Passage_(Collection)/The_Phantom_Ship)

In Mather's Magnalia Christi,  
Of the old colonial time,  
May be found in prose the legend  
That is here set down in rhyme.

A ship sailed from New Haven,  
And the keen and frosty airs  
That filled her sails at parting  
Were heavy with good men's prayers.

"O Lord! if it be thy pleasure,"  
Thus prayed the old divine,  
"To bury our friends in the ocean,  
Take them, for they are thine!"

But Master Lamberton muttered,  
And under his breath said he,  
"This ship is so crank and walty,  
I fear our grave she will be!"

And the ships that came from England,  
When the winter months were gone,  
Brought no tidings of this vessel  
Nor of Master Lamberton.

This put the people to praying  
That the Lord would let them hear  
What in his greater wisdom  
He had done with friends so dear.

And at last their prayers were answered:  
It was in the month of June,  
An hour before the sunset  
Of a windy afternoon,

When, steadily steering landward,  
A ship was seen below,  
And they knew it was Lamberton, Master,  
Who sailed so long ago.

On she came, with a cloud of canvas,  
Right against the wind that blew,

Until the eye could distinguish  
The faces of the crew.

Then fell her straining topmasts,  
Hanging tangled in the shrouds,  
And her sails were loosened and lifted,  
And blown away like clouds.

And the masts, with all their rigging,  
Fell slowly, one by one,  
And the hulk dilated and vanished,  
As a sea-mist in the sun!

And the people who saw this marvel  
Each said unto his friend,  
That this was the mould of their vessel,  
And thus her tragic end.

And the pastor of the village  
Gave thanks to God in prayer,  
That, to quiet their troubled spirits,  
He had sent this Ship of Air.

**THE PHANTOM SHIP**

IN MATHER'S MAGNALIA CHRISTI,  
OF THE OLD COLONIAL TIME,  
MAY BE FOUND IN PROSE THE LEGEND  
THAT IS HERE SET DOWN IN RHYME.  
A SHIP SAILED FROM NEW HAVEN,  
AND THE KEEN AND FROSTY AIRS,  
THAT FILLED HER SAILS AT PARTING,  
WERE HEAVY WITH GOOD MEN'S PRAYERS.  
'O LORD! IF IT BE THY PLEASURE!—  
THUS PRAYED THE OLD DIVINE—  
'TO BURY OUR FRIENDS IN THE OCEAN,  
'TAKE THEM, FOR THEY ARE THINE!'  
BUT MASTER LAMBERTON MUTTERED,  
AND UNDER HIS BREATH SAID HE,  
'THIS SHIP IS SO CRANK AND WALTY  
I FEAR OUR GRAVE SHE WILL BE!'  
AND THE SHIPS THAT CAME FROM ENGLAND,  
WHEN THE WINTER MONTHS WERE GONE,  
BROUGHT NO TIDINGS OF THIS VESSEL  
NOR OF MASTER LAMBERTON.  
THIS PUT THE PEOPLE TO PRAYING  
THAT THE LORD WOULD LET THEM HEAR  
WHAT IN HIS GREATER WISDOM  
HE HAD DONE WITH FRIENDS SO DEAR.  
AND AT LAST THEIR PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED—  
IT WAS IN THE MONTH OF JUNE,  
AN HOUR BEFORE THE SUNSET  
OF A WINDY AFTERNOON,  
WHEN, STEADILY STEERING LANDWARD,  
A SHIP WAS SEEN BELOW,  
AND THEY KNEW IT WAS LAMBERTON, MASTER,  
WHO SAILED SO LONG AGO.  
ON SHE CAME, WITH A CLOUD OF CANVAS,  
RIGHT AGAINST THE WIND THAT BLEW,  
UNTIL THE EYE COULD DISTINGUISH  
THE FACES OF THE CREW.  
THEN FELL HER STRAINING TOPMASTS,  
HANGING TANGLED IN THE SHROUDS,  
AND HER SAILS WERE LOOSENED AND LIFTED,  
AND BLOWN AWAY LIKE CLOUDS.  
AND THE MASTS, WITH ALL THEIR RIGGING,  
FELL SLOWLY, ONE BY ONE,  
AND THE HULK DILATED AND VANISHED,  
AS A SEA-MIST IN THE SUN!  
AND THE PEOPLE WHO SAW THIS MARVEL  
EACH SAID UNTO HIS FRIEND,  
THAT THIS WAS THE MOULD OF THEIR VESSEL,  
AND THUS HER TRAGIC END.  
AND THE PASTOR OF THE VILLAGE  
GAVE THANKS TO GOD IN PRAYER,  
THAT, TO QUIET THEIR TROUBLED SPIRITS,  
HE HAD SENT THIS SHIP OF AIR.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote the poem "The Phantom Ship" about this event.  
Published in "Birds of Passage"  
(Flight the First) 1858

An interesting reading of the *Phantom Ship* is on YouTube at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUVQgTA\\_JDU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUVQgTA_JDU)

### ***Capt. Nathaniel Turner***

There is a nice blog posting about George Lamberton and the Phantom ship – see:

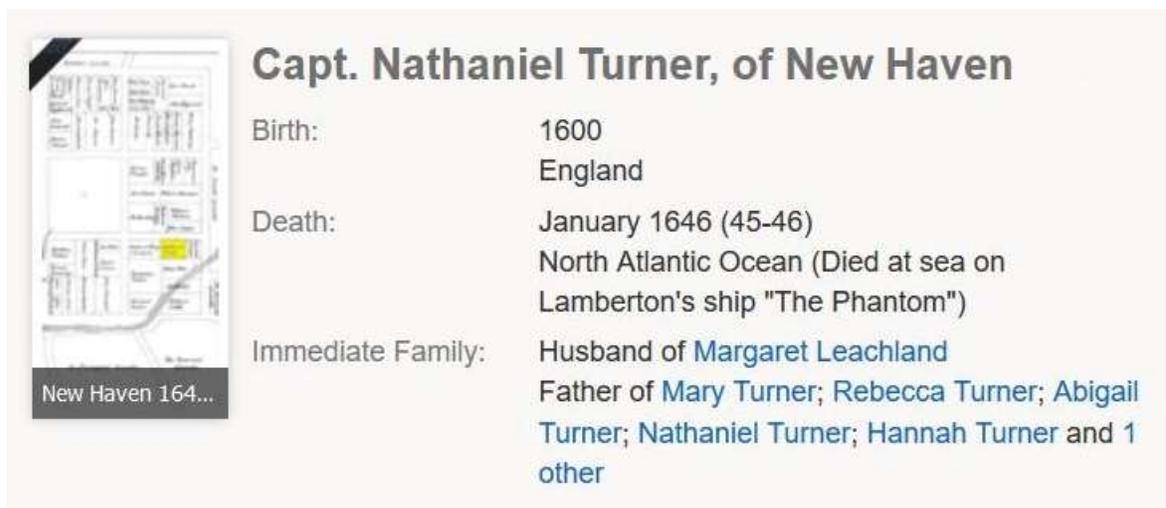
<http://marybarrettdyer.blogspot.com/2012/10/the-ghost-ship-of-1647.html>

This posting included the following:

Those lost were the ship's commander George Lamberton, (militia) Capt. Nathaniel Turner, Thomas Gregson [my direct ancestor], Mrs. Goodyear, and "seven or eight figures of importance." Mrs. Goodyear was the first wife of New Haven deputy governor Stephen Goodyear, who later married the widow of George Lamberton! Many of the rest of the 70 people aboard would have been ship's crew.

Seeing the other names got me to thinking if any of them were my ancestors.

Here is the Geni profile for Capt. Nathaniel Turner:



**Capt. Nathaniel Turner, of New Haven**

Birth: 1600  
England

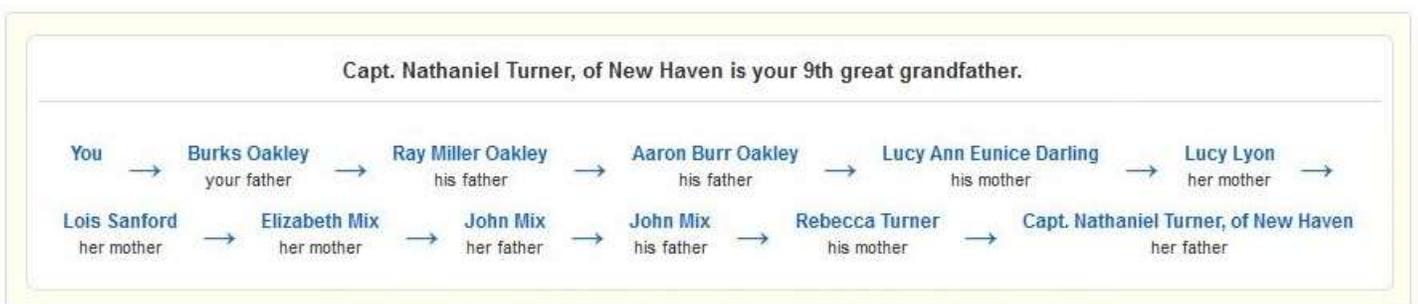
Death: January 1646 (45-46)  
North Atlantic Ocean (Died at sea on Lamberton's ship "The Phantom")

Immediate Family: Husband of [Margaret Leachland](#)  
Father of [Mary Turner](#); [Rebecca Turner](#); [Abigail Turner](#); [Nathaniel Turner](#); [Hannah Turner](#) and 1 other

New Haven 164...

<https://www.geni.com/people/Capt-Nathaniel-Turner-of-New-Haven/306621898920002126>

It turns out that he was my ancestor! Here is my line back to Capt. Turner:



My line back to Capt. George Lamberton goes through Joseph Oliver Lyon (1728-1812), while my line back to Capt. Nathaniel Turner goes through Joseph's wife, Lois Sanford (1742-1769). This means that my first five ancestors in each line are the same.

In reading about Capt. Turner, I learned that he was an ancestor of Ernest Hemingway:



As a descendant of Capt. Turner, Ernest Hemingway was in the same generation as my father:



The following was taken from the profile page for Capt. Nathaniel Turner on Geni.com:

The following epitaph was written to the memory of Capt. Turner:

Deep in Atlantic cave his body sleeps,  
While the dark sea its ceaseless motion keeps,  
While phantom ships are wrecked along the shore,  
To warn his friends that he will come no more!  
But He who governs all with impulse free,  
Can bring from Bashan and the deepest sea,  
And when He calls our Turner must return,  
Though now his ashes fill no sacred urn.

Nathaniel TURNER - b. England; d. Jan. 1646, aboard ship. Arrived in New England with the Winthrop fleet in 1630 and settled at Lynn, Massachusetts. He requested to be admitted as freeman on Oct. 19, 1630, and was admitted Jul. 3, 1632. Constable 1632; representative 1634; deputy 1635. Having been a soldier in England, he became an original member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston. Appointed Captain of the Saugus train band 1633 and commanded it during the Pequot War 1636-1637. Moved to New Haven, Connecticut in 1637 after his home at Lynn was destroyed by fire, where he was an original signer of the New Haven Agreement and took the oath of fidelity on Jul. 1, 1644. He became a member of the New Haven First Congregational Church; assistant to the Governor 1639; deputy in the Connecticut Assembly; and served on numerous committees both in New Haven Colony and previously in Massachusetts Bay Colony. On Sep. 1, 1640, Nathaniel was appointed Captain of all martial affairs of the New Haven Colony. He was on the ill-fated "Lamberton's Phantom Ship", which sailed from New Haven on a voyage to Europe and was lost with all on board in Jan. 1646.

## ***Summary***

In this narrative, I presented information about my 8<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather, Capt. George Lamberton (1604-1646). He was an English immigrant who settled in the New Haven Colony. It appears that he led a very interesting life as a sea captain in the early days of Colonial America. Tragically, he was lost at sea on a voyage to England. This voyage was immortalized in Longfellow's 1847 poem, *Phantom Ship*.

I also learned that my 9<sup>th</sup>-great grandfather, Nathaniel Turner, was on this voyage and also perished.