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A DISCOVERY CONCERNING THE TOWNLEY AND WARNER FAMILIES OF VIRGINIA

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THERE was a tradition in my husband's family that the Townleys of Virginia had some connection with Towneley Hall, Lancashire, England, partly because the American Townleys had been solicited on several occasions for funds to support an effort to obtain the Towneley estate in England after extinction of the male line there in 1878. There were myths and frauds associated with the so-called Lawrence-Towneley estate claims. Towneley Hall is now a museum owned and operated by the city of Burnley, Lancashire, since its relinquishment early in this century by Lady O'Hagan.

Colonel Richard Townley, an eighth son in the Royle branch of Towneley of Towneley, came to Virginia in 1683 in the suite of the Earl of Effingham, governor of Virginia. The next year he went to New Jersey, where he remained, and in 1685 he became the third husband of Elizabeth Smith Lawrence Carteret, widow of the governor of New Jersey. It was from Colonel Richard Townley that all the American Townleys have been thought by some to have originated. A complete genealogical series on his descendants was published in the "Jersey Genealogy" columns of the Saturday issues of the Newark (N. J.) *Evening News* between September 12, 1903, and December 19, 1903. Of the scores of Townley descendants given, not a single one was of Virginia. Furthermore, we already knew of persons by the name of Townley who were in Virginia before the Colonel arrived there.

We knew at the beginning of our research that my husband's great grandfather, James Buckner Townley, was born in Essex County, Virginia, in 1811. As a boy, he moved with his father, Mann Townley, to Christian County, Kentucky. Mann Townley was one of the executors of the estate of his father, John Townley, whose will was recorded in Essex County, September 17, 1792. This John Townley's father was also named John Townley and was in 1743 of Stratton Major Parish, King and Queen County, as revealed in a deed of purchase of land in Essex County. In 1745, in another deed of purchase of land in Essex County, he is said to be of South Farnham Parish, Essex County. The three purchases of land made in 1743 and 1745 were of tracts adjacent to his original holdings in King and

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Queen along the Dragon Swamp in the region of Bestlands. John Townley is mentioned twice in the vestry book of Stratton Major Parish, King and Queen County, December 11, 1767, and November 14, 1770. Evidently he kept his church membership in the county where he originally owned his land. The death of this John Townley occurred by 1772, when we find one of his sons, James (brother of the John mentioned above), deeding March 16 a parcel of land lying in the Bestlands Swamp region of Essex County which had formerly been a part of a tract of land that John Townley, deceased, had willed to James.

In the land grant records at Richmond a John Townley is named as receiving a grant of 1,100 acres from Governor Sir William Berkeley, March 17, 1675/76. This land was along the Dragon Swamp in Stratton Major Parish, New Kent County. Another grant of land was made to John Townley October 3, 1690: this was 80 acres in New Kent County on Poropotank Creek for transporting two persons. (King and Queen County was formed out of New Kent County in 1691.) We assume that the John Townley of the grant of 1675/76 was the grandfather of the John Townley who extended his land into Essex County in 1743 and 1745. At any rate, the original land grant on the Dragon Swamp locates the home area of the later Townleys discussed above.

Another important reference to the early John Townley is in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, XXIII, 395-396. Here he is mentioned as a deponent on behalf of Augustine Warner II in a case involving the invasion of Warner Hall by William Bird, brought before the Council of Virginia in 1678. The article contains in a footnote the following comment: "Augustine Warner, Jr. had a sister who married Lawrence Townley, and was an ancestress of General R. E. Lee. The John Townley, who was one of the deponents, was probably of the same family as Lawrence." In an answer to an inquiry about the Townley family in the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, Sunday, July 21, 1907, Hening is quoted as mentioning in his *Statutes at Large*, VIII, 630, Lawrence Townley with his daughter Alice and wife Sarah as living in the Colony. The newspaper article continues: "As to their English ancestry we can find nothing, though from the fact that his daughter married into such a distinguished family as Grymes leads to the conclusion that they were of very noble English birth. Lawrence Townley's wife Sarah was the daughter of Augustine Warner, one of the most prominent of the early colonial families." The rest of the note seems to confuse Augustine Warner I with his son Augustine Warner II. The Hening reference has to do with a certain

tract of land in King and Queen County which had been left entailed by Augustine Warner II to his niece Alice Townley, daughter of Lawrence and Sarah Warner Townley. Alice, who married John Grymes of Middlesex, left the land to her son John. Her grandson Philip inherited it and, not knowing of the entail, willed it in 1756 to his second son, John Randolph Grymes. Thus, in 1772, when John Randolph Grymes wanted to sell the land to William Roane, the matter came before the General Assembly and the entail was docked, since Philip, the oldest son and legal heir, consented. Polly C. Mason in 1948 in her *Records of Colonial Gloucester County, Virginia*, II, 39, states that Augustine Warner (1611-1674), married to Mary ———, was the common ancestor of Queen Elizabeth Angela Marguerite, Robert E. Lee, and George Washington. Here again the name of Lawrence Townley is prominent, for the line from Augustine Warner to Lee traces through him and his wife Sarah and their daughter Alice, the wife of John Grymes.

In May 1968 my husband and I made a pilgrimage to the graveyard at Warner Hall, where Augustine Warner and his wife Mary lie buried. One must cross a stile in a pasture fence to reach the walled-in graveyard; on the fence near the stile a sign informs the visitor that in this hallowed ground lie the great-great-grandparents of George Washington, and the matter is further explained by a plaque in the graveyard wall in honor of Mildred Warner, their granddaughter, who married Lawrence Washington and bore Augustine Washington, the father of George. We made our visit in consequence of recently finding *The Visitation of the County Palatine of Lancaster made in the year 1664-5 by Sir Wm. Dugdale, Knight*, edited by the Rev. F. R. Raines, M. A., F. S. A. Part III. Printed for the Chetham Society M. DCCC. LXXIII. In this book, p. 314, a chart traces the descent of the Townley family of Stonehedge. In this chart Mary Townley, one of six sisters of the Lawrence Townley who was then master of Stonehedge, is entered as married to Augustine Warner of Norwich, gentleman. This information clears up the identity of Mary Warner and throws light on the relationship of the Townleys and Warners. (Norwich is in Norfolk County, England. According to the lists given in George Cabell Greer's *The Early Virginia Immigrants*, Augustine Warner was brought into Virginia by Adam Thoroughgood, who originated in Norfolk, England.) The children of Lawrence Townley, brother of Mary and master of Stonehedge, are listed at the end of the Dugdale chart, p. 314, in the following order: Lawrence, Robert, Thomas, John, and Anne. Here is the clue to the identity and origin of the Lawrence Townley who is mentioned in the records of Virginia as mar-

ried to Sarah Warner, daughter of Augustine Warner (1611-1674) and his wife Mary (d. 1662), now identifiable as Mary Townley of Stonehedge. This Lawrence must surely have been a nephew of Mary Townley Warner, and a first cousin of his wife Sarah.

The John Townley allied with Augustine Warner, Jr., in the case against William Bird in 1678 must also have been from Stonehedge and a brother of Lawrence. He is most likely identical with the John Townley who received the land grant on the Dragon Swamp in 1675/6. At that date Augustine Warner, Jr., his first cousin according to this argument, was Speaker of the House of Burgesses. In Whitaker's *History of Whalley,* 2nd edition, 1806, there is no mention of the Townley family of Stonehedge. It must have disappeared from England in the interval between Dugdale and Whitaker. Could it be that the two other brothers, Robert and Thomas, also came to America under the influence of the Warners? The name of Robert Townley is found in Virginia in 1704. The name of Thomas Townley is found in North Carolina in a will of David Shepard (May 30, 1774) in which he leaves land he bought of Thomas Townley located on "Boague Sound, at the Mouth of Goose Creek . . . and known by the name of Townley's Point."[1]

Both Whitaker and Dugdale give the history of the Towneleys of Towneley. It was Lawrence, second son of John Towneley (b. 1415) and his wife Isabel Sherborne of Stannihurst, who founded the Barnside branch from which the Townleys of Stonehedge later originated. All the sons of John Towneley (b. 1415) other than Sir Richard, eldest son and heir, founded branches of the family (Barnside, Royle, Dutton, etc.). Nicholas, the third son, ancestor of Colonel Richard Townley of New Jersey, founded the Royle branch. Henry, the fourth son, founded Dutton. It was the great grandson of the first Lawrence of Barnside (himself named Lawrence, though the third son of Lawrence and Hellen Townley of Barnside) who married Mary, daughter and heir of Mr. John Hartley of Stonehedge, and thus began the Stonehedge branch. Mary Townley Warner was the granddaughter of Mary Hartley Townley and perhaps was named for her.

The information that Mary Warner, wife of Augustine Warner, was by birth Mary Townley of Stonehedge makes George Washington, Robert E. Lee, Queen Elizabeth II, and their descendants, all descendants of the ancient house of Towneley of Towneley.

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[1] J. Bryan Grimes, ed., *North Carolina Wills and Inventories Copied from Original and Recorded Wills and Inventories in the Office of the Secretary of State* (Raleigh, 1912), p. 404.