

Report of the Annual Meeting

Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada

Report of the Annual Meeting

The Genealogy of Charles Lawrence, Governor of Nova Scotia

James F. Kenney

Volume 11, Number 1, 1932

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/300106ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/300106ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0317-0594 (print)

1712-9095 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Kenney, J. F. (1932). The Genealogy of Charles Lawrence, Governor of Nova Scotia. *Report of the Annual Meeting / Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada*, 11(1), 81–86. <https://doi.org/10.7202/300106ar>

All rights reserved © The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada, 1932

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

THE GENEALOGY OF CHARLES LAWRENCE, GOVERNOR OF NOVA SCOTIA

BY JAMES F. KENNEY

In the Champlain Society's edition of Captain John Knox's *Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America*, vol. I, pp. 40-41, there is a biographical note on Charles Lawrence, Governor of Nova Scotia. The statements made therein regarding the ancestry of Lawrence were based on an article in *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, vol. XII, pp. 19 *sqq.* The precise and unequivocal character of the information given by that article inspired confidence, and it was not until after this edition of Knox had been published that failure to discover any evidence in support led to the conviction that the pedigree which it assigned to Charles Lawrence was quite untrustworthy. On the initiative of Dr. A. G. Doughty, who had edited the *Journal*, an extensive investigation was made by the London office of the Public Archives of Canada, under Dr. H. P. Biggar. Lieutenant-Colonel George H. Lawrence, of Torquay, generously co-operated by placing the fruits of his researches into family history at the disposal of the Archives. It is on the results of this investigation that the present article is chiefly based.

The only facts known about Charles Lawrence which seem to have value for an enquiry into his pedigree are the following: (1) he had a brother, Herbert Lawrence, who, as next of kin, was, according to the records in Somerset House, granted letters of administration of the Governor's estate in 1761;¹ (2) in 1726 he was—as is confirmed by the commission books in the Public Record Office, London—gazetted ensign in Colonel Edward Montague's Regiment of Foot (afterwards the 11th Foot);—in the same regiment a Herbert Lawrence had received the same rank in 1713 and an Elliot Lawrence in 1720; (3) his hatchment² in Saint Paul's Church, Halifax, seems to show that his coat of arms was "a cross raguly gules on a field argent, with crest the tail and lower part of a fish erect and couped, proper." These arms were borne by at least some of the descendants of Sir John Lawrence of St. Ives, Huntingdonshire, who died in 1604. This was the most famous Lawrence family of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately for our purpose, the same coat of arms, and frequently the same crest, are used by other lines of the name, all of whom thereby claim descent from Sir Robert Lawrence of Ashton Hall, Lancaster, who is said to have accompanied Richard Coeur-de-Lion to Palestine.

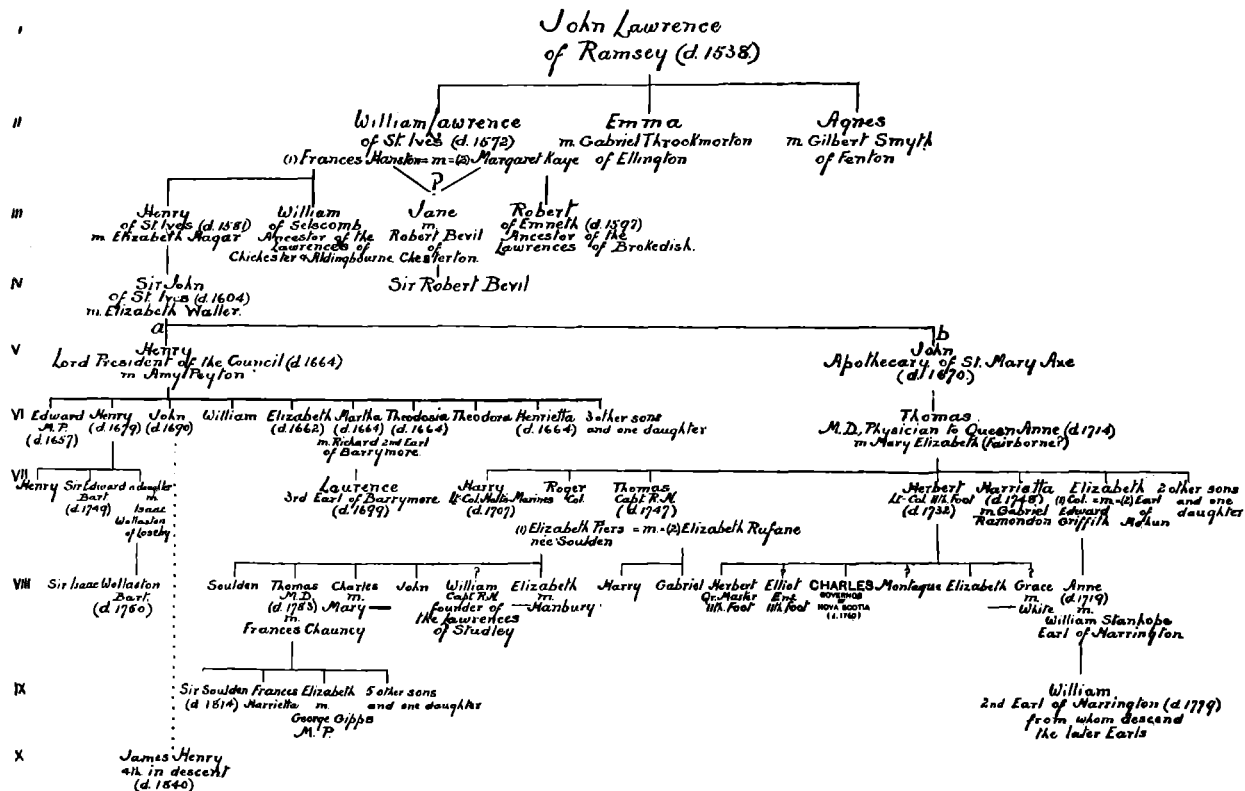
From various sources the genealogical lines of descent from Sir John Lawrence of St. Ives can be partially constructed. In particular, he had a great-grandson, Herbert Lawrence, who was Lieutenant-Colonel in Colonel Edward Montague's Regiment of Foot, was taken prisoner while commanding the regiment at the battle of Sheriffmuir in 1715,³ and died in

¹ Copy of the record is in the Public Archives of Canada.

² Copy in the Public Archives.

³ In the *Historical Record of the Eleventh, or, the North Devon Regiment of Foot* (Richard Cannon's *Historical Records of the British Army*) (London: 1845), p. 27, he is named "Albert" Lawrence.

Genealogy of Charles Lawrence.



1732.⁴ Among the Somerset House wills (Strachan 224), there is preserved the will⁵ of a Harrietta Ramondon, widow, dated 12 March, 1747, and proved 14 July, 1748, which, from the detailed information given regarding her family, makes it clear that she was the sister of this Herbert Lawrence. In the will certain sums are bequeathed to her nephews Herbert and Charles, sons of her brother Herbert. The inference is practically certain that the Charles Lawrence who was son of Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Lawrence of the 11th Foot and the Charles Lawrence who became ensign in that regiment in 1726 and afterwards Governor of Nova Scotia were one and the same man. Herbert Lawrence, ensign in the same regiment in 1713, was, no doubt, his brother. Elliot Lawrence, ensign therein in 1720, may have been either a brother or a cousin; he may have died before the Ramondon will was made in 1747. If all this is correct the story of the ancestry of Charles Lawrence of Nova Scotia can be reconstructed as follows:

John Lawrence de Wurdebois was abbot of the abbey at Ramsey in Huntingdonshire from 1508 till the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539.⁶ His will, dated in 1541 and proved in November, 1542 (registro Spert), makes reference to several of his relatives.

I. John Lawrence, residing also at Ramsey, is described as the nephew of the abbot, whom, on his death in 1538, he made supervisor of his will (registro Dingley). He left three children: William Lawrence; Emma, who married Gabriel Throckmorton, of Ellington in Huntingdonshire, third son of Richard Throckmorton, of Higham Ferrers, seneschal of the Duchy of Lancaster; and Agnes, who married Gilbert Smyth, of Fenton.

II. William Lawrence had settled at St. Ives, also in Huntingdonshire, apparently before 1541. He was sheriff for Cambridge and Huntingdonshire at the time of the death of Queen Mary. He was buried at St. Ives, 20 December, 1572 (will registro Peter). He had married, first, Frances Hanston, by whom he had two sons, Henry, his successor at St. Ives, and William, who settled at Selscomb, in Sussex, and became ancestor of the Lawrences of Chichester and Aldingburn; and, secondly, Margaret, daughter of Edward Kaye of Woodsom, in Yorkshire, and sister of Robert Kaye of Glatton, in Huntingdonshire, from which marriage was born Robert, who died in 1597 at Emneth, in Norfolk, and was the ancestor of the Lawrences of Brokedish, Norfolk. (Lucy Kaye, sister of Margaret, married John Pickering, of Titmarsh, and this alliance was the beginning of a long connection between the Lawrences and the Pickerings.) Another child of William Lawrence, by one or other of these marriages, was Jane, or Joan, Lawrence. (Will of Margaret, widow of John Lawrence of Ramsey, dated Septembred 1, 1545, proved May 31, 1546; registro Alen.) Jane Lawrence married Robert Bevil, of Chesterton, and her son and her grandson, both Sir Robert by name, were successively Knights of the Bath at the coronations of James I and Charles I.

III. Henry Lawrence, son of William, was buried at St. Ives, 25 February, 1580/81. He was married to Elizabeth, daughter of John Hagar of Bourne Castle, Cambridgeshire. (After his death she married Gilbert Pickering, later Sir Gilbert, son of John Pickering and Lucy Kaye. His

⁴ Charles Dalton, *George the First's Army 1714-1727* (London: 1910), vol. I, p. 149.

⁵ Copy in the Public Archives.

⁶ It is said that he was active in assisting Thomas Cromwell to secure the submission of the monasteries. The abbey of Ramsey was granted to the Cromwells. Then, if not at an earlier date, began a friendship between the Lawrences and Cromwells.

sister, Elizabeth Pickering, married Robert Throckmorton, only son of Gabriel Throckmorton and Emma Lawrence.)

IV. Sir John Lawrence of St. Ives, son of Henry Lawrence, was knighted at Windsor in 1603 by James I. He was buried at St. Ives, it is said on 10 February, 1604. He had married Elizabeth, sole daughter and heiress of Ralph Waller of Clerkenwell, Middlesex, fourth son of Robert Waller of Beaconsfield. (After Sir John's death she married Robert Bathurst, sheriff of Gloucestershire, and was the mother of Sir Edward Bathurst, created a baronet in 1643.) The will of Sir John Lawrence (registro Hayes), dated 10 January and proved 9 February, 1604, mentions his two sons, Henry and John.

V a. Henry Lawrence,⁷ son of Sir John, born in 1600 or 1601, was entered in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, as a fellow-commoner in 1622, and received his B.A. in 1623 and M.A. in 1627; became a member of the Long Parliament in 1646, and of the Council of State in 1653; and was elevated to the dignity of Lord President of the Council in 1654.⁸ He was a member of the Lower House under Cromwell until 1657, when he was appointed to the House of Lords. He ceased to act as president in July, 1659. After the Restoration he withdrew to Thele, or Goldingtons, a manor in the parish of Stanstead St. Margaret, Hertfordshire, which he had inherited from his own son Edward in 1657, and died there 8 August, 1664. He had married, on 21 October, 1628, Amy, daughter of Sir Edward Peyton, knt. and bart., of Iselham, Cambridgeshire, and had seven sons and six daughters.

VI a. Of these children we have information regarding the following: (1) Edward, member of Parliament under Cromwell, died in 1657, and was buried at Stanstead St. Margaret; to him, or to his brother Henry, Milton's twentieth sonnet was addressed ("Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son," etc.). (2) Elizabeth, who died in February, 1662, about the thirtieth year of her age. (3) Theodosia, who died 2 September, 1664, about the twentieth year of her age. (4) Henrietta, the youngest daughter, who died 30 September, 1664, in the thirteenth year of her age. And, of the children who survived their father: (5) Henry, who died in 1679, leaving two sons, Henry, who died unmarried, and Sir Edward, who died 2 May, 1749, having been created a baronet with remainder to his sister's son, Isaac Wollaston of Loseby in Leicestershire. (6) John, who left England and settled, first, in Barbadoes and, later, in Jamaica, where he left descendants; his will is dated 10 May, 1690. His great-grandson, Richard James Lawrence, of Fairfield, Jamaica, was the father of James Henry Lawrence (1773-1840), miscellaneous writer.⁹ (7) William. (8) Martha, who married, in November, 1656, Richard, second Earl of Barrymore, and became the mother of Laurence, third Earl of Barrymore. She died in 1664 and was buried at Thele. (9) Theodora.¹⁰

V b. John Lawrence, younger son of Sir John Lawrence of St. Ives, was an apothecary of St. Mary Axe. His will was proved 17 December, 1670.

⁷ There is an article on him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁸ It is to be noted that the Lawrences were associated in one way or another with the Cromwells, Wallers, Montagues, Bradshaws and Pickeringes, all of whom bore a share in the Puritan Revolution of 1641-1660. Oliver Cromwell was Henry Lawrence's tenant at St. Ives from 1631 to 1636.

⁹ Of whom there is a notice in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁰ The matter which precedes is, for the greater part, derived from an article in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1815, vol. LXXXV, pt. II, pp. 12-17. On the Barrymore alliance see the new ed., by the Hon. Vicary Gibbs *et al.*, of G. E. Cokayne's *The Complete Peerage*, vol. I (London: 1910), pp. 443-4.

VI b. Dr. Thomas Lawrence, only son of John Lawrence, apothecary, was physician to Queen Anne (Blenheim Roll) and died in 1714 (will proved 5 October). He had been appointed by Charles II physician to the garrison at Tangier, and had married Mary Elizabeth, daughter of the Lieutenant-Governor.¹¹ It is said that he had six sons, all of whom entered the armed services of the Crown, and three daughters. The names of the following are known: Harry Lawrence, unmarried, who, as Lieutenant-Colonel in Holt's Marines, was killed at the battle of Almanza, in Spain, on 14 April, 1707; Colonel Roger Lawrence, who retired from the army in 1713; Captain Thomas Lawrence, of the Royal Navy; Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Lawrence of Montague's Regiment of Foot, of whom mention has been made above; Harrietta, also mentioned above, who married a French gentleman, Gabriel Ramondon; Elizabeth,¹² who married, first, Colonel Edward Griffith, a Clerk Comptroller of the Green Cloth, and had by him a daughter, Anne, who married William Stanhope,¹³ afterwards first Earl of Harrington (she died 18 December, 1719); and, secondly, the Earl of Mohun, who was killed in 1713 in a duel with the Duke of Hamilton.

VII b. Captain Thomas Lawrence, R.N., ended his days as Captain of the Hospital at Greenwich, where he died in December, 1747 (will proved 13 February, 1748). He had married, first, Elizabeth, daughter of Gabriel Soulden¹⁴ of Kinsale and widow of a Colonel Piers, and, secondly, Elizabeth Rufane (still living in 1787). Harrietta Ramondon's will mentions seven children, of whom Soulden, Thomas, Elizabeth (named Elizabeth Hanbury in the will), Charles (whose wife Mary is also mentioned in the will), and John were probably of the first marriage, and Harry and Gabriel (who, perhaps, was already dead in 1747) probably of the second. This Thomas Lawrence,¹⁵ a son of Captain Thomas of the Royal Navy, was born 25 May, 1711; entered Trinity College, Oxford, in 1727; received the degrees of B.A., 1730, M.A., 1733, M.B., 1736, and M.D., 1740; became a fellow of the London College of Physicians in 1744; and was president thereof 1767-1773. He was friend and physician to Dr. Samuel Johnson. He died at Canterbury on 6 June, 1783. On 25 May, 1744, he was married, at the parish church of St. Andrew Holborn, by Dr. Taylor, prebendary of Westminster, to Frances, daughter of Dr. Charles Chauncy of Derby, and was the father of six sons and three daughters, of whom were Sir Soulden Lawrence¹⁶ (1751-1814), judge of the Court of King's Bench, Frances Harrietta, who is mentioned in the Ramondon will,

¹¹ This was probably Sir Palmes Fairborne. Sir Piercy Kirke succeeded as Lieutenant-Governor in 1680. Tangier was abandoned by the English in 1684.

¹² Cf. the new ed. of *The Complete Peerage*, vol. VI (London: 1926), p. 325.

¹³ It may, or may not, be of significance that he was second cousin, once removed, to James, afterwards Earl Stanhope, who was Colonel of the 11th Foot from 1702 to 1705. This Stanhope family group, descendants of Sir John Stanhope of Elvaston, Derby, who died in 1611, had much political influence throughout the first half of the eighteenth century.

¹⁴ For this Soulden connection Dr. Biggar refers to the wills of Gabriel Soulden of Kinsale, 1713, and Elizabeth Soulden of Kinsale, 1728, in Cork and Ross wills, Public Record Office, Dublin. These documents were lost at the destruction of the Four Courts, Dublin.

¹⁵ Notices of him, with some information about his father and grandfather, are to be found in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1787, vol. LVII, pt. i, pp. 191-3; Alexander Chalmers's *General Biographical Dictionary*, new ed. (1815), vol. XX, pp. 99-101; and the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁶ *The Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1814, vol. LXXXIV, pt. ii, p. 92, has a brief notice of him, and there is a longer article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

and Elizabeth, who married George Gipps,¹⁷ M.P. for Canterbury. Dr. Johnson addressed a Latin ode to this Dr. Thomas Lawrence on the occasion of the departure of one of his sons for the East Indies. The son practised law at Calcutta, and died at Madras, December, 1783.

VII b. What is known of Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Lawrence, of Montague's¹⁸ Foot, has already been stated. Harrietta Ramondon's will names "my nephews Charles Lawrence and Herbert Lawrence sons of my late Brother Herbert Lawrence" and "my Niece Elizabeth Lawrence one of the daughters of my said Brother Herbert Lawrence."

Other nephews and nieces of Harrietta Ramondon who are mentioned in her will—but without indication of the names of their parents,—are Grace White, Montague Lawrence, Mary Hales, Letitia Barker, Frances Darby, and William Lawrence. From the order in which they are mentioned it seems probably that Grace White was a daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Lawrence, and his name might suggest that Montague Lawrence was a son. William may have been the Captain William of the Royal Navy who founded the Lawrence family of Studley, Yorkshire.

Governor Charles Lawrence was, therefore, if the above is a true reconstruction of his pedigree, a scion of no mean line, and this is what would be expected, in view of the aristocratic character of English political life in the eighteenth century. But in a letter sent to England by some colonists in Nova Scotia, apparently in 1757, there is a reference to him as one "who some time ago was only a Painter's Apprentice in London."¹⁹ The authors of the letter are very bitter against the governor, and it is probable that this statement represents only hostile gossip. An application made by the Public Archives to the Painters' Company in London has received the reply that there is no record of the apprenticeship of a Charles Lawrence at any time possible to fit in with the career of Charles Lawrence of Nova Scotia. The records of the Vintners, at Vintners' Hall, Upper Thames Street, London, E.C. 4, do contain an entry of the apprenticeship of a Charles Lawrence to a Henry Eustace for seven years, dated 12 November, 1723. There is no further information regarding this Lawrence, and it is highly improbable that he could be the Charles Lawrence who three years later was gazetted an ensign in Montague's Regiment of Foot.²⁰

¹⁷ His brother Henry had a son George who was rector of Ringwoud, Kent, in 1784. The son of this George was the Sir George Gipps who accompanied Lord Gosford and Sir Charles Grey to Canada in 1835, and in 1838 became Governor of New South Wales.

¹⁸ The Hon. Edward Montague who became Colonel of this regiment in 1715, an office which he retained till his death in 1738, was the brother of George, Earl of Halifax (d. 1739). His father, Edward Montague, of Horton, Northhamptonshire, was nephew of that second Earl of Manchester who commanded the Parliamentary army at Marston Moor, 1645. As has been said, there was a connection between the Lawrences and the Montagues. Sir Gilbert Pickering, Lord Chamberlain under the Protectorate (see *Dictionary of National Biography*) and half-cousin of Henry Lawrence, the President, and of John Lawrence, the grandfather of Colonel Herbert, married Elizabeth Montague, first cousin of the second Earl of Manchester, and sister of Sir Edward Montague, admiral under Cromwell and, after the Restoration, first Earl of Sandwich.

¹⁹ British Museum, Add. MSS. 19,072, 45^v-46. Transcript in the Public Archives.

²⁰ No portrait of Charles Lawrence is known to exist. The two which are published in the *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, vol. XII, p. 19, and vol. XVI, p. 10, are no more authentic than the genealogy there given.