

Bio: James Lamb

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018

James Lamb (iii) was the son of James Lamb jr and Anne Morris, and the grandson of James Lamb sr and Martha Grebell; the Lamb family being of long-standing prominence in the village of Rye in East Sussex county England. He was christened at St Mary's Church in Rye on the 10th of February 1755. By 1774 young James Lamb (iii) was a member of England's 35th Regiment of Foot, then stationed at the port of Cork in Ireland. His decision to join the military may have been a sore point between James Lamb and his father.

Records of James Lamb's service in the British military are of interest:

1774, 22 Feb (recte 1775); James Lamb, 35th Regiment, Cork, to Rose Fuller, London; Due to embark on 20 March to re-enforce General Gage's army [in America]; thanks for favours, and hopes for continued patronage.

[source] Personal and business correspondence of Rose and Stephen Fuller, of the Fuller family of Brightling (Sussex), in the papers of Messrs Raper and Fovargue, solicitors, found at the East Sussex Record Office, England; SAS-RF/19/210 22.

1775, 7 March; Thomas Lamb, Rye, to Rose Fuller; Encloses a letter [no longer present] for Rose Fuller to frank and forward to his nephew Ensign James Lamb; has great affection for the young man, even though his father does not behave either as a brother or a friend.

[source] Personal and business correspondence of Rose and Stephen Fuller, of the Fuller family of Brightling (Sussex), in the papers of Messrs Raper and Fovargue, solicitors, found at the East Sussex Record Office, England; SAS-RF/19/211.

1776, 19 January; Headquarters, Boston, 35th. Regiment; Captain Cockburne to be Major vice Gaul, by purchase. Lieut. Cornelius Smelt, of the 14th., to be Captain vice Cockburne promoted, Lieut. James Lamb to be Adjutant vice Simcoe promoted.

[source] The Kemble Papers, Volume 16; Stephen Kemble, William Howe Howe (Viscount), Sir Henry Clinton, Daniel Jones; Society, 1884

1777, Dec; Lt James Lamb, 35th Rgt, served as Deputy Judge Advocate for several military cases in New York. note - "At this time the Orange Rangers were carrying outpost duties in the vicinity of King's Bridge and were cantoned at Fort Knyphausen under Major Gen Tryon."

[source] King's Orange Rangers, John G Leefe.

Note – In 1778, the 35th Regiment moved from New York to the West Indies, capturing the Island of St Lucia; remaining there during the latter Revolutionary years, and returning to England in 1785.

1779, March; War Office; 35th Foot - Lt James Lamb to be Captain, vice - Thomas Bomford.

[source] Preferments from the London Gazette.



Battle of Martinique, 1779

35th Regt of Foot, Lt General Henry Fletcher in Command
1779, Dec to 1780, Feb – James Lamb on payroll
1780, April – Capt James Lamb, St Lucia
1783, August – Capt James Lamb, absent by Leave

1782, May; To Captain Lamb, of the 35th Regiment of Foot, for Losses he sustained when taken Prisoner by an American Privateer, 26th October 1780.

[source] Journals of the House of Commons, Volume 39; Great Britain House of Commons; H.M. Stationery Office, 1803

This description of an auction item, found online, adds to the understanding of James Lamb's military service:

New York City, under British occupation; New York, October 18, 1778, sight draft of James Lamb, Jr., 300 pounds, for payment of purchase of a Company in the 35th Regiment (of the British army). (British forces occupied New York City from August, 1776, to November, 1783).

"Six months after Sight, please to Pay this my Third Bill / First or Second of the same Tenor and Date not paid, to Mr. Tho's Bomford, or his Order, the Sum of Three Hundred Pounds Sterling being in part of Payment for the Purchase of a Company in the 35th Regiment, as p'r Advice from me of this Date ."

Signed at lower right, "James Lamb Jun'r."

At lower left, "To Mr. James Lamb / Merchant Rye / Sussex."

Later pencil notation, "Capt."

Signed at verso by Thomas Bomford ("Pay the Contents to David Mathews Esq'r or order Value of him rec'd") and by Mathews.

Thick laid paper, with portion of ornate watermark. Measures approx. 4 1/2 x 7 3/4 inches. Filing folds; short fold separation at bottom edge, noted for sake of accuracy. Especially crisp and clean. Outstanding overall.

It was during the years of James Lamb's military service in America that he met and married Catalina (Catherine) Mathews, daughter of David Mathews and Sarah Seymour of New York.

James Lamb, esq Lt and adjutant in HH 35th Regt, married 31 Aug at Flatbush to Miss Matthews, eldest daughter of David Matthews, esq, mayor of New York City. Newspaper date – 14 September 1778. [source] Genealogical Data from Colonial New York Newspapers, Scott 1977.

It is difficult to discern the exact path that James Lamb and Catherine Mathews, followed, but it seems possible that she went with him for a time to St Lucia, before he returned with his bride to the Lamb family home in Rye, Sussex county England. Two of their sons were christened at St Mary's Church in Rye in 1782 and 1784.

At about the same time James Lamb returned to England, his father died. The Will of James Lamb (father of James Lamb who married Catherine Mathews) was written in January 1780 and probated in May of the same year. The Will runs to about eighteen pages, but this abbreviated copy, available at Britain's National Archives, gives a helpful picture of its primary content:

Probate copy of will (PCC) dated 6 January 1780 of James Lamb of Rye, esq; reference – PAB/305

*1 To his eldest son James Lamb the house and garden containing the banquetting house in Watchbell Street, Rye, purchased from his brother John Lamb; messuage yard and garden in the occupation of the Commissioners of H M Customs and used as a Customs House, with the vaults underneath it; lands in Iden (2a) now in the occupation of Christopher Dive [in ratification of the provisions of the marriage settlement between Ann Morris spinster and the testator. Reciting the will of David Morris, father of Ann Morris then Ann Lamb, in which he bequeathes (1) £1,200 remainder to the heirs of James and Ann Lamb and which has accordingly been allocated to them, viz. **some to James Lamb to buy a commission for the army**, and the rest divided between Martha Lamb, now Martha Chamberlain, and Ann Lamb, now the wife of Nathaniel Proctor, (2) £10 to Martha Lamb now Martha Chamberlain (3) to James and Ann Lamb and their heirs Three parcels of marshland on the west of the road from Iden to Wittersham, near the New Bridge in Iden, called Ram Marsh and the Pound Marsh (20a), parcel called the Hilly Field (11a) adjoining Pound Marsh late in the occupation of Samuel Southerden and now of Edward Long, and lands employed in making the new channel in Wittersham Levels, then and now in the occupation of the Commissioners of Sewers for the Upper Levels, for which they pay an annual rent of £10.10s; All this land has been duly allocated to James Lamb, Martha Chamberlain and Ann Proctor, children of the testator by Ann Lamb]*

2 To George Lamb, one of his sons by his second wife Susan, the house and appurts, at the Strand, Rye, purchased from the heirs of Robert Pearce; Messuage, barn, land and woodland in Beckley called Seer's Farm (25a); Messuage and three parcels of rough rushy land (6a) and one little wood (2a) called Sivers tenement, in Beckley, all now in the occupation of William Apps; One third part of one messuage called Stroods in Chiddingly, and 41a land, now in the occupation of [Blank] Barnes

All of which property in Beckley and Chiddingly was settled upon the heirs of James and Susan Lamb, by the Marriage Settlement dated 19, 20 June 1760 upon the marriage of James Lamb and Susan Coxsell, spinster

3 To Charles Lamb, another son of James Lamb by Susan his wife all his messuages in Longer Street Rye now in the several occs. of James Lamb, Samuel Miller, the widow Kelsey, and Benjamin Truncheon; His warehouses at the Strand in Rye and at the West Cliffe, Rye, with the land adjoining; stable and yard near the Rope Walk, Rye

4 To his daughter[s] Susan and Elizabeth Lamb, his daughters by Susan Lamb, his barn and 48a land, 39a land called Daw Marsh, Way Marsh and Fleet Marsh in Rye

5 To his daughter Susan Lamb, the silver spoons marked J L M and six silver table spoons

6 To his executors James and Charles Lamb and executrixes Martha Chamberlain and Ann Proctor, all household goods, plate, linen, ready money, wares, ships, vessels, boats, merchandise, and the two warehouses at the Strand, Rye built on lands held of the corporation, to provide £500 for each of his four children by Susan and the surplus to be divided between all seven children

Date: 17 May 1780

Following James Lamb and Catherine Mathews during their years in England has been difficult. Records hint that James Lamb (iii) took on the office of Customs Collector for Rye, a position that the Lamb family had long controlled and benefited by. They may have lived at Green Hall (The Old Customs House) on Church Square in Rye, as this property was bequeathed to James Lamb by his father's 1780 Will.

A few records of interest:

Lease for 31 years from 10 Oct 1776 at £38; James Lamb, Rye, esq, to William Davis, esq, collector of HM Customs, Rye The custom house (formerly called Greenhall), Rye; a new warehouse in Middle Street which James Lamb covenants to build; 30 Sep 1776.

[source] East Sussex Record Office; CUS/1/2/1



Old Customs House (Green Hall) Rye, Sussex, England

Insured: James Lamb and Thomas Clarke, Rye, Sussex, gents; other property or occupiers: near the George Inn, Long Street, Rye (George Dengate, gardener); Date: 16 April 1789.
[source] London Metropolitan Archives; MS 11936/359/556430

Rye: Old Customs House, Church Square; 1978; Related material - ROHAS parish and tenement analysis
[source] East Sussex Record Office; HBR/1/359 and 038/A/046

Electors (jurats) of Rye (date not given):

Mr. Thomas Lamb, a tally-cutter in the exchequer, a place of 400 [pounds] a year, and cursitor of Hampshire.

Mr. Thomas Phillipps Lamb, his son, cursitor of Kent, and late a king's waiter of the customs at this place, which he has given to his son, Thomas Davis Lamb, a minor.

Mr. James Lamb, collector of the customs.

Mr. Nathaniel Procter, brother of the above, farms the estate of the corporation, at a very low rent.

Mr. William Proffer, a superannuated riding officer.

[source] An Entire and Complete History, political and personal, of the boroughs of Great Britain (together with the Cinque Ports) . . Vol 2; TBH Oldfield, 1805.

James Lamb also continued in his military service, serving as Captain of the Rye Volunteers. Following this position led to a record of his death in 1795.

Rye Volunteer Company

James Lamb to be Captain

Nathaniel Proctor, Gent, to be first Lieutenant

[source] The Gazette (London England); 12 Aug 1794.

Lieutenant Nathaniel Proctor to be captain in the Rye volunteers, vice James Lamb, deceased.

[source] The Gazette (London England); 28 Aug 1795



Uniforms of the Rye Volunteers, on display at the Rye Museum

Two sons of James Lamb (iii) and Catherine Mathews are clearly identified in the baptismal records of St Mary's Church at Rye – James Mathews Lamb (married Mary Rich), and David Morris Lamb (died in infancy). Two daughters are also mentioned in family records – Sarah Lamb (married James Noble), and Susan Lamb (nothing further known). Notice of the death of Catherine Mathews Lamb has not been located, but she probably predeceased her husband who died in 1795. Unlike the more “prominent” Lamb family members, James Lamb (iii) did not leave a recognizable Will, nor did he and his wife have a tomb ledger in St Mary's Church at Rye. A few further details on the Lamb – Mathews family can be found in the brief biographical account of Catherine Mathews.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to James Lamb in the database](#)

[Link to Catalina Mathews in the database](#)

[Sketch: The Lamb Family at Rye in East Sussex County England](#)

Further Reading:

An Historical Memoir of the 35th Royal Sussex Regiment of Foot; Richard Trimen, 1873.

[35th \(Royal Sussex\) Regiment of Foot; online at Wikipedia](#)

About the photos:

Battle of Martinique, 1779; by Auguste-Louis de Rossel (1736-1804); Musée national de la Marine, France.

[Uniforms of the Rye Volunteer's, on display at the Rye Museum](#). These belonged to Lt Col Thomas Davis

Lamb, cousin of James Lamb. Great website!

The Old Custom's House at Mapp & Lucia's Rye Website

Biography of James Lamb; written by Pamela Hutchison Garrett for Markham of Chesterfield website; 2018.