

**THE INTRODUCTION TO INDEX
TO THE UNPUBLISHED CHAMBERLAIN
GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BOOK**

By George Richard Chamberlin

It appears from an early general examination of *The Chamberlain Collection*, located at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, that a passion of the *Chamberlain Association of America, 1897-1961*, (hereinafter referred to as the CAA), was the preparation of a book documenting the first eight or nine generations of Americans with the Chamberlain surname including known allied families. This book was entitled, *The Chamberlain Genealogical and Historical Book*, (hereinafter referred to as *The Chamberlain Book*). This work was initially expected to be finished in one or two years, however, the work was never published!

The first written reference to such a book was made by the then Assistant Executive Secretary of the CAA, Jennie Chamberlain Watts, in the 1911 Notice of Annual Meeting. Following that meeting, Reverend Charles Henry Pope, author of *the Pioneers of Early Massachusetts, a Descriptive List, Drawn from Records of the Colonies, Towns, and Churches and Other Contemporaneous Documents*,¹ was retained by the CAA for the purpose of preparing and editing this book. Interestingly, Pope's initial retention corresponded with the publication of the last CAA Annual Reports to be published by the CAA and the last CAA Annual Membership Meeting attended by General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain.

At first, *The Chamberlain Book* was commissioned to be completed by Reverend Pope by 1912. However, in CAA records we learn that in 1915 Reverend Pope requested additional funds to, "complete" the project. Notwithstanding such request, the project remained incomplete through the death of Jennie Chamberlin Watts in 1941. Letters of inquiry as late as 1955 by CAA members about the Chamberlain Book evidenced continued interest in the development of a finished project.

It now appears that a book manuscript existed at the time *The Collection* was transferred from the treasurer of CAA, William Chamberlain, to the New England Historical and Genealogical Library in 1961. It is possible the treasurer retained this manuscript or left the manuscript with a publisher. It is also possible that the manuscript was placed in the now missing suitcase that was once part of *The Collection*. Today both the suitcase and the manuscript remain missing. Perhaps one day, either or both will make a welcomed appearance.

In November, 2005, I visited the Chamberlain Collection at the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, (NYGBS). During that visit part of *Box 47* of the *Collection* was scanned. *Box 47* had been a neglected box due to its unusual contents. A

¹ (reprinted by Baltimore Maryland, Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc., 1998)

note attached to the box contained the recommendation that the box contents be discarded. This box consists of thousands of color coded index cards of Christian names and numbers. A portion of these color coded cards, letters, A-J, were scanned, 12 to 14 cards per page. Three and one half years later, April, 2009, after the collection was transferred to the New England Historic Genealogical Society, the remainder of the box contents, letters J-Z, were scanned. In May, 2009, the scanned color coded A-Z cards were reduced to paper copies. The images revealed first names in near perfect alphabetical order. This appeared to be an index to a book, perhaps the missing "*Chamberlain Book*."

The contents of each card were typed on 8" by 10" pages: Approximately 40 names per page. Next to each name was listed the color of the card, to wit: Green, White, Pink, Drab and Yellow, representing five original Immigrant ancestors; Henry, William, Richard, Thomas, Edmund. Next to the card color were number(s) written on each card, which appear to be page numbers. This process produced 94 pages of first names (Christian names), averaging 40 names per page or an approximate total of 3,760 different names.

The numbers on each card needs explanation. On many cards there is only one or 2 numbers. On other cards there are five to ten numbers. On numerous cards there 10 to 20 numbers. On some cards there are as many as 30 or 40 numbers.

On a green card for "Henry" there are 11 numbers. Number 1 on this card seems to mean that the name Henry appears on page 1 of the book. This very likely was Henry of Hingham. Here are the additional numbers that appear on the green card with the name Henry: 1, 2, 4, 5, 13, 14, 16, 70, 225, 247, 419a.

On a green card for "Jane" there are 14 numbers. The numbers are as follows: 1, 2, 4, 5, 23, 58, 299, 300p, 301a, 302, 399, 424, 427, 604e. Henry's wife is "Jane". She along with Henry appears on page 1. On another green card is the name "Christian." Next to this name is found a single number, 1. Christian is identified in genealogical circles as the mother of a Henry. On page 1 she is found with Henry and Jane.

The next step was to take all of the numbers on all of the cards and place cards in number order. Using the green cards A-J mentioned above we find on *page one* the following names: Henry, Jane, Christian, Faith, Daniel and Ebenezer. Those familiar with the Henry line, will quickly realize that all of these names are associated with a Henry in Hingham, MA. Also found on *page one* on cards A-Z are the names of the four remaining immigrants and their children, William, (white cards), Richard, (pink cards), Thomas, (drab cards), and Edmund, (yellow cards).

In July, 2009, I returned to the NEHGS and scanned Box 48 and Box 49. Box 48 appears to be an index of approximately 1,900 different Allied Surnames. Box 49 appears to be an index of geographical places, i.e.: consisting of approximately 1,900 different cities and towns. Once again, all of these cards are color coded with a number or a list of numbers on each cards

To date, this writer has reduced to writing a 150 page “partial index” combining the first names index, allied surname index and the “partial list of cities and towns.” The cities and towns list will be complete by October 31, 2010. When completed this index should number nearly 190 pages. In this writer’s opinion, the index described above is the index to the missing *Chamberlain Book*, the recreation of which is now possible.

After reading portions of Reverend Pope’s work, *the Pioneers of Early Massachusetts, a Descriptive List, Drawn from Records of the Colonies, Towns, and Churches and Other Contemporaneous Documents*, I developed a limited understanding of his writing style and choice of format. Using his perceived style, format and some of his content I used the index to re-create a few of the first pages of his book. Exhibit “A” is a sample of what the book may look like if found or ever completed.

April 30, 2010

Sincerely

George Richard Chamberlin
World Chamberlain Genealogical Society, Archivist