

**A MEMOIR OF GENERAL  
JOHN COFFIN, COMPILED  
FROM VARIOUS SOURCES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760575649

A Memoir of General John Coffin, compiled from various sources by Henry Coffin

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

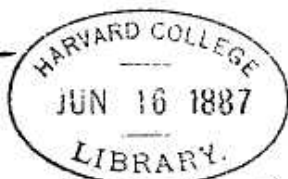
**HENRY COFFIN**

**A MEMOIR OF GENERAL  
JOHN COFFIN, COMPILED  
FROM VARIOUS SOURCES**



Can 428.6

~~5446.9~~



Subscription fund.

MEMOIR  
OF  
GENERAL JOHN COFFIN.



THE subject of the following memoir, General John Coffin, was the third son of Mr. Nathaniel Coffin, Cashier of Customs at Boston, Capital of the State of Massachusetts, at that time a Colony of Great Britain.

John Coffin was descended from a long line of Knights and Valiant men—for we find Sir Richard Coffin, as far back as the days of King Henry II. The most ancient seat of the name and family, called Portledge, is in the Parish of Alwington, bordering on the Severn Sea, about six leagues to the E. of the Isle of Lundy : and the Manor of Alwington has been in the family of Coffin from the time of the Norman Conquest.

We also find the following entry in Hutching's History of Dorset, Vol. 1, page 468, Parish of Wambrook. "This little village, now a distinct Parish, was anciently part of Chadstock, from which it lies about two miles N., on the very borders of the County adjoining Somersetshire. A family of the Percys were its Lords. It afterwards came to the Filiols, of Woodlands, who held it from the 3rd of Henry V. to the 19th of Henry VIII. In the 22nd of Henry VIII. on the partition of Sir William Filiol's property, this manor was assigned to Sir Edwarde Kymer; after this it passed to several private persons or owners. In 1645, Mr. Humphrey Coffin, Recusant, had his old rents here, and his lands, valued in 1641, at £30 per annum, sequestered.—In 1645, Mr. John Coffin's term here, valued at £45 per annum : was sequestered."

This ancient family originally came from Fallaise, in Normandy; and at a recent date, the compiler of this Memoir saw the ruins of the Chateau, in which the Coffin family dwelt. They came over to England before the Norman Conquest, and settled in Somerset and Devon; and, at the time of the Great Survey of all

Lands—ordered by William the Conqueror, the Coffins are mentioned in Dooms-day Book, as being possessed of several hides of land. The above, and the following extracts, are from Sir William Pole's M.S. of "Devon, and its Knights, in the Reigns of the earlier Kings of England." As a further evidence of the antiquity of this Gentle Family, there is a boundary deed, (a copy whereof is in my custody), made near the Conquest, written in the Saxon tongue, which giveth good confirmation thereof; which said deed expresseth the bounds between the lands of Richard Coffin, Lord of the Manor of Alwington, and Cokeweston, and the Abbot of Tavistock, in relation to the lands belonging to that Abbey in the near adjoining Parish of Abbotsham. Some of the terms and articles of which agreement between them are these :—that the Abbot and Convent of Tavistock should give to the said Richard Coffin, and his next heir, full fraternity in his Church of Tavistock, to receive there the habit of religion wheresoever (God so inspiring) they would, and that in the mean time he should have the privilege of one monk there. The family very early spread itself into several



branches, which flourished so well in divers places of this county, that they left their name and adjunct to them, as Combe-Coffin, now Combe-Pyne in the East part; Coffin's Well in the South part; and Coffin's Jugarly in the West part of this province; in which last place the Mansion House was near the Church, to which was belonging a fair deer park, now wholly demolished. Nor is it less observable that some of those places yielded gentlemen with gilded spurs, as Sir Jeffry Coffin, of Combe-Coffin, in the days of King Henry III. and before that, Sir Elias Coffin, of Jugarly (called also Sir Elias Coffin of Argot), in the days of King John of England. As to the family of Alwington,—one notes from the time of King Henry I. unto the age of King Edward II. (the space of above 200 years), that the heirs of this family were always called Richard; as for example—Sir Richard Coffin, of Alwington, Knight, in the reign of Henry II. Sir Richard Coffin, of Alwington, in the reign of Edward I. and Sir Richard Coffin, in the days of Henry IV.; and again—a century afterwards Richard Coffin was High Sheriff of the County of Devon, in the 2nd year of King

Henry VIII. : his education, and accomplishments were such that they introduced him with advantage to the Court of King Henry VIII. where he came highly to be preferred, first, to the Honourable post of Master of the Horse, at the Coronation of Queen Anne Boleyn, (Mother to the glorious Queen Elizabeth), Anno 25 of that King, and after that to the honour of Knighthood in the 29th year of the same reign. He was also one of the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber to the same King,—a place of great reputation, and trust ; whose office is to wait on the King, within doors and without, so long as his Majesty is on foot ; and when the King eats in his Privy Chamber, they wait at table, and bring in the meat ; they wait also at the reception of Ambassadors, and every night two of them lie in the King's Privy Chamber. They are forty-eight in number, all Knights, or Esquires of note, whose power is great ; for a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, by the King's command only, without any written commission, is sufficient to arrest a Peer of England.

In those days gentlemen were not always called upon to fill this office because of their

political training and abilities, but more frequently from noble carriage and expertness in arms.

Of what courage this gentleman was and how expert at feats of arms may be understood from the fact that he was one of the Eighteen chosen to assist King Henry VIII. at the tournament held between him and the French King before Guisness in France, A.D. 1519.

Of these jousts Camden says,—“They were at first public exercises of arms practised by noblemen and gentlemen, but soon became more than mere sports and diversions. They were first introduced A.D. 934, and were always managed by their own particular laws. A long time and in all parts their practise was continued, to that degree of madness and with so great a slaughter of persons of the best quality, especially here in England where it was more prominently introduced by Stephen, that the Church was forced by seven canons to forbid them with the penalty, “that whosoever should happen therein to be slain should be denied Christian burial,” and under King Henry III. by the advice of parliament it was enacted that the offenders’ estate should be