

# Henry Whitman Greene

1626-1698



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Mr. Greene's remote ancestor was John Greene, a surgeon, son of Peter Greene, of Aukley Hall, Salisbury, Wiltshire, England. He died in Warwick in 1658 (O.S.), having been three times married. His first wife, Joan Tattersall, whom he married in 1619, was the mother of his six children. John Greene landed in Boston in 1635, and at a later date settled in Providence, where he became one of the proprietors, and ultimately located in Warwick. His second son, James, was born in 1626 and died in 1698. He married, first, Deliverance Potter, of Warwick, and a second time to Elizabeth Anthony, of Portsmouth. He built the original stone dwelling on the homestead land, now owned by the subject of this sketch, the cellar walls of which are still standing. The house was demolished more than seventy years ago, and the present residence, erected in 1687 by his son James, stands but a few feet from the

primitive structure occupied by his father. Within this building are various evidences of strength and antiquity. The mammoth fireplace, six by ten feet in dimensions, the heavy oaken beams and solid stairways, all indicate the ancient and indestructible character of the work of that early day. The present owner is justly proud of the fact that this ancestral property is still his own, and has never passed from the Greene family.

James Greene, the second, died March 12th, 1712, at the age of fifty-two. He was a man of much influence in his locality, the first member of the Masonic fraternity in the county, and in 1702 captain of the militia. His descendant, Henry W., has in his possession a cane of which he is justly proud, brought from England by his ancestor, and suitably inscribed, with the date 1687. He has also preserved many deeds, records and parchments bearing the signatures of the early

members of the family. Fones Greene, one of the eight children of James

Greene, died July 29th, 1758, at the age of sixty-seven. His oldest son, Captain James Greene, the great-grandfather of Henry W., and oldest of the six children of Fones Greene, was born in 1713, and married Patience, daughter of Captain John Waterman, in 1740. He died in 1802, having been for more than sixty years a member of the Baptist society. His son, James Green (sic), was born on the homestead, a portion of which he inherited. He married twice, his first wife being Phebe Warner, who had five children. His second wife was Deborah, daughter of John Gorton. His son, Warner James Greene, was born on the homestead, inherited from his father and grandfather. He married Harriet, daughter of Henry Whitman, of Warwick, whose two children are Henry Whitman and Roby H., wife of Benjamin Budlong.

The former of these, Henry Whitman Greene, was born on the ancestral estate March 1st, 1814. The opportunities afforded at home for an ordinary English education not being promising, he pursued his studies in Providence, and on returning, began at once the business of his life, that of a farmer. He has since been known familiarly among his friends as "Farmer Greene of the Buttonwoods". On the death of his father in 1849, the estate was divided between the son and daughter, Mr. Greene receiving the dwelling known as the homestead, with land immediately adjacent, which he has greatly improved. He has gratified his inclination in cultivating the paternal acres, and given time and attention to this, to the exclusion of other business pursuits, perhaps more attractive and less laborious. He was formerly a trustee of the Centreville Savings Bank, and has been for forty years a member of Coventry Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons.

He has been since the casting of his first ballot a firm believer in the principles of the Whig party, and is now equally strong in his defense of the republican platform. He has been a delegate to state conventions, but always declined office other than that of member of the school board of his town. He was made a major during the days when the militia was a power in the state, and shouldered a musket when the Dorr rebellion inspired the patriotism of Rhode Island citizens. On the election of William Henry Harrison to the presidency in 1840, Mr. Greene gave a gigantic clambake on the homestead farm, when 10,000 good Whigs cheered for 'Tippecanoe and Tyler too'. He celebrated the election of his grandson, General Benjamin Harrison, in the same hospitable manner in 1888. He is doubtless one of the

best informed men on matters of historical and antiquarian interest in the town of Warwick. He adheres in religion to the faith of his ancestors, that of the Baptist church.

Mr. Greene was married in 1842 to Emeline, daughter of Jeremiah Dexter, of Warwick, and granddaughter of Benjamin Dexter, of Centreville, Warwick."