

**The Journal of the American-Irish Historical Society (Vol. VI) by Thomas Hamilton Murray**

CONCERNING "THOMAS THE IRISHMAN." (Thomas Lewis)

Editorial in the Irish-American, New York, October 14, 1905.

On page 121, Vol. V, Journal of the American-Irish Historical Society: "Thomas the Irishman" is mentioned in the Dutch records of New York. Thus, Hon. Peter Stuyvesant, Director-General of New Netherland, writing to Capt. Martin Cregier, 1663, says: "Your letter by Thomas the Irishman has just been received." ... On August 5, 1663, Captain Cregier writes in his journal: "Thomas the Irishman arrived here at the Redoubt from the Mannhattans." On September 1, 1663, Captain Cregier writes: "Thomas the Irishman and Claesje Hoorn arrived with their yachts at the Kill from the Manhattan," and on the 17th of the same month the captain writes: "Thomas the Irishman arrived today." The foregoing references may be found in Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York, edited by Fernow, Vol. XIII, Albany, 1881.

In the preparation for an exhaustive history of early New York Mr. Dingman Versteeg, archivist of the Holland Society, has been able to trace out many heretofore lacking details of the record of the Irishman who was so prominent here in Governor Stuyvesant's time.

His name was Thomas Lewis, and he must have gone to Holland from Ireland sometimes in 1657. How long he remained there does not appear, but, in that year, he was sent from Amsterdam under contract to the Dutch West Indies Company as a carpenter in New Amsterdam, as this city (New York) was then called. His name was transformed in the records to Thomas Lodewicksen, a sort of Latin-Dutch combination.

For three years after this, he does not seem to have made much stir here, and then he appears as the captain of a bark plying between this city and Albany. A man of such standing in this community at that time was a real captain of industry and a citizen of substance.

The favor and regard in which Lewis was held by Governor Stuyvesant is evidenced by the fact that his bark was used to transport troops in the Esopus war of 1663, and on it Stuyvesant made his headquarters, so dating a number of letters still extant.

Lewis was married to a Dutch wife, Geesje Barents, a member of a prominent and well-known family in this city. He had several children. One of them, Thomas Lodewicksen, Jr., married Frances, daughter of the famous Jacob Leisler, head of the colony, which is another indication of his father's social prominence.

Lewis died here, on September 14, 1685, and his widow was named executrix of his will by

Governor Dongan, on April 1, 1686. There are many of his descendants among the various Lewis families scattered over this state, but few of them, perhaps, know that their ancestor was that "Thomas the Irishman" mentioned so frequently in the old Dutch records of Stuyvesant's time.