

Our Clifford Ancestors

by
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Timothy Clifford	
John Clifford	1801 – 1881
James Clifford	1839 - 1905
Beatrice Clifford	1887 – 1958

Timothy Clifford

John Clifford 1801-1881

John Clifford was and continues to be an enigma in our ancestral annals. A great deal of history remains clouded. He was doubtlessly born in Ireland; a catholic. In his 1881 Canadian census, John Clifford reported his age as 80 and by this source John Clifford was born in 1801. His gravestone in Robie Street Cemetery M-2#20 has his death as 23 December 1881 and age 90 hence 1791 (Colchester Historical Archives, Colchester County Deaths 1793... Page 5).

His date of immigration to Canada has not yet been ascertained. Ray Johnson in *A Glance Backward* indicates that he may have come from a well-to-do family who sent him money regularly. It is beleived that he first took up residence in Halifax in that part of the City that once was Dartmouth.

His marriage is reported by Heather Long as takien place on 20 Sept 1829 to Eleiha Kenedy, Lady of Mount Carmel, PC (Prospect Church?) although in every census she reports her name as Alice.

John was engaged by Hiram Hyde, a Truro entrepreneur to operate a Hotel in Manganese Mines which was variously called the ten Mile Road Hotel and on the Church map of 1864 J Clifford Hotel. He moved to brookside aroad, Brookside, Colchester County.





Their children

Malvina Clifford b. abt 1831; d. 05 Mar 1908, m Abe Wall, b. 1821, 1899 Malvina died. 05 Mar 1908

James Clifford b. 31 Oct. 1838, d. 25 Jun. 1905 m. Rebecca Nelson, 27 May 1863 Leaving Children (see below);

Mary Ann Clifford, b. 1840, d. 26 Mar. 1913 Manganese Mines m John Andrew McCabe; b. 1840 d. 6 Dec 1927 Children 1. Andrew McCabe, 2. Anne Marshall McCabe m. John Harper Turner

Elizabeth Clifford b. 6 October 1847 East Mountain; d. 25 Apr 1931, m. James King Carlyle; b. 15 July 1848, East Mountain d. 28 Dec 1928, Children: 1. William Seymour Carlyle 20 May 1878 East Mountain, Colchester County, d. 2 May 1961, m. 2 Dec 1903 Ethel Jean Christie 2. John Andrew Carlyle b. 9 Jun 1881, d. 1956 m Bessie Sterling

Timothy Clifford b. Abt 1850

John Clifford m. 26 Apr 1905 Aggle Nelson in Bath Maine; Residence Bath, Maine

“The Clifford’s were probably the only Catholics in the area, and there was no church of their denomination within travelling distance. However, Mrs. Clifford did not neglect the religious training of her children. Each day she read the Bible with them, a custom which was not usual in Catholic families at that time. Thus the Christian faith was maintained in the family, but the children were lost to the Catholic Church. The census of 1871 lists their son James as a Baptist, Timothy as a Methodist, and daughter Elizabeth as a Presbyterian! James Clifford was a highly respected member of the community and an Elder in the Baptist Church”

Deacon James Clifford 1839 - 1905

James Clifford, son of John and Alice Clifford was born in 31 October 1838 Bible Hill, Colchester County

Clifford F. Archibald in “A Goodly Heritage” speaking of John Clifford indicates,

However, some of the best people in the community later could trace their ancestry to that same immigrant



hotel keeper. A son James Clifford was an elder in the Baptist Church at East Mountain. He was a living example of what James in his Epistle exhorts the believer to be.

He married Rebecca Nelson, no religious slouch herself. It is believed that they had 10 children.

Their children include,

Infant Clifford, a stillborn, evidence for the existence of this child is sketchy

Mary Alice Clifford b. 1864, 15 Apr 1899 m. 2 sep 1899 John Henry Archibald , Children:
1. Maynard Brown Archibald, 26 Jan 1891 m. Helen McGregor Dustan and had two children Joan Dustan Archibald and Marjorie MacGregor Archibald, 2. Rebecca Dell Archibald b. 09 Apr 1892, d. 02 May 1957. m. Frederick Johnson

.David Lorenzo Clifford b. 1866, d. 29 May 1878 died of Diphtheria.

Nanetta known as Nettie Clifford b. 1868 or 1869, Married Howard Mills (b. 1854), d. 1896 buried Acadia Mines Children 1. Faye Christine Mills 2. Max H. Mills

Benjamin Scott Clifford b.13 Aug. 1871, m. Lilly Taylor 27 Dec. 1899 d. 3 Jul. 1965

James William Clifford b. 1874, East Mountain Colchester County, NS; m. Ethel May McNutt (b.. Feb. 3 1884) Brookside (daughter of William McNutt and Mary B. McNutt known as May, moved off to Chase BC. D. 21 May 1946 No Children

Noble Clifford b.1876, d.1878 died of Diphtheria d. 26 May 1878 age 1 Yr. 10 Months

Lena M. Clifford b.1879, d 1901 died of TB 27 Feb. 1901 age 21 yr.

Sadie or Sarah Pearl Clifford b. 25 June 1882 , d. 20 Jan 1902 died of TB age 19 yrs

Beatrice Clifford b. 16 February 1887 d 16 Sept. 1958, m. William Rankin Retson, 25 December 1905, Children: 1. Mary Doris Retson b. 19 Aug 1909, 2. George Clifford Retson b. 19 Dec 1912 m. Grace Elizabeth Atkinson 3. Rebecca Jean Retson 18 Nov 1917 m. William Angus Jenkins 4. William Armour Bateman Retson b. 16 Mar 1925

Only 4, Mary, Nettie, Benjamin Scott, and Beatrice lived long enough to marry and leave offspring. The family faced one tragedy after another. 1878 brought the death of David and Noble of diphtheria. Two girls who looked after others with TB also succumbed in 1901-02. Another child was born stillborn.

James Clifford became a deacon of the Baptist church on the Brookside Road. His Grandson, Cliff Retson indicates that he was highly regarded by people who had known him. He reports that his funeral was heavily attended. Someone referred to him as “nature’s nobleman.” Cliff Retson named his second son James Clifford Retson in recognition of the high regards he had for James Clifford.

Ray Johnson, grandson of John Henry Archibald relates a story about James Clifford:

Grandfather Archibald was always known as John Henry. He grew up on his father’s farm and worked for a time in the manganese mine, where he broke his hip in a rock fall. They managed to bandage him up and got him to bed and called the doctor. The doctor, whose competence may be questioned, commented them for their work but did nothing for the patient. After the doctor had gone back to town, James Clifford, a neighbour who had taken an interest in young John Henry, heard what had happened. He was furious. He hitched up his horse and made a quick trip into town. He stormed into the doctor’s office and demanded to know why nothing was being done for John Henry. The doctor said that anyone that badly hurt usually died anyway. Mr Clifford ordered the doctor to go back to Manganese Mines and do what he could for John Henry. This must have been an unusual experience for the doctor, for doctors were usually treated with a respect which bordered on reverence. The doctor returned as ordered, and John Henry recovered

James Clifford died on 25 Jun. 1905

Beatrice Clifford 1887 – 1958

Beatrice Clifford, daughter of James and Rebecca Clifford both of Irish descent, was born 16 February 1887 in Brookside, Colchester County, Nova Scotia. She was the youngest daughter of James Clifford and Robert Nelson. She married William Rankin Retson 25 December 1905 in Onslow, Colchester County, Nova Scotia approximately two years after he immigrated to Canada.

Beatrice Clifford came from a cultured family. When her family would write letters they would write them in the form of poetry. Beatrice Clifford had a love of poetry. She had graduated from Colchester Academy. She was a school teacher in Valley and maybe Bible Hill as well.

She was a very religious. She was a Sunday school teacher at First Baptist Church in Truro for many years. In the early years Beatrice strong puritan background rose to the top. There were no cards – at least in the house or to the knowledge of Beatrice Clifford, no dancing, no drinking and church attendance was compulsory. Doris Hancock relates that her father took her to her dance at the Agriculture College when she was in grade 10. Similarly it was her father that gave her some money to buy cards in Truro to play “45s” when some boys from New Brunswick were going to arrive and required some entertainment. None of the children held any resentment to their mother – it was her religious convictions. However none either to choose to maintain her rigorous views with respect what was “of the devil”.

She had rheumatoid Arthritis before the end of the twenties. On her husband’s birthday February 22 1946 she had a stroke which paralyzed her left side. She did not think she was going to survive but lived another 12 years. She was bed ridden much of that time. She died September 16 1958.

They took Margaret Jennings from the NS Training School to help in the home.

Sources of Information on the Cliffords

Archibald , Clifford F.. A Goodly Heritage”

Johnson, Ray, 1989 A Glance Backward May be purchased at Colchester Museum at Truro