

Sent to me courtesy of Jamie Richards - James & Colleen Richards <stargazr@bbtel.com

GENEALOGY OF THE RICHARDS FAMILY

written by

JOHN CHURCH RICHARDS

1790 - 1884

[John C. Richards was the brother of William Richards. Picton, Canada, is on the northern shore of Lake Ontario. Bracketed entries are mine, J. L. Richards, 1992.]

Picton, January 26, 1875

Dear Children, Grandchildren and Children's Children:

As we have no written record of our ancestors and as I am the eldest of the fourth generation in my 86th year of my age, I will give you a few things from my memory as related by my grandfather and grandmother.

My great grandfather was a Welshman, who went to France, by name of John Richards. He married a French lady and had a family. After a time he became one of the King's Bodyguard and in the massacre of the Protestants on St. Bartholomew's Day [August 24, 1572] he helped the Royal Family to escape through the back gardens of the palace. For this he was promoted.

At this time the French were at war with the Indians in the Country. As fast as their soldiers were killed or died the ranks were filled with men from home. What was called conscripts or drafted men were brought over as soldiers. My grandfather, John Richards, was one of the number called to leave Country, Family and Friends to serve as a soldier. Being over eighteen years of age and a likely active young man, the Commanding Officer promoted him to a Lieutenancy in the army. The Sioux Indians were a very warlike race and gave them no end of trouble, and the country being all a wilderness gave the Indians much advantage, but the French, by perseverance, established themselves from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mississippi River. In an engagement my grandfather was wounded by a bullet in his thigh, [and] was taken prisoner of the Indians. He was placed with their other prisoners and when they halted, the Chief came to see them. He was accompanied by his daughter. The Chief had lost a son that day in battle. A Council was held to determine how to dispose of the prisoners and the young Chieftaness begged for Grandfather's life. The old Chief said it would only cause trouble, but the daughter plead for Grandfather's life, saying she would cure him and adopt him in her dead brother's place, and her father consented. They extracted the shot but the ball he carried to his grave. For three years and over he was kept their prisoner. He lived as they lived, [and] learned three different Indian languages. During this time they had wandered far west, and at the end of three years they began to talk of war. The head Chief

called a council of the different tribes to consult on what was best to do. As the tribes came from different parts it was needful that a feast be made. So, in order to do so, they killed most of their dogs and for three days and nights held their feast before the Council was held. This feast was called a potlatch.

For three days and nights they danced, sang and ate. Of course, after a time they became weary, and one by one, drunk and weary, they lay down to sleep -- all but one young squaw left to watch. They were all soon sound asleep and snoring away. My grandfather snored too but with one eye open. After a little, the squaw began to nod, till at last overcome by sleep she fell asleep.

My grandfather said, "Now or never," and very cautiously crawled out and fled. It was a full moon in the month of June. He expected that the dogs they had left alive would give an alarm, but like their masters they were asleep. He ran as fast as he could but in a little while he heard the report of a gun. As soon as it came dawn he crawled into a hollow log. Expecting they would pursue him he lay there all day. At night he ventured out again. Weak and weary he still kept traveling on and on, living on green leaves, roots and such like. He had no guide but the sun, moon, and stars. He knew that the white people lived to the east so thither he bent his steps, not knowing how far it was but he kept fording rivers and climbing over hills and mountains till at last he reached the settlement of Dutch people at Schoharie, N.Y. Then another difficulty presented itself. They spoke Dutch, and between French, Dutch and bad English he could not speak correctly. He made himself partly understood. He found people kind and sympathetic. He made himself a home among the British colony. Among them he became acquainted with a widow named Wemp. She became his wife and in process of time they had a family of five children, three sons and two daughters -- Owen R., the eldest; John R.; [and] Daniel R. The daughters were Jemima, the oldest, [and] Margaret, the youngest. All lived to have families of their own, of which I will say more hereafter.

Just then another difficulty arose. Between England and the colonies a war began, in which Grandfather adhered to the British standard. He joined the army as a lieutenant. His wife had to fly for safety, performing the journey of 700 miles on foot, leading one child by the hand and carrying another in her arms. Owen, the eldest, joined the ranks as a foot soldier. His property was confiscated at the end of the seven years war. The United Empire Loyalists (U.E.L.) settled in Nova Scotia or the wilds of Upper Ontario, Canada. My grandfather chose the latter, received a pension and land. He was then made Indian Interpreter and kept the Indian trading post for three years. He then settled on his land in Fredericksburg, where I, John Richards, the eldest son of Owen Richards, was born on November 5, 1790, and am now in my 86th year, 1876.

In going back to our ancestry, we find John R. 1st, a Welshman, John 2nd, a Frenchman, the third Owen Richards, an American, the fourth John R., a Canadian. My grandmother on my mother's side was Elsa O'Conner from the north of Ireland. Her fathers family and some friends came to the Colony when she was 17 years old, settling among the Dutch on the Mohawk River where my grandfather married her. In religion they were Protestants, though Catholic by name such as Margaret O'Conner, Christopher, Owen, Daniel, and so on the grandmother's side so far we are of Irish descent. On my mother's side [Dianah Spencer] I can say but little. Her father, Benjamin Spencer was from England. The name is common. She was born in the state of Connecticut. Her parents died when she was young and she came

to live with her brother, Hazelton Spencer, who settled in Fredericksburgh. So on my side there is English and American and from this amalgamation of races has sprung numerous progeny scattered far and wide. For instance, Owen R. had four sons [John, Hazelton, Benjamin and William] and 2 daughters [Polly and Eleanor?]. These again had large families. 51 grandchildren are living up to this date, November 28, 1870, and 14 great grandchildren. My father's family was the smallest of the five. My mother died in [my] childhood at the age of 34 having twins. One lived six months and died. My mother was a large healthy woman in the prime of life but called to leave a young family who needed a mother's care. My sister Polly, age 13, took charge of the house and did the best she could. We fared hard, a new farm, no schools, luxuries, parties, no holidays except Christmas, New Year's and Easter. No stationed minister in Prince Edward County.

The Rev. McGlaughlin married my parents [December 31, 1789] and baptized me when a child [March 6, 1791]. He was a Church of England minister and resided at Bath in Ernestown, so by birthrite I was a member of that church but my parents catechized their children, such as the Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, The Apostle's Creed, and some good moral lessons. First Honesty, second Truthfulness, third Punctuality, fourth Benevolence, fifth Industry, sixth Manliness, seventh Prudence, and above all the Bible was true, to fear God and honor the King.

As there were no roads and the settlements were far apart we had no schools and the children were taught at home to read and write. As many of the settlers were men of good learning some became teachers afterward. Then there was a want of books. The Dilworth Spelling book, The English reader, The New Testament, Johnson's Dictionary was our stock in store, but as the country settled times improved so that the third generation is well educated. Instead of Indian trail or road we have highways fit for the finest carriages in the Province. Instead of the old French post and log cabin we have forts, towns and cities. The county of Prince Edward was early settled, being nearly surrounded by water. In the absence of roads nearly any point could be reached by water, which abounded in all kinds of fish. The woods were filled with wild animals, Bears, Wolves and Deer. The woods and water offered great assistance sustaining settlers until the land could be cleared. Potatoes and turnips were the first things to grow. A man by the name of Dyer brought a few potatoes from the States in a napsack and in two years he raised 600 bushels. The land being new was very productive. Two or three crops of wheat could be raised on the same ground in succession. There were no mills nearer than Kingston so there was plenty of wheat but of times no bread on account of the difficulty of getting the wheat ground. People lived in plain humble style. The pioneers were a hardy race, many being old soldiers disbanded after the Revolutionary War, taking up land in Nova Scotia or Upper Canada.

My copy of Grandfathers Tale was the gift of Mr. Howard E. Fralick, a descendent of the Richards family. To the above the following short items had been added, likely by him.

John Church Richards was the son of Colonel Owen Richards who was buried in St. James Cemetery, Toronto. He was twice married, first to Sarah Spafford and after to Mary White, both of who were of U.E. Loyalist descent. He died Sept. 19th, 1884. Three weeks after, October 13th, his wife Polly (Mary White) followed him, he having reached the advanced age of 94 and she 88.

This article was passed to me by Colonel Oliver John of Evanston, Ill, who was the son of Clara Bessie Fralick (John). Her mother Clarissa Richards married John William Fralick, my great-grandfather, in 1858. The typed original was typed from the handwritten copy written by John Church Richards in 1875.

(signed)

Howard Ernest Fralick