

## **LOFTIS IN NORTH AMERICA**

From the Book: Loftis and the Descendants of Laban Loftis

In North America, included amongst the first immigrants of the surname Loftis or similar spelling were: John Loftis (age 21) settled in the Barbados on 17 February 1632 aboard the Hopewell; Richard Loftis arrived in Virginia in November 1637; William Loftis arrived in Virginia in 1642 and another William in April 1647; Joane Loftis arrived in Virginia in 1663. Another Richard Loftis arrived in Virginia in 1664. The Early Settlers of Maryland lists: Thomas Loffe transported in 1669 (Liber L., Folio 106), Margaret Lofthouse transported in 1678 (Liber WC2, Folio 308) and Fabia Loftus transported in 1679 (Liber WC2, Folio 129). John Loftus arrived in Philadelphia in 1683; Edward Loftis was witness to will of John Alson dated 11 December 1688; William Loftiee arrived in Virginia in 1703 and another William Lofftice in 1717; John Loftee arrived in Virginia in 1713; John Loftis, Sr. and his wife Ann were granted land warrants in Murderkill Hundreds, Delaware on 27 February 1739 and his will dated 5 May 1774 lists his children as: John, Jr. (married Barbara Bostwick), Joseph (sometimes called Josh), Burton (married Mary Cain – widow of Francis Cain), Rebecca (married a Dill), Sarah (married Absalom Clark), Ann (married Benjamin Dill) and Jermima (married a Chance). A Captain Arthur Loftis was a British officer serving in America on 12 March 1754 and was promoted to major on 30 October 1762. John Loftus of Cecil County, MD made a will in 1757 (Liber L. Folio 218). One source also notes that the first Loftis family in America settled in Palmer, Massachusetts before the Revolution of 1776. With this Loftis was a family of Lassiters who came from Tipperary, Ireland.

Murtherkill Hundreds, Kent County, Delaware Tax Lists gives these names and years: John Loftis, Sr. (1731-1776), Solomon Loftis (1748-1770), Burton (Barton) Loftis (1760-1776), Joseph Loftis (1768-1775), William Loftis (1772) and John Loftis jr. (1768-1774).

The County of Kent was divided into sections called Hundreds such as: Little Creek, Dover, Mispillan, Duck Creek and Murtherkill (Murderkill). A “hundred” was the English term for a precinct supposedly capable of supporting 100 families or 100 fighting men. Some additional names in Murtherkill Hundreds (1726-1777) were: William Dill (Sr. and Jr.), John Dill (Sr. and Jr.), Edward Dill, Philemon Dill, Job Dill, George Dill, Abner Dill, Joseph Dill, James Dill, Jacob Dill and Elijah Dill (Microfilm Roll No. 6494).

Kent, Sussex and Newcastle Counties were known as the Lower Counties of Pennsylvania until the State of Delaware came into being in 1776. The Loftis and Dill families and their neighbors had not been able to perfect their titles because of the border dispute between Lord Baltimore and the Penn family, the proprietors of Maryland and Pennsylvania, respectively. Legalization of the

claims by issuance of the proper land warrants was not completed until 1739-1740. The Mason and Dixon line, which finally defined the north-south, Maryland-Delaware and the east-west, Maryland-Pennsylvania boundary was not run until 1767.

Commenting on the influx of "Presbyterians" from Northern Ireland through the ports of Delaware Bay, James Logan, Provincial Secretary of Pennsylvania, wrote in 1727; "These immigrants settle generally toward the Maryland line, where no lands can be sold till the (Penn family's) dispute with Lord Baltimore is decided." By "Presbyterians" he undoubtedly meant the resourceful people whom the British called Ulster Scots. As they came in numbers to the new world, they began to be called "Scotch-Irish" on this side of the Atlantic.

About the year 1750, the upper section of South Carolina began to receive its first permanent settlers. These did not come from the coast, however, but principally from North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and western New York, moving down the valleys of the Alleghanies, Appalachinas and Blue Ridge Mountains, bringing their families and all their portable property with them. They were the crude pioneer type, having little wealth and education, and living in close touch with nature. Every family supplied itself as best it could from the soil and forests. Only the Indian, hunter and trapper, and the Indian trader had preceded them into this mountainous wilderness. For the most part, these new settlers were mostly Scotch-Irish, and adhered to the Presbyterian faith in religion, but later during the Restoration Movement becoming Methodists, Baptists and Church of Christ. A steady stream of emigrants flowed into upper SC. This description fits the Laban Loftis clan in whom we are interested as they migrated from MD and DE into VA, NC, SC and TN.

The Loftis and Dill families probably traveled along the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road from Murtherkill Hundreds, DE to Rockingham County, NC and then to upper SC. Two and a half centuries ago, the road was the main way south for countless thousands of pioneers fleeing prohibitive land costs, angry boundary disputes, Indian wars and the autocratic ways of crown for almost 150 years before that, it served Iroquois tribes as the major route along which they moved to trade, hunt or fight wars. By 1744, when the English finally acquired this Great Warriors' Path by treaty, it had already established itself as Colonial America's most important north-south highway.