

## **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 Loftice 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, Mispillian, 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.

Family tradition is that three brothers came to the U. S. from England. Therefore the Loftis set in SC is probably related to the John Loftis, Jr. of Kent County, MD and John Loftis, Sr., of Kent County, DE. Firstly, Laban and his wife Elizabeth were both born in MD. Secondly, Job Loftis is probably a son of William Loftis, Sr. of Rockingham County, Salisbury District, NC. John Dill, Thomas Allen and several others are neighbors in Rockingham Co., NC and then in Greenville/Spartanburg, SC. Thirdly, the Dill and Loftis families inter-married and were neighbors in DE, MC, NC, SC and TN. For example:

1. John Dill in his Revolutionary War pension application (Claim No. S-8326) stated he "was born on 25 Nov 1759 in Kent Co., DE and lived 9 Oct. 1832 at Orange (later part of Caswell) Co., NC and served as a private with the NC troops in Capt. Oldham's company."
2. Runnells (Reynolds) Dill, brother to John, has a similar application (Claim No. S-2953) filed by his widow Evaline Hooper Dill of Mush Creek, Spartanburg Co., SC dated 22 Nov. 1853 and stated he "had resided in Rockingham Co., NC and served in Capt. Oldham's Co."
3. Richard Dill in his pension application (Claim No. R-6409) stated he "served as a volunteer in the year 1782 under the following officers: Capt. Henry Cobb under Col. O'Neel in NC, Caswell County, and marched in Salisbury in NC." He was 84 years old and lived in Greenville Dist., SC when his claim was filed 18 Jan. 1848.
4. Archibald Dill in his pension application (Claim No. S-3285) of May 1833 stated he "was born in the state of Delaware, Kent County in the year 1748...From Caswell Co., NC he moved to Long Island on Holston River, TN which was then in Indian Country, thence to SC on Tyger River and lived there about 22 years. From there he moved to Wilson Co., TN where he lived three years. Then he moved to Beaver Creek in KY and afterward moved to Jackson Co., TN where he now lives." He entered the service in 1779 in Caswell Co., NC and served under Capt. Graves and later under Capt. Oldham's for a total of 16 months of service. He married Rebeckah Loftis and possibly a sister to Labin Loftis. The following affidavit is also on file:

"I Labin Loftis, residing in Jackson County, TN, do hereby certify that I am well acquainted with Archibald Dill, the above applicant for a pension...that I believe him to be 84 years old. I was his neighbor during the time he was a revolutionary soldier and took care of his family while he was absent from home in the army...Dated 14 May 1833. Signed "Neighbor to him and his "X" mark.

**CONCLUSION:** Labin, Job and Solomon Loftis were all in Guilford (later Rockingham) County, NC or adjoining Caswell (later called Person) County, NC at the time of the Revolutionary War in 1776 and prior to moving to SC. They were obviously neighbors to the Dill families and had moved with them to NC from MD and DE. Labin Loftis and Archibald Dill also moved to Jackson County, TN about the same time and settled near each other on Morrison Creek. John, Runnells, Richard and Archibald Dill were brothers.

#### **JOHN L. LOFTIS LINE:**

(1): John L. "Jack" Loftis, b. 7 October 1791, SC – d. April 1842/44, Jackson Co., TN. He is said to have been killed by a millstone. He married ca. 1818 enroute to TN in a wagon train to Ermilla "Millie" Dill, b. 1800/1805, VA or SC, d. after 1880, Jackson Co., TN. She was the daughter of Archibald Dill who according to

records served in the Revolutionary War. Her brother Roland C. Dill owned considerable land together with William Loftis, brother of John L. Loftis, on Blackburn's Fork in Jackson County, TN. Issue. The Dill and Loftis families are known to have been living near each other in the Tyger River area of Greenville, Co., SC before coming to TN.

(1.4): Archable/Archibel Squire Loftis, b. 18 October 1825, Jackson Co., TN – d. 1899, Jackson Co., TN, married ca. 1849, Jackson Co., TN to Elizabeth Jane Phillips, b. ca. 1827, Jackson Co., TN. He served as a Private, I Co., 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry, CSA, during the Civil War. Issue. According to research by Early Langford, Archable Loftis is buried in a family cemetery at the back of the house formerly owned by Perlina Loftis West and her husband Almon West. Perlina was the daughter of Laborn Loftis, Jr. She was apparently born in an old log house near to the house now standing on Spring Creek, 9<sup>th</sup> Dist. Jackson Co., TN which was built about the run of the century and recently sold by Dewey West. Also it is believed that John L. Loftis may be buried here or across the creek upon a hill in back of the old Harrison Loftis home in another old cemetery. Early Langford also believes that Archable Loftis lived down Spring Creek about 1 & ½ miles at a place once owned by Carlin C. Loftis and Michael Van Dorn Loftis and possible once owned by John L. Loftis. It's location is at what is known as the mouth of Hardscrabble Branch on Spring Creek, 9<sup>th</sup> Dist., Jackson Co., TN.

(1.4.3) Samantha Loftis, b. 14 July 1851, Jackson Co., TN – d. 2 May 1923, Jackson Co., TN, married 23 December 1869 to Steven Decalb Webb, b. 30 November 1851 – d. 22 May 1922. Both are buried in West Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN. Steven's full name is said to have been Steven Decalb Decatur Decandigo Webb according to Webb Descendants, and he was the son of Robert Burton and Martha Ray Webb. Issue 15. He was a school teacher and Justice of the Peace.