

A Brief History
of the
VINCENT FAMILY
in
America



T H E
C O R S E
P R E S S



Sandy Creek
New York

INTRODUCTORY

As a family the Vincents have reason to congratulate themselves that the line of ancestry can be traced with perfect accuracy through so many years, to their English origin.

In Austin's Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island, page 213, may be found a substantiation of the dates given in the following pages much of which has been patiently proven and forwarded to me by Edwin Vincent of New York.

The assertion has been made the family are of French descent. If so, they may have come to England prior to the date at which we take up our history.

THE VINCENT FAMILY

William Vincent was the son of Thomas and Fridgmith Carpenter Vincent of Amesbury, Wiltshire, England; baptized June 17, 1638. His mother was the daughter of Richard Carpenter, who died at Amesbury in September, 1625, at the age of fifty, who was also a brother of William Carpenter, one of the original proprietors of Providence, Rhode Island. Their father's parentage is unknown. At the age of twenty-one (1659) as has been presumed, William Vincent came to America with his sister, Jane, and settled in Pawtuxet, R. I., a town on Narraganset bay, six miles south of Providence. A family incident of 1660 was the marriage of his sister to John Sheldon, a tanner of Providence. The marriage ceremony was probably performed on an April day of that year for the banns were published on the 6th of the preceding month. As Jane Sheldon, however, she had a gift and grant of land from her uncle, William Carpenter, on August 2, 1660. She died in 1708, having had four sons and a daughter, who married Stephen Arnold of Providence.

William Vincent's name first occurs in the records on February 5, 1660, when his uncle deeds him sixty-four acres of land lying about three miles west of Providence. He was a good subject of Charles II and took the oath of allegiance on May 31, 1667, promising to be faithful to the king and his heirs forever. His business was farming but he was familiar with the coopers trade and prospering grew rich. He was taxed July 1, 1679, 4s. 4½d. In 1687, 6s. 1d. In 1688 he was assessed six cows, two oxen, three yearling heifers, three horses, two colts, four hogs,

four acres planting, eight acres meadow, ten acres wild pasture with one lot of land thrown out. With local affairs he had but little official concern though he was constable in 1670 and in 1680 was chosen a member of the Court of Appeals. In 1685 and 1693 he was one of the petty jurymen. On May 31, 1670, William Vincent married his cousin, Priscilla Carpenter, who was a daughter of William and Elizabeth Arnold Carpenter. She died between 1685 and 1687 and William Vincent married again one Jemima ———, dying himself in 1695, leaving an estate valued at £16 2s.

As a literary curiosity the will of said William Vincent is copied here differing materially from those executed in the present age:

I, William Vincent, being sick of body—yet of perfect understanding—do make this my last will and testament in manner following. I resign my soule into his hands whoso gave me a being here; secondly my body to the earth to be decently buried at the discretion of my executrix. As for my worldly estate I give as followeth: To my wife, Jemima, that tract of land lying at east end of Lichotonconelt hill by a cedar swamp containing ninety-eight acres of land, also a half right of commons within the seven mile line and five acres of meadow east of the new dwelling which I bought of Abraham Mann, all of which lieth within the township of Providence, and after the decease of my wife, Jemima, to be divided amongst my three sons, Thomas, Nicholas and the youngest. Also my son, William, to dwell with my wife until he come of age in my dwelling house, with all my movables, only I give out of the estate unto my son, William, the second best bedd with such poore coverings and bolster as there are. Also a heifer calf, five sheep and my shortest gun. All my tools between William and Thomas.

I also make my wife, Jemima, sole executrix to discharge all debts and receive all debts. This is my sole will.

The X mark

WILLIAM VINCENT.

December 31, 1695.

Signed and sealed in the presence of us.

WILLIAM RANDALL,

ROBERT BOWEN,

JOHN SHELDON.

Jemima Vincent, widow of the deceased, named within hath March 3, 1696, upon her engagement affirmed to the truth of the will written on other side of this paper.

So also hath

WILLIAM RANDALL,

RICHARD BOWEN,

JOHN SHELDON,

As witnesses before the magistrates and Town Counsel.

Nicholas Vincent, son of William, married Elizabeth Reynolds, daughter of John Reynolds of North Kingston, R. I. The year of his marriage is unknown but 1721 has been fixed upon as the probable date. He settled in Westerly, R. I., and the records of that town show an indenture of September, 1724, by which he conveyed to his brother, William, a portion of his property in Providence. The consideration was £21. Then in June he sold half a thatch right to Richard Currie of Providence. The consideration was £4. His brother, William, was joined with him as party in the indenture. At Westerly he purchased land and followed the occupation of farmer. To the profits of his farm he added an income derived from his trade as shoemaker. His success in the dual capacity was reflected in his home. He had furniture and linen in abundance, £10 worth spinning wheels, books and many small articles of luxury. With local affairs he had no official concern. In the latter part of his life he bought of

Amos Clark for £300 current money of New England a farm of thirty-five acres. This was in March, 1748, at which time he had tools of the shoemaker's craft which must have cost more than £3. He died in 1749 and an inventory was made of his estate amounting to £497 on April 21 of that year.

His will in abstract is as follows:

Nicholas Vincent gives to his son, Nicholas, his lands and buildings, two cows, a riding horse and all farming utensils reserving to myself and wife, Elizabeth, the profits of lands and two cows during our natural lives. To wife, Elizabeth, all household goods. To daughter, Jemima, son, William, daughters, Mary and Mercy, son, Joseph, daughters, Elizabeth, Deborah, Hannah and son, Joshua, each five shillings in money old tenor. As a final bequest he gives "my new great coat" to his son, Nicholas. He makes his wife executrix of his will, which is witnessed by Richard Berry, Stephen Clark and Silas Greenman.

Nicholas Vincent's widow survived forty-two years, dying in 1791 at the age of ninety-three. She made a will on October 21, 1787 and bequeathed certain wearing apparel and household goods to her children and grandchildren. The will was proved November 28, 1791, and an inventory of her estate was taken in December of that year which disclosed property valued at £14 and 5s.

The children of Nicholas and Elizabeth Reynolds Vincent were: Nicholas who married Mary Earle, Westerly, R. I.; Jemima who 1724 married William Clark, Stephentown, N. Y.; William who 1729 married Zeruah Rudd; Mary who 1805 married Ephraim Bacon, Samuel Hinkley; Mercy who married Elisha Freeman; Joseph who 1737 married Anna Dunbar; Elizabeth who married Oliver Lewis; Deborah who married Nicholas Gardner; Hannah who married Elijah Hinkley, Joshua who died young.

Nicholas Vincent, son of the first Nicholas and grandson of William, followed the occupation of weaver and was presented for freemanship in June, 1748, and the next month was chosen constable, in which capacity he served two years and was then appointed first town constable. He made no less than two purchases of real estate in Westerly February 24, 1748 for £400. It consisted of thirty acres with the appurtenances, privileges and commodities to the same belonging. In February, 1757, he bought half an acre of land from Joseph Crumb, the consideration being £50 old tenor.

Nicholas Vincent 2d married Mary Earle, of whom no particulars have been recovered. He removed to Stephentown, N. Y., where he purchased land and settled down as a farmer. It seems probable his removal took place between 1770 and 1774. In his new home he had his sister, Mary, and her husband, Samuel Hinkley, as neighbors. The children of Nicholas and Mary Earle Vincent were Elizabeth, Esther, Benjamin, Joshua, Earle, Wilbur and Joseph. It is through Benjamin we establish the distinct line of descent.

Benjamin married Polly Frier as soon as she landed from Germany. We are told she refused to talk German with her children, probably not to interfere with their English accent. Their home was in Herkimer Co. and their children were Gardner, Hinkley, Wilbur, Nicholas, Abram, Freeman, Washington, Polly, Charles and Enos, whose immediate descendants are represented in the reunions held yearly by the Vincent Association.

The daughter, Polly, being the only one among nine sons was idolized by her brothers. She was a little bit of a woman and is said to have been very unhappy, her husband being her opposite in character.

In an authentic historical sketch of Lewis Co. prepared by Judge Hardin of Little Falls we find this reference to

one of Benjamin's sons, Nicholas, who was the father of Seymour Vincent and Mrs. Edwin Clark of Dexter.

"Among the people attracted to the Brown Tract by Herreoschoff's developments (previously alluded to in the article) was Nicholas Vincent, who came from Russia, Herkimer Co., N. Y. The Vincent place in Herkimer Co. is now occupied by Leroy Moon. Vincent was by trade a nail worker. He went to the Browns Tract and opened a nail factory or shop. In those days all nails were made by hand, each nail being separately fashioned on the anvil. While here Vincent married Elizabeth, the daughter of Major Joy. This, so far as learned, was the first wedding upon the tract save perhaps the red man's nuptials. It is safe to say, however, the wedding feast was replete with game and fish for which the region is so famous. Vincent is said to have been a great hunter and fisherman and a beautiful lake where he used to fish is known as Nick's lake, a few miles southwest of the Joy clearing, was named in honor of Nicholas Vincent, the first bridegroom of the John Brown Tract. The Joys and Vincents kept up their Brown Tract home several years. The journey in and out must have been attended with difficulties especially in winter time. Their descendents remember many stories of the trials met with in going back and forth from Russia to the Brown Tract when an ox team was employed to take them thirty miles through the woods.

"Snow three or four feet deep had to be shoveled away to make camp for the night; stakes and poles cut to make a temporary shelter which was covered with hemlock boughs. Camp fires had to be built with flint and steel and punk wood with which to frighten off wolves and keep themselves from freezing. Their bed was also hemlock boughs." We can but note how human nature repeats itself in successive generations and Vincents in this day show

traits manifested by their forefathers in their love for nature and the pleasures found in her midst. A strong evidence of the high esteem which the family entertain for each other is found in the tendency to intermarry. The union between the first American Nicholas Vincent and Elizabeth Reynolds, his cousin having been repeated through successive generations and even now we have a "case" of it in our midst. In the family of Abram Vincent, one of Benjamin's sons, three sons served in the Civil war, proving they were not lacking in loyalty to their country. A brother of Edwin Vincent, we are so largely indebted to for information concerning the history of the family, is the famous traveller, Frank Vincent, who has within the past ten or twelve years travelled three hundred thousand miles and is the author of *The Land of the White Elephant* and discoverer of the ruins of Cambodia in Farther India adding much value to previous discoveries in Eastern countries.

Gardner Vincent, another of Benjamin's sons, is represented through his daughter, Mrs. Althea Getman, who was also largely instrumental in arousing interest in the tracing of genealogy. Her daughter, Mrs. Ames, is a member of the Association. They are among the earliest settlers of the county (Jefferson) and Leonard Vincent, now in his eighties, has spent his life in the vicinity of Depauville but whose two sisters and four brothers still living are widely scattered. In the early years the Vincents were good church people, many members of the family having been deacons generation after generation. We are told of Palmer Vincent, son of Enos Vincent, a native of Clayton who removed to Herkimer Co., settling at Little Falls, that he was a man of sterling worth with firm convictions concerning right and wrong and an earnest advocate of temperance, who put his principles into practical use in not even allowing his apples to be used for

cidar or selling them for that purpose. Strict also in his observance of the Sabbath not allowing milk to be drawn to the factory on Sunday. Enos Vincent, his father, and one of Benjamin's sons, a native of Russia, Herkimer Co., was a class leader and steward in the M. E. church, having experienced religion at Lee, Oneida Co. His chief characteristics were constancy, sociability, impulsiveness and a keen sense of justice. He possessed also an affectionate and jovial nature, was a good speaker, singer and story teller. Indeed, a family trait is the ability to tell and enjoy a good story.

Eleven years ago the idea of a Vincent Association was originated for the purpose of preserving records and facts and binding the family together. It has grown in membership and interest and different branches are represented at our reunions. The first gathering of our Association was held at Sylvan Beach. A second, the next year, was held at the home of our secretary in Rome to whom we are largely indebted for the faithfulness with which she has cared for the interests of the Association. The third, when we began to assume considerable importance, was held in Watertown, which we recall with pleasure, especially the adjourned meeting at the home of Dr. Gates in Brownville. Next came that delightful day at Thousand Island Park when another branch of the same name came asking adoption, which was most cordially granted. The fifth meeting, held at Dexter, was largely attended as was the sixth at Three Mile Bay. Then came a cordial invitation from mine host, Case, of Rome, who is never so happy as when entertaining his friends, which was accepted with satisfactory results to all attending. The following year Canastota Vincents did themselves proud in their entertainment. Our ninth reunion was held at Sacketts Harbor and although a military post is maintained at that point no

skirmishing took place but peace and harmony reigned. Our tenth gathering was held at Cape Vincent in 1911. Its success was assured beforehand by a knowledge of the executive committee.

Lest there be confusion concerning the name, history, geographically considered, shows the Cape gets its name from one Vincent Leray de Chaumont, a Frenchman, who stood high in royal estimation and was rewarded for his services which had been rendered the government by receiving a grant of a large tract of land in Northern New York, parts of which bore the names of Chaumont, Leray and Cape Vincent.

As the years pass we are making history. We have to note with sorrow the passing of Marcellus Vincent, one of Abran's sons, and Seymour Vincent, one of Nicholas' sons, both of whom were greatly interested in family traditions and members of the Association since its formation. In the various changes wrought by Cupid new members are added to us, we also have a new generation represented in the last year or two in the persons of Bettie Clark Cornwall, Willhemina Claire Reed and Leonard Sheley Vincent, each of whom have living great grandparents, members of our Association, and are the tenth generation since their English ancestor came to this country. If each family would bring all the data in their possession it would be easy to prepare a genealogical table which cannot now be undertaken on account of the meagerness of the records at hand. Just recently we have established the line of descendents of Washington Vincent, son of Benjamin, residing in Oswego Co., and patient effort would, no doubt, complete the line in other families.

(Signed)

B. L. VINCENT, Historian.

THE SWISS VINCENTS

(Adopted into the Association 1905)

John A. Vincent was born April 4, 1802, near Bern, Switzerland. He was of French descent and was educated in the schools of Switzerland in the French and German languages.

He came to America about 1819 with a party of surveyors. Frederick R. Hassler was the leader of the party and after surveying for a short time on Long Island, N. Y., they came to Cape Vincent, N. Y., then called Gravelly Point. Vincent continued to work at surveying with Mr. Hassler and winters attended the common schools and became proficient in the English language. John A. Vincent later purchased the farm on the River road now occupied by James Peo. In 1834 he married Clarissa Hollenbeck (born May 7, 1812), daughter of William A. Hollenbeck and Charity (Vanhosen), his wife. About 1840 they moved to Fox Island, Lake Ontario, where they resided seven years, then moving to the farm at Fox Creek, which is yet owned by a member of the family.

Eleven children were born to John and Clarissa Vincent and all lived to maturity, but owing to the various vocations chosen, the parents were never able to get all the children home at one time.

Their names are as follows: Elizabeth M. (Mrs. L. W. Eddy; Maryette (Mrs. Wm. Davidson) (deceased); William O. (deceased) married Ellen L. Estes; Caroline C. (deceased) married Harvey Warner; Harriet A. (deceased) married Joseph Saunders; Katherine C. married Richard Saunders; Edgar J. married Rosella Shafer (deceased),

married Catherine Rogers; Sara E. married Albert Comstock; Jane E. married Stephen McPherson; Frederick E. married Ida Armstrong; Cora C. married Newton Covert (deceased), married Benjamin Swarthout.

Grandchildren of John A. and Clarissa Vincent: James Davidson married Mary Thomas; Clara Davidson (Mrs. Adelbert Knapp) (deceased); John Davidson (deceased); Jeannette Davidson (Mrs. C. W. Davis), children of Maryette Davidson.

Florentine M. Vincent; John E. Vincent married Rose Baker; Mabel E. Vincent (Mrs. Wm. H. Gilchrist), children of William O. Vincent.

Emma Warner (Mrs. Lansing Barnes); Nellie Warner (Mrs. Elton D. Irvine); Clara Warner married Chas. Wells (deceased), married Will Stewart; Carrie Warner (deceased), children of Carolin Warner.

Josephine Saunders (Mrs. C. T. Sacket), daughter of Harriet Saunders.

Lena M. Saunders (Mrs. U. S. Miller), daughter of Katherine Saunders.

George F. Vincent married Annie Armstrong; William S. Vincent married Jessie Clark, sons of Edgar J. Vincent.

Mary Comstock; Zara Comstock; Elizabeth Comstock (Mrs. R. Holl), children of Sara Comstock.

Vincent McPerson, William McPherson, Lula McPherson, children of Jane McPherson.

Winnifred A. Vincent (Mrs. A. R. Washburn) daughter of Frederick E. Vincent.

Newton V. Covert (deceased), Joseph Swarthout, Cornelia Swarthout, children of Cora V. Covert-Swarthout.

Great grandchildren: Georgianna Davidson (Mrs. Howard Holl).

Robert Knapp.

Lois Irvine, Neil Irvine, Mabel Irvine, Roland Irvine,
Mary Irvine.

Garry Wells, Harvey Wells, Nona Wells.

Kenneth Vincent, Lansing Vincent, sons of George F.
Vincent.

William S. Vincent, Jr., son of William S. Vincent.

Signed G. F. V.

