



Clafin Family Association

The Clafin Connection

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Spring / Summer 2006

Editor's Letter

Summer 2006 seems to be the summer of Clafin gatherings.

Vermonters are getting together in early June.

The descendants of Increase Clafin have invited all Clafins to come to Door County, WI, for a three-day event the last weekend in June.

The Clafin Family Association annual meeting is the last Saturday in July at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut. This is an important meeting, and if you have an interest in the direction of the Association, I encourage you to attend.

Clafins getting together is not a new thing. They've been doing it for over 150 years. Read *History in the Making* to learn about how it all began.

Over the years that I have been involved with the Association, I've learned a bit about these gatherings. Clafins in Oklahoma have been meeting for years. Apparently, descendants of the "five brothers" have gathered in various spots around the country. If anyone reading this column knows the history behind these five brothers, I'd like to know. In talking with Clafins across the country these last couple of years, the brothers have been mentioned several times.

There's a large family of Clafins who gather in Texas. They even produce a newsletter – *Clafin Connection*. Imagine. This newsletter doesn't have an original name?

If Clafins are gathering in your area, email *Clafin Connection*: clafin.connection@gmail.com, and we'll post the details on Clafin.org.

For an update on the genealogy project, read Amy McGowan's *Fun with genealogy*, and if you've ever wondered why we Clafins are of strong stock, read Brian Cook's *Out of War*.

Out of War: A Clafin Emerges

For those Clafins looking for a link to the past and perhaps who marvel at the toughness of the Clafin character, look no further than the American family's founding ancestor.

Robert Maclachlan must have been one tough cookie for he survived the march of death from Edinburgh to Durham after Scotland's army lost its fight with Oliver Cromwell at the Battle of Dunbar in 1650.

Maclachlan along with 5,000 other Scots combatants were marched down the east coast of Scotland into northeast England in appalling circumstances and only 3,500 made it, most of them in tough shape. The others died of typhoid and dysentery, among other ailments.

The survivors were housed in the cathedral at Durham and, although ostensibly they were to be fed and cared for, most of the supplies got no further than the guards and their families, who in turn sold them for profit to local business people.

By the time that slave traders arrived to pick up the Scots, there were only 1,500 of them alive. Of that group, 900 came to the "New World" including the Caribbean, while the remaining Scots were sent to join the French army to fight long campaigns in Europe.

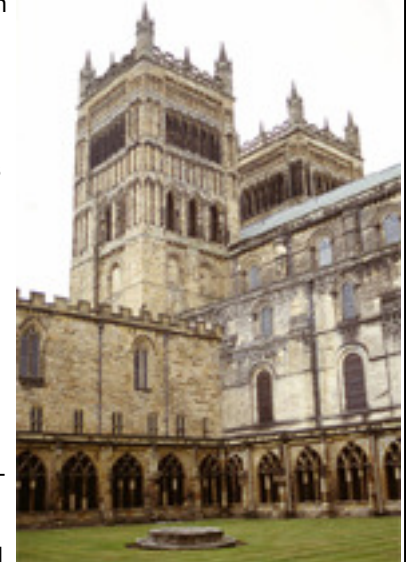
The story has not gotten much attention over the years that have passed since it's not in the interests of the victors to admit such cruelty and neglect.

That Robert Maclachlan not only survived the horrors of battle and imprisonment, it is testament to his fitness and his character that he also survived the journey to New England prospered long enough to win his freedom and start the Clafin dynasty.

Our thanks go to Dennis Bell of Canada whose research on the subject is from which this excerpt was derived.

For more info, go to: http://www.scotwars.com/html/battle_of_dunbar.htm

Brian Cook



More Contest Information

We thought the Who is this famous Clafin? Contest would be easy by using a Google Image search. However this image does not appear in Google so here's another hint to get you on your way to the 500 word essay contest. This Clafin is one of three founders of Boston University, plus he did a lot of other stuff. Let's hear from you!

Send us your email address and help defray the cost of production of this newsletter.

Claflin Reunions Blossom

Consider planning your summer vacation in the vicinity of one of three Claflin reunions – all of which are being held in some of the most beautiful spots in this country.

Vermont: June 4th drop by the Vermont Claflin Family reunion at Boulder Beach State Park in Groton. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. There's potluck-style lunch at noon and a short meeting at 1:00. Spend the afternoon swimming, boating, enjoying family or explore area attractions. Detailed information is on the website at www.claflin.org.



Wisconsin: The weekend of June 23rd move on to Door County. Humans have lived in the Door Peninsula for about 11,000 years. These early people were hunters and gatherers and eventually established small seasonal villages. In 1842, Increase and Mary Ann Claflin settled on Weborg Point. It is the descendants of Increase and Mary who have planned this event-full reunion.

Registration begins at 3 p.m. Door County Fish Boil is at 6; live music performed by Increase's great-great grandchildren follows. Saturday explore Peninsula State Park; visit Pioneer Cemetery where Increase Claflin and two of his sons, who fought in the Civil War, are buried. Lunch at Otumba Park will be followed by a short meeting and a chance to see Door County's 250 miles of shoreline in the afternoon. In the evening enjoy the water of Green Bay on a two-hour boat cruise. Sunday visit Stevenson Cemetery where many Claflins are buried and see Little Sturgeon Days Parade.

As Increase left Massachusetts and ventured to the South and Midwest, his descendants ventured further west settling in various places along the way.



Connecticut: The last Saturday in July caps off this summer of celebrating family with the Claflin Family Association annual meeting at Mystic Seaport.



In 1929, three residents of Mystic formed the Marine Historical Association for the purpose of establishing a museum and preserving the rapidly disappearing remnants of America's maritime past. In 1978 the name was changed to Mystic Seaport. This coastal life area is intended to give visitors an impression of 19th century seafaring communities. The skills of some of the maritime trades are demonstrated in the ship smith shop, the ship carver's shop, and the cooperage. Other buildings in this area include the bank, shipping office, grocery and hardware store, printing office, chapel, schoolhouse, drug store, rope walk, nautical instrument store, mast hoop shop, tavern and ship chandlery.

Registration at the Claflin meeting will begin a 9 a.m. followed by the annual meeting. (An official meeting notice will be sent out sometime in May.) This is an important meeting because the discussions and decisions made will have an impact on the direction of the Association. For example, traditionally the Association provides a free lunch at the annual meeting. In carrying out the Association mission, could this money be better spent on scholarships or genealogy research? Are there ways to raise money to support activities and initiatives such as this newsletter? How do we become a truly national organization? Do we want to? We invite you to join the debate and help shape the future of this 152-year-old institution.

The traditional free lunch will be served after the meeting, and a group rate to explore Mystic Seaport has been arranged.

Reunion planners would like to hear from you. Please email Claflin.reunion@gmail.com (or phone 781-710-0637) if you will be attending these events. Planners would appreciate an idea of the number of people attending each. For Mystic, planners also want to know if attendees would like to have a Friday night function, planned activities for Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening. Please send your thoughts and ideas.



President's Line

One of the great things about being president of an association like this is meeting the wonderful people who make up our membership. Sometimes in person, sometimes by telephone, sometimes by letter or email. Sometimes by just knowing that you are there.

Some remarkable persons whom I would like you to know are those who contributed to our July 2005 reunion that was held in Hamilton-Wenham, MA. We received \$470 from 16 very generous persons:

Kenneth Blake, Mary Jane Bradford, R. Verne Bradford, William Butler, Cecil Clafin, Chris Clafin, Nelson Clafin, Paul Currier, Nadine Freese, W. M. Johnson, Jr., Richard Kampersal, Margaret LaBrie, Louisa Mankin, Darren Shiftlett, Faye Thompson, and an anonymous giver.

Thank you, all. Your contributions mean a great deal to us, and we are encouraged to forge ahead.

Interesting things are happening. Most obvious, this newsletter, brought together by Susan Rich and her husband, Brian Cook. Second, our 2006 reunion at the Seamen's Inne, Mystic, CT, adjacent to the Mystic Seaport. This will give us the opportunity to visit restored sailing vessels and a recreated seaport village that recalls sea-coast living 200 years ago. There are opportunities for children at an on-site children's museum. And third, a new project spearheaded by board member Debbie Deptula, a cookbook of Clafin recipes, plus other pages of information of interest to Clafins. Send her a recipe!

In closing, I invite you volunteer as a member of the Executive Board or one of its committees. We are becoming a topnotch family organization, and to create that we need thoughtful service by persons who envision an association that will serve Clafins on a variety of fronts. If you are such a person, please write or email me at 228 Irving Avenue, Providence, RI 02906, wmlhowclaf@cox.net.

I'll see you in Mystic!
Bill Clafin, President

Cookbook Project
www.claflin.org

Correction: In the Fall/Winter edition, we should have indicated that Betty-Jane Lee has been a member of the DAR, not the CFA for 65 years. (*Clafins Connect*)

On Board

The Clafin Family Association board under its president William Clafin met in session in Andover, Massachusetts recently to conduct the normal business of the association.

Board members in attendance included Lisa Doucett, Secretary, Leslie Dolleman, Vice President, Judith Ludgate, Treasurer Elect, as well as board members Marcia Wardwell, Susan Rich and Debbie Deptula. Vermont-based board member Elizabeth Wheeler participated by conference call.

The committee voted to elect Ms. Ludgate as the new treasurer of the association and to elect Amy McGowan, retiring treasurer, to a vacant board position.

Board members dealt with a number of issues including the agreement to send a \$400.00 donation to the Clafin family members for their late June Reunion in Wisconsin.

Elizabeth Wheeler also mentioned that a Clafin gathering was being planned by her and others for Vermont on June 4. (**More details on www.Claflin.org.**)

Members also were informed by association secretary Lisa Doucett that the association's application for incorporation in Massachusetts was proceeding well and that ten annual reports had been presented as required by state authorities.

Bill Clafin suggested that the board should appoint a nominating committee to help widen membership of the board. He asked board members to think about who might serve on the committee and to come up with names at a future date.

Scholarship Changes

Following a review by board member Leslie Dolleman, several changes have been made to eligibility for the scholarship fund. It is being recommended that students looking for a scholarship will have to go to either Boston University or Clafin College – both institutions founded by Lee Clafin.

It is being recommended that the name of the scholarship be known as the Friends of Clafin Family Association Merit Scholarship. Future applications should be addressed to the above named Friends of the Clafin Family Association. They would have to be supported by proof of lineal descent from Robert Maclachlan and be notarized, and accompanied by a letter of acceptance from either college.

Cooking, Clafin Style

Board member Debbie Deptula proposed that as a fund raiser for the association that a cookbook be published comprising recipes from some 75 members of the Clafin clan. The board approved the idea and now efforts will be made to collect enough recipes so that the book deal can go ahead. The books will sell for \$7.95 a piece and much of the income will be used to help fund Association projects. (**www.Claflin.org for more information.**)

Fun With Genealogy

The genealogy clean-up is progressing. Master Genealogy software allows me to enter far more detail into the database than was possible with the previous technology. It is truly fascinating to watch the siblings marrying siblings and siblings dying at the same time in their 30s and 40s. Sometimes I have to go investigating. Is there a Gallia, Oklahoma, or is it Gallia, Ohio? On Mapquest, I could not find a Gallia, Oklahoma, but Gallia, Ohio, exists.

I find that tracking from a single entry down through the children, grandchildren, etc, is quicker than only doing one generation at a time. So although I am on #599, Giles Clafin, I am cleaning up his three wives, 27 children and a multitude of grandchildren. As I enter extra information from the Wight book into the database I learn a lot about each group. I can enter the sex of each person. This has to be done in order for the software to recognize the subject's children. I can also enter where each family lived at the time of the Wight Book Publication. Sometimes I enter questions, or possible places to look for information. My Wight Genealogy sits on my computer table as I trace information from # 599 to #1570 to #2954, tracking one path, adding gender to children and spouses.

This process needs to be done on one copy of the genealogy, so when I am through, I will be able to link everyone's pieces into it. At the moment, I can't.

I also have the genealogy on a system that has not had access to the Internet. I expect to be able to see the files soon from Internet accessible systems and get what I have online.

Amy McGowan

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History in the Making: The Clafin Family Association

In 2004 the Clafin Family Association celebrated the 150th anniversary of its origination. Some 130 Clafins from all over the country gathered in Massachusetts, just like their ancestors, to celebrate their heritage.

Clafins first gathered in 1853 in the area of Hopkinton, west of Boston, Massachusetts, for a day of berry picking and fun.

Back in 1853, it was decided to keep meeting in July each year. Gradually these meetings became more social and extended. Picnicking and dancing were soon added to entertain all comers.

At some point, the family began to elect officers and committees to work out reunion details.

A former president, Frank Russell Clafin, who died in 1936, left money in his will to support the activities of these family gatherings.

It is believed that meetings at Wenham, Massachusetts began in the early 1900s on the last Saturday in July. (The association meets there every two years.).

At the 1946 reunion, a long-time Clafin Family secretary, Bertha Summer Draper wrote "this tradition



must be kept alive, but in order to do so, we appeal to our younger generation, for when the present officers and friends have gone, the younger members must carry on our work." This is just as true today!

The Clafin Family Association was incorporated in 1954 and it continues in the 21st century. Among its premier missions is the holding of annual reunions, and the promotion of friendship among members.

Other benefits of membership include the provision of information about the genealogy and history of the Clafin Family in America since 1650, as well as our Scottish heritage and connections to Clan Maclachlan.

The association also makes funds available for the advancement of education, public health and historic preservation.

If you are a Clafin, then join us in celebrating a storied history that began as the result of a battle fought near Edinburgh, Scotland nearly 360 years ago and came to life in the New World. (**See *Out of War: A Clafin Emerges*, page one.**)