

OUR RATLIFF ANCESTRY IN AMERICA

Compiled by Ted "Teddy" LaVern Ratliff

The Ratcliff family in Lancashire, England, descended from Sir Nicholas de Fiitz-Gilbert de Tailbois (Talbot). His great-grandfather, Ivo de Tailbois, was a Norman knight who invaded England with Williams the Conqueror. For meritorious service in wars in Scotland, the King gave Sir Nicholas the manor of Radcliffe. He was then known as Sir Nicholas de Radcliffe, which became the family surname. During the years it has changed form, and our branch uses the Ratliff form. The only remaining evidences of the manor are the church and the ruins of the tower. The Radcliffe Tower is being protected by the Radcliffe Historical Society in the Borough of Radcliffe, which is located about nine miles north of Manchester.

During the 1600's the Quaker religion developed in Lancashire. The Church of England was the official state religion and the adherents of Quakerism were subjected to fines and imprisonment in the dungeons of Lancaster Castle. Richard Ratcliff and his wife Alice (Hawthorne) Ratcliff were fined and imprisoned on February 15, 1660/1 for attending Quaker meetings, refusing to swear an oath to the king, and for refusing to pay tithes to the Church of England. The historical novel, The Peaceable Kingdom, by Jan de Hartog gives an excellent account of this period.

One of their sons, Richard, and his wife, Mary (Caterne) boarded the ship SUBMISSION on September 16, 1682, bound for Pennsylvania. On November 10, 1682, they arrived on the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay instead of landing in Pennsylvania. It is thought that the Maryland colony paid the captain a bounty for each person delivered to their colony. The Ratliffs settled near Easton in what is now known as Talbot County, Maryland.

They became active in organizing a Quaker congregation there. Their original building is still standing today and is being preserved as a historic landmark. The family is prominent in the Quaker records of that locale.

John Ratliff, a son of Richard and Mary, was born September 15, 1694, in Talbot County, Maryland. He died in North Carolina in December 1771. His son, Moses, was born in Talbot County in 1730. He died in North Carolina in 1810.

Our ancestor, Elam Ratliff, was the son of Moses. Elam was born in North Carolina in 1778. He moved to Lawrence County, Tennessee, where he received a land grant from the state of Tennessee in 1849. His son, Zachius, migrated to Arkansas in the 1840's. Zachius was living in Lawrence County, Arkansas, during the late 1840's and served in an Arkansas regiment in the Mexican War. Zachius was also in an Arkansas regiment in the Confederate Army of Northeastern Arkansas. Zachius was both August 16, 1824, in North Carolina and died in September 1890 in Arkansas. He is buried in the Smithville Cemetery.

James S. Ratliff, born in 1852 in Arkansas, was the son of Zachius. James died in October 1889. He is buried in Birch Tree, Missouri. His son Whitfield was born in West Plains, Missouri, on January 4, 1879. He married Mary Jones September 17, 1900. He died in Cuba, Missouri, March 13, 1962.