

Staten Island and Its People

A HISTORY

1609-1929

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these, Daniel A., the clergyman, held pastorates throughout Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New York and New Jersey. His wife was Eliza Barker, daughter of Jeremiah and Abigail (Gorham) Barker, both being of old English families. (The change of the name from Clarke to Clark took place about this time as previously mentioned.)

Ephraim Clark, son of David and Elizabeth (Moore) Clarke, served his country in the War of 1812 against England and was also known as Major Clark. He became a resident of Staten Island, died here in 1838 and was buried in the Dutch Reformed Churchyard at Port Richmond. His wife was Abbie (Morris) Clark and to this marriage Dr. Ephraim Clark was born on March 29, 1797.

Dr. Clark's place of birth was in the family homestead at Wheatsheaf, near Rahway, New Jersey. After receiving a preliminary education in the schools of his native district he later supplemented this with a thorough professional preparation for a medical career, which in later years became his lifetime calling. Dr. Valentine Mott of New York aided him in his early medical studies and he was graduated from the College of the State Medical Society at New Brunswick, New Jersey. With his father he came to Staten Island to reside in 1820, locating in the North Shore section and forthwith becoming a conscientious physician and public-spirited citizen.

For a number of years Dr. Clark acted as personal physician to Aaron Burr, attending him in his last illness. He was a member of the committee that received General Lafayette in Tompkinsville when the distinguished soldier was engaged in making his farewell tour in the United States. On the occasion of General Andrew Jackson's visit to New York City in 1832, he was one of a reception committee of five who met the veteran campaigner at Mersereau's Ferry, Port Richmond, to escort the general to various points of interest on Staten Island and across the bay to Castle Garden, Manhattan. Other members of this latter committee were Colonel Nathan Barrett, Rev. Dr. Peter I. Van Pelt, Dr. J. T. Harrison and Colonel Barton.

Dr. Clark was appointed surgeon of the 146th Regiment of Infantry, composed of Staten Islanders, by Governor Yates in 1823. Upon resigning in 1837, he was appointed surgeon of the 65th Regiment, New York State Militia, by Governor Marcy. Afterward he was designated by Governor Seward as aide-de-camp with the rank of colonel on the staff of Major General Van Buren. During the Civil War he was attached to Camp Sprague, New Dorp, as post surgeon, where during the course of his duties more than four thousand men were examined by him.

Dr. Clark was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1860 held at Charleston, South Carolina, when Breckinridge and Lane were nominated to head the party ticket and were subsequently defeated by Abraham Lincoln, the noted Republican standard-bearer of the time. As one of the organizers of the Port Richmond Agricultural Society, Dr. Clark was also its first president. Fraternally, he was of the Masonic Order, having been one of the early members of Richmond Lodge, No. 66, and a charter member of Tompkins Lodge, No. 401. For many years prior to his death, he was physician to the county jail. Other offices held by him were supervisor for the town of Southfield and superintendent of the poor, in which capacities he served for some time. The Port Richmond Dutch Reformed Church numbered him among its active members and he was one of a committee which selected the Rev. Dr.

Robert Brownlee as pastor of this place of worship. Personally, he was a man of sterling worth and integrity, devoted to the welfare of Staten Island and to his family. Ira K. Morris, local historian who knew and appreciated him as a true friend has testified to "his happy disposition and generous and social nature."

Dr. Ephraim Clark's marriage took place about 1824 to Ann Bedell Guyon, thus bringing about a union of the Clark family to one of the earliest of Huguenot families on Staten Island. The history of the Guyons, many of whom left their native France for Holland in 1624, during the era in which persecutions were rife in the former country, is an interesting one.

The progenitor of this family on Staten Island was Jacques Guyon, who came from St. Martin on "L'Isle de Re." He settled here principally because of his receipt in 1664 of a land grant consisting of "two hundred acres of land on Staten Island" issued by Richard Nicolls, first governor under the Duke of York. The Duke of York, in turn, had been granted a large territory including New Netherlands and Staten Island land on March 12, 1664 by his brother, Charles, the Second, King of England. After several disputes had arisen as to the actual confirmation of these grants and the extent of land boundaries during the ensuing years, Governor Andros clarified matters somewhat in 1675 by granting a new patent to Jacques Guyon for one hundred and sixty acres of land with additional meadow.

Jacques Guyon resided on his property located in the Old-Town (New Dorp) district and married Sarah Casier, daughter of Philippe and Marie (Taine) Casier. The will of Jacques Guyon was proved on December 1, 1694, his widow, Sarah, qualifying as executrix. In 1699, it is recorded that she paid a mortgage on the estate and seems to have held possession of the property until after 1703, for land adjoining her plantation on the north was granted by patent in 1702 to Joseph Billopp and Abraham Lake-man.

It seems that one, Jacques or James Guyon, was the son of Jacques and Sarah (Casier) Guyon, as on August 30, 1708, a confirmatory patent for one hundred and sixty acres of land with additional meadow was made in the name of Queen Anne to "Jacques Guyon." He married Mary Holmes and their children were named James, Joseph, Ann, who married John Garrison; Stephen, John, Sarah, Elizabeth and Mary. Jacques, the father, died in 1742.

James Guyon, his son, was born January 5, 1714; the Christian name of his wife, born on January 22, 1729, was Addra or "Adraansha," but her family name has not been learned. James Guyon, who was known as "Captain," died in 1761, leaving a will by which he devised the Guyon farm to his eldest son, James. He and his wife had the following children: James, Mary, Joseph, another James, Peter, Addra, Phillip and John.

James Guyon, son of James of previous mention, born August 20, 1749, was three times married, having a son by each wife and several daughters. His first wife was Susannah Martineau and they had six children: Addra, Ann, Mary, Susannah, James and Ann. His second wife was undoubtedly Margaret Lake, according to a record, viz, "James Guyon married Margaret Lake on May 7, 1782." They had two children: Harmanus and Margaret. By a third marriage to Margaret Garretson, daughter of Harmanus and Autty (Simonson) Garretson, three children were born: Mary, John and Dinah. The life of this James Guyon was eventful, five of his children having been born during the period of the Revolution and he lived