

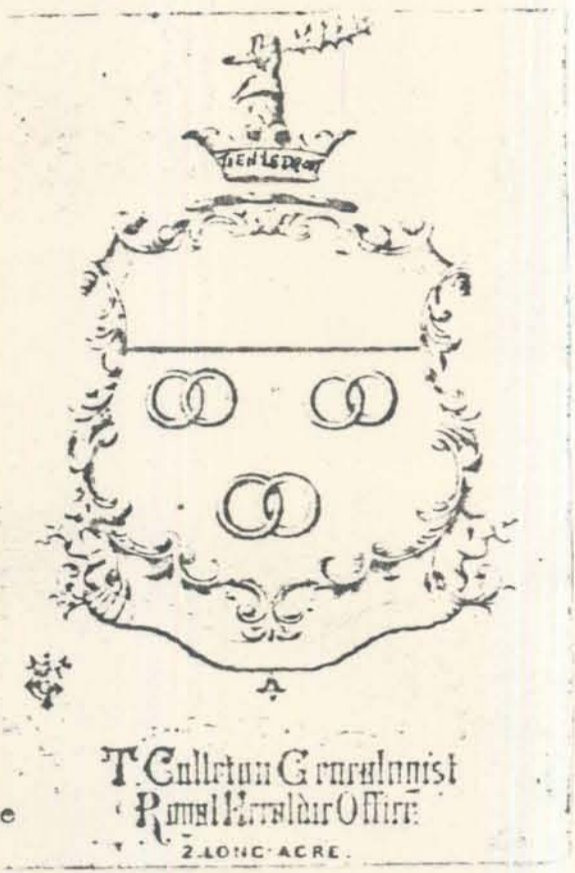
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HISTORY - F. S. CLENCH - CABINET MAKER  
COBOURG, ONTARIO

The Clench family may originally have been Norman. "John de la Clenche" is listed - A Hundred Rolls 1273 Wills 1273. I believe that is from "A Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames" by Charles Waring Bardsley M.A., Winchester College, Oxford, and published by Henry Frowde, 1901. (Miss Eliza Clench)

The Armorial Bearings "Clench, Haskstead in Suffolk" were granted to John Clench of Hobrook Co., Suffolk - Judge of the King's Bench, Baron of the Exchequer, who died in 1607. (Miss Eliza Clench)

*Arms of Clench, Suffolk.*  
Gules six annulets or, conjoined in pairs, two pairs in chief, and one in base, a chief of the second, crest - out of a Saxon Crown or, an arm erect, couped at the elbow vested gules,uffed argent, holding in the hand pp. a club vert, spiked of the party. Motto on the verge of the crown *TEN LE DROIT. Hold the right.*



(Xeroxed from a photograph belonging to F.S. Clench with the above written on the back in what is believed to be the handwriting of his wife, Eliza Clarke (née Cory) Clench) (J.J.Lowe)

WARRISH NOV. 18 1888  
MUSEUM OF MAN, OTTAWA  
HISTORY SECTION.  
J. J. Lowe

CLENCH

A GAP EXISTS HERE OF ABOUT 100 YEARS, NOT AS YET BRIDGED.

ROBERT CLENCH: came to America as Drum Major to General Braddock in the French-Indian war of 1755-1763, which was the American phase of the Seven Years War in Europe, and resulted in all Canada passing to the British on 8 Sept., 1760.

George Washington, then a young surveyor was, at 22, A D C to Gen. Braddock, and the two became friends. He married Hannah Vernon in Laycock, (now Leacock) Pennsylvania in 1758. Described as a man of property and reputation, Robt. Clench and family moved from Lancaster County, Penn. to Schenectady, N.Y. in 1768. There he was proprietor of the tavern built by Cornelius V. Viele in 1663 on the south side of State Street near the junction of Mill Lane, Church and Water Streets. "Clench House" was burned in the Great Fire of 1819, and an historical marker in the park on Lower State Street commemorates it. George Washington visited it twice after the death of Robert Clench, in 1782 and 1786.

Episcopalians had settled in the Mohawk valley soon after 1700 and appealed in 1765 to church authorities for a mission, which was not granted until 1771. Robert Clench and John Brown were named church wardens of St. George's Episcopal church in the first recorded election. Mr. Clench introduced stoves into the church - a frivolity disapproved of by many!

Robert Clench remained loyal to the Crown at the outbreak of the American Revolution (1763-1775). Revolutionaries at first met at the Clench House Inn, but soon moved to quarters more in harmony with their ideals. In 1778 the Albany Commissioners of Conspiracies demanded that all Loyalists take the oath of allegiance. Robt. Clench and two others were arrested and tendered the prescribed oath. Clench requested and was granted ten days in which to consider. Failing to appear at the prescribed date, he was again arrested and given two days to pack his belongings and be removed to within the enemy lines. He

ITEM 10



then took the oath that he would take up arms in defence of the country in case of an invasion.

A group including Robert Clench met at "Clench House" in 1865 to organize a Masonic Lodge. The Lodge meetings continued to be held in the Inn at 6 o'clock on Saturday evenings, followed by a social hour until December, 1777, when they were discontinued at the request of the landlord, he being the only Loyalist in an organization noted for its patriotic efforts. St. George's Lodge celebrated its 165th anniversary on 14 September, 1939.

Robert Clench died in the latter part of 1781 and is buried in the cemetery of St. George's Episcopal Church, Schenectady, N.Y.. Thereafter the tavern, managed by his son Thomas Barton Clench I was known as "The Widow Clench House". Hannah Vernon Clench died in 1788 and is buried beside her husband in St. George's Cemetery.

The children of Robert and Hannah Clench were:

- Ralfe                    born 1762
- Benjamin
- Thomas Barton Clench I
- Rebecca
- Elizabeth
- Everetta Catherine

The Clench name disappears from the Schenectady N.Y. records about 1850

(S. Armour to Robt. Mikel of Cobourg, 26 April, 1978; An Encyclopedia of World History by Wm. M. Langer, Coolidge Professor of History, Harvard University, and mainly the Schenectady Union Star of 16 October, 1939, quoting research done by K.D. Bartlett, of whom no knowledge is held.)

RALFE CLENCH, the eldest son, was undoubtedly the cause of some of his father's troubles, having joined the Royal Standard as a cadet in the 42nd. Regiment (Royal Highlanders or Black Watch), was commissioned and transferred to the 8th or King's Regiment (which took part in the capture of Quebec in 1759) and later was a lieutenant in Butler's Rangers, in 1777 at 15 years of age.

A U.E. Loyalist, he settled in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1784. In 1803 he was commissioned L/Col. in the First Regiment of Lincoln Militia of Upper Canada, which he commanded at the battle of Queenston Heights, and was mentioned in dispatches. At the fall of Fort George to the American Forces 27 March, 1813. L/Col. Ralfe Clench was captured and held prisoner at Burlington, Vermont until the cessation of hostilities.

The home of Ralfe Clench was set on fire by the U.S. soldiers early in the winter of 1813, but it was saved. Being laundry day, tanks of water were available. It was accidentally burned in 1814 while housing 17 females and children and only a few chairs were saved. (Eliza Clench)

He was appointed District Judge at Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1827. He had previously served as a Justice of the Peace. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada in 1801, 1805 and 1813.

Married to Elizabeth Johnson of Johnstown, N.Y., daughter of Brant Johnson, son of Sir William Johnson, Bart., he died at Niagara-on-the-Lake 19 January, 1828, aged 66 years.

(Willis T. Hanson and L. Humphry Irving "Officers of Brit. Forces 1812-15")

BENJAMIN CLENCH: Little is known beyond this extract from a letter of Kate Reed to Johnson Clench II in 1909: "With my Aunt Fanny (nee Clench) Lowe beside me, I am inspired to write you of a voyage of discovery she and I made last week to Schenectady, N.Y. -- poor old Ellen Tripp (a second cousin) now 87, told me of a family portrait in the house of her late brother in Lynn, Mass., of a handsome man, Benjamin Clench, brother of Robert Clench." (There is a photo of Benjamin Clench in an old photo album at Ninette, Man., inherited by Fanny Lowe. *J. F. Lowe*) In other texts Benjamin is listed as a son of Robert Clench. In a short text of U.E.L.'s given land grants, Benjamin is listed as having received a land grant on the north shore of Lake Ontario, but it was followed by a comment, "Query how? as he was residing in the State of New York", taken from a small blue bound book in a museum. (Eliza Clench)

T. BENJAMIN  
"LINCH" e  
ADOLPHUS TOWN



THOMAS BARTON CLENCH I, third son of Robert was named after Rev. Thomas Barton, Chaplain to Gen. Braddock's forces. Born 12 August, 1767.

He married Neeltje (Nelly) Schermerhorn of Schenectady, N.Y., 18 January, 1787 in the Dutch Reformed church. (The Schermerhorns are mentioned in Anya Seton's book "Dragonwyck" as a socially prominent family in the New York City winter season. *J. J. Lowe*)

The U.S. census of 1790 lists Thomas Clench (or Clinch, as it often was spelled) as a resident of Schenectady. For 10 years following the Great Fire of 1819 which destroyed "The Widow Clench House", he operated an hotel in the Arent Braet Bldg. at 7 State Street, later known as the Sharrat House. He also was captain of a Mohawk River flatboat in which the Erie Canal Commissioners made their preliminary survey trip. (K. D. Bartlett)

The children of Thomas Barton and Neeltje Clench were:  
Ariantje (Harriet) born 24 Dec. 1787, who married Hermanus (Henry) Peek. (The Henry Peek house, 32 Front Street, Schenectady, built 1810, is designated an Historical House.)

Hannah Catherine  
~~Robert~~  
Thomas D.  
Freeman Schermerhorn Clench I

FREEMAN SCHERMERHORN CLENCH I, cabinet maker of Cobourg, Ontario. He was born 28 December, 1795 in Schenectady, N.Y. A "late" U.E. Loyalist, he landed in Kingston 1 July, 1816. He married Eliza Clarke Cory, sixth child of Eliakim and Sarah (Nee Sayre) Cory of Hillier township on Pleasant Bay, Prince Edward County on 19 July, 1820., at The Carrying Place, Upper Canada.

In 1825 he settled in Cobourg, Ontario, where he carried on the business of cabinet maker. Their house on Kings St. W. was called "The Chestnuts" or "Chestnut Hall".

The 1861 census for Cobourg lists the F.S. Clench I property as: "Frame house, 2 storey, 1/2 acre; 2 carriages; 2 horses, 1 cow value \$220.00; cabinet maker, \$6,000.00 invested in the business."

The 1871 census implies his son, William Carrell Clench was then managing the business, though there is no such record on the bills in possession of J.J. Lowe, which show Thomas Barton Clench II as "undertaker" associated with his father as "F.S. Clench & Son." The 1871 census states, "Four employees, payroll \$100.00 per month. Annual output \$2,000.00."

There used to be a small cottage behind the house. One son is believed to have used it. In a letter from Eliza Clench to son Cory 7 July, 1881, reference is made to a rental property being vacant, but this is believed to be a property belonging to her son, Thos. Barton II, who, on 16 Aug. 1869 ordered his premises on Third St. Cobourg, vacated. There is also a notice of distraint of chattels to cover four months unpaid rent, or \$2.42. "in the shop and premises on Third St.," so it appears some form of residence was attached to the shop. Fanny Jane (nee Clench) Lowe is believed to have lived in the cottage after her widowhood in 1881., though still at Bowmanville in July of that year.

Letters written by Eliza Clarke (Cory) Clench to her two sons Will and Cory in 1869, seem to indicate some financial crisis had occurred, for F.S. Sr. is absent on a trip to Waukegan in an endeavour to raise some funds. Bills for that year show furniture being bought of Bowmanville Furniture Company and of Edward Miall of Oshawa with mark-ups pencilled in beside the price. As F.S. Clench was then 74 years of age, it would seem this was his method of keeping the business running, since all three sons were by now on their own, except that Thos. B. II was partially associated with his father as Undertaker.

F.S. Clench I died 24 Sept., 1877 in his 85th year and his wife, Eliza died 11 Sept. 1888. Both are buried in the family plot, St. Peter's Cemetery, Cobourg. *MRS. L. GOLFSRUB ADVISES IT WAS COMMON PRACTICE FOR A CABINET MAKER TO BUY FROM OTHER SOURCES AND RESELL. (J. J. Lowe, 11 Sept 79)*



The children born to F.S. and Eliza Clench were:

Thomas Barton Clench II, born <sup>1 AUG.</sup> 1821. Bachelor. Undertaker. Killed 12 December, 1877 in a fall from a railroad overpass on a shortcut home from an Orangeman's meeting.

Harriet, <sup>PEEK CLENCH FEB.</sup> born 1823. Married Paul Kane, the artist, 6 SEPT 1852. Born in Cork Co., Ireland in 1810, Paul Kane had emigrated to York with his father. During the portrait painting period in Cobourg he boarded with the Clenches. Toronto Sunday World of 26 Nov., 1916 states he worked for a Cobourg cabinet maker, one surmises his talent was used in painting fruit and flowers on chair backrails. The Kanes lived at 40 Wellesley Street, Toronto, the house having in April, 1978, been declared a Heritage House. She was widowed 20 Feb., 1871.

Eliakim Cory Clench, born <sup>11 JAN.</sup> 1825. Bachelor. Editor of the Bowmanville West Durham News and proprietor and editor of the Cobourg Star. For a time he studied medicine, but it was not for him. He probably was influenced by the fact his Aunt Rebecca Cory had married Dr. Pitkin Gross of Brighton, who raised two doctor sons and also by two uncles, Dr. Benjamin Sayre Cory of Wellington, Ont. and Dr. David Cory of Waukegan, Ill. His medicine chest is still in the family. He moved with his sister, Fanny Jane (Clench) Lowe in 1889 to the homestead at Ninette, Manitoba, which she had taken for her son, Harry, the year before, he being yet underage. He is buried on the hilltop at "Broadlands" where he loved to sit and enjoy the view, looking out over Lang's Valley. Died 12 AUG. 1891.

William Carrell Clench. Born <sup>MARCH,</sup> 1827. Married (1) 1855 Margaret Letitia Battell of Cobourg, to whom 2 sons were born:

Wm. Cory Clench, (See Geneology Add: P.5.2 & P.5.2A) <sup>BORN 4 OCT. 1858</sup>

Thomas Barton Clench III. Bachelor. (As above) <sup>BORN 31 AUG. 1856</sup>

(2) Mary. Lived latterly in San Francisco and Honolulu, Sandwich Islands. In the 1871 census for Cobourg he is listed as cabinet maker. It is known that he travelled a good deal between marriages, including Europe, during which time his 2 sons were cared for by F.S. and Eliza Clench - the grandparents. In her 1869 letter to him, his mother begs for his return "safely across the dark waters, for he is needed at home" both by his aged father and the 2 sons. (It is suspected that perfume bottles with Roman scenes on top, in a Morocco case were a gift to his mother after this trip. J. Howe)

Eliza Cory Clench, born 6 Dec. 1832. Married John Douglas Armour of Cobourg, later Chief Justice of the Ont. Supreme Court and a Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. Died 1 July, 1881, after bearing 11 children, 10 of whom lived.

MARRIED ADALIA HALLECK 8 OCT. 1857 SHE DIED 10 OCT. 1889.

Freeman Schermerhorn Clench II (registered John Freeman) Born 2 Nov. 1829. Settled Detroit. Two infant daughters, Helena 8 months and Jessie, 17 months, are buried in the Clench plot, St. Peter's Cemetery, Cobourg. Little is known of him latterly. He also was a cabinet maker. His toolchest with brass nameplate such as were presented on completion of apprenticeship stood for years in the workshop of his nephew, H. Lowe at Ninette, Man. He built the white house onto the original homestead shack at "Broadlands" in 1895. In 1891 he had made for his sister Harriet, a bedroom suite in black walnut. For his sister Fanny he made a yardstick in 1901 at Ninette, also an 18" rule. HE DIED IN DETROIT MICH. 17 JUNE 1904. SON FREDERIC & DAUGHTER KATHIE C. LIVED IN DETROIT.

Hannah Martha Clench, born 14 April, 1838. Died 1 Aug. 1839

Fanny Jane Clench, born 9 June 1842. Married William



Henry Lowe, B.A., L.L.B., 23 Dec. 1868, lived at Bowmanville. She was widowed 11 Jan., 1881, and at some time after that moved back to Cobourg to live with her mother.

(See "Homesteading in Manitoba" for account of how the Clench-made furniture made its way to Manitoba.)

She held several positions in the CPR chain of hotels as Housekeeper in charge of domestic staffs, latterly at the Royal Alexandra in Winnipeg. She underwent surgery in 1914 or 15 and died in Winnipeg, 23 Sept. 1918, aged 70. She is buried in the family plot in Cobourg.

EPILOGUE: As of 1978, the Clench house in Cobourg is a Pizza Parlour! Mr. John Taylor of the Cobourg Art Gallery bought the 12' Gothic porch off the front of the house and moved it to his home at Gore's Landing on Rice Lake. In doing so, he discovered <sup>on</sup> an unpainted area under the pediment the following inscription, "F. S. Clench. Aug. 1860 The Prince is coming next month". (Which he did - H.R.H. Edward, Prince of Wales and later Edward VII who opened Victoria Hall in Sept. 1860.)

The two Gothic windows flanking the porch entrance are believed to have contained the Clench and Cory Coats-of-Arms on glass. As a child I saw these carefully stored with my grandmother's belongings, but no trace of them can now be found. No doubt the glass got broken in the several moves which followed.

*Jessie J. Lowe*

Jessie J. Lowe  
2465 Clementine Blve.,  
Ottawa, Ontario,  
K1V 8E3

GRAND-GRANDDAUGHTER OF  
F. S. & ELIZA CLENCH  
(AND PROUD OF IT !!)