

# Stanbrough Perigrine Stancliff (1762-1820)

A few years ago when the writer was listing and transcribing names of early local settlers, one name in particular attracted my curiosity and attention. The name was "Stanbrough P. Stancliffe" It may have been the length of the 'handle' with a sort of musical ring to its pronunciation, or some other facet. Other than the bare record of census lists, settlers' lists and property ownership records, very little was revealed about this person. He was married, had a growing family, and acquired land on the east side of D'Arcy Street at the lakefront. He cleared land, met the requirements for settlers and obtained his patent in 1802. Later, in 1808 his property was sold and his name vanished from the records.

Recently, I received a letter from a Mrs. Stancliff of Cincinnati, Ohio, enquiring about my book "Early Cobourg" I mailed a copy to her along with other Cobourg material, and asked if she could tell me something about our pioneer settler. By return mail, I received several pages of Stancliff family information. Stanbrough was not a United Empire Loyalist but a Connecticut Yankee he had ac-

quired what is today Donegan Park and the area to the north, cleared some of the land, and built shelter on Cobourg's coast. His family story is enlightening.

The family is descended from James Stanclift, English stone mason and carver, born 1638, Halifax North Yorkshire, England. He emigrated in 1680, came to Connecticut where he married and by 1690, had settled in East Middletown. There he founded the Stancliff Brownstone Quarries. His eldest son, William, was also a gravestone carver. In turn, this skill was passed on to his eldest son, James, the father of Stanbrough P. Stancliff. There were no less than eight gravestone carvers in the early Stancliff family. Each had a unique style in the carvings.

Stanbrough lived in the Woodbury area of Connecticut, but returned to Simsbury to marry his cousin, Sibbel Davis, on May 5, 1784.

The Davis folk were involved in the American Revolutionary wars. Likewise, Stanbrough's family sent five sons to fight in the war, three of the sons died and Stanbrough was wounded in the leg, which made him to

some extent a cripple.

Shortly after their marriage, the couple set out on a trek to new frontiers. Their travel, apparently took them westward up the Mohawk River Valley in New York State. By 1792, they spent the winter at Paletine, Montgomery County, N.Y. By that time four children had been born to this union. All were baptised at St. John's Dutch Reformed Church St. Johnsville, N.Y.

Grants of land were being made available in Canada and this pact probably attracted the Stancliff family to the Niagara frontier. A fifth child was born in 1795 "near Niagara Falls." It is possible that the family may have been in the area as they waited for land to be assigned in Northumberland County.

Stanbrough's name is on the 1797 list for Hamilton Township and in all probability he took up his land at that time, to the east of Darcy Street. His neighbours, further east, were the Ash families who had arrived at an earlier date, according to their family story. To the west, Elias Jones moved in and lived on the west bank of the Factory Creek, at about the same time. By 1799, Stancliff

has four acres cleared.

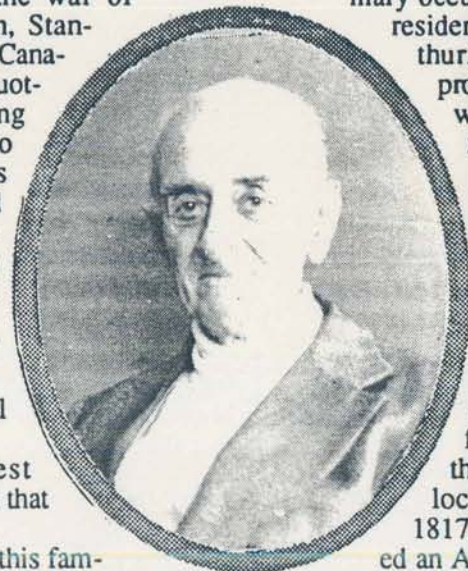
In all, Stanbrough and Sibbel had 11 children, five at least and perhaps six were born at the Cobourg location. At that time variations in the spellings of surnames was common. The Stancliff family was no exception with Stanclift, Stancliffe, Stancliff having the most common use. When the first rumblings of the war of 1812 began, Stanbrough left Canada. He is quoted as saying "I fought to free this country and I cannot stay in Canada and fight against it." Stanbrough and Sibbel Stancliff's two oldest sons died in that war.

By 1813, this family was established in a sparsely populated area of Ohio. Shortly thereafter, Stanbrough built the first house in McArthur, Athens County, Ohio. This town came into being be-

cause it was located at a cross road where stones from a nearby quarry were shaped and shipped west to the emerging communities. Since one of the new enterprises of a new area was to establish a grist mill, the burr stones were in demand. Farming was not established until later, and at this time burr stone production was the primary occupation of the residents of McArthur. Stanbrough probably

worked in his father's quarry as a boy in Woodbury, and had again gravitated to stone work. Stanbrough went on to become the first Justice of the Peace in his locality, and in 1817, he was elected an Athens County Commissioner. In 1819,

Sibbel was the first woman to serve on the County Grand Jury. In the spring of 1820, Stanbrough Perigrine Stancliff died. *LC*



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