

H. R. Tilton to Mary F. Tilton

Fort Wadsworth, N.Y. Harbor  
Apr. 22, 1874

Your letter of Sept 30/73 to Gen. Wm. S. Tilton was forwarded to me. As your father was greatly interested in the Tilton Genealogy and your letter indicates a like interest in the subject, I take pleasure in giving you a short account of my progress in collecting information for a genealogical history of the Tiltons. From small beginnings, facts have accumulated until I now have over 2600 names of the descendants of the 3 brothers who came from Eng. to Am. in 1640. Much remains to be done and it will probably be some time before sufficient material is obtained to warrant publishing the result. Some of the present generation have an unbroken chain back to the emigrants; too many Tiltons can only go back to the Rev. say 4 or 5 generations. Your branch is satisfactorily established back to Wm. of Lynn but as additional information is gathered, the missing links are gradually being found for other members and I hope eventually to account for nearly all.

I have an adv. in several Eng. papers offering a reward of £5 for an authenticated copy of record of the date of baptism of John, Wm. and Peter Tilton who came to Am. in 1640. We know that the surname of Tilton was assumed from the village of Tilton on the Hill in Leicestershire, Eng. This village was called Tilton as early as the time of King Edward the Confessor 1041 A.D. This was before surnames were in general use. I have found the name in the 11-12-13-14-15 & 16th centuries in Eng. Tiltons lived in Leicestershire, Rutlandshire, Northamptonshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. If I get no information I shall try Wiltshire. Many counties have been examined without any satisfactory result. Many records were destroyed in the time of Cromwell, but I still hope to find the former home of our ancestors. Tradition is that they sailed from port of Bristol and were 100 days in crossing to Boston Mass. Of the three brothers John and Wm. first appear at Lynn Mass and Peter at Windsor Conn in 1659. Peter removed to Hadley Mass and was a Representative for many years in the Colonial Court. Peter had influence and was a man of mark. He left 3 children, 1 son Peter and 2 daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. Elizabeth died young, Mary married but Peter was feeble in mind, was placed under guardians and died single. Thus Peters line became extinct.

Wm. left sons Samuel, Abraham and Daniel. Samuel removed to Martha's Vineyard and is the founder of the Martha's Vineyard Tiltons. Abraham settled in Ipswich and Daniel at Hampton. Gen. Wm. S. Tilton is a descendant of Abraham and your branch is thru Daniel. Perhaps you have seen the account which was written by Dr. Joseph Tilton of Exeter N.H. in his old age. While it contains many correct statements, it is very erroneous and since it was written, original records have been examined and many of his statements based on tradition found to be entirely wrong.

John Tilton the 3rd brother embraced the doctrine of his wife who was a Quakeress and this brought them under the censure of the Quarterly Court of Salem. In 1643 John and his wife left Mass in company with Lady Deborah Moody and settled in Gravesend L.I. John was made town secretary and the Gravesend records are kept in his hand-

HRT to MFT 4-22-74

writing for a period of 40 years. The records are in a good state of preservation at the present time and have proved of great value to me in my researches. John had 3 sons and 4 daughters, John, Peter, Sarah, Hester, Abigail, Thomas and Mary. John and Peter settled in Monmouth Co. N.J. and Thomas in Delaware. I am the 7th gen. from John of Gravesend thru his son John, Thomas, John, Thomas John and Henry. The Tiltens in the south, Ga. and S.C. are from the N. E. stock. Penn., Ohio, Mich, Wis. and Iowa have representatives from both N.Y. and N.E. but the Tiltens in the United States are all from the same family.

Wm. called his sons Samuel, Abraham and Daniel, the sons of J. Tilton Jr. are John, Abraham, Saml. Daniel and Thomas; the sons of Peter 2nd are John, Peter, Thos., Saml., and Daniel, these names indicate a common origin.

Theodore Tilton now editor of the Golden Age is a descendant of John of Gravesend. The celebrated landscape painter John R. Tilton of Rome, Italy is a descendant of Wm. of Lynn.

Dr. James Tilton of Delaware who was a surgeon in the Rev. and physician and surgeon genl. of U.S. Army in war of 1812 was also a member of Continental Congress and was so highly esteemed in Del. that a monument was erected to his memory at Wilmington Del. by the state. He was a descendant of John of Gravesend.

Yrs. Truly

H.R.Tilton