

**A PARTIAL RECORD OF THE
DESCENDANTS OF JOHN TEFFT, OF
PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND,
AND THE NEARLY COMPLETE RECORD
OF THE DESCENDANTS OF JOHN TIFFT,
OF NASSAU, NEW YORK**

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A Partial Record of the Descendants of John Tefft, of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, and the Nearly Complete Record of the Descendants of John Tiftt, of Nassau, New York by Maria E. (Maxon) Tiftt

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MARIA E. (MAXON) TIFFT

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TEFFT, OF PORTSMOUTH,
RHODE ISLAND * AND THE
NEARLY COMPLETE RECORD OF THE
DESCENDANTS OF JOHN TIFFT, OF
NASSAU, NEW YORK —————

Containing the Names of Seven Hundred
and Four Descendants, and extending over
a period of Two Hundred and Forty-one
Years in America * Together with other
Miscellaneous Records * * * * *

Compiled by
MARIA E. (MAXON) TIFFT
Buffalo, New York
March, 1896



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INTRODUCTION

It was not the original intention to compile this genealogy, but so much of the early history was obtained for the inscription on the Tift monument erected in May, 1895, in Nassau, N. Y., that it was determined to arrange in as compact a form as possible, all the facts learned about the various descendants, in order to preserve the same for future reference.

The record, though incomplete, represents a great deal of labor and study, and is the result of extended examinations of town histories, various family records and genealogies, and also extensive correspondence with the numerous descendants of John Tift.

An effort has been made to ascertain when the Tifts came from England and from what part, but so far without success. Two brothers are found in this country; William, in Boston, in 1638, who died leaving only one daughter, and John, of Portsmouth, R. I., in 1655, who is the ancestor of the Rhode Island Tifts.

The name "Tefft" or "Teft" is Saxon, and means "a piece of ground where there has been a house." (Etymological Dictionary of family and Christian names by William Arthur, A. M.)

The name at different times in Colonial Records is variously spelled,—Teffe, Teft, Tefft, Tiest, Tift and Tiftt, all pertaining to the same general family.

The following is an abstract from a letter written by Rev. Benjamin F. Tefft, D. D., LL. D., to Parker W. Tefft of Chicago.

"While in London on a mission for the United States Government, I employed some one to hunt up the family name in England. The result was the following: The family originally belonged to the French Huguenots, when the spelling of the name was "Thevet," and pronounced as if spelled "Tevay." The family with many others were driven out of France



by the St. Bartholomew massacre, and came to England. The Teffts of this country undoubtedly came from England. Now, when you take the name Thevet with its French pronunciation, and put it beside the name of William Tefte, how natural the transition and then how easy to change the final e to t, and produce a name of one syllable and easily pronounced Tiftt."

The above mentioned Benjamin F. Tefft was born in Floyd, N. Y., August 20, 1813, and died a few years ago in Bangor, Maine. He was a prominent Methodist Episcopal clergyman, author and teacher. In 1843 he was Professor of Greek and Hebrew Languages in the Indiana Asbury University; in 1846, he was editor of the *Ladies' Repository*, and of the publications of the Western Book Concern. In 1859 he re-entered the itinerant work of the church, and received appointments in Maine. In 1861 he was appointed Chaplain to the First Regiment of Maine Cavalry, Army of the Potomac. In 1862, Consul of the United States to Stockholm, and acting Minister to Sweden. In 1864, Commissioner of Immigration from the north of Europe to the State of Maine. In 1874, representative from Penobscot County to the State Legislature. Dr. Tefft was a member of the Geographical and Statistical Society of New York, and of the Society of Arts of England.

The system of numbering is as follows:

Beginning with John, the names are all numbered consecutively; his oldest child being number 2, and so on. This consecutive numbering precedes the name, and the Roman characters denote the order of births in each family. The small figure following the name denotes the generation.

For example—taking 186 (II) John⁶ (who is the descendant that came to Nassau, N. Y., in 1793); going back until we come to this number 186 (II)⁶ in the consecutive numbering, we find him to be the second child of 105 (V)⁵, Robert; following backward still further, we find 105 (V)⁵ to be the fifth child of 60 (I) John Jr.⁴; who is found to be the first child of 32 (I) John³, and he in turn is found to be the first child of 2 (II)² Samuel; who is the second child of John¹, the original settler in Rhode Island.

MARIA E. (MAXON) TIFFT.

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