

DESCENDANTS OF ROBERT SLIMMON & HELEN LINDSAY

John Slimmon (1849 - 1928) & Mary Wilson (1845 - 1912)



John Slimmon & Mary Wilson
(Photos courtesy of Carl Shiels)

John Slimmon was born on 19 May 1849 in Boghead, Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, Sct. He was christened on 3 Jun 1849. Sometime between 1851 and 1856 he emigrated with his parents and three older siblings to the British colony of Canada and, more specifically, Canada West (later Ontario). On 17 Oct 1871, he married Mary Wilson, daughter of Thomas Wilson and Elizabeth (--?--), in Maryborough, ON. On the marriage registration, John's last name appears to have been spelled "Sleenan".

Mary Wilson was born 15 Apr 1845 in Hollen, ON. According to oral family history, she was unable to read or write—not uncommon for women of that era. Mary's younger sister Margaret Ellen Wilson (born in 1861) married John's younger brother James (born 1856) in 1880.

An 1879 photo of the Harriston, ON members of the Minto Lodge of the Independent Order of Foresters (IOOF) includes John Slemmon as a member.

At the time of the 1881 ON census John was recorded as a Clarck (sic) in Harriston. He was also living very near his brother James and next door to his brother-in-law John Wilson. Both John's and his brother James' last names were recorded as "Slemmon." Apparently they had both started using that spelling variant of the family name by then.

ROBERT SLIMMON (~ 1790)
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At the time of the 1901 ON census, John was recorded as a "general agent" (operating a boarding house) in Toronto Centre, ON.

Around 1903 he and his wife were reportedly experiencing "hard times" and moved to Fort Ransom, ND to live with their daughter "Jennie" and son-in-law J.R. "Jim" Grant-Shiels where the couple was living in a tiny house with a newborn baby and a local school teacher as a boarder.

In the spring of 1904 John and Mary followed Jim, Jennie and other members of Jim's adoptive family as they moved to the Canadian Northwest Territories. There he applied for homestead rights on SW-18-21-20-W2 near Craven, SK and on 23 Mar 1909, he was granted patent. Three years later, on April 15, 1912, Mary died at the age of 67.

Exactly why John lost/sold his farm is a matter of family lore and some documentation. However, John has been described by family members as a heavy drinker, a sometimes shady character and a notorious gambler. On February 12, 1913 - less than one year after Mary's death John signed an agreement for sale of his land to a man by the name of John R. Glassy of the town of Craven. Annual payments totalling \$2,400 were to be made until the debt was settled by January 1, 1920. Then, on November 22 of 1913, John R. Glassy signed an agreement for sale of the property to local resident Sidney Thomas Martin for the sum of \$3,105 - a handsome profit to Glassy of \$700. Four years later, on February 21, 1917, Sidney Thomas Martin petitioned John Slemmon to transfer ownership of the land to him on the basis that he was the occupier of the land, that he had purchased the land from John R. Glassy, that his debt to John R. Glassy related to that purchase had been settled, and he was therefore the rightful owner of the property. Without delving into it further, it appears that the transfer did take place because Sidney Thomas Martin continued to occupy and farm the land for several years to come. Local family lore ended up concluding that John had "lost the farm to Sid Martin in a poker game."

Some questions remain though. For example, what was John R. Glassy's role in the transaction? Was he a participant in the poker game or was he simply a financial go-between and the \$700 apparent profit he made in the transaction helped to satisfy the amount lost in the poker game? Whatever the whole story was, John's son-in-law Jim Shiels remained bitter that he had never been given an opportunity to buy the land that he had helped develop and which was immediately adjacent to his own property.

Soon after "selling" the farm, John Slemmon began working as a clerk in Officer's Store in the nearby town of Craven, SK where he worked until very near his death on 21 Jul 1928 at the age of 79. Both John and Mary were buried in Longlaketon United Church Cemetery, north of Craven, SK.

Children of John Slimmon & Mary Wilson:

1.3.4.1 Jeannette (also Janet) Wilson “Jennie” Slemmon

- Born 21 Apr 1872 in Hollen, Maryborough, ON.
- Married James Robert Grant-Shiels 26 Nov 1902 in Enderlin, ND and had their first child, Marjorie, there in 1903.
- Moved to Canada's Assiniboia district of the North West Territories in 1904 and homesteaded on NW-18-21-20-W2 north of Regina.
- Had four more children: Thomas in 1906, twin boys Clarence and Warren in 1907 and Leonard in 1910.
- Retired to Victoria, BC in 1946.
- Died 24 May 1957 at 1315 Bay Street, Victoria, BC. She was 85.
- Her ashes were scattered on the homestead north of Craven, SK in ~1980.

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