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## The Family Tree

4 messages

barbara <[barbaraclements@sympatico.ca](mailto:barbaraclements@sympatico.ca)>  
To: [cliff.gittens@gmail.com](mailto:cliff.gittens@gmail.com)

Sat, Nov 24, 2007 at 5:07 PM

Hello Clifford,

I have been told I have ESP. About a month ago I was thinking of you and Leslie. It has been a very long time indeed.

I too have been thinking of possibly doing something about scouting out the Gittens side of the tree. It has always seemed so vague to me.

I did not know my grandparents name. I remember Dad's mom staying with us in Vancouver, but little else. I was thinking I should ask Paul sometime for a little more information. If you are visiting him, take him some coffee. I took him a coffee

Maker a few years ago. His parents are Percy and (her name escapes me now, but I should remember it soon) will let you know. Percy's wife used to do the catering for TCA- Tans Canada Airlines. I really liked them.

By the way, Edwin and Annie went back to Brooklyn as they still had family there. Jane Mansfield, the actress, was Dad and Uncle Bruce's first cousin. Your Dad told me that on one visit to Toronto. Jane Mansfield was from Philadelphia, where the Gittens immigrated apparently and then spread out. Percy had 3 children – Paul, Jessica and a brother whose name also escapes me. Jessica has a hotel in Barbados and Paul had the Travel Agency. The brother was also involved in Business somehow, I know that he used to swim and dive for the Masters Program. He got a group of Business people together to build and Olympic Size pool in Barbados for these events. Paul is like the Historian for the Island. He owned Foster Travels in Bridgetown before he sold it. None of his children where interested in keeping it going. He is a wonderful man. You will enjoy him very much. He used to look after the Royal Family when they were on the island. He can take you around to the house our Grandparents lived in.

When you are in Barbados, you will, without a doubt, hear about Harrison's Caves. You can go down under the earth and view Stalagmites Paul was instrumental in finding these Caves years ago. He also told me that before the was there was a train that went right around the island collecting Sugar Cane and taking it to Bridgetown to be processed into different grades of sugar and of course Rum.

I am not sure if you know about our Grandfather- he was murdered in Castries, St. Lucia. Apparently he went to there to get some money from someone and he was never seen again. He had the Singer Sewing Machine rights for the Caribbean. I have been to Castries on many ships and right at the pier, you can still see the old, very old, Singer Sewing machine office.

You were asking Barrie for my Mom's name: Jean Taylor Francis- born in Halifax, Grace Hospital April 07, 1917. Dad- Ivan Clement Gittens, I think born in Barbados or Philadelphia 23 April, 1916 or 1917?

My Birthday is 18 June, 1943 born in Halifax. I married Lawrence Eric Gotham Clements 04 April, 1970. We had 2 children; Scott Charles Edward Clements – born 05 Dec, 1975 in Toronto- Toronto General Hospital. He went to York University and studied Film. He wants to be a director. He then was accepted into the Norman Jewison Centre for further studies. He is struggling making ends meet but still wants to continue with his goal.

He is thinking of going to England as the prospects of finding interesting work are quite good.

My daughter is Jessica (named after Paul's sister- as a child, living in Barbados, I used to think she was beautiful) She was born November 06, 1978. She went to UBC, starting out in Oceanography and also switched to film. She wanted to be an actress. She produced her own play in Vancouver, but soon understood there was little work for people her age in Vancouver so she returned to Toronto. One day, it clicked that she wanted to have a constant income and she decided to go back to school and take her MBA. She graduated from Schulich School of Business, York University in Marketing. She had studied so hard and did extremely well, She took the summer off, but I think she waited too long to find a job. She left for London a few weeks ago and likes the idea of the European connections and possibilities of work in Europe. I have a few connections from years ago that might help- Norman, my contact, was an adviser for Margaret Thatcher and also works in Marketing for

The larger arm of Lever Brothers. He travels all over the world. He said he would be very willing to help Jessica. I am waiting to hear but so far no word... our family is slow with keeping in touch.

By the way, Jane Mansfield's daughter is an actress too. She is on Street Legal....I think that is the show. I have watched it a few times. I am not really into the blood and gore thing.

Paul is getting quite old now, so I hope you find him in good health. His wife Brenda was still operating a flower shop in Barbados as of the time Mom died- 1996. I was in the Airport waiting for a plane back to Toronto and she was returning from a buying trip to Grenada. I broke down when she asked me how Mom was doing. I went on a cruise to try and take my mind off what had happened. I had been going through a very messy separation at that time and was ultimately divorced in 2000.

I am working as a Cruise Consultant. I had my own company until Sars, 911 and the Bird Flu epidemic. I joined a larger company - Vision 2000 Travel Group and work as an Independent Contractor.

I have been rambling on Clifford.....sorry, but maybe it helps fill in some gaps. Let me know what you find as I would be very interested in learning more. As a matter of fact I was going to visit Wales last year and had been on the internet...great thing!! I located someone living in Wales who was from Barbados. I was briefly in touch with him and had planned on going to a reunion which happens every year. The Gittens clan gets together in Barbados. I do not know if you are aware of the situation, but years ago there was a plantation owner named Gittens. When the workers or slaves were freed, they took the name of Gittens as they had no idea who they were. Today there are many Black Gittens' in Barbados. Maybe you can get to the bottom of this.

Before you go, I will fill you in on a few other people who might help you when you visit the island.

It is getting late and I have to get going....Do keep in touch and let me know how you are progressing.

Barbara Clements

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Sun, Nov 25, 2007 at 3:30 PM

Barbara,

I was absolutely delighted to receive your e-mail. Over the last few years I have been gathering information on the Gittens family and since my retirement last March I have put some renewed energy into the project. Prior to retirement I would work on it for a couple of weeks and then put the project down for a long time before working on it again. One my big informational voids was knowledge about your family in Nova Scotia. After the deaths of our parents I let the connection go, something that I have often regretted over the years, and that's why I am so happy to have made contact with you, Barrie and Sandra and to be able to catch up on the last 40 years. It was actually through Sandra that I was able to contact Barrie and on to you.

The information on Percy Foster and his relationship to Paul and siblings was helpful, I did not know the relationship. The pool Paul was involved in making was actually named after him, in 1961 Paul also was one of the founding members for Rotary in Barbados and most recently he received a life time achievement award... I found the above and the following on the Internet.

" FOSTER HAILED FOR LIFE'S WORK. Retired businessman Paul Foster captured the Minister's Lifetime Achievement Award Saturday night at the Barbados Tourism Awards 2007. Foster, a former journalist and the first manager of the Barbados Tourist Board, was also president of the Barbados Jaycees, where he was instrumental in the celebration of Carnival, a precursor to Crop-Over. He spent many years as chairman of Paul Foster Travel and Foster and Ince Cruise Services, where he pioneered the "cruise and fly" industry in Barbados. " Seems Paul was very active on the Island as you noted in your e-mail.

The info on the death of our grandfather in your e-mail was new to me. I had always believed that he had died from food poisoning. I certainly like you version, much more exciting and mysterious. One more thing for me to try to search out. Maybe there was a newspaper in Castries that my have reported the murder???? The information I have puts the date of death as 1921, have you got any idea if this may be correct. When I was growing up I seem to recollect that our parents and their sister Hilda were raised with their "Foster" grandparents, did you hear any such story when you were growing up?

That brings up another question. Do you know the where abouts of Hilda? In my father's obituary in 1987 it says Hilda was living in Pentiction and was Hilda MacIntosh. I again let the contact lapse, although there was not very much contact between Hilda and my Father over the years. I always had the impression that Hilda was the black sheep of the family, I don't really know why.

You mentioned that Edwin and Annie went back to Brooklyn, did you mean to visit, or had they immigrated? In my research so far I have not found any relatives in Brooklyn, would you know which relatives they went to visit? I am sure Edwin's father was in Brooklyn but he returned to Barbados and remarried.

Thanks for the information on your Mom, Dad and your family. Sorry to hear about the messy divorce. I am very thankful that Donna and I

have been able to stay married and seem happier now that we may have been 35 years ago. I used to think that we were Mr and Mrs Joe Average, two kids, two cars, big mortgage and married. Now however a long and continuing marriage seems to be in the minority. A couple of things I would like to follow up on about the info you sent. Can you tell me where your Mother died, and where she is buried? Does Jessica have a middle or second name? Could you also provide me with e-mail address for your children. I have Sandra's two boys e-mail now. If I can get Barrie's children's e-mail, and my brother's children, then we could all stay in touch into the future.

Its kind of interesting that three of our collective 4 children are focusing their lives at present in the area of the arts....maybe its some kind of hereditary thing??

I don't really recall Jane Mansfield as being a relative.... very fascinating.

I do know that there are a large number of Black Gittens in Barbados. I have seen pictures of two Clifford Gittens, both very black. In my research I had read that slaves often took the surnames of their owners and the Gittens plantation owners have a very long history in Barbados. The two first recorded Gittens in Barbados in the 1680 census were John Gittens senior and John Gittens Jr, they owned 10 areas of land and 8 slaves and 5 acres of land and four slaves respectively. So our ancestors likely owned quite a few slaves until slavery was abolished in the mid 1800's.

We are going to Barbados for 15 days on Feb 2, 2008, as I mentioned in my initial e-mail to Barrie, but we have not yet booked accommodations. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations on the best value???

I too am starting to ramble a bit and I have another 1,000 questions that I will hold for another time.

Thanks again, it was great hearing from you and I will certainly stay in touch.

Cliff G.

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Sun, Nov 25, 2007 at 4:37 PM

Hello again Cliff,  
Jessica's full name is Jessica Barbara Jean, scanning 3 generations. Mom and Dad are both buried in Toronto. Do you know I cannot remember the name of the cemetery. I will have to drive by to get the information for you.

I brought Dad up here for a second opinion on a diagnosis that I could

not believe. He died of Cancer on Jessica's second Birthday- 06 Nov., 1980. I think it originated in the brain. We had several boats and he scraped and sanded the "lead paint" twice a year. Mom said she would see the red paint come out of his scalp onto the pillow for months after. Mom died in 1996. The phone rang as I came in that night and I answered it. I thought Mom was in the bathroom so I threw a magazine on her bed and headed off to my own washroom. Not seeing Mom in bed I started to go in when a cold sweat came over me. The bathroom door was open and she was on the floor. Her doctor said she would most likely choke to death because of her lungs and she had been bringing up a lot of flem. I panicked and called 911. The firemen and the Paramedics arrived first. I had also called Jessica and Scott. Jessica arrived first and tried to resuscitate Mom. I knew it was impossible. The Paramedic, a woman, arrived about the same time as Gotham. Gotham told her he would pronounce her dead and she could save her time. The paramedic told him this was not in his jurisdiction and proceeded to try and resuscitate her. Finally it was abandoned. I knew all along but was in such a state of shock I could barely speak. I was at that time feeling very guilty as I do not know if I startled Mom when I came in and could I have done anything to save her. I will never know. I called Barrie right away as well as Aunt Dot (Dorothy Currie) and Bill (William Francis) her Sister and Brother. Barrie and Roseanne came up the next day. Thank God for them. They picked up Andrew. It was so traumatic that I don't remember the next 6 months.

Regarding Hilda:

Hilda married my father's best friend and my father shut her out of his life. I do not know all the details. Your father thought that Dad had been too hard on her and tried to keep in touch. My information is a little sketchy as that is the way it was presented to me by your father. I too was inquisitive in that regard. Apparently his friend drank a great deal and thus so did she. I know that she had 5 children. She left him at one point and ran off to Europe with someone, but later returned. I think she married him again or lived with him. Then she came to Canada and remarried. I never met her. I thought she was living somewhere in BC. I wish I could remember. It sounded like a sad story. Her children never met us and I always wondered about them. Like you, I wished I had listened closer and asked more questions. There were 5 cousins we never met!

My cousin Linda has done the family tree on my mother's side. Jamie is named after my Mother's Grandfather- James Earl Grey. He graduated in Theology at the age of 15 and became a missionary spending most of his years in China. He settled in Sussex, New Brunswick when he retired at 75. There he met a 39 year old woman and got married. They had 5 children. Ethel Francis was my Grandmother. She went to Dalhousie University to study languages and to study opera. She was a mezzo Soprano. She met my Grandfather Bill Francis and that was the end of her career. They had three Children. My n Mother was the first born, then Dorothy and Bill 10 years later.

I have to get going now Cliff. We can chat again.

It is so nice having email.

My daughters email is [jess4clements@yahoo.ca](mailto:jess4clements@yahoo.ca). I will have to check on Scott's for you and let you know the next time we chat. Jessica is in England but is still picking up messages.

So good to hear from you.

Barbara

From: Cliff Gittens [<mailto:cliff.gittens@gmail.com>]  
Sent: November 25, 2007 6:30 PM  
To: barbara  
Subject: Re: The Family Tree  
[Quoted text hidden]

**Cliff Gittens <[cliff.gittens@gmail.com](mailto:cliff.gittens@gmail.com)>**

**Mon, Nov 26, 2007 at 9:49 AM**

**Draft To: barbara <[barbaraclements@sympatico.ca](mailto:barbaraclements@sympatico.ca)>**

Barbara,

I think I can save you the trip to the cemetery. I found your father's obituary in the Halifax Library last summer while I was there, it said he was buried at Riverside Cemetery, Etobicoke, Ontario. If you Mom was buried at the same cemetery then I already have the info.

Your Mother's death sounded very traumatic indeed. We had a similar situation with my Mother in that the family had to make the decision to remove her from life support. Both Donna and I to this day believe that her death was premature due to the negligent care that she received from the medical system in Nanaimo, BC.

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