

Book One

Philadelphia Fizell Genealogy

Simon Fizel (1)

Thursday, January 14, 1999! First, our genealogy as I know it today. Our oldest known ancestor is Simon Fizel who was born in France and finally settled in Philadelphia. It is assumed his wife Ann was born in France. Simon's daughter Emily was born in 1790 in St. Domingue according to French records from the colony and her listing in the 1850 US Census. There is no record of Simon's son Lewis' birth but I believe he was older and may have been born in France. Simon's other son Eli was born in Cuba according to the 1860 Census listing for his son Augustus.

On January 20, 1798 Simon was executor of a will for Jean Mares, an Inhabitant of St. Mare, St. Domingo. The record of that will confirms Simon, as a "former resident of St. Mare, now residing at Trenton, New Jersey." From these facts I assume Simon was a French settler in St. Domingue when the slave uprising forced many settlers from the Island. He took his family to Cuba where Eli was born, then on to Trenton, NJ and finally to Philadelphia, PA.

According to the City Directory of 1799 Simon Fizel lived at 73 New Street (a small street between Race and Vine Streets that ran from 158 N 2nd Street to 93 N 4th Street.) For 'Occupation' he was listed as "Gentleman". I don't know if he was a person of means, retired or disabled. Possibly Gentleman was a dignified way of saying a person was unemployed. The 1810 US Census lists his widow Ann Fizel as head of household. She was a Dry Goods shopkeeper, living in the front of 125 N. 2nd Street with two other females, no males in the household. It is interesting to note that two other families lived in the back of 125 N. 2nd Street. The census also indicates Ann was over 45 years of age, one female was under 10 and the other's age was 16 thru 25. I assume the latter is Emily who would have been 20 in 1810.

The City Directory for 1812 was missing so there were no addresses for Eli or Lewis Fizel although both served in the War of 1812. Eli or Ely Fizel was on the muster rolls of 4th Detachment (Rush's), Pennsylvania Militia, while Lewis Fizel was on the muster rolls of Thompson's Regiment, Pennsylvania Militia.

Ann and her son Eli Fizel lived near each other in the vicinity of 3rd and Race Streets between 1814 and 1828, the last year Ann was listed in a City Directory. Between 1817 and 1821 they lived in the same house at 314 Race Street. Later City Directory listings indicate Eli moved his family west within the city and that his occupation was paperhanger.

Lewis Fizell (2)

Lewis' City Directory listings show he moved north, outside the city limits. Between 1813 and 1822 his address was Prince Street near Crown Street, which are today Girard Ave and Crease Street in the original Kensington section of Philadelphia County. After a gap of 11 years, Mary Fizell, a widow is listed on Crease Street. Another assumption, Mary was his wife and if so, she was born in Ireland according to their son Thomas's 1860 Census record. The 1820 US Census lists Lewis Fissell, his wife, two sons and two daughters living in Kensington, a lower section of the larger Northern Liberties. Lewis' occupation is unknown.

Thomas Fizell (3)

Thomas, son of Lewis, was born in 1809. He married Francis Palmer. Thomas and Fanny, as she was known, had nine children. Their names are listed on the website <http://www.fizell.org/fizell.htm>

Thomas's occupation was Ship's Carpenter and he lived in Kensington his whole life and is buried with Fanny in the Palmer Cemetery. Thomas and Fanny raised most of their children while living in a small three story house at 313 Allen Street, a short walk to many ship building docks that lined Delaware Avenue. Thomas and Fanny are buried in the Palmer Cemetery Charitable Grounds, Palmer & Belgrade Sts, Philadelphia, PA, (contact Jos. McGough, 1521 E. Palmer St).

Three of Thomas and Fanny's sons served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Lewis lost his right arm at the elbow at Petersburg, VA, Andrew served in the Light Artillery, and George W. became ill soon after enlisting and was in a military hospital. He unfortunately died of the illness. He was only 22. Eli's son, another Eli, was a taylor (tailor) and served in the 3rd and 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry.

Thomas Fizell(4)

Thomas and Fanny's oldest child was another Thomas, born 1830. He married Mary Ann in 1855 and had three children by the time the Civil War started. The names

of Thomas and Mary Ann's children are on the http://www.fizell.org/thomas_fizell.htm web page. Thomas was a shoemaker by trade. He and Mary Ann lived in Kensington near his parents and brothers until the mid 1870's when he and Mary Ann moved to Tacony, a small town further north along the Delaware River. Thomas gave up being a shoemaker in 1884 when he opened a Fish Store at Tulip and Hamilton Streets in Tacony. He died in 1893 and Mary Ann continued to operate the Fish and Oyster store for another 10 years. She died in 1907.

My father told me an interesting story about Thomas that was handed down to him. Thomas was a short jovial man, played the harmonica and he had a small dog he taught to dance to the harmonica's music. He would take the dog to the local Tacony tavern on State Road at Longshore Street around noon when the Tavern served free lunch to the patrons. Thomas and his dog would entertain the customers who would treat him to drinks. And another tale relating how Thomas was going home from the Tavern one evening and fell. It was snowing and he slept where he fell until someone found him. This contributed to his death, which was officially recorded due to Dropsy. Dropsy is a contraction for Hydropsy, the presence of abnormally large amounts of fluid and congestive heart failure.

Joseph Fizell(5)

Of Thomas and Mary Ann's children, for this narrative I will only be concerned with my great grandfather Joseph. Joseph was the fifth child of Thomas and Mary Ann, born in 1865. He married Clara Fuller in 1886. Clara was from Titusville, New Jersey. Joseph lived his whole life in Tacony. He was a file maker at Disston Steel Works. Disston owned many of the homes in Tacony, and at one time employed most of the inhabitants of Tacony. All the public schools in Tacony were named for Disston family members. Joseph and Clara bought a large home on the main street of Tacony, 6643 Torresdale Avenue. Joseph died in 1927 and Clara took in boarders to survive. The boarders were workmen on the Tacony Palmyra Bridge which was being built 1928-1929.

Roy Neel Fizell(6)

Joseph and Clara had three boys. The first two died as infants before my grandfather Roy Neel Fizell was born in 1894. Roy married Mary Hyslop in 1914. Mary arrived in the USA from Scotland in 1905 with her mother and 9 siblings.

Roy went to Temple University at nights and studied accounting. Clara sold the boarding house and moved in with Roy and Mary in 1930. Roy became the company bookkeeper for a factory that made fruit jellies and preserves. I can't remember the name but the factory was located at American Street and Lehigh Avenue in Philadelphia. Roy and Mary lived in Tacony until 1947 when they moved into the "country". They bought a new Cape Cod in the rapidly developing Rhawnhurst section of Philadelphia. It was right after WWII and the northeast area of Philadelphia was in a building boom. All the farms were disappearing.

The owners of the factory where Roy worked had promised Roy the promotion to an officer of the company but procrastinated and finally brought in the owner's son instead. He was heartbroken to be passed by after so many years of faithful service. Clara died in 1950 and Roy followed in 1953. Mary married Harry Erny in 1954 and when he died in 1969 she married George Witte. Mary was too independent and George tried to control her friends and activities. She did not like living with George. They were divorced and she lived in Ocean City alone for several years before entering the Methodist Home on the boardwalk in Ocean City, NJ. Mary died in 1978.

Joseph Fuller Fizell(7)

Roy and Mary had three children, Joseph Fuller, Milda Hyslop and Roy Neel. At 6 years of age Roy fell and punctured his cheek on a brick or Hemlock bush, developed blood poisoning and died. Joseph (Joe) married Naomi Roberts in 1935. Milda married William Law in 1936.

Family may contact me for further information by sending me an email.
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