

The John Pierce Curtis Family

By Sharon Pike

This Curtis family descends from Zacheus Curtis, (1619-1682), born in Downton, Wiltshire, England and died in Topsfield, Essex Co., Massachusetts. Zacheus¹, John², Samuel³, John⁴, Fessenden⁵, Bradbury⁶, John P.⁷, Asaph⁸ (Ace), Ralph⁹.

John Pierce Curtis was born in Winchester, Cheshire Co., New Hampshire, on September 6, 1826, the eldest of nine children born to Bradbury Curtis and Harriet (Coddington) Curtis.

Bradbury Curtis was a farmer and lumberman by occupation who died in 1851, at the age of 48. His wife, Harriet, died in Sunderland, Bennington Co., Vermont in 1892 at the age of 83. Her father, Abijah Coddington, served in the Revolutionary War and her mother was Sarah Pierce.

The children of Bradbury and Harriet Curtis were John Pierce Curtis, Silas Curtis, Sophia Curtis, Sarah Curtis, George Washburn Curtis, Hosea Curtis, Christiana Sophia Curtis and Dora Sylvena Curtis. Dexter Curtis is probably a son, but this has not been proven.

Following the death of Bradbury Curtis, Harriet and the children moved to Sunderland, Bennington Co., Vermont. John P. Curtis married Julia Cook, the daughter of Isaac and Sabrina Cook of Washington Co., New York, just over the state line about 15 miles away. The first three Curtis children, Asa, John and Ida were born in Vermont. In 1864 the family moved to Washington Co., New York where their last two children, Belle and Sardis, were born and where they remained for 18 years. John was a farmer and cattle buyer and seems to have prospered. In the 1870 census the value of John's real estate was \$7000 and his personal estate was \$2000.

John and Julia's children were: Asaph Bradford Curtis (married Lillian R. Clark), John Fessenden "Jack" Curtis (married Camille M. Pratt and Minnie __?__), Ida Harriet Curtis (married DeForest Sweet), Belle Rowne Curtis (married William A. Smith), and Dexter Sardis Curtis (married Elsie M. Childs and Lona __?__).

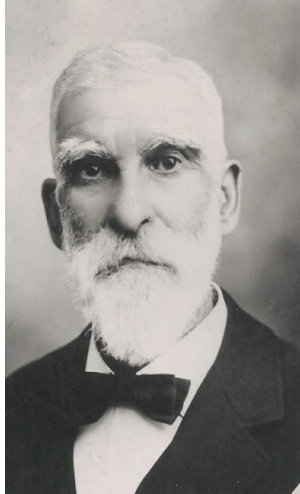
John's oldest son, Asaph Bradford Curtis, or "Ace" as he was called, left Washington Co., New York for Chicago, Illinois about 1880-1881. On December 22, 1881, Asaph married Lillian "Lilly" (Clark) Culver, a young widow whose first husband and child died in 1880. She was the daughter of Lewis E. Clark and Frances Perry.

Perhaps it was Ace who convinced his father to come to Illinois. In 1882 John Curtis settled in Rockford, Winnebago Co., Illinois, bringing his wife and children and his widowed mother-in-law, Sabrina Cook. He established a business as a dealer in old iron, rags, etc. at 214 North Madison St., and he also owned a large vinegar manufactory on Kishwaukee Street, just outside the city limits. He owned a large comfortable home on the same street. His published biographical sketch written in 1892 says, "He gives his entire thought and attention to his business enterprises, and is a man of character and energy and has succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations, keeping as many as 12 or 14 wagons on the road all the time."

"Mr. and Mrs. Curtis are well and favorably known to the people of Rockford, and Mrs. Curtis is prominently identified with the Methodist church. In politics Mr. Curtis is a Republican. Their children, five in number, are: A. B., who is the cider maker for the manufactory, married Miss Lillie Clark, and they reside with our subject; John F., is doing business for a KY tobacco house as a commercial traveler; Ida, married DeForest Sweet, a tinker dealer of Des Moines

[Polk County], IA; Rowne Belle, is the wife of William Smith, a junk dealer of Cedar Rapids [Linn County], IA, who like the members of the Curtis family, is a very successful business man; and S. Dexter, who is at home and at present in business with his father."

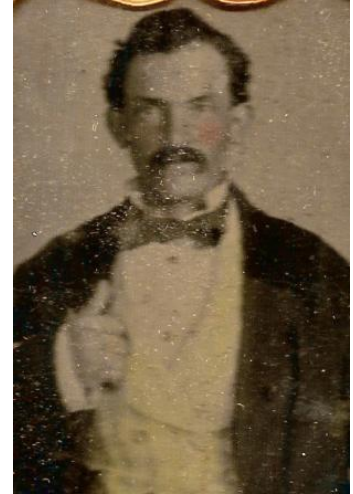
Ace Curtis left Chicago to join the rest of the family in Rockford where he ran his father's cider and vinegar manufacturing plant for 20 years. Ace and Lilly Curtis had four children: Lillie "Belle" Curtis, (married Howard Bargren), Frances May "Fanny" Curtis, (married Edward Summers), Hazel J. Curtis, (married George W. Kitteringham), and Ralph Dexter Curtis, (married Mabel Adelaide Halverson).



John Pierce Curtis



Julia (Cook) Curtis



Asaph "Ace" Curtis



Lillie (Clark) Curtis



Hotel Rockford



A family camping trip, most likely in Wisconsin about 1894, 9 years before the hotel was built, included Ace (left in helmet) and Lilly (Clark) Curtis (next to Ace with baby), both their parents (far right back), their children, and other family members. Some people in this photo are unidentified. If you can identify anyone please e-mail Sharon Pike at spike00@kih.net.



Back row: Howard, Marian, Bill, Lil, Jack.
Front: Bill, Mabel, Ralph, Ed.

Ace Curtis bought land on Long Lake in Washburn Co., Wisconsin and began building the first resort on the lake in 1902. The area had recently been logged and a crude log building left by the loggers was home to Ace, his ten-year-old son, Ralph, and two supervisors from Rockford brought to oversee the construction. They returned to Rockford each fall until the buildings were completed.

During the summer of 1904 the hotel was finished and the furniture was shipped by train from Rockford, Illinois to Saron, Wisconsin. Lilly Curtis and her youngest daughter, Hazel, made the trip by train, then across the rough logging roads to the hotel. The older daughters Belle and Fanny arrived in time for the grand opening of the "Hotel Rockford."

The entire family, including Ace's father John P. Curtis, moved permanently to Wisconsin.

The area around Long Lake was settled by Rockford people who would come up by train from Rockford to Saron. Ace would meet them with a dray team to bring them to the hotel.

The hotel did a brisk business with its large dining room, known to serve the best meals around, and 15 rooms upstairs for sleeping. Beside the hotel sat a tavern, which became a grocery store during Prohibition. Three rental cottages were built near the hotel along with private houses where the Curtis family lived. Their nearby farm provided fresh produce.

Ace and Lillie Curtis provided a home for his father, John P. Curtis, until his death in 1910. John's wife Julia (Cook) Curtis died in Rockford in 1899, before the family moved to Wisconsin. Lillie's parents Lewis E. Clark and Frances (Perry) Clark also resided with them until their deaths in 1914 and 1915 respectively.

Ace and Lillie Curtis were public-spirited people. Ace served several years at town treasurer and town chairman. Lillie was instrumental in forming the local ladies aid and establishing the Madge Evergreen Church and Cemetery Association where generations of the family are now buried.

The Madge Post Office was in the hotel in the summer months to accommodate the guests at the hotel and other tourists in the area. Ace's son, Ralph Curtis was the post master.

Ace and Lilly's son Ralph Curtis married Mabel Adelaide Halverson, the child of Norwegian immigrants. They were the parents of seven children: William Clark "Bill" Curtis, (married Laura Koch), Marian Lue Curtis, (married Gene Pike), Lillian Rae "Lil" Curtis, (married Oscar Bloom "Bud" Pedersen), Howard Bradford Curtis, (married Gwen Quisenberry and Lorriane Reynolds), Robert Allen "Bob" Curtis, (married Artis Chambers), John Warren "Jack" Curtis (married Marne Unknown and Donna Walker), and Edward Francis "Ed" Curtis, (married Margaret Mary "Marm" Kling.) All are deceased except for Jack Curtis.

Jack Curtis, at the age of 83, participated in the Curtis DNA project and his results matched the other descendants of Zacheus Curtis.

These children grew up on Long Lake and worked beside their parents and grandparents at the Hotel Rockford and on the farm. In the words of Jack Curtis, "We had an absolutely marvelous childhood."

The hotel was sold in 1941. Today the building still stands and houses a tavern named "Rockford House."

Descendants of John Pierce Curtis

- 1 John Pierce Curtis 1826 - 1910
 - . +Julia Ann Cook 1834 - 1899
- 2 Asaph Bradford Curtis 1857 - 1935
 - +Lillian R. Clark 1859 - 1927
- 3 Lillie "Belle" Curtis 1882 - 1969
 - +Howard S. Bargren 1846 - 1935
- 3 Frances May "Fanny" Curtis 1884 - 1973
 - +Edward Summers 1877 - 1940
- 3 Hazel Julia Curtis 1890 - 1981
 - +George W. Kitteringham 1891 - 1941

..... 4 John "Jack" C. Kitteringham 1934 - 2006
 3 Ralph Dexter Curtis 1893 - 1967
 +Mabel Adelaide Halverson 1890 - 1960
 4 William Clark "Bill" Curtis 1918 - 1985
 +Laura Amelia Koch 1920 - 1977
 4 Marian Lue Curtis 1920 - 2007
 +Gene Marden Pike 1917 - 2008
 4 Lillian Rae "Lil" Curtis 1922 - 1991
 +Oscar Bloom Pedersen 1919 - 1988
 4 Howard Bradford Curtis 1924 - 1977
 +Gwen Quisenberry
 *2nd Wife of Howard Bradford Curtis:
 +Lorraine Reynolds 1927 - 1993
 4 Robert Allen "Bob" Curtis 1926 - 1992
 +Artis Chambers 1927- living
 4 John Warren "Jack" Curtis 1926 - living
 +Marne' Weber 1927-1998
 *2nd Wife of John Warren "Jack" Curtis: +Donna Walker 1939 - 1996
 4 Edward Francis "Ed" Curtis 1927 - 2007
 +Margaret Mary "Marm" Kling 1927 - 2007
 . 2 John Fessenden "Jack" Curtis 1860 - aft 1930
 +Camilla Maude Reynolds 1863 - 1905
 3 Frank L. Curtis 1888 - 1967
 3 Helen Curtis 1895 - aft 1967
 +(Unknown) Marranzino
 . *2nd Wife of John Fessenden "Jack" Curtis:
 +Minnie L. (Unknown) 1867 - aft 1930
 . 2 Ida Harriet Curtis 1862 -
 +DeForest Sweet 1865 - 1937
 3 Julia Sweet 1893 -
 +Isaac Miller 1888 -
 3 Mabel G. Sweet 1894 -
 . 2 Belle Rowne Curtis 1870 - 1937
 +William A. Smith 1859 - abt. 1917
 3 Harry P. Smith 1888 - aft 1937
 . 2 Dexter Sardis Curtis 1871 - 1932
 +Elsie M. Childs 1877- 1912
 +Lona (Unknown) 1879 - 1944

Sharon Pike's Curtis Database online:

<http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?db=sharon-curtis>