

Robert Tilley

In 1840 Thomas Cole (1768-1840) died at Bird Island Cove. In his lifetime he had become comparatively wealthy. In his last will and testament [ref Registry of Wills- PANL-Vol 1.] prepared in 1833 he left all of his estate to his surviving family; his wife Susannah, his son Richard (1799-1856), and his daughter Sarah (bap. 1797-1865) [Mrs. Thomas Clouter]).

Before her marriage to Cole, Susannah (nee Ayers) had a child, Elizabeth, who was raised in the Cole family. Elizabeth married Joseph Tilley in 1810. Thomas Cole made no provisions in his will for the Tilley descendants of his wife, however, he predeceased Susannah, and in her last will and testament of 1845 she stated: [ref Registry of Wills- PANL-Vol 1.]

...I give to my grandson, Joseph Tilley, one hundred pounds current money of this island. I give to my grandson, Robert Tilley, one hundred pounds current money of this island. I give to my grandson, Thomas Tilley, ten pounds current money of this island...

Robert Tilley (1824-1872) of Joseph was then a teacher at Openhall, Bonavista Bay.

From the Tilley Collection: [ref. The Robert Tilley Collection, PANL, P7/A/67.]

Open Hall,

8th October, 1852.

I hereby acknowledge myself to be lawfully indebted to Robert Tilly, schoolmaster of this place, in the sum of three pounds, four shillings, currency, and I hereby agree to pay the sum of one pound currency annually to said Robert Tilly until the above debt of three pounds, four shillings be liquidated.

In witness whereof, I have hereto set my hand the date above written.

his

Christopher X Gould

mark

It is probable that his inheritance (four times his annual salary) was expended in the establishment of a small business at Bird Island Cove. It consisted of a large main store in the Cove and a smaller one on the North Side. The first entry in the ledgers for this business was dated May 9th, 1853. [ref. The Robert Tilley Collection, PANL, P7/A/67.]

From the **Evening Telegram**, August 29, 1963, is this extract:

...Robert Tilley...was a Bonavista-born teacher who, in 1853, had set up in business in nearby Elliston, on a £100 legacy from his recently deceased Elliston grandmother, Mrs. Susannah Cole. He became the place's first resident "supplying merchant", having, at his death in 1872, every fisherman in the settlement as a dealer...

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Information Provided by Mr. Doug Cole