



# Claiborne Society Newsletter

The National Society of Claiborne Family Descendants



Spring 2014

## Message from the President

On behalf of our exceptional officers and committee chairmen, I am pleased to present the Spring 2014 newsletter. I am also grateful for the opportunity to serve as your president. In many ways, the Claiborne Clan is a unique organization, with its focused goals and continuous efforts to increase knowledge of our shared history. For more than 25 years our society has served as the central starting point for a broad range of investigations, including Dr. Alex Waldrop leading the DNA research, Sue Cliborn Forbes directing our medieval historical studies, and Alex, Sue, Elsa Diamond, Adele Claiborne Tallman, and Stafanie Norton Forbes transcribing and publishing *The Claiborne Family Journal*. How lucky we are to have these and other champions, for the results they have achieved are extraordinary. As we look back at these achievements we should also resolve to inspire young family members to carry them forward.

As Vice President, Susan W.H. Rura is planning our next biennial reunion to be held in 2015 in Charleston, South Carolina. This charming location will be attractive to young and old alike. I encourage you to invite at least one new member to join our Society and bring them with you to the reunion. A membership application has been added as one of the final pages of this newsletter.

This issue contains an intimate family story and two portraits from William Claiborne Powell, sent to us on Valentine's Day 2014. Bill Powell allows us a glimpse into his lovely heritage when his great, great grandmother, Harriet Adeline Claiborne, married William Cole Powell on Valentine's Day 1838. We hope to have many such stories in the future, so please send us yours. And, finally, I have offered questions that have perplexed me about how our ancestors travelled in the Middle Ages, in order to stir up debate among us.

Patricia Clayborn, President      [claybornp@aol.com](mailto:claybornp@aol.com)

## Treasurer's Report Oct 1, 2013 - April 30, 2014

Balance October 1, 2013	\$15,247.03
Balance April 30, 2014	\$ 9,714.84

<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
New Membership	\$20.00	
Dues	1,050.00	
Reunion Reservations <i>(last minute)</i>	940.00	
Book Sales	390.00	
Interest (2013)	36.13	
Total Receipts	\$2,436.13	\$2,436.13

<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>		
10/4/13 "Let's Get Frank" Tour*	\$1,317.00	
10/5/13 Speaker, Cara Griggs*	100.00	
Speaker, Conf. Museum*	300.00	
Refund to G. Gilman	160.00	
10/6/13 Omni Hotel Charges*	4,521.25	
11/20/13 Reimbursement to Duain Claiborne /shipping records	84.38	
Reimbursement to S. Rura for Jefferson Hotel lunch & reunion booklets*	1,455.69	
12/6/13 Reimbursement to D. Clements for postage	30.00	
Total Disbursements	\$7,968.32	\$7,968.32

<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>\$9,714.84</b>
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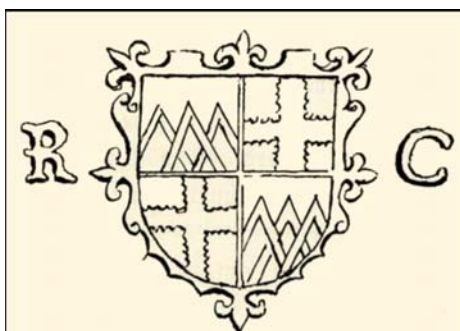
\*Reunion Expenses

In addition to the assets above, the NSCFD holds 2 CDs at Chesapeake Bank, Port Haywood VA, worth more than \$16,000  
*Diane Claiborne Clements, Treasurer*

## OFFICERS AND BOARD 2013 - 2015

President	Patricia Clayborn
Vice President	Susan W.H. Rura
Secretary	Corinne Middleton
Treasurer	Diane Claiborne Clements
Registrar	Ann Richardson Starr
Research	Dr. Alex Waldrop
Archives	Duain Claiborne
Publications	Patricia Clayborn
Webmaster	Dan Boylin

[www.claibornesociety.org](http://www.claibornesociety.org)



Coat of arms Cliburn Hall, Cliburn, Westmorland, published for the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, by Titus Wilson, Kendal, Westmorland, and by Charles Thurnam and Sons, Carlisle, Cumberland, 1892

## The Claiborne Sisters

### By William Claiborne Powell

Dr. Devereaux Jarratt Claiborne (1785-1871), son of Virginia U.S. Congressman Thomas B. Claiborne (1747-1811), commissioned an artist to paint portraits of his teenage daughters, Harriet Adeline Claiborne (1821-1844) and Mary Clayton Claiborne (1819-1841). The artist painted their portraits on wood and they were beautifully framed. They have been handed down through the generations and now hang proudly in my home.



**Harriet Adeline Claiborne**

Dr. Claiborne, who lived to the ripe old age of 86, wrote on the back of each portrait:

Harriet Adeline Claiborne: "Intellectual but judicious, she was guided by reason and prudence. Her habits and manners rendered her beloved by her friends and acquaintances, while her whole conduct was chastened by the benign influences of Christianity."

Mary Clayton Claiborne: "Poor Mary: hers was the generous heart, the open hand and the tear of sympathy for the wretchedness she could not alleviate."

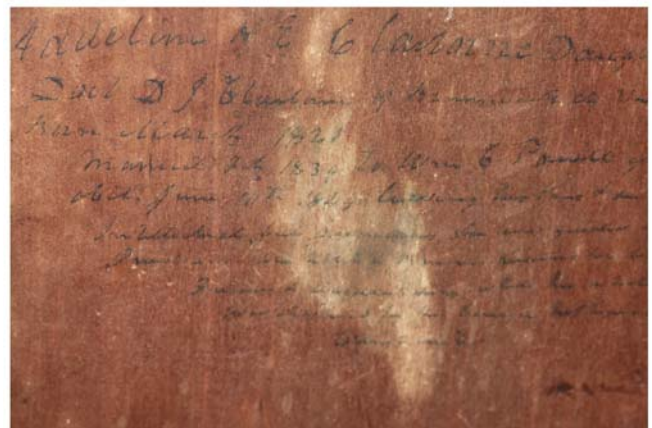
Harriet Adeline Claiborne, my great great grandmother, married William Cole Powell on Valentine's Day, 1838. Her second son, my great grandfather, Albert Theodore Powell, was born on February 18, 1842. At 18, he entered the Civil War as a First Lieutenant in the Confederate States Army Cavalry and rode with the likes of Fitz Lee and J.E.B. Stuart (talk about adventure, fun, and excitement!). After the war he studied law and was Commonwealth's Attorney for Dinwiddie County (VA) for 25 years.



**Mary Clayton Claiborne**

I had the pleasure of sitting next to John Frederick Dorman at the 2013 Richmond Reunion Banquet. Upon seeing photographs of the Claiborne portraits, he turned to me and remarked that he wished they could have been included in his book "Claiborne of Virginia."

Submitted by:  
William Claiborne Powell  
February 14, 2014



Epitaph written by Dr. Claiborne on the back of Harriet Adeline's portrait

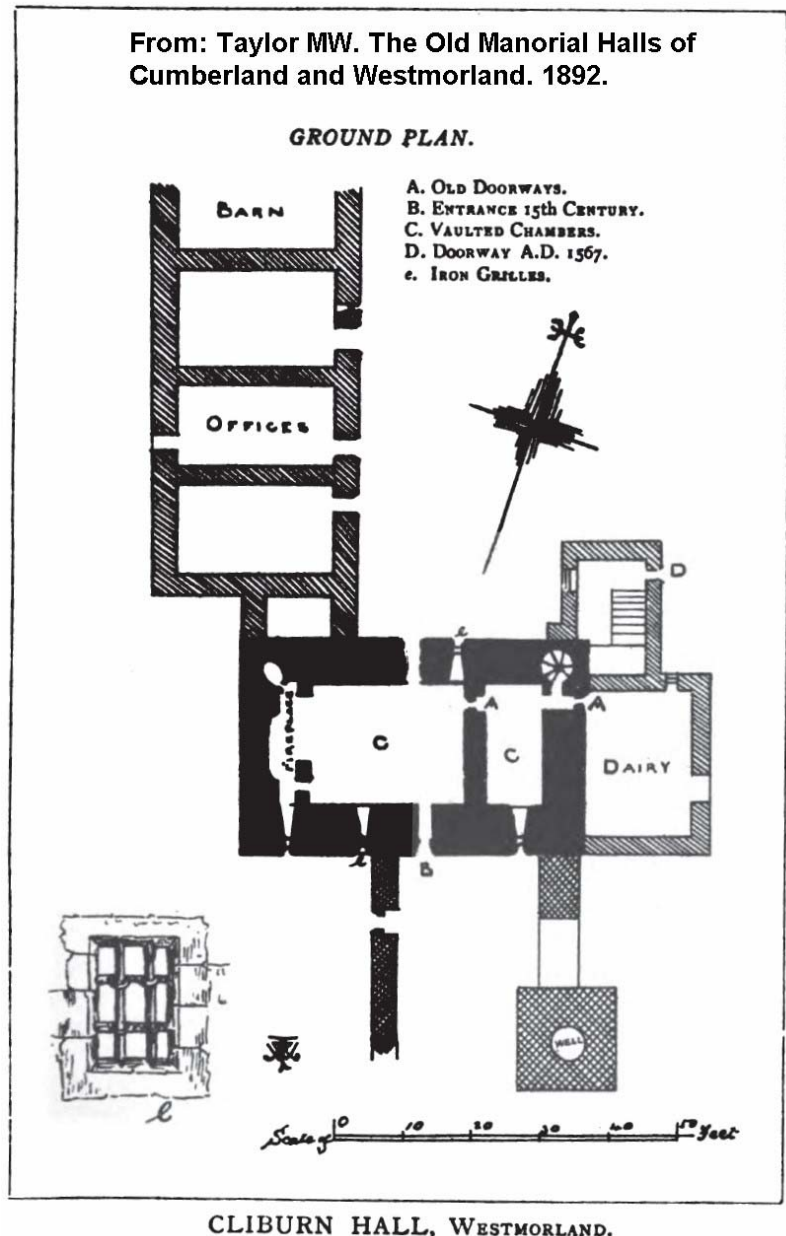
## Roman Roads and Westmorland Waterways

By Patricia Clayborn

In 1917 John Herbert Claiborne, MD, wrote that he had twice visited Cliburn, the first time in 1886, as he was returning home from his medical studies in Europe, and then several years after his marriage, with his wife Marie Louise Claiborne. Like John, Marie was a descendant of William Claiborne: he through his father, John Herbert Claiborne, MD, of Petersburg, Virginia – and she through her father, Major W. C. C. Claiborne of New Orleans. John described his impression of Cliburn Hall as follows: “Taylor, in his *Manorial Halls of Westmoreland*, says, it must, in the time of Richard Cleburne, have been a place of very considerable importance, but this writer can affirm without fear of contradiction, that, whatever it may have been, its glory is departed now.”<sup>1</sup>

Taylor himself said that his reason for thinking Cliburn Hall had importance was its size:

“The hall is planted on a bank, at the foot of which flows the river Leith, which discharges into the Eden a short way off. From the traces of foundation walls surrounding the hall, and from the extensive range of buildings that are attached to it (which are now used as stabling and outhouses, all having the character of the Elizabethan period), this must in the time of Richard Cliburn, have been a place of very considerable extent and consequence. If we look at a plan of the structure, as it existed in his time, it would present a range of buildings inclosing three sides of a quadrangular courtyard, the centre consisting of a massive tower, of three stories, and the wings of slighter two-storied buildings. The central and most imposing part (marked with black in the plan) has been the core to which the other structures have been added. Indeed we find that the type of the fourteenth century pele tower is presented to us. The tower is quadrangular. The dimensions are 45 feet in length-east and west, and the breadth-north and south-29½ feet. It is built of small blocks of new red sandstone, procured from a quarry close by: the rock is close to the surface, and forms the foundations of the buildings. The stone is well hammer-dressed, and laid in regular courses. Before leaving the description of this place notice may be directed to an uncommon feature in the earlier structure, which indicates the design for security and defense. A square mass of masonry, as may be seen on the plan,



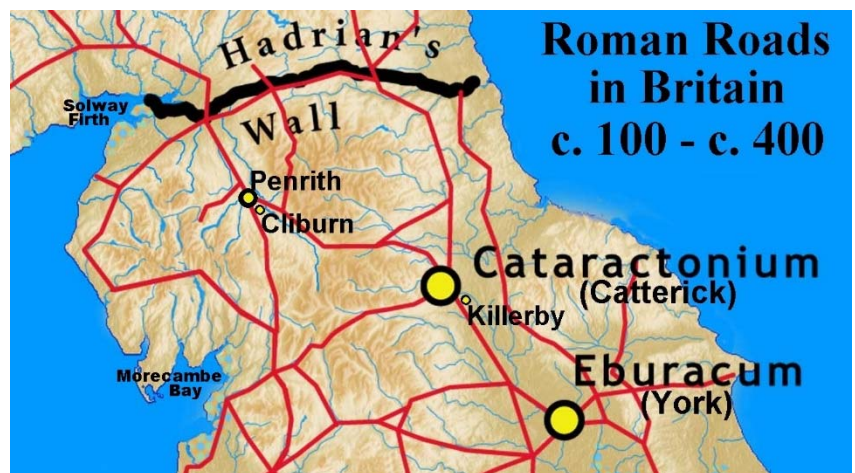
stands as a small tower a few yards off from the pele tower. It is 14 feet square, without any openings in its walls, and rises to the height of about 12 feet, and at the top there is an open platform with a parapet. In the centre there is a circular draw-well, built in well laid ashlar, about 14 yards deep, which still supplies the house, and was formerly carried to the top of the platform. The well tower was connected with the main building by a parapet wall. Another massive wall proceeds from the pele parallel with this one, so that they seem to have enclosed a small square court, which might have been available on the sudden approach of the moss-troopers as a shelter for the cattle, whilst it also formed an outwork for the protection of the draw well, and to sheer off danger from the threshold of the doorway. The outer defenses have been a ditch, which partially encompassed the enceinte, and a wall, traces of which are visible.”<sup>2</sup>



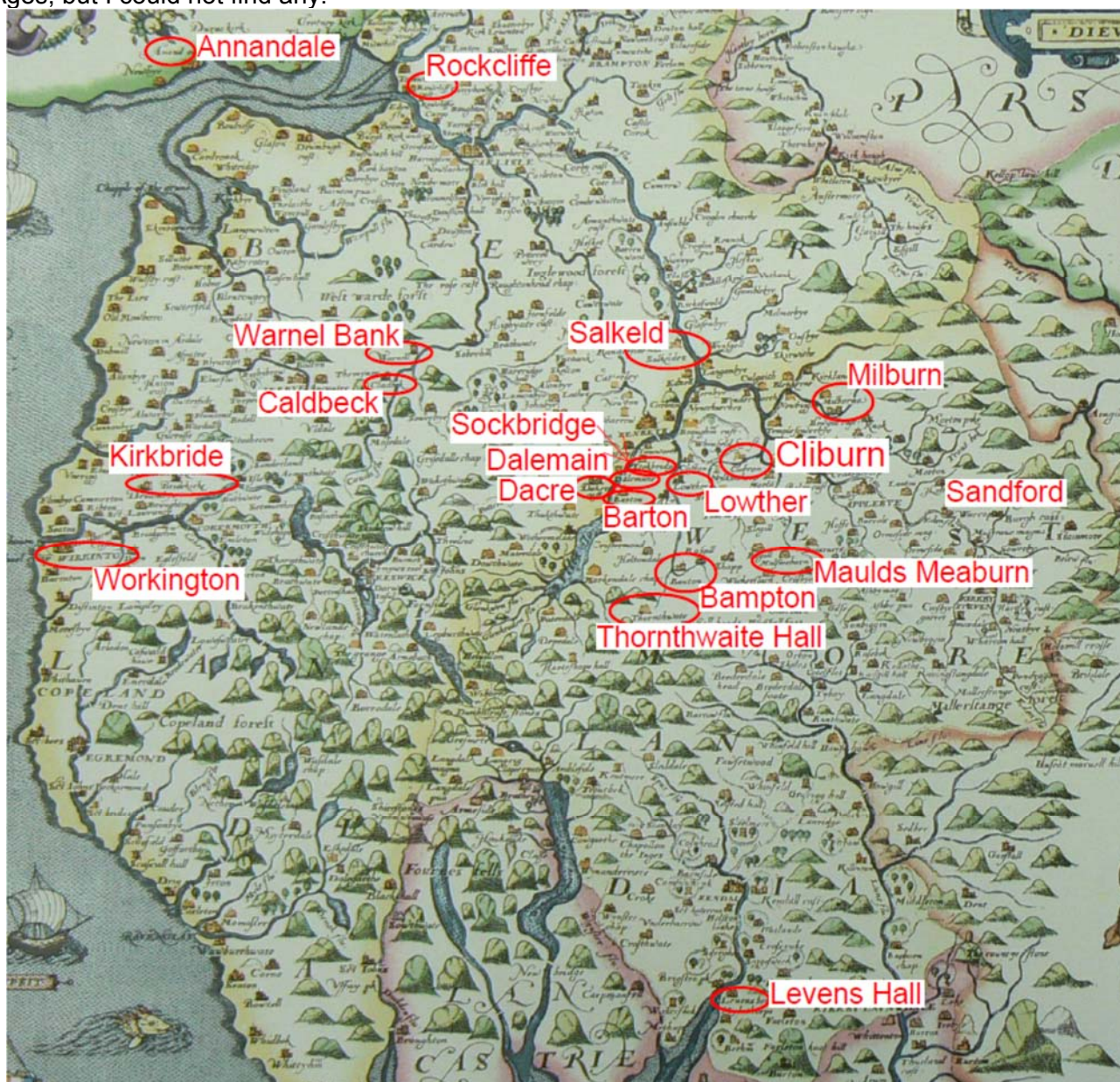
Photograph, Cliburn Hall, the Well, Cliburn, Westmorland, by Herbert Bell, photographer, Ambleside, Westmorland, 1895. (Armitt Library : ALMC1958.3165.91)

I had to agree with Dr. Claiborne, both when I studied modern maps and when I visited Cliburn myself. It seemed so far removed from the rest of the world! The ancient people who lived there must have been in near complete isolation. I imagined them struggling in carts on dirt roads.

However, my opinion changed when I studied historical maps. They showed that Cliburn was near the crossing of two major Roman roads, one of which ran from Penrith to join the Great North Road above Catterick, near Killerby, and then continued on to York.



The maps also showed that Cliburn was centrally located near a network of waterways, including the rivers Eden, Lyvennet, Leith and Eamont. I wondered if it would have been possible for the Le Franceys family members in the Middle Ages to sail from France into Solway Firth, past their home at Rockcliffe, and then cruise down the River Eden to Cliburn. Could they have continued on to their property at Mauld's Meaburn if they wished, or to Bampton or Thornthwaite Hall, all by boat? They also held lands in nearby Annandale, as described in *The Register of the Priory of Wetherhal*, which states: "Thomas Francigena, or Franciscus, or le Franceys. or le Franciase, was one of a family settled in different places in the district, as Cliburn, Maulds Meaburn, Routhcliffe, and in Scotland. They are mentioned in early documents in connection with the family of Brus in Anandale, and probably, like them, came in from Normandy where the family was well known." <sup>3</sup> I had read that ships of the time were narrow and sat very high in the water, which gave faster speed over the ocean. Crews could row against the current, and the shallow draft allowed them to venture up inland streams only four or five feet deep. The ships were light and could be carried over rocky patches or around falls. I looked for evidence that the River Eden, the Lyvennet and the Leith were navigable in the Dark Ages, but I could not find any.



Taylor in his *Old Manorial Halls* did say that:

“The Anglian Colonisation of the plains of Cumberland and of the bottom of Westmorland, where Saxon terminations of place-names are common, evidently advanced from the east,-- that is, from the direction of Northumberland,--and thence along the course of the Roman roads; whereas in south Westmorland and along the Lune, where Danish and Norwegian suffixes prevail to the comparative exclusion of Anglian etymons, these northern invaders appear to have swept round the western shores, and advanced inwards from Morecambe Bay. All over this part of Westmorland, place-names having distinctive Norwegian terminations are very frequently conjoined with known old Norse patronymics.”<sup>2</sup>

I had read elsewhere of the possibility that after 925 AD, invaders might have sailed into Solway Firth and up the River Eden to Penrith, which is 7 miles northwest of Cliburn. DNA research conducted by the University College London found that Penrith is unique in the areas they tested in the north and east of England because other towns displayed signs of Angles, Saxons and Danish Vikings but only the Penrith area seemed to have links with Norwegian Vikings. The researchers theorize that the area might have been a stopping off point for ships as they made their way from known settlements in Shetland to the Isle of Man or it might have been a temporary refuge for those Vikings expelled from Dublin at the start of the 10th Century.<sup>4, 5</sup>



The old maps I studied showed that the families with whom the Le Franceys family (later named Cleburne) intermarried also lived near rivers: Kirkbride, Curwen of Workington, Salkeld, De Lancaster of Howgill Castle in Milburn, Lancaster of Sockbridge and Barton, Layton of Dalemian, Dacre, Lowther, Sandford, and Bellingham of Levens Hall. I knew this proximity was based on the need for a water supply, but I now wondered whether it also was based on a need for transportation.

The John Le Franceys who held Maulds Meaburn was baron exchequer from 1241 to 1268. His duties required him to travel all over England, including being called to Parliament in London, and I wondered how he got around. For instance, records show that he presided as one of the justices when assizes were ordered to be taken before him in both Cumberland and Norfolk in July 1254 and again in July 1255. He was also a parson of the church at Caldbeck and owned land at nearby Warnel Bank on the River Caldew, which joins the River Eden at Carlisle. When he died, he owned properties in six counties: Lincoln, Bedford, York, Kent, Westmorland, and Cumberland. John was the brother of the Robert Le Franceys who married Elizabeth de Tailbois. Elizabeth was the daughter of Walter Tailbois who gave her Cliburn as her dowry.<sup>6</sup> Originally, the word baron meant a bearer of burdens in the sense of providing support for the King. Those who held lands worth at least 400 pounds per year were given the title Baron. However, barons of the exchequer were the judges of the Court of the Exchequer, one of the three ancient courts of England that are now merged with the Queen’s Bench. The Court of the Exchequer was established by William the Conqueror to recover royal debts and later it also presided over civil suits regarding revenue. The word “exchequer” came

from the checkered lines carved into the table the barons used when they drew lines scoring and underscoring the king's accounts on the pages of the court record.

I just recently came across the unpublished writings of a Penrith resident named T.C. Bell. He has been surveying the Roman Roads of Westmorland, and has discovered that the rivers and lakes were used as canals by the Romans.

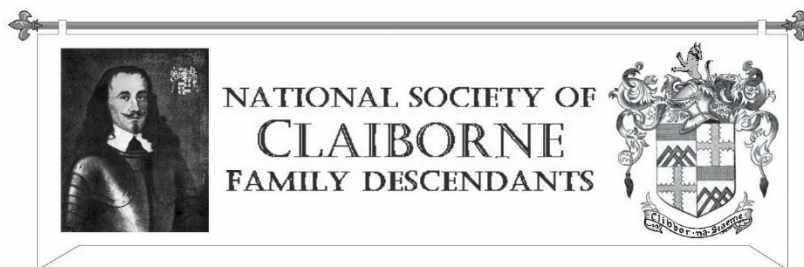
“The Romans’ transportation highways for heavy and bulky goods were the canalized rivers, burns and lakes, not their roads. The Rivers, Lowther, Eamont, Petteril, Calder, Lyvenett, Leith and the 70 mile long Eden, all which drain Cumbria’s eastern mountain ranges and the western slopes of the Pennines, formed the highways. The Romans converted all these rivers for navigational purposes and linked them by a series of canals around Penrith. Canals also connected the River Eamont, via Stainton to Troutbeck, Glendermackin to Derwentwater, thus enabling water transport to service the ore exploitation sites around Ullswater, Derwentwater and Thirlmere.”<sup>7</sup>

“Penrith stands at the gateway to the north lakes, Ullswater, Derwent Water, Bassenthwaite, Hawswater. In Roman times all these lakes were navigable and accessible from Penrith via canals and canalised rivers. Penrith itself was accessible from the Solway and Carlisle, either via the canalised Rivers Eden or Petteril. Derwent Water was also accessible from Penrith via the R. Eamont, then a canal via Stainton to Troutbeck and then via R. Glendermackin to Derwent Water. Thirlmere was accessible via a canalized beck through St John’s in the Vale. Near Penrith are the Rivers, Eamont, Lowther, Lyvennet and Leith, all canalised by the Romans, all run into the River Eden. Nearby, flanking the A6/M6 is the River Petteril and not far to the northwest, is the River Caldew. The Rivers Caldew and Petteril discharge into the River Eden at Carlisle, which flows to the Solway. Thus the Romans were provided with a wonderful network of rivers and lakes, which they proceeded to convert into transportation highways and link via canals.”<sup>8</sup>

If he is correct, both the roads and the waterways might still have been in use 700 years later when the Le Franceys family sailed in from France, and Cliburn would have been easily available by boat.

#### References:

1. John Herbert Claiborne, M.D., F.A.C.S. *William Claiborne of Virginia With Some Account of his Pedigree*. G.P. Putnam’s Sons. New York and London, The Knickerbocker Press. 1917.
2. Taylor MW. *The Old Manorial Halls of Cumberland and Westmorland*. 1892. T. Wilson. Charles Thurnam & Sons. Kendal. p. 105.
3. Prescott JE. *The Register of the Priory of Wetherhal: Edited with Introduction and Notes*. Elliot Stock Paternoster Row. London. 1897. p. 235.
4. Bowden GR et al. *Excavating Past Population Structures by Surname-Based Sampling: The Genetic Legacy of the Vikings in Northwest England*. *Molecular Biology and Evolution*. 2008. 25(2):301-309. [See also the BBC series *Blood of the Vikings* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O5KkDZD4HE>]
5. Harding SE et al. *Viking DNA: The Wirral and West Lancashire Project*. 2010. Nottingham University Press.
6. Foss E. *The Judges of England With Sketches of Their Lives and Miscellaneous Notices Connected With The Courts at Westminster From the Time of the Conquest*. Volume II Containing the Reigns of John and Henry III 1199-1272. Longman, Brown, Green. Paternoster Row, London. 1848. Page 343.
7. Bell TC. *High Street: Cumbria’s Best Know Roman Road – The Route, the Guarding Forts and the Roman Towns and Cities and Major Highways It Linked From Windermere to Ullswater and Penrith and the Ore Exploitation Sites It Served Along the Route*. 2011. Tirril, Penrith. <http://www.glenriddingcybercafe.co.uk/docs/TCBell/Index.htm>
8. Bell TC. *Penrith’s Roman Heritage*. 2012. High Street. <http://www.glenriddingcybercafe.co.uk/docs/TCBell/Index.htm>
9. Map 1: Roman Roads in Britain. Wikimedia Commons. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_roads\\_in\\_Britain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_roads_in_Britain)
10. Map 2: Saxton C. *Westmorlandiae et Cumberlandiae. AD 1576*. Lake District Historic Maps, Lancaster University Library Map Resources. URL: <http://lancaster.libguides.com/content.php?pid=160817&sid=1359971>
11. Map 3: History of Cumbria. Northeastern Irish Sea c. 800- c.1100: New Settlements with Norse Place-Names. Wikimedia Commons. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Cumbria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Cumbria)



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

From Membership Chairman:  
 Ann Starr  
 15302 Poplar Grove  
 Houston, TX 77068

*Please print:*

Name of Applicant (Claiborne Descendant): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Earliest Know Claiborne Ancestor: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Descendants (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

*You may include a pedigree chart if you have one*

Are you interested in sharing genealogical research? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

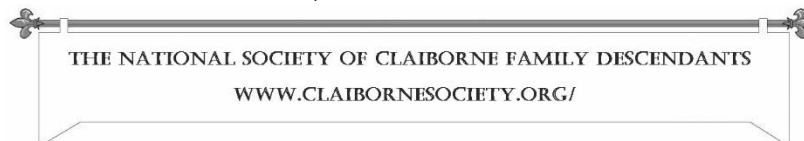
Amount Enclosed

Amount Due: Application Fee (\$20):  
 PLUS First Year Dues (\$10) = \$30  
 OR Lifetime Membership Option of \$200 = \$220

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Send this form and your check (payable to The National Society of Claiborne Family Descendants) to our Treasurer who will forward the form to our Membership Chairman:

Treasurer:  
 Diane Claiborne Clements  
 232 Cherokee Station Drive  
 Nashville, TN 37209





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Return Undeliverable Mail to Registrar  
15302 Poplar Grove  
Houston, TX 77068

