

# Tower Talk

## Newsletter

Picture of the 'Mary Ann' that sailed from Ipswich, England arriving in Boston, Massachusetts June 20, 1637 bringing John Tower to the United States



By  
The Tower Genealogical Society  
chartered in 1909



*The Tower Family Crest  
The Coat of Arms is a shield with three castle towers, a chevron with three roses, a knight's helmet above the shield and a Mason's square and compass above the helmet. These represent the Masonic Order of the Roses, a Scottish order.*

### From the Editor's Desk...

Hello Cousins,

I hope your New Year is going well! We've all heard about the fierce winter storms that the northern and even southern families have had to endure so far this year and so often I've wondered how our ancestors of long ago got through such winters without the many modern conveniences that we enjoy! They certainly were a hardy breed!

I have had some wonderful input from many members of the Tower family concerning the Canadian line from which I am also descended. In that regard I am most grateful to our Canadian cousins, Jeff and Stuart Ward, for the very interesting and informative article about the line of Joseph Tower, whose family settled in the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick area in the 1700's and to Paul Tower of Reading, Pennsylvania for his photos and information he has so freely provided. Jeff's article, along with his charts and photo, provides a wealth of detail about life on the Maringouin Peninsula on the Bay of Fundy and the rich heritage of its inhabitants, our Tower ancestors. They included people with skills in trades such as stone-men in the grindstone quarries, carpenters, shipbuilders, sea captains, seamen, farmers, millers, lumbermen, teachers and clergy along with many other skills necessary to build the new land. I am sure you will all enjoy the fascinating history of this branch of our Tower clan, a people who had to have been some very sturdy and industrious people. Thanks too, to Dave Tower who always contributes interesting and informative pieces for our TGS issues.

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*Happy Valentine's Day*



# The Tower Line in Canada

## By Jeff Ward

Jeff Ward is an amateur historian descended from the Towers of Hingham MA. This article is adapted from his recent book, "Head of the Bay: A History of the Maringouin Peninsula, Bay of Fundy, Canada", published by the Tantramar Heritage Trust in 2009. Jeff Ward lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia."

The Canadian Tower line descends from the family of Joseph Tower, who in 1761 was among the first group of Rhode Island settlers to arrive in the newly founded Sackville Township in what was then Nova Scotia, one of the 14 British Colonies in North America at that time. The Towers had lived in New England for more than a century when fifth-generation Joseph (son of Benjamin Tower and Judith Whipple) pulled up stakes to move north. He was granted land there, but he never took possession of it as he died at sea the same year. His death is noted in Charlemagne Tower's monumental Tower Genealogy.

Tower Genealogy has about 1 page on Joseph and his wife Judith Briggs of Taunton Massachusetts and lists six of their children:

- I. BENJAMIN, born Sept. 22, 1744.
- II. JOSEPH, born April 28, 1746.
- III. NATHANIEL, born June 28, 1748.
- IV. JOSUAH, born June 30, 1750
- V. LUCY, born Oct. 13, 1752.
- VI. WILLIAM, born March 6, 1755.

The Genealogy gives about 1½ pages on Nathaniel Tower, who moved to Vermont, and it follows 8 of his children. There is also space given to Joseph Jr. and his descendants.

The book seems to ignore anything that happened to rest of the family which left New England and stayed in Nova Scotia. Herein we fill in some of the gaps and offer glimpses of subsequent generations of the Tower name in the Rockport area of New Brunswick where the Tower line was established. Note: the geography covered in this article was in Nova Scotia until 1784 at which time the province of New Brunswick was created.



**A general map of the Upper Bay of Fundy region showing the Peninsula in context.**

The next several paragraphs are adapted from a notice posted on the Tower Genforum by my brother Stuart Ward in 2000. The "Return of the state of the Township of Sackville Jan 1 1770" lists among others Joseph Tower and Benjamin Tower. Joseph Tower is listed in the "List of Subscribers for the Township Lying on the Tantramar River etc. from Providence in Rhode Island", dated 1760 or 1761. Joseph Tower, Sr. was a grantee of Sackville but, as noted above, he never took possession of his grant. Thus, the Joseph Tower listed in 1770 would have been Joseph, Jr. who subsequently left for Vermont. It was his brother Benjamin who remained in Sackville Township and was the progenitor of the Towers in the area. He and his wife Anne Finney had 10 children.

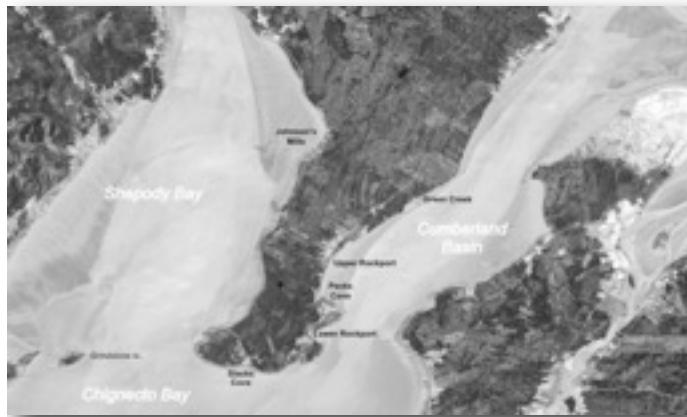
Of the others listed by Charlemagne Tower, Josuah died a child in 1753 in RI, never having left. His younger sister Lucy married Gideon Smith in Sackville. They had 10 children. William, who would have been six when the family moved north, was lost at sea about 1783, apparently unmarried and without children. There was a letter of administration granted to his brother Benjamin, Aug 1, 1783.

A seventh child, Nancy, was born either en route to Nova Scotia or shortly after the family arrived. Nancy married Gersham Maxwell 1778 and had 9 children. These were my ancestors. It's not known where or when Judith (Briggs) Tower died, or who her parents were.

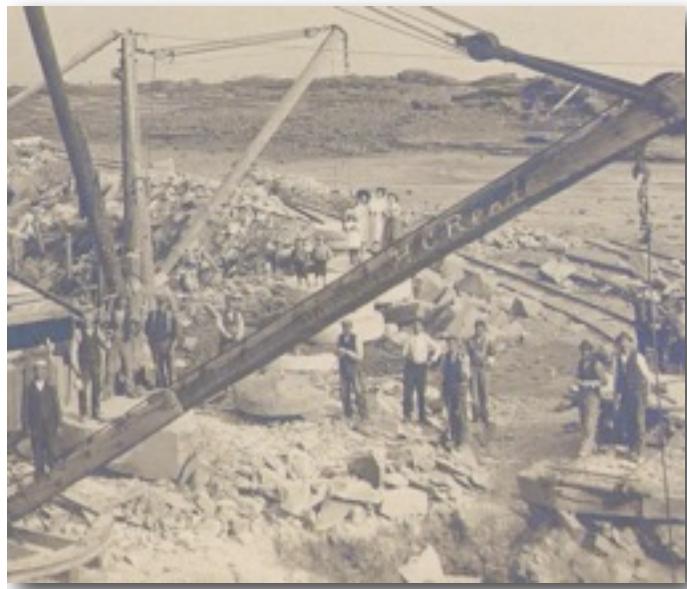
*(Note from Dave Tower: Judith Briggs was the daughter of Nathaniel and Judith Guild Briggs, born May 20, 1725 in Taunton, Bristol, MA. She probably married Second Nathaniel Finny and died about 1762)*

Having discussed the pioneering family, the question remains: What brought them north from the bosom of New England? They were a few of some 8,000 people who moved north between 1759 and 1768.<sup>1</sup> The reasons for migrating are not really that complex. As explained by R. S Longley, migration away from New England at the time was a natural progression: "In the 18<sup>th</sup> century fully 90 percent of the population tilled the soil, and as farming in New England was extensive rather than intensive, many a planter with a limited acreage found it difficult to make a living ... as the sons grew up, one generally remained with his parents and the others set out for the nearest unoccupied area to carve homes for themselves."<sup>2</sup> The opportunity to move to the northernmost colony arose following the Expulsion of the Acadians between 1755 and 1758.

By 1773 brothers Joseph and Benjamin Tower had obtained additional land grants in Sackville Township. As was typical of the Sackville Township allotments, their lands consisted of several disjointed parcels: marshland, woodland, and so forth throughout the large Township. One of Benjamin's parcels was on the Maringouin Peninsula at a place called Green Creek overlooking Cumberland Basin, and it was here that his descendants seem to have first settled, some later moving farther down the peninsula in search of grindstone-quality bedrock.



A recent satellite map from NASA showing the Peninsula where the Towers settled. The grindstones were quarried from offshore reefs (at low tide) near the end of the peninsula.



A view of one of the grindstone operations at Slacks Cove, ca 1895.

Grindstone had been quarried in this little corner of the upper Bay of Fundy since at least as early as 1732 and possibly earlier (a nearby was called by the French Ile aux Meules (Grindstone island) as early as 1683).

Benjamin Tower was one of those who quarried the stone. When he died, his tools included a hand bar, sledge, siding axe, pick, hack axe and chisels. He was an enterprising man: it is important to note that some time before 1790 Benjamin Tower also erected a mill at Frosty Hollow near Sackville, where he ground wheat and sawed lumber. He thus made important contributions to the early development of Sackville Township. Getting the stones to market (mainly Boston) was difficult and dangerous. Small vessels known as sloops were used and there are plenty of records of sailors going down with their ships in the treacherous waters of Fundy.

Benjamin's brother Joseph left with his family to for Vermont sometime around the time of the brothers' grants. Meanwhile, another New England planter named Gersham Maxwell had moved down to the end of Maringouin Peninsula to farm at Slacks Cove and probably to cut stone as well. He married Joseph's youngest daughter Nancy in 1779 when she was about 18.

In 1810, there began a division of labour as investors arrived to undertake the shipping and marketing of grindstone and gypsum (which was also quarried locally) to the US market. In the years leading up to the War of 1812, the United States government under James Madison imposed embargoes on grindstones and gypsum entering the country. While it is beyond the scope of this article, I will note parenthetically that the embargoes led to a fascinating era of smuggling and intrigue in the border area of Passamaquoddy Bay, where such towns as Eastport and Lubec, Maine developed important economies related to smuggling enterprises.

Amid these embargoes, in 1810 Joseph Read and John Seaman of Minudie, Nova Scotia formed a partnership to expand grindstone production in the region. Rather than purchase quarries, they struck deals with local stonemen already at work on the peninsula. These included Joseph Tower (a descendant of Benjamin), Gersham Maxwell, Gideon Maxwell, and Jonathan Ward (married Dolly Maxwell, daughter of Gershom and Nancy Tower Maxwell and had 12 children) Thus, a long and important grindstone industry would develop and continue throughout the nineteenth century. It only ended when artificial abrasives were developed around the end of the century. The last grindstone was produced on the Peninsula in 1908.

As noted above, shipping of stones was by ship and the trip could be treacherous. As the nineteenth century wore on and demand for the stone increased, large coastal schooners were required. The Maritime Provinces got their name during this period as a large mercantile fleet was created which carried goods all around the world. There was even a modest shipbuilding industry on the peninsula, which built specially designed vessels for the grindstone trade. The Tower line produced many hardy sea captains who sailed these vessels and many others. Here are few of those men:

Elias Tower (1833-1896) was the son of the grindstone cutter Joshua Tower and his wife Cynthia King. He married Lucy Ann Cole. He was a co-owner of the *Adelaide*, a schooner built in Rockport in 1875. Others of his vessels included the *Star of the Sea*, built in Nova Scotia, and the *Ethel Emerson*, launched by William Hickman of nearby Dorchester, New Brunswick. According to the *Chignecto Post*, the local paper in Sackville, she was "the best built schooner ever built at the Head of the Bay." Elias Tower lived near Pecks Cove where he could keep an eye on his vessel. But in the winter of 1896 he caught a chill while tending to his boat and he died of pneumonia on March 29, 1896. Elias Tower was the older brother of Captain Joseph Tower and father of Captain Leonard Tower (see below).

Capt. Joseph Tower (1836-1918) was listed as a grindstone cutter as late as the 1871 census, when aged 36 years old. That he sailed before that date is probable, but he only gave his occupation as master mariner in 1881. He was married twice. His first wife was Sarah Patterson who bore him six children including Bedford R. Tower who would also become a sea captain. Joseph's second wife, Elizabeth Daley was from New Bandon in Northern New Brunswick where the Read interests (owners of the grindstone business by the 1870s) also produced grindstones. He and Elizabeth moved from Rockport to Wood Point in 1900 and the following colourful dispatch appeared in the *Moncton Daily Transcript* not long after their move: "Capt. and Mrs. Joseph Tower, who quite recently moved here from Rockport, were given a genuine surprise on Saturday evening, December 27th, it being the fifteenth anniversary of their marriage. They were sitting quietly when they were startled by the sound of bells, yes, and not only the sound of bells, but men, women and children, as it seemed to them, dropped right from above, until 'bless me' the house was full.

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After a little of the confusion was over the Captain came to a wise conclusion, as is his wont to do, and fired up the furnace and made it pretty hot for them; nevertheless, it loosened up their rheumatic limbs until their owners forgot they ever had them and everything went 'Merry as a marriage bell' till hush! Hark! Smell! What is it? Coffee, not only coffee, but cake, pies, doughnuts, etc. began to pour out of the pantry till Uncle Joe 'allowed it was just like a wedding.' The clock striking twelve reminded them it was time for them to return to their homes, which they did, leaving behind a disordered house, dirty dishes, cake crumbs, not only that, but a large number of useful and pretty presents."

Capt. Leonard C. Tower (about 1858-1933) was the son of Capt. Elias Tower and Lucy Ann Cole. (She was the daughter of David Cole and Zebedutha "Zuba" Ward, the daughter of Jonathan Ward and Dolly Maxwell) He sailed at the age of five aboard his father's schooner the Star of the Sea. As the Sackville Tribune noted in 1932, he was "cradled on the waves." He was an ordinary seaman at sixteen and when only twenty, became master of his father's schooner the Adelaide. Other commands included the Ethel Emmerson, Demoiselle, Kenneth C., Unity, and Lavonia. He spent several years based in Port Greville, Nova Scotia and he partnered with G. M. Cochrane in the construction of several vessels. He was in command of his namesake vessel the L. C. Tower in 1915 when she was destroyed by a German submarine on 1 July 1915. His career lasted 43 years.

Bedford R. Tower (1861-1922) was a son of Captain Joseph Tower and Sarah Patterson. He mainly commanded vessels for J. Newton Pugsley, a timber magnate from Parrsboro, Nova Scotia. In 1908 he saved Mrs. Harley Tower from drowning when he spotted her on a reef rapidly being overwhelmed by the incoming tide. Capt. Tower "happened to be passing by and seeing her perilous position at once went to her assistance just in time to save her from drowning." (Sackville Tribune 10 September 1908) Bedford Tower was married to Annie Barnes in December 1887. They had two daughters and two sons. He died at age 61 after a long period of illness. A son was Capt. Rupert Tower who sailed vessels out of Florida in the 1920s.

Burnham Joseph Tower (1871-1938) was a son of Joseph (Trappy Joe) Tower of Lower Rockport, a brother of Austin Tower who became a chaplain on Martha's Vineyard (see below). Burnham went to sea as a boy. Like Capt. Leonard Tower, Burnham's vessel the St. Olaf, was sunk by a German U-boat in August 1915. He and his crew were given just ten minutes to leave the vessel. He had later commands of the tern schooner Bluenose, the two-masted schooner Genevieve, and another tern schooner, the Percy B., a 380 ton vessel he owned with J. Newton Pugsley. He was in command of the 425-ton schooner Cumberland County when she became stranded and had to be abandoned on Southwest Reef off Florida in March 1917. He later owned and commanded the William N. Reinhardt, which carried lumber for several years. The Reinhardt ran aground on Cape Cod during a late summer storm in 1926. He retired after that and became a mail driver in Wood Point.

Aaron E. Tower (1882-1946) was a son of Captain Leonard Tower. He started out as a teacher, having studied at the Normal School in Fredericton. However, after a few years he began a sailing career as a crew member on his father's ship the L.C. Tower. He was aboard her in 1915 when she was sunk by a German submarine (see above). Aaron married Ethel Janie Purdy of West Sackville. They had two children, Ronald Aaron born in 1909 and Ethel Janie 1911. The children were both born in Rockport.

His wife died a few days after the birth of the daughter, and Capt. Tower remarried Lucy Hatfield, of Port Greville, Nova Scotia. Tower later obtained a position as collector of customs in Port Greville and was also an accountant for a shipbuilder there. Port Greville, incidentally, is now the home of the Age of Sail Museum which tells the rich seafaring history of nineteenth century Maritime Canada, in which the Tower family clearly played a notable part.



## Austin Tower

*He's a live, two fisted preacher  
That's peculiar to the coast,  
Where he leads a life amphibious  
In the service of the Host*  
—Joseph Chase Allen

**(about Chaplain Austin Tower)**

I will end this article with a brief portrait of Chaplain Austin Tower (1880-1962) who is fondly remembered to this day in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and who was commemorated in the poem quoted above. He was a son of Joseph (Trappy Joe) Tower and brother of Capt. Burnham Tower as noted above. His sister Loretta was married to Captain Amos Pickering Ward who ran coastal schooners up and down the Atlantic Seaboard. It was perhaps as one of Ward's crew that Austin Tower went to sea as a youth, and found his way to Martha's Vineyard about 1900.

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There he was struck by the purpose and spirit of the Seaman's Bethel, a refuge in Vineyard Haven for seamen while away from home. Vineyard Haven (Tisbury) is the main point of entry for Martha's Vineyard. The Seaman's Bethel had been opened by Madison Edwards in 1889 as a branch of the Boston Seaman's Friend Society (now Seafarer's Friend). As many as 15,000 vessels called at Vineyard Haven each year as they provisioned or waited out bad weather. When Austin Tower volunteered to work at the busy Bethel, the offer was gladly accepted by Edwards.

The two men provided services and spiritual comfort to sailors from around the world. Austin married Edward's daughter Helen in 1908 and it was big news in Rockport, especially since the couple returned there for their honeymoon.

After the opening of the Cape Cod Canal in 1915, the volume of seaborne traffic declined dramatically in Vineyard Haven and the role of the Bethel changed. A seafarers union was formed by Edwards and later, support to out-of-work seafarers was also provided. Tower succeeded his father-in-law as Chaplain in 1926 after Edwards died. It is said that a wealthy island resident named Harriet Norris Goldberg used to join Austin for morning chats over coffee and that they became good friends. She was so impressed by his work with the Bethel that when she died in 1937 she left a considerable part of her large estate to the organization. Today the Goldberg Grants and other bequests provide such benefits to Island residents as scholarships to children of families whose livelihoods are related to seafaring.

Austin and Helen Edwards had four children. Paul Tower, one of their grandsons who now lives in Pennsylvania, accompanied Austin Tower on a visit back to the Peninsula a few months before his death: "I believe that Grandfather took the family down east once or twice," Paul wrote to me. "Later after they had grown he got back a couple of times before he and I went north in September 1961.

He passed away in May of 1962. ... Back then, [coming from the] suburbs, seeing all the farms, horses and so forth [in rural New Brunswick] was terrific. The old homestead in Rockport was still standing; we went to see the school house where grandfather went to school." Although he officially retired in 1957, Austin Tower continued with his work at the Bethel until his death at the age of 81. His son in law, the Rev. George Wiseman, who married his daughter Miriam Tower, published *They Kept the Lower Lights Burning* in 1979, a book inspired by the long chaplaincies of Madison Edwards and Austin Tower.

**Jeff Ward** [jeffreyward@eastlink.ca](mailto:jeffreyward@eastlink.ca)  
**Stuart Ward** [stuward@eastlink.ca](mailto:stuward@eastlink.ca)



**If anyone is interested in corresponding about the Canadian Tower line, they can contact Jeff or Stuart Ward but their best course for genealogical questions would be to contact:**

**Mr. Ken Tower of Riverview, New Brunswick.**  
**Ken has been researching the line for many years and has a very large database on this line.**

**He can be reached at (506) 858-0819 or by e-mail at [silas2@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:silas2@nbnet.nb.ca).**

## *The Importance of being Joseph and Judith...*



**By Dave Tower**  
**TGS Resident Genealogist**



### **Joseph (4), Benjamin (3), John (2), John (1)**

We don't really know a lot about Joseph himself but his descendants are of major importance to our society. We know that he was born in Cumberland, Rhode Island on 13 September 1721. We know he was a sailor and that he died at sea about 1761. We know that his marriage Banns were published on 9 April 1743 and we assume he married Judith Briggs and that they had 7 Children.

We can assume from other evidence that, after his death, his wife Judith married Nathaniel Finney and died abt 1762 in Falmouth, Hants, NS Canada. We know he is listed as an early settler of New Brunswick and that several of his children resided and married there.

Of the seven children born of Joseph and Judith Joshua died at age 3, and it is assumed that William also died at a young age as very little evidence of his existence exists beyond his birth in 1755. Joseph (5) might have been in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick prior to his marriage to Eleanor Mason in Proctor Vermont in 1768. Their nine children were all born in Ira, VT and all but three of them died there.

Nathaniel, my ancestor, married Lucy Tingley and moved north during the Revolutionary war and back south after the war. They had children born in Taunton, MA; Attleboro, MA. Rupert, VT, Manchester, VT; Ira, VT, Hindsburg, NY and Westfield NY. Both Nathaniel and Lucy died and were buried in Lenox, PA. Joseph (5) and Nathaniel were in Ira, VT at the same time between 1798 and 1791.

Benjamin (5), Lucy (5), and Nancy (5) all settled and married in Sackville, Westmorland, New Brunswick, Canada. Benjamin married Ann Finney the daughter of Nathaniel Finney and his first wife Hannah Wood., which brings us to the importance of being Joseph (4).

We have in our data base 910 generation (5) direct descendants of John (1). This means the five children of Joseph and Lucy that we know survived to adulthood represent less than three quarters of one percent of that generation. We know that Joseph (4) and Judith had at least 50 Grandchildren which is more than three and a half percent of the generation (6) descendants in our data base..

It is often difficult tracing the descendant path for females in the late 1700's so Lucy and Nancy have fewer descendants in our data base than does Benjamin. Benjamin had 10 children 7 boys and 3 girls. Lucy and Nancy had 19 children 9 of which were girls.

We have 2991 generation (11) descendants of John (1) and 2451 generation (12). Of this number almost twenty percent are descendants of Joseph (4) and Judith. Almost 17 percent of the total are descendants of Benjamin (5) most of which still live in Canada.. From a statistical probability of less than 1 percent to an actual 17 percent should present a great opportunity for increased membership.

What does all of this mean to us as a society? We have very few Canadian members. If we could find and convince 10 percent of Benjamin's ancestors to join our group we would probably double our membership.

**Give it some thought!**



## In Remembrance

### *Rupert Walter Leslie Delesdernier*



1924-2011

Passed away peacefully, at the Sackville Memorial Hospital, on February 4, 2011, in his 87th year. With the exception of a very short time, Rupert was a life-long resident in his beloved Wilbur Valley, in Rockport, NB, on the Maringouin Peninsula. Born in Rockport, he was a son of the late John Chesley Delesdernier and the late Mildred Edna (Ward) Delesdernier. Rupert is survived by a sister, Beulah (Earl) MacDonald of Sackville, several nieces and nephews and many friends. Rupert was an avid local historian, genealogist, naturalist, and was interested in affairs, both at home and abroad. He was a wealth of information and many people took a drive down the dirt road to Rockport to interview him for different projects they were working on or for just a good visit. Besides his parents, Rupert was predeceased by brothers, Douglas (Melba), Harold, and sisters, Hester (Ellsworth) Mitton, Maria (Garnet) Johnson, and Mildred (Albert) Spence. Burial in the Rockport Cemetery in the spring.

### *Beulah Delesdernier MacDonald*



1926-2011

Beulah MacDonald, age 84, passed away peacefully at the Sackville Memorial Hospital with her family by her side, on Saturday, February 5, 2011. Born in Rockport, NB, she was a daughter of the late John and Mildred (Ward) Delesdernier. After helping her sister run the "Kennel Club" restaurant, Beulah worked for the District 2 School Board for 25 years retiring at age 65. An avid camper she enjoyed camping in Rockport, Five Islands and Cape Tormentine. She was a member of the Midgic Baptist Church. Beulah, was a loving, wife, mother, grand and great grandmother and will be deeply missed by her husband, Earl; son, James (Edna) of Rockport; daughters, Betty (Robert) Harper, Kathy (Reginald) Richard, Judy (Stephen) Estabrooks, Angie (Kevin) Phinney, all of Sackville and Donna (Allan) Steeves of Rockport; 13 grandchildren, James, Erin, Bobby, Crystal, Josh, Caleb, Liora, Nick, Marcus, Naomi, Adam, Ashley and Geoffrey; 6 great grandchildren, Alyssa, Kelton, Emma, Eric, Jordynn and Abbygail. She was predeceased by brothers Harold "Jack", Douglas and Rupert; sisters, Mildred Spence, Maria Johnson and Hester Mitton.

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1291 S. 16th St.  
Grover Beach, CA 93433  
[tgsprez@live.com](mailto:tgsprez@live.com)

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Vice President  
3601 Hill Ave. Lot 39,  
Toledo, Ohio 43607  
[jcbattistone@gmail.com](mailto:jcbattistone@gmail.com)

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Executive Secretary  
83 Heather Lane,  
Rutland, VT 05701  
[johntowersr@gmail.com](mailto:johntowersr@gmail.com)

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Treasurer  
7698 Vermont Rt. 100,  
Readsboro, VT 05350  
[cmarchtgts@hotmail.com](mailto:cmarchtgts@hotmail.com)

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[foundit4you@yahoo.com](mailto:foundit4you@yahoo.com)

**Kerri-Lee Jansen**  
Recording Secretary  
164 Wompatuck Rd.,  
Hingham, MA 02043  
[kmlurette@hotmail.com](mailto:kmlurette@hotmail.com)

**Gloria Holmes Cooper,**  
Newsletter Editor  
3300 S. Clarkson St #103  
Englewood, CO 80113  
[gcooper52@aol.com](mailto:gcooper52@aol.com)

##### **David Tower**

Resident Genealogist  
219 Amherst Lane,  
Crossville, TN 38558  
[wicat@frontiernet.net](mailto:wicat@frontiernet.net)

##### **Bernard Tower**

Director  
1304 Via Hielo,  
Santa Maria, CA 93454  
[sparky8@comcast.net](mailto:sparky8@comcast.net)

### *Patrick A. Tower*

1969-2011

Patrick A. Tower of Normal, IL, son of Lillian (Watts) Tower and the late David F. Tower died unexpectedly on Friday, January 28, 2011. He was 42 years old. Patrick is survived by his wife, Ingrith Saavedra Tower, his brother Eric Tower of Kewanee, WI and his sister Heather Bandell of Alma Center, WI. Patrick is the nephew of TGS member, Margie Ann Cristofolini of Readsboro, VT and a second cousin of many of the members who reside in western MA and southern VT.

