

DRYSDALE IN ST LUCIA

These notes are based on various original documents provided by Mr J.H.V. Drysdale, of London, and on other sources.

According to Guppy, Drysdale is a family name in Fife, Stirlingshire and other central counties of Scotland. It is therefore believed that the ancestors of the St Lucia family belonged to those parts of Scotland.

The St Lucian family is descended from John Drysdale, who made his will in America, at Charleston in South Carolina, on 2 March 1810. From the contents of this document it seems possible that he had property or other interests in Charleston and in the town of Norfolk in Virginia. He was probably a widower, as his wife is not mentioned in the will. Apart from a legacy of \$1000 to "my mother Jean Drysdale at present living in Port Glasgow Scotland", he left his property to "my only Son James Vickery Drysdale, now three years old, & at present living in Norfolk, Virginia" subject to the control of his executors (who appear to have been residents of Norfolk, Virginia).

James Vickery Drysdale was therefore born in 1806 or 1807. We next find him in St Lucia: on 10 November 1834 the lieutenant governor of that colony signed his commission as assistant surgeon of the southern battalion of the St Lucian regiment of militia. He was also assistant protector of slaves.

It is not known how or where Mr Drysdale became a surgeon. He seems to have continued to practise his profession privately until at least 1850, in addition to exercising various public functions.

In 1839 Mr Drysdale was appointed provisional special justice (stipendiary magistrate) for Soufriere; a year or two later he was coroner (and no doubt special justice) at Castries; in 1843 he was special justice at Vieux Fort. (St Lucia was at that time divided into four judicial districts, each with its special justice: they had their seats at Castries, Gros Islet, Soufriere and Vieux Fort.) Mr Drysdale continued in the post of special justice until 1849, having been transferred back to Castries, where he was appointed inspector of the Royal Gaol in 1845.

His conduct during and after a riot in St Lucia in 1849 was favourably mentioned in despatches exchanged between the lieutenant governor residing in St Lucia and the governor of the Windward Islands (which included St Lucia) residing in Barbados.

A few months later, on 6 October 1849, Queen Victoria signed a warrant addressed to the governor of the Windward Islands, authorising him to appoint Doctor James Vickery Drysdale to be a member of "Our Legislative Council of Our Island of Saint Lucia", during the temporary absence of the comptroller of customs.

Another warrant under the royal sign manual, of 28 December 1850, required letters patent to be passed under the public seal of St Lucia to appoint Mr Drysdale to the post of colonial secretary of the colony; these letters patent, signed by the lieutenant governor, gave Mr Drysdale permission to use the title of "Honorable" as long as he held the post.

As colonial secretary, Mr Drysdale was ex officio a member of both the executive council and the legislative council of St Lucia, as well as a justice of the peace. He also performed certain other functions of government, as president of the board of health, president of the commissioners of public works and buildings, president of the commissioners of roads and bridges and member of the board of education.

The St Lucian militia had been disbanded in 1839, but in 1854 this body was revived on the occasion of the Crimean war, only to be again disbanded in 1857, after that war had ended. On 20 December 1854 the lieutenant governor signed the commission of the Honorable James Vickery Drysdale as aide de camp with the rank of lieutenant colonel in the militia; the commission was countersigned by R.G. McHugh as acting colonial secretary (perhaps to avoid the real colonial secretary having to countersign his own commission). However, on the back of the commission is a certificate, signed by the colonial secretary (J.V. Drysdale), that the oath of office was administered to "Aid (sic) de Camp the Honorable James Vickery Drysdale" on 10 March 1855.

From 1838 to 1885 St Lucia was included in the government of the Windward Islands which also included Barbados, Grenada, St Vincent and Tobago. The governor resided in Barbados. At first there was a lieutenant governor in each of the other islands. In St Lucia, the lieutenant governor was replaced by an administrator after 1855.

In 1856 Mr Drysdale, as colonial secretary, became administrator of the government of St Lucia, and on 14 May 1857 Queen Victoria signed a warrant authorising him to hold this office (subject to the governor's control) so long as he remained colonial secretary or otherwise during Her Majesty's pleasure.

However, shortly after, on 1 1857, the Queen signed a commission for Mr Drysdale as lieutenant governor of Tobago, under the authority of the governor of the Windward Islands. He assumed the office of lieutenant governor of Tobago on 8 June 1857, being succeeded by H.H. Breen as administrator of St Lucia.

Mr Drysdale later returned to St Lucia, where his home was Chesterfield House at Castries. It had been described, in an agent's puff of the 1840's, as "that commodious and genteel residence ... combining all the advantages of a town dwelling with the more attractive pleasures of a country villa".

James Vickery Drysdale married twice, both his wives being members of St Lucian families of French descent. His first wife was a Demoiselle Aquart. They had at least four children born at Chesterfield House: two sons, born on 16 March 1840 and 14 October 1846, and two daughters, born in 1843 and late in 1847. In 1846 Masters James and John Drysdale sailed from St Lucia in the barque Carmelita bound for London, in the company of Mr and Mrs Duncan Ferguson; they were presumably older sons of Mr and Mrs Drysdale. One of the

daughters was presumably Euphémie Drysdale, wife of Thomas Edward Goodman, a planter at Soufriere where he died childless in 1867 at the age of 30 years.

We know nothing more about the children of the first marriage of James Vickery Drysdale. However, the occurrence of the unusual Christian name Vickery makes us wonder whether one of these children might have been the parent of Charles Vickery Drysdale, a noted scientist whose obituary appeared in the Times newspaper in 1961. According to the reference books, this person was the son of Charles Robert Drysdale, M.D., M.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., a surgeon of Sackville Street, London W, and of "Dr Alice Drysdale-Vickery". Charles Vickery Drysdale was born in 1874, was educated in London, became a doctor of science of London University in 1901, was the director of scientific research at the Admiralty from 1919 to 1934, and edited the Journal of Scientific Instruments. He was a fellow of Imperial College, a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and a fellow of the Royal Society of Economics. He became an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1920, and a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1932. He died at Bexhill in Sussex on 7 February 1961, bequeathing £2500 to Cambridge University towards the cost of a life-size statue of Malthus.. He was married to Bessie Ingman Edwards (daughter of James G. Edwards, of Peterborough) and they had a son.

As mentioned above, James Vickery Drysdale was twice married. His second wife was a Demoiselle Dreuil. The marriage took place quite late in his life, and the three children of this marriage were all born in the decade after 1870. There were two daughters. Corinne lived unmarried in Castries and died in December 1968 aged about 96 years. Marie ("Mayotte") married Dr William Boase, from England, a medical practitioner in Demerera, and they had several children of whom one, Clement Boase, was a planter in St Lucia where he owned Rabot Estate at Soufriere.

Thomas Arthur Drysdale (son of James Vickery Drysdale by his second wife) entered the government service in St Lucia in 1889 as a clerk in the post office. The next year he became assistant clerk in the magistrate's court of the first district (Castries) and he soon became clerk to the magistrate. In 1901 his emoluments from this post were £125 and certain fees. He was at the same time owner of an estate called Inconnue in the second district (Soufriere etc).

In 1907 Arthur Drysdale was acting as magistrate of the first district, at the time of riots at Castries and at Cul-de-Sac. The "loyal support and advice" which he gave to the governor were acknowledged in a despatch from the secretary of state in London to the governor dated 11 June 1907.

Arthur Drysdale was called to the bar of Lincoln's Inn on 26 January 1911, and returned to St Lucia where he became a magistrate. Later he left the judiciary to become a planter, and for a time he owned the Dennergy estate and sugar factory. He died before 1929.

Like his father, Arthur Drysdale married twice. His first wife was Madeleine d'Etcheparre de Minvielle. They had an only son, Joseph Henry Vickery Drysdale, born on 10 June 1914, who settled in England and who served in the Royal Air Force during the 1939-45 war. Arthur Drysdale became a widower in about 1916. Later he married Norah Duff, of whom he had a daughter living with her husband in Jamaica.

Marjorie

? Drysdale m. Jean ? (living in Port Glasgow in 1810)

John (living in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1810) m. ?

Mlle Aquart m. James Vickery (born 1806/7, admin. St Lucia, lt.gov. Tobago) m. Mlle Dreuil

James
John
Euphémie
m. T.E.
Goodman
(no issue)

Others
including
perhaps
Charles
Robert
(surgeon
in London)
m. Dr Alice
Drysdale-
Vickery

Charles Vickery
C.B., O.B.E.
1874-1961
(scientist)

Miss de Minvielle m. Thomas Arthur m. Miss Duff
(magistrate
in St Lucia)

Corinne
d.1968
Marie
m. Dr
Boase
(issue)

Joseph Henry Vickery
1914-