

Some Vivians in Ontario

by Gary A. Vivian

“Dum vivimus vivamus” / “While we live let us live”

The Vivian name has ancient Celtic origins that predate the historical concept of Briton or Cornwall. It seems likely that Vivian (variants: Vyvyan, Vivien, Viviean, Viviani, Vivand etc.) was appropriated by others for a variety of reasons, but without genealogical links. From these ancient origins and varied pathways over long periods of time, to major genealogical catalogues of Vivians in Cornwall (3,6), and to recent ancestors (4), I here illustrate the diversity of the name in Ontario with a few Cornish Vivian emigrants. Vivian does not appear to be a Cornish language name. (2,3). It was probably imported to Cornwall via several pre-Roman routes and later, via France and Brittany, reflecting the ancient connections between Cornwall and Brittany, and the Norman employment of Bretons in the administration of Cornwall. “Imported” Breton names in Cornwall are not unusual.

Hereditary surnames were unknown in Cornwall before the Norman Conquest of 1066, arriving with the Norman barons and not becoming hereditary until after the 1540s. In west Cornwall, they were not finally fixed until the seventeenth century.

Recent DNA analysis for a new genetic map of the British Isles has shown that the indigenous Cornish, along with the Welsh, are the most ancient and most distinct of all the groups on mainland Britain, with a surprisingly sharp difference between Cornwall and adjoining Devon.

The results indicate that the Cornish and Welsh are linked to populations along the Atlantic coasts for many thousands of years. The migration path for the Y-DNA Haplogroup R1b and especially its L21 sub-group, the Atlantic Celtic branch, is of particular interest (1).

Ancient Roots

The name Vivian may have originated with the Veneti tribe of Celts. The Celts arose from the Bronze Age Halstatt culture in central Europe north of the Alps in 1200 BC and progressed to an Iron Age culture in 750 - 450 BC (1). They spread west and south reaching Britain in 550 BC and migrating to Italy in 400 BC. On the Adriatic, Celtic tribes, the Veneti among them, were under pressure from the southward migrating Slavic peoples, and there were successive waves of

emigration from what is now Slovenia down the Mediterranean trade routes, including to Brittany, where a seafaring Venetic nation was established.

The Venetians relied heavily on labour resources from the mainland of the Adriatic, and it seems likely that the many Vivians of modern-day Venice come from those roots. By 1500, the merchant city-state of Venice was the largest empire in the west, having survived independently for a thousand years. The Vivian name is still common in Venice with seventy residential telephone listings, almost as large as the total listings for the whole county of Cornwall. It can also be seen on the storefront of the local Italian Communist Party, now known as the Partito Democratico, dedicated to the partisan, Alfredo Vivian. Consulting the *Libro d'oro della nobiltà italiana (the Golden Book)* once the formal directory of nobles in the Republic of Venice, and the *Dizionario storico-blasonico delle famiglie nobili e notabili italiene*, (1) identifies no Vivians but a total of five Vivianis in Venice, Florence, Bologna, and Genoa.

A similar review of the French nobility (1) found no Vivian's, many Viviers, and a single Vivien family in Normandy dating from 1456. René Viviani, a prominent French Socialist, was appointed Minister of Labour by Premier Georges Clemenceau in October 1906, and in turn became Premier of France under President Poincaré from 1913 - 1915, during the conscription crisis, the outbreak of World War One and discontent with the War Ministry.

In his comprehensive survey of Vivians worldwide, Stanley Vivian, although agreeing that the origins of Vivian are not Cornish and referencing other works citing Latin and Roman roots, traces its origin as a family name to a 5th century French martyr, St. Vivien, Bishop of Saintes, the former Roman capital of Western France, and suggests the name returned to Italy after some five hundred years, the form Viviani again dying out in Venice and Tuscany by the end of the 13th century.

The Middle Ages / Medieval Period 5C - 15C

The first recorded Vivian in Cornwall is in 1213 in West Penwith with mention of a son, Ralph. In 1337, the Hundred Years War began between England and France, with Cornish archers playing a decisive role. An Ottawa area resident's Cornish ancestor on the Island of Jersey (mentioned later) was a member of the garrison there. In the Middle Ages, there are several references to the Vivian name and its origins (1,3). Stanley Vivian's excellent book (3) relies heavily on the record in the Visitations (6) discussing the offshoots from Trevedran, to Trelowarren, to Trenoweth and Trewan, and to the Vivians that appeared in the

early 16th century at Bodmin, including the renowned Prior Thomas of Bodmin, elected in 1508.

Cornwall's Great Migration

Most of the Cornish ancestors in Ontario arrived as part of a pan-European exodus between 1815 and the end of World War One. There was special interest in emigration from the northern part of Cornwall with sailings to Quebec from Padstow, near Little Petherick, which processed the third highest number of emigrants to Canada after Liverpool and London (2).

Contemporary Distribution of Vivian's by Residential Phone Listings

In 2013, there are 203 telephone listings for Vivian in Ontario, the primary locations being Toronto -18, and Kingston -16. By comparison, there are 13 listings for Vancouver, British Columbia, and 23 for St. John's, Newfoundland. The latter probably reflects emigration for employment in the mines. European phone listings include Venice -70, Florence -3, and Paris -70 Vivians.

In France today there are 568 Vivian/Vivien telephone numbers (includes surname variants: Viviand, Viviant, Viviani, Viviano, Viviane), excluding commercial lines. A large proportion, 64%, is in the alpine regions, and may reflect ancient Celtic migration down the alpine valleys from central Europe, and proximity to Italy.

The number of Vivian residential listings in Cornwall is much smaller, at about one hundred, or one fifth of those in all of France. However, that is four times the listings in France's combined Channel departments -26 and double the number for the combined French Atlantic departments -54.

My hypothesis is that northern Italy, the northern Adriatic shore, and the region known today as Slovenia, were significant contributors over long periods of time to today's occurrence of the Vivian family name in Cornwall (1). It is based on the contemporary distribution of the Vivian surname in western Europe, the high concentration in France near Italy, on the recorded historical migrations of Veneti and other Celts from the shores of the Adriatic down the Mediterranean to France and Brittany, and on the contemporary Y-DNA data.

Some Vivian Families that Emigrated to Ontario Uxbridge-Whitchurch-Stouffville

A Vyvyan family lived in Uxbridge, northeast of Toronto, for more than a century (3). It descended from William Henry Vyvyan (d. 1895), a Plymouth, Devon businessman, widely known throughout Devon and Cornwall as a powerful Wesleyan preacher. His oldest son, also William Henry, emigrated to Uxbridge, Ontario in the late 1800s where he established a merchant tailoring business which was continued by his son. The second William Henry's grandson, Byron Langley Vyvyan, was born in Uxbridge and later moved to Toronto. In a mingling of fates, his granddaughter, Laura Vyvyan, daughter of Byron's son, Stanley, became a classmate of our daughter, Susan Vivian. So once again the historic differentiation of the y's from the i's was practised!

Southeast of Uxbridge in the Whitchurch-Stouffville, municipality of York Region (1,3), the Vivian name appeared on a Vivian hamlet, a post office (established 1866), a Vivian Sideroad still existing today, a station on the Grand Trunk Railway, and a Vivian Creek. Finding the source of the name has been elusive (1). It may be the local use comes from a first name rather than a family name.

In 1837, nearby Stouffville was considered a centre "of Radical opinion", one of the "hotbeds of revolution", and it was here that William Lyon Mackenzie set forth his plan for the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837 - 38, which was later to involve the Vivian in-laws in Oakland, Ontario. (see below)

Kingston

There are sixteen Vivians listed in the Kingston telephone directory, all except one family possibly being related, reportedly having emigrated from the Midlands (1). Given the strong industrial connections between Cornwall and the Midlands in the areas of mining, steam power, and machinery manufacturing, future research may establish their earlier Cornish roots.

The Kingston Locomotive Works, initially established as the Ontario Foundry in 1848, may be central to this group of Vivians. It completed its first steam locomotive in December 1854, the first of four locomotives for the Grand Trunk Railway, and manufactured one third of the Canadian Pacific Railway locomotives over several decades.

Ottawa

This example of a Cornish immigrant to Ontario follows a very different path (5). An Ottawa-area woman having Vivian as her maiden name, emigrated to Canada in 1964 from the Channel Island of Jersey, after a short stay in England. Her family, still on the island today, traces its roots to a 14th century member of the British garrison on Jersey, a Jordan Viviean, one of the famed Cornish archer corps. The names of the members of the 1337 garrison are commemorated in stone at a recently restored national heritage site on Jersey, Mount Orgeil Castle. In that year, the Hundred Years War broke out between England and France, and Edward the Black Prince became the first Duke of Cornwall. Jordan Viviean stayed in Jersey, and subsequent generations of Vivians became farmers and landowners.

Port Hope

Possibly the most illustrious of Ontario Vivians, Reginald Percy Vivian, was born in Toronto and later settled in Port Hope (3). He was a medical doctor who from 1943 to 1962 served as MPP for Port Hope and became Minister of Health at the age of forty-one. Of the seven Vivians in Toronto in the 1881 census, five were Reginald Vivian's ancestors, Samuel Vivian's family. Samuel, then age twenty-eight, was a printer by trade and a Methodist. Both he and his wife were born in England. By 1890, there is a John H. Vivian with a printing and lithograph business, very probably related to Samuel, the printer. John's son, Percy, born in 1876, graduated with medical degrees from the University of Toronto and New York State University. He practised in Barrie for four years, and then died tragically in 1904 aged twenty-eight during a severe diphtheria epidemic, leaving his wife and a two-year-old son, Reginald, a future medical graduate of the University of Toronto. As Minister of Health, Reginald launched Ontario's county health unit system.

Oakland, Ontario

John Vivian (b. January 29, 1810), the first of the Cornish Vivians to emigrate to Oakland (1834), and from whom I am descended, came from a long line of millers going back at least three generations (7). He emigrated from northern Cornwall on the Camel River, near Little Petherick, where his family operated a flour mill.

Here I am heavily indebted to the pioneering research of the late Stuart Rammage (4), whose comprehensive Vivian publication of 1989, as well as others, is in many genealogical libraries. Research by William C. Vivian (8) of Florida, with whom I share the same Cornish ancestry, has added information on early potential Vivian ancestors.

Based on the *Visitations of Cornwall* by J.L. Vivian (7) the origins of our Vivian line may be in the 15th century with the first offshoots from Ralph Vyvyan of Trevedran, i.e. the Vivians of Trenoweth, near St. Columb Major. That trail disappears in the 1600's, possibly a casualty of the Civil Wars in 1642–51 and Oliver Cromwell's rule. Our Oakland line may descend from one Richard of St. Merryn of that time. The Vivians of St. Merryn were farmers, and later in the 17th and 18th century, some became millers.

Based on research by Barry E. Vivian (8,9), a later Richard of St. Merryn (b. 1758 in St. Eval), is probably the immediate Richard of our line in Oakland. However, Richard was a common Vivian name, and in the same year of 1758, another Richard was born in nearby Padstow; in 1743 another Richard Vivian was born in St. Issey, also nearby; and yet another in St. Issey in 1701.

In a handwritten family history and also in a family Bible held by William C. Vivian of Florida, the Oakland forebear is referred to as "Richard of St. Merryn".⁷ William Vivian has outlined a speculative genealogical trail going further back to 1669, and also an alternative Huguenot origin for our line(10), suggested by the same family history handwritten by his great-great grandfather. About 50,000 Huguenots came to England in the late 1600s after Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685. That alternative origin could also explain why there are no documented Vivian birth/death records in mid to late 1600's England, leading to our branch of the Vivian family in Cornwall, i.e. they had not yet arrived in Cornwall.

From the possible forebear, Richard of St. Merryn, the documented line begins with Stephen Vivian, baptized August 4, 1728 in St. Eval, Cornwall, who married Ann Saundry in St. Eval, November 26, 1751. Their child, Richard of St. Merryn, born August 1758, was a miller and married Ann Luke December 26, 1781 in St. Issey. The third of their children, Stephen Vivian, (b. February 15, 1785 at St. Merryn), also a miller, married Mary Ball January 30, 1808 in Little Petherick.

Stephen and Mary lived on the rural estate of Tregolds, about a mile south of Little Petherick, where several of their children were baptized between 1816 and 1820. The family operated a flour mill on the Camel River, sailing vessels delivering wheat and shipping out with flour until bridge construction blocked their passage. This was probably a factor in the sale and closure of the mill in 1826, after which the family moved around Cornwall, given the birth dates and locations

of later children. Their youngest, William Vivian the Younger, was born October 1836 near St. Columb Minor. Their second oldest, John, born January 29, 1810, and a miller by trade, reached Quebec on May 14, 1834, where he spent some time with an uncle, Richard Vivian.

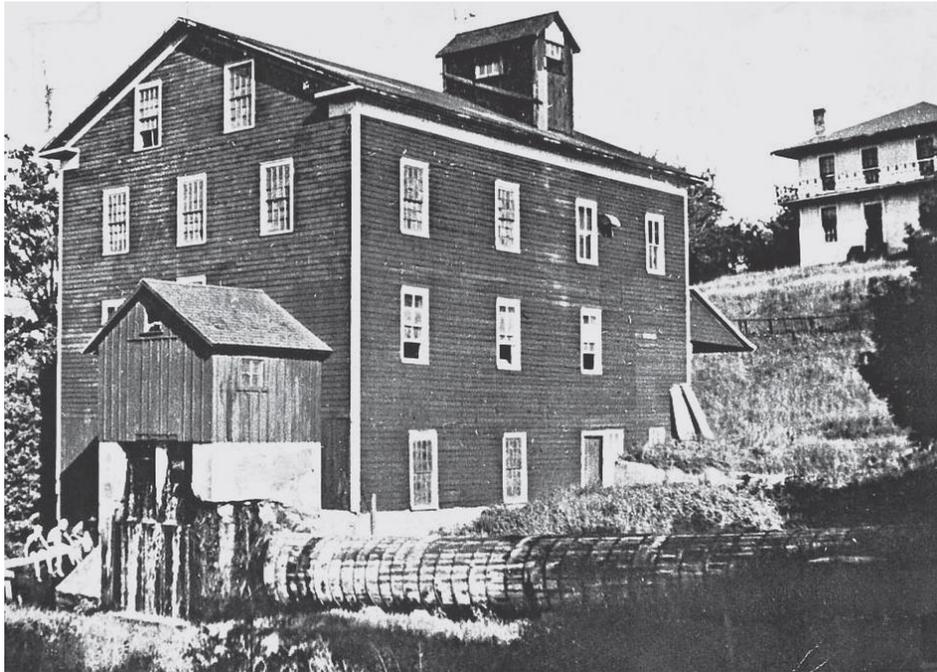


The Barn at Tregolds, Cornwall (photo by David Hawgood)

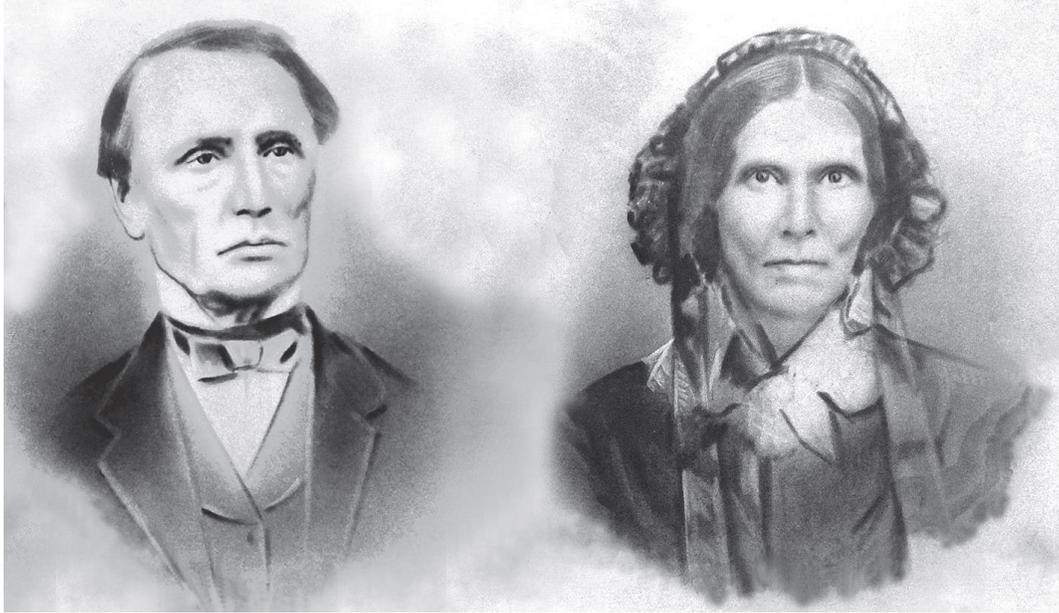
In March 1835, John settled in Oakland Township (then called Burford Gore), southwest of Brantford, renting a flour and sawmill from brothers John and Finlay Malcolm for £1000 per year. He had arrived at Oakland with a mare called Rose, a brindle dog, Carlo, and five dollars in cash(10). His next younger brother, Joseph (1811–1880), joined him in 1836, and they worked together for several years, one operating the gristmill, the other the sawmill. Also, in 1836, John married Sarah Tryphena Malcolm (1821–1862), daughter of the Oakland Mill owner, John Malcolm. Her grandfather was Finlay Malcolm Sr., the founder of Oakland.

In 1839 John bought his own mill nearby at Teeterville on Big Creek and further expanded his holdings circa 1840, buying the Oakland mills from the Malcolms. In that same year, his now widowed mother, Mary Vivian, the former Mary Ball, (1790–1847) arrived at Quebec, having sailed for six weeks from Padstow on the *Clio*, to settle in Upper Canada. Her husband, Stephen, had died in Cornwall June 7, 1839 at the age of fifty-four. She brought with her six children of her family of thirteen.

The Malcolms, the in-laws of John Vivian, were the founders of Oakland, and the builders of grist and sawmills in 1806 and 1807 (11). A Scottish-born ship owner, Finlay Malcolm Sr., and his family of eleven had fled from Maine during the American Revolution. From their initial Loyalist grant at Oakland, there were eventually thirteen farms occupied by the descendants of Finlay Malcolm Sr. They were a celebrated and political family in the area for many years before and after the arrival of John Vivian in 1834, Finlay Malcolm having been the Town Warden of Burford Gore in 1803. The Battle of Malcolm's Mill on November 6, 1814 was the last battle on Canadian soil in the War of 1812 with the United States. Malcolm's Mill (later to become Vivian's Mill) was burnt, the local militias at Oakland having been outnumbered seven to one by the American cavalry (1). The Malcolms, like many after the war, were dissatisfied with the slow settlement of their war claims but rebuilt the mill. Canada had survived the third year of the war.



The Vivian Mill and Home at Oakland (from Ramage)



John and Sarah Vivian of Oakland (from the Estate of Marquis Vivian)

Perhaps related to their war experience, the Malcolms later became a spectacular example of a Loyalist family with rebel sympathies in the 1837 Rebellion in Upper Canada. Dr. Charles Duncombe, the elected M.L.A. for Oxford and his allies, including twelve Malcolms, gathered some 500 rebel recruits at Oakland by December 13th. Eventually, 26 Upper Canadian residents were arrested, including three of the Malcolms from Oakland. It is not clear to what extent John Vivian was involved in the rebellion. The Vivian Mill burned again in 1842 and was rebuilt by John. The four-storey structure, which was fifty feet high, survived until disassembly in 1991. Behind the mill, the residence built by John Vivian in 1843 can be seen.

John and his first wife Sarah Malcolm had three children: Mary (1838–1869); Charles (1844–1914); and John Wesley (1851–1928). All were to be buried in Oakland. After Sarah's passing in 1862 at the age of forty-one, John married Charity Lowery on June 17, 1862 and had two more children, Bertha (1863–1893) and William Mathew (a.k.a. Herschell) (b. 1866). John died November 28, 1870 after acquiring further property in the Oakland area, with Charles and John Wesley continuing the milling business.

Charles married Clara Nelles, a cousin, in 1873. They had three children. Their son, Payson, took possession of the Vivian Mill after Charles had operated it for forty-five years. Payson was succeeded at the mill by his son, Lloyd, who shut it down in 1967 after 127 years of operation in Vivian hands. Thus ended at least

seven successive generations of Vivian millers, dating back to Stephen Vivian's father and grandfather in Cornwall.

Also in 1873, John Wesley Vivian married Cecilia Malcolm, a second cousin, the second marriage of the Vivians into the Malcolm family. They took up residence in the stately frame house built by John Vivian overlooking the gristmill. In 1885, they moved to Cecilia's father's farm (Edward Malcolm 1820–1913), a mile west of Oakland village. In 1903, John Wesley separated from his family, lured by the expanding west, and took his thirteen-year-old youngest son with him to homestead south of Wishart, Saskatchewan. He returned only once before his death at Oakland in 1925.

John Wesley and Cecilia had eight children between 1875 and 1893. Marquis Vivian (1885–1959), known as Park, ran the Oakland farm after his father's departure, and never married. One daughter, Alberta (Bertha), married Joseph Roberts in Oakland in 1902, and also emigrated to Saskatchewan.

John and Cecilia's third child, Edward, (1879–1940) was my grandfather who married Hughena Blanche Sheldrick (1881–1958) of Springvale in 1903. Edward had left the family farm about 1900 to work in the implement factories at Brantford, meeting Blanche who worked for the Paterson Biscuit Company. In 1919, Edward bought a farm nearby, south of Burtch, but in 1920 returned to Brantford when Blanche's health failed. They had three children: Cecil Malcolm (1904–1986), Dorothy Ivey Isabel (1908–2000); and Harold Ivan Archibald (Art) (1911–1997), my father.



Edward Vivian (from the Estate of Marquis Vivian)

In my line, the Cornish emigrants to Oakland, with a little help from others, begat a family of millers, farmers, secretaries, a plow maker, a telegraph manager, a bread salesman, a corporate vice-president, a floral designer, three engineers, a cabinet maker, a lawyer, a nuclear safety designer, a cost and budget analyst, a pension and wealth administrator, a satellite communications executive, a scenographer, a project manager in Trinidad, two MBAs, a MFA, a professor of dramatic arts, a creator of start-up companies, and a few artists and musicians.

I started this essay about some Vivians in Ontario with the original motto of the Vivian family in Cornwall, and close with one offered to our new generations.

“To Love, Live, and Aspire”

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