
Biography of Clare Thomas Bodwell

By Gregory N. Ball, grandson of C.T. Bodwell, with assistance from Eileen T. Ball

Clare Bodwell was born October 20, 1893, Riverton, Nebraska. Early in life he added Thomas as a middle name and used Clare T. Bodwell on all important documents. For family and local businesses in Franconia and the surrounding areas he was known as Tom, and used CT on his photographs and postcards.



Clare Thomas Bodwell

FAMILY HISTORY:

Tom's mother Mallie Mae Hickok was born August 27, 1861 Lincoln, Nebraska. Mallie's mother was born 1828, Meadville, Pennsylvania, and her father was supposedly born in Detroit, Michigan, 1824, later this was changed to Virginia.

Members of her mother's paternal side of her family originated from 1799 in Pennsylvania, and her maternal side came from Hurley, New York from as early as 1688 to 1800.

Tom's father Franklin Pierce Bodwell was born July 2, 1853, in Shapleigh, Maine, Franklin's mother was born 1823, in Shapleigh, Maine, 1823 and his father John born 1752, Methuen, Massachusetts.

Many of John Bodwell's family were involved in the early defense of our country: Captain John Bodwell, Jr. born 1752, Methuen, Massachusetts, Civil War; Captain John Bodwell, Sr. born 1723, Haverhill, Massachusetts, French and Indian and American Revolutionary War; Major Daniel Bodwell, born 1692, Andover, Massachusetts and served in the militia from 1754-1769.

The first Bodwell in America was Henry Bodwell born 1653, London, England. He was a soldier in King Phillips War. The Bodwell/Bodvel (Welsh spelling) name dates back to Beli Mawr, King of Britain ca. 100 BC.

The Bodwell Ancestral Home was at the tip of the Llyn Peninsula, Northern Wales.

Using the information obtained in Bodwell Family Lines Genealogy, 10th Edition, by Geoffrey Lionel Bodwell, in 2006, my wife Eileen and I went to see the ancestral home of Henry Bodwell. Located on the Pwllhelli, Llyn Peninsula, Wales, we saw Bodvel Hall and Bardsey Island, which were part of the Bodvel Estate; and the stone with the Bodvel name. We took pictures of the 500-year-old Bodvel stone, which measured 36" high 24" wide and 4" deep. It is located just inside the entrance to the Eglwys Llannor Church, Llannor Wales.



This very large stone is in the entrance to the Eglwys Llannor Church.



The family name Bodvel is clearly identified in the enlargement of the middle section of the stone.

Tom's father Franklin, Sr. had many businesses including a printing shop and a photography business, which he ran from about 1879-1892 in Atchison, Kansas and Denver, Colorado. The family grew with Sara born in 1881, and Franklin, Jr. "Frank" born in 1887 both in Atchison; and then Helena born in 1889, and Paul born in 1891 both in Denver, Colorado.

After Mallie's mother died in early 1893, Mallie's father moved to Saratoga, Wyoming to live with her twin sister Minnie Hickok Wilcox and family until his death in 1898.

It was after 1893, that Tom's family slowly made their way back east. Both Tom in 1893, and his sister Eulalia "Corinne" in 1896, were born in Riverton, Nebraska. In 1898, Franklin, Sr. and Mallie purchased a farm in Bethlehem, which was sold to Colonel Isaac Lewis. The family then bought the farm called "Mountain Lodge", which they later renamed "Fernbrook". It was there in 1905, that Dorothy was born.



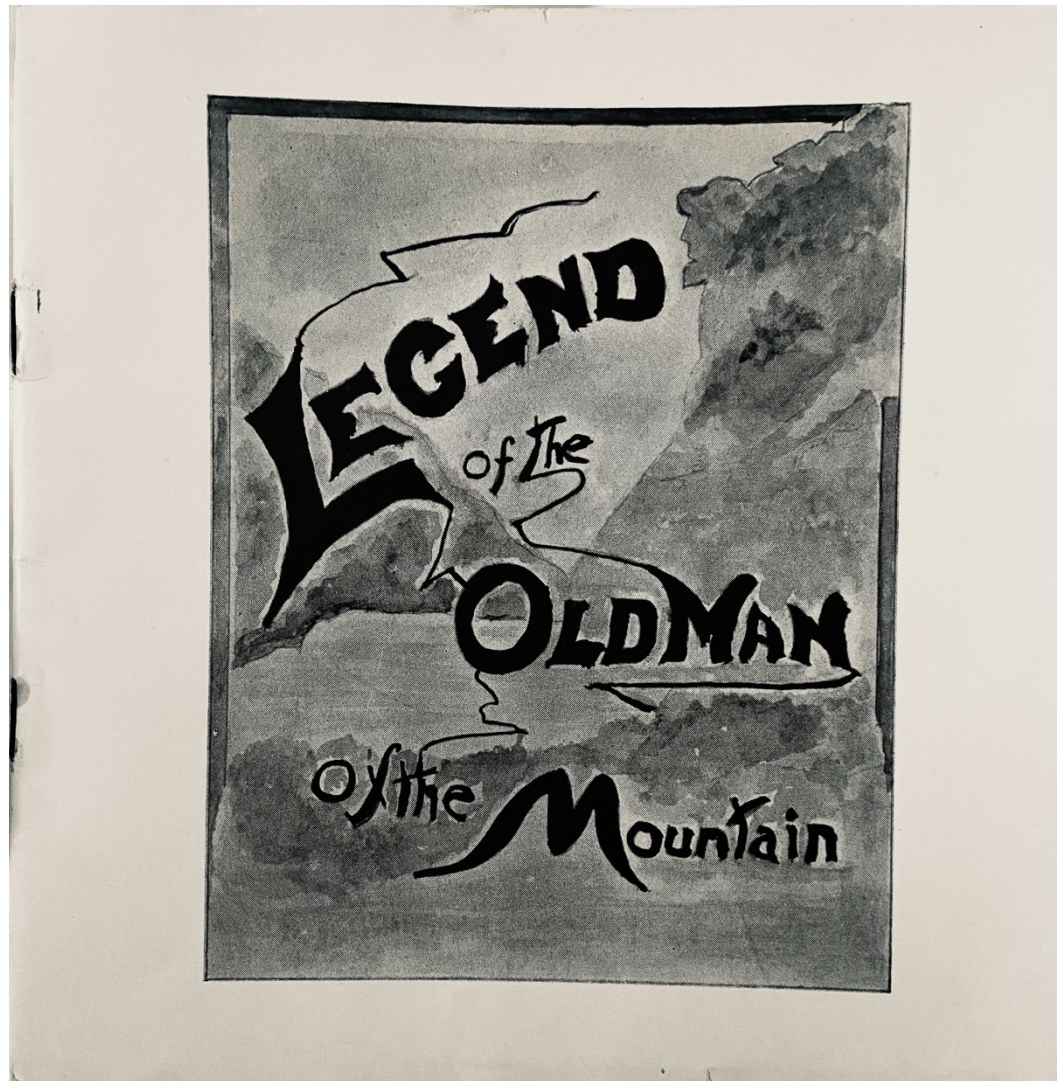
Eulalia "Corinne" (b. 1896), Clare Thomas "Tom" (b. 1893), Paul (b. 1891), Helena (b. 1889), Franklin, Jr. "Frank" (b. 1887), Sara (b. 1881). NOTE: This photo was taken prior to Dorothy's birth in 1905.

The whole family were personable and enterprising in the arts and business: Before coming back east, Franklin, Sr. took Sara, Frank and Helena on tour throughout the country with their vaudeville act called "Little Sara Trio". When Sara was older and the family had settled in Bethlehem, she chose a career travelling and selling chocolates and A1 Steak Sauce door-to-door with Tom as her driver. Frank developed a career in the hotel business, working at both the Prince George Hotel, and Astor in NYC. His musical ability included playing piano and tap dance, which he had perfected in the "Little Sara Trio" vaudeville act. Helena was ambitious and eventually owned her own dance school in Columbus, Ohio. Helena was a painter and was resident flower arranger for Lake George,

NY Convention Center. During her career she won the prestigious New York State Tricolor Award for her flower arrangement. Paul was successful and owned the Bodwell Company, Wholesale Plumbing, Wellsville, PA. His contribution to the Wellsville Fire Department is noted on their history page today. His hobbies included photography and gardening. Corrine played old time Jazz on the piano and was the families funny story teller.

TIMELINE

1913: Mrs. Mallie Hickok Bodwell wrote and copyrighted Legend of the Old Man of the Mountain. Mallie had told her two youngest children Corinne and Dorothy originally written poems and stories such as “The Promise”, “St. Peter’s Gate”, “As a Crow Flies”, and “The Story the Churn Told”.



Dorothy compiled these poems and stories by both her mother Mallie and twin sister Minnie Hickok Wilson into a booklet called Bedtime Stories My Mother Told Me. Dorothy was the person who researched and organized the family's genealogy and made sure that all of her brothers' and sisters' children and grandchildren knew of the Bodwell heritage. During her visits, she gave me 4 of her genealogical histories' as well as a copy of her childhood memoir called Baked Potatoes in My Pocket.

1916-1917: Tom had worked his way to California and Mexico, Cuba and Isle of Pines (where he bought a pineapple farm) and during World War I was working in an ammunition factory in Ohio. When his father died in May 1917, leaving Mallie with no means of support, Tom returned home to take care of his family.

1917-1923: September 25, 1918, Tom married Inez Whitcomb and had his first child, Natalie (my mother) in 1919. Inez was born in 1891, Wildwood (Easton), New Hampshire. Inez's family genealogy includes the Vilas, Clay, Whitcomb and Drury families. The Whitcomb and Drury families had migrated from the Lancaster, Massachusetts area, in the early 1810's.



Inez Whitcomb Bodwell

Tom became the farm superintendent at the Colonel Lewis Estate on Mt. Agassiz, produced, marketed and sold throughout New Hampshire, Fine Grade White Mountain Maple Syrup. In 1923, his second child Lucille "Cindy" was born. Tom operated the West End Garage in Littleton, and he took over the local Whippet Agency.

1928: Tom, Inez and family moved to Franconia and purchased a house and named it "Peak-o-muk", which in its original and somewhat longer form, is a Natick Indian phrase meaning "The Little House of Happiness".

During their daughter's education at Dow Academy in Franconia, Tom and Inez participated in and contributed financially to the activities and the prizes awarded to and for the Dow students.

1939-1945: In August 19, 1939, their daughter Natalie married Norwood A. Ball of Franconia, New Hampshire. They had four children, Robin, Gregory (myself), Diane Cameron, and Christopher Ball. In August 31, 1945, their other daughter Lucille "Cindy" married G. Peter Macon of Macon, Georgia. They had two sons, G. Peter and Thomas Macon.



Picture taken August 31, 1945 of Natalie (left) and Lucille "Cindy" (the bride on right)

1928-1946: Tom expanded the management of the Flume, Echo Lake, Lafayette Campground and Lost River Reservation and presented nature lectures to the public. He also helped maintain the Old Man of the Mountains by painting the turnbuckles and eyebolts which reinforced its forehead.

Inez was the manager at The Lost River Reservation while Tom was the overall Director. Many family members, including both daughters Natalie and Cindy worked at the Flume, Lost River, Lafayette Campground and the cafés and gift shops.

1943: Tom worked at the Office of Economic Warfare, Business Specialist, Chief, Travel Section. He secured wood in Mexico for war production planes.

Clare "Tom" Bodwell was admitted to the U.S. Senate Chamber by Senator Styles Bridges for 78th Congress.

1933-1947: Throughout his life Tom was artistic and loved nature. He photographed the White Mountains and other areas in New Hampshire. He also hiked 200 peaks in the East and climbed 136 mountains in many parts of North American Continent, from Alaska to Mexico.

1929-1965: Tom participated in and was a member of:

- Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests
- National and Wildlife International Federation, Life Member
- Burns Lodge # 66, Mason, Littleton, 25 years plus and Bektash Shriner
- Littleton Rotary and Rotary International Franklin Society
- Congregational Church Christian Men's Society, Littleton
- Kiwanis Club International
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- National Geographic Society, Life Member
- Mount Eustis Chapter O.E.S., Littleton
- Knight Templar and 32nd Degree Mason

1929-1957: Inez participated in and was a member of:

- Past Matrons Association of the Mount Eustis Chapter, O.
- E. S. (Eastern Star), Littleton
- Elected President of Littleton's Women's Club
- Bethlehem High School Alumni Association, secretary
- and treasurer

- Ladies Aid Society
- Emma Merrill Guild, Congregational Church, Littleton
- 20th Century Club, Durrell Memorial Church, Bethlehem
- Greenleaf Civics Club, Franconia
- Littleton Garden Club
- Women's Union, Federated Church, Franconia

- 1946-1947: Tom and Inez operated the Cayuga Inn at Aurora, New York.
- 1947: Tom purchased Cooney's Furniture Store in Littleton, renaming it Franconia Associates.
- 1955: Tom's photograph of "Old Man in the Mountains" was used for the stamp of 1st Day of Issue, Franconia Post Office, June 21, 1955.
- 1957: August 8, 1957, Inez died and Tom terminated his association with the Franconia Associates.
- 1961: Tom married Beth Cole Lobree, March 1961, Miami Beach, FL. They travelled all over the Pacific and Scandinavia.
- 1976: Clare "Tom" Bodwell died February 1, 1976, Pompano Beach, FL.
- May 4, 1977 Littleton Courier writer of "Mountain Musing", Jack Colby wrote, "The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests will plant a tree at the Flume Reservation in memory of the Late C. T. Bodwell of Littleton, who, if memory serves us right was for 20 years director of the Flume Reservation."