

I have prepared a document on my Sparks family as I know it. This is a lot of information but I am hopeful someone on your site will be able to make some connections. All deceased individuals mentioned below are detailed on [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org). There is also a skeletal tree on wikitree and a gedcom on gedmatch, familytreedna and myheritage.

Regards  
Shirley Mancino

Possible Connection Between Sparks from Connecticut and Ottawa Nicholas Sparks Families.

### The Early Gibson Family

Jane Gibson

In the 1821 Irish Census, in the Townland of Cladagh, City of Cavan, in Castlerahan parish, Martha Gibson's mother, Jane, was either a widow (her husband Robert having died earlier in 1821) or he no longer lived with the family. Jane at 43 was listed as head of the household. Her children were: Robert was 19, Archer was 17, Jane was 16, Anne 13, Mary 9, Ally 7, Margt (Margaret?) 5 and the youngest, Martha at age 3 yrs. (There was also a younger brother James born in 1821 or 1822 after the census was taken. Elizabeth, the eldest was not listed as living with her family during 1821 Census.

Martha Gibson, was a seamstress, born Sept 1820 (1826 according to Waller report), in County Down, Ireland. (The 1821 Irish Census, she is born in 1818). She was Church of England. Her tombstone indicates she was born in Sept, 1821 and died at 85 yrs 7 months. She was christened according to familysearch.org on Sept 21, 1821 in Kircubbin, Down Ireland. County Down is the county immediately south of and contiguous with Belfast. Martha, if this Irish census is correct, was a few years older than Ira Sparks. Ira and Martha married three years after she arrived in Canada about 1840 in Bedford or Kingston(?), Frontenac, Canada West.

According to the Winnipeg Free Press article (April 11, 1908 Vol 33, No. 240) published after Martha's death in 1906, Martha along with her siblings Elizabeth, Margaret, and James came to Leeds County Ontario in 1837 from County Down, Ireland. Martha would have been about 19 years old at this time. These Gibson siblings all married around Westport, Ontario. Martha was my 3X great grandmother. Martha and Ira Sparks had 6 children: Lydia Sparks, a.k.a. Mrs. Daniel Cleveland Stafford of Tichborne Ont, David W. Sparks, liveryman of Delbolco City, Pennsylvania, Richard Sparks of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and Margaret Sparks a.k.a. Mrs. Joseph Thompson, Sarah Sparks a.k.a. Mrs. John A. Lee and Amos Sparks the last 3 of High Bluff, Manitoba.

Ira Sparks's ancestors on the female side seem to consist of ancient and notable family lines going back as far as the 700-800's according to Familysearch.org. For example, the Rice family on Ira's mother's side included many kings, princes, countesses/marquises from England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany and Navarre, Spain, including but not limited to: Robert the Bruce of Scotland, Edward IV, Henry II and a number of the Plantagenet kings (House of Lancaster) and princes, Louis XVI, back to Charlemagne and a king of the Picts. I guess when you are related to one member of the nobility, you are related to many. (My grandmother, Grace Palmer thought she had married down when she married into the Thompson-Sparks clan!)

Ira Sparks born circa 1821 or 1822 in Ontario (or perhaps his father Reuben?) settled in Bedford in 1836

on lot 21 Concession 7 according to Bedford Township Papers (The Damned Lakes, pg 242). He had 8 family members. This was Margaret Sparks Thompson's father. In the Bedford 1861 census, Ira is listed as a farmer and a Wesleyan Methodist. Richard Sparks lived here in 1848, lot 21, Concession 7. Richard Sparks had 107.5 acres. (Frontenac County Map in 1878. See [www.mcgill.ca](http://www.mcgill.ca)).

During the 1837-38 uprisings, unrest and rebellions in what is now known as both Quebec and Ontario, loyal farmers were called upon to maintain the peace by serving in militias. In fact, male citizens over 18 yrs of age could be called upon to serve at any time. Ira served in the militia from Nov 18 to May 26, 1838 according to the Canadian, British Army and Canadian Muster Rolls and Paylist 1795-1850 doc signed 15 Jan 1839. The Document mentions the following battalions: Third Lacadie, LaCole, Hemmingford Cavalry etc ..... Leeds Cavalry, 2nd Leeds Militia, and Sixth Leeds Militia. (pg 535 of 709). He was a private and was paid 2 pounds.

In the Canada Census 1881, Ira is listed as a patient in an asylum. His occupation is not given. In the Canada Census, 1901, he is listed with 30 other members of his household (?) presumably meaning the residents of Rockwood Asylum, Portsmouth Village. He is listed as married He is listed as 79, , born in Ontario, a farmer of English origin and a Methodist. In the final column of this document entitled Infirmities: only 3 options are given a) deaf and dumb, b) blind, c) unsound mind, Ira is listed as unsound mind. Curiously, his wife Martha Gibson, living in Manitoba at this time, is listed as widowed in both the censuses of 1881 and 1891. It is possible that she was embarrassed to explain about her living husband's absence from her life). Ira at died at Rockwood in March 26, 1903 at age 80 yrs. He is buried at the Catarqui Cemetery, Frontenac, Kingston. The Waller report (pg 53) has Ira in an asylum in the 1871 Census. In Canada Census for 1871, he is not listed as living with his family in Frontenac. Ira would have been living at Rockwood or in the Kingston gaol at 36 yrs which would have been as early as the 1856 or 1857. ([ontariogenealogy.com](http://ontariogenealogy.com))

Ira's son Richard probably continued to live in Ontario when Martha Gibson Sparks went west to Portage la Prairie, Manitoba with her family including David, Sarah and Amos. She left her institutionalized husband Ira and possibly son Richard and married daughter, Lydia, behind. In the fall of 1890, her daughter, Margaret Sparks Thompson, husband Joseph and her 10 children arrived at the CPR station in High Bluff Manitoba. They were met by Margaret's sister, Sarah Sparks and her husband, John Albert Lee. They were taken to the John A. Lee farm just north of the town of High Bluff and spent the winter with this family.

Martha Gibson died April 4, 1906 (aged 85 years, 7 months or possibly almost 3 years older than this). She is buried at High Bluff Methodist Cemetery, Portage La Prairie. (Canada Gen Web Cemetery Project online site -good picture of her tombstone.) Of the two parents, only Martha appears on the tombstone. (Sarah Anne Sparks (1856-1920), Martha's daughter and her husband John Albert Lee 1850-1929) also appear on another side of the same tombstone.

According to the Winnipeg Free Press article April 11, 1908 (Vol 33, No.240), four young people from the Gibson family, Elizabeth, Margaret, James and Martha left Ireland in 1837 for Canada. Although the newspaper doesn't mention this, Elizabeth appears to have been married in Ireland in 1831 to Samuel Hannah. They would have come to Canada with one child Eliza born in 1833. Sister Margaret was 21; Martha was about 19 yrs and James about 16. The other brothers and sisters as far as I know, remained behind in Cladagh, Cavan, Ireland although the youngest James may have emigrated to the USA. Why the sibling came to Leeds is unknown. Possibly they had Samuel Hannah's family relatives already living here as there are Hannahs living in this area to the present day.

Their father was Robert Gibson, probably born 1776. In 1795 (as one source mentions) he would have

been too young to have had some of his children). Their mother named Jane, surname unknown, was born in 1778.

1) Margaret (1816- ) was married to Robert Blair, near Westport. Four of their children were prominent in mining circles in BC.

2) Elizabeth had married Samuel Hannah in Ireland. He was well known in Seaforth Ontario. Her son Samuel Hannah Jr. carried on extensive farming operations at Griswold, Manitoba and was killed about 1903 by falling into a well beneath a windmill that he was repairing on one of his farms.

3) James Gibson married at Westport. His wife's name is unknown. He died some years before 1908 leaving three sons: David, James and Robert, all well known in the area of Westport according to the Winnipeg Free Press article about the family.

4) Martha Gibson (1820- ) was married to Ira Sparks by whom they had 6 children: Lydia Sparks, a.k.a. Mrs. Daniel Cleveland Stafford of Tichborne Ont,  
David W. Sparks, liveryman of Delboico City, Pennsylvania,  
Richard Sparks of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan,  
Margaret Sparks a.k.a. Mrs. Joseph Thompson, High Bluff, Manitoba  
Sarah Sparks a.k.a. Mrs. John A. Lee, High Bluff, Manitoba  
Amos Sparks High Bluff, Manitoba

#### Ira Sparks and Martha Gibson Family

How and why the Sparks ended up in Ontario is a mystery. Reuben Sparks, Ira's father was born in Connecticut abt 1788. His grandfather, Thomas Sparks (b. 6/03/1767), and mother Jemima Fox (1767-1793) were born in Glastonbury, Connecticut. See [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org) for the ancestors on the maternal side that go back in some cases to the 700's.

It appears Thomas and Jemima Sparks, Reuben's birth family moved to Vermont as many of his siblings were born there. Reuben (1788-1836) married his wife Lucietta or Lucetta Rice (b. 1797, or 1788 or in Watertown N.Y.) in 1814. So, at marriage, he was close to the Ontario border. He died in Nov 17, 1836 (or another source his death was 1869) in Bedford, Ontario. Since this was well after the American Revolution, he had no claim to United Empire Loyalist status. Possibly, he was drawn here by Sparks relatives already living in the area that was just opening up to settlement so there was plenty of cheap land to be occupied. Or perhaps he was in touch with the Sparks families in the Ottawa area who our family lore says are related.

There was a Richard Sparks on a farm in Bedford early on abt 1828 and there are Rice's in the Bedford/Westport area. But Bedford has very poor farming. Located on the Canadian Shield, it is rocky with very thin topsoil. After all the timber was cut down off the Bedford land holdings, many families moved on west to Manitoba or Wisconsin as the soil itself couldn't sustain a family from farming alone. It is almost certain that this was at least one reason why Ira's family left the area and went west. Sparks/Gibsons (including Martha Gibson Sparks and her son Amos Sparks) were already in Manitoba when Joseph Thompson and Margaret Sparks left Ontario to join them in 1889-90.

Margaret Sparks Thompson's (my gr gr grandmother) father was Ira Sparks, born 1821 or 1822 in Ontario. Margaret's mother was Martha Gibson, seamstress, born Sept 1820 (or 1826 according to Waller report), in County Down Ireland. She was Church of England. Her tombstone indicates she was born in Sept, 1821 and she died at 85 yrs 7 months. Her birth year should be 1820. County Down is the county immediately south of and contiguous with Belfast. (Our Matchet and Lynn relatives came from Ballinderry Antrim that is immediately to the west of Belfast.) Martha's If this date is correct she was older than Ira

was. They had 6 children: Margaret, Richard, David, Lydia (or Lida), Amos and Sarah. Amos Sparks married Caroline Alice (or Caren Helena) Thompson probably not related to our Thompson's as she was born in a northern US state.

Margaret Sparks (my great great grandmother) was born 1852 (Waller has her born in 1845 in UC - maybe not an error). She is presumably buried in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. On the 1861 Canada Census, she was 10 years old next birthday, Lydia was 11 next birthday, Amos was 7 and Sarah was 6. (David was not listed.)

Richard Sparks, a brother of Margaret Sparks was born 1846 or 49 (or 1848 according to Waller) and is listed as a farmer aged 22 yrs on the 1871 Census - no indication on pg 54 of Waller which lot he owned. On the lot and concession map mentioned above, to the east of the Thompson properties and on the south side of Clear Lake is a property belonging to Richard Sparks concession 4, lot 21. Another Richard Sparks was born about 1828 in Bedford Township, Frontenac Ontario. Richard married his wife Eliza Jane, born 1866. She was almost 20 years his junior. They married presumably in the mid 1880s. They had 3 children living with them in the 1891 census: Jane born 1887, Lena May 1889, and Annie, born 1890. The family is listed as Church of England.

It is my speculation that Richard, the son of Ira, took over the family farm when his mom went west or he acquired lot 21 on his own at some point. He is shown on the map right beside Jos. Shillington (lot #21) where there was a cheese factory. Since at least Margaret Sparks' brother lived close by, this might account for where Joseph Thompson met his future wife, Margaret Sparks.

David W. Sparks, (b 1850- ) another of Margaret's brothers, was born in 1850. He is listed in my files as a blacksmith.

Lydia Sparks (a.k.a. Lida) was born 3 Feb 1850 (or 1852 according to Waller). She is apparently buried at Parham Cemetery. She married Daniel Cleveland Stafford in 31 Dec 1873. Daniel Stafford is shown on the Bedford 1880 McGill map as owning lots 23 and 24 (possibly Tichborne). It looks like they did not move west with Martha Gibson and her other children. She died in 1920.

Amos Sparks was born in Frontenac County Kingston on Feb 3, 1852 or (1854 according to Waller) and died 8 Oct 1943. He married Caren (Carrie) Helena Thomassen or Thompson (1883-1975) in High Bluff, Portage la Prairie Dec 18, 1901. Witnesses were John A. Lee of High Bluff and Abraham Thompson also of High Bluff. She was born in Julen, Klay County, 14 Dec 1883 and died in Winnipeg 2 Feb 1975. They settled in the Poplar Point area. Amos died 8 Oct 1943 at the age of 91 and Carrie died in 1975. Both of them are buried at Poplar Point Settler United Cemetery, Portage La Prairie. Given where she was born, she is probably not related to our Thompson's.

Sarah Anne Sparks, the youngest sister, was born 25 Dec 1866 (or 1855 according to Waller) or 1856 and died 18 Oct 1920. She married John Albert Lee (1850-1929).

Sarah and John Albert Lee are buried at High Bluff Methodist Cemetery, Portage La Prairie and their graves are under the same tombstone as Martha Gibson Sparks. The Winnipeg Free Press article in 1908, said that her grandmother, Lucetta Rice Sparks was mentioned in the will of her brother William Marsh Rice making Sarah a possible heir to his \$8 million fortune.

Their daughter was Ethel Lee who married Percival Albert Lytle. One of their sons was John Alvin Lytle. I am in touch with one of John's daughters, Melissa Lytle, a match for me on my DNA. Melissa Lytle, as a 2

gr. granddaughter of Ira Sparks and Martha Gibson she is a match for me on my DNA. She remembers her father recounting how during WWII, on his journey across Canada to fight in Britain, he stopped in Ottawa and either stayed with and/or visited the Ottawa Sparks relatives. Unfortunately, she remembers no other details and her father died in 1994. Interestingly, she is also a match for some of my Moulton/Morris distant cousins who all came to Leeds Ontario from Wexford or County Carlow, Ireland.

#### The Children of Amos Sparks and Caren Helena Thompson

Amos and Carrie had 7 children as follows: They would have been 1st cousins of Elena Thompson Lynn, my great grandmother.

Annie Sparks was born at High Bluff, Manitoba, 20 Dec 1900. Discrepancy: was she born one year before her parents were married? She died at Winnipeg, 31 Mar, 1983.

Clifford Amos Sparks, was born at Poplar Point, Manitoba, 29 Jun 1903. He died at Portage la Prairie, 17 April, 1977.

Amanda Sparks was born at High Bluff Manitoba, 6 Jan 1905. She died at age 88 in Burlington, Halton County, 11 Aug, 1993. She was married to Charles William Austen (1900-1994). Both are buried beside her parents in an identical tombstone at Poplar Point Settler United Cemetery, Portage La Prairie.

Wilbur David Sparks was born at High Bluff Manitoba, 16 Dec 1906. He died at Portage La Prairie, 28 Dec 1976.

John Albert Sparks, born at High Bluff Manitoba, 6 July 1908. He died at Lambertville Michigan, 17 July 1990.

Harvey Richard Sparks, born at High Bluff Manitoba, 26 May 1910. He died at Toledo Ohio 9 Mar, 1961.

Alice Wilhelmina Sparks, (aka Wilhelmina) was born at High Bluff, Manitoba, 12 Jul 1913. She died at Winnipeg, 13 Mar, 1935. She is buried at Poplar Point Settler United Cemetery, Portage La Prairie on the same tombstone as her parents, Amos and Carrie.

In 1863, Joseph, my g. g. grandfather married for a second time, Margaret Sparks (born in Ontario) Joseph was a farmer. They initially lived in Bedford probably on lot 24. Their religion was Wesleyan Methodist. They had the following 13 children: Jane, Alexander (a.k.a. Alec or Aleck or Alex), Elena (a.k.a. Lena- Waller has Ellen), Abraham, Rhoda A., Samuel, Joseph, Anne M.(Annie), Alice, Wesley, David, Ethel and Henry (maybe Harry). The Thompson line is made up of very strong individuals; all 13 children appear to have made it to adulthood, and a number of them lived to be close to 100, a rare occurrence at that time. Some of their children and grandchildren have also lived to be 100 yrs. old.