

THE BRUCE FAMILY OF SMITHS ISLAND SCOTTISH & ENGLISH DECENT

JOHN FRANKLIN BRUCE B. 1863 - D Oct.1st, 1941 78 yrs
TEENIE MARSHALL B. 1875 - D. ----- 1931 56 yrs

Captain John (Johnny) F. Bruce of Scottish Ancestry, beleived to have been raised in an orphanage in New York City, found his way as a young man seeking employment in Westmoreland County, Va.(by the Potomac River) as a farm hand...After working in the farm fields for a few years, the "call to the sea" apparently received young John's attention. Hundreds of oyster schooner, Pungy, and Bugeye sailing vessels were dragging the bottoms of Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River, with large oyster dredges. In the year 1888, there were 700 full crewed sailing vessels working on the Bay and Potomac River..... A total of 5,000 men worked on these vessels that caught more then 12 million bushels of oysters in 1888. This was during the period of time, known as the Chesapeake Bay Oyster Boom years.

Smiths Island had a total of 20 sailing Pungy, and oyster schooners in 1888. Some of them worked in the Potomac River near the resort town of Colonial Beach, on the Virginia side of the river where young John Bruce lived and worked. There is evidence, that he sought employment aboard of a Smith Island oyster schooner "J.A. Mahoney" about the year 1890. The "J.A. Mahoney" was owned and Captained by William Harrison Bradshaw of Rhodes Point, Smiths Island. Captain Bradshaw was born on Holland's Island, but came to Smiths Island, at the age of 17, to live with relatives, after his father Jacob Bain Bradshaw was drowned in Chesapeake Bay, when his schooner sank in 1858.

After oyster dredging for many weeks on the Bay, and rivers, the schooners would sail homeward to Smiths Island, for short periods of time, to be with family, and friends, of the oystermen. Its beleived that crewman John Bruce worked aboard of the "J.A. Mahoney" from the year 1890 untill about the year 1897. It was during this 7 year period when the sailing oyster vessels returned from time to time to Smith Island, that Bruce met and fell in love with a young lady named Elpitina (Teenie) Marshall. Teenie was the daughter of Wm. (Billy) Marshall, who was one of the 4 sons of John A.(Taffy) Marshall, who came with his widowed mother Hester Marshall, and several brothers and sisters from the Eastern Shore of Virginia at the age of 17, to live on Smiths Island, below the Maryland & Virginia Boundry line at South Point in the year 1828. Teenie's grand father John "Taffy" in later years, married the daughter of Richard (Young Dickie) & Rachel Evans of Fishing Creek, near Shankes Island. Her name was Eleanor (Ellen) Evans, and she bore John Taffey 12 children: Four boys and eight girls. Teenie's father "Billy was the 6th child born to the couple. He was born in 1855.

Teenie was the first of 7 children of Billy and his wife Margaret (Maggie) A. Tyler Marshall who was the daughter of Smiths Island first ordained Preacher Rev. John Tyler (B.1829 - D. Nov. 9, 1895) and his wife Alcie Evans Tyler (B. Jan 6, 1832 - D. Nov. 10, 1895). Rev. John Tyler was born at Drum Point (Tylerton), the son of Severn and Rachel Crockett Tyler. Rachel was from Tangier, Va. and is buried in the Tylerton Church Cemetery. He was the Captain of the oyster schooner "Fashion" in his younger days. Teenie's mother Maggie was born at Hog Neck, right on the Md. & Va. Boundry line.