



## William Fawcett Johnson (1857-1929), Picton Photographer

John A. Brebner, January 2016



William F. Johnson, perhaps?

**William Fawcett (W.F.) Johnson** (1857-1929) was an established Picton photographer, who was born in the County, and lived there all his life.

His images were used in Helen Merrill's book, *Picturesque Prince Edward County*, 1892, and it was after seeing this initial collection that encouraged my further research into his biography, with a special interest in finding out what had happened to his extensive collection of glass-plate negatives after his untimely death in 1929.

William's parents, **John P. Johnson** and **Eliza Moore** lived in Hillier, where John was a farmer. William had a younger brother, **John N. Johnson**, of whom I have yet to find details after the 1861 Hillier census.

In 1881, William married **Elizabeth Flanagan** (d/o **Patrick Flanagan** and **Rachel Ferguson**), and the couple had one daughter, **Elizabeth Mayne Johnson**, born 1896. She married **Cecil Braithwaite**, likely in the United States. They lived first in Houston, Texas and subsequently in Kansas City, Missouri where both Elizabeth and her husband Cecil died.

### A Genealogy of William Fawcett Johnson:

January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016

#### Generation One

1. **John P. Johnson** #69024, b. c 1821 - 1824 in Prince Edward County, Upper Canada,<sup>1,1</sup> d. 22 May 1893? in North Marysburgh Township, Prince Edward County, ON, Canada,<sup>1</sup> occupation Farmer.

John and wife Eliza were enumerated in the 1851 Canada West census in Hillier Township, Part 1, page 35. No children with family in 1851. There were a number of other JOHNSON families in Hillier at that time.

His death date of 1893 is speculative, based on approximate age, occupation and area of residence, but should be confirmed... He married **Eliza Moore** #69025,<sup>1</sup> b. c 1829 in Hastings County?<sup>1,2</sup>

#### Eliza:

1861 census states that Eliza was born in Ireland...

#### Children:

2. i. **William Fawcett Johnson** #69023 b. 17 April 1857.
3. ii. **John N. Johnson** #69036 b. c 1857. Not yet found after 1861...

*Generation Two*

2. **William Fawcett Johnson** #69023, b. 17 April 1857 in Hillier, Prince Edward County, Upper Canada,<sup>1</sup> occupation 1881 Artist, occupation 1891-1921 Photographer, d. 22 February 1929 in Picton, Prince Edward, ON, Canada,<sup>1</sup> buried 25 February 1929 in Glenwood Cemetery, Picton, ON, Canada.<sup>5,1</sup>

1861: Census gives age as "5".

1881: Residence in Picton, ON when married.

1891: Lived in Picton, ON with wife; no children; servant Minnie HARE lived with the family.

1911: Lived alone, but shown as married; census gives birthdate as April 1856. William was enumerated alone in Picton, but also with his family at 515 Gladstone Avenue, Toronto.

1921: Lived alone in Picton, ON.

1929: Length of time at residence prior to death, 35 years; lived entire life in Ontario.

He married **Elizabeth Flanagan** #69026, 21 December 1881 in Picton, Prince Edward County, ON, Canada,<sup>1</sup> b. 29 April 1858 in Hillier, Prince Edward County, Upper Canada,<sup>1</sup> (daughter of **Patrick Flanagan** #69027 and **Rachel Ferguson** #69028), d. 31 October 1932 in 515 Gladstone Avenue, Toronto, ON, Canada,<sup>1</sup> buried 02 November 1932 in Glenwood Cemetery, Picton, ON, Canada.<sup>9</sup>

**Elizabeth:**

1881: Residence in Picton, ON when married.

1911: Enumerated with family in Toronto, but husband William was also listed in Picton.

1921: Lived in Toronto, ON at 515 Gladstone Avenue with daughter, husband was living in Picton.

*Children:*

4. i. **Elizabeth Mayne Johnson** #69029 b. 26 May 1896.
3. **John N. Johnson** #69036, b. c 1857 in Hillier?, Prince Edward County, Upper Canada.<sup>2</sup>

*Generation Three*

4. **Elizabeth Mayne Johnson** #69029, b. 26 May 1896 in Picton, Prince Edward County, Ontario,<sup>1,1</sup> occupation 1921 Music Teacher, d. 10 April 1962 in Heartstone Nursing Home, Kansas City, Jackson County, MO, USA.<sup>1</sup>

When Elizabeth travelled to the US in 1936; her next-of-kin was shown as Mrs. Eleanor GUNN, Bloomfield, ON. Elizabeth planned to live in Niagara Falls with her friend, Mrs. Alice KINGSLEY at 328 6th Street, Niagara Falls, NY.

This was not her first trip to the USA; she had stayed in Niagara Falls from April 1916 to May 1919.

1941: Returned to USA at Derby Line, VT. Her permanent residence at that time was at Kelly Road, Sherwood Addition, Houston, TX. She was shown as "married", and was 5 ft 2 inches, and 124 lbs.

1962: Usual residence at death: 708 Garfield Street, Kansas City, MO.

She married **Cecil Braithwaite** #69030, b. 12 October 1883 in London, ON, Canada,<sup>1</sup> (son of **William J. Braithwaite** #69031 and **Mary S. McDougall** #69032), occupation 1907 Baker, occupation 1942 Unemployed Preacher, d. June 1970 in Kansas City?, Jackson, MO, USA.

**Cecil:**

1942: Residence at Knox Hotel, El Paso, TX on World War II Draft Card.

**William Johnson** died in a studio fire.

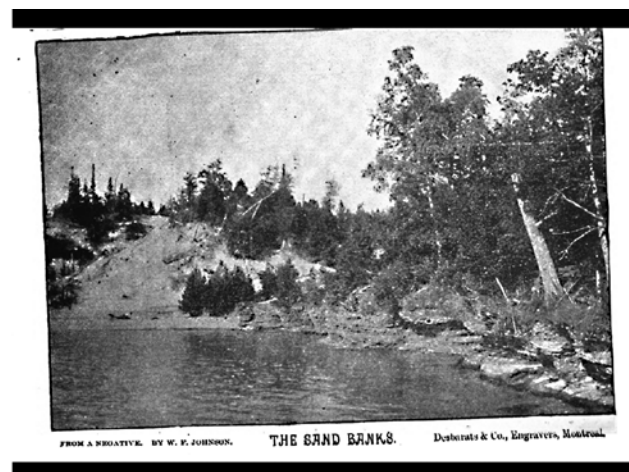
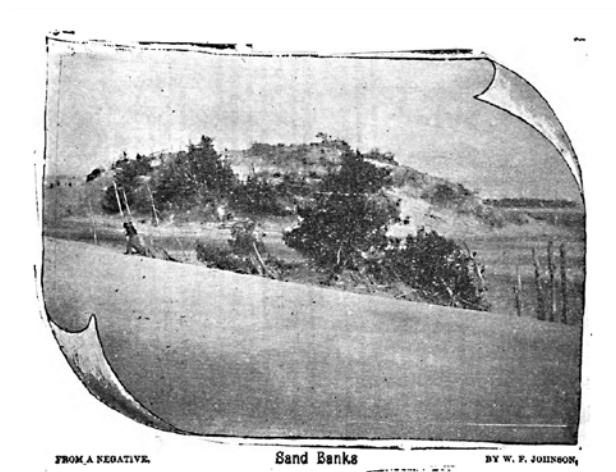
*The Picton Gazette of February 23, 1929.*

"He was in his 73rd year and had spent all his life in Prince Edward, except for two years in Toronto. His building was the oldest on Main Street and was shared with A.E. (Ern) War Men's Furnishing. Metcalfe and Vandusen's brick building on one side and the stone Bank of Commerce building with steel shutters on the other helped confine the blaze. **Ernest Wright** discovered the blaze about 1:30 a.m. and got **Mr. Johnson** out of the building. He tried to back into the burning building and was locked in the auto showroom next door. He got out and was pushing through the crowd ran into his blazing building."

He left a wife and daughter, **Elizabeth Mayne Johnson**, who lived in Toronto.

Note: The Bank of Commerce Building is now **Henderson Williams LLP**. (199 Main Street, Picton)

*Below: Some of W.F. Johnson's Sandbanks images (low resolution only), from Helen Merrill's "Picturesque Prince Edward County, 1892"*





*I wonder if the female figure above with the little dog on the sand and on the rock, right, is William's wife, Elizabeth Flanagan?*

*Or perhaps Helen Merrill?*



One of the mysteries in this story is the location of Johnson's collection of glass plates. were they destroyed in the 1929 Main street studio blaze, or are they languishing forgotten in a County basement?

They would be of great historical value to the County.

I'd really like to know where they are!

John Brebner