



***“...born 16 September 1811 at half past nine in the morning...”
The revelations of three family Bibles in the Homestead attic.***

By far, the most famous Bible at the Homestead is the 1793 Bible of Deacon Joseph Mather. But it is not the only Bible. In the attic are three others which give us information and insights you will not find in Ancestry.com, FamilySearch, or public documents. Indeed, they share the history of many lives that otherwise would remain unknown.

As Wikipedia defines a family Bible, it “is a [Bible](#) handed down through a family, with each successive generation recording information about the family's history inside it. ...this information consists of births, deaths, baptisms, confirmations and marriages.”

The oldest Bible we have is the one which accompanied John and Ann Sutcliffe to the America in 1819. The earliest entry is the birth of John Sutcliffe Jr. on 16 September 1811. The final entry is “The child died of the 14 of July same Place 1822.” By then John Sutcliffe Sr. had died and his widow, Ann, was to leave Savannah for New York. It is with this Bible that we learn of the unnamed stillborn child as well as the birth and death of their third son, William (16 Jul 1819-27 Sep 1820).

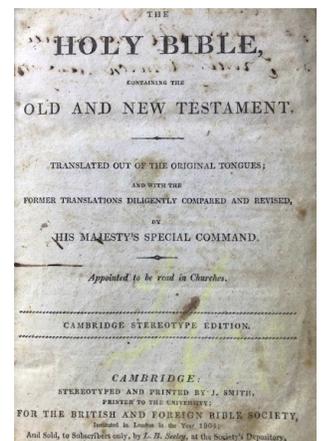
A more detailed Bible is that of Grace Sutcliffe, the daughter of John and Ann Sutcliffe, and grandmother of Jane Floy Mather, Stephen Mather’s wife. With 49 entries, spanning 95 years, it records births, marriages, and deaths. Grace married John Roberts Hoole in 1836. Go to Ancestry and you’ll find they had eight children. Come back to this Bible and you’ll find they had eleven. The additional three were all girls, each of whom lived less than one year.

Among the marriage entries in the Grace Sutcliffe Bible is:

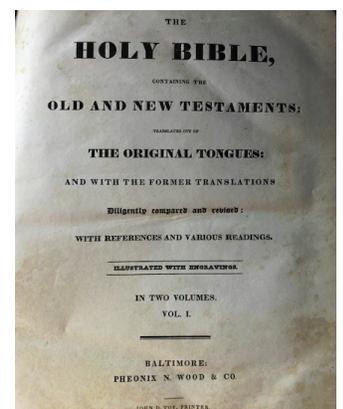
“At St. James Church, Eliz. Jane Thacker Floy
to Stephen Tyng Mather October 12th 1893.”

In the third Family Bible, that of the Floy family, the marriage appears as:

“Jane Thacker, daughter of James and Sarah A. Hoole Floy,
married Stephen Tyng Mather, in the City of Elizabeth,
New Jersey, on the 12th of October 1893.”



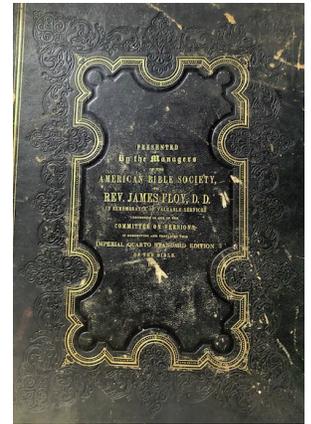
John and Ann Sutcliffe’s Bible



The Grace Sutcliffe Bible

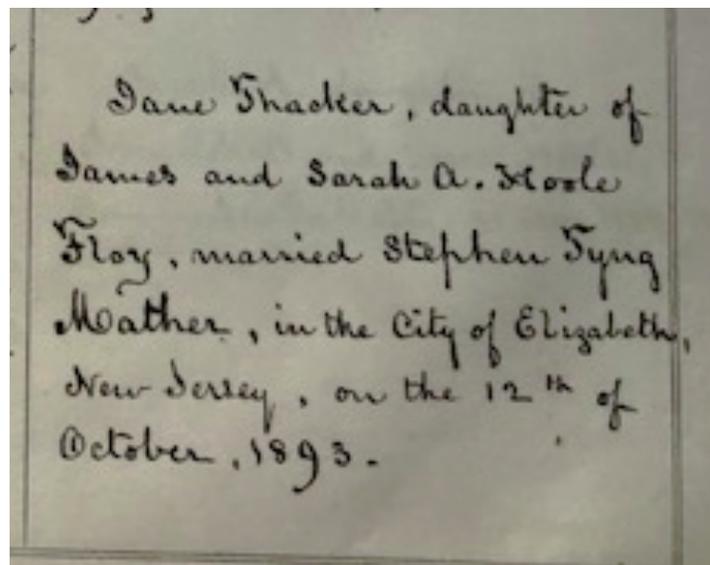
The Floy record includes 20 births, 9 marriages, and 17 deaths. The oldest entry given a date is "Michael Floy, Born 18th Dec. 1775, in Devonshire, England." And again, we learn of events and lives that well may have passed unnoted and unnoticed.

Jane Floy Mather's grandfather, the Rev. James Floy, had four children by his first wife, Jane Thacker. Two are unrecorded except in this family Bible. In 1860, the Rev. Floy remarried. In August 1863, his wife, Emma Jane Yates, died two days after giving birth. A month later their daughter Effie died. And in October 1863, the Reverend himself passed away. It appears his was the only death ever publicly recorded.



Floy "Family Bible" A Presentation from the American Bible Society

Today, "official" documentation is taken as a given. These Bibles remind us of another time...when it was a personal, and quite literally, a sacred commitment to one's family to record and remember the most important events of each member's life.



Stephen Mather – Jane Floy's Marriage as recorded in the Floy family Bible