

The William Pearson Daybook

By Barb Pearson and Greg Haley

The William Pearson Daybook was donated by George R. Pearson to the York-Sunbury Historical Society on 17 November 1937. George R. Pearson was a veteran of the Great War and a clerk at the post office in Fredericton. The Book belonged to his grandfather, William Pearson Esq., late of English Settlement, Kings Co., N.B. The book was donated shortly before George and his wife retired and moved to Texas to live with their son, a university professor.

So who was William Pearson and what can his Daybook tell us?

William Pearson was one of ten children born to Thomas Pearson and Ann Heaviside of Cumberland England. The family emigrated from England to New Brunswick in 1823, and settled on the Kennebecasis River, a short distance below the mouth of the Millstream tributary, where they purchased the William Inwood farm. On this property in 1825 they built an English-style house, called Stone House, notable for being the oldest free-standing stone building in Kings County. In 1824 several of the Pearson sons, including William Pearson, obtained grants of land in the newly-founded English Settlement, which was being established in the hills separating the Upper Millstream Valley and the Upper Washdemoak. William Pearson had two sisters and both married into the family of Scotsman Charles Murray, who was the principal tenant on the Studville (Studholm) estate at the mouth of the Millstream, belonging to Judge John Saunders of Fredericton. Several members of the Murray family later obtained land by grant or purchase at English Settlement. The settlement straddling the Kings-Queens County Border, was renamed along parish lines in 1897, as Highfield, Queens and Pearsonville, Kings. This was due to the opening of a post office in both areas. The post office in Pearsonville was in William Pearson's home on Lot #9. The post office in Highfield was in the home of a nephew, William Walter Pearson.

William Pearson spent his early life in Saint John as a clerk in the employ of his uncle Thomas Heaviside Esq. (1769-1833). Heaviside was a timber and dry goods merchant who had business connections in England, the West Indies and the Canadas. Thomas Heaviside had formerly been associated with the Royal Navy Yards at Halifax, where he made a considerable fortune, and he owned saw-mills at Sissaboo, N.S. Heaviside was a prominent member of Saint John society and held a number of commercial and public offices, including Provincial Auditor, Collector of Customs, Secretary of the Maritime Insurance Company, Cashier and Clerk of the Bank of New Brunswick and Secretary of the Marine Hospital. William Pearson was responsible for settling up his late uncle's affairs in 1834 after he died 29 July 1833. Thomas Heaviside is buried in the Old Loyalist Burial Ground in Saint John.

William Pearson had married Ann McGinn of McGinn Settlement in 1832. The McGinn family had emigrated from Ireland in 1828. They took up residence in English Settlement by 1834. William was one of the first general merchants in the district. By 1851 he had erected a grist mill on the Pearson Brook which was on the old "Pearson" Road to Highfield. This mill remained active until the 1870's. A grinding stone from the mill can be found on the Crealock farm in Pearsonville that had been the home of William's son, Isaac Richard from 1870 to 1919. William Pearson filled a series of Parish offices, beginning in 1840 as the assessor for the newly formed parish of Studholm. In 1841 he was a surveyor of lumber and from 1842-1844 he was a surveyor of highways in Studholm Parish. In 1846 he accepted a position of an officer in the 2nd Battalion Kings County Militia and in 1858 received an appointment as a Justice of the Peace.

His death in 1895 left a widow, two daughters and three sons. The sons were Thomas Heaviside Pearson, a farmer at Highfield, a militia officer, one of the original troop captains of the 8th Princess Louise Hussars; Isaac Richard Pearson, farmer and miller at Pearsonville; and William Walter Pearson, farmer and Postmaster at Pearsonville. William Pearson continued to serve as a magistrate until his death in 1895.

Date: November 8, 1895

County: Kings

Place: Sussex

Newspaper: Kings County Record

Collina (Kings Co.) Nov. 4 - William PEARSON, Esq. an aged and respectable resident of English Settlement, died Wednesday, Oct. 30. He was 96 years of age. Deceased was the father of Thomas Heaviside PEARSON, Isaac R. PEARSON and W. Walter PEARSON, all residents of English Settlement.

The William Pearson Daybook

William Pearson's daybook covers his commercial activities from 1836 until 1872. An examination of the accounts in the book indicate his dry goods business supplied early settlers and lumbermen from adjacent communities including **Irish Settlement, East Scotch Settlement, Collina, Keirstead Mountain** in Kings County, and **Goshen, Long Creek, Boyds' Settlement (Annidale)**, and **Salmon** Creek in Queens County. There are also earlier accounts for his father Thomas Pearson as well as fragmentary early accounts belonging to previous owners of the daybook.

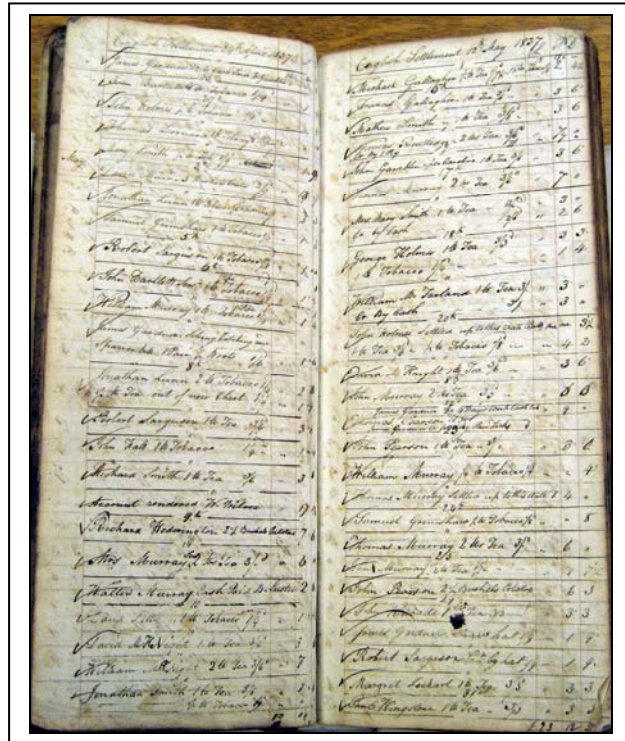
It appears that the William Pearson daybook had two previous owners, first **Robert Gibson** of Fredericton, Sussex Vale and Millstream, who used the book from 1824 to 1829, then **Charles Murray** of Studville (Studholm) used it from 1829 to 1834. Charles Murray was Robert Gibson's father in law. Partial accounts from these two owners remain in the book. William Pearson's use of the book appears to begin when he closed the late Charles Murray's accounts.

William Pearson's ledger then begins "**English Settlement 26 December 1836**". At first a simple chronological running list of debits and credits was kept from that date until January 1839, when the ledger was reorganized into a series of separate accounts under each customer's name. The last ten pages of the daybook are not numbered and contain miscellaneous information. There are two series of accounts for the **Grist Mill**, one dated 18 October 1852 through April 1855, the other from 10 May 1859 through 26 September 1872.

There are also other accounts with timber supplier John Alexander and with Messers. Alexander, William Bowie (carpenter and builder) and Jonathan Lunn (lumberman). Near the end of the book is an early entry dated 29 January 1829, containing Charles Murray's accounts in payment to John Saunders for the lease of the Studville (Studholm) property. The first account is "A list of Cattle turned off Studville farm on Judge Saunders" account from 1821-1827. The second is a "List of Cattle off the New Stock from Studville farm" on the account of Judge Saunders from 1824-1835. The 1835 account is followed by the note, "Mr. William Pearson set this writing hand." The third and final list is for grain, fleece, butter and hogs paid to "Honorable Judge Saunders from the Studville farm" in 1828 and 1829. (According to the Murray family history, Charles Murray, who had made his living as a cattle drover on the Scots border prior to coming to New Brunswick), paid his rent to Judge Saunders by annually driving cattle and sheep to Fredericton, a family story this ledger seems to support.

Judge Saunders farm was on Fox Hill which also was the training ground for the Kings County Militia 8th Hussars. The Pearson and the Murray families were regular participants. The final pages of the ledger include William Pearson's account with his father, Thomas Pearson from 1824 through June 1834. And lastly there is Michael Marley's account dated 1826-1831 for a variety of blacksmith work. Marley was an original settler at English Settlement, but sold his claim before paying off his grant.

The Daybook~William Pearson's Store Ledger~1836-1852



Customers~April 24 April 1837~Purchases are tea and tobacco

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| James Gardner | David McKnight |
| John Bartlet | William McKnight |
| John Holmes | Jonathan Smith |
| Thomas Leonard | Michael Gallagher |
| Mary Smith | Francis Gallagher |
| David Muir | Matthew Smith |
| Jonathan Lunn | Thomas Routledge |
| Samuel Grimshaw | John Gamblin |
| Robert Sargeson | Thomas Murray |
| William Murray | Paul Kingstone |
| John Hall | George Holmes |
| Richard Smith | William McFarland |
| Richard Hedenngton | John Holmes |
| Mrs. Murray | John Pearson |
| Walter Murray | John Kincaide |
| David Little | Margaret Lockhart |

The William Pearson Store~ Lot #9 English Settlement, Kings Co., N.B.



William and Ann (McGinn) Pearson settled in English Settlement, Kings Co. in 1835. There were more outbuildings when the store was in operation. The large barn was originally two. There are dates of 1866 and 1868 on the hand-hewn beams. The Pearsons carved their initials as well. Earlier barns were possibly of logs. The old house had a post office in the kitchen. There were apple trees in the front pasture. The last tree died in 1986. The KCR records celebrations held on the front yard.

The house was burned in 1950.

Items Sold in William Pearson's Store

Dry Goods:

- tea, coffee, sugar, and molasses,
- salt, pepper, mustard, ginger, and spices
- tobacco, pipes and makings
- muskets, guns, powder, shot, and lead
- fish hooks
- pins, needles, buttons, thimbles and thread
- leather, muslin, wool, flannel, and calico, also cotton by the yard or in balls
- candles, soap, and shampoo ("champoe")
- milk pans, bake pans, jugs, and berry jars
- tea pots, cups, saucers, bowls, plates, fancy dishes, fine china and all sorts of crockery
- books including Almanacs, arithmetic and spelling books
- writing paper, sketch paper, pencils, and slates
- handkerchiefs, combs, razors and razor straps, basins and mirrors
- frock coats, jackets, breeches, stockings, trousers, shirts, socks, belts, braces, straw hats, fur hats, and mittens
- boots and shoes
- sheep and bear skins
- chamberpots
- indigo dye, Wheaton's ointment, saltpeter, sealing wax, oil, turpentine, and "essence of smoke"

Building Supplies:

- birch, spruce and tamarack timber
- shingles, spruce boards, sashes, and boxes
- panes of glass
- barrels of lime
- iron latches, hinges, ox-chains, rings and wedges
- nails and tacks
- spades, axes, saws, hammers, awls, sickles, scythes, shoe-pinchers, pike-poles and boat-hooks
- pocketknives, jackknives and shoe-knives
- whet stones

FOOD

- barrels of fish by the quintal, geese, turkeys, lambs, pigs,
- potatoes, corn meal, buckwheat flour, eggs, and butter
- turnip and clover seeds
- bacon, mutton, beef, venison
- gin, wine, liquor and spirits

There were also some special items mentioned in the ledger, such as a clock and a watch. The ledger shows that Pearson also rented-out horses, e.g. a mare for Solomon Parlee “to go home to fix haystack” in September, 1850. In later years he also accounted for work done by his sons, e.g. Thomas H. Pearson driving logs and sawing. Customers paid with cash or traded goods and services. The most common items received in trade included: cattle, swine, sheep and lambs, turkeys, chicken and ducks; potatoes, turnips, butter, eggs, flour and maple sugar; hay, oats, ground or fine buckwheat by the bushel; turnip, grass seed; beef, pork, barrels of fish; leather, tanned hides and shoes; various timber and logs; oxen and horses.

Occasionally William took special or unusual items in trade, perhaps things he personally needed, or for whom he had arranged a buyer. These included a horsesled, wagon, saddles, a bridle and collar, stove piping and barrels of lime. In 1840 Robert McArthur paid his account with 46 pounds of tobacco and a spinning wheel, probably brought on consignment from Saint John. The items people sold or traded sometimes revealed a certain aspect of their work or personality. Richard Pearson, a noted bear hunter, once sold a number of muskets and guns, and John Pearson provided rum from his tavern. Thomas Murray Esq. sent boards from his mill, and Alexander McFarlane twice paid in apples from his orchard.

Often bills were balanced against a day’s work on Pearson’s farm, including hoeing, haying, hauling, piling and planting, reaping, sawing, chopping, shaving shingles, and cutting firewood, as well as parish road work and bridge work. George, William, and Dan Watson did a lot of this work. Sometimes work was done for William’s father; Michael Owen did work for Mr. Thomas Pearson at the Stone House, including haying, threshing, picking potatoes, and banking the cellar. Francis Carroll did “one year’s work” in 1841 for L5, which was sufficient credit to cover his purchases until 1844. Some men brought freight by sled, or brought goods by wagon to Saint John.

Some provided services in their respective trades and professions. Dr. Beavan was credited for “attendance and physic” while several teachers were credited for “schooling”, including Samuel Grimshaw, Francis Gallagher, and George Smith, the later mentioned as a teacher in 1857-58. The ledger mentions various types of blacksmith work by James Tamlyn: sharpening, joining a cart and making “door banns and crooks”. Abel Lawson also did blacksmith work on credit, shoeing horses and making staples for a barn door. Walter McAllister was credited for shoeing the coach horse and making hand irons. James Gardner and John Hall were shoemakers and furnished the store with shoes. They also re-soled and repaired boots. William Wilcox did extensive chopping and procuring of timber for Pearson, also “getting the frame for a barn door”. David Muir often balanced his account against carpenter work, making barrels, carts and harrows; laying a floor, framing a barn and a hog-house; roofing the kitchen, and framing a new house in 1857; also doing frequent work at the mill. Joseph Pearson Jun. did carpentry work too, framing a barn and also doing unspecified work at the local graveyard, perhaps mending fences or making coffins.

Men were not alone in their labour. The family bills were often paid by wives and daughters; sewing, mending, spinning, weaving and making trousers, jackets, gowns, frocks, mittens, hats. They also made butter and kept hens for eggs to barter.

Much information can be gleaned about rural parish life during New Brunswick’s “growing years” by leafing through the pages of William Pearson’s Day Book. And yet much is missing! While the book records what was given and taken on credit, one must wonder about all those transactions that were never recorded: the ones that were paid in cash!