

History of Apohaqui, Kings County, N.B.

Written by Marjorie Bupee McAlpine in 1962.

Donated by the family of Alice Baxter of apohaqui.

Submitted and edited with the addition of pictures by Barbara F. Pearson UE

(See photos at bottom)

“In the following pages I have endeavoured to give a brief account of life in this area of Sussex and Studholm parishes, known as Apohaqui, since the year 1780. Some of it will be rather vague owing to lack of records long lost. For my material, I am very grateful to the late Mrs. Harley Jones, for use of her scrapbook; the late Mr. Edward Erb; the late Mr. Carleton Musgrove; to Mr. Robert White for use of his map and any others who have put up with my curiosity from time to time.”

Apohaqui, Kings Co., N.B.

Apohaqui~as one says the word, one can almost hear the whisper of Indian paddles glide out of the Millstream into the Kennebecasis River. We can almost smell the smoke of camp fires as the natives, the Maliseet Indians, cooked their supper and rested after long hours in canoes. They might stay here over-night or even longer, in true Indian fashion~here today and gone tomorrow!

However there is evidence that an Indian village of a more or less permanent type was located on the low banks opposite the junction of the Millstream and Kennebecasis Rivers. The name Apohaqui comes from the Indian language meaning “meeting of the waters” or “joining of swift waters”. Some people believe that the Indians coined it as a brand new word when Major Studholm built his mills near the junction of these streams. Who can tell? It is certain that the Indians had use for many new words after the white men came with his many gadgets and strange ways of using them. In years gone by, old arrow heads and Indian tools have been found when residents of Apohaqui were cultivating their gardens. There is an old Indian burying ground on the hill back of the village on the south side, referred to by local residents as “Indian Hill”.

Actually the area known as Apohaqui Village of today was not settled by white people until the railroad came, a little more than a century ago. The School District of Apohaqui, Studholm-Sussex No. 25 includes that area on the North side of the Kennebecasis River from Fox Hill down No. 2 Highway to a line approximately a mile above Riverbank Cemetery; out the Millstream Road about a mile, the Village and Back Road (running along the South side of the Kennebecasis River) a distance corresponding to that along Highway No. 2. The upland parts of this area were settled very early-possibly some white people were here even before the Loyalists landed in Saint John in 1783. Definitely since that date white people have been living here.

If we examine a map of original land grants for this area, we will find, on the north side of the Kennebecasis River the names: Major Guilford Studholm, John

Burgess, William Inwood, Benjamin Harned, Edward Burgess and Samuel Hallet. On the south side were Studholm, John Whitejack, John Ross Jr., Reader Gray and Dougold MacDonald. Grants to both William and Jonathan McLeod lay along the Millstream River. All these grants have been divided and sub-divided so many times that the original lines are difficult to trace. To my knowledge, the only descendents of these original settlers living in Apohaqui today (1962) are Mrs. Harold Holmes and her brother, Mr. Ralph Cripps. Some of these grantees never lived here, while others soon traded or sold out their interests and located elsewhere. They were followed by people by names of Pearson, Secord, Sproule, MacDonald and many others. The local name was Studville at first and later when Parish lines were laid out this community became known as Studholm.

Near the time of the coming of the Loyalists, much of the Highland ground in this area was over-run by fire –a great waste of huge pines and other trees. Some folks accused the Indians of setting fires to keep the white man out. But it may have been purely accidental, as so much clearing of land would leave a great deal of slash in woods and edges of fields. There was a terrific gale Nov 13, 1769 that blew down whole fields of trees. Naturally these dried out during the next summer or two, thus, providing a grand chance for fires to spread.

At this time game was very plentiful and the streams full of fish. Wonderful stories have come down though the years of the hunters' success. It was considered quite ordinary to shoot 2 or 3 moose in a forenoon around the "Salt Springs" near Penobscus. It is reported that salmon and trout were so plentiful in the Kennebecasis River at times there appeared to be a "silver bridge" on the water level at the "Rapids" about two miles below the present Apohaqui Bridge.

Dated June 10, 1784, a grant of land (lying in the present parishes of Studholm and Sussex) was made to Major Guilford Studholm and took in 5000 acres. This was one of the last of the grants from the British Crown through headquarters at Halifax, N.S for on August 16th of that year, New Brunswick became a separate province. Major Studholm along with Thomas Harper, James Hayes, John Burgess and William McLeod had interests in a large grant of 14,000 acres in what is now Sussex, Parlee Brook, Salmon River area. This company soon dissolved and Major Studholm concentrated on clearing land, building mills, and houses on his grant in Studville.

Major Studholm was born in Ireland in 1740 and as early as 1762 was in command of Fort Frederick in what is now West Saint John. He was very active in military circles and was later made Commander of Fort Howe. Here he was to welcome the Loyalists in 1783 and tried to establish as many of them as possible. It was only fitting that the Major should receive the large "grant" mentioned above. On moving here he built a home on the eastern side of the Millstream with saw and grist mills near site of present mill owned by the Jones Brothers. The upper section of his land was known as "Drill Hill" (Fox Hill) and used as a military training ground for the militia. The Major died Oct 11, 1792, at the age of 52 years. At his request he was buried in an unmarked grave near his home, at the very top of the

hill (Earl McKnight) farm of today. Major Studholm had never married and left no heirs. He was said to be very wealthy but to all outward appearances he was destitute when he died. Stories have been handed down and more or less believed that his money was buried near his grave and that his ghost hovers near to guard same. All his personal effects, including his woollen underwear, were sold to pay his bills. Superstition was more prevalent in those days, and many weird tales have been told of strange and startling apparitions that have been seen near his grave, and, incidentally, the buried treasure. In the early years parties of treasure-seekers went many times in the dead of night to dig for the hidden gold. They were supposed to keep silent, especially at midnight. One night, in his excitement, one forgot and shouted, "There it is!" Immediately a lantern light held by another man was blown out (mysteriously) and all claimed to have seen the Major riding away on his famous white horse carrying a strong box across his saddle. So far as the public knows this hidden treasure has never been located.

Two streets in Saint John were named for Major Studholm; Guilford and Studholm. Studholm was later changed to its present name, Charlotte Street.

This grant reverted to the crown and later Judge John S. Saunders obtained it. He owned a large property in York County called "The Barony". It is doubtful if he ever lived in Studholm. At his death a son, Col. John Saunders inherited this property, but from time to time sections had been sold off and was so reduced in size that it is doubtful if Col. John ever owned any land west of the Millstream River. That section seems to have been taken over by John Burgess. The names: Lyon, Weyman, Ewing, and others appeared at an early date.

Col. Saunders was a prominent citizen and popular neighbour. He entertained lavishly and generously supported the Anglican Church. At first Col. And Mrs. Saunders lived in "Grantley Hall", a very fine house built near the Millstream. It is said this house had nine chimneys and a huge ball-room. Later Col. Saunders built a large house on Fox Hill, now owned by W.S. Watters, and died there. He had no children so a nephew, Col. H. Montgomery Campbell inherited this property and lived here until fairly recent times. In fact one small house was owned by members of this family until 1960 when it was bought by Joseph Sharpe of Berwick. The properties now owned by Earl McKnight, Harley Hayes, George Snow, Gordon Morrison, Earl Tribe, John Attoe, W.S. Watters, R.T. Watters and Bowden Brothers, all were a part of this estate, some sections have changed hands many times and various buildings have been added and subtracted also.

Thomas Pearson and John Burgess came directly from England. Three families of the Burgess name came to Canada about the time the Loyalists arrived. But only John stayed here. I believe he soon died and his widow left with 6 children had a very difficult time. In fact at one time she kept house for Major Studholm. Mr. Pearson bought land about a mile further down river. He soon replaced the log house on it with a fine 2 story house. This is still in good repair and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Emerson P. Rankine. The original Burgess house has long since disappeared but the homestead of the last generation of Burgess" was built in 1837,

a wooden house, but is still liveable. It has changed hands several times since the death of Walter Burgess about 1945 and is now owned by Roy Douthwright.

On down the road, people by the name of Secord, bought up large tracts of land on both sides of the river. Three brothers, James, Gilead and Carnel Secord , Loyalists, settled first at Oak Point on the Saint John River, but were dissatisfied there and moved to Studville, as this area was called then. The Sharpes and Johnsons came about 1786, followed shortly by the Lyons and Murrays, some of these families while attending church here, actually took up land at Lower Millstream and on into Pearsonville and Highfield. Archibald McDonald, a schoolmaster from the Highlands of Scotland, came with his family in the early part of the 19th century. He soon started a day school, the first that was held in this community. He used a room in the house of George Burgess and taught the “Three R’s” thoroughly. School opened early in the morning and closed at sundown, one recess, only, at noon, and 6 days a week. This was long before days of free schools, tuition was 14 and 10 pence for 12 months for 3 scholars. Mr. McDonald’s daughter Elizabeth, married Thomas Roach Burgess, his second wife. The late Mrs. Harley Jones was their youngest daughter.

Transportation and Trade

As early as the 1760’s there was a road of sorts between St. John and “The Bend” (Moncton) more or less in the same place as the No. 2 Highway of today. It was little more than a bridle path at first, later improved by corduroy (logs) in swampy places. There were no bridges at that date but the L was one, another near the Stone House at Studholm. It must be remembered that the water level in these little rivers was much higher in those early days before the forests had been cut back.

For more than 40 years after settlement of Sussex Vale, the Kennebecasis River, continued to be the chief way of transportation of heavy freight to and from St. John. At one time these “Durham Boats” went up as far as Penobsquis. These boats were flat bottomed 30 to 40 ft. long and equipped with mast and sails for use when the wind was willing and 4 to 6 pairs of stout oars, when the wind was contrary. A strong towrope was sometimes used especially through shallow water. Often a horse was driven along the shore to pull this rope. Potatoes, pork, beef, etc. were taken down to St. (not Saint in those days) John and the return load was made up of items such as molasses, tea, sugar, etc. Prices of tea (\$1.00 per lb. and sugar (24cents per lb.) were high at that time too.

Oxen were used for farm work and at times to visit the neighbours. Very few horses were in the country when the Loyalists arrived. Gradually the roads were improved and stage-coaches became the luxurious mode of travelling. Regular trips were made between St. John and Fredericton; St. John and Halifax, etc. Fresh horses and entertainment were provided at the many “Road Houses” or Inns along the way. The usual price for such accommodation as lodging, supper ½ pint rum and tobacco was 1s 6d. Another economical buy at this time was 2 gal. rum, with a

tub to carry it in., at 18s. 9 d. Think of the many uses the tub could be put to afterwards. Some of the Inns had very few guest rooms and guests provided their own blankets. Each guest rolled up in his own blanket and lay as near to a large open fire as he could, roasting one side and freezing the other. The Stone House at Apohaqui was an Inn at one time, another Inn was at Secords. Mrs. May Higgs lives at the Secord house now. Still others were at Roachville, on the site of the T. Hayes store and at Sussex Corner. Also at Sussex Corner was the McMonagle House. Transportation accidents happened in those days too. It was not unusual to hear horses being frightened and passengers being thrown out. A coach overturned at Apohaqui on one occasion and a mother and a baby were killed. Shortly after 1850 there was great excitement to hear the railroad was coming! The first surveys were made through the valley of the Kennebecasis River on the meadow and near the bank of the stream. These plans were soon upset by the flood of 1854. In November of that year there was a torrential rain storm lasting more than 48 hours. During the last night of rain five dams on the Millstream broke loose. The great rush of water backed up covering the meadows and people were awakened by the water rushing into their homes. Many cattle were drowned in their stalls. Morning came and the sun shone brightly on hen houses floating down stream, with roosters crowing from the roof-tops. Pigs swam until they drowned. No human lives were lost, but there was great property damage and financial loss in the death of so many livestock.

The railroad company made a second survey and the road-bed was laid where we see it today. The railroad was completed as far as Sussex by 1859. The first building erected in Apohaqui was the railroad station. The site for a station was first selected 2 miles downstream on property owned by Rueben Sproule (near the ford in the river) but he refused to sell the land. Then the railway company accepted the gratis offer of Col. Saunders as the present site of the station. The first dwelling house was built on the site of the home of the late Robert Williams. Shortly after this a fine hotel was built by Hon. John Ryan, opposite the Station and Charles Lockhart, a Nova Scotian, was engaged to operate it. Mr. Lockhart was more interested in his mines in Nova Scotia so left his wife to manage the hotel. Their daughter conducted a school in part of the house. There was a school across the river in Studholm at the same time.

Between 1865 and 1870 a wooden bridge was built across the Kennebecasis River near the site of the present steel structure, thus linking Studholm and Apohaqui. The steel bridge was built in 1908 by a contractor named Smythe. He built a number of bridges in Kings County of which the Covered Bridge over the Millstream near Jones Brothers Mill was one, built in 1906. About 30 years later this bridge was discarded and a concrete one built when the No. 2 highway was straightened at this point.

In the 1860's and 70's houses sprang up rapidly around the village but still the Indians lingered on the shore where the houses of Foster Avenue now stand. About this time an epidemic of Typhoid fever broke out and a number of Indians as well

as three residents died. Abram Johnson, Belding Sproule and a Coles Island resident were the three who died. After this incident pressure of public opinion caused the Indians to move back to Indian Hill.

Mr. Johnson mentioned above, was the first station agent, and as a sideline, he conducted a "likeness business" wonderful photography on tin-types, the first of its kind in this area. After his death the agents were as follows: Mr. Barbarie, Mr. Leonard, Ford McCready, William Tyng Peters, F.I. Gross, Colonel Morrison, Harold Graves, Heber Wiles, R.M. Scribner, George Peterson, Eugene Wiles, John Miller, all of whom boarded at Milton W. Baxter's as did the following temporary agents; Edward Gould, Edmund Girourd, Stephen Cain, Bruce Tower, Don Moore, Richard Glencross, Loring Wilbur, Don Blair, Ken Webb.

The station Master lived at the station and for many years it housed the Post Office. The first station was torn down in 1934 and rebuilt on a much smaller scale. The station no longer had living quarters for the Station Master.

Stage Coaches went out with the coming of the railroad, and motor cars are now pushing the railways out. There is much talk of tearing down the station. Since July of this year, 1962, we have only one employee, agent and caretaker combined, Miss Pauline Wiles, daughter of Heber Wiles.

Apohaqui had its place of business as other villages had at that time. No need to go farther than a stone's throw should you need a pair of shoes (made to order of course), a drink of rum, a new suit or horse shoes. The first General Store was kept by Matthew Fenwick, a native of Millstream, who had previously kept store at Collina and Lower Millstream. At first he was associated in business with Johnathan McLeod, but later this partnership was dissolved. The late Sir George E. Foster clerked in this store in his youth. Robert Weyman built a store near the railroad station and later sold out to James A. Sinnott of Mt. Middelton. This shop changed hands several times before it caught fire and burned to the ground in March 1956. During the last 20 years it was owned and run as a good general store by A.L. Parlee & Son. It has not been rebuilt. William Mercer and Frank Downey were the first shoemakers and George Ellison was the first blacksmith.

A garage was built and operated by the late Carl Leonard on Main St. About 1939 the garage and the hall on the corner of the street burned. A hall was rebuilt in the early 50's but not completed. A garage was rebuilt in the 40's and operated by A.J. Fournier for a short time. It is now owned by Bertrum Robinson, who owns the cottage nearby. Edward Erb and Isaac Gamblin were carpenters for hire.

About 80 years ago Stephen Jones of Belleisle Bay moved here with a large family and took over management of the Ryan Hotel. He later bought the William Mercer property which was near the site of the present Jones Bros. warehouse, and lived there. I believe that house was moved over near the United Church (then the Methodist Church) and H.L. Trites now owns it and lives there.

The Pearson Home and Inn in Studville, Apohaqui in 1825



Intercolonial Railway Station Apohaqui



Apohaqui Train Station



Jones Family Inn Apohaqui



Apohaqui Anglican Church



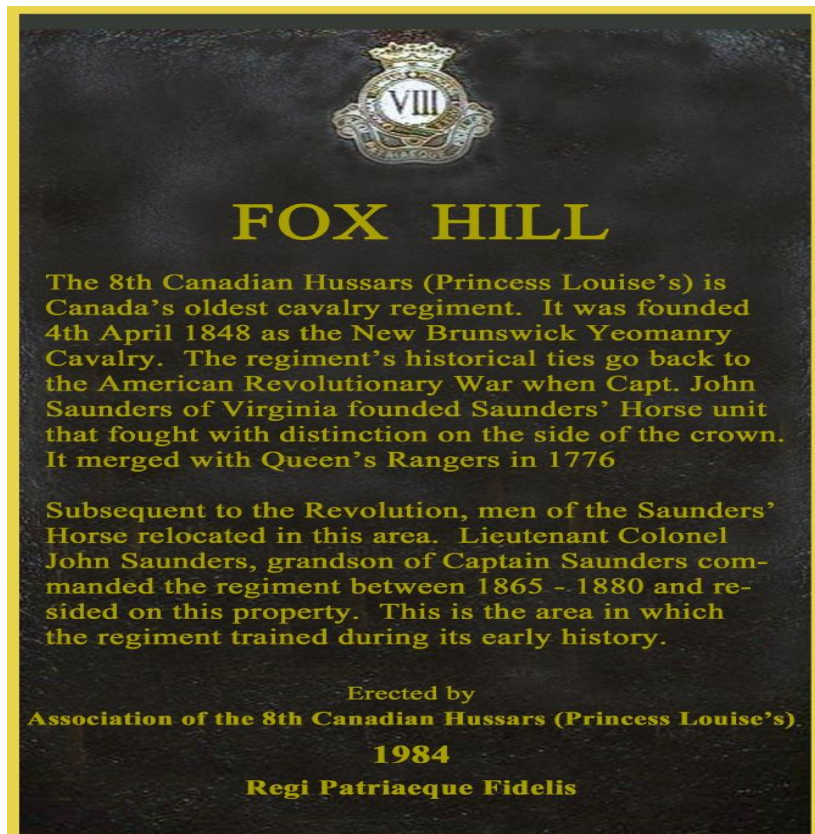
**Eliza Ruth (Secord) Pearson, (1827-1894) (Loyalist descendant) Anglican Cemetery
Apohaqui**



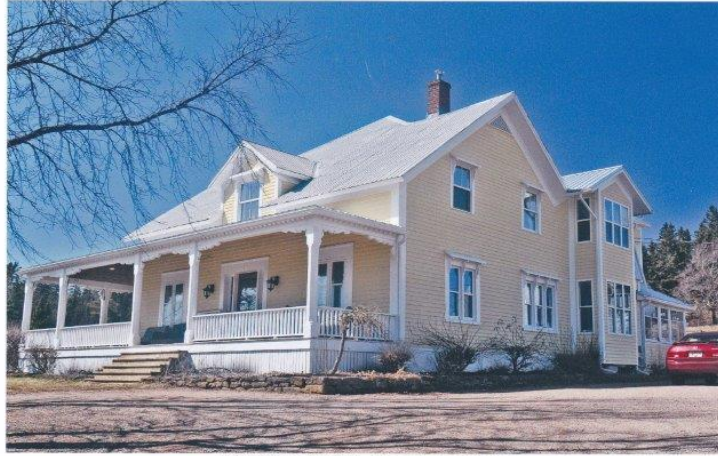
**Dr. George Pearson M.D. and Jennie (Secord) (Loyalist) Pearson
Anglican Cemetery Apohaqui**



Fox Hill, Memorial Studville, Apohaqui, Kings Co., NB



Fox Hill, Studville, Kings Co., NB



FOX HILL HOUSE - Saunders - Allaby
April 6, 2016



Fox Hill - Lieutenant Colonel Saunders home at Apohaqui. For a number of years during the late 1860s and the 1870s this estate was the location of the Regiment's annual training camps (Public Archives of Canada)

William Coleman working with the Jones Bros of Apohaqui with his team Frank and Colonel hauling lumber for the Jones General Store

