

THE LOYALISTS OF MOUNT HANLEY

By Brian McConnell, UE *

Located behind the Mount Hanley Schoolhouse Museum in Annapolis County, Nova Scotia is an abandoned burying ground that has become known as the Durland Cemetery. In it are seven or more grave markers made from hand chipped field stone. Only three are still legible with markings and one has been identified as the daughter of a settler who arrived in the area with other United Empire Loyalists in 1784. The engravings on the stones are PB 1806, AD 1825 and JHM 1826.

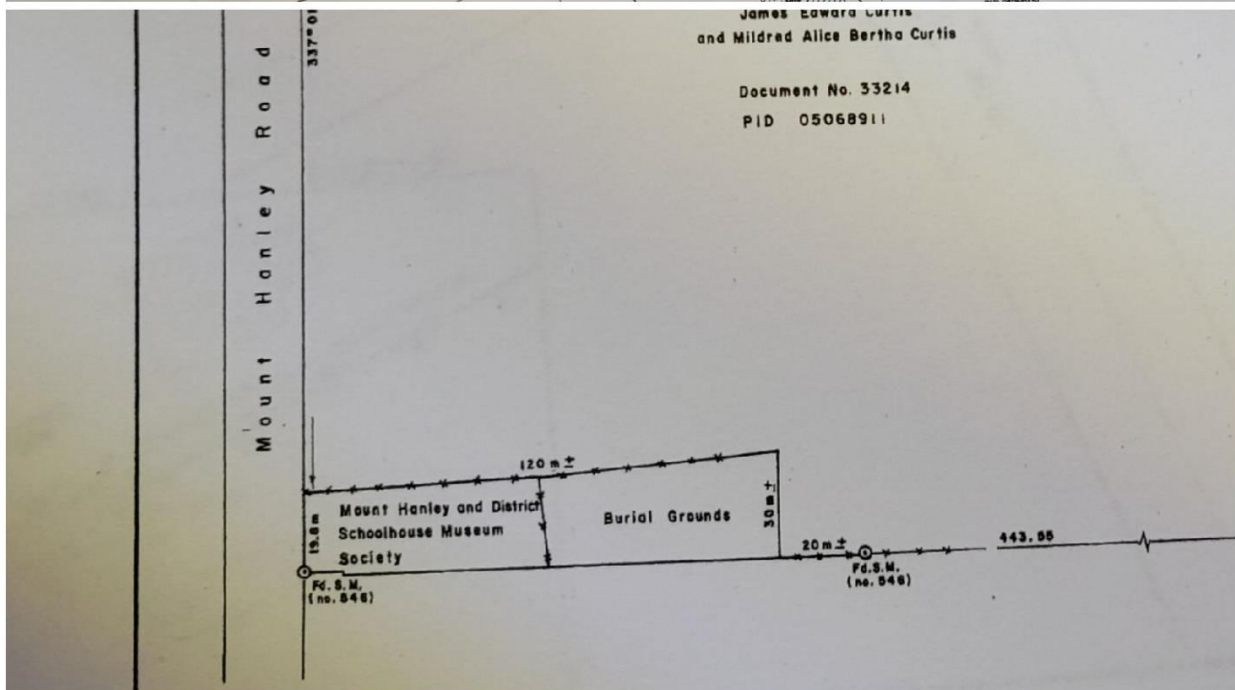


Durland Cemetery

A description of the Durland Cemetery as a “burying ground” appears in a Deed recorded on the 12th of October, 1848 in the Land Registry for Annapolis County, Nova Scotia. (1) As well it appears on two survey plans registered as Plan Number 9110569 identified as “Burial Grounds” and another being Plan Number 88107124 as “Portion of Land Reserved for Burial Ground” (2) It has been suggested it may have been an old Anglican burial ground. The Beardsley’s had their children baptized by the Anglican Church. Daniel Durland, one of the original settlers was a Loyalist and owned lands in this area. By Deed dated May 18, 1802 he and his wife Sarah Durland conveyed 100 acres to Jacob Miller and included on the description is a reference to adjacent lands of Robinson Beardsley. (3)

The identified grave marker is for Patience Beardsley, a young girl of age eight who drowned on August 25, 1806. Her father was Beverly Robinson Beardsley and mother Sarah (Hatch) Beardsley. Sarah’s parents were John Hatch and Patience Hatch, the girl’s namesake. (4) Beverly Robinson Beardsley left New York with other relatives who were United Empire Loyalists at the end of the America Revolution and arrived in New Brunswick as refugees. There he married Sarah Hatch on July 15, 1785. One of the most famous Beardsleys was his uncle Reverend John Beardsley, a clergyman who served as Chaplain with the Loyal American Regiment during the conflict. He settled in New Brunswick where he was Chaplain of the King’s New Brunswick Regiment and organized the first Masonic Lodge in the Province.

Below are portions of two survey plans showing location of Durland Cemetery to East of land owned by Mount Hanley and District School House Society on East side of Mount Hanley Road as "Portion of Land Reserved for Burial Ground" (top) and "Burial Grounds" (bottom)



The Loyalists who were granted land on Mount Hanley for their loyalty and service to the British Crown included Colonel Beverley Robinson and Major Thomas Barclay of the Loyal American Regiment. Both, however, within a few years departed the area for more established places and sold their property. When they arrived, it was a wilderness. Those Loyalists who stayed including John Slocomb from Massachusetts, Daniel Durland of New York, and Simon De Long, born in Albany, New York who during the American Revolution had been personal valet to Major Thomas Barclay. Another was Thomas Fritz who was a cart driver for the British Army during the conflict.

Prior to departing from Mount Hanley, Beverley Robinson included in his Memorial to the Commissioners dealing with Claims of Loyalists dated March 22, 1786 this description of his circumstances:

“That your Memorialist upon the reduction of the Provincial Corps was compelled to quit New York his native place and to seek a residence in Nova Scotia...That he is now settling a new farm in Nova Scotia by beginning to cut down trees and to erect a log house for the shelter of his wife and two small children, and to accomplish this is obliged to labour with his own hands.” (5)

Jeremiah Pemberton who was granted 200 acres as a Loyalist prepared a Memorial for losses and a note from Major Barclay dated February 7, 1786 that indicated he had a wife and several children and was in want. Pemberton was from Albany, New York and had served in Jessups Corps. He was imprisoned twice and escaped to New York prior to the evacuation of the Loyalists to Nova Scotia. (6)

One of the earliest descriptions of the Loyalists who settled on Hanley Mountain, also known as Wilmot mountain, and later called Mount Hanley, was made by Reverend John Wiswall, the first Rector appointed for the Parish of Wilmot. Wiswall, who was born in Boston, had remained loyal to the British Crown and served as a Chaplain in the Royal Navy and a clergyman in England before being appointed to Nova Scotia. He oversaw the construction of historic Old Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Middleton in 1789.

On December 11, 1787 in a Letter from John Wiswall to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel he states that his “little flock on Wilmot mountain” have built a log home 20 x 20 for a school and chapel and William Cropley, “one of the suffering Loyalists an elderly man recommended to me by men of character as a person well qualified” began his school the first day of November and on Sundays reads the Liturgy to them when I am engaged in other parts of the mission. “This poor but very industrious society are for the most part disbanded American soldiers who with their families four years past began this settlement in a wilderness.” (7)

About 1850 the school and chapel were replaced by the Mount Hanley School House which remained open until 1963 and later became a museum which received Provincial Heritage site status in 1995. (8)

Anglican Church Records for the Parish of Wilmot disclose before numerous Baptisms and Marriages of Loyalist families who settled Mount Hanley (9)

Baptisms by Loyalist Families of Mount Hanley

Date of Baptism	Name	When Born	Parents
1790			
July 16	Jacob	20 March 1790	Zebulon Durland (son of Loyalist Daniel Durland)
"	Henry	10 April 1789	" "
1791			
June 12	Edward	1 Sept. 1790	William & Charlotte Covert
1792			
Jan. 18	Elizabeth	17 Oct. 1791	William & Charlotte Covert
"	Fairfield Woodberry	27 Aug. 1791	John & Love Smith
"	Isabella	9 Sept. 1791	Simon & Experience De Long
Nov. 11	Daniel	29 Sept. 1791	Robert Robinson
1793			
July 1	Sarah	9 Nov. 1792	Beverley Robinson & Sarah Beardsley
"	Experience	22 April 1793	Simon & Experience De Long
1794			
June 1	Phebe	1 June 1794	John & Sarah Slocomb
June 1	Thomas	10 May 1794	Caleb & Mary Slocomb
August 1	Levina	22 July 1794	John & Sarah Slocomb
Sept. 24	James	27 May 1793	John & Love Smith
1795			
June 28	Rachel	9 Feb. 1794	Jacob & Ann Fritts
"	William	25 April 1794	John & Mary Cropley
Oct. 4	Beverly Robertson	28 May 1794	Beverly Robertson Beardsley & Sarah Beardsley
Nov. 15	Love	13 Sept. 1795	John & Love Smith
1796			
May 22	Mary	28 Jan. 1796	Caleb & Mary Slocomb
May 22	Freelove	24 Dec. 1794	Zebuland & Catherine Durland
"	Elizabeth Charlton	14 July 1795	Simon & Experience De Long
"	Anna	13 March 1795	Beverly Robinson Beardsley & Sarah Beardsley
July 3	Abraham	1 Nov. 1794	William & Charlotte Covert
	Paulina	1 Jan. 1795	" " "
1797			
Aug. 20	Elizabeth	6 July 1797	Caleb & Mary Slocomb

Marriages by Loyalist Families of Mount Hanley

Date of Marriage	Names	Comments
1791		
Sept. 6	Caleb Slocum to Mary Bass	Son of Loyalist John Slocomb
1793		
Nov. 25	Thomas Richard Nichols to Mary Robinson	Daughter of Loyalist Robert Robinson
1794		
Nov. 16	John Hawkesworth to Sarah Slocomb	Daughter of Loyalist John Slocomb
1797		
Feb. 12	Jacob Miller to Sarah Durland	Daughter of Loyalist Daniel Durland
1798		
March 27	Joseph Durland to Elizabeth McBride	
Nov. 26	Daniel Durland to Sarah Hawkesworth	
1805		
May 2	John Slocomb to Rebecca Hawkesworth	Son of Loyalist John Slocomb
1810		
June	Caleb Slocomb to Sarah Lennahan	Son of Loyalist John Slocomb

In the early 1800s religious revivals were happening throughout many parts of Nova Scotia including Mount Hanley and the Methodists and Baptists organized classes and churches. The Methodists built a Chapel in Mount Hanley. As well the Wilmot Mountain Baptist Church was constructed and more support developed for the Baptist religion. Several of the original settlers who had been Loyalists had left by 1800 and others some of whom were Baptist came to Mount Hanley to live. As well many Anglicans were converted by the religious revival.

The settlement at Mount Hanley continued to grow in the 1800s. The village became known as “the most prosperous and populous in Wilmot Township.” (10) It included sawmills, a grist mill, cheese factory, blacksmiths, general store and post office. Goods arrived and were exported from the nearby Bay of Fundy shore at Port George named after King George III. The population in recent years of fewer than twenty is small enough for some to describe it as a ghost town. (11) Not only have many of the people unfortunately been forgotten but so has the history of the Loyalists.



Grave marker of Patricia Beardsely dated Aug, 26, 1806

A description of the death of Patience Beardsley by author Sharon M. Barteaux indicates the girl was born on August 5, 1798 and “One day while coming home from school on the Long Hill, and passing her father’s mill she decided to pay a visit. While playing near the dam, Patience fell in and drowned.” (12)

Notes:

* This article was completed by Brian McConnell, UE, B.A. (Hons.) LL.B on April 20, 2023. To contact him please email brianm564@gmail.com

(1) Deed from Jane Brown to Henry Miller dated 27 June 1848, recorded October 12, 1848 in Book 41 at Page 235 as Document 2 in the Land Registry of Annapolis County, Nova Scotia as accessed on Nova Scotia Property Online on April 14, 2023

(2) Plan of Survey showing A Portion of the North Boundary of Lands Conveyed to Sandra Lee Dory prepared by Derik DeWolfe, N.S.L.S. on December 20, 2006 and recorded June 19, 2007 as Number 88102174 and Plan of Subdivision of Lands of James Edward Curtis and Mildred Alice Curtis prepared by Grant McBurney, N.S.L.S. on June 4, 2008 and recorded on July 11, 2008 in the Land Registry for Annapolis County, Nova Scotia as Number 9110569 accessed on Nova Scotia Property Online on April 14, 2023.

(3) Deed from Daniel Durland and Sarah Durland to Jacob Miller dated May 18, 1802 and recorded December 2, 1809 in Book 14 at Page 120 as Document Number 140120 in the Land Registry for Annapolis County, Nova Scotia as accessed on Nova Scotia Property Online on April 15, 2023

(4) in 1786 John Hatch resided in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia with his wife Patience and working as a Blacksmith as appears from Deed dated July 4, 1786 and recorded in the Land Registry for Annapolis County, Nova Scotia in Book 5 at Page 463 as Document Number 50463 accessed on Nova Scotia Property Online on April 20, 2023

(5) Ancestry.com. *UK, American Loyalist Claims, 1776-1835* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013. Original data: American Loyalist Claims, 1776–1835. AO 12–13. The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, Surrey, England. Accessed on April 29, 2023

(6) Ancestry.com. *American (Loyalist) Migrations, 1765-1799* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.as accessed on April 20, 2023

(7) Journal of Reverend John Wiswall accessed April 17, 2023 at <https://archives.acadiau.ca/islandora/object/collection%3Ajwiswall>

(8) Mount Hanley School House Section Number 10, accessed April 18, 2023 at <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=6947&pid=0>

(9) Wilmot Parish, Anglican Records, 1789 – 1973, Public Archives, Halifax, NS, Microfilm Reel 12000

(10) Parker, Mike. “Buried in the Woods: Sawmill Ghost Towns of Nova Scotia”. Pottersfield Press, 2010, p.162

(11) Ibid, p. 161

(12) Barteaux, Sharon, M, “My Mountain My Home – The History of Mount Hanley – Outram”, published 2009, p. 141