

ABRAHAM WARTMAN

by

John W. Sigsworth

[Note: This story was written some years ago by the late John Sigsworth of Stirling, Ontario and was shared with Kingston & District Branch by his cousin, for our Canada150 Project.]

Colourful but irreconcilable versions of the Wartman early years exist, one involving a romantic elopement and subsequent disinheriting of the high-born bride after her marriage. But the assured facts are that Abraham was born in mainland Europe – Holland or Germany – and with his wife (of European or Colonial birth) eventually homesteaded for a few years at Tunkhannock, on the upper East Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania, before joining in 1777, along with one or more sons, the famous Butler’s Rangers.

Shortly afterwards, the family livestock, furniture and utensils were confiscated and the eldest son was killed while resisting capture. Abraham, though described as “very loyal”, was discharged after two or three years of service, due to age.

With the War ended, he came in 1784 (two versions of the route exist) with his wife, three living sons – Peter, John and Barnabas – and several daughters to the Cataraqui area. Here he was given a lakefront lot by Captain Michael Grass. That was Lot 10, Concession 1 (on the east side of present Sunnyacres Road) of Kingston, the most easterly of five townships surveyed for Loyalists and a lot that Abraham personally asked for.

Abraham died in 1787, but not before he had seen his son Peter married to Grass’ daughter Eva (or Eve) in the previous year. Peter and John became farmers, while Barnabas was a Methodist “local preacher”. Daughter Susanna married a brother of Laura Secord. *[Editor’s note: this would mean that Susanna’s husband was an Ingersoll.]*

Abraham’s further descendants were soon legion. Four grandsons – Peter, Daniel, Henry and Barnabas – all married Days, three being sisters. (The first three named were sons of Peter; the last of John.) Among Peter’s descendants are Sharon Cadieux, the late Harriet Jeffery and the late Ward Wartman; among Daniel’s were the late Uly Wartman of Warkworth and the Keplar Wartmans; among Henry’s are John Wartman of Ottawa. The writer traces his ancestry to Barnabas (an early Harrowsmith postmaster) who alone had 14 children, nine having descendants through marrying into families with names Ellerbeck, Grass, Guess, Hill, Lake, Switzer, Warner and Wilson. The second wife of both James Richardson and Alexander Graham Bell’s father were descendants of Abraham.

[Editor’s note: James Richardson’s second wife was Susanna Wartman; see http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/richardson_james_1819_92_12E.html. According to Wikipedia, Alexander Melville Bell’s second wife was Harriet Shibley.]