

BENJAMIN BABCOCK UE
and the STEEVES FAMILY
by Marguerite Colpitts

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The original Steeves family came from the Principality of Moravia in 1759, the year of the battle on the Plains of Abraham in Quebec. At that time their name was the Germanic Stief. Like many others from areas of Germany they migrated to Pennsylvania; indeed those German immigrants are the original Pennsylvania Dutch, Dutch being the version of 'Deutsch' i.e. German.

At this time there was a very close connection between England and Germany. Queen Anne died in 1714 leaving no children and the English lords were determined not to have a Roman Catholic Stuart on the throne so they offered the crown to George of Hanover great-grandson of James I and a Protestant. George I never learned to speak English which helped to further establish the power of Parliament.

In the Pennsylvania census of 1771 the Stiefs had become Steeves. Presumably concerned by the rumblings which were to lead to 1776 they left Pennsylvania in an open sailing sloop! After a long and difficult voyage they sailed into the Bay of Fundy and landed in the Hillsborough area, Albert County, where they decided to stay. This is the area which in 1784 petitioned King George III to allow it to be called New Brunswick though it was part of Nova Scotia, because the inhabitants were mainly German and did not want to be ruled by Scots.

The Steeves were practical and hard working. They had brought with them in the sloop planting seeds as well as household possessions. They farmed, mined gypsum from the local quarry and built masts for sailing ships. In addition to useful articles they brought 12 beautiful ones - pressed glass plates, 10 inches octagonal, with the classic beehive and thistle pattern. Each plate weighs over one pound. This [shown at meeting] is the only one remaining.

The Steeves family probably told friends left in Pennsylvania that they had found a good place to live because in 1783 many Loyalists began to come up the St. John River, settling into the area around what is now the capital, Fredericton.

The Steeves were very proud of the fact that they even pre-dated the Loyalists. My husband Rolfe Colpitts has deep Maritime roots. His Colpitts ancestors are Robert and Margaret Colpitts of the Colpitts settlement in the Salisbury area in Albert County, New Brunswick. Robert was an army officer, an engineer. He and Margaret now have many, many descendants in North America who all came to the 200th anniversary in New Brunswick in 1983.

I, Marguerite Babcock Good Colpitts, am descended from Benjamin Babcock, United Empire Loyalist who came to Canada from Pennsylvania bringing possessions on an oxcart. (The yoke is still in good shape in Verona). My mother Sarah Babcock, his direct descendant, was born on the family farm in Oak Flats near Verona. When she married my father, Frank Good, they moved to the farm in Parham where I was born. My mother lived to be 102 years old!

In the circle of life's coincidences our niece Sara Victoria Good Avila went to Pennsylvania to take her PhD in biology at Penn State University. In checking records there she discovered that an earlier Sarah Good had been burned as a witch! Sara is now a Maritimer like Rolfe and is on the faculty of biology at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

This summer Rolfe and I intend to go to the Albert County Museum near Hillsborough, New Brunswick to return the Steeves plate to its original home in Canada.

Note: Jack Layton, late leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP), laid claim to Steeves ancestry of Hillborough, New Brunswick with reference to the Fathers of Federation - The Father of Confederation was Wm. Henry Steeves.