JOSHUA BOOTH
by Philip Smart

This report of Philip Smart's talk on his UE ancestor first appeared in *Cataraqui Loyalist Town Crier* (November 1997), 16(5):2-3.

Sgt. Joshua Booth was born 1758, in the Wallkill area, Province of New York. His parents were Mary Bull and Benjamin Booth. Mary (1733-1819) was from Hamptonburg, Long Island; her family had relocated in Wallkill. Benjamin Booth (1728-1783), also from Wallkill, was son of Charles from Southold, Long Island.

Joshua had a brother Jesse, who is listed in the Rose book (Adolphustown Centennial Book 1884), but Jesse never lived out his life in Upper Canada, but rather accompanied his mother back to Wallkill, New York, because she knew that the homestead could be saved. During the Revolutionary War she had helped the rebels while her husband, Benjamin, had served with the Tory Faction. The local bailiff had taken 150 foot frontage off the homestead because of Benjamin's Tory involvement.

Benjamin Booth, father of Sgt. Joshua Booth, died in May, 1783, while waiting in Manhattan for his exodus ship, although some records state that he actually died on Long Island. If true, he would have been outside the pale of redcoat protection. By late September most Loyalists had left Manhattan for a cold winter in Sorel, Quebec. In late May, 1784, Joshua and friends had transferred to bateaux at Pointe Claire for a three-week trip up the St. Lawrence River, which included about 30 portages, as Coteau Landing was the only lock finished at that time. Joshua drew a front piece of land at present-day Amherstview. He also held land beside the mouth of Millhaven Creek where he built a grist mill so the locals would not need to trek to the government mill at Kingston Mills. He also built a lumber mill and the first "Floating Bridge" at Parrott Bay on the present Bath road. Joshua thought of this idea, from reading of how Alexander the Great had arranged for his army to cross the Dardanelles by a floating bridge.

Sgt. Joshua Booth is also listed as an army surgeon. He died on duty, during the 1812-1814 War while trying to save a drowning cadet in October 1813. Joshua had just finished building a stone house to replace his pioneer home, and had lived in 'Stonewatch' several months. He had married Margaret, daughter of Daniel[1] and Sarah Fraser. Margaret, who lived until 1847, was buried in Ernestown Cemetery, on a knoll not far from her daughter-in-law, Catherine Dorland[2]. I cannot find grave markers for Margaret's husband, Sgt. Joshua Booth, or for their son Benjamin Booth, husband of Catherine.

In a later revision, Philip Smart updated his family story, as follows:

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[1]Daniel Fraser is discussed in another story on this website.

[2]The Dorland family is also covered in another story here.

BOOTH: the Family Nest in America at Southold, Long Island, 1652
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I shall skip three generations, to try and be brief, but I wanted to remind descendants that the Booth folk of Elizabethtown Township [Leeds County] and the Booth folk of Ernestown Township were related. John Booth, 1724-1788, received a land grant north of Brockville, Elizabethtown Township. There have been Booth descendants who have settled in the nearby communities of Schofield Hill and Addison. John was an older uncle to Sgt. Joshua Booth, 1758-1813, who was the first registered owner of lot 40 and the west half of lot 41, Concession 1, Ernestown Township - today bordering Bath Road in Amherstview.

If Joshua's father, Benjamin (brother of John), had not died while waiting for the exodus boat in May of 1783, he might have pioneered on the waterfront of Ernestown. But Benjamin would have had some 'baggage' to carry had he lived longer. He had not been welcomed by his neighbours in Wallkill, a village north of Goshen, New York. While he was absent, serving on Long Island, he learned that his wife Mary (nee Bull) had assisted her neighbourhood patriots! And although two of his older sons Joshua and Jesse also performed militia duty, son Thomas sided with the patriots!! Their other siblings were underage.

Both Joshua and Jesse are on the UEL list, but about 1962, I began wondering why I had heard no stories of Jesse. Their mother Mary (Bull) Booth dutifully came to Upper Canada, where she later received a letter from a few neighbours of Wallkill, inviting her to return to the old farm lot. Mary asked her son Jesse to accompany her, and perhaps stay to work the farm. A researcher told me that Jesse received a land grant in Kingston Township. Unfortunately, I do not know of any other male Booth descendants except Clement, son of Donald, and Nelson, son of Benjamin Albert, who both passed away in 1935 and were buried in Wilton Cemetery and the Methodist Cemetery, Cataraqui respectively.

But Sgt. Joshua Booth did not enjoy retirement - he died on militia duty, 30th October 1813 after trying to rescue a cadet near the windmill (one of three in Upper Canada) on Fredericksburgh Front. The handsome stone house, which replaced Joshua's frame house in 1813, still stands at 4423 Bath Road. He had named the house 'Stonewatch' as its location was ideal for spotting enemy American ships. Later owners preferred to rename the house 'Brothers Watch', the three Brothers Islands being in clear view.

Joshua and Margaret (Fraser) Booth lost an infant son Charles in 1799 and later named their youngest son Charles Andrew 1806-1873. The house passed through several relatives even when Charles Andrew was alive. Widow Margaret did not continue to live at Stonewatch and by 1817 she bought an acre of land at what later became Link's Mills in the 2nd Concession. Perhaps she had learned that her husband had two or three more children from a friendly association with a lady of Kingston. I know that there is more than one Bayard Booth; yet who is the Bayard Booth, father of infant Curtis, buried a stone's throw from the Booth Plot in the Lutheran Union Cemetery, west of Link's Mills on Ham Road? Between 1813 and 1836, Joshua Booth, Jr. worked the mill site until his older brother, Benjamin Booth heir-at-law entered into a trade with tenant John Link of Mill Creek (the future Odessa).

In 1869 the house and 300 acres was sold to neighbour Harmon Fairfield save and except the land purchased for right of way by Grand Trunk Railway. Stonewatch still has a few burial plots, now unmarked for the last quarter century. Previously recorded in these plots were three children: infant Charles d. 1799, Abraham (former heir-at-law) age 20, Mehetable age 16; their father Joshua died 1813; a sailor who was pulled from chilly water; an entire family whose boat sank crossing from Amherst Island and perhaps an early household servant.

The following is a genealogical list of descendants of
• Charles Booth 1689-1771: Charles, Mary, George, John who relocated in the Brockville area, infant died 1727, Benjamin 1728 - 1783 (mentioned above) and Anne.
• Benjamin Booth d. 1783, married Mary Bull, issue: Joshua 1758-1813, Thomas, Jesse, Mary, Eleanor born 1774, Benjamin Jr. who married twice, and probably four infants.
• Sgt. Joshua Booth, d. 1813, married Margaret Fraser daughter of Daniel, issue: Abraham, Sarah, Benjamin, Joshua Jr. Hester, John F. (teacher), Charles died in infancy, Charles Andrew, Mehetable, Mary, Eleanor and Harriet.
• Benjamin Booth 1793-1862 married Catherine Dorland 1788-1838 daughter of Philip of Adolphustown, had eight children; their third daughter Mary Eleanor Booth 1816-1888 married Parker S. Timmerman 1813-1897, ancestors of compiler Philip Smart.