

MAHLON KNIGHT

by the late Barbara J. Knight Cruchon

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My Loyalist ancestor, Mahlon Knight, was a Quaker, son of Isaac and Elizabeth (Wright) Knight, born 30 September 1744, Abington township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, a few miles northeast of Philadelphia. His Knight ancestor came from England to Philadelphia about 1683. Mahlon grew up on his father's farm, and learned the tailor's trade. He apparently left there around 1770 (leaving behind an unpaid debt), and we have no further word of him until he, his wife Rachel, and two young sons took ship in New York City, arriving at Annapolis, Nova Scotia, 19 October 1782. (It's thought his wife's surname was Bowen.) Two of his brothers, Joshua and John, were also Loyalists; Joshua was leader of a group of Quakers and Anabaptists who settled Beaver Harbour, New Brunswick, in 1783.

Mahlon and his family are included on a 1784 Return of Loyalists then quartered in Montreal, and the following year they are on the lists of settlers at Cataraqui (now Kingston), and Mahlon is among those who have drawn town lots. He also received considerable acreage in Kingston Township, where he had his farm on lots 11 and 12 in the third concession.

Mahlon served on a number of juries in Kingston, and was a member and benefactor of St. George's Church. In 1804 he returned to his Quaker faith, and received a certificate from Abington Monthly Meeting of Friends to Adolphustown Monthly Meeting in Upper Canada. His father, Isaac, died in 1794, back in Abington, and bequeathed to his son Mahlon £280, as well as payment of that as-yet-unpaid debt.

As a United Empire Loyalist, Mahlon received much land from the Crown, including lots 37 and 38 in the fourth concession of Sidney, Hastings County, where his grandson, Jonathan Knight (my great-grandfather), settled in 1832. Mahlon sold his three town lots in Kingston to Richard Cartwright in 1804. The fine limestone Cartwright house stands today on part of this property, at the corner of King and Gore streets.

Mahlon Knight "of Kingston, tailor" made his will on 1 March 1810, "weak in body but of perfect mind and memory, thanks be given unto God." He carefully divided his several thousand acres of land among his four living sons, Isaac, Cornelius, John and Peter, and his daughter Mary, mentioning also grandchildren Mahlon, Rachel and Joshua Knight, and Mahlon Knapp. His wife Rachel was given separate property, and together with youngest son Peter (then unmarried) received the home farm, with all livestock, farm utensils and furniture. His oldest son Isaac, as executor, registered the Memorial of his father's will in 1819; it is uncertain just when Mahlon died, probably around 1815 or 1816.

His descendants today are widely scattered throughout Canada and the United States. Those of us who have researched the Knight family and have discovered Mahlon among the past generations are proud to make his acquaintance.