

## PURDY FAMILY

by Doreen Hooper O'Brien, UE

This first appeared in *Cataraqui Loyalist Town Crier* (Sept. 2005), 24(4):4-6.

Cataraqui was first settled by Loyalists, many of them Methodists who, in 1784, came from New York State under the leadership of Michael Grass. It was with his Company No. 5 under Captain John Everitt that Gilbert Purdy died on passage to Philadelphia under Gen. Howe. His widow, Mary, her four sons and four daughters came to settle in Cataraqui area. Some of Gilbert and Mary's children moved a little further afield but names of their descendants are well known to the larger Cataraqui area. Mary's daughter, Mercy, married John Everitt and later married Peter Grass, a son of Michael Grass. Daughter Rhoda married, first, John Wartman, and on his death married Barnabus Day. Daughter Catherine married Joseph Ferris and daughter Charlotte married Nicolaus Herchmer. It appears from family tree notes and from "The Purdy Connection" compiled by Ruth Law that widow Mary's eldest son David lived in the Collins Bay or Bath area and her youngest son, Samuel, when married moved to Elizabethtown. That leaves sons Gilbert and Micajah who remained in Cataraqui and whose descendants have been associated with the Methodist church ever since.

Gilbert Purdy (1763-1851) - His grave stone is in the United Church cemetery near the road, south of the church and states "he was a member of the Methodist Church for 64 years". This means he became a member in 1787. Gilbert married Ann Elizabeth Jennings and they had 13 children. The branches spread out but some remain close by. Gilbert's son, Jesse (1794-1881) had a son Robert (1836-1896) whose daughter Hester Jane (1868-1958) married John W. Edwards. We do know that Dr. J.W. Edwards and his wife Hester Jane as well as their children Edna (Edwards), Worden, Sadie (Loney), Evelyn (Packer) and Elizabeth (Haggart) did live in Cataraqui and contributed much to the life of the Methodist Church in the early 1900s.

Gilbert's son, Samuel (1795-1859), who married Pamela Ferris, started the first regular stage coach between Kingston and York (Toronto) on Jan. 4, 1817. (From "Canadian History for January" by E.A. Taylor in Methodist Sr. Sunday School Paper, Kingston). Their home was in Sandville on the third concession of Kingston Twp. They belonged to the Wesleyan Methodist Church but it seems their children went further afield - at least two sons went "out west".

Gilbert's son, David (1808-1876), who married Mary Elizabeth Rees, appears to have the most descendants who remained connected with the church in Cataraqui. They lived in a stone house on con. 3 Lot 16 (where John Baker later lived) and they had 12 children.

Micajah Purdy (1768-1844) was the other son of widow Mary who remained in the Cataraqui area. His grave stone is directly across the highway from Cataraqui United Church and his death notice stated he was a Wesleyan Methodist. He was five times married - Elizabeth Sands, Mercy Sands (sisters), Ann Detlor, Mary Embury and Hester Jane Holmes - and when he died he was survived by his last wife and nine of his 23 children. His daughters married into the families of Guess, McCrea, Switzer, VanAlstine, Beach and Beamish. Micajah established mills along the Cataraqui Creek and also in Loughborough Twp. He owned several lots and it is known that he

owned Lot 17 Con. 3 east of the Cataraqui Cemetery as early as 1814. He is remembered even today by the name "Purdy Mills Road" in Cataraqui. It appears that most of Micajah's children lived elsewhere except John whose son John is listed as a steward in the 1884 Circuit Register; Philip whose wife Charlotte, I believe, is named in the Circuit Register and also a daughter Hester. Micajah's son Valentine (1814-1892) lived on the homestead by the Cataraqui Creek all his life and cared for his step-mother after his father's death. He married Harriet Hughson and they had 8 children.