

Joshua Knight Information

Knight, Joshua of Abington. Memorial, now of Beaver Harbour, NB, 1786. He abandoned his property immediately after the Battle of Germantown in 1777 and remained in British lines throughout the rest of the war. Claim for 141 acres twelve miles from Philadelphia, a house, blacksmith's shop and tools. Letter from Isaac Knight dated NYC 16 November 1783 to the claimant:

Dear children, I have got your estate appraised according to an Act of your Parliament by Abraham Tyson and John Shoemaker and thy brother John's likewise . . . I have taken on me to grant a power of attorney in thy stead and name . . . hoping that thee will not blame me for it because I have no other view in it to induce me to act as I have but the most tender affections of an ancient parent. Your mother is very bad with the rheumatism. Thy children when I left home were well and all the rest of us are in the usual state of health, for which blessing I am very thankful. Hoping these times find you all in the same state of health. I am informed you are in miserable country. Thee has not complied with thy promise in writing to me but I am doubtful your situation is so bad that you are afraid to give me a genuine account. I rest with the most tenderest affection to you both and children. P.S. The reason of my appointment of two of thy trusty friends is, as they are agoing in two ships and each of them will have one power of the same sort, I hardly expect both will miscarry if one should.

Letter from John Knight dated Digby, 16 April 1784, to Joshua Knight at Passamaquaddy:

Dear brother, I take this opportunity by our friend Hincksman of letting thee and my dear sister and family know that I am in tolerable good state of health, blessed be the Great Disposer of all Events for his many favours. Though I have had a very hard winter by Distress both of body and mind, I came to Annapolis last fall with a view of settling there but had such a tedious passage that the evacuation just taking place when I returned to New York, the vessels being thick crowded and my wife not in a circumstance to go to sea, was once more obliged to leave her but luckily our good old father came to New York and she went home with him to stay the winter: I am just going to fetch her . . . I could get no vessel coming to Annapolis and was obliged to go to Port Roseway, from that I took passage to Halifax which was near being my last as we were several times near being cast away . . . the vessel being so loaded with ice she would not steer the first harbour we made called Sheet Harbour . . . Four of us thought the best to fly the wilderness where there was no sign of any inhabitants . . . rather than stay on board and starve, though I expected nothing but to perish in the wreck. Two soldiers and two women that had gone to begin a settlement . . . got us Indian pilots, otherwise we should have perished. We was 45 days from Roseway to Halifax . . . I saw Jesse Lawrence in Halifax and gave him the estimate to thy estate.

From "Early New Brunswick Probate Records 1785-1835" by R. Wallace Hale:

Knight, Joshua

Parish of Pennfield, Charlotte Co., Blacksmith.

Will dated 25 3mo 1797, proved 23 September 1801.

Wife Sarah entire estate for life. Son Joshua Lot 2 that he now lives on, 200 acres, blacksmith tools, assorted books (including the Laws of Pennsylvania and History of New England), 3 guns of his choice. At wife's death residue of estate to my four children Isaac Knight, Priscilla PAUL, Jonathan Knight and Joshua Knight. Granddaughter Margrate Knight 5 pounds at age 18. Wife Sarah and son Joshua executors. Witnesses: Elias Wright, (a Quaker), Evan Thomas, (a Quaker), and AnnWright

(wife of Elias Wright). Sarah Knight renounced executorship. Son Joshua Knight noted as `being of the profession of the People called Quakers` in probate records.

Inventory, dated 28 of 10mo 1801, valued at 228 pounds by Evan Thomas, Elias Wright and Isaac Justason.

(Transcribed from the original which appeared in the Courier.) The Courier is pleased to publish a series of articles on local history in order to keep readers informed of the diverse and important undertakings of the Charlotte County Historical Society. Any persons wishing to donate funds, artifacts or support the society and the museum [former Murchie House in Milltown Heights] in any way, are asked to contact Bob Shreve in St. Stephen, George Smith in Pomeroy Ridge, Rose Haughn in St. Andrews or any other society member.

History of Beaver Harbour and Some of the First Families

Compiled by Mrs. A.W. Hawkins

Presented March, 1967

To get a clear understanding of the history of Beaver Harbour, also called Penn's Field Colony, Pennfield Colony and Bellevu (or Belleview), one should go back to earlier days and find why and how people came to settle there.

During the Monmouth Rebellion in England, there was a group called the Society of Friends of Quakers, who refused to take up arms against Catholic King James II and for this they were branded as rebels and many were thrown into prison and suffered great persecution. This led to many of them leaving England and coming to the colony of Pennsylvania.

Years later, for almost the same reason `Loyalist` descendents of these same people were leaving Pennsylvania and migrating to Canada because they would not swear allegiance to the United States of America against England. In 1783 one group under the leadership of Joshua Knight made arrangements to go to the colony of Nova Scotia of which New Brunswick was then a part.

Early in 1773 Joshua Knight had sought British protection in New York and he and many of his followers went there. Joshua was a man of prominence from Arlington, Penn. He was descended from Elizabeth Shorter, wife of John Rush, Sr., captain of the horse under Cromwell.

In June 1783 a group of people met at Joshua's New York home and a month later the following advertisement appeared:

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to those of the people called Quakers who have entered into an agreement to settle together in Nova Scotia that they are requested to meet at the house of Joshua Knight No. 30 Chatham Street a little above the Sea Water Pump on the seventh day next of the 5th of July at four o'clock in the afternoon in order to conclude upon some matters of importance to them and those who mean to join the above mentioned body.

They are requested to call No. 188 Water Street between the Coffee House Bridge and the Fly Market and have their names entered as soon as possible. No slave master admitted.

It is interesting to note that the Quakers were antagonists of slavery 80 years before Lincoln's emancipation proclamation.

Forty-nine names were signed to this agreement.

The Settlement

The place chosen for settlement through John Parr of Halifax and Governor Carleton was Beaver Harbour or Bellevu. The settlers were brought to Saint John, N.B., by ship under convoy. One ship was the Camel, 293 tons, Capt. William Tinker, and arrived 18 September, 1783. A list of the people she carried includes James Reed, Pilot, wife and two children; 30 children over the age of 10 years found as

supernumeraries for victuals and victualles at two-thirds of all provisions (spirits except) by order of Rear Admiral Digby; also Loyalists and refugees, consisting of 104 men, 50 women, 20 servants as well as 47 children who received half rations.

Nearly all the passengers of the Camel belonged to two special companies of Quakers and Anabaptists. They were immediately sent down the shore by ship to Beaver Harbour where they settled what was to have been a large town by the name of Bellevu. They suffered many hardships during the first winter.

One hundred and forty-nine lots were laid out as first grants, and these were soon followed, by 950 more. There were 15 streets and 800 residents when the town was incorporated June 4th, 1785. Three agents were appointed, Samuel Fairlamb, John Rankin and George Brown.

Original Grantees of Beaver Harbour town plots: John Rankin, Isaac Woodward, Peter Walton, Samuel Fairlamb, Samuel Stilwell, Daniel Registrar, John Knight, Nimrod Woodward, Thomas Buckley Sr., Joshua Knight Sr., Caleb Paul, Caleb Paul, Jesse Lawrence, Elias Wright Sr., Moses Foulk, Benjamin Brown, Joshua Knight, John Gill, John Horner, John Horner, John Dennis, John Loufbourron, William Holmes, John Harris, Joseph Harris, Joseph Parker, John Horner, Elias Wright, Joshua Knight.. John Horner, Elias Wright Sr., Elias Wright, Abraham Woodward, Jeremiah Fills, Richard Mead, Anthony Woodward, Jacob Buffington, Freeman Smith, John Strickland, Joseph Tomlinson, George Bennison, Jesse Woodward ,Richard Matthews, Amos Strickland, Samuel Woodward.

Only two families are now living their original grants, J.L. Wright (a direct descendent of Elias Wright, Loyalist) and Alvah Eldridge(a direct descendent of William Eldridge, Loyalist).

Early Records

Among the records of the Pennfield Colony we find the following which is taken from pages of record books found in an old trunk at Pennfield but since believed destroyed.

“Agreed by the said Company that they do meet on the seventh day of the week and the 16th of the seventh month to build a meetinghouse.”

This house was to be used by Quakers. In 1875 record shows that land was cleared for a burying ground. This land is now the property of the Baptist Church, Beaver Harbour. There are no stones to mark it as a burying ground because the Quakers did not believe in markers. Members of the Knight and Cross families are buried there. The last known burial was of Asa Best, son of John and Ann Best, about 75 years ago. This grave was marked until recent years.

The last entry in the old Records, written by an unknown hand, reads

“At a meeting of Friends at the Meeting-House, Beaver Harbour, for settling the business of the Society on the 10th day 3 m 1789, Jacob Buffington, John Dennis, Daniel Registrar and Richard Mead were appointed a committee to examine the accounts and proceedings of the committee who distributed the provisions which were received from friends from England for this place and to report thereon”

Little by little, it became evident they could not make a living here and in 1789 the Affairs of the Association were closed up.

The Great Fire

In 1790 Bellevu was destroyed by a forest fire. Elias Wright's was the only house saved. The meeting house and all records were lost. Elias Wright, Loyalist from New York, Magistrate and grantee of Saint John, married (first name not known) Kline. Elias Wright was also a grantee of Bellevu, and died in 1825, age 76, at Beaver Harbour. His son, Elias Wright, 1784 - 1854, married Mary Walton, daughter of Jesse Walton. Both are buried in Pennfield Baptist Churchyard.

In 1794 we have the record of a Quaker wedding at Pennfield. Joshua Knight Jr., married Jane Vernon, daughter of Moses Vernon.

Scattering of Settlement

After the fire many of the settlers moved to Pennfield Ridge, Pocologan, New River and Mace's Bay. In fact, Mace's Bay was first settled by five loyalist families from Beaver Harbour. Joshua Knight's dream of a large colony with Bellevu as its city was now crushed. Only a few struggling settlers remained to rebuild the little village of Beaver Harbour.

The following appears in the Winslow papers, 1803.

"Parish of Pennfield, population 54".

Rebuilding

Gradually more families began moving into Beaver Harbour. They were excellent farmers and lived quite comfortably. There was plenty of land for all as the first settlers had abandoned their grants. The new-comers settled on small farms and fished and farmed for a living. They were Anabaptists and Anglican and a few Quakers. There were two saw mills which cut about 400,000 feet of lumber annually. Two Vessels were built at Beaver Harbour - about 250 tons.

(There appears to be a missing section here, but I do not have it.)

him of 10 lbs. of sugar, seven pieces of broadcloth, six pieces of cotton and all his wife and children's clothing. They also took Capt. Cross' boat and fishing lines, etc. After loading Capt. Cross' boat and their own with plunder they said they were sorry that they had no more boats to load.

The sturdy men of Charlotte County were not the kind to be overawed and stand idly by while their friends and neighbours were being robbed. A number of them collected and manning three boats went after the buccaneers, put them to rout and drove them ashore.

There is a traditional story that on another occasion, the marauders sailed into the Harbour under cover of darkness and stole nearly all of George Wright's flock of geese. One of the group made a bag with a piece of sail-cloth put a penny in the bag for each goose stolen and tied it around the gander's neck with the following note:

"Mr. Wright: We bid you goodnight. We stole your geese at a penny apiece and left the pay with the Gander.

This petty plundering was carried on under the plea of legitimate warfare for although these small boats could not in any manner be described as sea-going vessels yet they all acted under a commission of the President of the United States of America which entitled them to treatment as prisoners of war if captured.

On another occasion an American naval ship, or man-o-war as they were then called, fired at the rock in the middle of Beaver Harbour. This rock was called Rams Head by the settlers as it resembled the head of a ram, the cannon balls knocked out great pieces of the rock so we now have one ram's head minus his horns.

On some early maps, Ram's Head is called Jail Rock. It has also been known as Sailors Rock. This harks back to times when naval ships landed sailors there whom they wished to punish. They were left with little to eat and tied to a ball and chain for such time as their superior officers saw fit to leave them, depending on the nature of their crime which in those days need be very minor.

There is a traditional story that a man by the name of Antonio escaped and swam ashore. His true last name was not known but is spelled Wadlin today. He was hidden by the people in the village, lived and married there. Thus began the present Wadlin families of Beaver Harbour.

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GLIMPSES OF THE PAST - Contributions to the History of Charlotte County and the Border Towns.

LXXII – PENN'S FIELD.

There appears to be no existing record of the date of the arrival of the Pennfield colonists.

Their leader, Joshua Knight, came from Abbington, a suburb of Philadelphia. With other members of the society of Friends, he had sought protection in New York; and his abandoned property was confiscated by the Whig authorities.

Early in 1783, the following advertisement was published in New York:-

Notice is hereby given to those Belonging to the Society of people commonly called Quakers, and to those who have had a Birthright among them, and now wish to promote that Society, and have made A Return of their names in Order to be removed to the river St. Johns in Nova Scotia, that it is the request of some of that Society that they will call at No. 188 in Water street between the Coffee house Bridge and the fly market(1), where a mode of proceeding will be Proposed to them, which it is expected will be agreeable to them: in so doing they will oblige Several Well wishers to that Society.

In answer to the above, forty-nine persons agreed to settle on 'the river St. Johns in Nova Scotia,' and adopted the following regulations:-

Rules and regulations for the Government of the society of people called Quakers, who settle together on the river St. Johns Nova Scotia, to be entered in their book of records as a standing rule to them, and Kept inviolate by every Member of Said society-

Article 1st. that a proper Book be procured by said society in which their proceedings shall be recorded, and that a Clark be appointed annually to make a fair entry of the Same

2nd. that every publick matter which concerns the society in general, shall be Determined by a Majority of votes of the members of the society who are arrived to the age of Twenty one years.

3rd. that five persons belonging to said Society shall be appointed annually by the members of the Society, to hear and determine all complaints and controversies which May arise in Said society, and that any three of the Aforesd persons meeting Shall be a sufficient number to hear and determine in those cases

4th. that no slaves be either Bought or sold nor kept by any person belonging to Said society on any pretence whatsoever(2)

5th. that in case any dispute or complaint shall be Brought before the committee appointed for Settling complaints and Disputes by a person not Belonging to said society, it Shall be their duty to See Justice done to the Complainants as soon as possible

6th. that no person belonging to the Said Society Shall be permitted or have a right to Sell or Convey the lands aloted to him in said society to any person which the said Society Shall not approve of - those regulations to remain in force until some others may take place.

The original memorandum of agreement is of such interest that we reproduce it in facsimile:-

[Joshua Knight, John Rankin, John Loofbourrow, Samuel Fairlamb, Gidn. Vernon, Amos Strickland, Evan Griffith, Joseph Tomlinson, John Strickland, Peter Price, Nathaniel Loufbourrow, Daniel Regester, Samuel Tomlinson, Peter Woltma(n), Abram Rankin, Samuel Stillwell, Joseph Thorne, Jeremiah Frith, Moses Winder, Thomas Buckley Junior, Thomas Buckley, John Burk, Edward Burk, Andrew Hamton, Benj. Brown, Richard Buffington, Jonathan Paul, John Dennis, Mathias Kizer, Richard Lawrence, Nimrod Woodward, Isaac Woodward, Jno. Hineham, Rachel Done, widow, Joseph Way, Daniel Southwick, Jon(athan) Remington, Gershom Remington, Richard Mathews, Abraham Wood Ward, Amos White, Jesse Walton, Anthony Woodward, Anthony Woodward, Junr., Abner Hamton, Wm. Reynolds, Robert Woodward, Jacob Woodward, George Fielder.]

This document was written fifty years before the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies, and eighty years before the emancipation proclamation in the United States. The fact that slavery then existed in New England, and that some of the New York Loyalists who settled in other parts of Nova Scotia brought slaves with them, makes its anti-slavery declaration the more remarkable. (2)

At a meeting of the society on the 5th day of June, 1783, it was agreed that three agents should be appointed to locate their lands; and Samuel Fairlamb, John Rankin and George Brown were selected for the purpose.

A month later the following advertisement appeared:-

Notice is hereby given to those of the people called Quakers who have entered into an agreement to settle together in Nova-Scotia that they are requested to meet at the house of Joshua Knight, No. 36 in Chatham-street, a little above the Tea-Water Pump, on Seventh Day next, the 5th of July, at four o'clock Afternoon, in order to conclude upon some matters of importance to them; and those who mean to join the above-mentioned body are requested to call at No. 188, Water-street, between the Coffee-House Bridge and the Fly-Market(1), and have their names entered as soon as possible.
New York July 2, 1783.

They had reached their destination, as we have seen, before Oct. 12. The story of their journey, and of their arrival at Beaver Harbor, is unknown to the writer, and further information on the subject would be gladly received.

A vessel bringing the Quakers and their goods probably accompanied one of the later fleets sailing for St. John. It may be surmised that the agents had chosen Beaver Harbor as a place of settlement in preference to any lands they found available on the St. John river, and made their report to that effect when the ship arrived. If this were so, the same ship would probably have brought them to Beaver Harbor. Their new settlement was called 'Penn's Field,' in honor of the founder of Pennsylvania.

The subsequent history of the settlement shows that lots were drawn by persons who never came, and that some who did come remained but a short time, and went away leaving their lots unimproved. Redistribution was made from time to time; and a list of grantees of certain lots in 1787 contains the following additional names:-

Samuel Stillwell, John Knight, Caleb Paul, Elias Wright, Moses Foulk, Benjamin Field Brown, John Gill, John Horner, James Harris, Joseph Parker, Jeremiah Fitz, Richard Mead, Jacob Buffington, Freeman Smith, Joshua Knight, jr., George Bennison, Jesse Woodward, jr., Evan Thomas, Robert Robbins, Samuel Woodward.(4)

Tradition says that the Pennfield settlers brought a considerable amount of property with them; but this appears doubtful, as we know that the colony received aid from friends in England.

(1) The word, 'Fly,' in this name, is a corruption of the Dutch word 'Vallei.' The following note from Mrs. Lamb, editor of the Magazine of American History and author of the History of the City of New York, explains its use:-

The Fly Market was near the foot of what is now called Maiden Lane. It was a salt meadow with a creek running through it into the East River, when the market was established there. The Dutch word for valley was 'v'lei' – thus it was commonly styled the 'V'lei-Market,' and hence the corruption into 'Fly-Market.' Being on the East River it was a convenient place for meetings.-Martha J. Lamb.

(2) 'No slave master admitted,' to my mind, makes that page one of the most magnificent in all our history, or in any history.-W. F. Ganong.

(3) It seems to me not improbable that the Quakers left New York in a fleet of 26 sail under convoy of the Magician frigate of 40 guns and the Tarrier sloop of war, which sailed from Sandy Hook for different parts of Nova Scotia, on Saturday, July 12, 1783. In this case, they might have come to St. John, and, finding the delays in allotting grants, have removed, say in the month of August, to Beaver Harbor. It will be remembered that there was an inclination in the minds of St. John Loyalists to remove in considerable numbers to Passamaquoddy.-W. O. Raymond.

(4) Early in the present century Elias Wright was living in Pennfield, at Beaver Harbor, as I have heard my father speak of stopping at his house there when on his way to Saint John. Jacob Buffington seems to have been a land surveyor, as I have often heard of Buffington's lines, in the eastern part of Charlotte County.-E. Jack.

<http://members.shaw.ca/caren.secord/locations/NewBrunswick/Glimpses/LXXII.html>

(article submitted by Kathleen Smith)