

Sergeant Gabriel Purdy UE (17 children)

By Grietje Renske (nee Purdy) McBride UE, B.Sc.

Sergeant Gabriel Purdy UE is my third great grandfather. He was born on 18 May 1754 and lived in Philipse Manor, White Plains, Westchester County, Province of New York. At the age of 21 he joined the British and fought in the Battle of White Plains on 28 October 1776. He was made a Sergeant at the end of the battle and served as a non-commissioned officer during the war. Gabriel served from 16 November 1779 to 04 February 1780 as a sergeant in the Corps of Westchester Refugees and Light Infantry commanded by Isaac Hatfield. On 05 February 1780 he continued as a sergeant in his brother's, Captain Henry Purdy's, Company of Light Infantry commanded by Colonel James DeLancey. As a Loyalist and to escape from Patriot soldiers, Gabriel hid in a barrel filled with tow, which is unwashed hemp, flax or fleece ready for processing into rope or wool. A Patriot officer thrust a sword into the barrel, cutting a gash into Gabriel's head, and he had to wear a silver tube thereafter to drain the wound.

On 28 March 1775, at White Plains, Westchester County, Gabriel Purdy, age 20, married Charity Purdy (12 December 1758 – circa 1776 or 1780), his second cousin and daughter of Joseph Purdy and Charity Eisenhart of White Plains, New York. They had one child:

1. Mary Purdy born after 1775

In 1782, in Morrisania, New York, Gabriel, age 28, was married to Esther Angevine (his second wife) by Squire Kipp and they fled from New York on 15 June 1783, bringing a coloured maid with them, settling in Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, near the top of the Cobequid Mountain Range that separates Cumberland and Colchester Counties. They named their land Westchester after their New York home.

Sergeant Gabriel Purdy UE and Esther Angevine were the parents of ten known children:

2. Peter Angevine Purdy (16 January 1783 –).
3. Charity Purdy (22 February 1785 – about 1823); Married: circa 1802, William Henderson Crawford; Issue: 9 children.
4. Jacob Griffin Purdy (26 December 1787 – 28 December 1879 or 22 September 1870) [conflicting death dates from Gabriel Purdy, 1983]; Married: 02 January 1811 by Rev. Thomas G. Smith of Londonderry, Nova Scotia to Sarah "Sally" Purdy (1791 –), his first cousin, daughter of Jacob Purdy (15 October or November 1739 – 28 December 1822) and Abigail Smith; Buried: Rose Cemetery, Westchester, Nova Scotia; Issue: 11 children.
5. Henry Purdy (02 January 1789 – 20 or 29 March 1857) [both death dates being provided in Gabriel Purdy, 1983]; Married: 24 March 1813 by George Oxley of Wallace, Nova Scotia, to Frances Embree (1787 – 18 October 1880), daughter of Joseph Embree (circa 1760 – 18 November 1828, aged 68) and Catherine Embree (circa 1761 – 02 April 1846, aged 85) of the Province of New York and Westchester, Nova Scotia; Buried: Rose Cemetery, Westchester, Nova Scotia; Issue: 11 children.

6. Gabriel Purdy (18 or 28 February 1791 – 26 April 1864); Married: 06 April 1817 by his uncle, Captain Henry Purdy UE of Fort Lawrence, to Sarah Embree (10 September 1798 – 06 September 1855), age 57 years, daughter of Joseph Embree (circa 1760 – 18 November 1828, aged 68) and Catherine Embree (circa 1761 – 02 April 1846, aged 85) of the Province of New York and Westchester, Nova Scotia; Buried: Rose Cemetery, Westchester, Nova Scotia; Issue: 6 children.
7. David Purdy (30 March 1793 –) age 79 in 1871 census; Married: 07 December 1818 by his uncle, Captain Henry Purdy UE of Fort Lawrence, to Mary Griffin, daughter of Caleb and Phoebe Griffin of New York. “*probably daughter of Caleb Griffin (1754 – 1834), a Loyalist who died at Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, and Phoebe Parent (1752 – 1837).*” [Alec Purdy, Francis Purdy CD, Version 2.0, January 2000]. Issue: 2 sons.
8. Phebe [Phoebe] Purdy (07 March 1795 – 24 May 1882); Married 1st: Thomas R. Black (1785 – 1838) of Amherst, son of Richard Black and Sally Chapman. Thomas Black became a Senator. Issue: 13 children. Married 2nd: Daniel McNutt.
9. Gilbert Purdy (03 August 1797 – 24 May 1882); Married: October 1817 by Rev. John Brown of Londonderry, Nova Scotia, to Sarah Knight (1795 – 18 January 1872), daughter of William and Jane Knight of Port-au-Pique, Colchester County, or “*of Londonderry*”, Nova Scotia; Issue: 11 children.
10. Melissa Purdy (30 March 1799 – 01 April 1869); Married: Peter Dunn of Westchester; Issue: one daughter, Lydia Dunn.
11. Esther “*Easter*” Purdy (03 May 1801 – 1819 [Gabriel Purdy, 1983, p. 44.]); Married: 07 December 1819 to John Carter (1796 – 1864) from River Philip; Issue: 11 children.

It is interesting to note that at the bottom end of the gravesite of Esther (Angevine) Purdy, in Rose Cemetery, Westchester Township, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, one finds two granite fieldstones that were identified in August 1998 by the caretaker of Rose Cemetery as being the gravestones for two coloured slaves of Esther.

After the death of Esther (Angevine) Purdy, Gabriel, age 50, was married by Jonathan Burnham, Justice of the Peace, to **Elizabeth (Wilkinson) Richardson** (– after 1812), a widow, on 07 September 1804 in Sackville, New Brunswick.

Sergeant Gabriel Purdy UE and Elizabeth (Wilkinson) Richardson were the parents of six known children (only 3 of whom have been identified):

12. John Richardson Purdy (17 July 1805 – 29 November 1828); Married: 15 February 1825 to Susannah Knight (– 26 June 1828), daughter of William & Jane Knight of Londonderry, Nova Scotia; Buried: Rose Cemetery, Rose Post Office, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia. Issue: 1 daughter, Elizabeth Agnes Purdy (09 April 1827 – 05 May 1828).
13. **Samuel Flintiff Purdy** (18 January 1810, Millvale/Millville, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia – 11 January 1892) “*aged 82 years lacking 7 days*”; Married 1st: 06 January 1829, by Rev. John Brown of Londonderry, Nova Scotia, to **Margaret Knight** of Londonderry, Nova Scotia (circa 1805 – 11 February 1846,

age 40), daughter of William and Jane Knight of Port-au-Pique, or “of Londonderry”, Nova Scotia; Issue: 6 children.

Married 2nd: 22 July 1850, by Rev. D. Chute of Wallace River, Nova Scotia, to Mary Elizabeth Knight (circa 1810 – 28 February 1897 or 23 February 1897 “age 84”), daughter of William and Jane Knight. Mary Elizabeth (Knight) Purdy is buried in Rose Cemetery. Issue: 2 children.

14. Lavina Purdy (02 March 1812 –); Married: 09 March 1829, by Rev. John Brown of Londonderry, Nova Scotia, to William Ralston of Wallace Road, Nova Scotia, who emigrated from England. “*He kept a diary [of his emigration voyage aboard a sailing ship] which is in the hands of his descendants. Minnie Fleming (Mrs. Victor Rushton) has a diary he kept on a walking trip to a Baptist Convention at Chester, N.S. She has a bible which is said to have come from England with him. From this marriage came great grandson James Layton Ralston, the Minister of Defence of Canada in World War Two.*” [Gabriel Purdy, 1983, p. 391]. Issue: 9 children.

15. }

16. }

17. } three unidentified children of Sergeant Gabriel Purdy UE and his third wife, Elizabeth (Wilkinson) Richardson, widow.

The third wife of Sgt. Gabriel Purdy UE, Elizabeth (Wilkinson) (Richardson) Purdy, died sometime after 1812.

Gabriel then married his fourth wife, Esther Knight (1766 – 05 December 1828, age 62), this marriage resulting in no known children.

After the death of Esther (Knight) Purdy, Sergeant Gabriel Purdy UE, age 76, married his fifth wife on 05 August 1830, Ann Aitkins/Aikens (–), widow of John Aitkins, the marriage being performed by Reverend John Brown. The marriage of Ann and Gabriel also resulted in no known children. Ann outlived Gabriel and is buried in Glenholme, Colchester County, Nova Scotia.

The tombstone of Sergeant Gabriel Purdy UE, located at Rose Cemetery, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, on part of his farm, reads “GABRIEL PURDY ESQ. AGE 92 YRS”. *The Halifax Times* recorded on 25 May 1841: “Died at Westchester, Cumberland Co. on Saturday 8th instant Gabriel Purdy, Esq., aged 87 years. Mr. Purdy was born at West Chester in the State of New York, 1754.” His military history supports the age of 87 years as his lifespan rather than the tombstone date of 92 years. In his remarkable life he married 5 times and, at the time of his death, had 17 children, 170 grandchildren, and 52 great grandchildren making a total of 239!



Part of his obituary, published in *The Halifax Times*, 25 May 1841, p. 162, states that he was “appointed Lieutenant in Provincial militia of Nova Scotia. In 1809 [age 55] he was a Justice of the Peace, and in 1817 [age 63] he received the command of a company. For 20 years he acted as a Road Commissioner, and was entrusted with the expenditure of many thousands of pounds of the public funds ... He was strongly attached to the doctrine as taught by [the] Wesleyan Methodists.”

For more information, please refer to “A Family Divided by the American Revolution: Sergeant Gabriel Purdy UE of the Guides and Pioneers and Colonel James DeLancey’s Regiment” by Grietje R. (Purdy) McBride UE, B.Sc. and Robert C. McBride UE, B.Sc., M.Ed., *The Loyalist Gazette*, Volume XLV, No. 1, Spring 2007, pp. 25 – 31.