

Bartholomew London UE

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“The Untimely Death of Bartholomew London”

By Kimberly Hurst, sixth great-granddaughter of Bartholomew London

Born in New Jersey, circa 1730, Bartholomew London made his way in life as a farmer. He had land on Scott's Mountain in Greenwich Township, Sussex County, New Jersey and was the father of six known children.

At the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, Bartholomew remained on his land in what was then known as West Jersey. He was a Loyalist. He believed in the King and was recruiting men for His Majesty's Services for which he was jailed on more than one occasion. He suffered greatly as a result of his imprisonment. His health suffered and he lost property for his loyalty to the British government.

Sometime between 1778 and 1782, he removed himself and his family to Monongalia County, Virginia. It is here that we find him in the Continental Census of 1782. Perhaps he was being harassed or threatened by his neighbours due to his loyalty to the Crown. In 1783 a dispute was settled between the borders of Pennsylvania and what is now known as West Virginia. The area in which the London family now resided was to be called Redstone Township, Fayette County, and Pennsylvania.

In 1789 Bartholomew left Pennsylvania with his son Richard, daughters Mehitable and Jane and quite possibly another son, Bartholomew, whom it is believed died in 1797. Jane's husband, Enoch Moore, and their four children also traveled with him as he headed for Upper Canada. They arrived in Saltfleet Township, which was located in Wentworth County in Upper Canada, sometime after June of 1789.

The names of Bartholomew London and Richard London as well as Enoch Moore were placed on adjoining lots in Saltfleet. There they began clearing their land and building crude homes to sustain them through the long cold winter that lay ahead of them. Bartholomew was granted land for his loyalty to the Crown. In a document dated 20 October 1794, Judge Nathaniel Pettit, a member of the first Upper Canadian parliament at Newark, stated that he had known Bartholomew London and that the Patriots in New Jersey had indeed imprisoned him. Bartholomew maintained his farm in Saltfleet on Lots 18 and 19 on the 3rd. Concession and was close to all of his children. Grandchildren also surrounded Bartholomew in his new home.

His eldest son, Jeremiah, did not leave for Upper Canada with his father and siblings right away. He is found in the New York Census of 1790 in New York. When he finally arrived in Upper Canada, he was granted land. He and his family lived on Lots 27 and 28 on the 5th Concession. Jeremiah and his wife, Margaret Prall, had three children. Aaron was the eldest followed by Joseph. Both boys were born in New Jersey. Their third child was daughter Margaret who was born in Upper Canada.

Richard lived on the 200 adjoining acres, Lots 16 and 17 on the 3rd. Concession of Saltfleet. He married a young lady named Maria and they had seven children: Jeremiah, Magdalena, Susanna, Elizabeth, John, Daniel and Anna.

Bartholomew's daughter, Mehitable, and her husband, William Disher, lived not far away from him in Pelham, Welland County. Mehitable had a son by William Disher, and he was named Bartholomew after her father. After William's death in 1811, Mehitable married for a second time to Andrew Whitsell.

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Daughter Jane and her first husband, Enoch Moore, had four children together, the eldest being Charles from whom I am descended. Thomas was the second son and Sarah was the oldest daughter. The baby of the family was Mary. She was born on 15 June 1789 before their arrival in Upper Canada. Enoch Moore's name was placed on Lot 20 on the 3rd Concession and Lots 14, 15, 16, and 17 on the 4th Concession of Saltfleet.

Enoch Moore left for the United States on family business sometime between 1791 and 1798 and was never seen or heard from again. Jane married for a second time to John McDeade also known as John McDavid. He had received Lot 27 on the 4th and Lot 26 on the 5th Concession of Saltfleet. The disappearance of their father posed a great problem for the children of Jane and Enoch. Their father had not petitioned for the 500 acres of land he had been allotted in Saltfleet before his departure and this land now lay unclaimed. Bartholomew had taken up the fight for his grandchildren, and he was in the process of applying for the 500 acres of land for his four grandchildren when he was murdered.

This is where the story of the infamous Mary Osborne London begins. By 1798 Bartholomew had hired a housekeeper by the name of Mary Osborne. Having already had two sons, William and Nathaniel Osborne, by her first marriage, the young widow of 28 found herself expecting her third child. This child's father was none other than Bartholomew London. Having no other choice but to marry her, he did just that, and they had a daughter, Hannah, on 5 April 1799. It would appear that all was well.

In the fall of 1800, Bartholomew decided to hire a farmhand to help around the farm as he was getting on in years and wanted to take on less. His new farmhand would be George Nemires, 28, late of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and an old acquaintance of one Mrs. Mary Osborne London. Within two months, Bartholomew's new wife, Mary, and the new hired hand, George, started a torrid affair. By January Mary had reported to her husband that she was pregnant with his second child. She stated later that "knew not who the father of her child was."

Bartholomew, having written his will, gave Mary and her children the principal part of his interests while excluding, for the most part, the children of his first wife. This will was dated 4 May 1800. Mary knew she would be well taken care of and the plot to murder her elderly husband begins. In her first attempt, Mary had stirred up a heated argument between herself and Bartholomew. George, pretending to avenge the abuse bestowed upon Mary, struck Bartholomew on the head quite severely with a shoe hammer.

In a few weeks, Bartholomew was nearly recovered from this attack. Not being successful, they decided to poison him. George, disguising himself as a Mr. Kerr of Long Point, went to a neighbouring physician in Ancaster for a poison named Vitriol. He told the doctor it would be used as a cure from an old sore. He asked the doctor at that time if the amount he had given him would be enough to poison a man. The doctor told him no and that he would need a larger amount than what he had prescribed. George then asked the doctor if he would prescribe a larger dose, but the doctor replied to him that had had been given a sufficient amount for his needs.

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George returned to Mary and that dose was given to Bartholomew without the desired effect. George then went off on foot in the middle of the winter to Canadiagua,

New York, for additional poison. In ten days George returned with two ounces of arsenic and one ounce of opium. Two more doses of the mixture were administered to Bartholomew in whiskey and still he showed no signs of illness.

The third dose was administered to Mary's husband, and this was the last dose needed to end his life. Suspicion began to circulate rapidly throughout the small community and the physician, who prescribed the initial dose of poison, recalled the earlier enquiries when he arrived at the London home to find the man he recognized as Mr. Kerr of Long Point.

Both Mary Osborne London and George Nemires were taken into custody for the murder of Bartholomew London. They were jailed while they awaited their trials, which were held on the 14th of August 1801 in Niagara-On-The-Lake. The Honourable Judge Alcock presided over the case of the two star-crossed lovers. At half-past nine in the morning the Attorney General addressed the jurors praying that "God would assist and direct them in their deliverance." Several witnesses were called to testify and even though they could not prove who actually had administered the poison, the jury had no choice but to deliver a guilty verdict.

With the verdict before him, Judge Alcock had to pronounce the sentence in accordance with the law of the land. Both Mary and George were to be executed on the 17th day of August in the year of 1801 for the murder of Bartholomew London. The judge remarked the coincidence of the time, which was exactly six months to the day of the final dose of the poison.

During the time he was confined to the jail, George would say "that if they died, another must die." He implied that there was another who was also responsible in his own way for the death of Bartholomew. A man living in the neighbourhood was partially to blame for this incident.

George alluded to the guilt of the neighbour on more than one occasion and stipulated that the neighbour's brother was in no way responsible for what happened to Mr. London.

George also stated that it was Mary that he wanted and not the husband's estate. She had pushed him to do it and even suggested that he shoot him but not to use his own gun. He was to borrow the neighbour's gun, the man who George felt should also hang for this crime. George also confided that Mary had frequently confessed to him that she had poisoned her first husband. She took out the hellebore from a chest where she had kept it to show him. It seemed she was not stranger to this deadly game.

Subsequently no other charges were laid in this case and the two participants already found guilty were to be "hung by the neck until dead and their bodies dismembered." As Mary made her way up the scaffold, she cried out to the crowd, "May this be a warning to you all." She prayed to God to have mercy on her soul and both were very quiet for the time leading up to the dropping of the floor, sending them both to their final resting place.

- Part 4 -

Mary left behind two young sons from her first marriage, Nathaniel and William Osborne, as well as two young daughters, Hannah and Catherine London. Where the two boys were reared is still a mystery. But William Osborne can be found in the War of 1812

Muster Roll of Capt. Abram Nelles' Flank Company from the 24th of July to the 24th of August 1812. No mention of Nathaniel has been found to date.

It is believed that Hannah was reared in the home of Mehitable London and Andrew Whitsell. According to Andrew's will, there was a Johannah Lunnen living with him and his wife. Hannah would be the half sister of Mehitable London. Where Catherine was taken is up for discussion. Perhaps her much older half sister, Jane Moore McDavid, took her in and reared her. No evidence has been found supporting this.

Mary Osborne London had the distinction of being the first woman to be hanged in Upper Canada. Research is still ongoing and findings will be reported as they become available.

Sources

- Upper Canada Land Petitions submitted for Bartholomew London: Bartholomew London was a United Empire Loyalist. He is registered in *The Old United Empire Loyalists List*. It states: "A settler in 1789; states, p. petition, to have suffered imprisonment"
- *Sons and Daughters of American Loyalists*, p. 182.
- Moore, O.C. 12 May 1801
- Robertson's Landmarks, v6 , p 280
- Upper Canada Land Petitions, Roll 154, L 1/5 Recommended for 200 acres, Newark 27th June 1794 Recommended for 200 acres, Ordered 3 July 1795 Land or Probate record 5 March 1801. Granted to Jeremiah London and Richard London in Estate of Bartholomy London: appraiser L. Pettit ESQ. Lincoln County Surrogate Court Records, estate proved and settled to Jeremiah and Richard London, 5 Mar 1801 FHL film # 057914 9.

Will of Bartholomew London

Last Will and Testament Of Bartholomew London of Saltfleet, Upper Canada

In the name of God Amen I Bartholomew London of Saltfleet, County of Lincoln and province of Upper Canada being of sound mind and memory and calling to mind the uncertainty of this life Do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in manner and forme following.

First I give and bequeath my soul into the hand of Almighty God that gave it and my body to the earth from whence it came to be buried in a Christian manner at The Desposal of my executors here after named**

I give and bequeath to Oldest son Jeremiah London five pounds New York currency and to my son Charles London one pound like money and to my son Thomas London one pound like money and to my loving son Richard London one pound like money I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Marey late Marey Osburn, after all my Full Debts, funeral charges, Legals and other Contingent Expences are paid, the use, benefits and profits of the farme and in Cantation I live on and the use and profits of all my real and personal estate during which time she remains my widow for and toward her own support and the Raising, Teaching, Supporting my daughter Hannah and if my said wife Marey shall have any more children borne of her body during my life for the Raising, Teaching, Supporting them as well as my said daughter and for the Raising, Teaching and Supporting her sons William and Nathaniel Osburn until they shall arrive at the age of Twenty-one years which it is my will that they as well as my own children by her shall be raised by her on the profits of my real and personal Estate.

I also give and bequeath to my said daughter Hannah all the lands that I by possess of and to the children as my said wife shall have borne of her body during my life to be equally divided between my said daughter Hannah and them if any such shall be so borne.

Whether they be male or female and to their heirs and assigns forever the division to be made by my Executors at the time the youngest of them shall arrive at the age if male twenty one and if female eighteen years if my said wife shall not bear me any more children then I will and order that the whole of my real and personal Estate shall be the property of my daughter and her heirs or assigns forever. Except what is given to my said wife to be laid out for the life of my children and for her own life.

At the death of my said wife or at the time she ceases to be my widow, two thirds of my personal Estate that shall not be Expended for the support of any children, and her two sons as above said shall come into the hands of my Executors towards their support until they come of age, and the other third shall be the property of my said wife if she be then living to be desposed of as she shall be ____ the said low third, or what shall remain my Executors hand shall be equally paid to my said children born of my said wife when they shall come of age and if my said daughter Hannah or any of my children born of my said wife shall happen to dye unmarried before they come of age then their share of my real and personal shall be my said Executors be equally divided amongst the survivors of them and I further will and order that out of my personal Estate

that I Bye, possess of my said Executors pay all my Debts, funeral charges and contingent expenses and that by ____ by me given and despose of Overplus? as above directed.

And if there not be sufficient money in my Executors hand of my personal estate to pay my debts, funeral charges and legals and contingent expenses I will and order that thay shall sell so mutch of my real Estate as shall be nessessary to pay these and no more, and I do hereby nominate and appoint my Trusty friends Gershom Carpenter, Thomas Ghant and my beloved wife Marey, late Marey Osburn to be my whole and sole Executors of this my last will and testament. Giving and granting to them all power and authority to perform all and singular the truth uposed by me to them in and about the prime ? ____ In Witness where of I leave here unto my hand and seal this fourth day of May one thousand and eight hundred and in the fortyeth year of his Majesty's reign.

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the said Bartholomew London to be his last will and Testament in the presents of us whose names are here unto subscribed as witnesses in the presents of the Testater

Signed,
Peter Templer

Samuel Green
Nathanial Pettit

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