

# DEVONIANS IN ONTARIO

a semiannual genealogical newsletter

number 1 : July 2003



Edited and published by Ryan Taylor

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## A New Newsletter

*Devonians in Ontario* is a new genealogical newsletter, meant to inform researchers about the many people from Devon, England who came to Ontario during the nineteenth century, and to link them with other researchers who are working in the same area.

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome, including short expositions on individual families, articles of any length which include resources in Devon or Ontario, or are about those resources. Queries are welcome, but they must be short, and the editor reserves the right to publish them or not. Material which will enlighten other readers is especially welcome.

No research can be undertaken.

The plan is to publish this e-zine twice a year (spring and fall), with the length depending on the material available. Because it will be sent via a simple e-mail distribution list, there will be no charge. Enjoy!

## Why This Newsletter?

A large influx of emigrants from Devon (particularly north Devon) came to Ontario, settling largely in the Lake Ontario townships where Ontario and Durham counties meet, and in Huron. They are a prime example of how people from one area in the home country came to settle in one area in the new country because of familiar contacts.

One reason for the settlement was the early evangelism of Bible Christian missionaries in Darlington township. The Bible Christians, a sect of Methodism which eventually broke away from the main Methodist church in England, began in north Devon and the names in the records of the early chapels there—in Shebbear and Holsworthy, for example—can be found later in Whitby and East Whitby townships.

The English Methodist Church in the 1830s made a conscious decision to evangelise in Upper Canada in an effort to convert as many of the pioneer settlers as possible to their cause. The Church of England had a shortage of priests who could act as missionaries, and many Anglicans who came to Canada changed to Methodism as a simple matter of convenience: there was no Anglican church near them, but there was a Methodist 'chapel' (as the English called them). Once they grew used to attending as Methodists, they were firmly in the Methodist camp.

The Methodist hopes (and a lot of hard work) resulted in victory. There were many more Methodists in Ontario than Anglicans by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and once the Methodists and Presbyterians combined in 1925 to form the United Church of Canada, they were by far the largest Protestant church.

The Bible Christians flourished in Canada for only a short time, along with a number of other Methodist sects, and by 1884 had rejoined the main body to form the Methodist Church of Canada. It should be said that Bible Christian church records in Ontario are not particularly good, but if you find a Bible Christian relative (from a religion notation in the census), your first stop should be the United Church of Canada Archives in Toronto to see if their local Bible Christian church left any records. Find their website at [vicu.utoronto.ca/archives/](http://vicu.utoronto.ca/archives/).

More information about the early history of the Methodists in Ontario, including the Bible Christians, can be found in Neil Semple's excellent and readable *The History of Canadian Methodism* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

### **Devon-L**

Discussion groups and informational resources for many English counties can be found on Rootsweb. The one for Devon (called Devon-L) can be found at <http://lists.rootsweb.com/index/intl/ENG/DEVON.html>.

First, the discussion group: it makes it possible to contact people with Devon genealogical interests anywhere in the world, and it has an active clientele. I receive dozens of messages a day, and they conveniently come marked [DEV] in the subject line, so they are easily identifiable in the mailbox.

When I first joined I had the idea that the list would be used to share information about Devon and its genealogy, but most of the messages are requests for someone else to do the searching. There are also a great many elementary level questions, which indicates that these groups are especially useful for beginners. In any case, I find it useful to receive the messages in the hope that someone will show up who is interested in the same families I am or who is going to tell about a genealogical resource I can use.

The list administrator of Devon-L is strict about off-topic submissions, including non-Devon, non-genealogical-Devon and virus notifications (the word 'virus' in a subject line ensures the message will be automatically discarded and the person sending the message will be unsubscribed). Brian Randell, whose name often appears among messagers, runs the Devon Genuki site and is a generous font of good information.

### **Devon Genuki**

Genuki is the United Kingdom genealogical website, with sections for the various counties. Devon's can be found at <http://www.cs.ncl.ac.uk/genuki/DEV/>. The site includes both general information about the county, more specific materials on towns and parishes, and a great deal of very detailed genealogical resources. The best idea is to go to the site and look at the contents (leave yourself lots of time!).

Subscribers to Devon-L will be very aware that the Genuki Devon site is constantly growing, with new indexes and extractions being added all the time. If you looked at the Genuki site some months ago, it is time to look again.

## **The Pollard Family**

At a recent OGS gathering, I met Peg McLean from Kingston ON (205-91 King Street East, Kingston K7L 2Z8; peg@matrixlinks.ca), who provided a vast pedigree chart and other information about the Pollards. Here is a synopsis of the immigrant generations:

John Pollard (1814-1873) was born in Hartland DEV and died in Brussels ON. He married Grace Crocker (Wimbleigh DEV 1814-1883 Brussels ON) at Welcome DEV in 1836 and came to Canada in 1843, bringing three sons with them: William (b. Hartland 1837), Richard (b. Hartland 1839) and John (b. Hartland 1840). Three other children were probably born in Canada: Joshua, Kate and Mary.

William remained in Ontario, while Richard moved to Saskatchewan in 1903, where he settled at Piapot, a hardy pioneer of the prairies at the age of 64. Richard and his wife, Mary Ann Reinhardt (1848-1933) were Peg's great-grandparents. In a very vivid memory, Richard's grandson wrote that he was 'small but rugged, with a beard, who stood so straight he leaned over backwards'. He ran a store in Brussels, and later worked with his son-in-law in a store in Yellowgrass, NWT.

Their daughter Grace Elizabeth Pollard (1867-1942) was born at Walton, a tiny place that straddles the corners of three townships in Huron County. She trained as a teacher at Seaforth and went to the North West Territories (as Saskatchewan and Alberta were then called) to teach. Her son, Richard William Ian Urquhart (1898-1977, Peg's father) wrote, "I would think that Mother decided to go out west to teach in order to get out of the unreasonable demands made upon her by her parents and the rest of the family [as a daughter on the farm]." The family had a 'strict Methodist upbringing'. Grace was soon being romanced by Angus Urquhart, a Scot, whom she married at Indian Head NWT in 1896.

Peg has established that the parents of the emigrant John Pollard were John and Elizabeth Pollard of Hartland. John was born there in 1792, the son of Thomas Pollard and Elizabeth Shutt (married at Hartland 1787).

## **Hartland**

Hartland is the last parish in north Devon on the Bristol Channel before Cornwall. It is claimed that Hartland is physically the largest parish in England (although far from the largest in population).

The registers of Hartland have been published for 1558-1837 as *The Register of Baptisms, Marriages & Burials of the Parish of Hartland, Devon*, transcribed by John Ingle Dredge and R. Pearse Chope (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 1930-34). John Ingle Dredge transcribed a large number of parish registers in north Devon, and these are the basis for the IGI entries for the area, as the Bishop of Exeter would not allow the LDS church access to the originals when they were filming in the area (more of that in another issue). The transcriber's beautiful handwriting is a joy to use, but Hartland researchers have a printed version, with extensive index, which is even better. John Ingle Dredge is buried in Buckland Brewer DEV churchyard (behind the church); genealogists who happen to find themselves there should stop by his grave to thank the memory of someone whose long labours make our work shorter today (as I did myself in on a cold spring morning in 2001).

The Hartland registers volume is widely available in libraries holding the publications of the Devon & Cornwall Record Society, including through the LDS family history centers.

### **A Durham Resource**

Researchers interested in Devonians in old Durham County ON (not to be confused with the current Durham Region, which has quite different boundaries) should know about Sher Leetooze's seven-volume history of the county. There are six township volumes, one for each (Darlington, Cartwright, Clarke, Manvers, Cavan, Hope) and a companion volume which includes corrections, addenda and all-important indexes.

Individual volume titles:

*Irish, Orange and Proud* (Cavan)

*Along the Gravel Road* (Cartwright)

*From the Oak Plain to the Lakefront* (Clarke)

*The First 200 Years* (Darlington)

*Built on Faith and Fortitude* (Hope)

*The Trail Through the Bush* (Manvers)

These books are widely available in libraries, and can be purchased from Lynn Michael-John Associates, 80 Roser Cres., Bowmanville ON L1C 3N9. Zip a message to Sher at [sher.leetooze@3web.net](mailto:sher.leetooze@3web.net).

### **Some Burials of Devonians in Ontario**

From Bethesda Cemetery (Darlington Township ON)

Mary Harris (Roach), b. Ashreigny DEV 1831, d. 1886

Hugh Oke b. Bradworthy DEV d. 1874 ae. 84, to Canada 1832

Hugh Clarke b. DEV d. 1875 ae. 81, also his wife Elizabeth b. DEV d. 1877 ae. 78

Thomas Yeo b. Bradworthy DEV d. 1881 ae. 90

From Hampton Union Cemetery (Darlington Township ON)

Samuel Ward b. Chawleigh DEV 1824, d. 1893

From Providence Cemetery (near Enfield, Darlington Township ON)

Thomas Allin b. DEV d. 1848 ae. 63, also his wife Mary b. DEV d. 1848 ae. 57

From Eldad Cemetery (Solina, Darlington Township ON)

Matthew Cole b. Pyworthy DEV d. 1867 ae. 67

Elizabeth --- b. Bulkworthy DEV, m. John Martin d. 1862 ae. 70

George Westlake b. DEV d. 1866

The references above taken from cemetery transcriptions available from Whitby-Oshawa Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society, Box 174, Whitby ON L1N 5S1.

### **This brief, sample issue of Devonians in Ontario**

is an indication of things to come, if sufficient interest is shown. The editor/publisher looks forward to hearing from others interested in Devonians in Ontario

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