

Jones Family History

The early history of our Jones family in North America is still obscure. The story emerges somewhat in the following way:

In the early 1700's a sixteen-year old Welsh boy, bearing the surname of Jones, came to America and settled in what is now New York State. Because he had the trade of a weaver and reed-maker, he is presumed to have lived in a village/town community rather than a rural one. Around 1734 he became the father of a son, James.

James Jones, presumably [sic] because he grew up in a settled community, received a good education for those times. At some period in his early life he was a clerk to a Company of British Militia, and family tradition has it that his services were frequently sought by neighbours in the writing of deeds and the working out of trade accounts. In the mid 1700's, James Jones married Catherine Folk (Volk ?), a girl of Dutch descent some ten years his junior.

Their eldest son Andrew, was born January 11, 1767, to be followed by a daughter, Marcy, in 1768. Other children were a son, Samuel; a daughter, Elizabeth; a son, Jonathon; a daughter, Nancy; a daughter, Sarah; and perhaps an eighth child, born in Canada after the Revolution.

Shortly after 1770, James and Catherine Jones moved to Kingstown, Ulster County, in upper New York State. James had obtained a lease for 52 acres of what was called "Corporation Land". The land was to be his and his descendants for as long as they wished, for the annual rental of twelve skipple of wheat. Seemingly well-off, James and Catherine had carried nine wagons of furniture and possessions to this new homestead.

When the American Rebellion broke out in 1775, James Jones refused to join the Rebels, and was imprisoned by them. For over three years he was a prisoner, during which time he was kept close confined and in irons for nine months. Released, or escaping prison in 1780, he joined Butler's Rangers and eventually arrived in Niagara.

At the time of his imprisonment, he had cleared twenty acres of land at Kingstown, had planted an apple orchard, and had constructed a good log house. In addition, he had ten head of full-grown cattle, fourteen hogs, and two horses. In all, he estimated his property worth £100. Under the pretense of the rent being due, although a crop of grain was in the ground, the Trustees of the Corporation made his wife give up the lease, sold the property and gave her only £20 for it.

Then a Rebel, Colonel Sneider, warned Catherine Jones off the premises. While Rebel Scouts destroyed and plundered most of their furniture, possessions and livestock at this time, Catherine managed to save one wagon-load of furniture and some cows.

How Catherine Jones, and her family managed to get in touch with James, is not known, but all are listed in a "Return of Loyalists in Captain McKinnon's Company of Rangers at Niagara in December, 1783".

On July 20, 1784, James Jones was amongst those who subscribed their names to the list of disbanded Rangers, in order to settle and cultivate Crown Land opposite Niagara. He was then living near Niagara (now Niagara-on-the-Lake) at Ten Mile Creek in what was then called Louth Twp. (#3) Lincoln County, District of Nassau.¹

¹ James Jones lived on Lot Pt. 11 & 12, Conc. I and Lot 12 Conc. II. Grantham Twp. in 1784. That area, to this day, is called "Jones' Beach" by the people who live in the area. He never lived in Louth Twp. The 10 Mile Creek ran through his property and is now the site of the 4th Welland Canal on Lake Ontario. His son Andrew Jones later lived on the property. Apparently he also received a Lot in Thorold Twp. but it is doubtful that he ever lived there. *Maggie Parnall*

During the summer of 1787, the Commissioners of Claims arrived in the Province of Canada to take evidence. In August, a considerable number of Loyalists, residing near Niagara, went to Montreal to appear before these Commissioners. Amongst the claimants who made this arduous trip to Montreal, was James Jones.

The numerous evidence of Loyalists claims having been heard, the Land Board ruled in 1789 that "every discharged soldier . . . is entitled to 300 acres of land, . . . every Loyalist settled prior to the 17th February, 1789, is entitled to 200 acres, together with 50 acres for each individual of which their family shall consist".

During the next few years, new concessions were laid out in what is now Southern Ontario. But in spite of name changes on maps and deeds, James and Catherine Jones continued to live on land near Ten Mile Creek, in what is now Thorold Township and Grantham Township.

In January 1791, a certificate for 200 acres was issued to James, and in May of the same year, a further certificate for 200 acres, lots 34 and 35, Township of Thorold.

At Niagara on March 6, 1790, Andrew Jones, then twenty-three, married Mary Slough (Slow), who had been born in 1770 in Reading County, Pennsylvania State. He then petitioned for lands as a Loyalist and not as family land owing to his father as when 17 years old (1784) he had taken an oath of allegiance before Colonel De Peyster.

Sometime during the period 1794-5, James Jones died, being about then in his sixtieth year.

At Newark (Niagara) in August 1795, Andrew Jones laid a petition before Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe – "in behalf of himself and others, the heirs of the late James Jones, of Butler's Rangers – deceased . . ." A grant of 300 acres was granted to complete the family lands to which his father had been entitled.

It is interesting to note that in this petition, Andrew states that his father's family consisted of a "wife and eight children, seven of whom he brought into the country". When the grant was ordered, it was noted that he had a wife and eight children. Therefore it is assumed that a child must have been born to James and Catherine after they had settled as Loyalists.

In May, 1797, Andrew Jones laid a further petition for lands before Peter Russell, Administrator, Upper Canada, and was granted 100 acres in Grantham Twsp. Where Port Weller and the Welland Canal now are. Also in 1797, Samuel Jones, the second son, Jonathan the third son, and Elizabeth the second daughter, petitioned for and grants of land, 200 acres each.

In 1801, Andrew Jones, and his brother Jonathan, walked from their Thorold/Grantham Twsp. Lands to that part of Waterloo County, now called Wentworth County, and decided to settle there. On September 21st, Andrew purchased the south half of Lot 33, Concession 2, Beverly Twsp., and in 1804, bought further lands in Lot 34.

He sold to his brother Samuel, in 1805, his Crown Granted Lands in Grantham and in 1810, those in Thorold Twsp. Samuel remained on his father's lands, until 1829 when he passed them on to his sons, Christian and William. The last of these Niagara Peninsular Lands passed out of the Jones family in the 1860's.

Andrew Jones died in 1851, and his wife Mary Slough in 1843. Both are buried in the Copetown Cemetery.

We are all descended from this couple, who had twelve children. Further research will have to be done in an attempt to find out more about Andrew's brothers and sisters, and to follow up on James Jones and Catherine Folk's early life before they fled to Canada.

We also hope to fill out the branches of the family tree, so laboriously compiled by the late Albert Jones, before the next reunion.

WELLAND, ONTARIO
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SHIRLEY L. JONES
211 Willow Rd.

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