

Information About Benjamin Fralick

Contributed by John Haynes

Benjamin Fralick (also spelt variously Fraleigh, Frelick, Froligh, Froeligh) was baptised April 19, 1747 at Zion Lutheran Church at Loonenburg (now Athens), Greene, New York.

Benjamin stated before the Commissioners on Loyalists' Claims that he was a native of America, lived near Albany, had been settled ten years on Patroon lands, had cleared ten acres and built a house and barn. Warner Fralick and Jacob Ball were neighbours in their old homes. Benjamin suffered terribly before leaving his home. The Rebels took his livestock, utensils, furniture and tools and drove his family out. He joined Butler's Rangers in 1778 and served six years as a sergeant and corporal.

In January 1781 he was at Fort Niagara serving as a sergeant under the command of Lieutenant John Turney. In April of the same year he was court marshaled, along with two officers, Lieutenant Peter Ball and 2nd Lieutenant Joseph Ferris. The Court Martial files have disappeared from the records in the British Library, but a sense of the crime can be determined in the General Order. Sergeant Frelick tried for being concerned with Lieutenants Jacob and Peter Ball and 2nd Lieutenant Joseph Ferris in writing an anonymous letter to Brigadier General H. Watson Powell, Commanding the Upper Posts, and Charging Lieutenant Colonel Butler and other Officers of said Corps with Capital Crimes and to stir up a mutiny and sedition among the men of the Corps of Rangers, and for speaking disrespectfully of the Commanding Officer of the Regiment, is found guilty of the 3rd Charge exhibited against him, and sentenced on account of the undoubted testimony of his general and good character in the Corps, and likewise on sundry occasions, only to be reduced to the ranks.

In the summer of 1783 at Fort Niagara, New York in the summer of 1783, Christian Warner corroborated Benjamin's evidence of his service to the Crown. Consequently, as a sergeant Benjamin received a land grant of 400 acres consisting of Lot 6, Concession VII, and Lots 6, 7, and 8 Concession VIII Louth Township, Lincoln County. Thus he had the consolation of being settled near his sister, Elizabeth Hein's family who settled in Grantham Township, Lincoln County. Surveyor Augustus Jones' map of 1791, indicates that the Benjamin and Elizabeth were living 5 lots east and west of each other, or roughly 1 and 1/2 miles. More importantly both Benjamin and Adam Hein's homesteads border the Iroquois Trail, which became the major road in south St. Catharines, namely St. Paul Street/St. Paul Street West/Highway #81.

Although as of 2008, I know of no records or oral tradition indicating where Benjamin's house was located. However, I suspect it was on the 9th Street side of 15 Mile Creek, close to Highway 8, bordering Ebenzer Culver's grants of Lot 10 Con 7 and Lot 9 Con. 6, because Culver's descendants knew of a burial site either on their property (or close to it) which was ploughed over and Benjamin was buried on his homestead. Also if I were Benjamin and owned Lot 6, Concession VII, and Lots 6, 7, and 8 Concession VIII Louth Township, I would either build my house along the Iroquois Trail/Highway 8 where it crossed a tributary to Twelve Mile Creek Henry Smith's place or more likely where it crossed Fifteen Mile Creek

and I had the chance of creating a mile pond. Corroborating evidence is to be found in a quote from John Darling, a miller owner in Short Hills, who remarked in 1822, "Benjamin Farlick [sic] operated a saw mill." (John Darling's Day Book, 1822-1825, 929.2 Dar., Special Collections Dept., St. Catharines Central Library).

In 1796 a local landowners were asked to contribute to a fund for the erection of the first church in the area. Benjamin and his brother-in-law, Adam Heins/Haines, both contributed "The Assignment to the Church at St. Catharines." "The Assignment" didn't stipulate that the church would be of a specific denomination. However, the Church of England ultimately claimed the funds it's exclusive use for the construction of St. Catharines [Anglican] Chapel. The chapel stood on what is now Memorial Park, St. Paul Street West.

Benjamin and his brother-in-law, Adam Heins/Haines lobbied for the establishment of the first Lutheran parish in Niagara, commonly known today as "The Old German" Lutheran Church and more formerly St. John the Evangelist's Church, Thorold. Along with his Peter Lampman--his kith by marriage--and George House, Benjamin was for several years the trustee of the Church. Notably, he could write as he signed his own name to church documents.

Benjamin lived in Louth Township on his farm near what is now Highway #8 (Regional Road 81).

He died at his farm in December 1804 and was probably buried there in a family plot. As of 2008, those lots are next to Ebenezer Culver and the Culver's had a burial ground on their property. Last I heard, a farmer ploughed it over. In his will, which was probated in 1805, Benjamin gave his occupation as being a shoemaker. The will notes he owns in Louth Township Lot 6 in Concessions 7 & 8, along with Lots 7 & 8 in Concession 8. These are deeded to his eldest son John, aged 30, provided "that he educate Peter and Benjamin," who were approximately 13 and 14 years old respectively.

PRIMARY SOURCES:

1) From "Return of Persons - Captain George Dame's Coy [i.e., Company] of Butler's Rangers," in the "Haldimand Papers:"

"FRALICK/FRELICK, Corporal Benjamin, age 36.

wife: Catrina, age 34

Children: Margaret, age 10 yrs. 2 mos.

John, age 8 yrs.

Mary age 6 yrs. 6 mos.

Lehen (Female) age 3."

2) From "Niagara Mini-Atlas - 1784 Bureau of Archives Map:"

"Benjamin Fralick, Lots 6,7,8, Conc. VIII Louth Twp."

3) "2nd Report of the Bureau of Archives" by Alexander Fraser 1904:

"Claim No. 820 - Claim of Benjamin Frelick of Albany County.

Claimant says he was at Niagara in Summer of 1783 and the next winter.

Native of America. In 1778 he joined Butler's Rangers and served 6 years as Sergeant

Produces his discharge June 1784."

3) "He was at Niagara in the Sumr. '83 & the next winter. Is a native of America. Lived near Albany. In 1778 joined Butler's Rangers & served 6 years as Seargt. Had suffered terribly before he quitted Home on acct. of his Loyalty. Obligated to quit Home. Now lives at Niagara. Produces his discharge June, '84. Had a farm of 10 acres in the Patroon Lands. Had no Deed or Lease. Had been settled there 6 yrs. Had cleared 10 acres, built a house& Barn. Lost 2 Horses taken for fines, 2 Cows, 19 Hogs, furniture, utensils, Tools. His family were driven from the Place & the rebels took all the things above mentioned. [27] Produces affidvts. that Claimt. sustained the Losses above mentioned."

4) Ontario Heritage Foundation plaque on the corner of St. Paul and Yetes Streets, St. Catharines:
ANGLICAN CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES [Grantham Township, Lincoln Co. ONT CAN] (1795 - 1836)

On this site stood the Anglican chapel, St. Catharines (1795 - 1836), the first public building in the community. The name St. Catharines became associated with the community and the church. By 1797 a log school house was situated just east of this spot. The Parish included a cemetery and a parsonage. An assignment to the church dated Feb. 17, 1796 is the first documented use of the City's name and records the names of the 44 heads of the community's founding families and others from the surrounding area.

John Backhouse, John Hayner, Jacob Dittrick, Abraham Clendenin, Benjamin Froilick, Henry Smith, Zackariah Hayner, Richard Hayner, Albert Hayner, Adam Haynes, Cornelius Follock, John Decow, Robert Campbell, John Turney, John Brown, William Day, Obediah Hopkins, Peter Hopkins, Asa Waterhouse, John Willson Senr., Hugh Willson, John Kelly, Jonathan Nunn, George Couke, Jacob Upper, Anthony Upper, Petter Wever, George Hover, Stephen Seburn, Philip Metler, Andrew Hanseler, Jacob Bowman, George Keefer, Michael Teattor, Jacob Ball Jr., George Hartsell, John Stevens, Adam Hunt, John Dennis, John Bessey, James Newkirk, Francis Wever, Robert Bessey, Jabish Bessey

This plaque was erected by the St. Catharines Bicentennial Committee with the assistance of the Ontario Heritage Foundation, July 1, 1996.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

1) From "Loyalists in Ontario," by William Reid:

"Fralick, Benjamin of Thorold (Family were at Niagara 1783, Ontario Reg. I:206)

Children:

Magdalen md. Ettiene Allair of Louth

Elizabeth md. Samuel Durragh of Waintfleet."

NOTE: This information was contributed by John Haynes in October, 2010.