

MORE MOUNTAIN PIONEERS

By Robert Williamson

The purpose of this Mountain Memories column is to uncover the history of our Mountain pioneers. It is truly an adventure in discovery. Previously we have told the stories of the Rymal, Burkholder, Horning, Binkley, Terryberry and Ryckman homesteaders to mention just a few. This month we will disclose the little known story of the Laidman family.

We begin with Fred Laidman, a resident of the Westcliffe neighborhood at Upper Paradise and Mohawk Road West. He read the stories of Mountain homesteaders in the Mountain News and realized that he too has an extensive pioneer heritage dating back 190 years. In fact he could count at least 25 first and second cousins in the Hamilton region because he is the great, great grandson of Samuel and Elizabeth Laidman nee Pickersgil. They homesteaded in the Binbrook area where there is a Laidman Park, a Laidman Road on which the original homestead still stands and the Auld Kirk Cemetery, the primary Laidman burial ground.

Samuel and Elizabeth were of sturdy English Yorkshire Dales farming stock who emigrated to Canada in 1830 with 6 sons, and 3 daughters. One additional son, John, was born in their Binbrook farm log cabin. What a hardy woman Elizabeth was! From the vista of her beautiful homestead built later in 1848, she was able to proudly count smoke rising from ten chimneys of her family's farm houses.



First generation Laidman children circa 1881, (left to right) Standing: Richard, John, Samuel, Mark. Seated: Martha (Dickson), Elizabeth (Thomson), Margaret (Hall / Arthur), Marmaduke. Inset: Thomas d. 1880, Joseph d. 1847

Photo courtesy Fred Laidman

On August 8, 1900, the Hamilton Times reported that a Laidman family picnic reunion was held on the homestead farm to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the embarkation of the late Samuel (1790-1867) and Elizabeth (1789-1862) Laidman to Canada. In seventy years their 10 children became 228 direct living descendants plus 63 members by marriage. The great majority of those almost 300 people settled on the mountain within several miles of the Binbrook homestead. Today, by geometric progression, it staggers the imagination as to how many descendants of the Laidman family there might be. From a rare photograph we have discovered one certainty. Hamilton Mountain's Fred Laidman is the great grandson of Marmaduke Laidman.

For the Centennial Year in 1967, the Wentworth County Junior Farmers Association promoted the Century Farm Project. Any farm in the same family for 100 years or more received a Century Farm plaque. The Laidman Homestead was justly honored and is still beautifully maintained today. Ref. *The Laidman Pioneers in Binbrook Township: Elizabeth N. Laidman.*



Laidman Homestead on Laidman Road south of Kirk Road at Hendershot Road 2019. Williamson photo

