

The Loyalist Cunards

by Lieutenant Colonel WA Smy,
OMM, CD, UE

The stories of Loyalists re-establishing themselves in Canada after the American Revolution are legion. One family, though, is an exceptional example of entrepreneurial success — the Cunards of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.¹

The family had arrived in North America in 1683, when Thones Kunders and his wife settled in Germantown, Pennsylvania. Kunders was a Quaker from Krefeldt (Crefeld), Prussia, and by trade was a weaver and dyer. During the lifetime of the second generation in America, the family name was commonly being misspelled in official documents, not an uncommon occurrence in an age of illiteracy, when bureaucrats often spelled phonetically. The Kunders became Cunrads, Cunraeds, and Cunards.

By the outbreak of the Revolution almost one hundred years later, the family were engaged in the mercantile trade, sending ships from Pennsylvania to England, then from England to the West Indies, and finally back to Pennsylvania. The head of the family at that time, Abraham Cunard, a great-grandson of Thones, managed a very successful enterprise, but by 1780 his whole fleet had been confiscated by the rebels, and Abraham was forced to flee to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he obtained employment in the lumber yards and on the waterfront. Soon after he met Margaret Murphy, a Loyalist from South Carolina and they were married in 1783. They had at least seven children: William, Edward, Henry, Samuel, John, Thomas and Joseph.

On arrival at Halifax, Abraham Cunard was employed by the Royal Engineers as a carpenter, and worked for the Army until he retired in October 1822. Between 1784 and 1812, Abraham acquired property in and about Halifax, being careful to ensure that every parcel fronted on the harbour, where he could build wharves in anticipation of returning to his former occupation and re-establishing his sailing fleet.

In July 1813, the Halifax Weekly Chronicle announced the establishment of a new firm Abraham Cunard and Son,



Cunard
Photos provided by the author

which would enter the timber and West Indian trade. The company acquired large tracts of timberland in Cumberland County and began selling timber to the dockyard in Halifax and to purchasers in England. Records reflect the company's import of spirits, molasses, brown sugar and coffee from the West Indies. The company also acted as agents for ships owned by Bermudians and Englishmen. The company continued to prosper, even during the War of 1812. It was not many years before the company had a fleet of nearly forty vessels of different rigs and their business operations reached out to Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and New England.

In 1815-1816, Abraham purchased a 500-acre farm in Rawdon which became the family homestead until 1842.

In 1820, Joseph and Henry moved to



Samuel Cunard

the Miramichi, and opened a branch of the company, known as Joseph Cunard and Company, (the partners being Joseph, Samuel, Edward and Henry), and were soon in the business of lumbering, milling and shipping at Chatham, NB. By 1832, Joseph was described as one of the wealthiest and most influential merchants in the province.

The company began building ships, making Richibucto the third largest shipping port in New Brunswick. The company's shipyards at Chatham, Bathurst, Richibucto and Kouchibouguac built at least 77 ships during the period 1827-1847. Exports of lumber from the company's operation in Bathurst reached 26,500 tons by 1833.

Henry and Samuel turned the company over to Joseph in 1846. Although an audacious and daring businessman, whose energies had built a vast empire in New Brunswick, Joseph had made enemies who challenged him in the courts and legislature. These challenges resulted in the loss of 500 square miles of timberland on the northwest Miramichi and Nepisiguit rivers, with the consequent impact on the company's financial wellbeing.

Joseph took an active part in supporting a candidate in the 1842 elections in Northumberland County. The campaign literally becoming an election "fight," with some 500 to 1,000 men fighting in the streets, and only dispersing with the arrival of troops. Joseph's candidate lost the election, which diminished his political influence in the legislature.

Depressed economic conditions, strong competition and reckless expansion eventually caught up with the company in 1847 when it was forced to declare bankruptcy. Between 500 and 1,000 men were out of work. Joseph moved to England in 1850 and entered the ship commission business, which involved selling ships and their cargoes for a commission. His debts were not finally cleared until 1871, probably by his brother Samuel.

Joseph had married Mary Peters of Bushville, NB, in 1833, and they had four sons and one daughter. Joseph died in London 16 January 1865.

While Joseph and Henry were establishing themselves in New Brunswick,

Greenfield, Mass., retired to Boston. He was not yet 25 years old.

Samuel was commissioned a lieutenant in Capt. Alexander MacDonald's company of the 2nd battalion of the newly formed Royal Highland Emigrants (this regiment was later placed on the regular army establishment as the 84th Regiment of Foot). Capt. MacDonald took him to Halifax from where the battalion was administered and trained. Companies of this battalion garrisoned New York and fought in the Carolinas.

Samuel retired from the army with the rank of captain. For his services he received an island in the Bay of Fundy. He became a merchant at St. Andrews, New Brunswick. He was married 17 June 1779 to Mary Harwood. Only one child is known, a daughter, Mary Harwood, born 8 February 1783.

He died 28 February 1803 at St. Andrews, aged 53.

Captain Joseph Bliss

Joseph Bliss, the youngest child of the Rev. Daniel and Phebe Bliss became a clerk in the book store of Henry Knox in Boston. When Knox became Washington's chief of artillery, Joseph accompanied him and served in Knox's regiment with credit throughout the war. He was present at the Battle of Brandywine and achieved the rank of captain and paymaster. He was married and had a son, Joseph, about 1784, by his first wife.

He married again, 11 July 1786, at Boston, to Nancy Cook, the daughter of Major Cook of Newton, Mass. He moved to Haverhill, New Hampshire in 1791 and became an inn keeper. He was a community leader in the development of the town and in 1795 President George Washington appointed him to be town postmaster. He had five more children:

- John, born 1787 at Concord, died 22 December 1854 at St. Augustine,

Florida.

- Louisa, born 1791 at Haverhill, married 27 March 1810 to the Hon. Arthur Livingstone, Chief Justice of New Hampshire.
 - Caroline, who died very young.
 - Julian, who died very young.
 - Horace, born 24 May 1802.
- Joseph Bliss died at Haverhill 3 January 1819, at the age of 61.

Epilogue

Many of the 50,000 Loyalists who fled to Canada and Nova Scotia were of the brightest and best, a loss to the land of their birth. They were to help found a new *constitutional monarchy* in their new home.

The officers of the Continental Army likened Gen. George Washington to Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, the fifth century BC Roman senator, farmer and soldier who was twice summoned to lead the army and save Rome, and afterwards each time declined to seize power but returned to his farm. In May 1783 those officers formed the Society of the Cincinnati to commemorate their success. The hereditary membership passes through the eldest sons of those officers according to the rules of primogeniture.

It may be that the "UE" mark of honour decreed by Lord Dorchester, Governor General of British North America, by Order-in-Council on 9 November 1789, and its application to all descendants, was prompted as a response to the Cincinnati.

The ad hoc leadership of the new American nation lacked a continuing authority. A Constitutional Convention was assembled in 1787 to codify the old common practice and thus correct matters. They harked back to the ancient Greek philosophers who had prescribed for good government that a "Tyrant" (that is, a non-hereditary king) must be elected for a defined and limited term. Remembering

the Restoration Settlement of King Charles II in 1660, their elected ruler would be bound by parliamentary rules from the old law and their puritan background. Thus came into being The Constitution of The United States of America. A fine *representative government* was achieved. A more recent tradition of "Prime Ministers", which arose long after many of their ancestors had left England, and during what may have seemed to them to be unhappy regimes, had not become graven in their minds. They missed the chance to also have *responsible government* that could fall on a confidence vote.

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About the author:

Charles E. Cartmel, UE, member of Heritage Branch, UELAC, is one of five children of the late Edith Lockhart Bliss from Oromocto, New Brunswick. Mr. Cartmel had four and a half years army service overseas, as an anti-aircraft gunner in England and later as an infantry platoon commander in Holland. He worked for 46 years in the life insurance business. Mr. Cartmel has retired to Lachine, Quebec, to pursue his "abiding interest in the flow of history".

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Thank you

Your proofreader (Dorothy Martin) is a gem; her assiduous work was a real help.

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Endnotes:

1. Haldimand Papers, B191/38, 7 December 1778
2. Letter of Ezra Ripley to Joseph Willard

Most of the family history is found in *Genealogy of the Bliss Family in America* (3 volumes) by Aaron Tyler Bliss, published 1982.

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*To my children, and to their children.
May they never forget the hardships
of these, our ancestors of 220 years ago,
who founded what we enjoy.*

• **George Lewis.**

Judge Bliss was not allowed to settle again in the land of his birth. He did not receive the portraits of his parents which had been bequeathed to him, and which remain still at Concord.

He died in 1806, at the age of 67 years, at his country residence, "Belmont," at Lincoln in Sunbury County, a few miles downstream from Fredericton. His wife died some months later, in 1807.

The Reverend William Emerson

William Emerson was born 31 May 1743 at Malden, Mass. He was son of the Rev. Joseph Emerson and of his wife, Mary Moody. He was appointed pastor of the Church of Christ in Concord when the Rev. Daniel Bliss died in May 1764.

On 21 August 1766 he married Phebe Bliss, the daughter of the late pastor and sister of Daniel Bliss, the Loyalist. Unlike his wife's father, he did not support the king.

The day after the Battle of Concord, he took the lead in the activity to salvage the munitions and stores that the troops had sought to destroy, and to prepare the town for the struggles to come.

He volunteered as chaplain to the American expedition in August 1776 to Ticonderoga to join General Horatio Gates.

In the summer of 1776 William wrote a letter to his wife from Ticonderoga telling her of his inability to forward a letter to her brother at Quebec, that all communications through the lines was forbidden. At that time Daniel was already with Burgoyne's army on his way to battle this brother-in-law, and also their young nephew, Theodore, both with the Continental Army.

On 20 October 1776 William Emerson died of the fever in Rutland, Vermont, at the age of 33.

The Emersons had five children:

- *William, born 6 May 1769, married Ruth Haskins 25 October 1796. He died 11 May 1811. (Ralph Waldo Emerson was born of this union in 1803.)*
- *Hannah Bliss, born 27 July 1770, died 27 March 1807.*
- *Phebe, born 8 November 1772.*
- *Mary Moody, born 25 August 1774, died 1 May 1863.*
- *Rebecca, born 7 August 1776. Phebe Bliss Emerson had been widowed at age 35. On 16 November 1780*

The Boston Massacre was not a massacre but actually a street fight between a mob and a squad of British soldiers that ended in the death of five colonists. Paul Revere sold an engraving which did not depict the events as they were but the picture aroused much anger.

—from *Hulton-Deutsch Collection*

[Editor's Note: In our Fall 1995 issue, page 42, we featured details of this "massacre", under the subtitle, "How a President Saved a British Captain"]

she married the Rev. Ezra Ripley, who had succeeded her late husband as pastor. Ezra Ripley died in 1840. She had further issue of this second marriage:

- *Sarah, born 8 August 1781.*
- *Samuel, born 11 March 1783.*
- *Daniel Bliss, born 26 August 1784.*

The pastors' widow died 16 February 1825, still at the old manse in Concord, at the age of 83.

Captain Thomas Theodore Bliss

Thomas Theodore Bliss, a younger brother of Loyalist Daniel, was born at Concord in the same year that the New England militiamen, under William Pepperell, captured the mighty fortress of Louisbourg. That England gave the French back the fort in 1748, with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle at the end of hostilities, was contrary to the interests of the New England colonies.

Thomas became a shipwright and lived at Brimfield, Mass. He married a Miss Bartlet at Concord.

people were suspicious of Samuel and believed that he had served as guide to the British troops... but four witnesses proved that he had been in Boston... and he was discharged

In March 1775 his elder brother, Daniel, remarked to his two army visitors that, if hostilities broke out, the Americans would fight. As Thomas Theodore passed within sight Daniel added, "There goes a man who will fight you in blood up to his knees."²

At age 30, John Hancock gave Tho-

mas Theodore a commission as captain and the command of a company of artillery. He was a brave and efficient officer but had misfortune. In the campaign against Quebec in 1775 (where his brother, Daniel, was with the defenders) he was captured with all his company at Three Rivers. He was kept as a prisoner of war and sent to New York City, where for a while, he was held in the vaults of Old Trinity Church.

Daniel used his considerable influence to prevent his brother's release or exchange. While he may have wished to keep such a formidable officer out of battle, he may also have sought to keep his brother away from harm. The captain of artillery was not released until the British forces evacuated New York after the peace.

Thomas had five children:

- *Theodore, born 17 March 1766, served 3 years as a private with the Massachusetts troops and was at Saratoga and the surrender of Burgoyne. He was later a sea captain.*
- *Thomas, born 3 February 1767 at Boston, was a cabinet maker.*
- *Eliza*
- *Phebe, born 6 November 1774.*
- *Ann*

He was likely remarried, for there is a record of a marriage at Boston on 25 June 1789 to a Hulda Delano. He died at Cambridge, 1 September 1802 at age 57.

Captain Samuel Bliss, UE

Samuel Bliss was born at Concord in 1750, a year when the French were adding new fortifications at Louisbourg in the hope that it would not fall again.

After Daniel had fled in March 1775, Samuel led his oldest brother's wife and children away to safety in Boston with the aid of his brother-in-law, Pastor Emerson.

When the Battle of Concord was fought the people were suspicious of Samuel and believed that he had served as guide to the British troops, giving directions as to where contraband arms were stored and pointing out the dwellings of the leading rebels. On the 12 May 1775 he was brought before the magistrate, but four witnesses proved that he had been in Boston on April 19th, and he was discharged.

Because he was fully persuaded that other charges would be sought against him, Samuel, who was a merchant at

erty" while attended by a personal slave, and in a market which later might be used for the auction of slaves.

When Benjamin Barron of Concord died in 1754, in his estate was listed "One Negro servant named Jack . . . £120/ 0/ 0." By the year 1761, industrious "Jack" had bought his own freedom and, for another £16, four acres of plough land. He asked Daniel Bliss to draw up his will.

At the rear of Concord's old burial ground, to the left of the church, stands a gravestone. It bears this epitaph.

God wills us free; man wills us slaves.

I will as God wills; God's will be done.

Here lies the body of

JOHN JACK

a native of Africa who died

March 1773, aged about 60 years.

Tho' born in a land of slavery,

He was born free.

Tho' he lived in a land of liberty,

He lived a slave.

Till by his honest, tho' stolen, labors,

He acquired the source of slavery,

Which gave him his freedom;

Tho' not long before

Death, the grand tyrant,

Gave him his final emancipation,

And set him on a footing with kings.

Tho' a slave to vice,

He practised those virtues

Without which kings are but

slaves.

Daniel Bliss was appointed executor of the modest estate of the freed slave and composed the epitaph. Though he held the deceased in good regard, it is likely that some of the thought behind the stone was also a comment on the hypocrisy of those rebelling for the right to liberty.

On 20 March 1775, two British officers, Capt. Brown and Ensign deBerniere, came to Concord under orders from General Gage both to reconnoitre the town and to find out about the munitions being made and stored. They used the Bliss home in the centre of the village, from which they could easily observe all activity. The population quickly became aware of their presence and they threatened to kill Daniel Bliss and his visitors. Late at night he led his guests by an unwatched road and fled to Boston.



"Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne

He was then 36 years of age and he left behind his wife, aged 29, and three children of ages 6 to 4 years. A few weeks later he sent his brother, Samuel, to Concord to get his family safely away and to salvage a few valuables.

On 19 April 1775, when the war started in Concord, his house was used by the Americans to treat the British wounded. His estate was the only one in Concord that was confiscated in the revolution. On 6 March 1781 the house and



General Haldimand who received a letter from Commissary-General Day describing Daniel Bliss as "a deserving good man"

lands were disposed of by auction for £278, 2s., 10d. under the Act of Sequestration.

The family went to Quebec that very year, in time to be present when the invading Continental Army was defeated, and when his brother was captured. Daniel was appointed a commissary officer under Commissary-General Nathaniel Day. As Assistant Commissary-General, he accompanied General John Burgoyne's army when it was defeated at Saratoga in October 1777.

Before the surrender, General Burgoyne suggested that the provincial troops should escape in small groups, as he feared that he would be unable to protect them from retaliation by the Continental Congress. Daniel returned to his family in Quebec. The Commissary Department was now overstaffed so he was released along with several others.

In late 1778 he was rehired to fill a vacancy at Niagara. Commissary-General Day referred to him in correspondence with General Haldimand as, "a deserving good man."

In 1786, the war being over, he resigned his commission and moved to Fredericton, the capital of the new colony of New Brunswick. He built up a large and lucrative law practice and became the head of the New Brunswick Bar. He was raised to the Bench and later became Chief Justice of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas.

He and his wife had six children, three before the war; it seems likely that the other three were born at Quebec or Niagara during his army service:

- Daniel, born 7 July 1768 at Rutland, Mass., joined the army at Quebec and was paymaster of an Irish regiment. He married and settled in County Fermanagh, Ireland.

- Mary, married a Major Park and lived in Ireland.

- John Murray, born 22 February 1771 at Rutland. He became Solicitor General of New Brunswick and later a Justice of the Supreme Court. (From this stem descended the mothers of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts and of Bliss Carman.)

- Isabella, married in 1815 to Berran Foster, at Springfield.

- Hannah, born 12 May 1780, married William Wilmot of Fredericton 1 January 1805. She died in 1811.

George III had sought to have his fractious colonies work together, with the aim of reducing the costs of governing, that the 13 governors and administrations might be reduced in numbers. His wishes for their joining together for action were realized, but not as he hoped, when 12 of the colonies met together in a Continental Congress at Philadelphia on September 5th, 1774. On June 14th, 1775, the second Congress resolved that a continental army should be raised.

Through this 140 years the Bliss family had prospered and increased, and now, by the sixth generation, was spread among more than fifty households. Like many neighbours in the colonies some of them split into factions, as can be seen by looking at the household of our ancestor, the pastor at Concord.

The Reverend Daniel Bliss

Daniel Bliss was born 21 June 1715 at Springfield, Massachusetts, in the first year of George I and the year of the first Jacobite rebellion. He was the tenth of the thirteen children of Thomas Bliss and Hannah Cadwell. He graduated from Yale College in 1732 and was ordained 7 March 1739. From 1738 until his death

Daniel was pastor of the Congregational Church at Concord, Mass.

He was a friend of the English evangelist George Whitefield. His final sermon was preached 11 March 1764 in the presence of Mr. Whitefield who said, "If I had studied my whole life, I could not have produced such a sermon".¹ A few days later he was taken sick and died on 11 May 1764 at Concord. His tomb is prominent in the old churchyard.

On 22 July 1738 he married Phebe Walker of Stratford, Connecticut, the daughter of Robert Walker and his wife Ruth Wilcoxon. There were nine children born to their union:

- *Daniel, born 18 March 1739 at Concord.*
- *Phebe, born 21 October 1741, married 21 August 1766 to the Rev. William Emerson (who had succeeded her father as pastor of the Church of Christ in Concord).*
- *John, born 11 July 1743, died 16 December 1743, at Concord.*
- *Thomas Theodore, born 21 May 1745 at Concord.*
- *Hannah, born 22 March 1747, died accidentally September 1768.*
- *John, born 2*

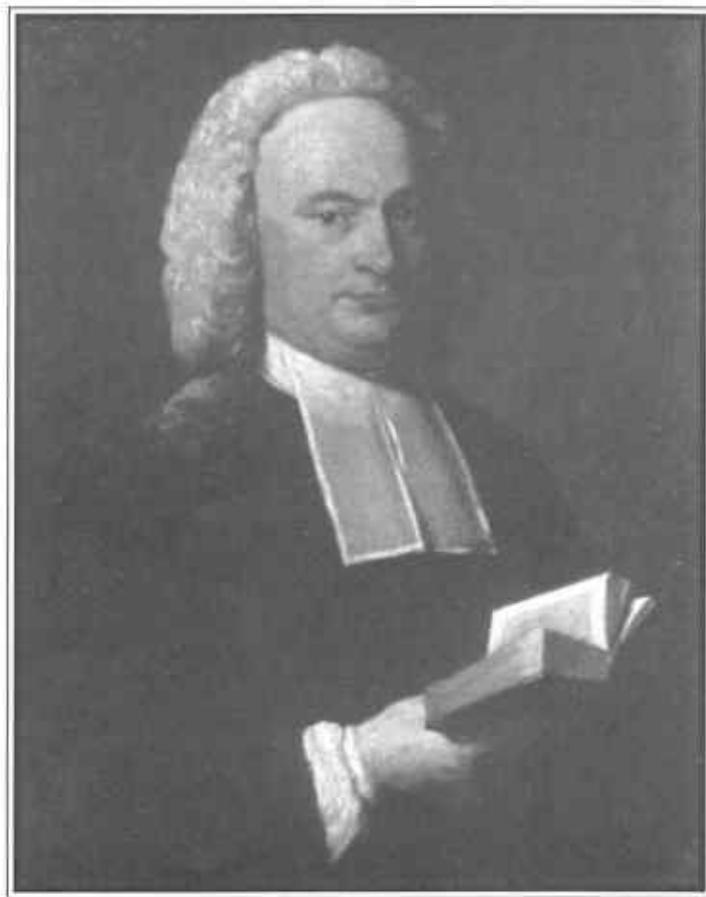
July 1749, died 15 December 1749 at Concord.

- *Samuel, born 19 November 1750 at Concord.*
- *Martha, born 5 November 1752, married Isaac Hoar of Concord.*
- *Joseph, born 23 July 1757 at Concord.*

The Honourable Daniel Bliss, UE

Daniel Bliss (the younger), first of the nine children of the Rev. Daniel Bliss and Phebe Walker, was born in 1739 at Concord, Mass., in the reign of George II. He graduated from Harvard in 1760 and was admitted to the bar at Worcester County, Mass., in May 1765. In March of that year he married Isabella Murray, the daughter of Col. John Murray and his first wife, Elizabeth McClanathan. Daniel opened a practice at Rutland, Mass., but moved the practice to Concord in 1772. In 1774 he became a legal advisor to the Governor, Thomas Hutchinson.

Daniel was highly regarded and well liked by his neighbours. But his unpopular views on slavery were not well received by the gentlemen of Boston who spoke of the "Rights of men" and "Lib-



Rev. Daniel Bliss, 1715-1764, Phebe Walker Bliss, 1713-1796, from portraits in the Ralph Waldo Emerson House, Concord, Massachusetts

The Bliss Civil War 1775-1783: A Family Divided

by Charles E. Cartmel, UE

Prologue

The most significant battle of the eighteenth century took place in 1759. Its success and aftermath resulted in the American Revolution. It removed all threat from the north and any further need for support or protection by the mother country. Further, it led indirectly to the French Revolution, both by example and due to the involvement of French troops and officers, such as the Marquis de LaFayette, in support of the Revolution.

It was also one of the greatest amphibious operations known in warfare up to that time. From England, New York and Boston they came and, under Admiral Charles Saunders, the forces had a rendezvous at Louisbourg. The Royal Navy carried a British army thousands of miles to the mouth of the St. Lawrence River and then, with the navigating skills of James Cook, hundreds of miles safely upstream to Quebec past the difficult reefs and shoals. This famous navigator, James Cook, was to spend the following year, 1760, charting the St. Lawrence River.

By the end of June 1759, General James Wolfe had his force of about 9,000 troops ashore at three separate camps. Quebec was defended by about 16,000. Part of the French army was deployed under the Comte de Bougainville to prevent a landing upstream along the north shore. At the end of August the British troops were concentrated. Using the strong tidal flow up and back downstream to carry his boats and confuse the French, on the night of the 12/13th of September a surprise landing put the British army on the plains outside the fort at dawn. Unwisely, the French commander-in-chief, the Marquis de Montcalm, did not wait within the fort with its superior artillery until the forces of de Bougainville could come up to the action. Rashly, he attacked the best trained infantry in the world. In fifteen minutes the battle was over. One perfectly timed volley left about 1,500 French casualties, to about 650 British.

Governor Vaudreuil fled Quebec for Montreal by the lower road and left the British army with a base for the winter. The ships had to withdraw to avoid the



Marquis de LaFayette

ice hazards. The following spring it was the Royal Navy that returned, and not French ships, to replenish the forces and ensure the capitulation of Montreal in September 1760.

In February 1763 the Peace of Paris ceded Canada to Britain. As was the custom in feudal Europe, whether caused by marriage, inheritance or war, those ordinary souls resident in the ceded land cared little about who was their lord, but that they might be treated well. The next fifteen years brought a peace not previously known and increasing prosperity. The absolutism of Louis XV had been replaced by a constitutional monarch, 26 years before the French Revolution. Gradually the old administration withered and the habitant acquired the "Rights of Englishmen". An elected assembly was promised which, slowed by the objection of the Canadien élite, was only created in 1791.

The British Parliament, which sadly had no members from the colonies, saw fit to presume that the costs of removing the French threat from the north should be shared by the Americans, the main beneficiaries of the war. Taxes were imposed from London. With no external enemies to fear, radical politicians raged against the imposed taxes. Massachusetts was the hotbed of radical politics; their

northeast province (now the State of Maine) had suffered through 85 years of the French and Indian Wars with little aid from the Crown. They had become independent and, in 1770, saw no need for interference.

In Boston, seven soldiers were taunted by a crowd. As the insults and threats got worse shots were fired, 5 died and 5 others were wounded. This "Boston Massacre" induced further emotional furore.

With the recent acquisition of the vast territories up to the Mississippi River, some order needed to be established. The Crown settled the boundaries of all British possessions in North America. The Quebec Act of 1774 decreed that the Ohio Valley was not to be colonized, but left to our Indian allies, and it was to be administered from Quebec City. Their exclusion from the Ohio Territory was deeply resented by the Americans, some of whom had looked to acquire land there.

The Bliss Family in America

In 1635, in the reign of Charles I, parliament had not sat for five years. The Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, was striving to suppress the Puritans. The New World called and thousands emigrated. At about this time, the parents of Samuel Bliss arrived in Massachusetts from Gloucestershire.

The American colonies lived largely in benign neglect through the Great Civil War (1642 - 1646), Cromwell's Commonwealth, the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, James II, the accession of William & Mary in 1689, Queen Anne, the Hanoverian succession of 1714 and the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 & '45. (After the '45, many Jacobites left for North America where they and their families, including Mrs. Flora MacDonald, loyally supported King George III during the revolution.)

In 1664, when New Netherland was taken from the Dutch and ceded to the English, the three new colonies of Delaware, New Jersey and New York added to the strength, security and prosperity of New England. Regardless of changes in Britain, the various colonies (such as Catholic Maryland, Congregational Massachusetts and Quaker Pennsylvania) each prospered separately. An active new interest by England was to change matters.