

Research – Researching Jacques James Boutilier (1735 – 1827)

By Joe Petrie

To summarize for Cape Breton researchers, what is important about Jacques James is that:

He was born and baptized in Etoban, Montbeliard in 1735;

He immigrated with most of the Boutiliers on the Sally to Halifax in 1752;

He survived the trip on the Sally but was orphaned because his parents died en-route;

He worked in Halifax to pay for the trip;

He was resettled by the British as an original settler of Lunenburg;

He married Suzanne Elizabeth Rigoleaux in Lunenburg in 1765;

He sold his property in Lunenburg County about 1780;

He relocated his family to St. Margaret's Bay in Halifax County (now French Village);

He received 2 land grants (1784 and 1791), while living in St. Margaret's Bay;

He, other Boutiliers and other land owners received 100 acres each in the 1791 grant;

He farmed, fished and ran a shipping business in Halifax County;

He moved his family (wife and 2 unmarried sons) with 5 married children and their families to Cape Breton to a farm called Cox Heath that also contained a mill which he bought both from Captain Cox in 1811;

He and his families farmed, operated the mill and operated other businesses in Cox Heath;

He eventually was known as James Boutilier; and

He died and was buried in Coxheath in 1827.

I can't claim that anything in this article is original. It is all public information. My paper sources are from the late Charles Buchanan of New Waterford and Sydney. I suspect that it includes information given to him by John Howie of Glace Bay. John also provided me with information. There were notes on Land Grants. My web site sources are: cbgen.org; Jessica Boutilier's site (Jessica is a fellow member of the Association of Professional Genealogists); and Kim Stevens, pages on the Lunenburg County GENWEB Web Site.

For background, Charles Buchanan provided the following on Jacques James, who also known as James Boutilier:

Baptism:

Date: 11 AUG 1735

Place: Etobon, Montbéliard

Baptism sponsors: Jacques Migneré represented by his father Jean Nicolas Migneré and Catherine Boillot daughter of Pierre Boillot represented by her mother Susanne Goux widow Boillot, Jean Bouteiller carpenter - laborer of Etobon [uncle] was presented as father because of Jean George Bouteiller's absence from the baptism.

Alias: James /Boutilier

Burial Date: 27 MAY 1827

For additional background, Jessica Boutilier on her web site indicates that:

The Boutiliers left Etobon, in the Principality of Montbeliard (under the rule of the Duchy of Wurttemberg Germany) for economic reasons. In the late 1740's, Britain began recruiting settlers for the Canadian provinces. (Then under British and French rule).

Boutillier families sailed to Canada on 3 ships: Speedwell, Sally and Betty. Jacques James arrived on the Sally on June 6, 1752. The Sally arrived in Halifax 88 days after departure with 218 passengers out of 257. Among those who perished were Jacques James parents, Jean George Boutillier and his wife Sarah Grange. Jacques James Boutillier is shown on the passenger list as a farmer, from Montbeliard, age 17.

Typically, the ships went down the Rhine to Rotterdam to Hellevoet Roads and then sailed when the weather was favorable (this often resulted in a wait of up to a week.) The ships then sailed for Cowes or Gosport in England before being cleared for Halifax (this was because the British were paying for the passage and passengers had to work the passage off after they arrived in Halifax). The British wanted to be sure they were able bodied. On the Sally, Jacques James' father Jean George lied that he was 50 instead of 61 for the able bodied reason.

On the typical ship, each person had little floor space. There was no privacy. Beds were bunks in tiers maybe 12" wide. Food was supplied by the ships' captains and it was wormy. Cooking was in fireplaces on deck but only in calm weather. When the weather was unsettled, they ate the food raw. Barley, oatmeal, salted beef and pork, dried salt cod, peas, oil, butter, cheese and hard tack was their menu. There was 50 gallons of water per passenger which had a strong odor and overgrown with slimy green algae. Hygiene was unknown aboard they voyage, many died under these conditions, especially the elderly and the young.

The record shows the Sally sailed with 258 souls and arrived at Halifax with 218 souls after a stormy voyage. This was followed by a further 3 weeks of quarantine and on the 26 of Sep the 218 souls were landed at Halifax. The total trip may have taken nearly 5 months. The Boutilliers on the Sally arrived in Halifax after a dreadful voyage, sick from the voyage, from the food and other conditions. On and after the voyage over 70 of the 'Foreign Protestants' died. At Halifax, they came ashore on George's Island, took an oath to King George III of England and became members of the Church of England. Previously, the Boutilliers were either Lutherans or Calvinist.

The British government supplied housing and provisions but it was a miserable winter for the settlers. Many were required to work to pay off their passage. Halifax had needed fortification. The settlers worked on building the Halifax Citadel and other public works. Each member of the family was indebted and the whole debt had to be paid in full before all family members were free of the obligation.

The settlers remained in Halifax over the winter until June 1753 working at 1 shilling a day to pay the cost of transportation for themselves and family. The cost was: Adults 6 pounds, 5 -12 years 3 pounds, infants free.

The stay in Halifax was less than a year. In the spring of 1753, a new settlement named Lunenburg was carved out of the virgin forest. The Lunenburg settlers gathered in St. Paul's Anglican Church in Halifax where they drew ballots for their lot of land. At Lunenburg, the settlers were given a town lot, a garden lot and 30 acres of land which had to be cleared. The land was not granted to them as they were not British citizens and had only licenses of occupation. This suited most of the settlers for if their land was not registered as a grant, they did not have to pay quit-rents to the province.

The move to Lunenburg was a military operation. It was designed to protect soldiers and settlers from Indians and the French Acadians. In Halifax, the timber for two blockhouses were cut and pre-fitted so the structure would be put up quickly in Lunenburg. A flotilla of 20 vessels made the move and on June 8, 1753 they arrived at Lunenburg. All they could see was forest. The timbers were unloaded at 2 AM the next morning and by 10 AM the first blockhouse was erected 1/2 mile from the shore on the hill. In 10 days. By June 19, the settlers were on shore with their complete store of goods. The 2 blockhouses were finished. 3000 pickets had been cut for a stockade to protect against attacks from the Micmacs and Acadians. Town lots had been handed over to the settlers.

Jacques James settled at North West Range about 9 miles from town. The settlers were always in danger of Indian attacks. Until 1760, it was dangerous to farm or even cut wood. They began to look for other places to settle.

Jacques James and Suzanne sold their lot at North West Range, Lunenburg about 1780. They moved to St. Margaret's Bay and settled at what eventually became known as French Village.

While in St. Margaret's Bay, James petitioned for two land grants.

The 1784 petition follows:

Boutellie [Boutillier], Jaques who came to the province "at the first settlement of it and served in the artillery." Had improved a small island in St. Margaret's Bay and now asks for a grant of the island in St Margaret's Bay. The Surveyor's Report indicated that the island had 5 acres.

In 1791, Jacques James and others who settled on and purchased small lots of land (30 & 50 acres) at St. Margaret's Bay needed more pasture land for their cattle. They wanted a grant of the land in the rear of their lots. Each of the following were granted 100 acres:

Bulkeley, J.M.

Freke,

Stuart, Alexander

Boutillier, Frederick

Rogers, William

Boutellier, George

Jeanperine, Christopher

Boutillier, Jacque, Sr.

Dofinnee, George

Doufinee, John

Davis, Lewis

Boutillier, James

Westaver, Conrade

Boutellier, John

Jeanperine, George

Colville, Hugh

In 1791 James had an extensive mackerel fishery and was said to have brought in thousands of barrels of fish for Halifax and for export. This is the first mention of a Lunenburg settler in the fish trade, for they were mostly farmers, woodsmen and artisans. The point and the village on the point is now Boutillier's Point.

In 1794, James and Suzanne sold one acre of their land to the community for six pounds for the continued use of it as a cemetery. The oldest burial was 1789 and the oldest dated headstone 1828. This is now Pioneer Cemetery of French Village.

In 1811, James and Suzanne moved from Boutillier's Point and settled on Sydney River (now Coxheath), Cape Breton.

In 1822, James petitioned the government for a grant of land stating he is upward of 100 years old. (He lied a little as he was about 87.) He stated he was a native of Switzerland. His mother or grandmother may have been Swiss. Technically, he was not French although his language was French. The Montbeliard settlers were considered a forgotten people. James died in 1827.

About Coxheath:

The following paragraphs are probably from a speech entitled "Coxheath, or A Century of Civilization" given by Edmund ANDREWS in January of 1899, reproduced at www.cbgha.org.

After the fall of Louisburg in 1758, Captain William Cox was left in charge of English soldiers in Sydney. In 1796 Cox obtained a grant of 1300 acres of farmland along the Spanish River where he had been living since 1790. The land extended from the Cantley Grant (now Cantley Village) to just beyond Mountain Road, touching the river on the southeast as well up into the Coxheath Hills on the northwest.

English soldiers cleared the land, built a house, stable and barns. They then set up a grist mill, just below what is now Heathview Drive. A road was built from his farm to the mill. Captain Cox lived on the farm with his wife and ran a successful grist mill and dairy farm. He named the land Cox's heath. Captain Cox returned to England in 1809. James Boutilier from St. Margaret's Bay ran a coal shipping business carrying coal from the Sydney Mines Coal Co. to Halifax. He purchased Capt. Cox's land for 300£ in gold.

Three brigantine ships sailed up Spanish River in May 1811. On the ships were James Boutilier, age 78, his wife Susanne, 5 of his 6 sons and 2 daughters. 10 grandchildren were also on board ranging in age from 6 months to 13 years old. These 3 families the Boutilier, Lewis, and Andrews families were the founding families of Coxheath. The grist mill was turned into a saw mill when wheat became difficult to grow. It was used in a ship building and repair business run by the Boutilier and Andrews families in the mid-1800s. The ship building business was located where the Sydney River Dam is today. Around 1850, several Scottish families began to settle near Blackett's Lake. Coxheath soon became known as the "Garden of Cape Breton."

By 1900, the original land of Captain Cox was divided into 25 separate farms. The farms provided the main supply of farm products for the residents of Sydney.

About the families that moved to Cape Breton:

The 5 sons who relocated to Cape Breton were: John James (B 26 May 1868), John Peter (B 28 Oct 1773), John George (B 16 Sep 1777), John David (B 13 Aug 1784), and Henry Joseph (B 29 Jul 1789). John David and Henry Joseph were still unmarried in 1811 and both married in Cape Breton. The 2 daughters were: Catherine Elizabeth Lewis and Susanna Margaretha Andrews.

Please note that I have not determined the 10 grandchildren's names. I believe that there were more than 10 – based on birth year information.

Of the 5 sons in Cape Breton:

John James stayed in Coxheath.

John Peter Boutilier settled near Lingan (Bridgeport, Glace Bay).

John George stayed in Coxheath.

John David Boutilier married and settled near his wife's Peach family at Port Morien.

Henry Joseph Boutilier married and stayed in Coxheath.

Of the 2 daughters in Cape Breton:

Catherine Elizabeth Lewis and her family stayed in Coxheath.

Susan Margaret Andrews and her family stayed in Coxheath.

Jacques James Boutilier's family was not the only group of Boutiliers on Cape Breton in the early 19th Century. For example, Jacques James' brother Frederick Boutilier and Frederick's wife Anna Hirtle also moved to Cape Breton, settling with their large family in the Bras d'Or area. They were also parishioners of St. George Anglican Parish in Sydney.

Finally, my father descended from Jacques James. My mother descended from Frederick.

Joseph F. Petrie

Genealogy Memberships:

Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association (CBGHA);

Association of Professional Genealogists (APG);

Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (FGSNL);

New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS); and

Founding Member, Friends of Irish Research