

Different Responses to the Influx of Loyalists

The town of Oromocto and its township of Burton, where the Kimballs and Kenneys lived, was near but downstream from Fredericton. Feeling of sympathy for the United States persisted among the settlers who had come from New England almost two decades earlier. During the American Revolution, Asa and Israel as members of the committee had made their feeling of support for the Americans known. Asa backed his opinions by taking the committee's petition for union with Massachusetts to their legislature in Boston. But now, with Loyalists in dominant positions, the social and economic conditions in New Brunswick were changing. These two families followed different courses. The Kimballs moved away; the Kenneys stayed.

Israel Kenney was able to continue farming. In 1786 the government of newly formed New Brunswick gave him a grant at Oromocto, Lot 1, 170 acres, the farm he was occupying. The deed was made out to "Israel Kenny." He was allotted a larger grant of land, 227 acres, further up the Oromocto River in 1790, and his oldest son, Stephen, was granted the adjacent 235 acres.

The Kimballs, on the other hand, were unable to obtain the land they needed. In 1783, the time of the Studholm Report, three of their sons were of an age*, or nearly so, to want to establish their own farms: Sam, 22; Richard, 20; and Asa, Jr., 15 or 16. As mentioned earlier, Richard and his brother, Samuel, had applied for land and been turned down. Their discomfort in living among Loyalists may have been increasing. In the next few years Asa and the entire Kimball clan with the possible exception of Samuel moved away. In the U.S. Census of 1790 many Kimballs were living in the area of Bethel in western Maine. Sarah Kenney, one of the oldest of 14 children, married Richard Kimball, second oldest of 9 children. Just when they married is not known, but during the year of 1785 two children, apparently not twins, were born to this couple. Sarah of course accompanied her husband and the other Kimballs when they moved to Maine.

With the Kenneys, the common interests of families that had sympathized with or even supported the Americans may have influenced the choice of spouses in the next generation. Sarah, as we have seen, married a Kimball. Susan and Abigail Kenney married men by the name of Shaw. (Francis Shaw of Mauderville was another who visited the Massachusetts assembly.) A genealogy²⁰ notes that about half of the Kenney children found spouses among the Loyalists, as though this were unexpected.

Incidentally, women had rights in land sales in that day. Israel and Susannah Kenney sold some land in July 1791. Justice Hubbard wrote that he executed the deed and:

[On] the same day also appeared Susannah Kenney, wife of the above named Israel Kenney, and she being examined by me separate and apart from her husband acknowledged that she had executed the same Deed of her own free will without any threat, fear or compulsion from her husband.

* Younger Kimball boys were between 8 and 14, and three daughters ranged in age from around 7 to 18. In 1783 Kenney's sons were between the ages of 5 and 12, none older. The oldest daughters were married or about to be, and other daughters were 7 and under. After 1783 the Kenneys had four more children.

²⁰ From misc. information included with E. W. Bell, *Israel Kenney*, 1939