

Hannah Orcutt Stephenson Sutherland, wife of James, was born on November 9, 1819 in Oromocto, New Brunswick. Her people came from Boston. She had two brothers, Reuben and William, and two sisters, Izetta and Sarah, who married brothers. Izetta married Warren Lincoln, and Sarah married John Lincoln. It so happened that Hannah and James Sutherland also were married the same day as Sarah and John, January 5, 1837.

Hard Times and Increasing Responsibilities

As James and Hannah married economic clouds were appearing on the horizon. Presidential administrations in the United States were bringing its central bank to an end, state governments had allowed rampant speculation in land, and these factors had precipitated a financial panic in 1837. This was followed by a depression in the United States beginning the next year and lasting about seven years. With many links to the economy of the United States, economic problems worked their way into Canada as well. Good times did return soon enough. Watson says: "The big crash came in 1843. Lumber was no longer in demand and the lumber camps failed. James Sutherland suffered heavy losses, too."

By April 22nd of 1844 the Sutherlands had four children. Hannah Rebecca was named after her mother and her grandmother. The others were Sarah, Elspa Philena and Robert. In this period Hannah lost both her grandfather and father. Richard Kimball, the rather aggressive landowner, died in 1844, around the age of 80. Hannah's mother, Rebecca Stephenson, was among those receiving land in the Kimball will; others were his second wife and several grandsons. Then around 1846, Hannah's father, Collin Stephenson, died. He was about 60.

The names of Sutherland, Stephenson and Kimball continue to occur together. Sunbury County records an indenture on May 26, 1846 between Rebecca Stephenson, widow, and James Sutherland of four acres of land occupied by William Brown, a son-in-law of Richard Kimball. In 1851 Hannah's brother, William G. Stephenson,²⁵ carpenter, farmer and property owner in Burton Township, was providing a home for his brother, Reuben Richard, and for a 14-year old cousin, Asa Kimball. (Asa Kimball? More echoes of the past!)

A baby is added to the family of James and Hannah Sutherland. Late in 1848 or early 1849 Zeresh Vashti was born. (A baptismal record has not been found for her in Fredericton, possibly should be sought in Burton. The suggestion has been made that a minister might object to the choice of names.)

By 1851 the Sutherland family had moved to Fredericton, the census²⁴ there giving James Sutherland, "native", age 40; Hannah, 33; Hannah Rebecca 13; Sarah, 11; Elspa Phelene, 9; Robert, 8 and Collin S. The boy was born on Feb. 9, 1851 and, according to church records, Pamela Elizabeth on March 28, 1853.

James had suffered economic losses in the 1840s and was not able to restore his business. In the next few years the situation the Sutherlands found themselves in grew increasingly difficult, even desperate. This comes through in a letter to Hannah from James* written in Australia in 1853.

("Ovens" in his letter refers to shallow caves hollowed out by wave action of ancient seas.)

²⁵ Census of 1851

* His letter, other papers, and the scales and weights used are in the possession of Glenn Harris Ickler.