

JOSEPH FISH

JOSEPH FISH, son of Nathan and possibly the son of Mary (Pierce) Fish, was b. at Pepperell, Mass., Apr. 27, 1770, the same year as Preserved Fish of Ira, Vt.; d at Hatley, P.Q., Apr. 22, 1859, age 89, ten years after Preserved; m. Jan. 5, 1793, at Reading, Vt., Sarah (Known as Sally) Spear, who was b. Mar. 24, 1770, at Walpole, N.H., and d. Oct. 12, 1858 age 88 at Hatley.

Mrs. Lemuel Fish, dau-in-law of Joseph, has written a description of Joseph's migration to Canada, which is here quoted:

"In the winter of 1795, my father-in-law, Joseph Fish, with his wife and their eldest son Lemuel, then a babe of 8 months, left their home at Reading, Vt., and with an ox-team loaded with their household goods and a limited supply of provisions, found their way through the woods to Durham, Province of Quebec, becoming the first white settlers to settle in that part of Canada, in what is now known as Stanstead County, in the eastern Townships of Quebec. It is said that they moved in not knowing that the land was outside the border of the United States, and thinking they were still in the state of Vermont. After remaining a short time at that place, they sent back their team as it was a dense forest and no wagon could get through, and set out on foot to seek a home on the eastern side of Lake Memphremagog. They carried many of their belongings on their backs in places; the mother and her babe all the way in their arms, and the father was loaded down with a pack of no small dimensions. After crossing the Lake and staying a day or two at the log cabin of Capt. Hovey, they directed their course to a place on Negro River about a mile below Borough's Falls. Here they put up a temporary shanty on a rising ground near the river. The place is still known as "Shanty Hill."

George G. Fish, who lived for many years at Ayers cliff, Quebec, but now lives at Toronto, Can., states that in his youth he remembers being told that the wife of Joseph Fish was the first white woman to spend a winter in that part of Canada, now known as Stanstead County, Quebec. He can point out where they made their first clearing in the forest adjacent to what is now known as Burrough's Falls (near Ayers Cliff). The story relates how the friendly Indians went out of their way to see a white woman for the first time.

They were poor, and their hardships and privations were for many years very severe. Some time elapsed before they were able to clear land enough to raise their grain, and still longer time before they could get their grain ground into meal. During the first seven years of their experience, there was not a grist mill within the distance of twenty miles from their dwelling. From 1795 to 1802, they pounded their grain in a large mortar made from a heavy block of maple. For variety, they sometimes boiled and ate their wheat and Indian corn whole.

The supply of fish from the lake and river was abundant and contributed masterially to their support. From 1802, their difficulties began to lessen. The wooden mortar was thrown aside (although long preserved as a memento), and they enjoyed the luxury of loaves baked from well ground flour. The shanty had, meanwhile, been superceded by a substantial log house, of limited dimensions, which furnished them with a comfortable home. In 1795 Mrs. Fish was playfully called "the handsomest woman in the town," there being no other woman in the settlement. In the meantime, their family increased; and by industry and economy their means increased; and after residing some seven years in this locality, they removed to No. 9, 1st Range of Hatley, which lot Mr. Fish had drawn as an Associate. Here they passed their last days in comfort and prosperity, and lived to see their children and grandchildren well settled in life, and with hardly an exception sustaining respectable and useful positions in the community. All the families were exemplary members of the different Christian Churches."

Children:

Lemuel, b. August. 16, 1794; d. Sept. 27, 1873; m. Mary Rowell

Joseph, b. August 28, 1795; enlisted in the U.S. Forces and was killed in the war of 1812, on his 17th birthday, Aug. 28, 1812

Champion, b. Sept. 6, 1797, Hatley; m. Polly Wells, and had: Eleanor, b. Oct. 27, 1819, m. Abial Abbott; **Betsey, b. Apr. 8, 1821, m. Asa Foster**; and Mary Ann, b. May 1823, m. Josiah Osgood
Horace, b. Jan. 5, 1799; d. July 6, 1870; m. Hannah Leavitt