

## The Kennedy Family of Georgetown



*Annals of the Forty, No.5, Grimsby Historical Society, 1954.*

### KENNEDY

John was born 8 May 1761 in Sussex County. He studied to be a schoolteacher and sometime before 1787 he married his first wife, Charity, surname unknown. After the war of Revolution, he became unhappy under the new government and in 1794 he decided to move to Canada. He brought a team of horses and he and Charity, with five young children, began the long trek through the wilderness. On the way the horses died and they were forced to delay their journey travelling on foot and by boat. From Oswego they followed the south shore of Lake Ontario to the Niagara frontier. While at Oswego they met a party of indians, who greatly admired their youngest son, Morris, who had the large bright black eyes and dark hair of the Kennedy clan. An Indian woman stole the baby but John gave chase and rescued him.

They crossed the Niagara River 8 June 1795. Like many of the early pioneers, John and Charity Kennedy brought few worldly possessions...

John and Charity settled first on Lot 19, Conc V, Gainsborough township, later settling on Lot 27, Conc. VI...

...another schoolhouse was built at Snyder's Mills (St. Anns) and the first teacher was John Kennedy.

Charity, wife of John, died in 1799 and shortly afterward he married Barbara Dean. He died 12 April 1847. Barbara was born 1744, d. 1849. They were buried in the churchyard at St. Ann's, Gainsborough.

### CHILDREN OF JOHN AND CHARITY:

**John Kennedy** b.4 March, 1787, m.Barbara, dau. of John and Margaret Dean. Barbara b. 18 June 1791 at Fox Hill, New Jersey, d. 27 June 1861. John died 1874. They were buried at St. Ann's churchyard.

**Elizabeth**, b. 27 July 1788.

**Anny**, b.30 March 1790, d.10 February 1797.

**Charles**, b. 13 March 1792, d.12 June 1854. Charles...was a carpenter and joiner and lived for many years at St. Ann's. Charles was a sergeant with the 4th Lincoln Regiment during the War of 1812.

**Morris**, b. 4 November 1794, d. 12 October 1886. He served with 4th Lincoln Reg't in War of 1812.

**Samuel**, b. 12 May 1797, settled on Lot 22, Conc. V, Gainsborough, d.7 March 1879.

**George**, b. 16 Sept. 1799, d. 28 January 1870. The Historical Atlas for the County of Halton gives him credit for the founding of Georgetown in that County.

**CHILDREN OF JOHN AND BARBARA (DEAN) KENNEDY:**

**William**, b. 5 Sept. 1802, d. 18 Sept. 1899.

**Charity**, b. 29 March 1804, m. Darius Travis.

**Catherine**, b. 9 Nov. 1805.

**Phoebe**, b. 29 April, 1808.

**Jacob**, b. 29 April 1809, married Martha Thomas, 1839, d. 27 October, 1884. They lived on Lot 34, Conc. V Gainsborough twp. Martha b. 16 Nov. 1816, d. 3 Dec. 1890.

**Margaret**, b. 6 August, 1811, d. 17 June 1887.

**Michael**, b. 27 July 1815, d. 15 Nov. 1881.

**Joel**, b. 15 Dec. 1816, became a clergyman and went to the USA, d. 23 July 1902.

**David**, b. 16 July 1817, married Sarah Thomas, settled Lot 2, Conc. IX, Grimsby Twp. Sarah b. 1821, d. 1906. They were buried at St. Ann's, Gainsborough twp.

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## The Georgetown Herald, April 16, 1924

### IN THE EARLY DAYS

...There were four families of Kennedys drew land in 1820: they came from New Jersey like so many U.E.L. who preferred living under the British rule. The one that this town was named after was George Kennedy and his land was to be the future Georgetown. I do not remember of any boys in that family. There were two girls, the oldest being the first child born here. She married John Higgins, the younger one married Louis Heartwell. Charles Kennedy J.P., the oldest of the brothers and a land surveyor, was the most outstanding character for many years. I quote from an old record, "...possessing great talents for public duties as J.P., interested in any movement for the betterment of the people, and as the early settlers were without regular preaching of the gospel he officiated or acted as a local preacher. His house was the home of the ministers and a place of rest and refreshment to poor travellers." He left to take up his work, a son in the person of the late George H. Kennedy, who faithfully and well discharged any duties that involved the furthering the cause of religion and temperance, and of course the Methodist Church. His only son now living is our townsman, John W. Kennedy, and grandson Major Mervin Kennedy now of Acton. This family located on 21 in 8th Con. where three generations were born. - *L. Grant*

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## *The Kennedys: What brought them to this area?*, Collections 1, Esquesing Historical Society, 1984

...John Kennedy (grandfather of George) according to family tradition, was born in Scotland but moved to Ireland with his parents. Sometime before 1750 he came to the United States and settled in New Jersey. He served with the British forces during the Seven Years War: was captured by the French and eventually ended up in London, England, in an exchange of prisoners. He married in London and returned to New Jersey to live.

His son John was born on May 8, 1761, in New Jersey and was still a student when the American Revolution broke out....During the Revolution many had not fought for religious reasons, and others did not wish to side with either group. Unfortunately, once the fight was over the Americans made life extremely difficult for anyone who had not

actively supported their cause. John Kennedy and his wife Charity Wurtz were part of this group and so they and their five children joined the migration north.

They arrived in Niagara on June 8, 1795, and settled on Lot 19 Concession 5 in Gainsborough Township (near St. Ann's) on June 24, 1795. John had become a teacher after the war.... Charity Wurtz Kennedy died in 1799 and John married Barbara Slough. They had five sons and four daughters, but it was the children of John and Charity who were destined to become some of the first settlers of Esquesing. They were John born 1787, Elizabeth 1788, Anny 1790, Charles 1792, Morris 1794, and George 1799....

At least four of the Kennedy sons fought in the War of 1812. Charles took part in the Battle of Lundy's Lane, John was at Queenston Heights and Morris was with the 4th Lincoln Regiment. George, a boy of 13, served with the Royal Artillery and was later granted a pension for permanent injury; partial blindness in both eyes. Boys of his age were often given the job of loading the heavy artillery. The flash of fire when they ignited made blindness a common injury, along with deafness....

Morris Kennedy ...claimed the West half of Lot 20, Concession 9, on the 24th of March 1819. George Kennedy was given the east half, Charles all of Lot 21, Concession 8, Samuel the east half Lot 22, Concession 8, John the west half....

In order to obtain a Crown Deed, "Settlement Duties" had to be completed and Patent fees paid. Settlement duties varied but those prescribed in 1818 were "To clear and fence 5 acres for every 100 acres granted, to build a dwelling house 16 feet by 20 feet, and to clear one half of the road allowance in front of each lot." These duties were to be performed within two years of the date of the location ticket...Morris Kennedy completed his duties on Oct. 17, 1822, but George obtained an exemption because of his disability. - *Elaine Robinson-Bertrand*

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## *Georgetown's Oldest Church, Halton Hills Herald, 13 February, 1985*

...Charles Kennedy (1792-1854) was a leading supporter of the cause [Methodism] around what was to become Georgetown. The Kennedy's were active in a variety of churches. One brother, John (1787-1874) was an elder of the Presbyterian Church at St. Ann's in the Niagara peninsula for over fifty years.

Another brother, George (1799-1870), after whom Georgetown would be named, joined the Congregationalist church. A third brother, Morris (1794-1886) was to be a leading supporter of the Methodist Episcopal church.

Charles had been converted to Methodism in 1817; in 1818 he married Elizabeth Williams (1796-1855), whose family gave its name to Glen Williams; and in 1819 he was surveying the northern part of Esquesing Township.

His survey work may have been a factor in the 1819 order-in-council which granted him a mill seat on the Credit, where Georgetown was to develop, on condition that he have a saw mill in operation within twelve months.

Charles was influential in local politics, being named at the first town meeting in 1821 as one of the two wardens; and becoming one of the first justices of the peace in the area.... - *Richard E. Ruggle*

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*Reminiscences of Georgetown*, Georgetown Herald, June 26,  
1940.

...The first settler in Georgetown was George Kennedy, who built a saw mill on the branch of the now Credit which flowed through the town-site-to-be, and from which the place took its name. Of the village proper, however, my father, James Young, was the founder. He located there about 1843, soon after his marriage ... - *C.W. Young*

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**Christian Guardian, Sept. 19, 1849.**

Mr. George Kennedy and his amiable wife, very worthy members of the Congregational Church, are we believe the founders of Georgetown. About ten years since it was quite a small place having only a few houses with a Grist-mill and a small woollen factory....

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