

RYCKMAN NEIGHBORHOOD **How It Became A Loyalist Nucleus** By Robert Williamson

Part of our Mountain Memories mandate has been to trace the ethnic heritage of groups who pioneered the virgin expanse of the Hamilton Mountain. In the beginning it was Loyalist refugees escaping the turmoil of the American Revolutionary War, by following the Mohawk Trail to 100 acre of free land grants from the Crown. Later, it was immigrants seeking employment opportunities in a rapidly developing country. Some of the family stories previously told here are: Rymal, Hess, Terryberry, Burkholder, Binkley, Beckett, and Bull. This month the focus is on the Ryckman Corners neighborhood where the Young (Jung) and Almas families of German descent were among the first United Empire Loyalist (UEL) settlers along Rymal Road.

This story begins with Adam Young and his sons John, Daniel and Henry who were members of the Butler's Rangers fighting alongside the First Nations in the Mohawk Valley against the American rebels in 1776. An impressive granite monument beside the Grand River between York and Cayuga describes how John Young, followed by his father and brothers was the first settler on the Grand River, arriving in 1783. Their land grant expanded into a tract of several square miles when the Haldiman Grant was approved by the Crown for the Six Nations in 1784. However, one brother, Daniel, moved to Barton Township, which was a lot closer to civilization, when his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of a UEL, received a 100 acre grant at Lot 13 Concession 8 in Barton Township at the headwater of Red Hill Creek. In addition, Daniel was commissioned in the Lincoln County Militia, becoming a Captain during the War of 1812 serving with members of his Almas neighbors.



A montage of Ryckman's Park on Diconzo Drive, west of Upper Wellington with an artistic depiction of Daniel Young's Homestead. The City's historic plaque is in the foreground. Photo composed by Robert Williamson

With his military service, Daniel obtained two adjoining Lots 11, & 12 in Con. 8. Thus, descendants of the Young and Almas families came to occupy all the farm land bounded by Rymal and Stone Church Roads from west of Upper Wellington to Upper Gage. They became founding members of the Barton Stone Church congregation in 1811 and established what would become one of the largest church cemeteries on the Mountain. Church records show that these pioneer neighbors intermarried and on May 1, 1843 when James F. Young was excluded from Communion over a dispute with the church elders, he established a Young cemetery on his farm midway between Rymal and Stone Church Roads on the east side of Upper Wellington. The Young cemetery is still there and in 2015, a city plaque was placed nearby in Ryckman's, Park in recognition of the family heritage of Daniel Young and his wife Elizabeth (Windecker).

A third family joined this Young/Almas clique. It was headed by Joshua Wells who immigrated to Canada from Norfolk, England prior to the 1837 Rebellion. Joshua joined the militia and with his military service eventually settled on Crown land along the Caledonia Plank Road (Upper James Street) adjacent to the Barton Stone Church where he operated a toll gate. Joshua's son, William, also joined the militia when he came of age and took part in defending Canada against the Fenian Raids in 1866. He eventually rose to the rank of Captain in the Wentworth Battalion of Infantry and was a contractor by trade. He helped in the construction of the famous Mountain View Hotel as well as the St. George Anglican Church in Hannon. The Rev. George Bull a notable Mountain resident, conducted the first service there on January 6, 1846.

Robert Morris is the current owner of what remains of the Wells' land grant on Upper James. When his maternal grandmother, Alice Ella Wells, married William Almas, Morris became part of the Young / Almas gene pool. He estimates that such a connection makes him the 7th generation of the Young (UEL) family, that served in the American Revolutionary War with the Butler's Rangers and became the earliest pioneers on the banks of the Grand River.

Mountain Memories by award winning writer Robert Williamson appears monthly for the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society <Hamiltonheritage.ca> Research papers by **Dr. David Faux**, a Young family descendent, were very helpful in preparing this story.