

# The Grand Dispatch



A brief social history of Port Maitland Ontario, and the surrounding area  
Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association (PMHA) - Free to PMHA members

## Royalty; Maybe – Maybe Not!

### Many People claim to be Related to the Royal Family!

This past fall I received a phone from Arie Van Der Knyff of Dunnville, who wants to get on the mailing list for The Grand Dispatch. Arie asks me if I knew about the Kirk Cemetery near Chippewa. I do! But what is it I should know about it? Arie then told me a lady is buried there by the name of Amelia Barber and Amelia is the half sister of Queen Victoria. He found this information on the web.

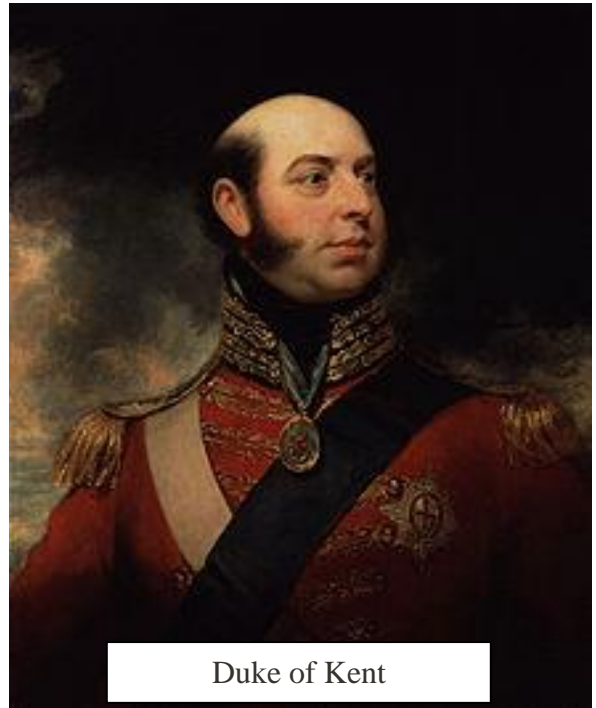
Recently, I had a number of previously unknown connections to people including the possibility of being related to Royalty while searching for genealogical information. My article in the last issue of the Grand Dispatch demonstrated a couple of those unexpected connections. Arie's inquiry once again sent me hunting for his suggested connection of Amelia to Queen Victoria.

You would think the story would end here but it has only become more interesting. The week after Arie asked me about this Royal connection, my wife was at Value Village AKA "The Boutique" where she picked up a book for me called "*HAMILTON famous and fascinating.*"

On page 9, of this book is a story about an Emily Ester Elizabeth Whyte who married Col. Wm. Gourlay and lived in a home in Hamilton called "Barton Lodge."

The first paragraph reads as follow: "*Once upon a time, a man from a distinguished family left his Scottish home, changed his name to Whyte, and took up residents in Jamaica. Did he do this to rear Isabella Hyde the offspring of a prince?*"

From the Dictionary of Canadian Biography we learn that "*James Matthew Whyte Jr. was a slave owner in Jamaica. After the abolishment of slavery in British territories he took his compensation awarded to former slave owners and moved to Hamilton.*"



Duke of Kent

*From Dictionary of Canadian Biography "Searching for new investment opportunities, he considered immigrating to the Canadas and in early 1834 departed Jamaica for Hamilton. He quickly became interested in the land market, receiving a patent on land in Cayuga Township in April. In January 1835 he sold the property to Allan Napier MacNab for £500."*

In 1836 he built Barton Lodge in Hamilton. After James Matthew Whyte died, his brother John Lionel Whyte of Jamaica took over the Barton Lodge and brings with him a daughter Emily Ester Elizabeth Whyte and his wife Isabella Hyde, the same Isabella Hyde mentioned earlier. The article suggests of rumors that Isabella was born of Madame Julie de St. Laurent and the unmarried Duke of Kent. This

would if the story stood up make Isabella a half sister of Queen Victoria. It would also make Isabella and Amelia Barber half sisters. Emily Ester Elizabeth Whyte married a well known Hamilton business man named Col. William Gourlay.



Madame Julie de St. Laurent

The last sentence in the story from the book "[HAMILTON famous and fascinating](#)" asks "Was Emily Gourlay, Queen Victoria's half niece"?

That being said, notice the name Isabella **Hyde** above! In the fall [2016 Dispatch](#) I wrote a story called "Thanks you for your kindness Dr. Jukes." In this article I told you about Doctor Jukes' mother Georgina Mary Ewart, and his step father Frederick **Hyde**. There was rumor that Georgina was the Godchild of King George III. An odd coincidence in my mind! The Hyde Jukes and Kirk families all seem to have some connection – distant though they may be, but the same names and same stories seem to pop up while researching them.

While researching Amelia Barber (married to Dr. John Kirk of Attercliffe Ontario) and Isabella Hyde, I came across a Kirk family researcher by the name of Doug Shirton who lives in Grimsby. Below, in part is an email I sent to him.



Emily Ester Elizabeth Whyte

*Hello Doug,*

*I took my time and did a ton of research only to find nothing to confirm a relationship between Amelia Barber and Queen Victoria. There is considerable information that Victoria expunged any information relating to any bastard relationships to her. There is also information on the net stating she did gift her half siblings on a regular basis. This gifting supposedly continued until after her death when her son Edward VII cancelled it.*

*I have found numerous family trees with Amelia as a Barber but then again none of them have any documents attached confirming her relationship to Victoria or the Duke of Kent. . .*

*I am at a loss as to why there are numerous seemingly credible letters etc. out there which implies otherwise.*

*I will include you on my mailing list where you will receive my next Grand Dispatch newsletter in which I intend to write a story about this research.*

*Good luck and Merry Christmas Bill Warnick.*



Queen Victoria

Now for information found on the Web” The following articles are copied directly from the websites given. If you are interested and have a digital copy of [The Grand Dispatch](#) you will find lots of documentation supporting these articles. See notes from Marylin below (spelled Marylin) Donato sent to me by Doug Shirton. Marylin is writing to Estelle Pringle at the Dunnville and District History Societies history room. These notes call into question my note (above) sent to Doug Shirton!

Following are a number of articles found both on the net as well as in newspapers and personal notes.

*The Prince and His Lady*

*The Love Story of the Duke of Kent and Madame de St. Laurent*

Review by Cheryl Bolen

[www.cherylbolen.com/kent.htm](http://www.cherylbolen.com/kent.htm)

*The Prince and His Lady, The Love Story of the Duke of Kent and Madame de St. Laurent* Mollie Gillen  
St. Martin's Press, New York 1970 314 pages

*I had always read that the French woman who served as mistress to the Duke of Kent for a quarter of a century entered a convent after her royal prince abandoned her to lawfully marry and beget the child who would become Queen Victoria*

*Like so many stories –including claims that the French woman and the prince had illegitimate child while living in Canada- this tale has no basis in fact.*

*(For the record, she never gave birth.)*

*The fact is that very little information was known about Madame de St. Laurent. This prompted biographer **Mollie Gillen** to spend five years thoroughly researching the lives of Prince Edward (who became Duke of Kent) and Madame de St. Laurent. Much of this research involved the examination of countless letters and records in the Royal Archives.*

*Gillen learned that the name Madame de St. Laurent was a complete fabrication. Like so many courtesans of the era, the prince's lady used the prefix of a married woman, though she had never married. No one today knows how she came by the name St. Laurent, either. As did the famed English courtesan Harriett Wilson, this French lady manufactured her surname. She may have done this to protect her respectable family for Therese Bernarding de Montgent (her real name) was the daughter of a Besancon engineer.*

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES


*A former journalist and English teacher, Cheryl Bolen sold her first book to Harlegquin Historical in 1997. That book, *A Duke Deceived*, was a finalist for the Hold Medallion for Best First Book, and it netted her the title Notable New Author. Since then she has published more than 20 books with Kensington/Zebra, Love Inspired Historical and was Montlake launch author for Kindle Serials. As an independent author, she has broken into the top 5 on the New York Times and top 20 on the USA Today best-seller*

*list.* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mollie\\_Gillen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mollie_Gillen)

*Mollie Gillen (née Woolnough; 1908–2009) was an Australian historian, researcher, writer and novelist. Her work on the [First Fleet](#), in *The search for John Small, First Fleeter and The Founders of Australia: A Biographical Dictionary of the First Fleet*, explored the idea that many of the founding*

*Continued on Pg 6*





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*Continued from Pg 3*

*families of Australia were descended from the convict population, rather than those sent to guard them. Gillen's article *Maud Montgomery: The Girl Who Wrote Green Gables* instigated a new era in scholarship on [Lucy Maud Montgomery](#).*

Below is an email sent to Estelle Pringle from Marylin Donato.

*Marylin Donato (View posts) Posted: 24 Sep 1999 7:00AM Classification: Query Surnames: KIRK, GREENE, MACLAREN OR MCLAREN, BARBER*

*“My ancestors, Dr. John Kirk and his wife, Amelia, are buried in the Kirk Family cemetery, near Attercliffe Station, Ontario, which is now a part of the town of Dunnville, Ontario. In August, 1999 while on a visit from California to Jamestown, New York where my husband grew up, he and I visited the Kirk Cemetery on Robinson Road. Near the cemetery is the site where John and Amelia Kirk had their home, which is gone now. Next to this site is the former farm home, still there and lived in, of the Kirk's only child, Hannah Amelia, who was married to Robert John Greene. John Kirk, and possibly a brother of his, settled the area which now encompasses Attercliffe Station.*

*John and Amelia Kirk are my great, great, great grandparents. A number of years after the 1859 death of Amelia Kirk, John Kirk and his daughter, Hannah Amelia, her husband, Robert John Greene, their children and grandchildren, and the MacLaren family, all formed a wagon train and traveled to Dakota Territory, where they founded and named the town of Mapleton, which is near the city of Fargo, North Dakota where I grew up. Upon the death of John Kirk in 1882, his remains were taken from Dakota to Ontario where he was buried in a plot of land, next to his wife, Amelia, which is now a part of the Kirk Family cemetery. Attercliffe Station was named in honor of Amelia Kirk as she was of royal blood, being born privately in Kensington Palace but*

*growing up with the Barber family of Attercliffe, England. I would appreciate any information in regards to Kirk, Greene, MacLaren, or Barber family genealogies.*  
*Marylin Donato.*

*It is a secret but known in our family that Grandma Amelia Kirk was a daughter of Prince Edward, the father of Queen Victoria. Grandma Kirk's mother, Theresa Bernardine de Montgenet (her alias name for secrecy was Julie de St. Laurent) was the companion of Edward for almost 28 years before he married and fathered Victoria. In order to not raise the anger or contempt of Edward's father; King George III, Edward and Julie managed to keep a secret of the fact that they had children by consigning them to other families and then giving these families money to raise the children. Grandma Kirk was consigned to the Barber family in Attercliffe, England, which is near Sheffield where Grandpa Kirk came from. Grandpa Kirk was born in Scotland but moved to Sheffield later on. Some years after Victoria took the throne, she began to send her half-sister, Amelia (Grandma Kirk), the monthly remittance of money. Then Grandma Greene received this remittance, along with other gifts. One of my mother's cousins (passed away now) ended up having a four poster bed that Victoria had sent to Grandma Greene. I have photos of this bed that were taken back in the 1970s.*

*When Victoria died, Grandma Greene received a private message of her death that was sent by special courier from the royal family, and Uncle Claude said that when Grandma Greene read this message she was so overcome that "she took to her bed in grief". Grandma Greene always called Victoria "a kind old soul". A while after Victoria's death, Grandma Greene received a large lump sum of money from Victoria's son, the new king, with the message that she and all her descendants would not be receiving any more money from the royal family. As Uncle Claude described it, we were disinherited. Then Grandma Greene called the king "a big stinker" and that was that!"*

## **I suppose you expect a Conclusion!**

I searched through a large number of family trees on Ancestry.ca, newspapers articles, and family letters and found information on both Emily Whyte as well as on Amelia Barber finding no conclusive proof of these claims. I found a number of Ancestry sites on Amelia Barber which at first led me to believe we had a ringer here! However, with some more diligent review I noticed that none of the Amelia Barber sites provide one piece of documentation that Amelia was the daughter of The Duke of Kent. There were notes made long after both women died, but nothing written during the time either was alive.

As if the notes above were not enough! If you were the half sibling of Queen Elizabeth and your family received a small monthly sum as both these families claim; don't you think that your letters from London and receipts etc. created from the payments would be of enough interest to be kept safely for future generations? I can forgive the Kirk family for this oversight as mentioned they packed up and moved to the Wild West. However the Whyte family is another matter. These were wealthy cream-of-the-crop people in Hamilton. They enjoyed their status! It is just too hard for me to believe that nowhere can be found one piece of confirming information.

Take yourself back to the early 1800s in Upper Canada: what could give you more credibility among the old English top hats than to be able in some way hold something like a Royal connection over their heads! More likely this would work in a rural community where the other peasants would surly think you special. Could some of these early settlers have thought "maybe if I claim some Royal connection I would be held in higher esteem? No one will ever be able to prove my ancestry?" What do you think?

## **We have Winners!**

On February 20<sup>th</sup> the final four prizes for our Sesquicentennial lottery were drawn. We are pleased to announce that the following people were the winners.

One, \$1,000.00 prize went to Bill Moran of Whitby ON

One, \$1,000.00 prize went to Shirlene Hedden-Badger, Port Dover ON

Painting of Port Maitland went to Simon Courtenay, Waterloo ON

Grand Prize of 4 to 6 days Great Lakes Ship Cruise went to Don Blunt, Oakville ON

Congratulations to our winners.

## **May we offer a big Thank you!**

On behalf of myself and our executive I wish to offer a few words to thanks to all of you who sold and who attempted to sell tickets on our behalf. Without your help, we would not have been as successful as we were.

## **Port Maitland Lock Property**

We will continue with taking a lease on the lock property again in 2017/18. This year our lease will cost us \$1,000.00, however next year and years to follow this amount will grow to \$2,000.00 annually. That is a bit rich for us, so we are contemplating making an offer to purchase the property from the CPR. Currently, the asking price is far out of our reach. Hopefully yours truly will be able to put on Mr. Trump's negotiating hat and get a better deal! That being said, we have not yet made the commitment to go forward with a purchase. We have met with Greg Hedley our lawyer for some preliminary guidance as well as Des Rasch regarding property boundaries. We know what the current property taxes will be. They are a bit frightening but we feel we will be able to get a bit better break once and if we take possession. Just like Mr. Trump we need to keep our thoughts close to the chest for now. Your executive has voted to continue on with the idea of completing this purchase. One step at a time! I do anticipate a meeting with all members of PMHA before a final decision to purchase is confirmed.

## We need volunteers - Badly!

As you may know we have had a number of volunteers helping with clearing most of the brush along the canal and other areas. This is very much appreciated. Where ongoing volunteering is needed is the weekly upkeep of the grass etc. If you feel you could assist in this area, please give me a call or email letting me know your thoughts.

**We also need some new and younger blood on our executive.** PMHA was not formed to give its current old folks a hobby until they kick the bucket. Our hope was and still is for it to continue for many years after we are looking up at the grass! Currently, we are in need of a recording secretary but I believe we are flexible enough to exchange executive positions where a new member may be able to step into a different position other than recording secretary.

## Sad News!

Our past Vice-President Barry Fraser emailed me from Florida on January 21<sup>st</sup> to tell me his wife Marg had suffered a severe stroke on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Marg passed away on Sunday January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Marg was cremated and returned to Hamilton. I was fortunate enough to know Marg and will miss her great sense of humor. She and I had a great exchange each time I called her. Miss you Marg!

## More Sad News!

Estelle Pringle Past-President of the Dunnville District Heritage Association passed away on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Anyone who knew Estelle knew her passion for local history. I spent many hours on the phone and in person with Estelle learning and sharing our great love of history. Estelle's daughter Candee Pascarella provided the following note. Anyone wishing to donate in her honour or in lieu of sending a card please do so to: Dunnville Veterinary Clinic, 110 Ramsey Drive Dunnville, ON N1A 1K8, 905-774-7642, Critter Care Program

## MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE OVER DUE!!

As you may recall we advised you in an earlier Dispatches that dues are going up to \$15.00 beginning October 1, 2016. This is because of the increased cost of printing and mailing the Dispatch as well as there being more cost to maintaining the Port Maitland lock than anticipated.

Starting this year, when we receive membership for both spouses we are giving each a separate membership. Until now we have only given out one membership. Fair is Fair! Please make payment to Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association and mail to Bill at address below.

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## PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

Each December and January I have the job of contacting our sponsors asking if they will support us for another year. Most of them are willing and able, but from time to time, we lose a few. This year was a tough one! I do wish to thank our past and current sponsors for all the support they have given us over the years.

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