

The Murley Family of the Bay of Islands

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My connection to the Murley family is through my great-grandmother, Mary Lavinia, born in 1872, who married Benjamin Hunt in the Bay of Islands in 1900. She was the daughter of Levi and Mary Ann (Allen) Murley and he was the son of George Benjamin and Lucy (Mills) Hunt.

What follows is the history of the Murley family as I now know it.

I have been able to trace my Murley family in the Bay of Islands back to James Murley of East Coker, Somerset, England. James, born 1793, married Margaret Chester in 1815, and had one son, George, born around 1816. It was this George, who was the first of our family to come to Newfoundland. Exactly what happened to George's mother, Margaret, is unclear, despite several theories about what happened. In any event, James went on to have two more families: three sons with Elizabeth Dibble (to whom he was not married), and then a son and daughter with his second wife Edith Coles, the widow of Charles Godfrey. James died in East Coker in 1872.

I could not find any details of George's life in England, but it seems likely that he grew up in, or near, East Coker. It is also unclear when and under which circumstances he arrived in Newfoundland. However in 1842, when he was about 26, he married Amanda, the daughter of Thomas and Margaret (Murphy) Winsor, in Carbonear. George and Amanda appear to have lived in Conception Bay for the next eight or nine years (at least on a seasonal basis) since their first three sons, Levi, James and Thomas Winsor were baptised there. In addition, during the 1840s George's name appeared on Voters Lists for Carbonear.

In 1851 George, his wife and four sons (Levi, James, Thomas and George) were recorded living in Trap Cove, Labrador. They remained in Labrador for at least the next fourteen years and from 1856 to 1862 had four more sons: William, Samuel, Ephriam and Alfred. In 1863, George was listed as the head of household (10 in family) which wintered at Yankee Pond, Labrador. I have not found any record of them having any daughters. They were still living in Labrador in 1865 when two of their sons, George and Samuel, died at Chimney Tickle. They were buried at Shoal Cove.

Seven years later, George had moved his family to the Bay of Islands. Rev. J.J. Curling included George in a list of Protestant families living there in 1872, and noted that he was a widower. Although I have not been able to find out anything about Amanda's place, time or cause of death, it seems likely that she died on the Labrador. Of the eight sons of George and Amanda Murley, only six survived into adulthood and they all came to the Bay of Islands. Alfred, the youngest son, died in the Bay of Islands in 1883 at age 22.

George must have been one of the early settlers in Child's Point, Bay of Islands, since at one time he owned most, if not all, the land on the north side of the public road (water side) running from Welshman's Brook (which on some earlier maps is named Murley's or McDonald's Brook) right down to the Perrett property. I have documentation to show that George purchased about 60 acres from a William Petipas in 1875, which I believe to be the land mentioned above.

By the time George died in 1902, only two of his sons were still living (Levi and Thomas). In his will, George left his son Levi the land at Child's Point, west of the land already owned by the children of James and Emma Murley (Isaac etc). To the widow and family of his son, William, George left the land they had been living on previous to George's death. Thomas, who was not mentioned in his father's will, had land in Pleasant Cove (Allen's Cove).

Five of George and Amanda's sons married and had families. The details as they are known to me are as follows:

Levi (1844-1908) married Mary Ann Allen (1849-1935) in 1869 in Chimney Tickle, Labrador and had the following children:

1. Samuel who married Eliza Knight
2. Elizabeth Amanda (Sis) who married Henry Baldwin
3. Mary Lavinia who married Benjamin Hunt
4. John (Jack) who never married
5. Henry who married Jane Stone
6. Emma who died as a young woman
7. Ellen who died as an infant
8. Levi Jr.(Son) who never married

9. Harriet Ellen (Hattie) who never married
10. Sophia who never married

James (1846-1888) married Emma Cooper (1848-1891) in 1880 in the Bay of Islands and had the following children:

1. Isaac
2. Alfred who married Martha Frances Abbott
3. Edward
4. Ann

Thomas Winsor (1848-1924) married Sarah Pike (1851-1895) in 1873 and Susannah Mattis Lewis in 1900. Thomas and Sarah had the following children:

1. Marium Emily who died as a child
2. Sarah Louisa who died as a child
3. Alice Maud who married William John Edwards
4. George Alfred who married Ella Reeves
5. Amanda Jane who married Chesley Hugh Pennell
6. Edith Mabel who married Arthur Allison
7. Elwin who married Rebecca Clarke
8. Andrew who died as a child
9. Rachel who married a Captain Graham
10. Eliza Lily who married Arthur Short
11. Thomas who drowned in the Gulf of St Lawrence, age 21

William (ca 1856 - ca 1895) married Susanna Mercer (1855-1936) in 1880. They had the following children:

1. Amanda who married Albert Elliott
2. Catherine Wilhelmenia
3. Emily who died as a child
4. Maria who married George Brake
5. Mary Grace who married Reuben Buckle

Ephriam (1859-1883) married Harriett Ann Perrett (1861-1924) in 1882 and had one child, George.

George Murley Sr. was the only child of James Murley to settle in Newfoundland, but succeeding generations now live coast to coast across Canada. Although I have tried to be as accurate as possible in my research, there could be errors in the above information. However, the intent is to give descendants of George Murley, and others who may be interested, a general picture of our earliest ancestor who came from England to settle in Newfoundland. If anyone has additional information about these families, I would like to hear from you. (My email address is: e_schmitt@gmx.net).

A point of interest which might be helpful to anyone wishing to do more research about this family: the Murley name is found in various Newfoundland records with different spellings such as Morley, Marley, Marly, Murly and Murley.

There was also a family of Murleys who settled in the Mortier Bay area on the south coast of Newfoundland by the late 1830s. I have been in contact with descendants of this family, and although they lived just a few miles away from our Murley family in England, and used many of the same Christian names in early generations, we have not been able to confirm any link between them to date.

Special thanks to Les Winsor, Jack Clarke, Calvin Poole, Barry Murley, John Langdon, Bill Hughes and Doreen Bates for providing me with some of the research details concerning the Murley family. Additional sources of information include family documents and letters, parish records, headstones and newspapers.