

Les familles de Potton Potton Families

The Perkins



THE PERKINS COAT OF

ARMS: given to John Perkins by Thomas le Despenser, 1st Earl of Gloucester, 22 September 1373 – 13 January 1400. Edward Perkins who emigrated from Ufton

Court, Berks, England, and settled in New Haven, Conn., in 1629. Peter Perkins II was the first Perkins to settle in Potton. Peter II, his wife Anna Ames, and two sons, Peter III and Samuel, settled on the meadowland across the river from Highwater, in the summer of 1793. The family was forced to relocate the following spring when the waters of the Missisquoi reached the eaves of their cabin! They moved to the higher land, just west of Mansonville. Peter III remained in the same general area of what is now called West Hill, and *"the descendants of his three sons, Captain David, Lyman and Lewis, settled in and about Mansonville. All are now dead or have moved away, except Major Frank H. Perkins, son of the late Levi Perkins and grandson of Captain David, and his son Frederick and daughter Gertrude, wife of William Cyrus Perkins of Vale Perkins."*

Vale Perkins and Perkins Landing received their name from the first known settler in that area, Samuel Perkins. Vale Perkins is something of an undefined locality and perhaps is better described as a state of mind!

Technically, it may be described as more of an intersection than actual settlement. But it was not always so...

Reverend Taylor resumes in his history: *"About 1793, Samuel Perkins, the other son of Peter II, hearing that Nicholas Austin had left the camp that he had built on the shore of Memphremagog Lake somewhere about 1785 and had taken his family to his property at Austin's Bay, cut a trail through the woods from where Mansonville now stands to Vale Perkins, taking up the land vacated by Austin at Perkins Wharf. Here he and his three sons, Cyrus, John and Ebenezer, lived and died. The family of John moved away; Ebenezer had no children; and the land generally came down through Captain Cyrus to his son David, who lived the larger part of his long life of ninety-two years on the old farm, which passed at his death to his only son, William Cyrus Perkins, who now resides there."*

The family name Perkins/Perkinson is derived from the Welsh meaning 'son of little Pier' or *pierkin*. The name of Chemin Ufton Court was chosen by the proprietors living on this road, because the road was the original driveway leading to "Ufton Court", the traditional name given by the Perkins family to their homestead and Home. Ufton Court recalls a medieval manor built for the Perkins family in the late 15th century, in England. The history of this manor house is easily researched on the net, for those wishing to investigate further. There you'll find an interesting description and a snippet to the effect that *"The Perkins family are perhaps best known for instigating the Ufton Bread Dole, which is distributed every year from a certain window at the Court. Lady Elizabeth Marvyn, widow of Richard Perkins, left the money for the dole in her will (1581) in thanks for finding her way home after getting lost in some woods."* Ufton Court in England is part of the Englefield Estate, run by the Ufton Court Educational Trust as an Educational and

Conference Centre. (http://www.berkshirehistory.com/castles/ufton_court.html)

To return closer to home and to the more relevant history of Potton, Ufton Court was the name given to the ancestral home of Samuel Perkins and descendants in Vale Perkins. It was once a "summer boarding house with accommodations for 35 boarders", operated by Gertrude (Mrs. G.A. Perkins) and later by her son, David, and his first wife, Rita. William Cyrus Perkins writes, in a letter to W.B. Bullock, author of *Beautiful Waters*, published in 1926: *"The earliest summer visitor was the late Bishop W.W. Niles of Concord, N.H., who, with his family and often with his friends, spent the summers for more than fifty years with his sister the late Mrs. David Perkins and, after her death, with her son W.C. Perkins. Their advertisement of the beauties of the place soon began to attract others; such was the beginning of the present large summer colony, there being here now 35 privately owned cottages and several boarding places, besides a fine boys' camp."* Mr. Perkins went on to name the names of the privately owned cottages, all homes located on what is now called Chemin Girls' Camp. The *"fine boys' camp"* he refers to belonged to Colonel F.B. Edwards (...). William Cyrus Perkins concludes that same letter: *"Possibly I should have stated that during the Canadian Rebellion, my grandfather, Major Cyrus Perkins, had a troop of English soldiers in his command quartered here for awhile."*

Also located on this road was Vale Perkins' only bar! Called the "Sugarhouse", this bar was operated seasonally by Dave Perkins in the 1950's and 60's as a lucrative and very popular adjunct to the boarding house trade of the era.

Such is some of the history of a place called Ufton Court, Potton, Quebec!

Potton Heritage Association has a collection of old photographs taken in the mid 1940's and 1950's by the late Stanley (Red) Talbot, a frequent guest at Ufton Court in years gone by. They were generously shared by his son, Pete Talbot, a seasonal resident here and will appear, once catalogued, on our website.

The Perkins family in North America appears to have come from Warwickshire, England, from whence they voyaged to Massachusetts in the very early 1600's. From there, the family spread to Ipswich, and beyond, where one of their number, Mary Perkins Bradbury, in 1692, was persecuted as a witch in the infamous Salem Witch era of American history, although she did escape death by hanging.

Many were the number of descendants of the Potton Perkins' in its earliest years – and broad was their influence in civic and economic interests of the day. The Perkins family is present as founding members of the Masonic St. John's Lodge No. 27 in 1865 and contribute to erection of the St. Paul's Anglican Church in 1902. Present in Mansonville, the Perkins built, around 1870, the building in which the Soleil Rouge is housed. William Perkins was Mayor of Potton in 1857. Levi A. Perkins occupied that function from 1880 to 1889.

One of the petitioners for the railway, which did eventually make it to Highwater and beyond, was Levi A. Perkins, a descendant of Peter III, who originally settled in Highwater – and got his feet wet! Levi A. Perkins *"was one of the most prominent men of Potton for more than fifty years. He held various offices, being for nearly forty years Collector of Provincial Revenue for the District of Bedford (our judicial district). It was said of him "that he could prosecute an offender against the law without persecuting him"*.

The distillery near the chapel at Meig's Corner, was owned by David Perkins, Esq., father of Levi A Perkins. The Perkins homestead in Vale Perkins changed hands many years ago, when a large portion of it was sold to the Baudinet family. Before that, much of the original land holdings were parcelled out over time as building lots for cottages on the Girls' Camp Road.

Vale Perkins Brook, in Vale Perkins, empties into Lake Memphremagog at Perkins Landing, and has headwaters to the west of Sugar Loaf Mountain. At one time, there were at least two mills located on the brook, one of these built by Samuel Perkins. In *Beautiful Waters*, W.B. Bullock reminded: *"About 1840, my grandfather built a sawmill on the brook (then a small river) which empties into the lake at the Landing. Some 25 years later, the late Capt. George W. Fogg built a mill further up the brook, also built a small landing for the Mountain Maid. When the Lady of the Lake began running, a larger wharf was made and maintained by the people in this locality until the Canadian government built and have since kept in repair the present wharf."* Those may have been the vestiges still present, around 1960. Nothing now remains of either mill.

The Boulangerie Perkins, begun by Dave and Doris Perkins in the 1980's, once bustled with customers, but closed several years ago. Now only one son, Alan, of the original Potton Perkins family remains as a resident of the little community that bears his family name. Another Perkins descendant is a landowner but does not live here permanently.

If you would like to research the Perkins family name:

- www.angelfire.com/mi4/polcrt/Perkins.html will provide a good start; it is an interesting read.
 - *And Record of the Perkins Family in Potton*, Taylor, Vol. II, page 113,
 - or about Ufton Court, *Beautiful Waters*, by W.B. Bullock
 - www.berkshirehistory.com/castles/ufton_court.html
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