

Colonel Henry Nase, notable Loyalist Settler in Grand Bay-Westfield

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Mount Hope Farm, Grand Bay-Westfield, New Brunswick, Canada

The Grand Bay – Westfield Heritage project has identified settlers as a major theme. Colonel Henry Nase was the first documented loyalist settler in our community who along with many others, helped shape our beautiful community into what it has become today. He helped scout the area prior to the landing of the loyalist fleet, operated farms and mills, acted as justice of the peace, lieutenant-colonel of the militia, judge of probate for King's County and was largely responsible for the presence of the church in the earliest days. His life and accomplishments have been memorialized in the large stained glass window at the head of the Church of the Resurrection in Grand Bay, the new ferry at Westfield (the Henry Nase) and the new boulevard to be opened this fall (Col. Nase Boul.). The first of his homes in the area, Mount Hope Farm, still stands solid 225 years after its construction. The diary he maintained throughout the revolutionary war, referenced and studied by revolutionary scholars and authors, is also a part of our heritage.

Henry Nase is my great-great-great grandfather. His story begins with his grandfather, Henry Nase Sr. (1695 – 1759), who came to America as a German refugee of the French wars under Louis XIV. The area or state of Germany where Henry Nase Sr. and his neighbours lived was predominantly protestant and sympathetic to England. Louis XIV ordered his troops to burn and level all such towns and villages. England, under Queen Anne, accepted these refugees and subsequently provided these “Palentines” passage to America with provisions, horses, cattle and all instruments to establish their industry in America. There was an expectation of future trade with England in return for the goods they received.

A patent of land was eventually assigned to the Nases and other families known as the Group of Nine and the Oblong. Together, they settled in Amenia / Dover, Dutchess County, New York. This area along the Hudson River was to become very rich farmland and thrived as a place of religious freedom with close family ties and a place where the whites and Native Americans lived in peaceful co-existence. For several decades the area grew to become a rich agricultural community. It thrived and held close their harmonious way of life. Although involved in the hostilities, it was little harmed by the revolutionary war. However, family values and political viewpoints changed. Some felt a profound allegiance to England, some believed she “took” too much and others believed it was time to separate from her completely. The area grew and so too grew the divisions within families and neighbours.

Henry Nase Sr's son Philip (1726 - ?) had five sons, Henry, John, Philip, Cornelius and William. Philip's oldest son, Henry, became Col. Henry Nase who settled on the St. John

River, Nova Scotia (present day N.B.) after the Revolutionary war. He, along with fellow loyalist settlers, helped open up this wilderness area to what would become beautiful, Grand Bay – Westfield, New Brunswick. In the “History of Amenia 1875” it is written that ...“Henry was a Tory of so positive a character he left his home and family for Nova Scotia after the war.” *It wasn't until after the arrival of the loyalists and the rapid growth of the area that present day New Brunswick was separated from what had been Nova Scotia.*

Colonel Henry Nase (1753-1836), a native of Dover, Dutchess County, New York, was the son of Philip and Elizabeth (Dutcher) Nase, the eldest of five sons and four daughters. His family had farmed this land since 1725. On December 26th, 1776 the rebels conscripted the younger William into the rebel cause. At 10:00 pm on December 30th the rebels arrived through the front door of the Nase home to impress William into the American army. Henry seized the younger William and with him escaped out the back. Henry and William “...determined to quit that part of the country and join the King’s Troops as soon as possible...” (*Nase diary*). Henry enlisted in the Kings American Regiment (KAR) on April 10, 1777. He served with the regiment for six years until the end of the war, first as a sergeant, then as sergeant-major and then after receiving his commission in 1783, ensign. After the war he rose to the rank of Colonel. Throughout most of his war service he was attached to Captain John William Livingston’s Company and later served under Captain Thomas Chapman’s Company and Captain Abraham DePeyster’s Company.

The Kings America Regiment was involved with many of the significant campaigns of the American Revolution. One of the finest of the Provincial units, . It was designated the Fourth American Regiment in 1779, one of only five to be so honoured. It was taken on the British Regular Establishment effective December 25th, 1782. The Regiment was disbanded in Saint John, in the autumn of 1783. At this time several hundred officers and soldiers settled as Loyalists in what became New Brunswick.

Much of what we know of the Kings America Regiment, the battles and the everyday life of the common soldier is in a journal Henry Nase kept throughout the revolutionary war. He began writing in the journal the night he left his home in Amenia, N.Y. in 1776 and continued writing throughout the American Revolution and into the first few years in New Brunswick. It provides an insight into the life of the soldiers on the British side of the revolution. The journal speaks of details of battles, frustrations, sickness, shame and a deeply religious gratitude for survival. Names out of history; Washington, Arnold, Winslow, DeLancy, Carleton and others, appear on the pages of young Henry’s journal. The “Henry Nase Diary” or journal has been a valuable resource for revolutionary scholars and authors. It is now in the archives of the New Brunswick Museum in Saint John New Brunswick, a gift from the Nase family.

The war is lost and talks are ongoing announcing that the “...rebels are to have independency...” (*Nase diary, Feb.16th, 1783*). Henry embarked at New York on board the “Peggy” April 27th, 1783. He arrived in the Bay of Fundy May 8th and into Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia on May 11th, 1783. On June 6th, 1783 he departed Digby, arriving at

the mouth of the Saint John River with Cols. Winslow and DeLancy and Majors Barclay and Murray with a small party of men. June 20th sailed four miles up the river. All were “pleased with the situation, meadows etc.”

After some correspondence, Henry began work on a home for his friend and fellow officer, Major John Coffin, who was still in New York. Coffin was a colourful and controversial Loyalist with aristocratic roots in England. The landing of the loyalists in Saint John was recorded by Henry on September 18th, 1783, “...the fleet is said to be in the Bay...” General Fox arrives Sept. 22nd and Major Coffin and his family arrive on the Brittain Sept. 26th, 1783.

Upon his arrival to his new home Coffin was so pleased with the house that he gave Henry a beautiful horse. Coffin accompanied Henry up the river and set about to claim a large tract of land owned by Beamsley Glazier on the Saint John River. Coffin eventually acquired the old manor from Glazier. Many stories are told as to how this actually transpired! His home here became known as Alwington Manor after his ancestral home in England, later to be known as Lonewater Farm. Henry Nase and John Coffin remained friends and went on to become business partners on various ventures in the early community.

Henry became a highly regarded, active member of the community. He was involved with grist mills, lumber mills and farming. He was a justice of the peace, the lieutenant-colonel of the Kings County Militia, Edward Winslow’s deputy surrogate (later called judge of probate) for Kings County. The history of the first fifty years of the Church of England in New Brunswick credits Henry Nase for his efforts in securing the church’s presence. Henry was noted as a staunch and zealous churchman, responsible for keeping the regular services going. For many years he served as lay reader in the absence of a priest. To acknowledge his service to the church, a large stained glass window was installed at the alter of St. James church in Westfield in his memory. The glass window is now at the head of the Church of the Resurrection in Grand Bay-Westfield

Henry Nase himself built a farm on a 400 acre kings grant calling it Mount Hope Farm, completed in 1786. On March 13th 1788 Henry Nase married Jane Quinton (1767-1852), daughter of Hugh and Elizabeth Quinton of Lancaster. They had 10 children, four sons and six daughters, who survived to adulthood. In time Henry and Jane built a grand house near the mouth of the Nerepis River on the St. John River at Westfield Beach. This house, unfortunately, burned down after Henry’s death. At one time the Nase family owned 6,000 acres of land in the area. Mount Hope Farm was later given to Henry’s sons to work as a farm “when they came of age” and to this day, remains in the hands of his descendents. The basic Georgian style farmhouse has been lived in continuously since it was built. It has never moved and has been altered only slightly over the years. Today it is recognized as a Provincially Designated Historic Site and is home to generation six and seven of Henry’s descendants. There are now four eighth generation children who, although they don’t live on the property, are often present at the old home for family gatherings.

The line of descendants who have owned Mount Hope is:

- Colonel Henry Nase (1752 – 1836)
- Philip Nase (1791 – 1870)
- Frederic W.C. Nase (1844 – 1930)
- Philip G. Nase (1878 – 1940)
- Charlotte (Nase) Lohnes (1933 - present)
- Peter E. Lohnes (1957 - present)

Colonel Henry Nase (1753 – 1836) is buried in a family graveyard at the mouth of the Nerepis River along the Saint John River at Westfield Beach, Grand Bay-Westfield. Anglican Bishop Richardson consecrated the family graveyard in 1925 in a ceremony which had his great-grandson, Herbert, playing a violin. This graveyard is on the register of Grand Bay – Westfield and N.B. Heritage sites.

Many of his descendants still live in the area and other direct descendants are wide spread throughout the world. The early Nase families in Australia and Tasmania are direct descendants of Henry and Jane. Many have maintained close ties with their Canadian cousins and the “old home” throughout the generations. Old grave markers in Australia bear fond reference to New Brunswick, the “Dominion of Canada”. Nase family reunions uniting direct descendents of Henry and Jane Nase and Mount Hope have brought together family members from far and wide. The last large reunion was in the summer of 1988 when 200+ attendees were able to tie Mount Hope and Grand Bay - Westfield to their heritage. Mount Hope Farm, the farm house he built 225 years ago this year, stands as a provincial historic site today.

The Nase family has made significant contributions to the community. The Nase Grounds, the land Henry donated for recreational purposes at Westfield Beach, have long since disappeared for the railway and roadways we have in the area today. The Westfield Beach area in its entirety makes up a significant portion of our community heritage. The old Nerepis School which disappeared in the early 1960’s was also a gift to the community from the Nase Family. The property and stories date back over 150 years. It shows up on an 1852 map as one of the early New Brunswick schools, forming part of our historic inventory. Mount Hope Cemetery, adjacent to the old farm, is a beautiful old country cemetery which is the resting place of many of the earliest residents. The cemetery was a gift to the community from General Coffin and Colonel Nase at a point where their properties met. It is a non-denominational cemetery now managed by a board of directors and is a significant part of our heritage. The Nase Family Papers in the archives of the NB Museum in Saint John contain letters written between Henry and family members, between Henry and Gen. Coffin and Edward Winslow, and several family diaries including the original “Henry Nase Journal”, so valuable to Revolutionary scholars and authors.