

CAMBRIDGE HARKENER

CELEBRATING THE HERITAGE OF CAMBRIDGE, VERMONT

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SECRETS of CAMBRIDGE'S CEMETERIES

Jennifer Bartlau

Henry Squires Revisited

In the June 2013 issue of the Cambridge Harkener, Lynn Austin wrote an article titled *A Runaway Slave in Cambridge* in which she relates the tale of Henry Squires who is buried in Mountain View Cemetery. Lynn refers to a memoir written by Lucy Wheelock, daughter of the Reverend Edwin Wheelock, in which Lucy mentions that the Safford family had a hired man, a former slave, who "had come north during the Civil War by the underground railroad." Lynn also recounts an oral history by June Dodge who heard that a "Cambridge Civil War soldier...brought a teenage former slave home with him after the war."

Lynn's research revealed that Henry Squires was indeed living with the Samuel Safford Family in 1880 and 1900 (the 1890 census was lost in a fire). By 1910, Samuel had moved off the family farm into a rented house in Cambridge Boro, so Henry lived his last years on Samuel Hooper's farm in North Cambridge as a hired hand.

Researching former enslaved persons can be difficult. The 1850 and 1860 Census "Slave Schedules" only list gender, color (black or mulatto), and approximate age. Henry stated he was born in Virginia (around 1850 according to his census records and gravestone), so the first step was to look for slaveholding Squires in Virginia with the assumption he kept that last name. Through process of elimination, it is probable Henry lived in the household of Asa Squires of Salt Lick, Braxton County, Virginia. This part of the state became West Virginia in 1863.

Asa Squires enslaved 8 persons in 1850 and 9 persons in 1860. On the 1860 Slave Schedule a mulatto male, age 8 is listed. This is most likely Henry. In his will signed on 22 April 1856, Asa bequeathed to his wife Sarah the female servants "during her natural lifetime to be taken care of by her on the place or hired out, as she may think best." He also exhorts his son, Daniel, "to see that the three old colored women... are comfortably provided for after his parents death, their taxes paid, kept at home to enjoy their freedom as well as the laws of the State may permit them to do. Also that to remain with [my son] or some of the other heirs...as they may choose or allot...the other servants..." Asa continues in his will to instruct his heirs to not sell the servants (he never calls them slaves), and that if they consent, they may be sent to Liberia Colony in Africa. The peculiar wording of the will document does not make clear whether he is manumitting any or all of his enslaved "servants" at his or Sarah's death.

1860 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules					
Virginia > Braxton > Not Stated					
13	Asa Squires	1	65	M	B
14	"	1	50	M	M
15	"	1	48	M	M
16	"	1	16	M	M
17	"	1	14	M	M
18	"	1	8	M	M
19	"	1	6	M	M
20	"	1	25	M	B
21	"	1	3	M	B

Asa died in 1861, Sarah in 1869. Several things happened during that span, the most momentous being the Civil War. President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, freeing "all the slaves in rebel territory that was not under Federal control." Negotiations were in the works at that time to add West Virginia as a Union State which Lincoln was prepared to do "on the condition that the new state provide some type of emancipation." West Virginia's compromise was the Willey Amendment which stat-

Early History of Cambridge

by Ida Morgan Anderson

Beginning in 1935, Ida Morgan Anderson began serializing a column on the History of Cambridge in the *Cambridge Town Crier*. Many of our readers may remember the series of 27 Installments. The Harkener continues publishing the installments for a new audience on the assumption that the copyright (if it ever existed) has long since expired. We hope you will enjoy these "blasts from the past."

Installment Nine

There were tin peddlars with carts shaped much like a stage coach, and as large. Brooms and mopsticks made a sort of hedge along the back.

The body of the cart was divided into two or more compartments and filled with every kind of tinware, glass ware, pans, pails, basins, dippers, dinner horns, graters, tin tumblers for the children, and tin plates with the alphabet in raised letters around the rim, so that mind and body could be nourished together without any waste of time, thus early teaching the wisdom of killing two birds with one stone.

These things were paid for with "paper rags," battered pieces of lead pipe, hens' feathers, and perhaps a few hens' eggs. In those days rags were eventually made into paper, and every scrap, whether cotton or woolen, was carefully saved and had a market value of from a cent and a half to two and a half cents per pound. The ragbag was an honored member of the family, and many were the handy dishes that it placed upon the pantry shelves.

Even in those early days there were certain standards to which the best families must conform. No girl who had been properly brought up, felt that she could marry without a dozen teaspoons and a half a dozen tablespoons of solid silver. No plate ware for her. More often than not, she worked out and earned the money to buy them. Then one silk dress, while not absolutely necessary, was highly desirable. This she earned and probably made up with six full breadths in the skirt, and flowing sleeves, with a wide collar and under-sleeves of finest lawn, perhaps elaborately embroidered by her own hands. It was "a good piece" to begin with, was only worn on important occasions, and was her best dress for many years. It

was made over now and then, turned, and perhaps made into a wedding dress for her daughter at last.

With all their spinning and weaving and knitting, and all the endless round of housework, these women yet found time to make petticoats with deep borders of eyelet embroidery and yard square veils of finest net covered with a darned in pattern of leaves and flowered [sic]. "Can a maid forget her ornaments?" These Vermont girls could not.

Then there were patchwork quilts in beautiful patterns and quilted with the tiniest stitches in lines three-fourths of an inch apart. And every housewife had many of them. With all our conveniences we should look upon one as a monumental task. But a love of beauty surmounts all obstacles.

A touch of beauty was given these rude, wilderness homes by slips and roots carefully brought from the old home by the homesick wife. Many of these old homes have been abandoned, but near the old cellars will still be found clumps of garden lilies, bunches of striped grass, little thickets of flat, pink cinnamon roses that bloom so freely in June, perhaps a maiden's blush rose and a few plants of "sweet balm."

Grandmother thriftily saved the rose petals, preserved them by sprinkling plentifully with sugar, and used them for flavoring cake.

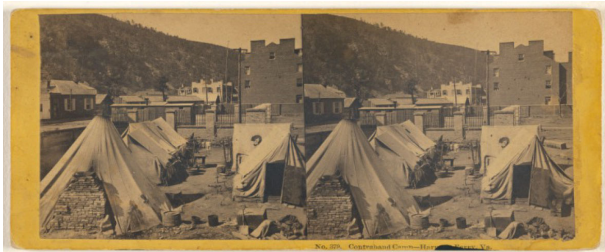


Continued from Page 1

ed that “the children of slaves born within the limits of this State after the fourth day of July 1863, shall be free; and all slaves within this state who shall, at the time aforesaid, be under the age of ten years, shall be free when they arrive at the age of 21 years...” This meant Henry Squires would be “owned” until about 1871. Fortunately, the West Virginia legislature ended slavery in their state almost 18 months later in 1865.

How Henry came to Vermont is still a mystery. Lynn conjectured that Henry returned with Samuel Safford’s brother, John, who was a Sergeant with Battery L, 1st Vermont Heavy Artillery. A notice in the St. Albans Weekly Messenger on 17 May 1906 reports that “Henry Squires, who has worked for S.M. Safford for the past twenty-five years or more, is seriously ill. Henry was formerly a slave in the South but came to Vermont with some of the Vermont troops at the close of the Civil War and has lived in this vicinity ever since.” This would put Henry’s arrival in the Safford family around or just prior to 1871. As he doesn’t appear in the 1870 census with the Saffords (or anywhere that either Lynn or I could find), 1871 seems correct.

On his GAR Post 10 record, John lists the places he was during the 18 months he was in the Civil War. He declares he resided at the Harpers Ferry Union Hospital for some time (whether he was ill or wounded, he does not say). Harpers Ferry became a major Union encampment, supply depot, and General Sheridan’s headquarters during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign of late summer to early winter 1864. It was also the location of a significant “contraband camp” for former enslaved persons fleeing to the Union troops (see picture below).

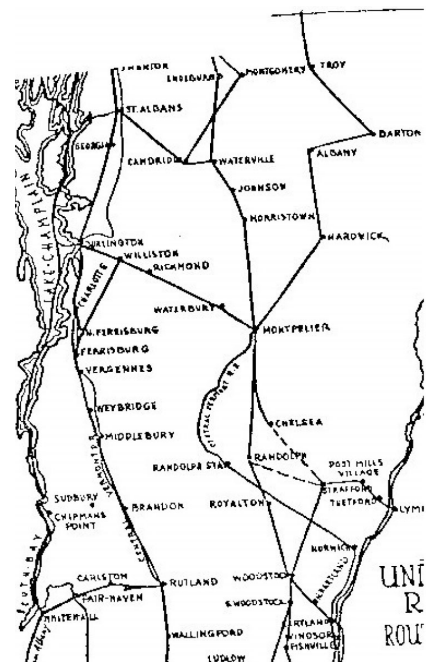


It is entirely possible that Henry Squires somehow made it to the contraband camp in Harpers Ferry, some 165 miles from Salt Lick, WV and that was where John Safford met him. Henry would have been a young teenager perhaps finding some work in the Union camp and/or hospital. Because of the Willey Amendment, and that Sarah Squires had not died yet, Henry would have been considered a “runaway slave.”

dom, John’s and Samuel’s father, Madison Safford, may have been a conductor or at least a safe house for the UGRR as part of a network running north from Montpelier through Morristown, Johnson, and Waterville. From Waterville, refugees could continue north to Montgomery or Enosburg, or northwest through Cambridge to St. Albans and Lake Champlain, all heading for the Canadian border. Madison Safford lived with his son Samuel during the same period that Henry Squires lived there. According to his obituary, Madison and his wife Charlotte were also staunch supporters of the American Missionary Association which set up schools and other services for emancipated persons in Union camps during the war.

During the Civil War, the Underground Railroad was not as active as it had been the previous 20 years. According to a Vermont State document titled *Friends of Freedom*,

I believe, as is the case with most stories, that both oral histories of Henry Squires and Lucy Wheelock’s account hold a ring of truth. He likely met either John Safford, or John’s cousin Darius J. Safford who was an officer in the same unit. Perhaps an invitation of work was proffered, and Henry made his way North using Underground Railroad contacts or through the auspices of the AMA after the War. It may also be that Henry became John’s “batman” through the remainder of the war (rather unusual for an enlisted rank) to help during John’s recuperation in Burlington right around the time of the Confederate Raid on St. Albans.



The Safford connection is important because Vermont, according to Sam McReynolds of the University of New England, did not offer much of an incentive for African-Americans to migrate here after the Civil War ended. Instead, former enslaved persons flocked to plentiful industrial jobs in cities closer to the South. For Henry to come to rural Cambridge, a job must have been waiting for him, along with housing.

No matter by which path he arrived in Lamoille County, we can only hope that Henry found amiety and purpose, and a sense of family in this community – regrettably, we may never know for certain.



HENRY SQUIRES
1850 – 1917
“ONE OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN’S FREEDMEN”

All census records and vital records from Ancestry.com
<https://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/african-american-history-in-new-england>
<https://www.vpr.org/post/history-slavery-vermont-across-new-england#stream/0>
<https://www.vpr.org/post/why-vermont-so-overwhelmingly-white#stream/0>
<https://northcountryundergroundrailroad.com/champlain-line.php?page=1>
<https://www.townshendvt.org/photo/underground-railroad-routes-in-vermont-map/>
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/35871994/john-morton-safford>
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-68J3-2H?i=11&cc=1483040>
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-68J3-K1?i=92&cc=1483040>
https://www.ucc.org/about-us_hidden-histories_blacks-and-the-american
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/stereo.1s04358/>
<http://www.npshistory.com/publications/hafe/hrs-armory.pdf>
<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/10-facts-harpers-ferry>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Virginia_in_the_American_Civil_War
<https://openingdoorsinbrickwalls.wordpress.com/2019/01/29/slave-name-roll-project-releasing-leonisa-leo-dina-emily-harriet-anjaline-margaret-and-illegible/>
<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/vpr/files/201710/friends-of-freedom-raymond-zirblis-1996.pdf>

Jennifer would be pleased to answer any questions raised by her articles.
You can contact Jen by email (vtjen802@gmail.com) or by phone (802-881-8608)

We made it through 2020 and are now beginning 2021, that means....

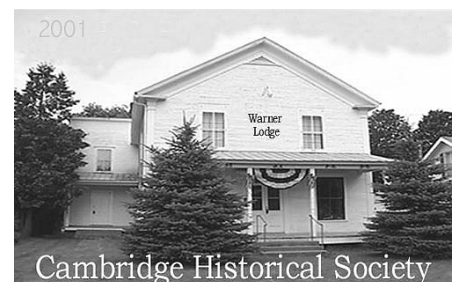
*****Membership Renewals*****

You should be receiving a notice of membership renewal shortly. Please consider renewing your membership. A membership renewal form is attached to this newsletter, if you don't what to wait for the letter.

We hope to be able to offer programs again soon. If not in person at the Warner Lodge, then virtually by videoconferencing. We will announce any programs well in advance, so look for the notices.

Please let others know of our organization. We only exist because of our members.

We hope to see many of you at our meetings as we emerge from the pandemic and get back to (whatever will pass for) normal.



Membership Application/Renewal

Please complete this form and mail to: Cambridge Historical Society
PO Box 16
Jeffersonville, VT 05464-0016
or email: rgtle@stowweaccess.com

New

Renewal

Name _____

Address _____
Number Street Town State Zip

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Membership Category

Individual \$15.00

Family \$25.00

Business \$25.00

Please consider becoming a:

Patron \$500.00

Benefactor \$1,000.00+

If you have suggestions about program topics or have some great ideas for fundraisers,
please let us know by listing your ideas below.

Cambridge Historical Society
PO Box 16
Jeffersonville, VT 05464



Jennifer Bartlau continues to provide interesting articles on the people of Cambridge. She is requesting folks to email or call her (vtjen802@gmail.com) (802-881-8608) with any info they have on the **Edwards/Hebb/Lamplough families of South Cambridge** in the 1840s, 50s, 60s?

She is preparing an article about the families, and is curious as to any "tales of old."

This Newsletter in one of the perks of membership, so to continue receiving The Harkener renew your membership, and THANK YOU.