

Document Prepared for an early Brehaut Reunion (1906?)

Prince Edward Island

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The following information was shared with the Register by **James Beck** - **jamesverebeck@hotmail.com** - Our thanks also to **Donna Collings** and her wonderful library for providing fills and missing text!

The following information is from pages prepared for an early Brehaut reunion.

About 20 years ago I took pictures of some typed pages that Whitney Brehaut invited me to see. Whitney passed away several years ago. He was the postmaster at Murray Harbour at that time. - James Beck.

Prince Edward Island

BREHAUT

A Sketch Historical and Otherwise

**by J. Hedley Brehaut,
Roxbury, Mass.**

John T. Mellish in his history of Methodism in Charlottetown, P.E.I., says that in May, 1806, seventy-three men, women and children arrived in Charlottetown from Guernsey. The diary of Benjamin Chappell, the first postmaster at Charlottetown, has the following entries in 1806:

May 15 - Arrived this afternoon the ship from Guernsey.

June 3 - The Guernsey people go the Murray Harbour - eight families of them.

Seven of the eight families were the Brehauts, LeLacheurs, Robertson, Robertsons, Taudvins, Machons, Marquands and DeJerseys. (A note added later replaced Robertson with Roberts and deleted the second Robertsons.) Another family on the ship was Henry Brehaut's sister Elizabeth and her husband, Captain Fallow, who settled at Bay Fortune.

And now a glance at Murray Harbour as it was when our ancestors settled here one hundred years ago. The first census of Prince Edward Island, taken in 1798 by order of his Excellency Governor Fanning, gives as the sole residents of Lot 64 Nicholas Hugh, with a family of three; William Sencabaugh, with a family of five; and Mrs. Foster, with a family of five. These were all American Loyalists.

In the memoirs of the Rev. James McGregor, D.D., 1859, occurs the following, relating to a trip the Doctor made to Prince Edward Island in 1806:

It was on this occasion he first visited Murray Harbor. There were at that time only three actual settlers besides the hands connected with a fishing establishment set up by Mr. Cambridge the year previous. Early in that spring (1806) a number of families immigrated from Guernsey and were at that time living in Mr. Cambridge's store, upon a point in the Harbor still commonly known as the Old Store Point where the Harbor Beacon now stands. These were all the inhabitants at that time. His preaching took place at the house of Mr. James Irving, a Dumfriesshire Presbyterian. The immigrants from Guernsey were generally Episcopalians, considerably tinged with Arminianism though the teaching of John Wesley. The doctor's ministrations were very acceptable to them. They

subsequently took land in the place and were the ancestors of a large portion of the present population. It is believed that his attention to them at the early stage of the settlement was the means which led the adherence of many of them and their descendants still to Presbyterianism.

It may be mentioned that after this date that the population of Murray Harbor increased rapidly as Mr. Cambridge in that year built a large establishment of mills and commenced a trade in timber which gave employment to a number of persons who ultimately took up land in the neighborhood, and immigrants poured in from various quarters. The doctor visited them on various occasions, but exact particulars of his visits we have not been able to gather. It is sufficient to say that his visits were the means of cherishing them as a congregation till they were able to obtain a minister of their own.



MURRAY HARBOR SETTLEMENT

The Brehauts of Murray Harbor South just one hundred years ago in the early part of June, a party of people landed from a vessel at the place ever since known as Guernsey Cove. They came from the Isle of Guernsey to make homes for themselves in the new world, and they were the ancestors of a great many of the people now living here.

They were the Machons, LeLacheurs, Roberts, Marquands, DeJerseys, Taudvins and Brehauts.

Today as we are here to celebrate the centennial of their arrival, and to do honor to the memory of one of the families by unveiling the monument lately erected.

Henry Brehaut died in 1848, aged 81, his wife in 1864, aged 96 years. They were laid to rest in the English Church cemetery, but their descendants thought it best to remove them, and place them and monument where most of their relatives are buried.

After coming from the old country, it must have taken brave, stout hearts to land on these forest-clad shores, where they knew nothing but hardship and toil could await them. But nothing daunted. They found such shelter as they could, in an old house, near what is now called Beach Point, and from there they afterwards moved to what became known as Machon's Point. Perhaps had they been as much alive to the needs of farming as their descendants, they would have settled about the Cove, where they first landed, but they were coopers by trade, so they considered the woods were all that were to be desired and therefore they settled there.

Their first work after choosing their lands, was to clear a small plot, and build a log house for shelter. Little could be done in the way of raising a crop that year, as the season was past, but they were busy enough getting prepared for next year.

What an undertaking it must have been to cut down those great trees from every rod of ground, to get out the enormous stumps, level and make the ground fit to grow crops to keep them and their families.

How should we feel facing such difficulties in our days? And yet thousands every year are going to strange out-of-the-way places, clearing new lands, and enduring all manner of hard living, just as they did then; but there are many inventions to make all kinds of work lighter that the comparison is scarcely allowable.

Henry Brehaut and his wife brought with them six children of whom Henry II was the eldest. He was about thirteen years of age. They were not very long here when a little daughter was added to the family; she was named Margaret. In after years two other children were born, named Joseph and Charlotte.

What a great difference in the country then and now. Roads there were none, just a path blazed here and there through the woods. Bridges had not been thought of. People mostly crossed the river at the Narrows in boats. Now we have fairly good roads, we have bridges, and the Railroad for which we have waited so long. All kinds of conveyances are in use (altho [sic] we have not seen the automobile in this part as yet) where they only got around at that time by walking or in boats.

There were few neighbors to visit then. Only three families were here when those seven families arrived. There Nicholas Hugh's family, William Sencabaugh's family and the family of James Irving. At Murray Harbor North there was a Mrs. Creed, also a Graham family.

There were few churches, schools, stores nor Post Office, and neither doctor nor minister.

The first Presbyterian church was built on Donald McKay's property, but was afterwards moved across the river to Henry Brehaut's place, where the site can still be pointed out by those living there. This became an advantage, when a few years later the people of the North and South sides joined forces and got a resident minister. That was about the year 1828 or 1830 and their first pastor was the Rev. Daniel McCurdy.

There was also a Methodist church very near to where the Presbyterian church first stood. The cemetery is on the old Methodist Church farm, and the church stood near the shore. When it was known that there would be services in either church, people came from far and near, often bringing a lunch with them, and staying for both services if there chanced to be two. The first Methodist minister who was stationed here was the Rev. Thomas Bulpitt.

In the old land, Henry Brehaut attended the English or Episcopal Church, but after coming here he became a Presbyterian, and a number of his children followed him, while others went with the mother who was connected with the Methodists.

It was some years before there was any school, but in the course of time many other people arrived, among them a Mrs. Thorne, with her son Charles, and daughter Frances, who afterwards became the wife of Henry Brehaut II. She taught school for some time in a house not far from where our school now stands. Afterwards Mrs. Thorne and her son, not caring for life here, went back to the old country. Mrs. Machon, or Aunty Machon, as she was called, also kept school, and it was with these teachers the Brehaut family got most of their education.

About that time the Brehauts came here, John Cambridge started a shipyard and store at the head of Murray River. For a number of years this was the nearest store, until David Crichton, a young man who came from Dumfries, Scotland, was given charge of a small store, on what is now John Hyde's Point, by Hon. Joseph Wightman. After a few years he, with a partner, William Emery, started in business for themselves, which they carried on for ten years, They then dissolved partnership, and for nearly thirty years David Crichton served the wants of the Murray Harbor South people.

At first there was no Post Office nearer than Charlottetown, and the people's few letters and papers were brought to the place by Cambridge. But after over thirty years, or about the year 1834, a post office was established at Thomas Bell's, White Sands, the grandfather of the present postmaster there.

At times the need of medical skill must have been very severely felt, there being no doctor nearer than Charlottetown. In after years it was a great boon to the people to have Dr. Kaye as near as Georgetown.

Even more did those old people miss having regular Sabbath services. Perhaps for six months they would be without a preacher. How those godly old souls must have hungered for someone to break to them the Bread of Life.

We, with all the conveniences of the Twentieth century, cannot begin to realize what life meant to them, and yet perhaps they were more content than we are today. But although their privations from many sources were great, they never suffered from actual need. We know their labors were both hard and unceasing, but there were some advantages even then.

Shipbuilding grew to be a great business, and all the timber was close at hand, and when the ships were completed, they were loaded with timber and sent home to the old country, where both ship and cargo were sold for money and supplies.

There were also fish of all kinds in far greater numbers than now, and the kelp and seaweed made a plentiful supply of manure.

Then the fact that some of the young people growing up needed to wander away to choose homes for themselves, as our young folks are forced to do now, was another advantage. The places for homes lay all around them, and land was cheap then; the most that was needed was the strength and the will to clear it, and they were rich in both.

True, there was no such machinery as now, which makes the farmer's life seem almost one of ease compared with one hundred years ago. Oxen were generally used for tilling the soil, and all the crops were put in by hand. Gathering the harvest was done with the sickle or reaping hook. Threshing was done with flail. Perhaps few of us have seen either used.

It was a proud day when Henry Brehaut first brought home a horse. His name was Trim, and a faithful horse he proved.

There were some wild animals, most dreaded was the bear. No very serious adventures came from this source however, but several bears were killed in the neighborhood. About the last one was one that Henry Brehaut II and two of his sons killed with pitchforks, between John Cowan's and Thomas Henry's farms. The depredations of foxes among the poultry were rather troublesome, but as the land was cleared they gradually grew less bold.

The second generation of the Brehaut family here were a hardy, upright, honest, hardworking people; inclined to be excitable, owing probably to the French in them. Their lives seem to have been rather uneventful, no notable disasters, or adventures of great importance taking place among them. Neither were any of them great travellers. But they all lived God-fearing, upright lives, and trained their children in the fear of the Lord. A majority of their young men became farmers, but there were a number who went away and learned trades. Plastering seems to have been the favorite trade among them, a few became carpenters. We find one tanner, two shoemakers and three school teachers. The next generation spreads out and shows a great many different callings. Those now growing up, will doubtless do honor to themselves and also to those who went before them.

Henry Brehaut II married Frances Thorne of England. Their family numbered ten, of whom six are still living. They and most of their family followed the Methodist Church, and for years their house was the home of the Methodist ministers.

Daniel Brehaut, who was the second son, married Isabella, daughter of James Bell of White Sands. Six of seven of their children are still living. His death in the prime of life, caused by consumption brought on by exposure, while helping to cut a vessel out of ice, was the first break in the family. His remains lie in the English Church cemetery.

Thomas Brehaut, the third son, went to Miramichi, a young man. He married Sarah Noble of that place and settled there. His family numbered eight, four of whom are dead. Some of the family reside in the United States, two other sons are farmers living with their families in Douglasfield, N.B. There is also a daughter, a maiden lady. The sons are farmers.

Elizabeth Brehaut was married to James Laird of Vernon River. She had one daughter who became the wife of David Crichton (before mentioned on this paper). The daughter died, leaving four little children to her mother's care. She lived with them until her death.

The writer has a remembrance of this old lady bringing her a set of silver cuff buttons very long ago. They had been her mother's and she left orders that if the writer died, they were to be left as an heirloom to someone in the Brehaut family. The present owner prizes them highly.

Matthew Brehaut was the next son, he married Ann, daughter of William Bishop of Murray Harbor South. Their family numbered nine, two are dead. He was a very good man and his last message to the young people of the place, sent from his death-bed to a service in the Methodist Church at White Sands, was a message urging all to give their hearts to the Lord.

James Brehaut married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Bell of White Sands. Nine children were born to them, six of whom are living. He was a good, jolly old man and a staunch Presbyterian. He, with his family, moved to Summerside, where he died.

Margaret Brehaut was married to Henry Sencabaugh. Of their family of seven daughters, only two are living. She was an old lady who had seen trouble of no ordinary kind, but was always cheerful and ready to tell all kinds of stories.

Joseph Brehaut was the youngest son, he married Susan, daughter of William White of Murray River. Their children numbered twelve, two of them are dead. To his daughter, Charlotte, Mrs. Murray, now of St. Paul, Minn., belongs the honor of originating the idea of this celebration, and to his daughter, Bessie, the writer is indebted for most of the information in this paper. The homestead came to him at the old people's death, and is now held by his son David.

Charlotte Brehaut was married to James Sencabaugh, and lived on the farm west of her father's. They had eight children, of whom four are dead. She was a very good woman, and a famous housekeeper, and the last of the family who died.

It is rather noticeable how each family held to the old family names. Margaret's family was the only one without a Henry, and she had no boys. James, William, and Daniel were in nearly every family, and there were Elizabeths and Charlottes more than a modern postmaster could stand.

The living descendants of Henry Brehaut, who landed here in 1806, are not less than four hundred, possibly there are four hundred fifty, as there were some not heard from.

If there are any errors in this paper, the writer would be glad to have them corrected, and to those who have furnished the information given here, the writer gives sincere thanks.

May each of us live so as to be worthy of the inheritance left us by those gone before, and may we all be fitted to meet them in that Better Land where joyful meetings never end, and partings are no more.

signed: Charlotte M. Brooks Murray Harbor So. Written in 1906.

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