

Burleigh Hunt (1792-1868) & Mary Ann Row (1814-1912)

Sidney Township

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Contact Ian at:

ian.d.hooker@gmail.com

The Hunts and Rows of Sidney Township

By Ian Hooker, Ottawa, September 2019

The following biographies may be read as a supplement to [the work of Mildred Sussell](#). See her genealogy in two places: Vol 1 Ch 6 p 55 and Vol 2 Ch 7 p 70.

Burleigh Hunt and Mary Ann Row

Burleigh Hunt (1792-1868) was born 20 Jan 1792 the 11th of 15 siblings in Strafford, Vermont and was a carpenter by trade. His twin brother, Enoch¹, died at birth.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army Engineers during the War of 1812 at the age of 21, from 10 Feb 1813 until 12 Jul 1815, when his term expired, coming to Upper Canada sometime afterwards. This made him a part of the large wave of American immigrants to Upper Canada in that era, the so-called "Late Loyalists." According to his biography in *Pioneer Life on the Bay of Quinte*², he built a house for Colonel Joseph Ryerson, (father of the famous Egerton Ryerson), in Norfolk County in 1818. In 1819, he appears in a list of settlers in London Township, Middlesex, Upper Canada.

His land petition for 100 acres dated 2 Jan 1827 was recommended by Colonel Thomas Talbot, who vouched that he had taken the oath of allegiance; he received clear title to his 100 acres in 1828. In 1827 he was also running a store on Commissioners' Road in Westminster Township.³ In 1831, he bought a mill site in Westminster Township on the Thames River, where he built a grist mill and dam in 1833, the first mill on the Thames.

Burleigh's first wife was Fidelia (1803-1832). They had a daughter, Caroline Hunt (1822-1890) born in Detroit, a son, Asenath Borwell Hunt (1829-1832), and a second unnamed infant son (1832).

While on the one hand it may seem unlikely that the same carpenter from Vermont is popping up in Norfolk County, different townships in Middlesex County, Detroit and Fort Malden (now Amherstburg), on the other hand it seems likely that he was only working his own land on a part time basis, possibly using hired labour with the wages he earned from taking skilled carpentry jobs in varied locations.

In May 1832, his wife Fidelia died 3 days after their infant, unnamed son died, probably from complications following childbirth. Soon after, in Aug 1832, his three-year-old son died as well, possibly in a cholera outbreak. Fidelia and his first two sons are the oldest grave markers in the cemetery at St Anne's Anglican Church in Byron (now part of London), Ontario.⁴

¹ Some Christians interpret [Deuteronomy 5:24](#) to mean that the Biblical Enoch did not die but was taken straight to heaven.

² His life as put forth in *Pioneer Life on the Bay of Quinte* conflicts somewhat with the documentary evidence and omits much else.

³ *History of the County of Middlesex, Canada. From the Earliest Time to the Present; Containing an Authentic Account of Many Important Matters Relating to the Settlement, Progress and General History of the County; and Including a Department Devoted to the Preservation of Personal and Private Records, etc.* (Toronto: W. A. & C. L. Goodspeed, 1889.) [Archive.org](#)

⁴ <https://www.stannesbyron.ca/?q=content/early-settlers>



The millstone behind the Byron branch of the London Public Library.

Burleigh Hunt sold the mill to Cyrenius Hall in 1836, (it was known afterwards as Hall's Mills). The mill was damaged in floods and rebuilt several times until partially dismantled in the 1930s and the final remains were carried away in a flood in 1937. A millstone monument is located behind the Byron Branch of the London Public Library.

In 1836, Burleigh Hunt was amongst the first settlers in Little Fort (renamed Waukegan in 1841), Illinois, which was then the frontier of settlement. He went there with his second wife, Mary Ann Row⁵ (1814-1912), with whom he had two children: Henry Bleeker Hunt (born 1838 in Illinois) and John William Hunt (born 1846 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario). His daughter Caroline by his first wife also went with them; she married there Freeman Bridge (1807-1888), also of Vermont.

In 1838 he built a house on the south side of the river in Little Fort, which was followed by a dam and in 1840 a grist mill. Lake County was organized in 1839 and that autumn he built the first circuit court building, which he leased to the county. In 1842, he completed the first county jail.⁶

He ran into financial difficulties and in 1842 conveyed his assets into the name of his infant son Henry Bleeker Hunt to escape his creditors. He was sued and lost in circuit court in 1845 and lost again on appeal at the Illinois Supreme Court in 1856⁷.

He was back in Canada in Sidney Township, Hastings County with Henry Bleeker Hunt in 1845⁸ and his next son John William Hunt was born the following year in 1846. The 1851 census for Sidney Township shows Burleigh Hunt, Mary Ann Row, their two sons (Henry Bleeker and John William), Burleigh's daughter Caroline with her husband and two children and Burleigh's brother Solomon Hunt (1794-1852) all living together. His daughter Caroline and her family later permanently resettled in Wisconsin and his brother Solomon moved to California.

⁵ I don't know exactly when or where Burleigh Hunt and Mary Ann Row married. My working hypothesis is that sometime after he sold his mill in the London area in 1836, Burleigh met Mary Ann Row at the Trenton inn operated by her mother, Mary Walden Meyers. Perhaps after growing up on the story of her mother's elopement, Mary Ann Row decided to do the same with Burleigh Hunt.

⁶ *The Past and Present of Lake County, Illinois: Containing a History of the County--its Cities, Towns, &c., a Biographical Directory of Its Citizens, War Record of Its Volunteers in the Late Rebellion, Portraits of Early Settlers and Prominent Men, General and Local Statistics, Map of Lake County, History of Illinois, Illustrated, History of the Northwest, Illustrated, Constitution of the United States, Miscellaneous Matters, Etc., Etc.* (Chicago: Wm. Le Baron & Co., 1877.) pp. 225, 229, 232, and 321. [Google Books](#).

⁷ Reports of Cases at Law and in Chancery Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Illinois: Volume 17 (Illinois: Supreme Court, January 1, 1886.) [Google Books](#)

⁸ See Henry Bleeker Hunt's year of arrival in the 1921 Census

Mary Ann Row also had a daughter (Augusta Rowe, 1839-1915) born out of wedlock in Sidney in 1839 with John Lott Jr, a 29-year-old single farmer living near her parents' farm, (and also her 3rd cousin).⁹ Augusta Rowe at age 13 (in the 1851 census) was living with her grandparents, John Row and Mary Meyers, but after their deaths (in the 1861 census) was living with Burleigh Hunt and Mary Ann Row under the name Augusta Row. Augusta married John Johnston and the marriage record of their son Edgar Malcom Johnston in 1901 gives her maiden name as Augusta Lott.

Census records show Burleigh Hunt and Mary Ann Row were Universalists¹⁰, although when Burleigh's younger brother Solomon was living with them, he gave his religion on the 1851 census as Congregationalist. Mary Ann Row was baptized a Presbyterian 2 Dec 1814.¹¹

Burleigh Hunt died aged 76 and Mary Ann Row died of old age aged 98. Both are both buried in the Old Sidney Burying Ground but in separate plots. Burleigh Hunt is in an older plot while Mary Ann Row is buried with her son John Hunt, his wife Isabella Coon and their daughter Lottie Belle Hunt.

Mary Ann Row was the daughter of John Row¹², the second husband of Mary Walden Meyers. I believe that John Row's parents were John/Johannes Row/Rau/Rouch and his wife Elisabetha of Little Nine Partners, New York.¹³

⁹ Mary Ann Row evidently went with Burleigh Hunt to Little Fort (Waukegan), Illinois in 1836, gave birth to Henry Bleecker Hunt there in early 1838, and was back at home with her parents in Canada shortly afterwards in 1838. Burleigh Hunt returned to his wife in Canada in 1845, when he was effectively bankrupt, after losing his property in a lawsuit that year.

¹⁰ Universalism spread into Canada with British and American settlers in the 19th Century. The belief in universal salvation through divine love and mercy was a reaction to the harsh doctrines of Calvinism prevalent in the nineteenth century and appealed to people put off by preaching that they might not be reunited with family members in the afterlife, who could be damned for eternity. It was largely a rural movement, made up of independent and usually self-educated members who had left other Protestant denominations. Women were permitted unusual freedom to preach and to take part in congregational affairs. The first Universalist woman preacher in Canada (and possibly the first of any denomination) was Mrs. Mary Ann Church, who built up a congregation at the village of Merrickville, Upper Canada, in the 1830s.

Individualistic and free-thinking, Universalists resisted organization and regulation, even by their own Conventions, a characteristic that resulted in somewhat hit-or-miss record keeping and was later to be an impediment to growth. Universalism peaked in Canada in the 1860s, as the other Protestant denominations moderated their Calvinism and became more tolerant and inclusive in their attitudes. See Heather Watts, "The Canadian Unitarian- Universalist Record Survey," *Archivia* 30 (Summer 1990).

¹¹ Presbyterian Register of Rev. Robert James McDowall, Missionary to Upper Canada, 1800-1841. Kingston: Ontario Genealogical Society, 1980. p. 64 [↗](#)

¹² See his obituary in the *Canada Christian Advocate* newspaper on 22 Jul 1857

¹³ Henry Z. Jones, *The Palatine Families of New York: A Study of the German Immigrants who Arrived in Colonial New York in 1710*. Universal City, California: Self-published, 1985. p. 806.



Burleigh Hunt - Old Sidney Burying Ground. 157-A, Row 10



Mary Ann Row - Old Sidney Burying Ground, 317-A, Row 17

12. **Burleigh Hunt**, born 20-Jan-1792 in Strafford, Orange, Vermont, United States; died May-1868 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario Canada; buried in Sidney Burying Ground, Hastings, Ontario, 157-A Row 10, son of 23. **Solomon Huntress** and 24. **Lucy Burleigh**. He married (1) abt. 1821 **Fidelia** (---), born abt. 1803; died 23-May-1832 in Westminster Township, Middlesex, Upper Canada; buried in Byron Anglican Cemetery, Middlesex County, ON; (2) abt. 1838 13. **Mary Ann Row**, born 02-Feb-1814 in Sidney, Hastings, Upper Canada; died 19-Feb-1912 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario, Canada; buried in Sidney Burying Ground, Hastings, Ontario, 317-A, row 17, daughter of 25. **John Row** and 26. **Mary Walden Meyers**.

Children of Burleigh Hunt and Fidelia (---) were as follows:

- i Caroline Hunt, born 01-May-1822 in Detroit, Michigan, USA; died 14-Jun-1890 in Plainfield, Waushara, Wisconsin, USA; buried in Plainfield, Waushara County, Wisconsin, United States of America. She married on 20-Jun-1842 in Avon, Lake, Illinois, USA **Freeman Bridge**, born 10-Jun-1807 in Weston, Windsor, Vermont, USA; died 27-Dec-1888 in Plainfield Township, Waushara County, Wisconsin, United States; buried in Plainfield, Waushara County, Wisconsin, United States of America, son of **Jeremiah Bridge** and **Sally Polly Cox**.
- ii Asenath Bordwell^s Hunt, born Mar-1829; died 12-Aug-1832 in Westminster Township, Middlesex, Upper Canada; buried in Byron Anglican Cemetery, Middlesex County, ON.
- iii Infant Hunt; died 20-May-1832; buried in Byron Anglican Cemetery, Middlesex County, ON.

Children of Burleigh Hunt and Mary Ann Row were as follows:

- i **Henry Bleecker Hunt**, born 15-Jan-1838 in Illinois, USA; died 28-Sep-1931 in Belleville, Hastings, Ontario, Canada. He married on 19-Sep-1867 in Hastings, Ontario, Canada **Sophronia Lazier**, born 26-Nov-1845 in Ontario, Canada; died Aug-1927 in Hastings, Ontario.
- ii **John William Hunt**, born 29-Dec-1846 in Sidney, Hastings, Canada West, Canada; died 11-Jul-1911 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario Canada; buried in Sidney Burying Ground, Hastings, Ontario, 317-A, row 17. He married on 11-Jan-1876 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario, Canada **Isabella Jane Coon**, born 10-Jun-1851 in Sidney, Hastings, Canada West, Canada; died 10-Apr-1886 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario, Canada; buried in Sidney Burying Ground, Hastings, Ontario, 317-A, row 17, daughter of **Matthew Coon** and **Sarah Anne Rose**.

Children of John Lott and Mary Ann Row were as follows:

- i Augusta Row, born 23-Jan-1839 in Sidney, Hastings, Canada West, Canada; died 2-Feb-1915 in Belleville, Hastings, Ontario, Canada. She married between 1861 and 1871 **John Johnston**, born 16-Mar-1838 in Aberdeen, Scotland; died 30 Mar 1910 in Belleville, Hastings, Ontario.



Grave of Fidelia Hunt (Abt 1803-1832)



Grave of Asenath Bordwell Hunt (1829 – 1832) and infant Hunt (1832)

The poem from Fidelia's gravestone¹⁴:

When sorrow weeps o'er virtue's sacred dust,
 Our tears become us, and our grief is just;
 Which were the tears he shed, who grateful pays
 This last sad tribute of his love and praise;
 Who mourns the best of wives and friends combined
 Where female softness meets a manly mind;
 Mourns, but not murmurs, sighs, but not despairs,
 Feels as a man, but as a Christian bears.

¹⁴ "Early Settlers," St Anne's Anglican Church (Byron). Website, accessed 27 Jul 2018, <https://www.stannesbyron.ca/?q=content/early-settlers>

John William Hunt and Isabella Jane Coon

John William Hunt (1846-1911) was a farmer in Sidney Township and an engineer on the Grand Trunk Railway, (see his *Pioneer Life on the Bay of Quinte* biography). At the age of 29, he married Isabella Jane Coon in 1876 and they had 4 children. In religion, he was listed in the census as a Universalist (like his parents) in 1851, 1861, and 1871. In the 1881 and 1911 censuses, after his marriage, he was a Methodist Episcopalian but for a period after the untimely death of his wife in 1886 he was a “free thinker,” (1891 and 1901 censuses). He died at the age of 64 of heart disease.

Isabella Jane Coon (1851-1886) married John William Hunt at the age of 24 and died at 34 of dropsy (edema) and heart disease, when their fourth and youngest child (Lottie Belle Hunt) was not quite 5 months old.

They are buried in the Old Sidney Burying Ground with his mother, Mary Ann Row, and their daughter, Lottie Belle Hunt.





DIED.

HUNT. — In Sidney, on July 11th,
John William Hunt, aged 65 years.

The funeral will be held from the
family residence, Front of Sidney
on Thursday, July 13th at 3 p.m.
Interment White's cemetery.

6. **John William Hunt**, born 29-Dec-1845 in Sidney, Hastings, Canada West, Canada¹⁵; died 11-Jul-1911 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario Canada; buried in Sidney Burying Ground, Hastings, Ontario, 317-A, row 17, son of 12. **Burleigh Hunt** and 13. **Mary Ann Row**. He married on 11-Jan-1876 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario, Canada 7. **Isabella Jane Coon**, born 10-Jun-1851 in Sidney, Hastings, Canada West, Canada¹⁶; died 10-Apr-1886 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario, Canada; buried in Sidney Burying Ground, Hastings, Ontario, 317-A, row 17, daughter of 14. **Matthew Coon** and 15. **Sarah Anne Rose**.

Children of John William Hunt and Isabella Jane Coon were as follows:

i **Henry Rowe Hunt**, born 11-Nov-1878 in Sidney Twp., Hastings, Ontario, Canada. He married in 1904 **Myrtle Boulton**, born abt. 1879 in Ontario. They had 5 children. One, Pilot Officer **Norman Boulton Hunt**, RCAF, was killed 14 Jan 1944 off the coast of Norway.

ii **Florence Hunt**, born 05-May-1881 in Sidney Twp., Hastings, Ontario, Canada; died 07-Jun-1969; buried in Whites Cemetery Sidney Township Ontario Canada. She married on 01-Sep-1904 in Bayside, Sidney Twp., Hastings Co, Ontario, Canada **Charles Benson Bonisteel**, born 09-Oct-1883 in Hastings, Ontario, Canada; died 06-Mar-1971 in Trenton, Hastings, Ontario, Canada.

iii **Charles Burleigh Hunt**, born 23-Aug-1883 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario, Canada, born 23-Aug-1883 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario, Canada; died 14-Jun-1912 in Hastings, Ontario, Canada; buried in Sidney Burying Ground, Hastings, Ontario, 319-A, row 17. He married on 05-Oct-1910 in Hastings, Ontario, Canada **Mabel Wilson**, born abt. 1890 in Ontario; died 1979 in Ontario, Canada.

3 iv **Lottie Belle Hunt**, born 12-Nov-1885 in Sidney, Hastings, Ontario, Canada; died 30 Nov 1973; buried in Sidney Burying Ground, Hastings, Ontario, 318-A, row 17. She married on 29-Oct-1907 in Sidney Twp, Hastings, ON **John Archibald Crews**, born 25-Apr-1878 in Murray, Northumberland, Ontario, Canada; died 18-Apr-1953 in Canada; buried in St George's Cemetery, Trenton, Ontario, son of **Robert Sheeran Crews** and **Maria Ellen Maguire**.

¹⁵ No birth record for John William Hunt is likely to exist. Birth records at the time were typically church baptisms; (civil birth records did not begin in Ontario until 1869). Census records indicate that Mary Ann Row (1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911) and her husband Burleigh Hunt (1851, 1861) were Universalists. John William Hunt was a Universalist, (1851, 1861, 1871), and a Methodist Episcopalian after his marriage, (1881, 1911), but a freethinker, (1891, 1901), for a period after the untimely death of his wife in 1886. The surviving records of the Christian Universalist Association for Canada West (1845-1873), founded by the [Rev David Leavitt](https://div.hds.harvard.edu/library/bms/bms00148.1.html) in the Bay of Quinte area, are in the Andover-Harvard Theological Library in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The library's special collections archivist confirmed by email 24 Oct 2018 that they consist of meeting minutes, with no genealogical data. <https://div.hds.harvard.edu/library/bms/bms00148.1.html>

¹⁶ I have not been able to find a baptismal record for Isabella Jane Coon. The baptism was likely performed at the Frankford Episcopal Methodist Church by the [Rev. John Sills](#), the minister for the Sidney Circuit in 1851. The United Church of Canada Archives confirmed by email 28 Sep 2018 that they do not have Episcopal Methodist records for Frankford before 1872. Neither do the UCC archives hold the personal register of Rev Sills, only a short biographical file.