Barnston-Ouest
A look into our past

By Géraldine Stringer

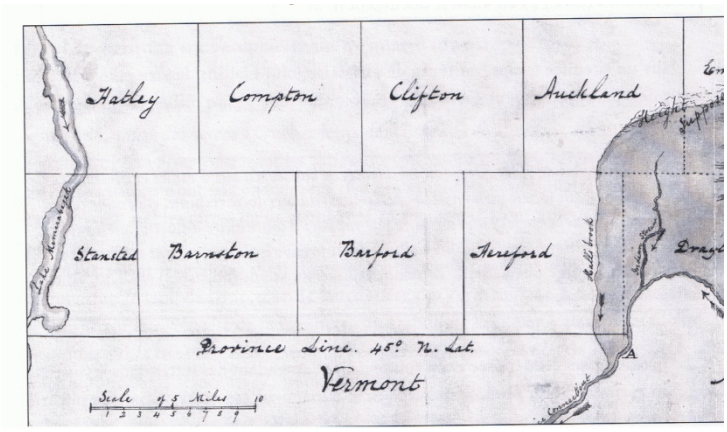
Introduction

Today we're starting a new series of historical chronicles about our municipality. This time the stories will look at the 13 cemeteries that are tucked away in the corners of our territory. Who are the people who rest there and how did they arrive here? In some cases these families and their names have disappeared into history leaving only a street name or the name of a cemetery behind. In other cases, the names and families are still living amongst us and they are our friends and neighbours.

Before looking at the final resting places of our pioneer families though, let's start with a short history of our 'township'. In February of 1792 in Quebec City, Crown Governor Alured Clarke ordained by royal proclamation the opening up of the wilderness territory to the east of Lake Memphremagog and running along the 45th parallel to the south. This land was now available for clearing and development. The land was divided into Townships of approximately ten miles by ten miles. Because of inaccurate land surveying at the outset, the dividing line between Barnston and Barford remained a point of contention for a number of years. Each Township was then divided into lots of 200 acres with a land reserve in each for the Crown and the clergy.

Land concessions for the Townships were distributed to associations of land speculators who then sold the lots or partial lots in their Township for cash or by mortgage. The leaders of the association for our territory were Robert Lester, an Irish Catholic living in Quebec City, and his nephew Robert Morrogh. In June of 1792, Governor Alured Clarke announced the granting of a Township to Lester and Morrogh and decreed that it should be called Barnston.

We'll pick up our story in the September issue with the first pioneers who braved the elements and felled the trees to colonize and open the first farms in the Township of Barnston.



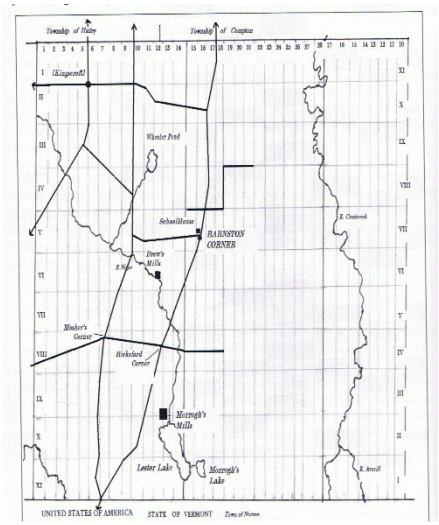
Information from: De Barnston à Coaticook by Jean-Pierre Kesteman, Productions G.G.C. Ltd., 2011.

First villages of Barnston

The Land Association known as Lester and Morrogh won the concession for the Township of Barnston in 1792, however government bureaucracy held up their ability to start selling the land officially. In the winter of 1796 Lester and Morrogh hired a land surveyor to lay out 200 acre farm plots and to mark off the lands to be reserved for the Crown and for the Anglican clergy. In anticipation of future pioneer settlement, the land developers contracted to build a grain mill in 1799 at what was to be known as Lake Lester (now known as Lake Lyster). The mill and the settlement that developed around it were to be called Morrogh's Mills (now known as Baldwin Mills).

By 1801, at the time their license was officially accorded by the government, Lester and Morrogh's Barnston Township already numbered approximately 35 pioneer families who were clearing the land for farming. There was a grain mill as well as a saw mill built and in use. Things are moving quickly after 1801 as pioneer families begin buying up land at prices varying from $1.50 to $2.00 an acre. By 1806 family names such as Kilborn, Gould, Heath, Buckland, Ball, Baldwin, Clifford and Cleveland begin appearing as owners of land.

Several areas of development can be seen in Barnston Township as more families arrive. The villages of Mosher's Corner and Bicksford Corner to the south, Barnston Corner to the east (site of the first school and meeting house) and Kings Corner (Kingscroft) to the north of the township attract buyers and become settlements. Pioneers are establishing themselves near other pioneer families in order to be closer to such necessary services as saw and grain mills. At the same time they are creating a network of help and solidarity as well as a community life in their new land.



By 1816 settlers in Barnston are demanding a route west to join up with the already existing Township Road on the west side of Lake Massawippi linking the region to Montreal. The War of 1812 having effectively halted the north-south supply lines to Boston and access to commercial exchange. Barnston Township is growing and developing. Families have come to settle, their sons and daughters are starting to marry and so the pioneer development continues. We'll see, however, that with new growth there also comes death.

Next time: We'll visit the Gould Cemetery, opened around 1811 to serve the families farming around Kingscroft.

Information from: *De Barnston à Coaticook* by Jean-Pierre Kesteman, Productions G.G.C. Ltd., 2011.

The Gould Cemetery

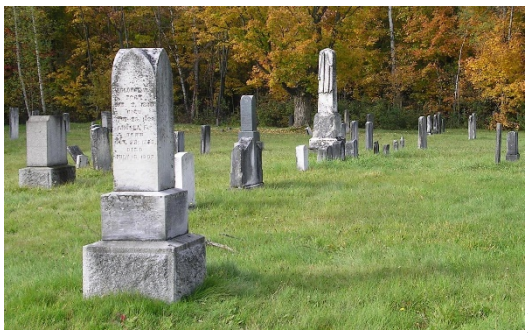
This month's visit is to the Gould Cemetery located on chemin Corey in Kingscroft. This Protestant cemetery was opened circa 1811 to serve the pioneer families who began to settle in and around the village of King's Corner (Kingscroft).

It is rectangular in shape and the land slopes slightly. The cemetery lies perpendicular to the road on the south side, is surrounded by mature trees on the west and north sides and by a field on the east side. The land for the cemetery belonged to the Gould family, whose numerous members owned land in and around King's Corner. Many were buried here.

It was in 1806 that John, David and William Gould were listed by land agents Lester & Morrogh as buyers of acreage in Barnston Township in the area of King's Corner. William Gould's land was eventually seized for non-payment and was re-sold to George Barnard, whose daughter Eliza was buried in the cemetery in February 1811.

Another large family of note are the Nortons, who arrived in 1803 from Newhaven, Vermont to buy land. Issachar Norton, Sr. had ten children and many of them bought land and raised their own families in King's Corner. Shadrack Norton and his wife were buried in the Gould Cemetery in 1858 and were the grandparents of Arthur Osmore Norton, who left to eventually become a wealthy industrialist in Brookline, Massachusetts close to Boston. He built a summer residence in 1912 on Union Street in Coaticook that today is the home of the Beaulne Museum.

The Sutton family arrived in King's Corner from Vermont in 1805. Philpot Sutton emigrated from England to New Hampshire and then to Vermont before moving on to Barnston Township. He, his wife and their children settled in the area and began farming. Several of their sons also bought land for farming. Philpot Sutton's grave stone dates from December 1813 and his wife from March 1847. John Sutton, the eldest son of Philpot, was born in England in 1792. He became a deacon in the Baptist church and was a founding member of the Barnston Baptist Church located in Barnston Corner. Descendants of the Sutton family are still living in Kingscroft as well as in Way's Mills.



Members of the Bishop family bought land near King's Corner from Lester & Morrogh in 1806. James Bishop was buried in the Gould Cemetery in 1831. His wife was buried in 1863 and other family members were buried here throughout the 19th century. Marshall Pope arrived from Albany, Vermont in 1826. He bought acreage just south of Kingscroft that had an existing tavern on it, probably called the Norton Tavern. Alonzo Pope became the tavern keeper. Marshall Pope was buried in 1880.

Among other families of note buried in Gould Cemetery are the LeBarron family who arrived in 1825; the Morrison family, represented by Samuel and John who arrived circa 1823; and members of the Heath family who inter-married with the Morrison family.

Today the cemetery is cared for by the Barnston Heritage Cemetery Association and by a descendant of the Sutton family. It's a lovely place to take a stroll to look at autumn colors as well as to see the many old and interesting grave stones left by those pioneer families who opened up this part of Barnston Township and which today is part of the municipality of Barnston West.

References: *Transactions Foncières dans les Townships de Barnston et de Barford et à Coaticook (1792-1855)* by Jean-Pierre Kesteman, Productions G.G.C. ltd, 2011.

De Barnston à Coaticook by Jean-Pierre Kesteman, Productions G.G.C. Ltd., 2011.

The Heathton Cemetery

The Heathton Cemetery, dating from approximately 1813, is located on Stage Road close to the intersection with chemin Routhier. Heathton is a Protestant cemetery that served the farming families living in the area known as Heathton. The earliest monument in the cemetery that is still readable is that of Harvy Colby who died on December 18, 1813 at the age of 31. The cemetery entry is located directly from the road. The land slopes gently away from the road. The cemetery is surrounded by scenic rolling hills and open fields that are bordered by forest.

The cemetery takes its name from the Heath family who arrived early on in the opening up of Barnston Township. John Heath was born in 1771 in Plymouth, N.H. He married Margaret Mosher with whom he had 10 children. In 1806 he and his family arrived from New Hampshire to purchase land from land agents Lester & Morrogh in the area that eventually became known as Heathton. James Heath also bought land in 1806 very close to John's farm however his land was seized in 1810 for non-payment of his mortgage. Sally Heath, born in 1794, married John Corliss who purchased his land in the area in 1833. Sally was buried in September 1865 but her husband, who died in 1869, was buried not far away in the Bickford Cemetery on chemin Stanstead. Daniel Heath, born in 1791 in New Hampshire, was the eldest son of John Heath. He married Jemima Clement and they bought land in Heathton in 1833. Jemima was buried in August 1870.

The Heath family was a large one and married into other pioneer families in the area who were opening up farms and clearing land at the same time. The Mosher family is one such family. John Heath was married to Margaret Mosher who was buried in the cemetery in January 1855. Daniel Mosher arrived in 1815 to buy land in the area as well as Jesse Mosher who arrived from Vermont. Michael Mosher, Sr and Michael Mosher, Jr. both bought land in 1806 and in 1808. Michael, Sr. was the first person to run the mills set up by Lester & Morrogh at Lake Lester (later known as Baldwin Mills). The Cilly family had many members buried in Heathton as well, among them Thomas Cilly who was married to Olive Heath. Thomas was buried in March 1876 and Olive in June 1864.

Cyrus Daniels, born in 1808, purchased land in the Heathton area in 1852. He was buried in the cemetery in December 1891. His son Farnum C. Daniels was married to Sarah Humphrey. Both are buried in Heathton but interestingly, their son, Farnum C. Daniels, Jr. married Cora Belle Clifford, who was Daniel Way's great granddaughter. Farnum, Jr. and Cora Belle are both buried in the Way's Mills cemetery located on Jordan Road.

Levi Aldrich, who was born in 1763 in Westmorland, New Hampshire, arrived in 1804 and purchased several different parcels in the area of Heathton. Lewis Aldrich, born in 1812, bought land in 1840. He was buried in January 1892. Many members of the Aldrich family were buried in Heathton cemetery. Folsom Bean, who died in 1866, and his wife Polly, who died in 1864 were buried in Heathton not far from the Bean Road that bears their name.

Heathton Cemetery is the site of many interesting grave stones bearing the names of early pioneer families who came to open the land, who married into each other's families and who found a final resting place on the rolling hills of Barnston Township. The Crystal Lake Cemetery Association cares for and maintains the cemetery today.

References: *Transactions Foncières dans les Townships de Barnston et de Barford et à Coaticook (1792-1855)* by Jean-Pierre Kesteman, Productions G.G.C. ltd, 2011.

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Way's Mills Cemetery

This month's visit is to the Way's Mills Cemetery located just outside the village of Way's Mills on Jordan Road almost to the intersection with Madore Road. It was opened around 1820 and served the families of the village and the nearby farms. However, I have two unconfirmed written sources that contend that the cemetery was actually opened around 1814-1815 to bury the victims of a smallpox epidemic that was devastating the region during those years.

The cemetery is surrounded by fields of corn and hay and because its elevation is high, the view across the valley to the opposite hills and farms is quite stunning. There is a line of mature maples running down the center and there are several mature maples on the south side. The entry is from Jordan Road on the east side of the cemetery where a new decorative metal fence has been donated by Rick Bryan, a descendant of Daniel Way.

Let's start with the graves of the Way family since it is from them and their woollen mill that the village eventually took its name in the mid-1850's. Daniel Way, who was born in 1794 in Marlow, New Hampshire, died in Way's Mills in September 1875. His grave site is at the back of the cemetery in the south-west corner. Unfortunately his grave stone was so degraded that his descendants asked that it be brought into the community center for safekeeping. His wife, Keziah Jaquith Way, was born in Chester, Vermont in 1793. She died in Way's Mills in January 1878 and was buried next to her husband. Sadly, her grave stone has been lost and its location is unknown. Through a donation by one of their descendants, there are new grave markers to indicate their final resting places. Julia Hodge Way, wife of Lorenzo Way, the eldest son of Daniel and Keziah, is buried next to her in-laws. Her stone is still there and the information, although worn down, is still readable. She died in Way's Mills in September 1892.

Lorenzo and Julia Way's son-in-law, Lafayette E. Brown, is buried near his wife's family. His wife was Amy Adelia Way, eldest daughter of Lorenzo Way. Cora Belle Clifford, granddaughter of Delia Way Clifford and great granddaughter of Daniel Way, was born in 1885. She died in 1969 and is buried with her husband, Farnum Daniels, who died in 1945. Cora Belle and Farnum's daughter Iris was born in 1904. She died in 1992 and is buried

with her husband Alber Bryan who died in 1956. Iris and Alber Bryan had 9 children, several of whom are buried here.

John Dresser, born in 1763, probably came to Barnston Township from Royalton, Vermont. He died here in January 1833. His wife, Polly, died in 1850. There are a number of Dresser men who are listed in 1825 as owning land near the future Way's Mills. Benjamin Dresser, who died in September 1874, is most likely the son of one of them. Benjamin's wife Cynthia Ball, whose family owned a farm on Ball Brook Road, died in 1884. Harry Hollister, born in March 1802, was the son of Nathaniel Hollister who owned land in the area. Harry Hollister purchased land on the Niger River in the early 1830's and built a saw mill that operated until the 1950's. Harry Hollister died in Way's Mills in November 1857. William Cramer, born in 1832, died in 1898. His wife, Emaline Miller, died in 1894. Willis Cramer, born in 1870, would buy the Hollister saw mill on the Niger River. He died in Way's Mills in 1952.

Walter Buckland, Sr., born around 1765 in Connecticut, moved to Vermont where he married Elizabeth Drew. They would have 13 children together. He purchased land from land agents Lester & Morrogh in 1806 and settled in Barnston Township with his family. Members of this large family would own numerous farms in the area and are buried in the Way's Mills Cemetery, the Buckland Cemetery on Buckland Road and in the Barnston Pleasantview Cemetery. The MacKinnon family, descendants of Walter Buckland, are also buried in the Way's Mills Cemetery.

In 1852 Robert Standish owned 100 acres of farmland close to the village of Way's Mills. The farm is still owned by a Standish. Many members of the Standish family are buried here.

The Way's Mills Cemetery is cared for by the Way's Mills Cemetery Association and is still being used for burials by descendants of original families such as the Way/Bryans, the Buckland/MacKinnons and the Standish as well as by 'newcomers' to the village.

The Buckland Cemetery

This next visit is to the Buckland Cemetery located on Buckland Road roughly mid-way between the villages of Way's Mills and Kingscroft. The cemetery was opened in approximately 1839 on land given by the Buckland family. It is set back slightly from the road and is surrounded on three sides by cultivated fields and by an open weave metal fence. As the cemetery is located high on Buckland Road, the views of the mountains, the hills and valleys to the north, east and west are quite spectacular. There are three mature maple trees growing in a line on the east side of the cemetery. The gated access to the cemetery is from Buckland Road.

There is an interesting obelisk style funerary marker for members of the Buckland family close to the entrance with two smaller grave stones at either side of it. Unfortunately, all of the other grave stones have been moved from their original positions and have been placed in two parallel lines in the center of the cemetery. Obviously this destroyed the original layout and has undermined the historic nature of the site. However, there are a number of appealing grave stones located here. There are several interesting shapes and some are carved with the funerary motifs and symbols of the time.

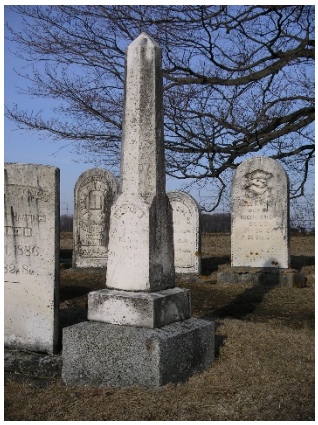
As noted in the article on the Way's Mills Cemetery, Walter Buckland, Sr. bought land and moved to Barnston Township from Vermont with his wife and children in 1806. His sons would eventually own farm land in the area and one of those, William Buckland, who was born in 1804, died in January 1886 and is buried here. William's wife Clarissa Heath, born in 1808 and from the Heath family in Heathton, was buried in October 1890. Norman Buckland, who was born in 1840, died in July 1871, is very likely their son. Elvesta Buckland, their daughter born in 1842, died in November 1864. Elvesta was married to Sias Bachelder, whose family had moved to the area from New Hampshire. Laura Bachelder, who was born in 1818, was married to Daniel Colby and died in March 1869. Interestingly, Daniel Colby died in Boston in November 1892 but was brought back for burial to the Buckland Cemetery.

The Dresser family, some of whom are buried in the Way's Mills Cemetery, are also buried in the Buckland Cemetery. William Dresser, born in 1793 probably in Royalton, Vermont, was buried here in November 1879. His wife, Mahitable, born in 1796, was buried here in 1865. Their son Ozro Dresser died in 1842 at the age of 7 years and was buried next to his parents. Sally Dresser, born in 1823, was married to Smith Bachelder and died in June 1867. Ruth Dresser, born in 1830, died in March 1899. She was married to John Marsh who died in June 1876. Lydia Dresser, who was born in 1826, died in 1903. She was married to Elias Bellows, who was born in 1821 and died in 1851.

The Bellows family moved to Barnston Township from Hancock, Vermont around 1806. The two pioneering families of the Bucklands and the Bellows became closely connected through marriage. In fact, there is a family cemetery called the Bellows-Buckland Cemetery located on chemin Madore almost to the junction with Route 141. It is recognizable by the distinctive obelisk grave marker that is visible as one drives on chemin Madore towards Rte. 141. The cemetery would have been located at the time in Barnston Township but is now part of Coaticook.

We'll see next time that members of the Clifford, Sanborn, Southmayd, and Wheeler families are also buried here in the Buckland Cemetery.

The visit to the Buckland Cemetery continues with a look at the Clifford family graves. Deacon Samuel Clifford was born in New Hampshire in 1767. He married Sarah Riddell, also born in 1767, and together they had 11 children. In 1806 Samuel Clifford bought land in Barnston Township and moved from Grafton County, New Hampshire to settle as a pioneer in the Township with his family. Sarah Riddell Clifford was buried in the Buckland Cemetery in July 1842 and Samuel was buried in July 1845. Their son Philander Clifford, born in 1802, was buried in July 1865. Another son, Jacob, was born in 1795 and would eventually purchase land along the river near the land of Harry Hollister. In 1843 Jacob would sell that land to Daniel Way. Two years later Jacob sold another 50 acres to Daniel Way in the area where he would eventually construct a mill. Family marriage also tied these two men together when Jacob Clifford's son Francis married Daniel Way's daughter Delia in December 1848.



Ebenezer Sage Southmayd, who was born in 1800 in Middleton, Connecticut settled in Barnston Township in 1829, bought land on the river and began farming. In 1849 he sold 1 ½ acres on the river to Daniel Way. On the land was a house, a barn and the privilege to erect a dam on the river. This is where Daniel Way built his woollen mill. Ebenezer Sage Southmayd was buried in Buckland Cemetery in September 1884. Ebenezer's wife Sarah Cool was born in Whitehall, N.Y. in 1799. She was buried in May 1883. Their son Ebenezer Southmayd, born in March 1828, was buried in February 1912. Their daughter Sarah C. Southmayd, born in 1824, was buried in 1900. Sarah's husband A.R.P. Sanborn, born in 1823, was buried in 1896.

Samuel Sage, born in February 1833, owned a farm near the Buckland farms. He was buried in January 1905. His wife Sarah A. Wood, born in 1831, was buried in November 1904. William Sage, born in 1835, was buried in May 1913. William's wife, Martha Arms, born in 1837, was buried in 1902.

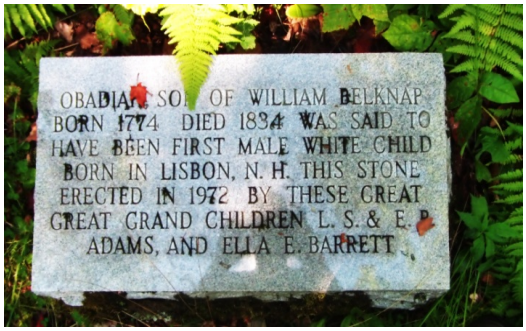
Josiah Wheeler, who was born in Plainfield, Connecticut in June 1750, married Hannah Howe, also of Plainfield, Connecticut and together they had 13 children. They moved to Royalton, Vermont and then in 1803, they moved to Barnston Township. Josiah and his many offspring bought, sold and farmed land from Way's Mills to Barnston Corner. Josiah even sold land to Leverett Buckland, one of his sons-in-law. Hollis Wheeler, who was born in 1818, died in September 1904. His wife Louisa Bacon Wheeler died in December 1884. Gilbert Wheeler died in 1901. Other members of the Wheeler family are buried in the Baldwin Wheeler Cemetery.

There is still a Wheeler farm in Way's Mills and that is where in September 1902, Orson S. Wheeler was born to Fred Hollis Wheeler and Mary Amelia Moulton. Orson Wheeler would go on to become a well known Canadian and international artist and sculptor. For many years he was a professor of art and art history at McGill University as well as at Concordia University in Montreal. Orson Wheeler died in 1990.

Today the Buckland Cemetery is maintained by the Crystal Lake Cemetery Association.

The Belknap and Blanchard Family Cemeteries

The year is 1834 and Obadiah Belknap has died. Obadiah was born in 1774 in Lisbon, New Hampshire and came to Barnston Township with his wife Abigail Lock and their children sometime early in the 1800's, most probably around 1806. Like many others coming at the same time, they wanted to buy land at the low prices being offered by the land agents, to clear that land and to start farming. As was often the custom at the time, burials took place very close to home in a quiet corner of the farm. The Belknap family followed this tradition and so Obadiah was buried on their land.



Thus began this family cemetery located on Lyon Road almost on the Canadian-US border. Today it is surrounded by forest but it was at one time open farm land owned and worked by several generations of the Belknap family.

Abigail Lock, Obadiah's wife, was born in 1778 in the US and was buried next to Obadiah in 1861. One of their sons, Mitchell Belknap, was born in 1799 in the US and was buried in 1880. During his life Mitchell had 3 wives and 18 children! His 3rd wife, Sarah Converse, was born in 1816 and died in 1865. Another of his wives, Artimissia, born in 1803, died in 1850. Two of Mitchell's sons are also buried in the family cemetery. Mitchell, Jr. was born in 1826 and died in 1893. His brother Laban, born in 1839, died in 1901. As witness to the harsh conditions of pioneer life, there are a number of Belknap children buried here as well.

Today the cemetery is still cared for by the descendants of those early Belknaps. There are family members living in the Baldwin Mills area as well as in Vermont.

Another small family cemetery, the Blanchard Cemetery, is located in a field next to an apple orchard on private land on Provencher Road. Jared Blanchard, born around 1805, and his wife Lydia, born in 1805, owned and farmed this land in the area that was then known as Mosher Corner. Their son Artemas was buried here in February 1832 at the age of 2 months. Emily was buried in August 1835 and an infant was buried in March 1837. To make things even harder for the Blanchard family, Jared was arrested in 1838 for sedition and was imprisoned in Sherbrooke. Released in 1839, he was arrested again in 1844 and incarcerated at the prison in Kingston where he died in September 1851. Could it be that Jared was one of the rebels from Stanstead who took part in the rebellion of 1838?

Lydia Blanchard died in February 1860 and was buried in the family cemetery. Another of Jared and Lydia's daughters, Calista, born in 1839, was buried in November 1881. Bertrand Blanchard was buried in May 1876.

The Blanchard Cemetery is cared for by the Barnston Heritage Cemetery Corporation.