

that the marriage was bigamous and, after either the divorce or death of his English wife, he remarried in Nova Scotia. It appears that the son either never came with him to Nova Scotia or returned later on his own to England.

In the last few years, additional support for Martha Marie Bissett as the daughter of George Frederick Bissett has been uncovered. Daphne Bissett Schober found a reference in an index to British baptisms to an 1808 baptism of a child named Martha with a father named George Frederick Bissett. Subsequently, I was able to confirm Daphne's discovery in the church records of Saint Nicholas Parish, Depford, Kent, England (near the British Naval Base at Greenwich) and add the mother's name of Martha and the father's occupation of "Mariner". Given the relative scarcity of Bissett (or the like) surnames in that part of England at the time and the otherwise remarkable coincidences, I believe that this baptism meets a "more likely than not" standard as that of our Martha Marie Bissett.

The Missing Ayhner Bissett and the Two Bissett - Hollywood Marriages

The Halifax County marriage registers show two marriages for what is most likely the same couple: "26 November 1865; at Halifax by license in the Church of England; John Holyhood, age 27, bachelor, laborer, living in Halifax, born in Ireland, son of John Holyhood (laborer) and Bridget Murphy married Ayhner E. Bissett, age 21, spinster, living in Halifax, born in Cole Harbour, daughter of Joseph Bissett and Elizabeth Conrad."

"7 June 1868; at Halifax by banns in the Roman Catholic Church; John Hollywood, age 30, bachelor, mechanic, living in Halifax, born in Cole Harbour, son of John Hollywood (fisherman) and Bridget Hollywood married Catherine Bissett, age 30, spinster, living in Halifax, daughter of Joseph Bissett (farmer) and Elizabeth Bissett; witnessed by E. Bissett²."

The Presbyterian Witness of 3 May 1873 also carried the following notice: "*HOLLEYWOOD, Angeline Catherine 27 ult died in her 28th year, w/o John HOLLEYWOOD and 3rd d/o Joseph BISSETT, Cole Harbour.*"

Unless we have a very unusual case of remote co-incidences, all these records probably refer to the same couple, John Hollywood and Angeline Catherine Bissett. The second marriage is best explained as occurring after one or both of them converted to Catholicism³. The "Ayhner E." in the first marriage record is likely a mis-transcription of "Angeline" from the original into the County records. The bride's age in the second marriage record was likely either mis-transcribed or roughly estimated as being the same as her husband's.

The Many William Gammons

The relationships among the various Gammon families that appear in one or more Nova Scotia records from the mid-18th to the early 19th centuries are not at all clear. Over the years, there have been several major research efforts aimed at compiling a comprehensive genealogy of these families. These have been complemented by many additional attempts at extending and revising individual branches of these Gammons based on wider availability of source documentation from that period. Yet, the results for some elements of the Gammon genealogy remain confused and inconsistent and none of them convincingly explain all of the known data.

This discussion will focus only on the spouses and children of the several William Gammons who appear to have been born in Nova Scotia in the period from about 1760 through 1810 or so. While there are also problems in associating each of these Williams with their parents and with the other Gammons, these will not be addressed here.

² Most likely her sister Elizabeth, who married in Halifax in 1870.

³ Many of Angeline Catherine Bissett's immediate family, all of whom were originally baptized as Protestant, were converting to Catholicism about the same time. Her younger brother, Alfred J. Bissett, was re-baptized a Catholic on 11 Apr 1868. Her father, Joseph A. Bissett, was re-baptized a Catholic on 21 Aug 1872. Her older siblings, Elizabeth and Walter, married Catholics in a Catholic Church in 1870 and 1860, respectively. Her mother was buried in a Catholic cemetery in 1870.

Prior Base-line Research Efforts

The major research efforts that attempted to include all the known Nova Scotia Gammons of that period that I have seen⁴ include those of Reverend William J. Gammon, Josiah O. Hatch, and Gregory Bishop:

1. In 1965, the Reverend William J. Gammon published his *Old Gammon Families and their Descendants*, which included a chapter on the "Canadian Branch" Gammons. His research efforts apparently spanned over fifty years and was almost solely based on correspondence with living descendants who furnished him with their family stories and various forms of family documentation in their possession. These documents included notations from a family bible extending back into the early 19th century and letters that had been written back to the early 20th century. As Rev. Gammon himself noted, these inputs were not completely consistent.
2. In the 1970s, Josiah O. Hatch revised and extended the Rev. Gammon's work based on some original research in the Nova Scotia records and on additional family correspondence.
3. In the 1990s, Gregory Bishop further revised and greatly extended the previous work based on his own extensive research in the microfilm files of the Nova Scotia Provincial Archives.

I want to make it clear that each of these researchers was acutely aware of the limitations placed on his efforts by the sparseness of solid documentary evidence available to them and none claimed to have produced definitive results. In the time of Rev. Gammon's efforts, source documentation was very hard to access and he had to rely mainly on family records and tradition. Hatch's work shows that he had access to some microfilmed records at the Nova Scotia Provincial Archives and from United States census data. Bishop had access to an even wider collection of microfilmed source documentation. But, by today's standard, access to most of these sources was very cumbersome (e.g. lack of effective indexes) and expensive (e.g. perhaps requiring a trip to Halifax).

Although the major research efforts noted above were at least in part based on the primary evidence sources available to them, these sources were usually just cited as a bibliography of sources for the genealogy as a whole and, for the most part, it not possible to associate any of their conclusions regarding the individual relationships with a specific source.

In spite of these limitations, their compilations did in general prove to be sufficiently better than anything previously published. It is not surprising then that these works have become "baselines" - in the sense that many Gammon researchers continue to have the confidence to incorporate all or part of them into their own results. Unfortunately, without source citations at the detail level, it is very difficult for a current researcher to differentiate between their firmly grounded conclusions and those conclusions that had been merely plausible speculation based on the incomplete and ambiguous evidence available at the time. Consequently, through proliferation from researcher to researcher, some of these suspect conclusions have gained an undeserved level of general acceptance along with the better grounded ones.

Focusing solely on those William Gammons of the period in question who appear in the various genealogies, the variance among the base-line researchers are apparent:

- Reverend William J. Gammon found just one - William, a son of John Gammon and Mary Ann Bissett, born 7 April 1803, who married Ann Mackensie of Edinborough Scotland. Based on a letter from a granddaughter⁵, Rev. Gammon showed several children for that William - William

⁴ I am using as the basis of this discussion a copy of Josiah O. Hatch's submission of his work to the Nova Scotia Provincial Archives on 10 Sep 1975. As part of that submission, Hatch included the "Canadian Branch" chapter of Reverend William J. Gammon's *Old Gammon Families and Their Descendants* published in 1965 that Hatch had annotated with his own corrections and comments. In February 1997, Gregory Bishop furnished me current copies of his work that I am using here. It should be noted that each of these researchers may well have revised their conclusions at some later time and thus this discussion may not reflect their final thoughts on the subject.

⁵ She identified herself to Rev. Gammon as Mrs. Martha Priscilla (Gammon) Orr, daughter of William Henry Gammon and Emilee Eliza Brodie.

Henry Gammon, born 4 Oct 1845, and Mary, Maria, Alex, and David. The author of the letter further identified her own grandmother as Ann Mackenzie and her aunt Maria as having married a Gould.

- Josiah Hatch also shows the same William, son of John Gammon and Mary Ann Bissett, with the same birth date and wife - but with no information on any spouse or children of that William. (Elsewhere, he shows a William Henry Gammon, born 4 Oct 1835 - but, contrary to Rev. Gammon, Hatch claims he is the son of Richard Gammon and Mary Wiswell.)
- Gregory Bishop has four William Gammons in this period:
 - He apparently has that same William Gammon, with the same birth date (7 Apr 1803) and wife (as "Eliza or Ann") as does the Rev. Gammon and Hatch. But, contrary to both of them, Bishop shows his parents as Richard Gammon and Mary Wiswell. He shows this William's children to be Eliza Ann, Isabel, John Alexander, Annie, Mary Jane, Maria Elizabeth, Agnes, Sarah Jane, Abbie, William Henry (born 8 Oct 1844, however), and Harriett. Among the spouses listed for these children are "___ Allen" for the daughter Annie and "___ Gould" for the daughter Maria Elizabeth.
 - He also has a William Alexander Gammon, son of John Gammon and Mary Ann Bissett, with the identical 7 Apr 1803 birthdate. That second William Alexander Gammon is shown as married to Anna Barbara Himmelman and having children Angelina (Annie), John Alexander, Mary Jane, Maria Elizabeth, Agnes, Sarah Jane, David, William Alexander, and Abbie - many of which incongruously appear to be the same as the children of his first William Gammon. The children with names in common in these two sets of children (i.e. John Alexander, Mary Jane, Maria Elizabeth, Sarah Jane, and Abbie) are shown by Bishop as having similar birth dates and spouses. Among the spouses listed for the children in this family are "Allen ___" for daughter Angelina and "Gould and/or James T. Wilson" for daughter Maria Elizabeth.
 - The third William is shown as born circa 1760, married to Mary Hall, a brother to both the John and Richard Gammon above. The children of whom Bishop offered explicit information were William, George Archibald Hall, Joseph, James, Matthew, Frances, and Margaret.
 - Bishop's last William is the son of the above William, shown as born circa 1801. He is said by Bishop to have married Mary Webber and had the children Julianna, Eliza, Christopher, and James. This William is claimed by Bishop to have settled ultimately in Guysborough County.

Primary Relevant Evidence

Over the past decade or so, many information sources have become increasingly accessible to a wider range of genealogy researchers. Gary Gibson's research in the early Methodists of the Dartmouth area of Halifax County has added documentation from the local Methodist Church files and the Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Museum that was relevant to the genealogy of the Lawrencetown - Cole Harbour Gammon families. The Mormon Family History Library has made available through its world-wide system of branches many of the microfilms of records that previously were only accessible at the Nova Scotia Provincial Archives (now the Nova Scotia Archives and Record Management agency) at Halifax. With the advent of the internet, many additional transcriptions of source documents from various local sources have been made readily available and communications among researchers have been greatly facilitated.

There are many primary sources now available that can help identify the individual William Gammons and associate them with their spouses and children. Over the years in my research on the Bissett family and its

related families, I have collected much evidence that is pertinent to the early Nova Scotia Gammons. It should be noted that this collection of evidence is by no means comprehensive - at least partial due to the fact that my primary research focus has concentrated only on those Gammons who are the descendants of John Gammon and Mary Ann Bissett of Lawrentown. For the most part, I have only extended my Gammon related research so as to be able to distinguish these Gammons from the many other branches.

I have limited the following references to those to which I have access and are either directly pertinent to identifying to one of the candidate Williams and their possible spouses or to associating them with their children. Other evidence in my possession that may be of secondary value in confirming identities and relationships is not explicitly listed here, but may be referred to in passing in the analysis sections.

1. Kim Stevens' transcription of the baptism records at St. Paul's Anglican in Halifax.
 - a. For the parents identified as "William and Mary", there are baptisms of:
 - i. William, baptized on 14 Oct 1791.
 - ii. John, baptized on 9 Sep 1793.
 - iii. George Archibald Hall, baptized on 16 Nov 1795.
 - iv. Mary Ann, baptized on 19 Mar 1803.
 - v. Joseph, baptized on 1 May 1806.
 - vi. Ann, baptized on 18 May 1808.
 - vii. Matthew, baptized on 1 May 1811.
 - b. For the parents identified as "William and Hannah B., Lawrencetown farmer", there is the baptism of William Alexander, baptized on 14 May 1844.
 - c. For the parents identified as Martha Gammon and Thomas Ring, the baptism of William Gammon, baptised in Nov 1753 (identified as illegitimate).
2. Kim Steven's transcription of the church records of Christ Church Anglican in Dartmouth and associated chapels reveals:
 - a. For the parents identified as "William and Mary", there is the baptism of:
 - i. Robert, baptized on 22 Jul 1794 (birth date of Feb 1793).
 - b. For the parents identified as "William Alex. and Anna Barbara", there are the baptisms of:
 - i. Amelia, baptized on 20 Mar 1839 (birth date of 27 Jan 1839) - father is shown as "Lawrencetown farmer".
 - ii. Charles Alexander, baptized on 20 Mar 1841 (birth date of 25 Oct 1840) - father is shown as "Lawrencetown farmer".
 - iii. Harriet Sophia, baptized on 22 Apr 1859 (birth date of 5 Jun 1847) - father is shown as "Dartmouth labourer".
3. Terrence Punch's *Religious Marriages in Halifax 1768 - 1841, From Original Sources*. Marriages are shown for:
 - a. William Gammon, batchelor, and Mary Hall, spinster, at St. Paul's Anglican on 9 Dec 1789.
 - b. William Gammon, status unspecified, and Eliza McKenzie, status unspecified, at Brunswick Street Methodist on 14 Oct 1826.
4. Gary Gibson's survey of "Information/Vital Statistics About William Gammon". Baptisms from the Brunswick Street Methodist files are shown for: