

THE LOYALIST SCIDMORES

By Brian McConnell, UE*

In the course of recent research I discovered two Loyalist Scidmores who lost their lives fighting on the side of the British in battles on two different continents and for whom there are no marked graves. This was the case with Samuel Scidmore born in Suffolk County, New York and Edwin Sanford Scidmore of Cumberland County, Nova Scotia. Nonetheless, one was remembered after his death in an old document, a framed Roll of Honour, which I saved from destruction.

Samuel Scidmore was born at Huntingdon, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York by 1730 and killed in the Battle of Eutaw Springs in South Carolina on September 13, 1781. He was serving in Captain Robert Drummond's Company of the 3rd Battalion of the New Jersey Volunteers and appeared present at Musters taken between 24 February and 24 June, 1781 in Ninety – Six District of South Carolina. (1) No record of his grave remains.

When the American Revolution ended some Scidmores, whose surname also could be spelled Skidmore, left by ship from New York for New Brunswick. In particular these included Whitehead Skidmore, Sr. and his family from Queens County, New York. They occupied lands in Queen's County, New Brunswick, however, eventually returned to New York. Other Skidmores settled in Nova Scotia who arrived from England. (2)

On June 26, 1917 Private Edwin Sanford Scidmore was killed in action in Vimy, France. He was born on December 29, 1885 at Pugwash Junction, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia and enlisted in the 193rd Battalion, Nova Scotia Highlanders on April 10, 1916 at Oxford, Nova Scotia. Before enlistment he was a locomotive fireman. His parents were Frederick and Mary Skidmore. (3)

Private Scidmore is remembered on the Vimy Memorial in France which has inscribed on it the names of 11,285 Canadian soldiers killed in France whose final resting place is unknown. As well his name is included on the gravestone for his parents in New Canaan Cemetery, Cumberland County, Nova Scotia. His brother, John, who died in 1918 of pneumonia, is also on the family gravestone.

After the conclusion of World War I, a Roll of Honour was prepared on which the name of Private Scidmore appears. It also mentioned the names of five other soldiers from Nova Scotia who served. Their names were: Orrington Stephen Marsh, W. Jollymore, A. Stewart, Francis Duncan Dodsworth, and A. Harris. A friend sent me a photo of it he had seen and I contacted the person who had it in his possession and arranged to meet. At our meeting he indicated he did not know what he would do with it if I had not contacted him. He did not understand the meaning of the Roll of Honour. One of the names of it had a similar spelling to his surname but there was no known connection. No one else knew it had any significance nor had expressed any interest. It was in danger of becoming a part of Canadian history that was forgotten, lost or destroyed.



All men listed on the Roll of Honour were members of the Loyal Orange Lodge in Nova Scotia. Similar Rolls of Honour were prepared for other members. When they were prepared a few years after WWI they were placed on the walls of lodge or community halls, however, over the years as these buildings have closed or been repurposed the Rolls were often removed then lost or destroyed.

Notes:

*This article was prepared by Brian McConnell, UE, Past President of the NS Branch of the UELAC. He is also a member of the Royal Canadian Legion. Some of his relatives who fought in France during World War I were members of the Orange Lodge. To contact him please email brianm564@gmail.com

(1) "The Loyalists Skidmores of Essex County, New Jersey", by Warren Skidmore, accessed on December 10, 2024 at

<https://www.skidmorefamilyhistory.com/THE%20LOYALIST%20SKIDMORES%20OF%20ESSEX%20COUNTY.pdf>

(2) "Thomas Skidmore (Scudamore) 1605 – 1684, of Westerleigh, Gloucestershire and Fairfield, Connecticut, his ancestors and descendants to the ninth generation" by Warren Skidmore, accessed on December 10, 2024 at

<https://www.skidmorefamilyhistory.com/Westerleigh%20book,%20revised%202010.pdf>

(3) Ancestry.com. *Canada, World War I CEF Attestation Papers, 1914-1918* [database on-line].