

From The Settlement of Prince Edward County by Nick and Helma Mika. Transcribed here by Linda Herman

Pioneers of Prince Edward County
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

ICHABOD BOWERMAN

1721-1792.

The Bowerman family came to Prince Edward County in 1792. Within the county, particularly in the Bloomfield area, the family grew quickly. The Bowerman history has been traced back to England in the fifteenth century. In the eighteenth century the Bowermans suffered double taxation because of their following of the Quaker religion. The English were taxed firstly for the Church of England and then for any other church, such as the Quaker Society of Friends, which they supported. The lure of freedom from religious persecution and the offer of free or inexpensive land probably led some of the Bowermans to North America in the 1700s.

Icabod (or Ichabod) Bowerman, who was born in Falmouth, England in 1721, moved to Dutchess County, New York and lived there until his death in 1791. Many of his children and later descendants, however, became settlers of Prince Edward County. Icabod was married twice, and he became the father of twenty children. In 1744 he married Lydia Mott, and they had six children. He married Jane Richmond in 1757, and they produced fourteen children. After Icabod's death, Jane and thirteen of the children traveled up the Hudson River, by boat, to arrive in Prince Edward County in 1792. The Bowermans, being Quakers, did not fight in the American Revolution and were not part of the influx of United Empire Loyalists who came to Canada in the eighteenth century. Jane Bowerman and her children were probably given the incentive to move to Prince Edward County by Governor Simcoe's Proclamation which offered free land to suitable settlers.

One of the daughters to come to Prince Edward County, with Jane Bowerman, was Lydia. Lydia Bowerman married Cornelius Blount and settled in Hallowell.

Jonathon was born to Icabod and Jane Bowerman, in Dutchess County, New York, on Aug 10, 1769. He was twenty-three years old when he moved to Prince Edward County with his mother and some of his brothers and sisters. Jonathon married Sarah Vincent and settled in Bloomfield, where he built the area's first sawmill. Jonathon and Sarah has seven children: Icabod Jr., John I., Thomas, Cornelius, Abigail, Deborah, and Helen. Deborah married Thomas Brown, and they settled in Bloomfield. Cornelius and his wife, Mary Morgan, also resided in Bloomfield.

Cornelius Bowerman, who was born in Bloomfield in 1799, became a minister in the Society of Friends. Cornelius and Mary raised twelve children: Deborah, Hannah, John, Icabod, Daniel M., Leonard, Thomas M., Sarah C., Jane, Bennett, Joseph and Phoebe. Cornelius died in his hometown on July 7, 1780, and both he and his wife were buried in the Friends Cemetery in East Bloomfield. Their son Leonard, and his wife, Barbara Lambert, settled in Cherry Valley, while Phoebe and her husband, David Gilmore, moved to Picton. Bennett and his bride, Mary Smith, lived in Bloomfield for a few years but later moved to Victoria, British Columbia. Joseph Bowerman married Melissa Spafford and remained in Bloomfield.

Elwood Bowerman, the son of Joseph and Melissa, served as a minister until his death at an early age.

Most of the Prince Edward County Bowermans settled along what is now known as Bloomfield Road. With their strong beliefs in the Society of Friends, they also brought to the county a family-oriented population.