

# Did You Know...

While Major Edward Jessup is often credited with the founding of Prescott, some may not know it was his daughter-in-law Susannah Jessup who was the person who turned Prescott into what it is today. Born in 1776, she was the daughter of United Empire Loyalist Simeon Covell. She married Edward Jessup II in 1799. She and Edward had seven children between 1801 and 1813.

After laying out town lots in a survey in 1810 on land he had been granted by King George III, Edward Jessup I started selling land to newly arrived immigrants to Upper Canada who were looking to settle in a town rather than on a farm. In a couple of years, as his health declined, Edward I gave the unsold town lots to his son Edward Jessup II. Edward II sold plots up until his premature death in 1815 at the age of 49. His will left all his land to his wife in trust for the support of their seven children.

Susannah immediately began selling and quickly found success in the period following the war of 1812 when the town grew rapidly. Development spread along Water and King Streets and up the side streets which became residential areas.

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During her 30 years as a land developer, she continued developing the town on the land the Jessup's had been granted between East and West Streets. Susannah had also inherited the land between West Street and the western limits of the town from her father and started selling lots in the area closer to the river. In this time, she also granted land to church congregations and land to set up a school and post office to serve the needs of ever-growing community. Towards the end of her life her son, Hamilton Dibble Jessup, took over the family business in addition to his activities as a doctor, politician, and soldier. Some of these deeds still exist today at can be found on display at the Prescott Museum.

Susannah lived an active life until near the end, dying on May 13th, 1846. A woman who had the reputation for being a sharp businesswoman in a time when it was a man's world, Susannah's diligence and persistence resulted in the success of carrying out her late husbands wishes. Without the dedication of Susannah Jessup, Prescott would not be the town that it is today.

You can learn more about Prescott's founding family at the Prescott Museum and Visitor Centre at 202 King Street West. Open Wed-Sat 11-5.