

One woman's work

March 18, 2013 by Andrew Oland

It is my honour to introduce you to my great-great-great-great grandmother, Susannah Woodhouse (Culverwell) Oland. Her contribution to the Moosehead beer we enjoy today cannot be overstated. Simply put: she made it all happen.

She and her nine children left England in March 1865, joining her husband John James Dunn Oland in Nova Scotia a month later. Family history doesn't paint John as a man who enjoyed much success in his career, and Susannah had to work hard to keep everything together.

When the opportunity to own a business – a small brewery on the Dartmouth shore – came about, she knew it was the chance they needed. The papers were signed October 1, 1867 – the year of Canada's Confederation. Even though the company was incorporated as James Oland and Son, there is little doubt that Susannah was the engine behind its success.

You see, in those days – as it had been for hundreds of years – beer was a household staple. People drank it at every meal. More often than not, it was made by the women in the family, using recipes passed down through the generations. Susannah was no exception, and started out using her long-memorized recipe for October brown ale. She evolved the recipe over time, creating a combination of beers: a sparkling amber ale; a stout; and a darker ale made with top-fermenting ale yeast.

Her sons learned the brewing process from her, and as the brewery found its feet – renamed as S. Oland, Sons and Co. – Susannah found hers as an early female entrepreneur.

She is a hugely influential figure in our family's history – with the power to inspire us all today.

Source: Moosehead Beer Academy <http://www.mooseheadbeeracademy.com/one-womans-work/>