

## Forbes Murder- Written by Alan Norton

### Prudence & Alex Forbes

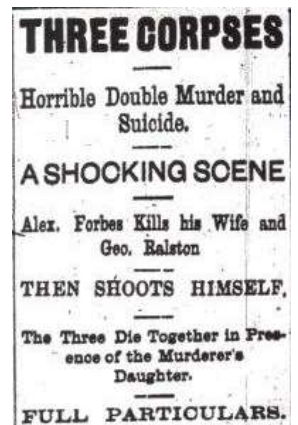


Prudence Norton 1843-1882 was the 4th of eight children of John Norton & Elizabeth Clark of Tapleystown, Saltfleet Twp., Wentworth Co. Three of her siblings, Louisa, Hiram and Demarius married Wilkinson siblings of Palermo, Trafalgar Twp. Halton Co. They were Robert, Elizabeth and James "Andy" respectively. It is family lore that Hiram Norton, the two times great grandfather of the author Alan Norton, was a hired hand of Francis Wilkinson and Clarissa Simons and that is how he met their daughter Elizabeth. They married in 1867. How he got to be in Palermo is not known, a distance of 35 kilometres. Interestingly though, Robert W and Louisa N married in 1865. So who actually first made the Wilkinson-Norton connection and where is open to speculation. But obviously there was a close relationship between the two families, regardless of the distance which likely took 3 or 4 hours by horseback.

Prudence, the 4th Norton to be connected to Palermo, was married to Alex Forbes about 1864 in Hamilton, Canada West. Very little was known of Prudence's life however, for today's family historians. This all changed very dramatically in October of 2009 thanks to the author's fourth cousin, Catherine Richards of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She was able to determine that a Prudence Forbes had been killed in Hamilton, Ontario in June of 1882. Further investigation in the Hamilton Spectator archives by Alan Norton at Burlington Library, showed that she had been shot to death by her husband Alex Forbes. He also murdered Prudence's employer George Ralston before taking his own life. The date was 21 June 1882.

From the first article on 22 June 1882 it became immediately apparent that this was Prudence Norton, sister of Louisa, Hiram and Demarius. As stated in the newspaper, Prudence's father John Norton had been visiting her only an hour before and while on his way home to Tapleystown was overtaken at Bartonville by someone on horseback with the horrible news that his daughter had been shot and killed.

Over the course of three days, in detail to rival today's sensationalist reporting, the Hamilton Spectator carried the story. On Thursday 22 June 1882 the headline was: "THREE CORPSES. Horrible Double Murder and Suicide. A SHOCKING SCENE.



In reading the articles, Alan Norton was able to confirm Prudence's family lineage and find information pertaining to herself and her children.

- . Prudence was the daughter of John Norton of Tapleystown and had a sister connected with Walker's confectionary store on King Street west.
- . Alexander "Sandy" Forbes was the son of Alexander Forbes Sr. and lived with his father in Hamilton until he married Prudence Norton.
- . After marriage, Forbes and Prudence removed to Palermo and carried on a potash factory, which they later sold and moved to the USA.
- . Prudence and Alex Forbes had lived in Pittsburgh and Erie, Pennsylvania.
- . Prudence and her children had left their home in Allegheny, New York as a result of her husband Alexander Forbes' continued drinking and ill treatment.
- . She had been separated from her husband for about six years at the time of the killings.