

ACL

November 17, 1966

Mr. Ronald Lane,  
Lane's Motel,  
Liverpool, N.S.

Dear Mr. Lane:

Here briefly are the facts about Joseph Barss Sr., who built your house, and his oldest son Joseph Jr., who lived in it for many years.

Joseph Barss Sr. came to Liverpool as a boy of eleven, with his widowed mother and two uncles, in 1761. He became a sea captain, and in 1773 married Elizabeth Crowell, daughter of a Liverpool proprietor. He built a small house on a knoll in the marsh east of the present Bristol Avenue; and the stone-walled cellar may still be seen, not far from the railway "Y" track.

During the American Revolution, while on a peaceful voyage from the West Indies to Newfoundland, he was captured by an American privateer. His ship and cargo were confiscated, and he was thrown into prison, from which he escaped after a year. He returned home penniless. By hard work and skill he restored his position, and by 1798 he was <sup>able</sup> to build what was then one of the largest homes in Liverpool. This is the house which now forms part of your motel. The site was then known as Dean's Point, and the house faced over a slope of lawn and garden towards the river. It had twelve large chambers, each with a fireplace, and there was an all containing the kitchen, with a large fireplace and brick ovens.

There was no bridge across the river at Liverpool then. A boat ferry crossed from the foot of Market Street to Dean's Point.

In 1793 began the long war with France, and Joseph Barss Sr. suffered heavy losses from French warships and privateers while engaged in his West Indian trade. Consequently he and other Liverpool merchants fitted out privateers to attack French and Spanish commerce in the Caribbean Sea. Joseph Barss Jr., at the age of 23, commanded one of these privateers, the "Lord Spencer". She was lost on a reef off the Spanish Main (the present coast of Venezuela) in the year 1800, but Barss and his crew were rescued by another Nova Scotia privateer and returned home safely. In 1801 Captain Barss Jr. commanded the famous Liverpool privateer "Rover" on a cruise to the Caribbean Sea, but for the next eleven years he seems to have sailed on merchant voyages.

In 1812, when the United States declared war on Britain and sent a swarm of privateers to attack British shipping in the North Atlantic, Capt Joseph Barss Jr. took command of a small Liverpool privateer, the schooner "Liverpool Packet". Within the next year he made her famous and himself rich, capturing 33 American ships, mostly off Boston and Salem, and getting them safely home to Nova Scotia. In the summer of 1813 the "Liverpool Packet" fought a losing battle with a larger and better armed American privateer, and Captain Barss and the other survivors were taken to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, as prisoners of war. Eventually Barss got his freedom in an exchange of prisoners, but in 1814 he was captured again while sailing on a merchant voyage. He was released when news of peace reached the United States early in the year 1815.

About the year 1803 Captain Joseph Barss Jr. had married Olivia, daughter of Judge Elisha DeWolfe, of Wolfville, N.S. He and his wife lived in the house on Dean's Point, with his father. In 1816 a wandering Irish thief named Hurly broke into the house at night, stole a variety of valuable goods and money, and passed it to his companions. Captain Barss Jr. awakened, pursued Hurly to the river bank, and caught him. Most of the stolen goods were recovered, and at

a trial in Liverpool in ~~September~~ July 1817, Hurly was sentenced to death by hanging. That same summer (1817) Captain Barsz Jr. decided to remove with his family to Kentville, where he had bought a large farm. The hardships of an adventurous life had affected his health, however, and he died at Oak Grove Farm, Kentville, on August 3, 1824, in his 49th year.

His father, Joseph Sr., died in Liverpool in August 1826, leaving his estate to his surviving sons John and James, and his two daughters.

Sincerely,