

## Teacher Fighter Writer Reverend

Over the years, many people left their mark on the *Summerside Journal* (and later the *Journal-Pioneer*). While history remembers many of their names, such as Joseph Bertram and William A. Brennan, and more recently John “The Realm” McNeill, others have suffered the misfortune of falling into relative obscurity. Therefore, this month’s article is dedicated to one such individual. Educator, soldier, editor, and Methodist minister: meet the multi-faceted David Hickey.

Hailing from Indian River, Hickey was the fifth child born to parents James and Elizabeth, in August of 1843. Likely educated at his local schoolhouse, he evidently displayed a high scholastic aptitude and a penchant for learning. By the early 1860s, he was employed as a schoolteacher on the Island, a vocation which at that time offered a lot of work for little pay -- perhaps that’s why he traded it in for a rifle, a uniform, and the blood-stained battlefields of the American Civil War.

Hickey mustered into the 2nd Massachusetts Heavy Artillery in July of 1864 under the name of David H. Moreton. Why the alias is anyone’s guess; in any event, hostilities were well underway by that time and had taken a decided turn in favour of the Union following its victory at Gettysburg the previous July. Hickey and the 2nd Massachusetts Heavies found themselves embarking for North Carolina where the regiment was involved in a number of engagements, notably the Battle of Wyse Fork.

After mustering out in September of 1865, Hickey found his way back to the Island where he resumed his career as a teacher at the Western School. In 1870, he was approached by Joseph Bertram about joining the editorial staff of the *Journal*, and accepted the position of associate editor. The timing was interesting, as escalating tensions in Europe between France and Prussia finally boiled over that July into open conflict. It was news around the world, including Prince Edward Island; therefore, it was only natural that the *Journal* provide some coverage, and who better to do so than an educated ex-soldier? A good idea in theory; however, from a public relations perspective, it probably wasn’t Bertram’s best decision.

For reasons unknown, Hickey had developed an intense dislike for several of his German comrades during his days spent slogging it as a private in North Carolina; what’s more, he seemed unable to leave those feelings behind upon his return to civilian life. And that was a problem. When it came to the Franco-Prussian War, nearly everyone supported the Prussians, and considered the French to be aggressors - everyone that is, except David Hickey.

Although the Franco-Prussian War was relatively short, it lasted long enough for Hickey’s one-sided, biased, anti-Germanic views to incur mass condemnation, spearheaded by the rival *Summerside Progress*. Whether it was simply coincidence, or a direct result of his editorials, he left the Island shortly after and entered the Methodist ministry. He married Annie Lockhart of Nova Scotia, and by 1881 was resident in Cape Breton with two sons, Edwin and

Francis. Two more children, Florence and Harold, were born by 1885, and by 1901 the family had relocated down the coast to Liverpool. Another move fifteen years later would see them in Massachusetts, where Hickey continued his religious work in a career spanning five decades.

In 1938, David Hickey died at the ripened age of 95, having lived out the final years of his life with his son Harold in Boston. A brief death notice published the day of his passing contains no reference to his one-time incarnation as a journalist.