

# Rev. Henry Loveall



It is no surprise to find, among the branches of our family tree, several relatives who served as pastors or ministers. But none did so as infamously as Rev. Henry Loveall, an 8th great-grandfather of my niece's husband.

Born in England in 1694, he came to America in 1729 and soon thereafter began offering his services behind the pulpit as a Baptist minister. From all accounts, he was known as being an accomplished orator and preacher. What wasn't known is that he had fled his home in Cambridge, England in order to escape prosecution over an "inexcusable immorality." Fortunately for him, a congregation in Piscataway NJ was in need of a replacement for their aging pastor and quickly chose to ordain Loveall as their minister despite suggestions to have him first enter into a trial period. They learned to rue that decision for not only did they discover that Loveall's real name was actually Desolate Baker but that he had changed his name to obscure a number of indiscretions, including a bigamous second marriage, sexual liaisons with slaves and Indians, and the fact that he was perhaps an escaped convict.

Even though the Piscataway church forbade him from administering the holy ordinances and soon excommunicated him from their church, he traveled to other parts preaching to Baptists up and down the eastern seaboard and, as far as the records show, apparently never changed his nefarious ways. He became the first pastor of the Chestnut Ridge church in Baltimore MD (pictured above) in 1742. Four years later he was

“forced to resign.”

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