Ferry Crossings at Port Levi, 1853

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# Quebec Heritage News

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## Borderlander

The Career of Amos Lay

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The Private Journal of Henry Joseph Martin

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover photo: James Duncan, "Modern Street View of Point Levi, and Quebec in the distance," 1874. McCord Museum, 17260.

EDITOR'S DESK

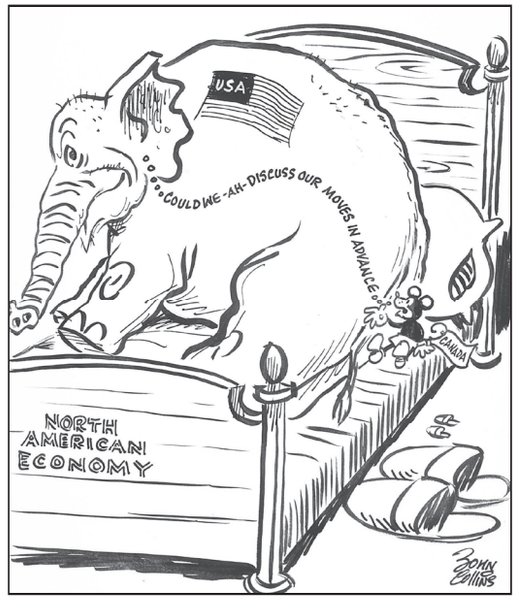
# *Altered States*

by Rod MacLeod

We are definitely living through interesting times (as the Chinese say), with the world turned upside down (as 1640s English Civil War balladeers sang) and a steady dollop of wonders from Looking Glass Land (says Alice). The lion is definitely *not* lying down with the lamb. For that matter, all the techniques we have used for decades when sleeping with the proverbial elephant are now out the window. And it is quite likely that all this is only going to get more so – in fact, it may already be more so by the time you read this.

For Canadians, perhaps the weirdest thing going on is that out of the blue we are almost all on the same political page. Sure, there is still *politics*, but in terms of policy we have rallied in opposition to an outside threat, almost as if we were all in some alien invasion movie. The alien in this case is a deranged American president bent on attacking his closest allies, with Canada tightly in his crosshairs. His oft-stated objective is to make Canada the 51st American state.

Way, way back in the simpler olden days when I wrote the first draft of this article (January) all this seemed a bad joke, one of a long line of inanities the president was forever spewing out to get a laugh at rallies. But before long it became clear that he was serious – or at least serious enough to start making the pitch, using flashy language worthy of a used car salesman. Becoming the 51st American state would bring enormous benefits to Canada, he claimed, including lower taxes and not having to worry about things like paying for our military or guarding our borders. I guess it would also allow health insurance companies to cash in big time. And it would bring an end to the "brain drain," since there would be no place for brains to drain to. Admittedly, by the same token, the union would be tough on anyone seeking to dodge the draft in the event of America going to war – but then, of course, America will not go to war since the new administration is staunchly isolationist. Except for hostile foreign takeovers, that is. Canada would be absorbed into Fortress America, and we could all get some sleep, safe behind those sturdy walls. We would still be sleeping with an elephant, but the bed would be bigger.




These arguments have not worked in large part because the president does not understand the people he is trying to woo. He talks as if joining the United States was a prospect that had never occurred to us (Annexation Manifesto, anyone?), and he is clearly oblivious to the considerable time we have spent over the last two centuries exploring what it is to be Canadian. Even the suggestion that Canada should join as a single entity rankles, as it assumes we are a vast snowy land of moose-hugging eh-sayers, rather than a jealously guarded archipelago of cultures represented by no less than thirteen separate legislative bodies. For Canadians to do anything as a whole is rare; to choose to become something else would be rarer still.

Given his monolithic view of Canada, the president has obviously given no thought at all to the distinct society that is Quebec, and does not realize that union would mean the addition of eight million Francophones. Mind you, they might not stay Francophone long. Quebec nationalists always point to Louisiana as an example of what could happen to French culture without constant vigilance, so the prospect of being rolled into that great melting pot with significantly less autonomy than Louisiana enjoys would be a nightmare within a nightmare. Quebec has passed a great deal of legislation to prevent the linguistic apostasy that beset Louisiana, but in the United States, with its venerated constitution and unalterable Bill of Rights, these laws could not be maintained. The French language would inevitably wither – and do so without the exotic charms and sultry climate of Bourbon Street to keep the flame alive.

By this reasoning, it could be argued that Canada's joining the United States would make life much more comfortable for Quebec Anglos. The "Bonjour-Hi" controversy would be settled solidly in favour of "Hi." English signs would dominate our streets again; Best Buy and Second Cup would not have to explain what they do in French, and "maisons publiques" could go back to being simple pubs. McGill University would regain its former status as the Harvard of the North and could blissfully abandon the current lip-service to offering instruction in French. English CEGEPs could rehire the faculty they have had to let go over the past year or so because of the increased French course requirement. School boards would be reestablished everywhere – and, if we adopted the American model, they would cease to provoke yawns from the populace and become instead venues for heated arguments, even screaming and fisticuffs, among parents,

*John Collins, "The Elephant and the Mouse," c.1963. McCord Museum, M965.199.9182.*

officials and police. Said officials, including teachers, could openly display symbols of their faith, such as crosses and hijabs, as protected by the First Amendment, although there would be no question of a school itself displaying such symbols; that would be a clear violation of the concept of neutrality as it has been widely understood for generations throughout most of North America. Similarly, our stop signs would revert to saying "stop," just as they do in most of the world.

But despite the irritation many of us feel over the pettiness of language legislation in this province, I'd venture to say that very few Anglos would want to see the inevitable destruction of Francophone culture that joining the United States would provoke. Union would effectively mean setting Quebec's linguistic clock back half a century or more. Canada's too, for that matter. It would be throwing the bicultural baby out with the bureaucratic bathwater. Besides, in the 51st state there would be very little in the way of public support for culture or heritage; there might be funding from the kinds of private bodies that support Vermont Public Radio et al, but that is hardly the same. Moreover, tuition at Quebec universities (both English ones, like McGill, and very nearly English ones, like the future UQAM) would skyrocket. This lack of public funding would mean that a great many of our community organizations would fold – including those supported by federal minority language programs.

Quebec politicians have been as critical of the president's threat as those of other provinces, but some nationalist pundits have taken it as an opportunity to criticize Canada. One view is that Canada has no business denouncing attacks on its sovereignty when historically it has shown so little regard for Quebec's own aspirations of self-determination. This argument begins with the assumption that the Canada-Quebec relationship is entirely imperialist in nature, positing Confederation, never mind the Conquest, as a form of hostile takeover akin to what the president is proposing or, say, what Russia is doing to Ukraine. Hyperbole aside, Canada does arguably have a history of imperialism, certainly of collaboration with an imperialist agenda – but the argument works a lot better when it concerns Indigenous populations, who of course do not figure in nationalist diatribes. As a nation (i.e., since Confederation), Canada has not taken over the territory of any other sovereign nation (leaving aside the complicated issue of First Nations) – not even the tiny islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, which sit there off the coast of Newfoundland practically daring us to invade.

The nastier position taken by some pundits is that Canada has no reason to oppose joining the United States because it is not a real country. This argument resuscitates the old trope that Canada has always primarily defined itself by not being American, beginning with the Loyalists and continuing through 1960s Canadian nationalism. While true enough in an obvious sort of way, this trope overlooks a couple of subtler realities. First of all, defining identity is not an exact science (despite what much essentialist discourse these days would suggest), nor does identity exist outside our efforts to define it. Pundits argue that Canada is not a real country because its identity was an artificial creation, put together in a Frankenstein lab – or rather in a series of labs, reflecting the preoccupations of different eras: the British Empire before the Second World War, Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the 1960s, and more recently the embrace of (a huge sin in Quebec nationalist parlance) multiculturalism. But there is nothing of substance there, according to pundits: "Canada" is just smoke and mirrors, the little man turning knobs behind the Wizard's screen in Oz. Again, all true enough in a certain light – but when was identity ever something that did not depend on mythology? Most often, identity is not an entirely artificial creation; rather, it derives from all the stories we have told ourselves over generations that have helped us make sense of the world and our place in it. Mythology is not falsehood, but rather the underpinning of being human.

Pundits would have it otherwise. By contrast to Canadians, "les Québécois, de leur côté, sont un vrai peuple," declares the ever-acerbic Mathieu Bock-Côté (*Journal de Montréal*, January 8, 2025) in an article that is positively gleeful regarding the American president's threats. Bock-Côté's comparison is unfair, as he is talking apples and oranges: on the one hand a vast country composed of people from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds, and on the other a single ethnic group – whose members inevitably bristle if you call them that, but so be it. His statement is also confusing, since he uses the label "Québécois" to describe this "vrai peuple," even though that term might be argued to describe all the province's citizens, whose claim to "people" status is surely exactly the same as Canadians'. But most of all, the statement is disingenuous, since it assumes that this "vrai peuple" exists without recourse to mythology, and has an easily definable identity. It should come as no surprise that Quebec nationalists would make such an assumption, given how unquestioningly they embrace so-called core values such as secularism, feminism, and that peculiar construction known as interculturalism – all qualities that would have mystified their nationalist grandparents. Apparently, when it comes to culture and values (both tricky terms to define in any context), what is sauce for the Canada goose is not sauce for the Quebec gander. One might even argue that the identity enjoyed by this "vrai peuple" has taken shape over the generations largely in opposition to what is "English" – both the language and whatever is understood by its culture.

Like the American president, pundits such as Bock-Côté have no regard for what makes others tick. People everywhere are the products of the places they live, the languages they speak, the traditions they have absorbed, the truths they have been taught. I myself feel no need to describe all this in terms of "identity," and I certainly do not believe in "national identity," but the way people find meaning in such concepts is fascinating. A sense of difference is always worthy of study and respect. The same is true at the provincial level: British Columbia is not Alberta, which is not Ontario, which is not Nova Scotia or Newfoundland or Nunavut – and certainly is not Quebec. Both the president and the pundits should remember this as they paint so much of Canada in undistinguished shades of gray.

And, heck, could there be a more mythologized and haphazardly

concocted bunch than Quebec Anglophones? I don't think anyone would define Anglos as a people, and many question whether we ought to be considered a *community* (the Minister of Culture and Communications once did so to my face), but let the latter term stand. Once upon a time, Anglophones (as they are now understood) had next to nothing in common, not even the English language, but they became a *community* with the realization that they were not Francophone. In the battle to carve out a space as a linguistic minority, Anglophones acquired something at least akin to an identity. Our existence depends on our relationship with the majority culture, just as, in so many ways, the identity of the majority depends on its relationship with us. Anglophones would have so much to lose were Canada to join the United States – or any other scenario that would result in the Louisianification of Quebec, the decline of the French language, and even the loss of those values that many of us do *not* hold dear, even as we acknowledge their symbolic importance for the majority.

In the meantime, we should keep standing on guard. And for criminy's sake, let's stop sleeping with that elephant. We're better than that.

# Captain Holman Hunts for Gold

## by Michael Webb

*I have spent the past decade undertaking ancestral research, and it was while researching my great-great-grandfather, Josiah Holman (1821-93), that I discovered he had written a journal during one of his many mining ventures. While the information written in the journal is historically correct, in many instances I have triangulated dates and places to check for accuracy. Any assumptions are deduced from information sourced and gathered through research as an adjunct to create the narrative. Passages from Captain Holman's journal have, where appropriate, been added in italics to the story.*

*I am keen to make contact with publishers who might be interested in printing the full unedited version of this small, somewhat unknown piece of Canadian history.*


# The Chaudière River and Mount Megantic

In the summer of 1853, Josiah Holman had journeyed along numerous tributaries of the Eastern Townships' St. Francis River, and then explored the Leeds area, searching for potential gold deposits. He now turned his attention to his scheduled meeting with Alexander Tilloch Galt, secretary of the British American Land Company (BALC), in Quebec City on September 27.

As always, finding transport was a challenge, but after some searching Holman was lucky enough to secure a cart to take him the 30 miles to Point Levi (Pointe Lévis). Having checked the ferry times, he arranged with the carter to meet him back at the same spot at 8 o'clock in two days' time. He crossed the St. Lawrence on the ferry and checked into St. George's Hotel, run by Macrow & Son, on St. Peter Street in Quebec's Lower Town. The following morning, he climbed to the Upper Town for his appointment at the Swords Hotel, on the corner of Haldimand and St. Louis Streets, but was informed that Galt was busy in meetings.

Holman returned in the late afternoon and, while waiting, was introduced to Charles Bischoff.

> *I saw Mr Bischoff (the BAL Co Solicitor in London) and had some conversation with him respecting our explorations for Minerals in this country. He kindly informed me that he would get a letter from some Gentlemen of Quebec for me to inspect a Mountain said to contain a great quantity of Iron Ores situated near Belville in Upper Canada. This inspection must not interfere with my present engagement – and I am to have a fee for the same.*

Galt eventually received the two men, and together they discussed Holman's progress and his future plans for exploration.

Galt was in possession of a letter, dated August 16, 1853, from James Bruce, Earl of Elgin and current Governor General of the Province of Canada, addressed to Henry Pelham-Clinton, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. Bruce wrote:

> *Of these Districts, the one which I first visited lies to the south of the St. Lawrence at a distance of about 60 miles from Quebec. The discovery of gold at various points within it, and more particularly in the beds and banks of some of the smaller streams which fall into the river Chaudière, has attracted attention to it of late years. The geological formation in which these discoveries have been made is held to be a prolongation of the Green Mountains of Vermont, and its strata bear*

*Detail from Colton's* Atlas of the World, *Vol 1, New York, 1855.*

*a close analogy to those that run through Virginia, the Carolinas, and other Southern States, in which gold has been found at intervals in veins and alluvial deposits.*

*The gold workings in this District have been hitherto conducted on a very small scale by companies employing hired labour, and for obvious reasons it is difficult, under such circumstances, to ascertain what may have been the amount of the actual yield. The encouragement which the companies have met with is at any rate such as to induce them, after the experience of two or three years, to continue their operations. I was unable to visit the most productive working, but a considerable quantity of gold was extracted in my presence from the gravel on the banks of a small stream called Des Plantes, which runs into the Chaudière.*

Gold had also been discovered and mined in the area by J. P. Cunningham in 1847-1848 along the Gilbert River about a mile from where it joins the Chaudière. It was reported that, during one three-month period, $1,100 worth of gold was mined, the largest nugget weighing 25 dwts (deadweight tonnage).

In light of this information, Holman proposed that he should explore the Chaudière River and the Lake Megantic, and then proceed to Acton in the hope of finding copper veins. Galt, however, having read Holman's previous reports and listened to his opinion of the area generally, believed that they would have no success at Acton. He recommended that Holman and his team return to England, avoiding the harsh Canadian winter, and make another try the following year. He had already written to the board of BALC "advising them to

*James Duncan, "View of Quebec from Point Levi," 1874. Collections.rom.on.ca.*

continue the exploration another Summer season," this time employing Holman "and only two Miners from England."

Holman returned to his hotel and wrote to Charles Pennoyer, the BALC's agent in Sherbrooke, enclosing a letter to be delivered to Skews and Jennings, leaders of the mining team. He instructed these two men to explore the area around the village of Stoke, and said he would meet them at the head of St. Francis Lake on October 6. Holman also wrote to his wife, Elizabeth, enclosing another for his father and mother.

Early next morning, Holman checked out of his hotel, posted his letters, and purchased fresh biscuits and calico cloth for the tents. He also met up with a Mr. Otie, his son and his son-in-law, who informed him that they had washed 10-11 pounds of gold that season, which was similar to what they had found the previous year and the year before. Otie was of the belief that the diggings of one Dr. Douglas were the most valuable yet discovered in the Chaudière area. The foreman engaged in Douglas' works said they had found more gold just below the quartz veins, as well as a number of quartz stones containing gold, although they had not discovered any gold in the quartz veins themselves.

It was now 10 o'clock, and Holman was running late for his arranged meeting with the carter in Point Levi. He caught the steam ferry, hoping that the carter would be waiting, but when he arrived there was no sign of him. Holman learned that the carter had been there at 8 a.m., waited, and left. Holman lingered about, hoping the man might return, but eventually decided to engage another carter. They drove about 15 miles, halfway to St. Mary's, and in the morning they completed the journey. Holman paid the carter, arranged for another cart from the local livery for the next day, and then found accommodation for the night.

The next morning was fine but chilly, and Homan almost slipped on the thick frost on the pavement. He would need to be more careful. He drove twelve miles to St. Joseph, collected the baggage he had left behind the previous Sunday, and then drove a further ten miles to the village of Tring. "Drove about 4 miles beyond Tring," he wrote. "By this time it was dark and the horse tired out."

Continuing on just before daybreak, Holman arrived at Forsyth at 9 o'clock and soon located the members of his team, who showed him the pits they had sunk around the exposed veins. Near the surface the veins were nearly two feet wide, but further down the pit the veins had dwindled to just a few inches. In the course of his journey, Holman had not seen any quartz outcrops or veins; from St. Joseph's to Forsyth the strata generally consisted of clay slate with frequent boulders of sandstone – not the terrain likely to contain quartz veins. Having seen so many similar veins which disappeared into nothing, Holman was quickly coming to the conclusion that the area lacked any mineral value of significance. Even so, he remained optimistic about prospects elsewhere. "Whilst at Quebec there appeared to be a great stir with the people about the diggings and I expect next season will bring some fresh Companies into the Gold regions."

The next morning, they left for Lambton on foot, and after travelling some twelve miles made camp at the head of St. Francis Lake. It was a pleasant cool day to start, but afternoon showers made the journey demanding. Rain persisted overnight, increasing in intensity during the following day.

> *Intended going down the St Francis Lake to examine a river leading into the same reported here to show a deal of ledge. However heavy rain prevented us – and I put the men to making our Cotton stuff into shape for a camp for the Megantic. Determined to wait here till Skews & Co comes up, as the nearest route to the Chandiene is to strike off from Lampton Village.*

The rain having mostly cleared, Holman headed a mile or so south to a tributary, Rivière Felton, leading into St. Francis Lake, but with no ledges to examine, he decided to wash some surface gravelly sand on the east end of the lake. He returned without success. Taking advantage of the weather, Holman took the cart and headed a few miles towards Gould, hoping he might meet Skews and the men along the way. He was now concerned that Skews might not have received the note he sent to Pennoyer on September 27. "Sent Treweek & a Canadian yesterday to Maclentics store with my carpet bag & tools to be forwarded thence to Gould," he wrote. "They are to remain at the store till Skews arrival."

The weather changed, as it often does in early October: the cold chilly morning soon turned to rain, preventing the men from prospecting. Much to Holman's relief, in the late afternoon, Treweek, Skews, and Jennings arrived, having received Holman's note on October 1. By October 3, they had only got as far as Cookshire, and due to heavy rain they could not proceed further. "They reported the roads to be the worst they have passed over in this country," Holman wrote, meaning the area between Gould and St. Francis Lake. "The day was wet when they came here and in the evening it was snowing fast." Snow continued falling and was now over four inches deep around the campsite. Holman had hoped to proceed to the Chaudière River but was forced to stay put.

The delay gave him time to collect details of the expenses Skews had incurred during his exploration around Leeds, Sherbrooke, and Stoke Mountain, details he passed along to Galt. "Skews in his journey from Leeds to Sherbrooke, Stoke mountain and to this place," he wrote, "reports having only seen one vein of Quartz 18 inches wide (very poor) at Stoke mountain. They also washed several places (both ledge & sand) but found no Gold." Holman placed these reports in an envelope addressed to Pennoyer, knowing they

*William Notman & Son, "Caleche, Pointe Levis," c. 1890. McCord Museum, VIEW-2584.*

would be forwarded to Galt.

A few days later, with only an inch or two of snow on the ground, Holman and the men were able to leave camp and head east towards the Chaudière River. The horse and cart carrying their tools and baggage followed along a very wet and muddy road made worse by the thawing snow. Six miles on, through mostly settled country, the road petered out into a single track; the cart could go no further. Each man took his pack, Holman his carpet bag of tools and gun. After another three miles, they come across a small ten-foot square log hut on the edge of a settlement. Here, they engaged five local men to carry provisions and equipment for the three-week expedition. At 8 o'clock, Holman, the six miners and five locals departed, heavily loaded.

While near Lambton, using the money received earlier, Holman had purchased a barrel of biscuits, 20 pounds of mutton, 13 pounds of sugar, 11 pounds of butter, nine pounds of pork, tea, salt, pepper and ginger. He would have liked to have bought more pork, but there was none to be found. "I carried a Gun & ramming shovel on my shoulders all day which made them sore," Holman wrote. "Walked 3 miles to a small Lake [Drolet], then crossed the Lake in canoe & man returned for the remainder of baggage whilst Men walked around the Lake." Consequently, the men's burden was eased for about four hours. Then they continued to the Chaudière River, where they arrived just after 5 o'clock and "had barley bread & butter at the Lake for dinner."

In the morning, Holman discharged two of the packmen and instructed the others to make a log canoe. The previous week's rain had raised the water level, preventing any exploration of river ledges. Holman sent the miners along a small stream on the west side of the Chaudière River, where they would dig and wash on any suitable sandy beaches or ledges. On their return, the men reported they mostly found black sand intermixed with some mica crystals, but again no signs of any gold specks from their washing. Meanwhile, Holman had continued upstream for about a mile, finding the blue clay riverbanks intermixed with granite, sandstone rock strata, but no pyrites.

The men woke to a very cold uncomfortable morning of showers of sleet that fell most of the day, hampering any exploration activity, although the Canadians did finish making the canoe. The calico tents stood up well to the three or four inches of snow that fell the next night and continued until mid-morning. "Started at 10 a.m. up the Chandeine with all baggage in the canoe," Holman wrote. "After proceeding about 2 miles and finding the current very strong, we were obliged to take out one half of our baggage & leave the men that were walking on the rivers side carry the same. At 4 p.m. camped on the west side of River." To the men's delight, the Canadian guides caught four fish, which supplemented the evening meal.

The snow continued overnight, making the day's journey as difficult as the one before. "Started at 9 a.m. with canoe & men with packs. After proceeding about 1 mile up the river the rapid became so frequent & strong as to require the boatmen to be almost constantly in the water pushing the canoe along. Therefore we determined to leave the canoe and taking all the baggage on mens backs we proceeded along the Western side of the River." The men were drenched from the falling snow all morning; added to that, the trees would occasionally dump snow onto them as the branches above gave way to the weight. After crossing two smaller brooks, they found a place to camp and after some searching "made a good fire but it took till 9 o'clock before we had properly dried our clothing & blankets."

Taking advantage of a fine morning, the men left early, crossing a small stream almost immediately after leaving camp. Two miles further on they were again drenched, crossing a cold fast-flowing brook some 18 feet wide. The journey through the unrelenting wilderness, the constant trekking through dense cedar bush and swamps of decayed timber, was now becoming increasingly difficult.

> *I fell down and ran a piece of wood into the heel of my right hand causing a free discharge of blood for a little while. Put some leaves to it which had an immediate effect stopping the blood.*

Exhausted, at around 4 o'clock, they rested. Skews climbed a nearby tree and announced he could see Lake Megantic about six miles in the distance. Holman decided to make camp rather than endure further hardship.

Realizing that the end of their journey was near, the men were keen to pack up their tents and leave early the next morning. Just before 8 o'clock, they passed a small island in the river, and an hour later they reached Lake Megantic.

> *All hands welcomed the sight. At the outlet there is a slight rapid for a short distance, but the whole distance traversed by us on the Chandiene River being about 25 miles was chiefly rapids, but presenting no ledge whatever at every point of the river seen by us. The water was high & probably covered ledge that might be exposed when the water is much lower.*

They came across a narrow road, more like a track, but at least not dense bush, leading to Victoria, and although it was tempting to continue on, they decided to make camp for the day. Holman had intended to explore Arnold's River, but having left the boat behind and with the trip taking longer than expected, provisions were now running very low. There was no argument from the men when Holman announced they would head to Sherbrooke the following day.

They left camp at 8 o'clock, and covered terrain that allowed for a quicker pace. They "walked smart and at 2 p.m. came on the 'Broad Road' which is 9 miles from Victoria. The latter place we reached at 5 p.m. 20 miles walked today. Encamped there." Determined to catch the morning coach, they rose at 2.30 a.m. and headed at a quick pace to Gould, arriving at 6 o'clock. Having eaten only biscuits and sugar for the past two days, they all enjoyed a hearty breakfast. Holman then paid, thanked, and dismissed the remaining local guides. At 8 o'clock, Holman and the miners boarded a Stage Van that took them to Bury and then Cookshire, where they stopped for dinner at the new hotel, completed only a few years earlier. They

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reached Sherbrooke somewhat late in the evening, and checked into the Magog House Hotel. The last 35 miles it had been slow going, over soft dreadful, slippery muddy roads.

After a bath and a good night's sleep, Holman walked to the BALC office. He hoped to meet up with Galt, but was informed the man would not arrive for a few days. There were letters waiting for him, one from his friend John Tregonning, another from his father, and one from his young daughter, Elizabeth. Trekking for the past week had exhausted him, but the letter from Elizabeth, her first attempt to write him, lifted his spirits immensely. He was especially touched that she had remembered to send him birthday wishes, since it had been his birthday on September 27, the day he had met Galt and Bishoff in Quebec City. Holman "also had letter to go to inspect (at my leisure) the Marmora Iron works in Bellville for which I am to get a fee of £50/-/- paying my own expenses."

The following morning, Holman met with Pennoyer and, after some discussion and review of activities to date, both agreed that they should leave the following day to complete the exploration of Stoke Mountain on the side nearest to the roadway to Dudswell. In the afternoon, Holman arranged for provisions for the five-day Acton exploration, and then caught up with the men to review maps and detail what activities they would be undertaking.

Although he was ever the optimist, Captain Holman was beginning to have some reservations as to the likeliness of the expedition's success. He hoped that a substantial mineral discovery at Acton would alleviate those doubts.

***Michael Webb*** *began his career in the computer industry in the mid-1960s. Since his retirement, he has been researching the life of his great-great-grandfather, Josiah Holman. Living in Australia, Michael has travelled to many of the mine sites managed by Capt. Holman as well as the church in Cornwall where Holman was married and baptized. This Canadian expedition in just one chapter in the book he is writing.*

# Rawdon: Ready for Development (1830)

## by Daniel Parkinson

One wonders about the topography and watercourses on the Seventh and Eighth Ranges of Rawdon Township in 1830, and the types of trees that grew in the virgin forest. This was a developing area, and only ten years after the small settlement that was established along the lower ranges. Now, a few ambitious settlers were opening farms and mills independent of those on the First and Second Ranges.

Answers to these questions are found in a detailed report by government commissioners – a team of experienced surveyors appointed by the legislature of Lower Canada. The report is included in the Appendix to the XLth volume of the *Journals of the House of Assembly of the Province of Lower Canada* (the first session of the fourteenth provincial parliament).

### Background

In 1829, the Lower Canada legislature voted a sum of money to explore the territory that lay "in the rear of settlements" between Grenville on the Ottawa River and the St. Maurice River, and to examine the practicality of opening a road between these two points.

Toussaint Pothier (1771-1845) superintended the exploration and reported to the House. Pothier was a businessman, militia officer, seigneur, member of the Legislative Council and civil servant. The son of a prosperous merchant, he helped to found the North West Company. He was also actively involved with the Michilimackinac Company and with John Jacob Astor in forming the South West Fur Company. He owned several properties in the centre of Montreal, including an immense piece of land along what is now St. Antoine Street, as well as the seigneuries of Lanaudière and Carufel. (Philippe Pothier, "Toussaint Pothier," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*).

Two men who had served on a previous expedition of exploration were recommended and engaged for the work: Lieutenant Ingall of the 15th Regiment and surveyor John Adams. The party, which included workers with axes and provisions, departed from Montreal on September 24, 1830, and began work at Grenville on September 26. The journal that follows contains the remarks of both men.

The team proceeded in a north easterly direction behind "the northerly settlements," occasionally diverging "according to the nature of the ground," and passed through the townships of Grenville, Chatham, Abercrombie, Kilkenny, Rawdon & Kildare, the Seigneury of Daillebout [d'Ailleboust] and the Township of Brandon, until they reached the banks of Lake Maskinongé in the Seigneury of Lanaudière. From there, they continued through the townships of Hunterstown and Caxton, traveling southeast to Three Rivers and then to Quebec, where they arrived on November 22.

The commissioners took pleasure in "remarking the facility with which a

*Toussaint Pothier, 1823.*
*BAnQ, P560,S2,D1,P1042.*

road of communication may be opened" from the St. Maurice to Grenville, through areas well adapted for cultivation and settlement. Information from other persons, "especially Indians," suggested that another expedition ought to be undertaken the following summer to travel up the St. Maurice to Matawa River and to explore the rivers that enter the Ottawa.

Pothier noted (February 28, 1831) that Ingall had served gratuitously, and recommended that he receive a recompense equal to Adams so that he might support his family and continue with the proposed project. The commissioners "flatter[ed] themselves" that this sum would be approved by the legislature.

A large section of the 7th and 8th ranges, lots, 12 to 28 of Rawdon Township, had been reported on by Surveyor General Joseph Bouchette (LAC-2515 Vol. 57 pps, 29,105 - 29,123). He used the field notes that surveyor John Sullivan had taken in October 1826.

## Remarks of Ingall and Adams recorded when the survey, on an imagined line, passed through Rawdon 7th & 8th Ranges

***October 25, 1830***

*A hard frost the whole night. Thermometer at six o'clock, twenty seven.*

*Started at half past seven o'clock and descended abruptly to the discharge of the Lake; we crossed it over a beaver dam, and observed that the stream was towards the north.*

*After a short ascent, we entered Lot 4 of Rawdon, still between the seventh and eighth ranges. We descended fifty feet gradually and continued over level land, as far as lot five; timber beech and maple. Soil a light sandy marle. On entering lot five the land was rough; timber hemlock, spruce and cedar; this rough tract terminated in an abrupt descent into a valley; still black timber. This valley will be found to run round the north side of the hill until it meets the level tract on lot four.*

*We crossed a small brook and descended gradually about one hundred feet and met a stream running south east; this stream was about eighteen feet wide. We crossed a wood path and continued on level ground for some distance, until we reached a small brook. We then ascended gently to the top of a low hill and almost immediately descended forty feet abruptly into a small valley. The timber we had passed since crossing the stream or smally river was hemlock, spruce, balsam and a few black birch trees.*

*On entering the valley, we crossed a small stream and came out on a clearance but uninhabited. Here we saw another wood road or path.*

[Author's note: I have assumed that they crossed the lots of the Smiley family. Samuel Smiley, his sons Samuel, William and John, and grandsons George and John, had received tickets of location in January 1828 to parts of lots 6, 7 and 8 of the Eighth Range, with one son located on the adjoining Ninth Range. The wood paths and clearances noted in this area are evidence of their early labour to confirm their locations. The Smileys received their Letters Patent in 1833 and 1838. In 1823 and 1824, John Smiley and his three sons had tickets of Location on the Fifth Range at lots 20 and 21. The elder John and Samuel Smiley on Eighth Range were brothers from Corrinary, Parish of Currin, County Monaghan.]

*We soon entered lot seven and ascended a very high hill, close on our right or south east, a very easy and gradual ascent. This high hill was covered with beech and maple. We wound round a rugged part of the hill, and entered lot eight, and then ascended over another steep and rough tract.*

*On gaining the summit we perceived that a fine valley or large ravine wound close to the south east. At a great distance in a south direction, we could distinguish a sheet of water which we imagined to be in the neighbourhood of Montreal, and in the middle distance we could see a tinned spire and one or two buildings glittering in the sun. From the height we were upon, the intervening country appeared to be almost flat.*

[Author's note: They were probably seeing the spire of the church of St. Louis de France at Terrebonne, which dated from 1734. George Heriot's painting of Terrebonne in 1810 is what I imagine they saw in 1830.]

*We made a gradual descent into a valley of hemlock, spruce and cedar, and finding some water under the root of a tree, stopped to dine. In running a road along this line, of course the ravine to the south-east should be taken advantage of. After our dinner we pursued our march, and found the valley end in small swamp, which brought us into lot 9. We could distantly hear a fall or heavy rapid to the north. The whole of this lot was a continuation of undulating land covered principally with hardwood. Through one of the valleys ran a brook of clear water. We ascended a gradual rise and entered a clearance on lot ten and another on lot eleven. The inhabitants were employed making ashes.*

[Abraham Watters had an occupation permit for 7 / N10 in 1828, which he sold to his brother-in-law, Henry Smith, in 1832. Henry Smith and Jane Watters were the author's great grandparents. James Croker had been located at 7 / S15 in 1823, and in 1826 he sold to Robert Bagnall. Croker lived at 8 / S10 in 1831, for which land he received letters patent in 1846. James D.C. Holtby lived here before moving to Minnesota in 1869.]

*We left these clearances by a small path leading towards the east and shortly after came on another farm. We then changed our course a little more to the north, and passed through a wood for about half a mile, which brought us into a cleared meadow, or strip of interval land, on the banks of the River Lac-Ouerreau. Here we camped for the night. This fine river (which at this place was deep and poured down a vast body of water) owes its name to a large lake many leagues to the north of the settlements at Rawdon. and is navigable the whole way for canoes. Some Indians we fell in with encamped on its banks, informed us that the Lake Ouerreau was with a half day's journey of a very large lake which was the source of the North River, and that the communication with*

*the River Matawa and Vermillion, was close to the same lakes. The shores where we were encamped were low and convenient for erecting a bridge. The banks of the river were pretty well settled, and a road on the opposite side communicated with the lower parts of the Township and the Seigniory of L'Assomption.*

***October 26, 1830***

*A frosty morning. Thermometer at six o'clock, twenty six.*

*Commenced conveying our stores across the river in an old canoe which we found on the west shore. Having seen every thing safe across, we proceeded along the east shore to lot 15 on the seventh range, belonging to Mr. Bagnal where we succeeded in procuring a cart to convey our stores to Mr. Hobbs' mills on the Red River. Part of the men went round with the cart, and the remainder, with their axes, accompanied us back to our line.*

[Robert Bagnall was at 7 / N 15 since 1823. A native of King's County, he operated a potashery and a sawmill. Lot 15 of the 8th range was the property of Bernard and Hugh Cassidy, who were located there in 1827. George Hobs was a Loyalist from Prince Edward Island, but was born in New York. The Quebec Mercury of April 14, 1836, reported when he died at the age of 63 that he was "formerly an inspector of flour for Montreal." He was located at 7 / 22 from 1821, with his sons at lots 21 and 23 and other locations.

*After passing through a small swamp we ascended a hill and entered a clearance on lots fifteen and sixteen. The land continued level as far as the foot of a high and steep hill generally called mountain. Soil clayey.*

*We gained the summit of this hill by passing round to the south-east through a gorge down which ran a small brook, timber beech and maple.*

*In gaining the opposite side of the hill we descended rather rapidly into a clearance. Here the land was flat and continued so to the next farm which was on the Red River and belonged to Mr. Hobbs. We proceeded to the mills and found our stores had arrived ten minutes before us. Mr. Hobbs procured a cart to convey the stores round to a Mr. Brown's on lot twenty eight, it being close to the line we were pursuing.*

[Robert Brown, a native of County Down, is the author's twice great grandfather. In 1824, he settled at Rawdon on four adjoining lots with three sons and four daughters.

*After dinner we proceeded across the Red River (which is about thirty or thirty five feet wide) accompanied by Mr. Hobbs, who very kindly offered to show us the most direct route through the wood to Brown's farm. Leaving a river, we passed over a small hill and soon struck upon the line between the seventh and eighth ranges. We continued in the vicinity of our line, but generally a little to the southward over level fine land, well wooded with beech and maple.*

*We crossed between two farms and reached Brown's at five o'clock situated on lot twenty eight and four and one half acres from the augmentation to Kildare. The air was sultry and peculiarly oppressive. The sky clouded, a little past five we were assailed by a violent thunder storm which lasted until ten o'clock. Some flashes of lightning, and accompanying peals of thunder, were terrific.*

*Thermometer at eight o'clock fifty two.*

***October 27, 1830***

*A cloudy sky but symptoms of it clearing up. In consequence of our men complaining that their necks were strained from conveying heavy loads over such a rough country, we engaged two men to accompany us for this day. Started from Brown's farm at eight o'clock, and having crossed the four and a half acres, entered the augmentation of Kildare and continued along the front line of the first range.*

***Daniel Parkinson** is the author of Up To Rawdon, the story of the early settlers of Rawdon Township, with an emphasis on family history.*

# The Third Station

## *Preserving the Heritage of a Railroad Boomtown*

by Joseph Graham

In St. Agathe, our current railroad station is our third. In 1892, when the train first arrived, the station that welcomed its first passengers stood south of its current location, at the corner of de Montigny Street. It was a smaller building, part of what you see today, the part without the rotunda.

Canadian Pacific Railway could not have foreseen that this little town would grow to 20 times its size in the 20 years following the arrival of the train. Five years before the station opened, the town's existence was threatened by the smallpox epidemic and three years of drought. The total turnaround was unimaginable, even though Curé Labelle believed that the train would save us. His belief was very practical. There were large forests to our north being actively exploited and needing access to Montreal, but the northern rivers could handle much of the timber, floating wood to the Ottawa. St. Agathe was not particularly known to anyone except to the decreasing number of farmers who struggled to make ends meet after the drought. Many of their children were moving north into the fertile valley of the Rouge River, but something else was starting the happen. People from Montreal and the United States were coming. What was the draw to St. Agathe? There were lakes everywhere. What made St. Agathe stand out so much?

Some time between 1892 and 1894 a geological expedition left Montreal to explore the hills surrounding the new rail line. The organizer was John William Dawson, principal of McGill University and an amateur geologist. After his visit, he wrote an article about the wonderful Laurentian Mountains, bringing particular attention to St. Agathe. He referred to the hills as the oldest in the world, and the St. Agathe station as being at one of the highest points on the line, 1,214 feet above sea level. In contrast, the St. Jovite station was at 690 feet and St. Adèle 660 feet. The article was published in the American magazine *Harper's*, and it certainly influenced American readers. Was it a catalyst for what followed? English-speaking Montreal, along with some better-informed Americans, simply adopted St. Agathe as their home away from home and, followed almost immediately by the spread of the sport of skiing, the whole eastern Laurentians soon became the country playground of Anglophone Montreal.

The people who were already here had come north only fifty years earlier, encouraged by the department of colonization in order to keep them from moving into the cities, or, worse, to industrial towns in the United States. The people who came were self-reliant, independent and even, at times, ornery. They made their own homes, their own homespun clothes, their own wooden shoes; of course, they grew their own food. The hills had mostly been cleared of trees, which were burned for ashes and carried to St. Jerome to be sold for the small amount of cash needed to continue a self-sufficient life. The new fields had been fenced. Little herds of sheep and a few cows, oxen, chickens, horses and tidy houses beside barns must have presented a bucolic scene to the Montrealers. In her short book describing St. Agathe in the 1890s, New York nurse Elizabeth Wand describes the residents of this "village nestled at the lower end of the lake" as being particularly fastidious:

> *The houses mostly built of logs, with plaster in between, and white-washed. Little gardens with vegetables and flowers, all so neat and trim-looking. The people clad in homespun of their own weaving, knitted stockings, good thick ones, also the work of the women and girls. The catalogne carpets and braided rugs, such a happy-looking industrious people, hospitable and kindly to a degree.*

This "happy-looking industrious people" had lived through plague, famine and poverty in just a single lifetime, and had watched as many left for more promising soil to the north. They knew well how vulnerable their lives were on these subsistence farms and were happy to sell the bucolic dream to wealthy



*Photo courtesy of Joseph Graham.*

Montrealers and Americans.

Many of the Montrealers were business leaders in an important colonial city of the British Empire, a city whose growth had not stopped since the American War of Independence. A major North American port, Montreal was also a point of entry for waves of European immigrants. Its infrastructure could barely keep pace, and sewage and garbage collection systems were in experimental stages. This was a city that dreaded the arrival of spring because the thaw brought with it the stench of uncollected wastes, a city that also boasted the Square Mile where Canada's economic leaders lived. Just as we saw during the COVID pandemic, the smallpox epidemic of 1885 encouraged those who had the means to move out of the city – at least for the smelly summer season. The train moved moneyed people to St. Agathe. Some of the wealthiest even travelled in their own train cars, towed along with the rest of the train.

This new economy destroyed the Laurentians' subsistence farming community, not because it wasn't viable, but because farmers were receiving astounding offers for their farms and they began to open businesses and build houses in the village, creating more opportunities for growth and employment.

Canadian Pacific (CP) eventually rebuilt its station at its current location, adding the rotunda. The sleepy village of St. Agathe had become a real town, and the station grew even larger. When the ski train became a factor, 10,000 people would come north to ski every possible weekend. There were no ski lifts yet. They skied over the trails that Jackrabbit Johannsen dubbed the Maple Leaf.

The new and old communities never joined. A hundred years later, the descendants of the farmers saw the descendants of the part-time residents as tourists. Enormous tuberculosis treatment centres became the largest employers, and then, when antibiotics made them redundant in the early 1950s, that infrastructure became a part of the local health system. Roads replaced rail and country estates became weekend getaways.

The third station was built nineteen years after the railway had been removed. The era of trains was over, but not of train stations.

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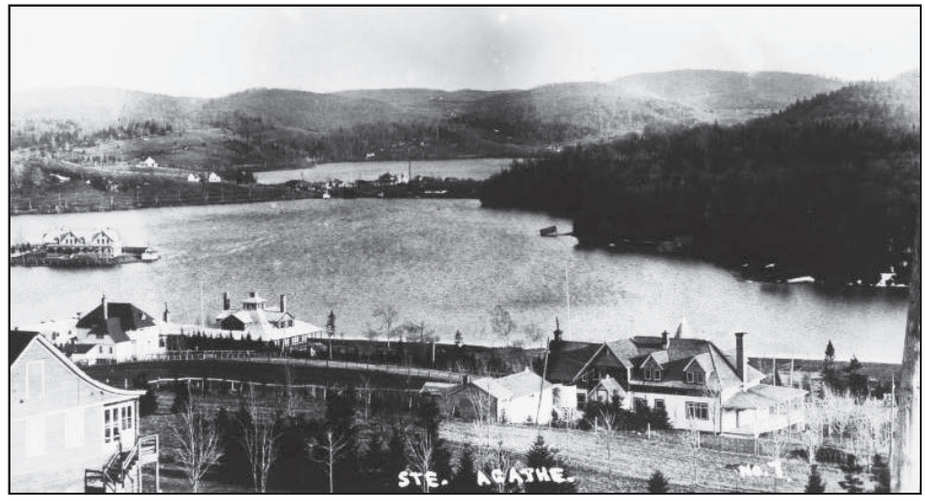
In 1987, we opened our real estate office in St. Agathe and almost immediately learned that CP Rail was planning to close the railway. We were all motivated by the surprising demolition of the old Banque Provinciale du Canada building on Rue Principale, a lost landmark that left only a commemorative composite image behind. There was concern that CP would demolish the stations.

Denise Goulet and Yolande Gaudet were very concerned about the loss of the heritage bank building. They told me about a group of other concerned people across the Laurentians who were determined to save their stations. I met Gleason Theberge of Prévost and Adrien Grégoire from l'Annonciation, who were setting up *La Corporation des Gares des Laurentides* to save the stations. They encouraged us to create a local committee under the umbrella of the corporation. Together with Denise and Yolande, we created the *Corporation des Gares, secteur Sainte-Agathe*. We were soon joined by others in our area, and I was named the president. I was at the beginning of a learning curve but Sheila, my partner in all things, had more experience in dealing with community groups like this. She made sure from the outset that we stayed organized and kept minutes.

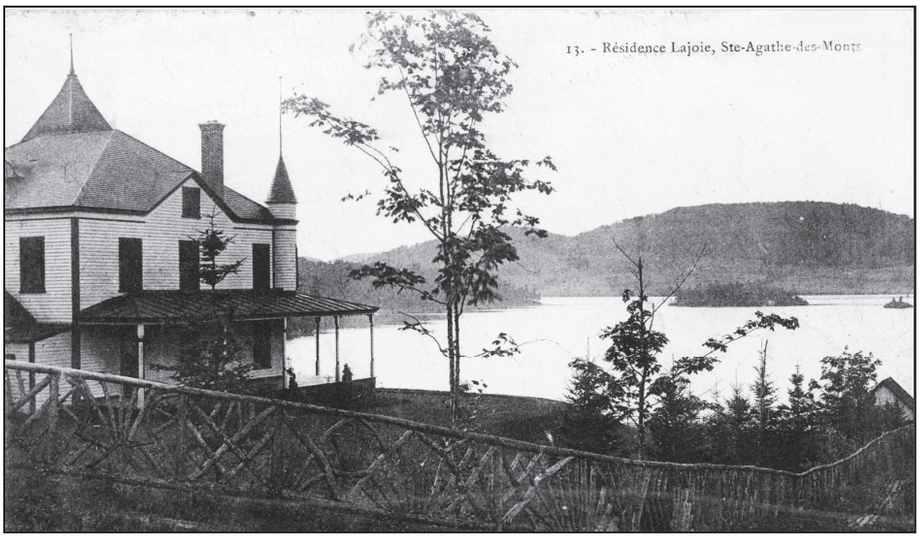
Our members opted for regular meetings on Friday evening, held at our real estate office. Running these meetings, I discovered how often people cannot see where they are going or how to focus on getting there. At first the meetings were held after supper. Not living in St. Agathe, but in nearby St. Lucie, that meant going home, 15 minutes' drive, eating, and returning, then going home again afterwards – 45 minutes total travel. Plus meetings that threatened to not end, at which members questioned details such as how the spelling or tenses used in the minutes of the previous meetings had to be corrected while at the same time proposing complicated strategies that would involve a horrendous amount of organization, planning and funds.

As our representative to the umbrella group, I also drove great distances to meet with the members of local committees from other towns, spanning the train network from St. Jerome to Mont Laurier. We had opted to meet for restaurant suppers. Gleason was always there and always funny, happy and pertinent. Even though the subject could often be discouraging and sometimes the attendance consisted of only Gleason, Adrien, me and a Quebec community worker named Claude Goulet who brought excellent organizational skills, I looked forward to the get-togethers. It also gave me the opportunity to rethink how I could improve our local committee.

Instead of after supper on Fridays, we set up our St. Agathe meetings on a weekday, and always at 5:30 p.m. We made sure to serve no food, feeling that empty stomachs would keep people focused on what had to be done. I took on the habit of warmly congratulating anyone who came up with a strategy, quickly parsing it, and then suggesting that the person who proposed it should




*Delphis Côté, "Aerial view of Ste-Agathe-des-Monts," before 1940. McCord Museum, M2017.46.2.1256.*




set up a sub-group of their own to make it happen. I insisted that initiatives should not be critical of the municipality, but always warmly supportive of even the smallest positive action or comments on the part of the town. These steps did not dampen anyone's enthusiasm, and people with good ideas were proud to take charge of their proposals and make them happen. We began to feel like a real group.

Even so, a great deal of time passed with no news and no positive encouragements. One aspect that troubled me was that people whose ancestors had forfeited land either through expropriation or simple sale when the railway was created a hundred years earlier began to demand that those parcels be returned to their families. This brought my attention to the railway property itself. The Corporation des Gares agreed with the notion that the stations were part of a long, linear property, but they did not want to alter their mission of saving the stations to include a mission of saving the whole railway right of way. I began looking for other people who did want to save it and even asked for a meeting with CP to try to get a better understanding of why they wanted to close the line. The official who agreed to this meeting, Michel de Bellefeuille, was very supportive and he introduced me to a team of analysts and engineers who helped me understand CP's problems.

As a private company, CP could not compete with the public road network. Governments were spending colossal sums through election promises to improve the road networks, and truckers were replacing trains, running for free on public roads. CP's revenues were therefore shrinking and were inadequate to maintain the cost of the railway line. Bridges were aging, speeds had to be reduced, and generally the rail industry was losing ground to the oil and automotive sectors thanks to politically-motivated investments of our taxes in the road networks.

There was no alternative but to close it. Our best hope was to try to set up a linear park on the model of some American ones.

During those early years, we did educational projects and held press conferences. While we were working to promote the idea of saving the station, we began to encourage other heritage projects in St. Agathe. All this work proved to be good for business, something that we had not foreseen but of course should have. The big accomplishments were to come, but our next objective was to get into the building, as nominal tenants if necessary. We were trying to save a totally redundant building. We never imagined that one day, there would be the need for that third station.

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I had never given much thought to heritage. My real passion was history, and I had suspicions about the purpose of heritage. Historian Cecilia Morgan's definition of heritage as "a means of justifying particular courses of action (and not others) and upholding certain political and social values" resonated with me. We want to save something, a structure, an object, a building that once had a function, because we see heritage value in doing so, but we know that there is more to it than the thing being considered. Promoting can often be an expression of a desire to lend importance to something that… died. We cannot give it back a purpose, only commemorate an aspect of the past that is no longer relevant except as a memory.

Growing up, I knew men in St. Agathe who valued heritage and did something about it. I admired and learned from them, sometimes with pleasure and sometimes through rancour. As a teenager, I bought a small 10' by 11' squared log structure that a neighbour, Mr. Legault, had found on a farm nearby and dismantled, marking each log, the old tin from the roof, and the planks, so it could be reassembled. I was too young to negotiate with Mr. Legault, but my brother helped. Mr. Legault had sheds filled with stuff he had acquired. He knew where and what every piece was. He valued them for the heritage they represented, but also for their original functionality. They had to be maintained, used for something new.

I carried the logs, planks and tin way into the woods in St. Lucie to the edge of an abandoned field. Following Mr. Legault's marking, I rebuilt the farm shed on a stone base made up of rocks I found in a pile, rocks the farmer had cleared from the field, most probably at the end of the nineteenth century.

A few years later, I spent some time in France learning French. I was drawn by the stories of the student uprisings of the spring of 1968 and wanted to learn more. I also had to convince a French language teacher who neglected his English students to stop giving me failing grades. When I returned in the spring of 1969, I redid my French exams so I could get out of high school. He grudgingly gave me a barely passing mark even though I was fluent, had audited courses at the Sorbonne, and easily thought and even dreamed in French. He was not one of the men I admired. He possessed an image of a heritage that Cecilia Morgan would have seen through. His heritage could not be shared, especially with an English boy. The bitterness remains among many of



*"Lajoie home, Ste. Agathe des Monts," c.1910. McCord Museum, MP-0000.970.7.*

his students.

Later still, I decided I could live in my little log house in the woods, but I would need to find a heater. This time I was old enough to negotiate – I thought. I stopped off at a general store on Highway 30 (329 today) in St. Agathe North, on my way to St. Lucie. It was a family business, and was surrounded by dozens of sheds full of stuff. The head of the family was known locally as "Sale" (dirty) Menard. The store was his living room, and he sat there while the world went by, his heavy frame carried above legs that splayed out to left and right at impossibly right-angles to his body, often half asleep with drool falling to the floor in front of him. No one disturbed or crossed his formidable presence. Except me. I was told that he had everything somewhere in his sheds. He looked at me from his sitting position as I presented my request, then he carefully stood up, his walking stick a loyal helper in the effort. He walked out of the store slowly. I followed, although he had not yet spoken. We moved through a series of sheds on paths that I could not easily retrace. Finally, he took out a key, opened a lock, pulled a door back and we entered a gloomy space. He moved something out of the way exposing the perfect heater. Then he spoke: "Quinze piastres." Young buck that I was, moving back and forth from one foot to the other, I believed I had to negotiate. I proposed a lower number, feeling that this was the proper thing to do. Sale Menard's eyes opened as though for the first time, took me in. He scowled and thundered: "Pas à vendre!" He turned and walked away. I had to follow, bewildered and out of my depth, a lesson delivered and learned.

Eventually I did find a heater and also discovered other men like Menard and Legault, some younger and more sophisticated, but all savvy and independent. They possessed the true heritage of our society although they were often embarrassments to their own families for clinging to junk and to the past. One, a plumber, in fact the plumber's plumber, Ed Le Saux, generously guided me years later, finding the oddest fittings as though they were common. There was also Mr. Heroux with his machine shop. I even discovered that my near-contemporary, Gord Savery, who became one of my closest friends and confidants, had the same passion as these heroes of yore. He had everything and knew where it was. I remember once being bewildered that I could not find a simple bar sink in any of the stores. He invited me around and when I arrived at his place, he offered a display of bar sinks laid out under the trees, just for me. He helped me understand the merits of each one. He could pull this kind of miracle off for just about every problem he faced. He definitely dealt in neglected heritage items and often wanted only to make sure they were appreciated, used.

That is an aspect of our community heritage that I understand and that I did not want to lose. (I am sorry that I have not yet arrived at that third railway station, but, as we know, trains don't always run on schedule. Please bear with me.)

These old guys who valued our heritage in tools and equipment were practical. I often went to them when I needed help moving a heritage idea forward, and when we got permission to go into the abandoned railroad station in 1995, possibilities opened for us to take the next step and save it. In February 1995, after ten years of meetings and requests, federal Minister of Heritage Michel Dupuy declared that our station would be classified as protected. It was a beginning. The station was not eligible for a demolition permit, but there was no obligation to restore it either. Anyone coveting the land for other purposes simply had to acquire the building and let it fall apart. Our objective was to redo the roof, because a good roof would buy us years to deal with the rest.

In a meeting that summer, we invited people to volunteer. We also began organizing a Katimavik project to clean up the station's interior. We posted a date for a roofing bee, the weekend of September 9-10. Our authority to do so could have been questioned. A bit ambitious, but something had to be done. We also asked the owners of the Lortie-Martin building supply store near the station if they could help us with the materials. It proved magical.

That Saturday morning, I was on the roof as the early sun shone through a deep fog, slowly burning it off. People arrived. Boxes of material were delivered, and a team of us stripped off the old shingles. On the roof with me was the contractor Dorcy Laroche, who walked with the casual security of a cat. His whole team came out, as did many others. The station roof was huge, with a rotunda at one end – a beautiful old building even when you see it from the roof. We had two days, the weekend, to finish the job.

Lortie-Martin came through with the materials, including the shingles in just the right colour to commemorate the old building's history. Very early Sunday morning, as I treaded not-at-all-catlike to the edge of the roof to pick up a package of shingles for the professional volunteers higher up, I got a surprise. The volunteer handing me the package from the top of a ladder was Michel Charette, the mayor himself – no ceremony, no formality, just a volunteer with a

package of shingles, dressed in rough clothes like the rest of us. And it led directly to the town signing a lease with CP.

The new roof was beautiful. It became an emblem for our group of believers. Katimavik confirmed, and, as winter came upon us, we had the team of young volunteers from across Canada cleaning up and preparing the large interior. They managed to find a lovely old door from someone else, not from the station itself, and they scraped it down and made it a gift to us. It still hangs in our house, the door between the entranceway and the living room. Many of us put up the Katimavik volunteers who could not return home for Christmas; a young man from Saskatoon joined our household for the holidays.

Soon, the Chamber of Commerce offered to take over the station and turn it into their office and an informal museum, a place where many heritage tools and other artefacts could be displayed, including a collection of old cameras donated by the recently retired owner of the local camera shop. A client had given us a very old birchbark canoe, and we formally presented it to the heritage committee to have the Chamber of Commerce hang it from the ceiling of the rotunda inside that main room. Some aspects of the station were renovated, and some were maintained as examples of their time, but overall it looked so modern to our committee that we asked them to try to preserve the exterior, keeping in mind how it would have looked in its time, a clapboard wall in the CP colours of cream and maroon.

We, the *Corporation des gares, Secteur Sainte-Agathe*, had achieved our goal. The station was saved and restored. Other stations were as well. We had sensitized the different players across the Laurentians to the concept of a linear park.

In 1992, my elder son had been a goodwill ambassador, cycling up the old train bed as a summer job. He was 14, and his job was to tell people about the plans to make the property into a cycling park, as hard as it might have been for some to imagine. It was rough, muddy and the rails themselves had recently been torn up by CP. They kept the rails from south of St. Agathe to be used in other parts of their operation, but the steel in the tracks to the north were a different quality. They sold that steel to Gillette to be turned into razor blades.

There was much resistance and indifference. A few times, my son and his co-workers were threatened and chased off the right-of-way; they had to cycle back to their base along the public roads.

I worked closely with Yvan Dubois, the mayor of the Olympic Village at the Montreal Olympics and the owner of Camp Edphy in Val Morin. We proposed the Solomonic solution of dividing the park, with the northern section for skidoos and the southern for skiers, just to get some unity. Somehow the idea was retained, although by then we had both withdrawn from the project.

The turnaround in the fortunes of the linear park and the creation of the Parc linéaire *le P'tit Train du Nord* happened when Intrawest, with its private and government money, asked Gaz-Métropolitain to supply natural gas to their massive condominium and real estate development at Mont Tremblant. The old rail right-of-way was suddenly needed, and though there are apocryphal stories about how it came into the hands of the very groups we had worked with, the park, coupled with the gas line, made the whole project work. The railroad stations were suddenly necessary again, but for an entirely different purpose.

Our committee was asked to help explore and promote our rich built heritage. It was reborn as the St. Agathe Heritage Committee. We did studies identifying some of the spectacular architecture that characterizes St. Agathe's history. We created a walking tour, and awarded plaques of recognition to owners who had restored aspects of their homes and businesses. We even explored the whole tuberculosis treatment history and twinned with Saranac Lake, New York, our real sister city, with a very similar history. The more we explored, the more we could identify the deep Anglophone roots that made St. Agathe a special place, and we explored all the great historical figures, Francophone and Anglophone, who had contributed.

The Heritage Committee was again consulted when a new railroad station was needed, 19 years after the last train had gone.

On Election Day, October 14, 2008, the railroad station was not on our minds. Stephen Harper, Stéphane Dion, Jack Layton, Gilles Duceppe – they were. But the sun rose the next morning on a whole other story. Kids, probably unwatched because of all our political preoccupations, played with fire on the receiving platform of our gigantic railroad station in St. Agathe. Back in 1995-96, when we first got full access to the station, I remember finding burnt marks where kids had played with fire, and I remember thinking that they never could have escaped through their little hole if the fire had caught more seriously. This time, though, the fire started on the outside, with the full stock of the Chamber of Commerce's offices, with artefacts, with our birchbark canoe hanging from the ceiling, all caught inside. It looked horrible on that morning of October 15. The massive building's roof had two holes the size of cars. The peak of the rotunda still stood, but all around it, the air could move through unimpeded. At the other end, the station

*"C.P.R. Station, Ste. Agathe des Monts," c.1910. McCord Museum, MP-0000.968.4.*

master's second-floor apartment was just a hole beside a chimney. The contents of the building were ashes.

After days of shock, some kids were identified. What should we do? It is never the children's fault—that is the definition of underaged. No action was taken against these young people.

Fire insurance would not cover replacement. In any case, the many archives, including the cameras and the canoe, were simply not replaceable. We discussed the fire as an opportunity to start over. The huge structure had been built to service different needs. It was a wonderful heritage building, but it was too big for its new usage, the linear park that followed the old railway line. Instead of replacing the whole building, I proposed that we look at the elegant station that had been originally built before St. Agathe's golden age forced the construction of the major station we had just lost. The second station had been built in its current location only ten years after the first train came through in 1892. That building, complete with the rotunda, was a more modest structure and, more importantly, the plans for it were available. Going back would be going forward—and that is what train stations are for, going forward.

We had established a lot. The linear park, along with its stations, had the resilience to overcome a setback of this nature. Now the focus was simply on doing it well. In the meantime, we had retired. We would no longer need to take the active role we had taken in saving the original.

Today, if you look at the new building, you will see its clean lines and solidity, its colours, its original function – and the original building as it appeared to tens of thousands of Montrealers, their first view of St. Agathe. Our initial motivation for valuing the heritage of the railroad station was to commemorate that period, and, while the current building did not experience the community bee to change the roof, nor the young Katimavik team, nor the canoe hanging below the ceiling of the rotunda, nor the archives, it is alive with a real purpose, a real function. It still evokes the fascinating history that made St. Agathe into a boom town, and that changed the face of the Laurentians well over a century ago.

My book *Naming the Laurentians* was inspired by these same incidents, this same heritage movement. The heritage study contributed to the core identity of the eastern Laurentians, the extraordinary energy that exploded out of the smallpox epidemic that hit Montreal in 1885 and sent us north into the Cantons du nord. The foundational history was French. The first townships north of the limits of the seigneurial system in old Terrebonne were Abercrombie, Wexford, and Beresford, all names that reflected British governance but that were chosen at a time when the capital of the Province of Canada was Montreal, a bilingual city with a Minister of Colonization, Augustin-Norbert Morin, representing the political party that spanned present-day Quebec and Ontario. Morin's objective was to develop farmland for the large population of French Canada crammed into the seigneuries and needing a place to go. His government's mentality was secular, but the French side of his government was supported by the Catholic Church. When Morin co-wrote the first civil code that would apply to Canada East, he shocked the church into action and the bishop gave the Parish of St. Jerome to the ambitious Curé François-Xavier Antoine Labelle. It was Labelle who conceived of tying the eastern Laurentians together with a railroad that would stimulate French Catholic settlement. Even the bishop could not have conceived what the consequences would be.

***Joseph Graham**'s book* Insatiable Hunger *reinterprets our historic understanding of the colonial period, here and in New England. It tells some of the stories that we were not taught in school.*

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*Photos courtesy of Joseph Graham.*

# Mapping the Townships – and Beyond

## *The Career of Amos Lay*

by Jane Jenson

In January 2025, a map of the United States published in 1827 had an asking price of $12,000 USD. Potential buyers would not know, however, that the mapmaker had a longstanding tie to the Eastern Townships. Nor that Amos Lay had been a major property owner in the Township of Ely and, as an early surveyor, had laid out plans for towns such as Philipsburg. Indeed, his only biographer describes him as a land agent "for the proprietors of a township in Lower Canada (now Ontario)" [sic], and suggests that he sold only "small amounts of land in Lower Canada" and that most of his life was a "marginal existence" (Allen).

Amos Lay's will, written in 1851 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, gainsay these observations. After describing him as a resident of Ely Township, the will lists ownership of numerous lots there, as well as properties in Michigan. Those in Ely were the remainder of a grant of 11,550 acres (a quarter of the township) for which Lay received letters patent on November 13, 1802. He worked actively in Quebec, had close ties to early settlers of several townships, and in his eighties he lived in Ely, where his perhaps better-known son, Amos W. Lay, had also settled (Wagner, Farfan).

Who was Amos Lay? He was a transnational borderlander throughout his adult life, moving often across the international line and maintaining close economic, familial, and friendship ties on both sides. Until the 1820s, documents call him "Amos Lay jun." because he was a younger son of Amos Lay and Mary Griswold. He was born in Lyme, Connecticut, but the family moved soon after his birth, so he grew up in New Haven, Addison County, Vermont. We know nothing about his early years or his training (if any) for surveying and mapmaking. The first documentary appearance of Amos Lay was in the 1790 United States census as a resident of Fair Haven, Rutland County, on the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, which at the time was the "highway" into Lower Canada (Lampee). The Eastern Townships, whose western entry point was Missisquoi Bay at the top of Lake Champlain, was just opening for settlement. Lay was among the early petitioners for a land grant. His travails to obtain it, however, lasted over a decade, revealing that he suffered, as did many others, from public policy uncertainty and policy reversals. (For the policy conflict see Kesteman, Southam and Saint-Pierre; and, in detail, Caron.)


Vacillation of public policy reinforced Lay's border-crossing lifestyle. On February 7, 1792, Lieutenant Governor Alured Clarke issued a proclamation that was widely publicized in the American states as well as Lower Canada, setting the conditions for obtaining Crown land and promising letters patent within six months. A deluge of hopeful settlers applied, only to find that political controversy and technical incapacity, particularly for conducting surveys, meant their petitions languished. Amos Lay was an example (LAC-BAC). His first petition, with fully 158 names, was made March 29, 1792, and asked for land along Lake Memphremagog; it was quickly rescinded because that land was already claimed. On May 8,1792, a replacement petition for land in Ely Township named Amos Lay jun. as Leader and listed 42 Associates, including his father and uncle. By December 1792, Lay had placed several announcements in the *Vermont Gazette* and other local newspapers calling potential associates to a meeting to raise money for a survey of the township, the price being the not inconsiderable £15.

Although the land committee had accepted the May 1792 petition, and the lieutenant governor had commissioned a survey in June, things bogged down. Two years later, despite having received the £15, the surveyor general reported the survey was incomplete. The shortage of surveyors was a major problem but so too was the identification of Amos Lay's 42 Associates; in December 1794, the land commission in Missisquoi Bay reported that they knew none of them. "Having a good Oppinion of the said Mr Lay we can not think that he would wish to introduce any bad Characters into this Province." Nonetheless, they recommended only him to take the oath of allegiance, which he did on January 30, 1795. Lay presented another list in June 1795, but the commissioners recommended only 20 names as eligible for the oath and a revised list of 20 was forwarded to the land committee in March 1796. Then, despite Amos Lay having made two trips to Quebec City to deposit long "memorials" addressed to the governor general (July 1794; March 1796), each of which recounted the saga of his petition, the land committee

*Amos Lay, Map of the United States, 1827. raremaps.com.*

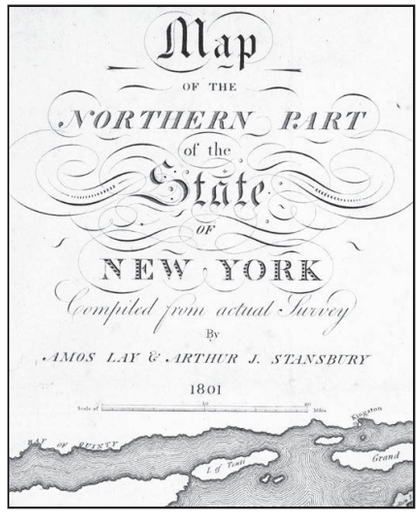
suddenly rejected it in December 1796.

In effect, between Lay's enthusiastic response to the lieutenant governor's proclamation in 1792 and the end of 1796, Lower Canada was mired in a major political conflict between the land committee, on which large landholders such as Thomas Dunn sat, and the government authorities. In 1794, faced with a backlog of over 1,200 petitions and insufficient resources to conduct the necessary surveys or even administer oaths, the Executive Council simply dismissed all petitions for which conditions had not yet been met, and restarted the process. Amos Lay began again, but the supply of surveyors plus political intrigue meant that by 1796 only one township had received its letters patent: that of Dunham, going to Thomas Dunn. Colonists, relegated to being "squatters," mobilized in protest. The conflict between the land committee and the governor general intensified until the latter was recalled. Lay resubmitted his petition in March 1800. A warrant of survey followed in May 1802, and the letters patent were delivered on November 13, 1802.

During the first years of the imbroglio, Amos Lay was active in the community of Missisquoi Bay. In his explanatory memorial of July 18, 1794, he declared he had settled in St. Armand in preparation for taking up land in Ely. In June 1795, identified as a surveyor, he was inducted into the Select Surveyors Masonic Lodge (Montgomery). This involvement no doubt contributed to the good opinion reported by land commissioners John Ruiter (a brother Mason), Jesse Pennoyer (the Master of the Lodge) and Philip Luke. Nonetheless, once all of his efforts produced only the rejection of 1796, Amos Lay – still unmarried at age 31 – moved across the border.

By 1798 and 1799, Lay was surveying the lands of northwestern New York State. He mapped part of the massive Macomb grant around Louisville and surveyed in Lisbon and Canton. However, he is most associated with Massena, New York, where he drew up the town plan and acted as a land agent: he was also the first Town Supervisor, after a successful petition for the creation of St. Lawrence County, New York, in 1802 (Hough). Indeed, in 1914, Alcoa Aluminium in Massena named a tugboat in his honour (Danforth).

In August 1800, Amos Lay from Massena married Lucy Euston from Pittsfield, Massachusetts; their son Amos Winnett was probably born in Massena about 1805. Amos Lay continued to be a border crosser, however. In February 1800, he had given the Seigneury of St. Armand as his residence when signing an agreement with a settler; this agreement transferred a




portion of the anticipated land grant to Lay in exchange for his handling the process of obtaining the letters patent. Throughout 1802, when he was described as a resident of Massena, Lay was frequently in the office of Maître Léon Lalanne, a brother Mason and the first notary in the area (Montgomery). Lay was signing standard contracts, usually printed, with his Associates, for the transfer from Associate to Leader of 1,000 of the 1,200 acres each would receive when the letters patent were finally issued (Day). After receiving these, Lay was back in St. Armand for a series of sales in 1803. Moreover, in 1809, he laid out the plan for the new town of Philipsburg, founded by Philip Ruiter (Montgomery).

Nonetheless, over these same years, he had another occupation. In 1801, he had his first major map printed. It was a basic *Map of the Northern Part of the State of New Yor*k. "It shows fairly detailed hydrography for most areas, and major roads and towns are depicted… Its most notable feature is its delineation of the boundaries of recent land grants and purchases. The large scale and attention to land ownership are characteristic of Lay's work" (Allen). This and subsequent maps clearly indicate the "Indian" lands straddling the border between Lower Canada and New York at Akwesasne.

Subsequent maps provide an indicator of this borderlander's thinking about the relevance of international borders. The next version of the New York map, which appeared in 1812, extended its coverage southward but also to the northwest, naming the townships in Upper Canada as far west as Lake Simcoe and the "Chippewa's Hunting Ground." Indeed, in his constant search for subscriptions to support his publishing, Lay presented this extension as a selling point of the map (Allen). What became essentially the last version of the map appeared in 1817 (it was republished at least seven times but was little revised) and included extensions into even more of Upper Canada.

Between these printings of the New York map, Amos Lay also produced *A New and Correct Map of the Seat of War in Lower Canada*. In 1814, using a document created by Samuel Holland, Lay updated information on roads, settlements, and industries, including the location of Lays Mill in Ely Township. Given that Lower Canada was the site of barely any action in the war, the interest of the map is more in its representation of the colony, and particularly the Eastern Townships, of which Amos Lay had good knowledge. He reprinted it without revision in 1837. (Smith and Vining provide a complete list of his maps, publishers and dates.)

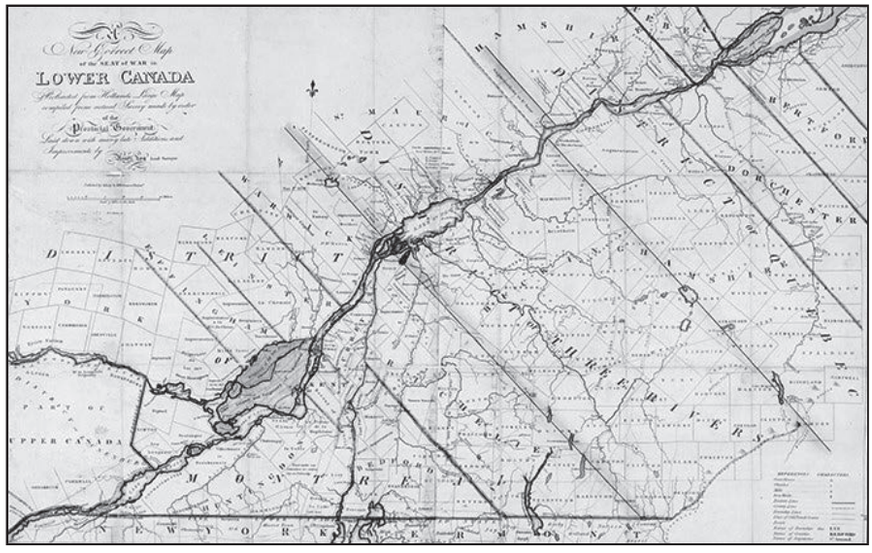
In these years, however, Lay's magnum opus was the 1827 map of the United States – as far west as the Rocky Mountains. Lay reissued this map several times and ensured its printing in England. He had to seek patronage for its preparation, including a promised trip "down the course of the lakes through upper and lower Canada – soliciting his friends, and those friendly to so laudable an undertaking, to furnish such data as may be in their possession." (The quote is from an 1818 advertisement cited at length in Allen.) The resulting map of the "United States" did not stop at the border, therefore: it charted the town-

*Detail from Amos Lay, Map of the Northern Part of the State of New York, 1801. raremaps.com.*

ships in Upper Canada between Lakes Huron and Ontario and all along the Ottawa River, although Lay provided less information about Lower Canada. The presence of detailed information about the colonial Canadas in a representation of the expanding national space of the United States was highly unusual; the New York Public Library collection contains no equivalent (nypl.org).

As Lay's commitment to a career as mapmaker matured, he and his family left Massena for Albany, New York, where by 1815 he had a "Map Establishment" selling his own work and receiving orders made with booksellers in other cities. Advertisements appeared in many newspapers through the 1840s, including in Michigan, where Lay had relatives. For example, on the first page of the *Montreal Gazette* of August 11, 1819, there was an announcement for the map of "the State of New-York," including its list of endorsements by American public figures. The newspaper office offered to handle orders for interested purchasers. By 1824, some of the family was living in Philadelphia, where Lucy Euston died in February. After that, Amos Lay moved about, residing until at least 1843 in New York City, but also making a long trip to England, from which he returned in 1835. He organized the printing of his map of the United States in London, and placed advertisements in several provincial papers.

By the mid-1840s, having reached his ninth decade, he was again tending to his land in Ely. In July 1845, he sold 200 acres to his son Amos W., who was relocating from Bolton to Ely (Registre foncier, 1845). In numerous other transactions at the time, Lay always described himself as a "mapmaker" and as resident in Ely. He did the same in his final will, written on April 7, 1851 (and probated only a week later), in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In that document, he disposed of his considerable properties in Ely and in Lansing, Michigan, leaving a major portion to St. Mark's Church in Grand Rapids and the rest to various friends and relations. The will included instructions to his executor to purchase gold rings for 20 female relatives and friends (Registre foncier, 1851). It fell to his son Amos W. Lay, acting for the executor in Michigan, to sell to incoming French Canadians, who were moving in large numbers from the seigneurial areas of Lower Canada.




A New Correct Map of the Seat of War in Lower Canada, 1814.
*bac-lac.gc.ca.*

At the end of his life, as he did throughout it, Amos Lay lived as a transnational borderlander, moving back and forth with ease between the two countries and maintaining strong ties in both. His contribution to settling the Eastern Townships rested on a nomadic life, initially prompted by birth, then by the policy uncertainties of colonial administrators and finally by the challenging demands of earning a living as an entrepreneurial mapmaker. Despite the "obscurity" of his individual history, it merits attention as evidence of the fluidity of colonial life.

***Jane Jenson*** *is a member of the Société d'histoire du Canton d'Orford.*

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# Lost Corners

## *Where in the world is Brooklet?*

by Heather Darch

*In the spirit of QAHN's popular "Raising Spirits" documentary film series that searches for cemeteries, crossroads and vanishing places in rural Quebec, this series of articles, called "Lost Corners," explores disappearing communities across Quebec.*

It's the apple trees and the knee-high fieldstone walls along Route 202 that are the first signs that you are in the Châteauguay Valley in southwestern Quebec. *The Circuit du Paysan* entices tourists to "Quebec's fruit belt" for its cider houses, farmers' markets and commercial pick-your-own orchards. Quaint rural communities with names like Powerscourt, Herdman, Rockburn, and Hinchinbrooke speak to an earlier time in the province's history when English-speaking settlers came into the region, primarily from New York, at the close of the Revolutionary War, but also from Scotland and Ireland beginning in the 1820s.

Brooklet was one of those communities. It was an area southwest of Rockburn, Quebec, from Route 202 to the American border, in Hinchinbrooke Township. The corner of the First Concession Road, where it crossed Rennie's Sideroad, was likely its centre. At that corner, a post office operated from 1900 to 1915 and put Brooklet on the map. Along the First Concession today, in what was the heart of Brooklet, only a few families, descended from the original settlers, live on their ancestral properties. For most, the road is simply a quick passage through the countryside. For local resident John Wilson, however, Brooklet has been home to generations of his family.

The Châteauguay Valley's colonial history begins in 1729 when King Louis XV gave brothers Claude de Beauharnois de Beaumont (1674-1713) and Charles de Beauharnois de la Boische (1671-1749) title to woodlands south of the St. Lawrence River, ignoring the Kanien'kéha Nation (Mohawk), who had lived there for thousands of years. Neither brother made an effort to attract settlers to their seigneury of Villechauve, commonly known as Beauharnois, and the land reverted to the Crown in 1749.

In 1795, London merchant Alexander Ellice (1743-1805) purchased the seigneury, and also acquired land in the adjacent countryside in what were later the townships of Godmanchester and Hinchinbrook. The Ellice family continued to contribute to the economic development of this territory until the 1860s.

After the Revolutionary War, Loyalist John Campbell from Cherry Hill, N.Y., petitioned for and was granted 600 acres of land in what later became known as Brooklet. Although the family had been here since the early nineteenth century, the Letters Patent were dated August 15, 1833, and were in the name of John's son, Peter Campbell. Today, John Wilson's farm is located on some of this Campbell land that stretches from the First Concession to the American borderline. Other early Brooklet settlers included the Farquhar, Thompson, McCoy, Wilson, Rennie, McGuiness, and McCormick families.

**Correction**

In "Lost Corners: Where in the world is Crystal Falls" (*QHN*, Vol. 19, No. 1, we inadvertently misspelled the name of Arundel pioneer Stephen Jakes Beaven. QAHN regrets the error.

*Top: First Concession (Brooklet) looking west, 2024.*

*Bottom: Detail of roof line of the Wilson barn built in 1894, Brooklet, 2024. Photos: Heather Darch.*

Brooklet residents used the wider network of communities around them for religious, economic and social connections. An early Protestant church was built in 1829 on Lot 35 on the 3rd Range (north of Route 202) on land donated by Henry Rennie (1789-1841) and his wife Agnes Wands (1803-1831). All Protestant faiths were welcomed, and, whether religiously inclined or not, nearly all attended as a "way of getting the news and seeing folks."

This Church is referenced in historic records as "Black's Church," likely because there was a family by that name nearby. In 1831, Henry Rennie donated an acre of land for use as a graveyard, and here he buried his wife and infant son John that same year. It is known as Hillside Cemetery today.

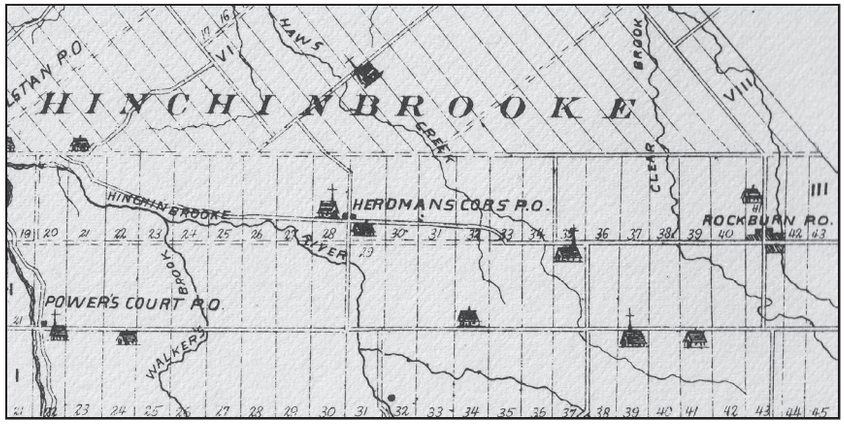
The location of the church was convenient for the residents of Brooklet as they could use an old military corduroy road to get there. The road had been cleared by American soldiers attempting to gain access to a British outpost on the Châteauguay River during the War of 1812-1814. Other Protestant churches in the wider community included St. Paul's Anglican in Herdman, built in 1848; the Rockburn Presbyterian Church, built in 1856; and Rennie's Wesleyan Methodist Church, finished in 1868, across from Black's Church. Irish Catholics attended St. Patrick's Church on the First Concession, east of Rennie's corners. The parish was founded in 1826, and, while the early church was destroyed by fire in 1936, its cemetery remains. The Rennie family also donated land for the first school, which accommodated the children from Brooklet.

Not far from the hamlet was Cook's General Store, built around 1825 and managed for many years by the Cook family.



*Top: Rennie's log cabin. Photo courtesy of the Châteauguay Valley Antique Association.*

*Bottom: Rennie's (Methodist) United Church, built 1863, 2024. Photo: Heather Darch.*




It straddled the border on "Cook's Line Road," an extension of the Rennie Side Road. Two cash registers were used for the different currencies. Another store called McCoy's, standing opposite Cook's on the Canadian side, was well-known for its sale of alcohol in Prohibition years.

In Brooklet itself, there was a cheese factory managed by the wonderfully named "Buttermilk Bill" Henderson. Later owners of this enterprise were John and Fred Rennie, followed by Fred Fall and his son, David. The factory produced cheese and butter, which was shipped to surrounding communities.

Like many other hamlets across Quebec, Brooklet diminished when economic opportunities came from larger centres. Huntingdon was a hub for business, Ormstown was the centre of Quebec's brick industry, and Beauharnois had its large paper mill.

Nowadays, there are those who are dedicated to preserving the history of the First and Second Concessions. For many summers, the Châteauguay Valley Antique Association has hosted a lively fair. Taking centre stage at the event, held on the First Concession at Rennie's farm, is Cook's Store, Black's Church and the Rennie family's original log cabin. Black's Church was painstakingly dismantled and moved to the Rennie farm in the late nineteenth century, and in the 1960s and 70s, Leslie Rennie (1901-1985) relocated the cabin and Cook's Store along with its contents.

John Wilson and his wife, Connie McClintock, live in a charming red-brick house built in 1866 by Peter Thompson, John's great-great grandfather. Regrettably, they have sold their dairy herd and understand that they represent the end of their family's legacy in Brooklet. Amongst his newspaper clippings, family papers, and photographs, John laments, "Who will want this; who'll remember any of it?" It is a sad sentiment shared by those living in all-but-forgotten communities across Quebec.

***Heather Darch*** *is a project director for QAHN and former museum curator who has been wandering happily around abandoned cemeteries and hamlets for years looking for interesting stories and stones – fortunately not as an incorporeal being.*

*Thank you, John and Connie, for your hospitality!*

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1871 Census: Hinchinbrooke, Huntingdon East, Quebec.

*List of Lands Granted by the Crown in the Province of Quebec from 1763 to December 31 1890*. Charles-François Langlois, 1891 (p.497).

*Top: Campbell family Lot #36, Hinchinbrooke.* Illustrated Atlas of the Eastern Townships and South Western Quebec, *H. Belden & Co., 1881.*



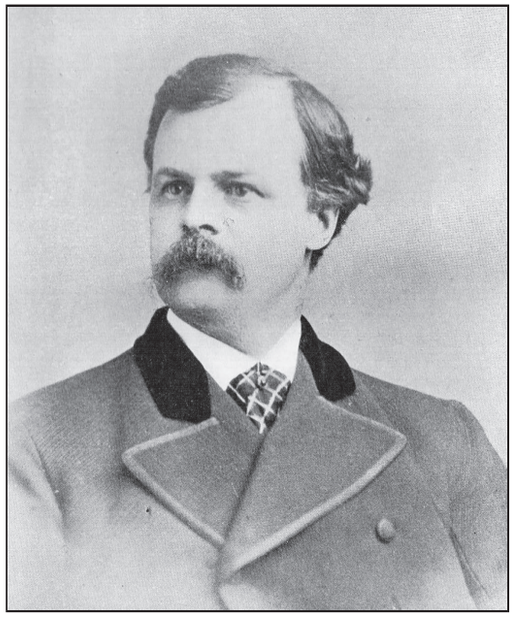
*Centre: Rennie family monument, Hillside Cemetery.*
*Bottom: Connie McClintock and John Wilson, Brooklet, 2024. Photos: Heather Darch.*

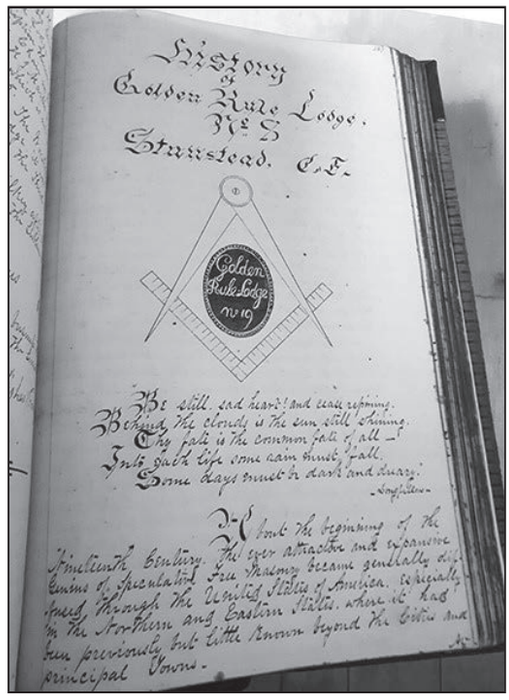
# Events That Might Otherwise Be Lost

## *Henry Joseph Martin and his Private Journal*

by Matthew Farfan

*The following texts have been excerpted from a "Private Journal" kept by Henry Joseph Martin, a resident of Stanstead, Quebec. Martin's journal, a large, leather-bound volume, has been in the archives of Stanstead's Golden Rule Lodge No. 5 since Martin's death a century and a half ago. The journal covers the period from 1859 to 1868. Original spelling and grammar have been retained. A momentous one in the history of North America, this period includes Canadian Confederation, the United States Civil War, the Fenian Raids, the Temperance Movement, and many other important social and political events. These events and others far more local are mentioned in detail in this diary, in particular the way they impacted life in Martin's beloved Eastern Townships.*






### Henry Joseph Martin (1828-1885)

Martin is an obscure man today. This is due in part to the fact that he was such a modest man. But in life, he was highly sociable, and profoundly respected by his wide circle of friends, colleagues and community, where he was heavily involved in numerous behind-the-scenes ways, giving freely of his time and energy, without expectation of recognition or reward.

Martin was remembered by historian Arthur Henry Moore (*History of Golden Rule Lodge*, published in 1905) as being "of a quiet, even temperament, born to win the hearts of his fellows and to lead them by the sheer force of his personality."

Born and raised in Stanstead, Quebec, Henry Joseph Martin studied civil engineering and worked as a land surveyor and draftsman. After pursuing his profession for several years in the Townships, Martin moved to Iowa in 1861, where he remained until 1864. He then returned to Stanstead for several years until he received an appointment to the United States Patents Office in Washington D.C.

After moving to the United States, Martin maintained close ties to the place of his birth, returning frequently to Stanstead where, among other things, he was one of the leading lights (and several times master) of Golden Rule Masonic Lodge. Indeed, he organized and supervised the construction of the lodge building, a classical revival gem which stands to this day. He also conceived and instituted the famous Masonic gathering that takes place annually at the summit of Owl's Head Mountain, overlooking Lake Memphremagog.

Martin died of tuberculosis in Washington D.C. in 1885. His untimely death was lamented by all who knew him. A funeral was held at Golden Rule Lodge, with many visitors coming from afar to attend. Grand Master E. R. Johnson of the Grand Lodge of Quebec gave the eulogy. Martin was buried in the family plot in Crystal Lake Cemetery.

Martin was known as a meticulous record-keeper. He transcribed by hand many of Golden Rule Lodge's minutes, bylaws and other records. The results of his work, literally hundreds and hundreds of pages, include a set of finely bound volumes that exhibit a high level of calligraphic skill; some of these volumes are illustrated with sketches and original photographic portraits taken of local luminaries.

Martin's "Private Journal" that has come down to us is remarkable in its detail. Within its pages may be found descriptions of everything from local disasters to political events of regional or international significance. Like many diaries of that era, when people's routines were so intimately connected with the seasons and the land they farmed, Martin's includes daily observations of the weather.

*Top: Henry Joseph Martin. Golden Rule Lodge collection.*



*Bottom: History of Golden Rule Lodge, transcribed by Henry Joseph Martin. Golden Rule Lodge Archives.*

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# Temperence Tempest and Other Happenings

*This first excerpt from Martin's Journal spans a two-month period between August and October 1859. The main event noted in the diary during this time is the ongoing battle between local Temperance crusaders and those (like Martin and his good friend Rufus P. Stewart, of Beebe Plain, Quebec) who saw no moral dilemma in the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages.*

## 1859

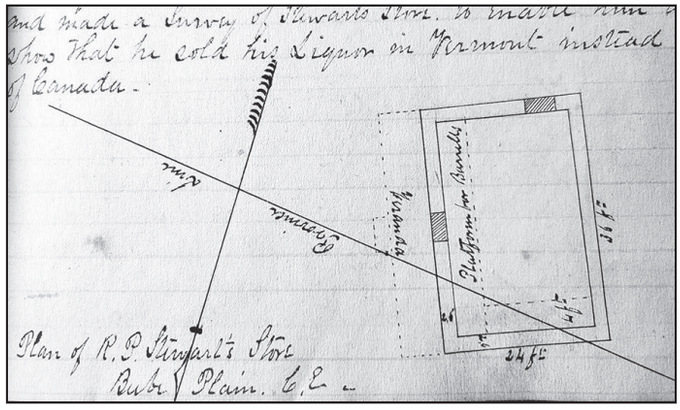
Believeing that a Journal may be of use in recording Events that might otherwise be lost, as well as of use in establishing ones whereabouts and what one was occupied about, I have resolved to devote this volume to be used as a private journal. I therefore commence recording this Sunday the 21st day of August AD 1859…

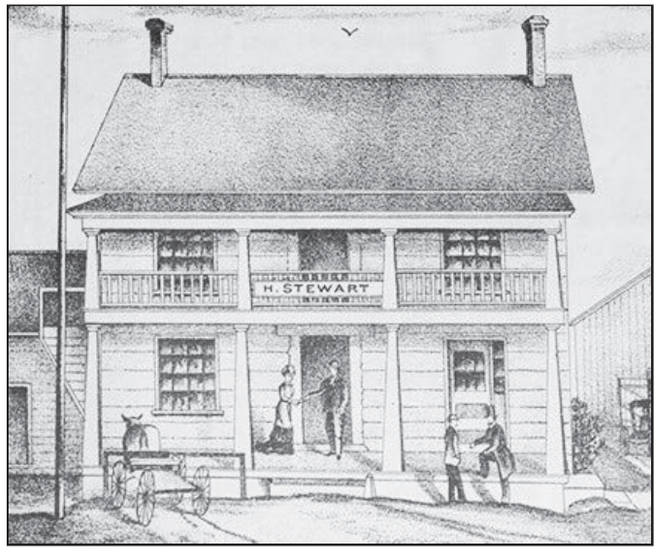
*Wednesday. Sept 14th.* Cold, windy, rainy, snowy day. In the house nearly all day. Went to the Line Post Office in the evening. Great excitement amongst the Liquor vendors. Every Landlord in the County with the exception of one (Levi Bigelow) has been arrested for selling liquor without a license.

*Thursday. Sept 15th*. Clear windy cold day. There was a tremendous frost last night. Got in Three loads of wheat and assisted Bachelder to cut up his Corn. The Liquor excitement increases. The Landlords and Merchants who sell liquor, are assembled at Winn's Hotel to form a league offensive and defensive…

*Saturday. Sept 17th.* Lowery rainy day. At home in the forenoon, in the afternoon I went to Beebe Plain and made a Survey of Stewarts Store, to enable him to show that he sold his Liquor in Vermont instead of Canada.

*Sunday. Sept 18th.* Fine pleasant day. Took dinner at Winn's. Went to the Line [Derby Line, on the Vermont border] in the afternoon and drew another plan of Stewart's Store. Took a long ride in the evening with Bro' Kathan. Stoped all night at Winn's.




*Monday. Sept 19th.* Fine pleasant day. Took the Stage at 4 o'clock A.M. for Sherbrooke where I arrived at 10 o'clock A.M. I am here as a witness in these Liquor cases, for Stewart, and to impeach Nathan Morehouse one of the witnesses. These trials have created much excitement throughout the country. The feelings and sympathies of the people of Sherbrooke are with the defendants.

*Tuesday. Sept 20th*. Cold rainy day. In the Court room all day. In my opinion the Court are a set of prejudiced men, who are determined to give judgement against the Defendants let the evidence be what it may. The sequel will show.

*Wednesday. Sept 21st.* Cold rainy day. In the Court room all day. The Court to day gave judgement in McNamarah's case, in which the witness for the prosecution was most thouroughly and decidedly impeached by their own witnesses brought forward to sustain him. There can be no chance for the others.

*Thursday. Sept 22d.* Cold rainy day. The Court adjourned until Monday next. Their decision of yesterday was too much for them. They must lay off a few days to recruit their exhausted energies. Stewart and I started after dinner for home, in the rain. At the Old Elm Tree we got out of the road and encroached upon the jurisdiction of the fence, and on feeling out our position (for it was so dark we could not see) we found a deep ditch between the wagon and the road.

After a most scientific effort, aided by a certain prayer book, the contence of which was anything but the Church litany, we succeeded in regaining our position in the road without accident, and went on our way rejoicing. We arrived at home beautifully wet inside and out, about 10 o'clock PM. Henry Benson's Saw Mill and dwelling house were carried away early this morning by the freshet, which broak away two dams and let the accumulated mass of water, flood-wood and directly upon the Mill & House. The family barely escaped in their night clothes.

*Friday. Sept 23d.* Cold rainy day. At the farm in the forenoon, at the Line in the afternoon. The excitement caused by these Rum suits still raging. Joseph

*Top: Survey of the Stewart Store by Henry Joseph Martin, from his Private Journal. Golden Rule Lodge archives.*



*Bottom: Horace Stewart Store, Beebe Plain.* Illustrated Atlas of the Eastern Townships and South Western Quebec, *H. Belden & Co., 1881.*

Stodard has been arrested for setting fire to Morehouse's House, and God knows that he is as innocent of it as I am. I have no doubt but Morehouse fired his own buildings, to get the sympathies of the public in his favour. Mrs Wallingford has opened a Temperance House in the old Durocher Stand, as Winn has closed his house…

*Monday. Sept 26th.* Fine pleasant day. Went to the Line in the forenoon. Afternoon Stewart and I went to Sherbrooke where we arrived at 7 o'clock PM. John W Baxter and Hellen Gaylord were married today.

*Tuesday. Sept 27th.* Fine pleasant day. Loafing about Sherbrooke all day, waiting for Stewart's case to be called.

*Wednesday. Sept 28th.* Cold rainy day. Loafing about Sherbrooke as yesterday. Eliphalet B Gustin was married to a Miss Bean of Hatley. Stewart and I went down to the Cars to congratulate him, got an introduction to the Bride.

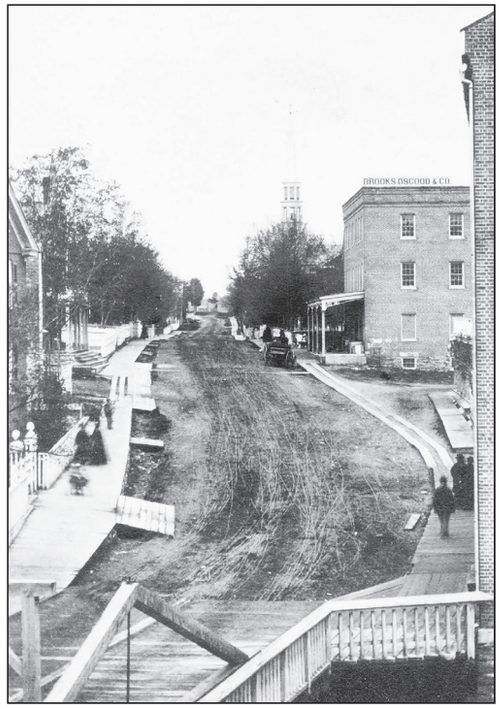
*Thursday. Sept 29th.* Fine warm pleasant day. After breakfast Stewart and I rode to Compton where we stoped to the cattle-show which was a good one. After dinner we started for home. Captured a Colt in a pasture between Compton and Hatley, belonging to Stewart, and led him home. I had not been at home more than an hour when I was subpoenad to return to Sherbrooke as a witness in Woodards case.

*Friday. Sept 30th.* Pleasant day. Went to the Line in the forenoon, pulled Peas all the afternoon. Father gone to Sherbrooke as a witness…

*Monday. October 3rd*. Cold pleasant day. Started for Sherbrooke. Dined at Coaticook, arrived at Sherbrooke at 3 o'clock PM. Roomed with W. S. Foster Cashier of the Eastern Townships Bank…

*Wednesday. Oct 5th.* Fine pleasant day. Called on Mrs & Miss Wesson. Started at 9:30 o'clock AM and walked home (14 miles) where I arrived at 2 o'clock, my toes somewhat sore…

*Sunday. Oct 9th*. Fine pleasant cool day.




*Downtown Sherbrooke, 1860s. Matthew Farfan collection.*

In the forenoon Mr. Kimball's House & Barn was burned down. The fire was caused by his children setting matches on fire while playing on the hay. In the afternoon Bro' Kathan and I went down and smoked the Pipe of peace with Bro' Stewart. Evening spent at Judson York's...

*Sunday. Oct 16th.* Fine pleasant day. After dinner C F Haskell and I started for Island Pond, where we arrived at 6 o'clock cold and hungry. Rufus Stewart and I spent the evening in Bro' Fennessy's room. Smoking, chatting, reading and drinking good Brandy.

*Monday. Oct 17th.* Took the train at 7 o'clock AM for Boston. Arrived in Portland at 2 PM, got dinner and Rufus & I went up to see James H Baxter. At 9 PM Rufus & I took the Cattle train to Portsmouth. We had to crawl through a window to get into the Sallon-car. We stole the cushions from the Seats and made us a comfortable bed, while others had to lay on the bare slats of their berths, which was not very pleasant to judge by their swearing.

*Tuesday. Oct 18th*. Cold rainy day. About 5 o'clock in the morning, the couplings in the center of the train (which consisted of 50 cars and two engines) broke away and droped on the track. The Engine went on and left the hind half of the train. The hind saloon car was thrown off the track and smashed up, no one hurt. Rufus and I walked into Portsmouth about eight miles. When the train arrived we took it and went on to Boston where we arrived at 4 PM. Drove Mead Blake's cattle out to Mitford and then took the horse cars for town. Stoped at the "American House…"

*Friday. Oct 28th*. Fine pleasant day. Left Portland at 7 AM. When we got to Island Pond at noon we found plenty of Snow. Arrived at home about 8 in the evening where we found Mr Stewart with a team to send us on to Sherbrooke to attend Rufuses liquor Suit. We went as far as West Hatley and being fatigued we got Supper and stoped all night at "Hitchcocks."

*Saturday. Oct 29th.* Cold cloudy day. Arrived in Sherbrooke at 11 AM, got our breakfast and went up to the Court House. Stewart's case came off in the afternoon, but the decision not to be given until next Saturday. Spent the eve' with the young ladies…

*Next: Fixing Up the Farm*

***Matthew Farfan*** *is a historian and administrator. He is also the executive director of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network and the president of the Colby-Curtis Museum. He is the author of* The Eastern Townships: In Town and Village *(2006);* The Eastern Townships: On Lake and River *(2008);* The Vermont-Quebec Border: Life on the Line *(2009); and* Tradition and Fraternity: the Continuing History of Golden Rule Lodge *(2020).*

## Sources

Archives of Golden Rule Lodge No. 5, Stanstead.

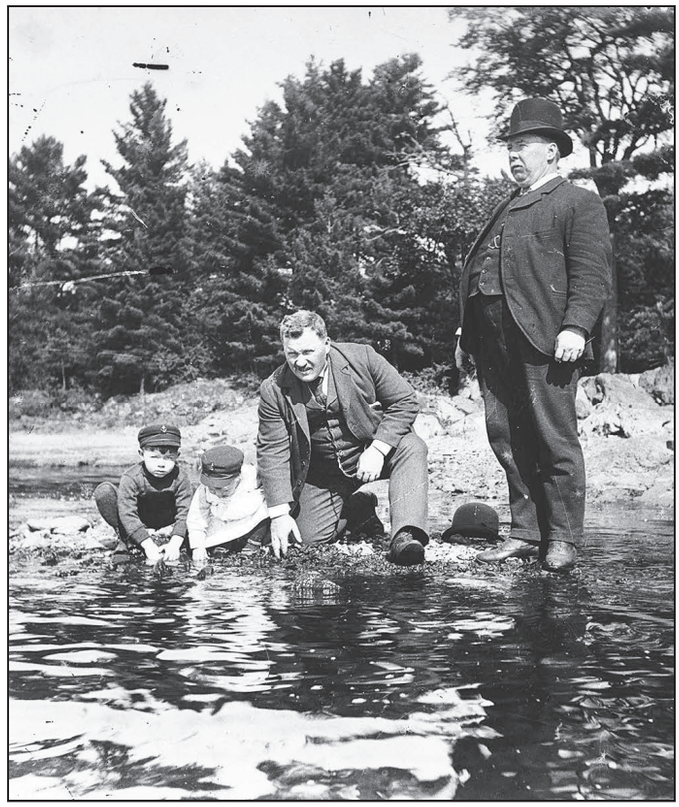
Matthew Farfan, *Tradition and Fraternity: the Continuing History of Golden Rule Lodge*, Stanstead, 2020.

Arthur Henry Moore, *History of Golden Rule Lodge 1803-1903*, Toronto, 1905.

Review

# Drummondville: Evolution Through 200 Years

*Voices Lost in Time: the Anglophone Legacy of a Small Quebec City*
by Nick Fonda and Barry Husk
Société d'histoire de Drummondville, 2024



*Voices Lost in Time* traces the development of Drummondville from a frontier settlement on the St. Francis River to a nascent farming and milling area to a very dynamic and prosperous twentieth century textile hub through a changing economy to the present day. There is an emphasis on the English-speaking component of the population: its rise, expansion, decline, and finally its small but stable presence today.



The authors, Nick Fonda and Barry Husk, have deeply researched their topic and demonstrate a wide knowledge of the history and demographics of the region. Each of the individual chapters, which are essentially chronological, focuses on an English-speaking person who contributed in some way to the community life and / or economic development of Drummondville. The separate chapters do not have attribution indicated, so it is impossible to tell which author wrote which chapters; there is a seamless and easily read style of writing throughout.

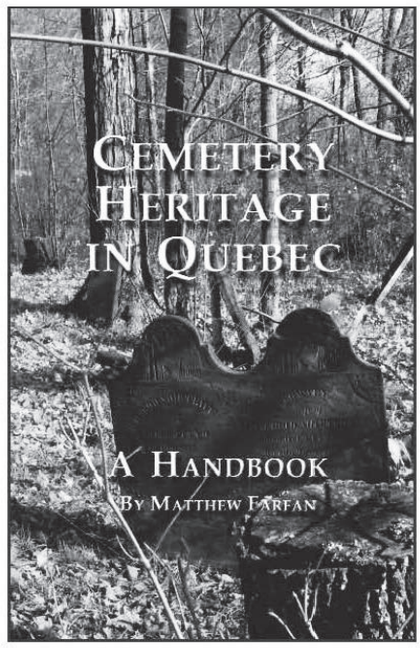
Some aspects of individual Drummondvillers – both life-long and part time residents – stand out. Fonda and Husk have included a much more diverse group than might be expected. Industrialists figure large in the book, but we also meet military personnel, teachers, journalists and artists. There are many women – so often omitted from histories – as well as several important persons of non-British Isles background, including Indigenous and Metis persons. Quebec has always been much more diverse, and our society much more complex ethnically and religiously, than traditional historical accounts tend to present. Hopefully, the trend we see here with regard to Drummondville – a so-called "typical" Quebec factory town – is the movement towards presenting more inclusive and realistic portraits of communities in historical writing.

This is a good, basic local history and a solid record of so many Drummondvillers who we really should remember. It is available through the Société d'histoire de Drummonville.

-Reviewed by Sandra Stock



*Annie Grey McDougall, "William, Jimmie, Ivan and Bruce Millar at St. Francis River, Drummondville," 1888. McCord Museum, MP-1974.133.176.*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