Beyond Burgundy: The Black Heritage of St. Henri

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Quebec Heritage News

Vol 19, No. 1 Winter 2025

Staking a Claim

The Case for Indigenous Landowners in the Rawdon Area

Gossan and Pyrites

Captain Holman's Continuing Quest

Drummondville Denizens

New Book Highlights Townships Stories

25 Years Ans QAHN RPAQ

Quebec Heritage News

Editor
Roderick MacLeod

Production
Dan Pinese; Matthew Farfan

Publisher
Quebec Anglophone
Heritage Network
3355 College
Sherbrooke, Quebec
J1M0B8

Phone
1-877-964-0409
(819) 564-9595

Correspondence
editor@qahn.org

Websites
qahn.org
facebook.com/QAHNCanada

President
Grant Myers

Executive Director
Matthew Farfan

Project & Contract Staff
Heather Darch;
Glenn Patterson; Dwane Wilkin

Bookkeeper
Marion Greenlay

Quebec Heritage News is published quarterly by QAHN with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage. QAHN is a non-profit and non-partisan organization whose mission is to help advance knowledge of the history and culture of the English-speaking communities of Quebec.

Annual Subscription Rates:
Individual: $30.00; Institutional: $40.00; Family: $40.00; Student: $20.00.Canada Post Publication Mail Agreement Number 40561004.

Patrimoine canadien Canadian Heritage

ISSN 17707-2670
PRINTED IN CANADA

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Cover: Reverend Charles Este and Elders, Union United Church, c.1960.
Photo courtesy of Dorothy W. Williams.

EDITOR'S DESK

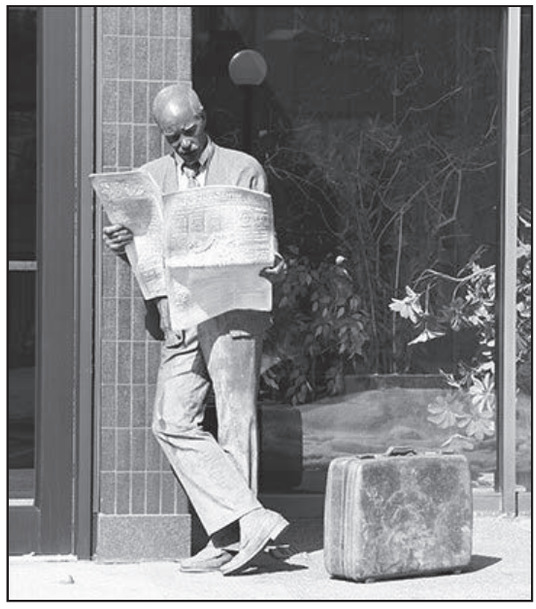
Atomic Age

by Rod MacLeod

You are holding in your hands the result of a great deal of thought. I don't mean the *content* of what you are reading, which obviously reflects creativity and imagination. I refer to the pages themselves. Part of the art that goes into storytelling is its *form*: a story can be told many different ways, and even the same text will have a different effect if it is read aloud or on the printed page. When read aloud, the narrator's voice (pitch, inflection, speed) will affect the outcome; aural factors. On the page, the factors are visual: font, margins (including the use of columns), punctuation (poorly positioned hyphens can really wreck a read), and illustrations. Without all that, we might just as well be deciphering a Roman inscription: a contiguous strip of undifferentiated caps.

Ok, some of you are no doubt reading the electronic version, having downloaded the issue when it passed its sell-by date and went online. No matter: you are still able to note the thought and care that went into creating these pages. That is the beauty of PDF, that champion of fixed form and perhaps our last defence against literary atomization. Moreover, you inevitably downloaded the whole issue, not individual articles, thereby preserving the integrity of the magazine itself. You can appreciate what brings all 32 pages of the *QHN* together into a whole, including the positioning of images, the use of colour, and the arrangement of features, reviews, ads, and letters. To access back issues posted online is to use the internet as a delivery system, a kind of electronic paper boy – rather than use it, as most of us tend to do, as a bottomless repository of hits.

I found myself thinking about the integrity of publications like ours while reading a recent article on how the Saturday newspaper has made a reappearance in a small community (Allison Hanes, "Gazette Print Edition Comes Back to Hudson," *Montreal Gazette*, September 28, 2024). It seems that the good people of Hudson have been rushing to a local emporium every Saturday morning to pick up an honest-to-goodness paper copy of the *Montreal Gazette*, a commodity that had not been available off-island for nearly two years until a local entrepreneur decided to take on the job of acquisition and distribution himself. His patrons wax lyrical about the feel of newsprint between their fingers and the smell of ink, but they also express the pleasure of seeing the whole issue spread before them the way the editor intended. They insist that reading the paper version satisfies their curiosity the way the online version does not. And that claim made me think about how we think about how we get information.



Implying that curiosity is not satisfied online seems counterintuitive. The internet is a veritable feast for the curious, tossing out points of interest with every click, opening "rabbit holes" that can and will take us far from where we started (mentally, that is – with the internet, an infinite number of things happen in one single place: the screen in front of you). Indeed, the internet provides so much information so easily that it can be a genuine curse for people like me for whom "curious" is largely a euphemism for "easily distracted." I start most days looking up something that popped into my brain in the middle of the night – which is a good way to lose 45 minutes of productive time and a terrible way to get in the mood for the actual task at hand. Even so, given a reasonable level of time management, the internet is a fabulous source of knowledge. In addition to pursuing useless trivia, I look up things I really need to know all the time, using even the much-maligned Wikipedia. Finding facts online is far easier than thumbing through books' endless indices.

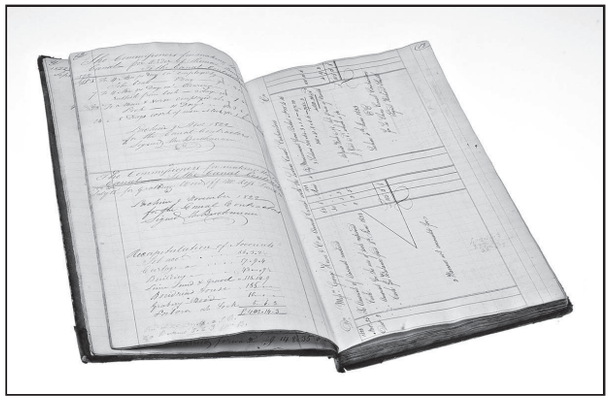
Researchers (at least those that can stay focused) know what a godsend the internet is. Whereas once you had to travel long distances to libraries and archives, sift through catalogues and finding aids, wait for books and documents to be delivered, and then figure out a system to record the information you discovered, now it can all be done in a matter of seconds from the comfort of your own home. In this sense, the internet is liberating. Even so, there is a certain magic in sitting in an archive (especially if it is located in a distinctive space, preferably old) and opening boxes of documents to see if what you've ordered is going to be pertinent to your research. Holding old minute books and handling brittle parchment echoes the nostalgia people express about reading actual newspapers. And don't forget the dust – the internet spares you the sneezing and coughing, but it also deprives you of the chance to connect tangibly with the past and marvel at who might have touched these pages long ago. I can go one step further: there was a time when I regularly handled thirteenth-century deeds, each of which came with its red wax seals and clearly had a rough side and a smooth side – what scholars

John Seward Johnson, "Catching Up," 1985. Photo: Sandra Cohen-Rose and Colin Rose.

call "hair" and "flesh," which perhaps tells you a good deal more than you cared to know about what these documents were written on.

All that said, the arguments about touching and smelling, whether they concern ancient documents or last Saturday's *Gazette*, are arguments that pit convenience against nostalgia. Most of the time, convenience wins. Truth be told, I don't really have the patience these days to wallow in old archives, any more than I do to take non-digital photographs or play LPs. Like most people, I read articles online, keep a huge collection of photos in the "cloud," and when I think of a song I'd like to hear, I look it up on YouTube (which tells you something about the kinds of songs I like to hear). But I do edit a print magazine, and when I come back from a trip I create albums containing the photos I took, along with brochures, receipts, ticket stubs, and lots of rambling captions. I could do all that in digital form, be it a website, a blog, or Facebook – but I like to be able to turn pages. Why do I do it at all? Because I like to tell a story.

And that brings us back to that sense of curiosity mentioned by those devotees of print copy from Hudson. Part of the pleasure in perusing a newspaper lies in the story it tells – not the individual stories one can easily summon up online, but the sense of progression from front to back that an issue, or at least a section, conveys. Someone decided what to put on the front page and what to consign to the inside, possibly "buried" at the bottom somewhere. Long ago, when most cities of any size boasted several daily papers, the political slant of each one was known, and that factored into your enjoyment – or your displeasure, if you were the sort that wanted to see what the other side thought. At any rate, there was intelligence behind the presentation, whether you agreed with it or not. By the same token, we appreciate (or remember appreciating) LP albums because they told a story; they were more than the sum of their parts. *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was more than simply a means to hear "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" and other tunes in one convenient place. Even the fact that there were two sides to a record, each featuring a certain unity, was part of the story; however much I came to enjoy the convenience of CDs, I always found it odd that I didn't have to turn them over halfway through – a task that also provided an opportunity to savour the way Side A concluded before pressing on with B. The journey from CD to Spotify involved the abandonment of any sense of unity, of voice, of story. Of a certain type of curiosity.



This process, admittedly, was liberating. The iPod allowed us to pick and choose what we wanted to listen to in the order we wanted, and even to assemble our own "playlists." Which was, of course, a form of creativity – rather like assembling a photo album, I suppose. But it's not as if one was exactly *coerced* into listening to *Sgt. Pepper* in a particular order (you could always lift and reposition the needle) any more than one is forced to read a newspaper or magazine from cover to cover. To argue this way would be like complaining about the "tyranny" of having to read the words of a book in the order the author chose – which is, in fact, exactly what many literary critics were arguing not so long ago. Such disingenuous (to me) reasoning seemed to suggest that it was practically an act of political resistance to read the end of a book first rather than plough through all the descriptions and characterizations and clues that the author inserted in the earlier chapters; one ought to sacrifice the appreciation of a good story in the interest of not submitting to the tyranny of the author. Such reasoning always struck me as absurd, and yet as time goes by I have begun to fear we are losing our appreciation for authors, for good storytelling. With increasing frequency, I find articles from news sites that focus on colourful incidents without providing context, or without answering glaringly obvious questions. Writers often don't seem to understand that there is an art to telling a story, and I suspect they often lack editors to put them straight. If that is liberating, I'll take tyranny any day – of the author, at any rate.

I joke, of course. Tyranny should be resisted at any cost – real tyranny, that is. And this is no joking matter in a world where tyranny seems to be raising its head everywhere you look. In the atomic age we live in, where information is reduced to bytes, the threat is all too real. Tyranny is ready to step in when traditional authority has been compromised and people see conspiracies everywhere except where danger truly lurks. I'm not saying, of course, that creating musical playlists leads directly to the destabilization of society, but I do believe that the current trend to undervalue authors and editors and composers contributes to a larger sense of mistrust that is not serving us well as a world. By enabling us to pick and choose rather than appreciate how creative persons have sought to tell a story (whatever the medium), the internet has posited the belief that your or my view is as valid as, or even more valid than, the author's. Admittedly, as literary critics will be sure to tell you, reading or listening or viewing is not a one-way street; we inevitably interact with what we read or hear or see, bringing our own life experience into play. And it is possible that on occasion we do know better than the author: there are a couple of books and films where I believe my reading makes more sense than what the author apparently intended. But all that is essentially critical thinking – which is a world away from the increasingly popular tendency to claim that I know best, that I don't trust experts, that I can "do my own research." We see liberty as an end in itself, rather than a cherished environment where critical thinking can occur.

We have recently emerged from a devastating pandemic wherein tens of thousands of people died needlessly

Lachine Canal construction business ledger, 1822-1829. McCord Museum, P070/A3,2.4.

because they believed in doing their own research rather than listen to experts – or simply refused to take basic precautions in the belief that they knew better, or even just *because* the experts said they should take precautions. Of course, there have always been people determined to pursue their own courses, but these days toxic incredulity seems to be spreading like a virus. Crucial to its spread has been the work of politicians out to score votes by discrediting experts of all sorts, including scientists; I can think of one recent world leader (and so can you), who through his wilfully ignorant rhetoric and advocacy of idiotic remedies during the first months of Covid-19 was responsible for thousands of deaths. In a way, though, the real culprit is the internet. We blame "social media" for all kinds of ills, but what we really mean is that information has been atomized, separated from its traditionally recognizable sources and cut into disconnected bytes. Within the internet we can be free – free to spread hurtful ideas, and just as free to be hurt by them. When certain politicians use social media to spread such ideas, they are putting nails in the coffin of open dialogue and reasoned discourse.

It is quite shocking how many people rely exclusively on social media to inform themselves about important issues. This is not to say that traditional media never had biases or axes to grind, but you understood where they were coming from and could, with a modicum of healthy scepticism, easily read between the lines. You also knew whom to complain to if you disagreed, or whom to sue if you felt you were being libelled. "Traditional" media also included offbeat, underground, even subversive publications that in a way resemble some of today's online platforms in their niche appeal. But the impact of some of today's provocative sites can be devastating: on lonely individuals nervously surfing by the blue light of laptop screens, on fearful parents convinced their children are in constant danger, on militant mobs with increasingly easy access to destructive weapons. There is no filter at work, no voice of reason, no recourse to expertise that might put matters in perspective. The internet is full of reason and wisdom and useful, even life-saving information, but it is hard to find and hard to hear over the sound and fury.

Perhaps there is no better illustration of the atomization of information than the recent descent of that great nation lying to the south of us into evil. I do not use that term lightly. To have elected this man once may be regarded as a misfortune, but to have done so twice looks like the abandonment of all that is good. To have heard the vitriol spewed against competent public figures, the slander hurled at entire segments of society, the terror stoked over imminent social collapse, and the indignant promises of retribution – to have heard all this and still voted the way they did is as clear a mark of evil as the one that motivated the largest number of German voters in 1932. More so, perhaps, since the man who would assume office in Germany the following January was an untested commodity. Our neighbours to the south had more than vile rhetoric to guide them; they had already seen their leader behave in an official capacity for four years. They could not rationalize their choice, as many did in Germany in 1932, with the hope that the bark was worse than the bite and the more unsavoury aspects of the party's program would be tempered once in office. In 2024, there is no excuse. Conditioned as people are to receiving ideas uncritically from the flashiest corners of the internet, so many appear to have lost the ability to make intelligent connections. They see and hear what they want to see and hear. The playlist includes fear of immigrants, distrust of expertise, and high gas prices. They looked the other way when it came to their candidate's history of corruption, insurrection, criminal conviction, and assaults on valued institutions such as a free press, demonized as "the enemy of the people." Such blinkered vision in the face of blatant contradictory evidence is the product of atomization. If people remain blinkered when the rhetoric turns into violence and oppression, they are firmly grounded in evil.

That is my view, of course. You might disagree. You might want to do your own research. You might also want to write to express your own views. We would certainly consider printing what you send us in the magazine – under the heading "Letters," right after the section called "Editor's Desk."

Letters

Working with Kevin

I've been meaning to write since hearing of Kevin O'Donnell's death earlier this year (*QHN*, Spring, 2024). My sincere, if very belated, condolences to Kevin's family, to you and to all who knew him, on everyone's very great loss. So many people benefited from his knowledge, experience, passion, and generosity for sharing himself and his talents.

That terribly sad news came as a total shock because I hadn't seen Kevin since prior to my retirement from the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University at the end of August 2012, after 42 years there. Kevin seemed as healthy, enthusiastic, and energetic as ever at the time, so of course that is how I remember him. To learn earlier this year that he had died of pancreatic cancer hit really close to home because my father died of the same disease in September 1993. Both were very good men who contributed so much to society and neither deserved to live that very painful experience.

As you no doubt know, when Kevin was an employee of the Ministry of Education, he worked closely with Professor Jon Bradley of "my" department, and occasionally taught Social Studies courses to our teachers-in-training, as did Sam Allison, another of QAHN's authors. It should have been no surprise to learn of Kevin's deep affiliation with QAHN. As the chair's secretary back then, I probably saw it on his curriculum vitae but certainly did not realize the extent of his involvement in this organization and in preserving Anglophone history, heritage, and culture in Quebec.

Dealing with Kevin at McGill was always an absolute pleasure, and the experience was enhanced because we both came from that Irish Catholic Montreal background, although we had grown up in different areas of the Island.

I was fortunate to work closely with Kevin for several summers on the Integrated Science program offered to teachers of mathematics and science at McGill in conjunction with the University of Alabama.

I also worked at St. Joseph Teachers College in Montreal for the last year of its existence as a Provincial Normal School, prior to its merger with McGill's Faculty of Education in September 1970, when the CEGEP system was introduced in Quebec. I wonder if Kevin completed his own teacher education program there, before my short period of employment.

Kevin really was an exceptional person. I am certain he is sorely missed by all who knew him, and I feel privileged to have been one of them.

Kathleen McElroy
Point Claire, Qc.

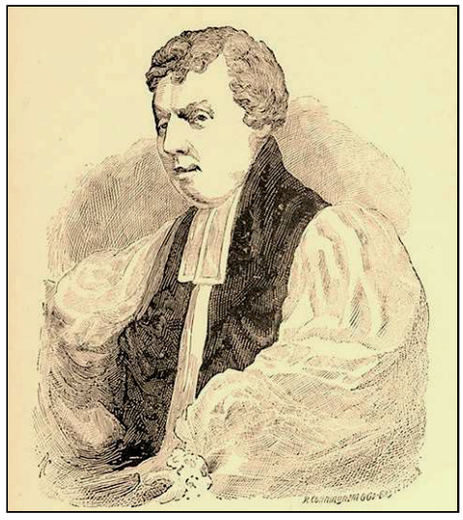
The Charleston Connection

Reverend Sam Borsman's "The Church on the Green, St. James, Hatley" (*QHN*, Fall, 2024) set me thinking.

People came from all over the Townships for the July First parade and celebration, including my own family from nearby Waterville. We visited our cousin, Judge Arthur Ives Smith, who lived in the old Ives Hatley home. His father was my great-uncle, Reverend Robert Smith, who from 1890 to 1894 held the Methodist double charge of Hatley-Cassville and Waterville. In 1891, he married Lucy Ella Ives, who came from a founding Loyalist family in Hatley.

The connection to Bishop Charles Stewart intrigued me.

Borsman mentions that the village name was changed in 1820 to Charleston, for a time, to honor Stewart. In 1816, the governor of Lower Canada gave Stewart permission to build the Charleston Academy. Indeed, local histories suggest that the name predates Stewart's time as a priest in Hatley. Perhaps it applied only to the parish he founded; it is not used in government documents.



As a traveling missionary under Bishop Mountain, and through his association with the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning, Stewart had great influence in Rawdon Township (where my uncle Robert Smith was born). In 1821, the newly arrived (from Galway) Reverend James Edmund Burton helped establish a school in Rawdon, which opened in 1826 for all children, regardless of religion or language, and was also used for church services.

Stewart was consecrated as a Bishop in the chapel of Lambeth Palace, London, on January 1, 1826. He was greatly involved in the development of the church at Rawdon and several other places that were under Burton's charge. Burton wanted a proper church built, and may have financed the Episcopal church that he constructed on his property on the township's First Range, which was consecrated by Bishop Stewart on August 6, 1830.

Burton returned to Ireland, and in July 1834, the Rawdon vestry had a new priest, but there was still no church in the village itself. Political dissent was in the air. In September, the Irish Catholic community established St. Patrick's Church in Rawdon. The Episcopal vestry decided to follow suit, and Reverend J. L. Milton was mandated to "solicit aid from the Episcopal Brethren abroad for the purpose of building" a church and a parsonage house. Powerful voices on the vestry resolved that "the village at present known as the village lands of Rawdon" should be known as Charleston, and the secretary was to inform his Lordship (Stewart). This all came to naught, however. Perhaps Stewart pointed out that there was already a village and school named for him in Stanstead. However, through his fundraising, he remained a constant supporter of the Rawdon church.

Borsman comments that village commons are rare in Quebec, but I believe that Waterville, only a few miles distant, and with New England settlers prominent in its early history, originally had one. I have an early postcard that shows the St. John's Anglican Church and manse, facing common land.

Daniel Parkinson
Toronto, Ont.

O'Hea's Heroism

I am enjoying the "Lost Corners" series of articles in *Quebec Heritage News*. I am not certain if my query fits into that category, but it is certainly a lost piece of interesting Quebec history.

Some 10 years ago, I visited Danville, Quebec, and located a plaque in the front yard of what was then the town hall. The plaque outlined the courageous action of a British soldier, Private Timothy O'Hea of the First Battalion of the Rifle Brigade. A train wagon laden with 2,000 pounds of powder and ammunition, sitting at the Danville railway station, caught fire. While others sought cover, O'Hea wrenched open the door of the wagon, collected water, and suppressed the fire, thereby saving the lives of those in the immediate area and also a good part of the town. For his action, Private O'Hea was awarded the famous Victoria Cross, the highest honour given to military personnel for acts of valour or self-sacrifice.

This past summer, I returned to Danville to find that the town has a lovely new town hall in a park at the edge of town. The old town hall has been repurposed and the O'Hea plaque is gone from the front lawn. I searched the site of the new town hall and found no sign of the plaque.

The awarding of this Victoria Cross is unique in two ways. It is the only occasion that the medal has been awarded on Canadian soil and the only time it has ever been awarded for an action not on a battlefield.

I am wondering what happened to the original plaque and if it is intended to place it again on public display.

Bob Dallison, Lt Col (retired)
Fredericton, N.B.

Editor's note: QHN *published an article on the heroism of Timothy O'Hea (May-June 2009, Vol. 5, No.3) by the late Stephen McDougall, a writer for the* Sherbrooke Record *based in the Danville area.*

Bottom: Monument to Private Timothy O'Hea VC in Danville, Quebec, 2008. Photo: Jean-Philippe Boulet.

Top: Bishop Charles Stewart, in C.H. Mockridge, The Bishops of the Church of England in Canada and Newfoundland, *1896.*

"No Sir, It's St. Henry for Me!"

A Black History of St. Henri

by Dorothy W. Williams

This article is adapted from a lecture presented at the Pointe-à-Callière Museum, February 22, 2024.

I was born and raised in Little Burgundy, although it wasn't called Little Burgundy when I was growing up. The 1960s and 70s were a pivotal time in Quebec's history, and I would say that my historical consciousness emerged at this critical juncture, when Little Burgundy was being razed and the early imprints of gentrification were taking hold in the entire Southwest, including St. Henri.

Despite my origins in Little Burgundy, I have lived in St. Henri since 1988, on the same street. I learned only recently that this street lies within the boundaries of St. Henri's historic Black community. In fact, this part of St. Henri has a much richer Black history than most people realize.

The village of the tanneries began to develop in the late seventeenth century with a few houses built along what is today Notre Dame Street. As the village's name indicates, residents operated small home-based leather works. By the early nineteenth century, these leather workers had attracted tanners, pelt preparers, and even shoemakers and related millineries that needed leather. In 1825, with more than half the village's population connected to the leather trade, artisans began to plan for larger facilities in the neighbourhood. This mechanization coincided with the creation of the Lachine Canal, which brought people and goods from Upper Canada and the United States to the city. It all had to pass through St. Henri. As a result, the village grew, new businesses sprang up, and Notre Dame Street became a major thoroughfare.

Before the trains, steamboats were the height of technology. Most moved freight, but passenger ships required human labour to care for the needs of the travelling public. Blacks, both men and women, were part of a critical labour force that kept the passenger ships moving. Employment records show they worked in an array of jobs: cooks, cleaners, shoe shiners, porters, mates, stokers, carpenters, and stewards.

Historian Frank Mackey argues that Blacks, regardless of sex, were considered the "females of the labour force" because they were not trained in nautical skills, nor were they ever employed on the hard physical tasks. These "female skills" followed Black men as they moved from the boats to the rails. Thirty years later, with the persistence of labour stratification, or racial segregation, the development of the railway industry in Montreal did little to change this perception of Black labour. Indeed, the domestic role of Black men was sustained on the railways for the next hundred years.

Wm. Notman & Son, Montreal from Street Railway Power House chimney, 1896. McCord Museum, VIEW-2936.

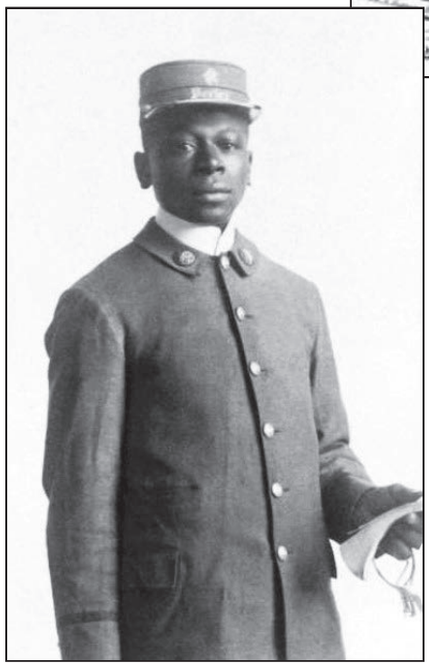
The railroads were critical to the story of St. Henri, and to the Black community in general. In 1836, the Champlain and Saint Lawrence Railroad was laid out, followed by the Montreal and Lachine Railroad in 1847, the Grand Trunk in 1851, and finally the Canadian Pacific Railroad, which opened in 1881 and would connect Montreal with the west coast. Passengers on these trains required service over extended hours or even days. The most popular business model for rail passengers, was one developed in the United States by George Pullman. His Pullman Palace Car Company eventually became the gold standard, which other long-distance rail companies tried to copy. The Pullman company trained porters to serve on trains across the continent. Pullman became a multi-million-dollar industry that used cheap labour. As with the steamboats, using cheap labour for "female work" meant hiring Black men.

In the early years of the railroad, Black men worked as cooks, waiters, and firemen or coalmen. Over time, however, America's Jim Crow attitudes became company policy even in Canada, and Blacks were squeezed out of these jobs. Eventually, the companies allowed unions to dictate job classifications. Blacks were relegated only to the porter class. African Americans were recruited to Montreal to work as sleeping-car porters.

Blacks were challenged living in Montreal. It was a segregated city, a bifurcated city based on language, religion, ethnicity and of course, race: negrophobia was rife at this time. Porters were a mobile group of young, strong, temporary residents who laid over in isolated railway "quarters," originally run by these railroad companies. The Black presence in Montreal's St. Antoine ward developed around Bonaventure Station and Windsor Station.

St. Antoine ward was a huge area that took up a significant portion of the territory of Montreal at that time. Its boundaries were Notre Dame Street to the south, University Street to the east,

Pine Avenue to the north, and Atwater Avenue to the west. A very small section within this ward along St. Antoine Street formed the iconic Black economic centre. By the 1920s, the heart of Montreal's famous jazz nightlife lay at the corner with Mountain Street (today's Rue de la Montagne). For several decades, the area immediately north and south of this intersection was associated with Little Burgundy. Of course, it was not Little Burgundy, but the St. Antoine Faubourg, once an upscale suburb. Over time, it became a working-class neighbourhood. Here is where most Black life unfolded.



In the nineteenth century, Montreal was bounded to the south-west by St. Cunégonde, which was originally called Village-Delisle or le Village de Sainte-Cunégonde and was part of St. Henri des Tanneries. In 1876, about a year after St. Henri had incorporated, St. Cunégonde became its own distinct municipality. Its borders never changed. The western border was on the east side of Atwater Avenue, while the western boundary was a diagonal axis that ended at Dominion Street. The map shows the triangle area that was St. Cunégonde, as well as the compact area just west of it that was where most Blacks lived. Cité de Sainte-Cunégonde went bankrupt, was annexed by Montreal, and was absorbed into the St. Antoine Ward in 1905.

In St. Henri, as in St. Antoine, Blacks lived in just a small section. "From St. Henry Place to the Glen and trailing along the tramway lines west into the city of Notre Dame de Grace there are more Negroes to be found than in any other section," wrote Wilfred Israel in his 1928 McGill University sociology thesis on Montreal's Black community. Today, this area runs from the Place Saint-Henri metro westward to the junction of St. Antoine and St. Jacques streets. The rest of St. Henri was almost devoid of Black residents.

By the time these Blacks had settled in St. Henri, the old artisan culture had long been replaced by a massive industrial infrastructure. Zoning and tax deals had built up an array of businesses plying goods in the international markets, and it needed the transportation infrastructure of the rails to move them. These businesses were powerhouses. At one time, some 62% of all of Canada's industrial wealth came from businesses around the Lachine Canal. They badly needed labour – and yet, these factories did not accept Black workers, forcing Black men to remain in domestic service on the railroads. Our statistics showed that 90% of all working Black men in Montreal worked on the railways.

This niche segregation largely explains the presence of Blacks in the extreme western section of St. Henri. Much romance has been built up around the Francophone working class that manned St. Henri's assembly lines, but Gabrielle Roy highlighted how, even then, St. Henri was a critical part of the railroad infrastructure in the city's south-west. Not only did the railway lines bifurcate the residential landscape, but both the CN and the CP yards lay right in the

Top: A. R. Pinsonneault, Map of Montreal, 1907, showing the boundaries between St. Henri and St. Cunegonde.

Left: Notman & Son, F. R. Blackburn, porter, 1904. McCord Museum, II-151582.1.
Bottom: Conrad Poirier, Railway in St.Henri, 1945. BAnQ, P48,S1,P11912.

heart of St. Henri. The Black families who lived there did so because the railway companies' personnel offices were nearby: CP on St. Antoine Street near Rose de Lima, and CN on St. Jacques Street between Delinelle and Lacasse. It was there, rather than downtown, that porters checked in and out of Montreal on their runs. This concentration of employers meant that Blacks in St. Antoine were also obliged to come into St. Henri on a regular basis.

There was also a pocket of Blacks in St. Henri who were stable, meaning that they lived there year-round. Stability was reflected in the emergence of Black establishments in St. Henri between St. Marguerite Street and the Glen Road. In early Black railway communities, the barbershop was often the first business established, followed by the tailor. Why were these two businesses critical indicators of Black settlement? Outside of the obligation to carry the financial burden of their comportment, the job of porter gave the Black man a measure of community status. He had a uniform that must always be cleaned and pressed. It had many bright, often gold-coloured buttons that made it looked very officious, almost military. Such a uniform would have created a certain type of bearing in the community, and no doubt, a good tailor helped to maintain this image. Being on the train for days at a time, often with only three to four hours sleep each night, porters no doubt looked forward to a clean shave and a good hair trim once home. And although sleeping car porters and red caps wore hats with brims and shiny buttons, ensuring that the hairlines were sharp and sideburns were even, the men knew that the quick shave on the moving train did not equal the close shave of the barber's razor. Even with their low wages, the serious porter spent part of it to invest in personal hygiene.

Wilfred Israel noted that there was a third Black institution in St. Henri in the mid-twenties: a private men's club called the European Club. Israel tallied 42 such clubs for Blacks in Montreal – quite a significant number for only 3,000 Blacks. These social clubs helped mitigate the racial exclusion these men felt in Montreal's social culture, where many doors were closed. These clubs allowed paying members to socialize, grab a snack, drink, smoke cigars, read newspapers, and play dominos or cards. Although weekends were usually the most popular time to be at the clubhouse, members came and went throughout the week at all hours of the day, particularly when the men were laid-over or between their runs on the train. The more upscale clubs might have a pool table, darts, a piano or even a small jamming space for amateurs. Because Black men were often not welcome in the local corner tavern or downtown bar, these private social clubs in Black neighbourhoods preserved that "man cave" atmosphere and camaraderie. They functioned as a release valve where men could be themselves, and rail against the injustices and abuse heaped on them at work and in society.

A decade after Israel completed his thesis, Montreal's first Black newspaper, the *Free Lance*, showed that Blacks continued to reside in St. Henri. Issues from 1937 and 1938 depicted advertising for two businesses in St. Henri within the same area we identified in the 1920s: one was a hair salon, the other a newsstand. This is remarkable, given that the Depression hit Montreal's Black communities severely: 80 to 90% of the men were unemployed for significant periods as rail travel slowed. These businesses may be our only clues as to the persistence of the small enclave that was still rooted in the western part of St. Henri.

But St. Henri's story doesn't end here. Montreal's Black community has other connections to this neighbourhood, beginning with the city's oldest continuous Black church, located just east of Atwater Avenue near today's Lionel Groulx metro station. Despite innumerable references to Little Burgundy in films, articles and books, Union United Church is not in Little Burgundy. The church moved to Delisle Street in 1916 – only about four years after the towering church across the street, Saint Irenaeus, was built. Union United even predated the Atwater Market, which arrived only in 1933.

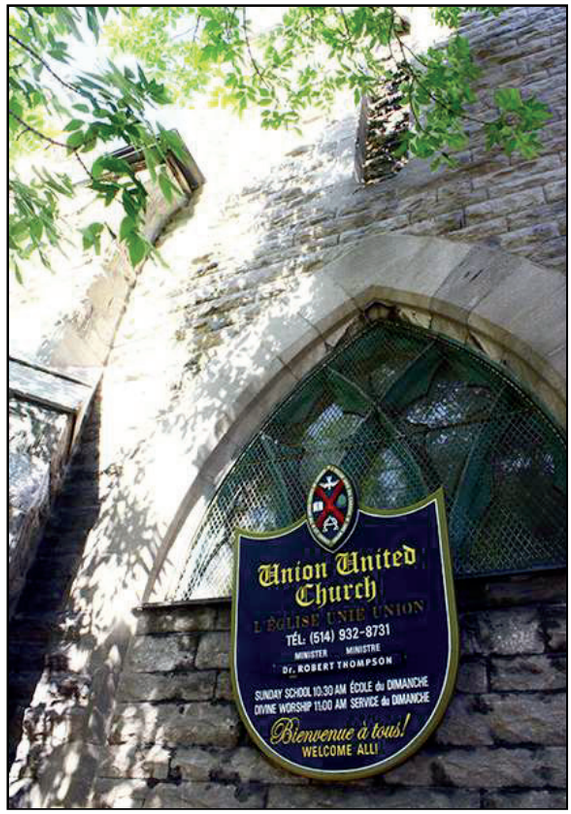
Creating Union United in 1907 was a response to racism in Montreal's established churches. The importance of church as a community institution at this time cannot be overstressed, and this was especially true for Union United, which became a symbol of Black community, self-identity, and collective kinship. Its congregation faced special challenges living in a segregated city, with negrophobia a government policy, restricting settlement, family reunification and even employment prospects.

Some boast there is a church on every corner in Montreal. Yet, at the turn of the last century, for Blacks in St. Antoine, the simple act of attending church was not an easy one. Blacks felt overt hostility when they attempted to worship at mainstream churches. It was not unusual to find that they were either denied a pew or shunned, perhaps even accosted after the service, with children throwing stones or spitting at them. Union United brought together the different religious denominations and stressed Black brotherhood and ecclesiastical

Barbershop / Free Lance advertisements. Images courtesy of Dorothy W. Williams.

openness towards all Blacks. This was unusual thinking, given that at the time Canadian businesses had the legal right to refuse to serve someone if they did not like their skin colour. Churches often exercised this same privilege. But Union United did not care about these social indicators. It was the voice of conciliation, empowerment and mediation. For decades, this small church ministered to the Blacks of St. Antoine, St. Cunégonde, Little Burgundy and, yes, St. Henri.

One of Union United's successes has been its unwavering support for opposition to South Africa's apartheid regime. It came as no surprise that, shortly after his release from prison in 1990, Nelson Mandela travelled to Canada and spoke to 15,000 people gathered on the Champs de Mars. He then insisted on visiting the congregation that had stood by him for so many years. At Union United, he gave another speech to an overflow crowd, stating that this church, a civil rights champion in its small corner of St. Henri, was his home.



Union United Church has played another significant role in the development of the local Black community. The Negro Community Association (later the Negro Community Centre, or NCC) started in 1927, and for almost three decades its activities took place in the basement of Union United Church. It was only in 1954 that the centre moved to 2035 Coursol Street in Little Burgundy. The NCC closed its doors in 1989, but at one time it played a key role in developing unity consciousness through vocational education, sports and leisure. Community members would come from St. Antoine, NDG, and Verdun for arts and crafts, reading and drama clubs, elocution, drama, and music. In the basement of the Union Church, the early Black community was entertained, educated, and fed in body and mind.

As a result of its connections to the Social Welfare Federation, the NCC was given the responsibility to run youth activities in a park in St. Henri at the corner of St. Jacques and Brewster streets. This park was open to all in the St. Henri area. Every summer, thousands of children used the wading pool and took part in pick-up games and team sports. The NCC partnered with a host of foundations, philanthropists, and social service agencies to meet the needs not only of Black residents but of any families in St. Henri willing to take part.

Two blocks north of Union Church and two blocks east of Atwater Avenue lies Charles Drew Park, named for the inventor of the blood bank, which saved billions of lives. African-American Charles Drew was a 1933 McGill graduate and a top-notch athlete. Some say Drew became the first Black to obtain his surgical license. He practised at the Montreal General Hospital. Back in the United States, Drew continued his research into blood plasma and transfusion, and during World War II, Britain invited him to set up and manage the world's first blood bank. Drew is not from Montreal, and as a student and practicing doctor he did not live in the city's Black community. Yet, on November 30, 1994, on Walker Street in St. Henri, a park was named to honour his connection to Montreal. Charles Drew Park is the only Black commemorative space in St. Henri. I find it interesting that the site chosen to honour this marvelous athlete and incredible inventor was just steps from the playground that the NCC managed over 60 years earlier.

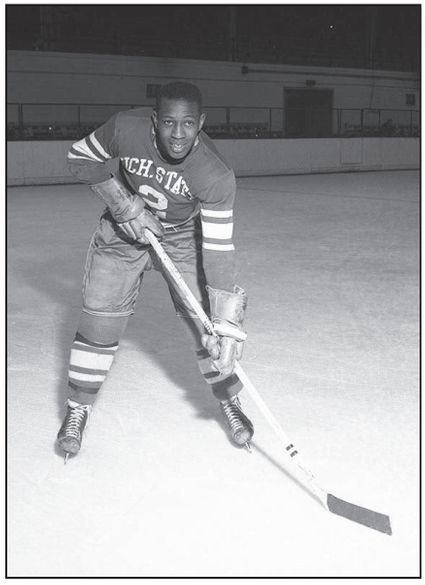
While most residents of St. Henri over the last hundred years would say they had not ventured into Little Burgundy and had no solid connection to the neighbourhood, the Black community of Little Burgundy would say the opposite. Going into St. Henri was, for most of us, a weekly activity. While the Atwater Market gave us our best options for fruits and vegetables, much of our retail purchases were made on Notre Dame Street, particularly the stretch between Atwater and Rose de Lima. Our shopping began at the butcher's and continued to the Applebaum shoe store or Liberal's clothing store. A lot of Burgundy money was spent along that strip. Fifty or sixty years ago, when we said we were "going downtown" it meant strolling on Notre Dame, not St. Catherine Street. Walking up the hill at Atwater or Guy was not commonplace until commercial gentrification meant that Notre Dame's stores of produce and household goods were replaced by food boutiques.

A great many well-known Black families made St. Henri home. Oscar Peterson's early years were spent in the manse attached to Union United Church, although the family eventually moved into

Top: Union United Church, 2019. Photo: Rod MacLeod.

Bottom: Mural at Union United Church. Photo courtesy of Dorothy W. Williams.

St. Antoine. Another prominent resident was Edward Packwood, editor and publisher of the *Free Lance*. His wife, Ann, was known for her decades of philanthropic work with the Coloured Women's Club, the oldest Black women's club in Montreal. One of their daughters, Lucille Cuevas, was the first Black librarian in Montreal and mentored dozens of students in her trailblazing career before leaving for Ontario. Their other daughter, Mairuth, became a diplomat, activist, and author of the lauded book, *No Crystal Stair.* Their lives were intimately entwined in Montreal's early Black community. Even after they left, they were tireless in their efforts to impel the governments to acknowledge the Black presence in the country. Mairuth was decorated for her innovative promotion of Canada abroad and her environmental stance with the United Nations. She has even been acknowledged globally with the declaration of Mairuth Sarsfield Day.

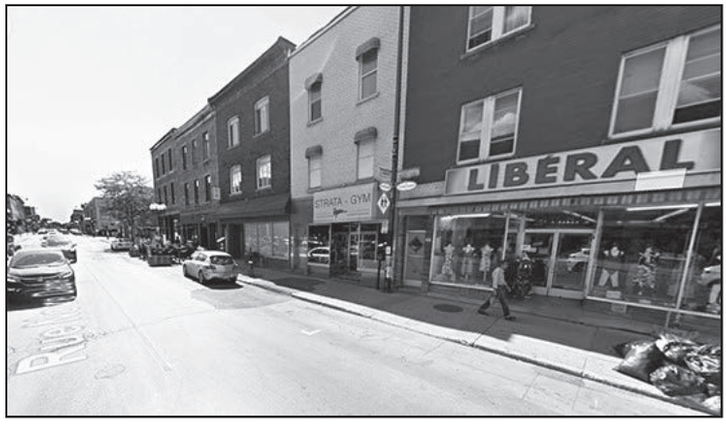


Another accomplished family was the Lords, who lived on and around St. Antoine Street. Gwen Lord helped to re-make Protestant education, becoming the first Black school principal in Montreal – a real milestone, given how hard it was for Blacks to even get hired. Richard Lord, Gwen's brother, has broken ground in so many areas in Montreal and abroad. He broke varsity sports records while at Michigan State University. He was responsible for connecting the communications at Expos 67. He ran numerous companies and became the province's first Black immigration judge. Always an activist, Richard lobbied for the recovery of the Jackie Robinson statue and got recognition for the Black porters with a plaque at Windsor Station. Perhaps his most significant achievement is that in 1966, long before Dominique Anglade, Richard Lord became co-Leader of the Quebec Liberal Party.

The story of Blacks in St. Henri is one of class and race. Renting homes outside the district was sometimes difficult. Westmount, immediately to the north of St. Henri, was basically restricted. Living in Westmount was considered a privilege because of the better schools and superior municipal services. Many Blacks lived on the south side of St. Antoine Street in St. Henri, they hoped to be able to eventually move across the street into Westmount. In one case, a Black family paid $300 to obtain the key to a flat on the Westmount side of the street. The family did not live there, but they were allowed to use the address so their children could go to school in Westmount.

I am not claiming that St. Henri was an extension of Little Burgundy's Black community. Yet, clearly St. Henri was not separated from the development of the Black community in Little Burgundy. In some respects, the culture of the city's Black population, its social and educational development, straddled both neighbourhoods. For a good many Blacks who could afford to, moving to St. Henri presented its own challenges because they would be distant from the Black institutions and the larger Black population. Even so, St. Henri was seen as an opportunity. Sometimes that opportunity was for their own livelihoods. Sometimes it was for their children. For others, St. Henri felt like an opportunity to remove that stain of St. Antoine's loose reputation. In his 1964 McGill thesis, "West Indian Associations in Montreal," Don Handelman recounts the following:

> *Two Negroes were walking west on St. Antoine Street one evening. In passing through the sporting district one was heard to say: "I am going to move from St. Antoine Street." His companion asked, "Why are you leaving St. Antoine Street?" The first speaker replied, "Do you think that when I go to look for a job I am going to say 'I live on St. Antoine Street.' No sir St. Henry for me."*



Dorothy Williams *is the author of* Blacks in Montreal: 1628-1986 An Urban Demography *and* The Road to Now: A History of Blacks in Montreal. *She also established Blacbiblio.com Inc, which has produced an educational kit for teaching Black history, the ABC's of Canadian Black History.*

Top: Conrad Poirier, Atwater Market, St. Henri, 1945. BAnQ, 06M,P48,S1,P11922.

Left: Richard Lord, 1951. Michigan State University Archives, A009189. Bottom: Notre Dame Street, St. Henri, Google Street View, 2016.

Lost Corners

Where in the world is Crystal Falls?

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, a new series of articles called "Lost Corners" explore disappearing locations across Quebec.

We invite any of our readers who happen to know of a "lost corner" in their region to let us know about it so that Heather can contact you for more information. Please make sure there are high resolution historic and modern-day photographs to share and a story of interest to tell. When was the "corner" founded? Who lived there? What happened there and why should we remember this location?

Please send your suggestion to editor@qahn.org.

Photo: Knox Church Crystal Falls Memorial Fund Facebook page.

The final chapter in the history of Crystal Falls ends in fire.

On Saturday May 29, 2021, the wood-framed Knox Church, on the boundary between the municipalities of Arundel and Mont-Tremblant, Quebec, burned to the ground. The heritage building was listed in the *Répertoire du patrimoine culturel du Québec*. The mayor of Arundel provided a heartfelt statement: "The destruction of a church, no matter what the cause, is dismaying, especially one so beautiful and peaceful, which watched over this part of the valley of our village of Arundel" (author's translation).

The church was the last public building in what was an old English-speaking settlement in Quebec's Laurentians. At one time, there was a post office, an elementary school, a cheese factory, a water-powered grist and sawmill, dairy and crop farms and the Presbyterian church and its cemetery.

In 1822, the first non-indigenous pioneer to establish a presence in Arundel Township was Stephen Jakes Bevin (1799-1886), a hunter and trapper, and a former clerk and interpreter for the Hudson's Bay Company. His trading post was located at the stream joining Beaven Lake to the Rouge River. While some half-hearted attempts at settlement were made after Bevin's arrival, it wasn't until the 1850s that land was surveyed and opened for development. Historian Cyrus Thomas called the region "a terra incognita," ignoring the Weskarinis Algonquin's presence for hundreds of years.

Politician Sydney Robert Bellingham (1808-1900) directed the surveying and settlement in "the wild lands of northern Argenteuil." He encouraged French Canadian, Irish, English, and Scottish families to settle here, and opened the first post office called "Fitzalan." In 1857, a Glaswegian couple, William Thomson and Margaret Currie, considered to be the first permanent settlers, established their farm close to where Arundel is today and operated the post office. Settlers soon followed and the family names in the Knox Church cemetery, such as McMahon, McIntyre, Dobie, and Bennett, represent those early Irish and Scottish families.

The northernmost English-speaking settlement in the County of Argenteuil, Crystal Falls was situated midway between Arundel and St. Jovite. You won't find the name "Crystal Falls" on mid-nineteenth century maps, though. In 1878, the first town council of Arundel comprised the "United Townships of Arundel and De Salaberry," with meetings held in De Salaberry. The name De Salaberry was later changed to Crystal Falls. To make it slightly more confusing, the post office in De Salaberry, established in 1876, was known as "Antoinette." Mapmakers used both names mutually to mark the community.

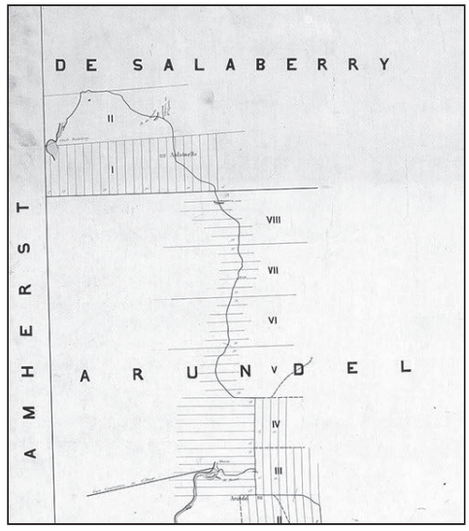
In September 1897, the citizens of De Salaberry petitioned to have their post office and their community called "Crystal Falls," as it was "situated close to a falls on Devil's Creek." They argued that they were "an English-speaking settlement" and they would "rather have an English name" to reflect the heritage of their community. The petition was granted, and the hamlet's name and its post office were duly changed to please its citizens, although De Salaberry remained in use for years.

In 1908, a new church building was built opposite the original 1878 church. The local newspaper announced that the dedication service was scheduled for December 19, 1908 "at De Salaberry." The interior was "neatly finished, with sheeted walls of varnished white spruce," with a seating capacity of 150 people. While this seemed to be a promising achievement for the hamlet, Crystal Falls was already in its decline.

The arrival of the train in Arundel at the turn of the century, and economic opportunities elsewhere, signaled the end. A number of farming families believed that they would "get on better in the world elsewhere," and left their farms to be reclaimed by the encroaching Laurentian forests. The post office, which is now a private home, closed long ago, in the summer of 1915. The large mill burned down in 1919. The cheese factory closed, as did the school.

Although there are still heritage homes in the area, the hamlet itself disappeared from maps and ceased to have an identity except for Knox Church. Without an active community of parishioners, however, the church stopped providing regular worship services, but it did hold special ecumenical services

and, on occasion, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Fortunately, people who could trace their family lineage to the community continued to support the maintenance of the building and its graveyard through the *Knox Church Crystal Falls Memorial Fund* which was established in 1977. Exterior upkeep and fresh coats of paint over the years, served the building well, and in 2002 the church was painstakingly restored and reflected the pride people still had in their vanishing community.



The Fund also created the Canon Horace G. Baugh (1916-2007) Memorial Scholarship for deserving students with ancestral ties to the original families of the hamlet. It also subsidized the congregation's project to perpetually illuminate the building with exterior floodlights. The lights allowed travellers to see a "welcoming and comforting beacon" along the dark stretch of highway between the municipalities of St. Jovite and Arundel.

Sadly, the social media trend to identify historic rural churches as "haunted" has been taken as an invitation for people to conduct séances and to "party" in heritage buildings. Early in the spring of 2021, the church was vandalized, its door and windows smashed, and its sacred interior badly damaged. A few weeks later, it was reduced to ashes, thus ending its beloved place in the vanished community of Crystal Falls. The Sûreté du Québec closed the case in 2022 without any suspects.

Now, a white cross stands where the church once stood, but its small well-cared-for cemetery continues to give testament to the first families who came to build a community that they hoped would last for generations.

Heather Darch *is a project director for QAHN and a 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.*

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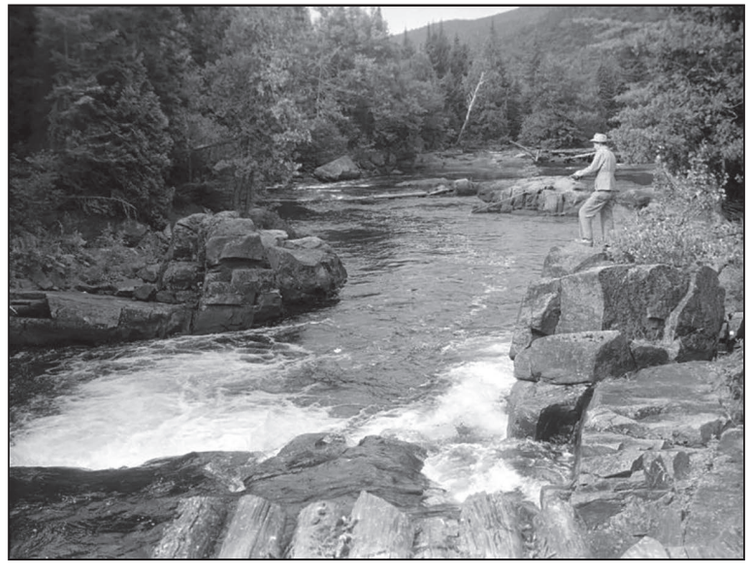


Top and bottom: Knox Church Crystal Falls Memorial Fund Facebook page.

Middle: Edouard-Gaston Deville, Plan des chemins du Comté d'Argenteuil, 1876. BAnQ, E21, S555, SS1, SSS5, P4.

Heart of the Northern Townships

by Joseph Graham

St. Agathe is a regional service centre for the fastest growing sector of the province. It is being discovered as an ideal retirement area boasting an excellent community hospital and an array of stores. It had a significant English-speaking community for over one hundred years and is surrounded by lakes with organized lake associations and activities, largely English-speaking.

Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts is a layered community that, unlike so many other small towns, has failed to integrate its different contributing communities. Originally it was the northern limit of Augustin-Norbert Morin's settlements. He was the minister responsible for colonization in the 1840s and he developed what was called *les Cantons du nord* (Northern Townships) in 1846. These were developed to the north of the seigneurie of Mille Isles. St. Adele, named for A. N. Morin's wife, Adèle Raymond, was his official base in the *Cantons du nord*, and St. Agathe's parish was established only later, in 1862. At that time, there was an Algonquin presence and in the 1850s, a Mohawk reserve, Tioweronton, was created nearby in an attempt to solve tensions in Oka/Kanehsatake.

St. Agathe almost disappeared in the 1880s, experiencing successive years of crop failures once the trees were removed. By 1888, it was in need of a bailout and the farmers were given new seeds in order to re-establish their agricultural economy. Many of the young had left during that period in search of more fertile land to the north, encouraged by the ambitious plans of Curé Labelle.

Curé Antoine Labelle, erroneously credited as the founder of the Laurentians, planned to develop a French Catholic community from St. Jerome north through northern Ontario all the way to the Red River settlements in Manitoba. His first step was to get Montreal to contribute to the construction of a railroad line to St. Jerome. Despite his eloquence and great efforts, Montreal officials returned from a banquet in St. Jerome in January of 1871 unconvinced. Everything changed the following autumn when a severe cold spell closed the transport routes before Montreal had received its winter fuel supplies. Responding to a call for help, the curé led a huge bee, encouraging the farmers to bring the necessary firewood to Montreal. One description has more than eighty double wagons, following a billowing flag winding its way through the streets of Montreal.

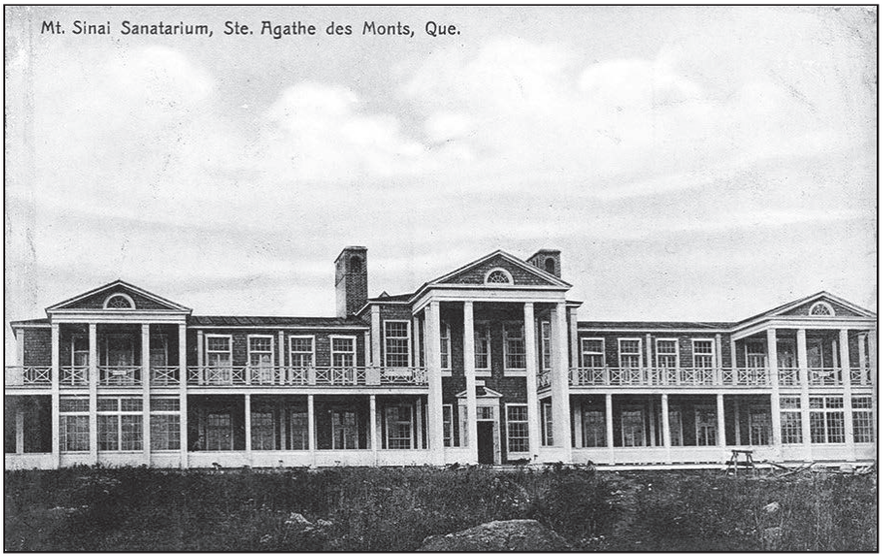
Once Montreal was onside, the railroad made slow but reassuring progress north until, in 1892, it arrived in St. Agathe. The poor curé, who had died the year before, might have been surprised at what happened next. Montrealers discovered a whole series of beautiful lakes graced by fenced fields all around the charming country village of St. Agathe. More importantly, they found farmers willing, if not desperate, to sell these lovely farms. Within the next 16 years St. Agathe grew to twenty times its size.

As importantly, St. Agathe was discovered to be an ideal environment to take the "rest cure," the only remedy then available to treat one of the worst diseases in human history, tuberculosis (TB). By the onset of World War One, both English and Jewish Montreal had established permanent satellite communities around the Laurentian Chest Hospital and Mount Sinai Hospital in St. Agathe, and a thriving hotel business had sprung up to accommodate their visitors and other vacationers. During World War One, the Laurentian Chest was commandeered as a treatment centre for TB and gas victims, bringing another influence into the region. By the late 1920s, this enterprising community had become a popular winter destination for Montreal skiers.

St. Agathe grew from there to be the most popular recreational area in the Laurentians right through World War Two, and it wasn't until the early 1950s that things began to change. In 1954, TB was cured, and the hospitals began to empty. By the 1960s, the train was displaced by the automobile and the Laurentian Autoroute was completed to St. Jerome. New development was springing up in the little towns to the south and the old infrastructure of St. Agathe was beginning to creak and crack. With the hospitals no longer treating TB patients, the English and Jewish communities receded to the city for their livelihoods and the countryside around St. Agathe became their weekend and holiday playground.

The weekenders who come to their chalets and cottages around the many lakes that surround St. Agathe once created an almost bilingual environment. This weekend community represented over 50% of the homes in the *MRC des Laurentides*, and while that percentage is much smaller in St. Agathe itself, the town has become one of the major service areas for the region. Slowly, with the help of Bill 101, St. Agathe has recaptured the French face that it had worn before the train arrived, and, while the English-language communities are still present, the

Bird's eye view of St. Agathe des Monts, c.1910. McCord Museum, MP-0000.968.11.



permanent community is small. Today the permanent population is only 6% English-speaking and the second-residence population has become increasingly Francophone. The remaining English-speaking weekenders are largely descendants of English and Jewish satellite communities.

At the same time, the descendants of Morin's colonists, the local French population, have been overwhelmed by a large influx of French speakers from other regions of Quebec, leaving a dual French community, partially with deep roots and partially mobile and recently arrived. As the two French communities struggle towards homogenization, the English and Jewish weekender communities tend to be forgotten even by the local stores that are dependant upon their patronage. As a result, a large part of the English-language community dollar is spent elsewhere.

Even so, St. Agathe is experiencing a construction boom of apartments and condos. Rip Van Winkle would not recognize it, not just physically, but culturally. You will find more people in stores ready and willing to speak to you in English in St. Jerome or St. Sauveur. In a lot of ways, it is a microcosm of Quebec, once French, then bilingual, and now predominantly French. One difference, though, is that St. Agathe was unilingually French only for one short generation before the train arrived in 1892.

***Joseph Graham**'s new 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.*

Writing Voices

by Nick Fonda

November 2024 saw the publication of Voices Lost in Time: The Anglophone Legacy of a Small Quebec City. *The book presents an overview of two centuries of English presence in the Drummondville area, on the northwest fringe of the Eastern Townships, as laid out at the end of the eighteenth century. Arranged chronologically, about three dozen brief sketches of the men and women who have a connection to the area serve to form an anecdotal history of the city and its periphery. The book was published by the Société d'histoire de Drummond with funding from the Centre for Access to Services in English (CASE) and the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise. It was written by Nick Fonda and Barry Husk.*

Barry Husk was already comfortable with the process of co-authorship. For me, it was a novel experience.

Barry has been a science writer for the better part of the last two decades. He has published more than 50 papers in scientific journals. Almost all his writing has been related to his St. Francis River watershed fieldwork. Significantly, all of Barry's articles were co-authored. Barry wrote with as many as five other scientists, each adding or modifying a text as it underwent multiple changes.

Approximately over the same period, I've been a freelancer. Most of my stories have been published in *The Record*, but they've occasionally appeared elsewhere, including in *Quebec Heritage News*. I've also had five books published in that time. But I've never been a co-author.

In the fall of 2021, Barry – not entirely out of the blue – asked me if I'd be interested in working on a book about English speakers' contributions to Drummondville. It would also include individuals who made history elsewhere but who have a connection to Drummondville. When Barry proposed the idea, he had already done much research. In fact, he'd been collecting maps, photos, and articles for the better part of the last four or five decades. The idea of writing a book on the English of Drummondville had been germinating for a long time.

Barry's problem in 2021 was that he was simultaneously working on five different scientific papers. He wasn't often able –

Left: Mt. Sinai Sanatorium, St. Agathe, c.1910. McCord Museum, MP-0000.968.13.

Right: William Notman, Reverend A. Labelle, Montreal, 1864. McCord Museum, I-11098.1.

after a day spent writing science – to sit down in the evening and write history.

Yet, there were compelling reasons to get the book written sooner rather than later. Age and energy were trending on inversely proportional paths. If he didn't act soon, he might never write the book at all. And the book was important in a personal way. Barry vividly remembered the passion his grandparents, Stafford and Joyce Husk, had for local history. Through Stafford, Barry traces his Drummondville roots back to John Husk, one of the disbanded soldiers from the War of 1812-14 who took up land with the community's founder, Frederick George Heriot, in 1815. On his mother's side, Barry's roots go back nine generations to ancestors who first settled in the Gaspé in the mid-eighteenth century.

He had the material, but he didn't have the time. How did I feel about co-authoring a book?

So, it began. We met every week or two at Morgane's Café in Drummondville or La Desserte in Richmond. While the conversations tended to meander, the meetings were productive. Sometimes, I would leave the meeting with a manilla folder – at times thin, at times thick – of material on yet another name from Drummondville's past. Barry also sent me digital files.

On one occasion, the file turned out to be an entire book, *French Canada in Transition*, by Everett Hughes. It was an intimidating file. It's one thing to read a few pages on the screen, but an entire book? I procrastinated for months before sitting down to read it. Although the text was a little academic, it was interesting material. Still, it took me a long time to get through the book. Then, when it was time to write a chapter on Hughes' book, I again fell into procrastination. However, in the end, I had two chapters for our book. I also had a new-found conviction that Hughes is essential reading for all Quebecers.

Over coffee, we dealt with a myriad of problems. Did we have enough material on the early period of settlement? Many men through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries left records and biographical traces, but few women did; would we be able to give the book a semblance of gender balance? There was a lot of material related to the Second World War; did we want to use all of it? How long should our book be? How many photos did we want in the book? How many maps? Would we find a publisher? Who could we ask to edit the book? Did we want to give ourselves a deadline?

"There's no rush," Barry said, at least at the beginning.

Bit by bit, solutions surfaced. The first surprise for me was Simon Stevens. I'd always considered Frederick George Heriot the first white person to settle in Drummondville. I didn't know that a decade before Heriot's arrival, a young American from Vermont cleared some land that is now part of the Drummondville golf course. Four years after his arrival, Stevens gave up on the site and moved upstream to Kirkdale before settling in Trenholmville.

There were other surprises as well: Ike Cutter – actually, two Ike Cutters, father and son – who operated a stagecoach route from the St. Lawrence River through Drummondville to Sherbrooke in the first half of the nineteenth century. Another surprise was Edward Doherty, who grew up in nearby Wickham Township. Doherty was the man who captured John Wilkes Booth, Abraham Lincoln's assassin.

Thanks to Yolande Allard and Chantal Proulx, the book will also have the stories of two women from that early era: Lucy Spicer, who ran an inn that served as a stagecoach stop in what is now the St. Joachim neighbourhood of Drummondville, and Charlotte Sheppard, who oversaw the superb manor house, Grantham Hall, which once stood where the golf course is now.

Did I do all the writing? No, Barry wrote several chapters. Conversely, I contributed a couple of names to the book.

For Barry and me, as co-authors, our work is done. We'll undoubtedly have a few more communal cups of coffee now that *Voices Lost in Time* has been published. There are bound to be post-publication problems that will require just a bit of caffeine to be solved. For example, what if someone wants the film rights?

For more information on the Société d'histoire de Drummond, go to histoiredrummond.com.

Annie Grey McDougall, Rural couple hoeing, Drummondville, c.1900. McCord Museum, MP-1974.129.1.107.

A Devil of a Place

Rawdon's Michel Nicolas and his Indigenous Kin

by Daniel Parkinson

The dedication mass held in Rawdon on September 21, 1834, established a parish church for Irish and English-speaking Roman Catholics, who at that time comprised nearly half of the population of the township. The event, described by "A Visitor at Rawdon" in the (Montreal) *Vindicator* (September 26, 1834) and in the *Canadian Advertiser* (October 3, 1834), provides a view of the recently-founded community, its customs and traditions. What is surprising is its mention of an Indigenous couple who lived in the township.

Despite many years researching Rawdon's history, I had never encountered an acknowledgement that there were non-European residents, only general references to Indigenous trails through the bush. This newspaper account places them in the historical record. Subsequent research suggests there were two or three individuals at Rawdon from almost the time it was officially opened to settlement in 1820, and that other Indigenous settlers followed shortly after. The language used in the 1834 account is not acceptable to readers today, but it reflects the thinking and usage of the time. "A Visitor at Rawdon" was apparently familiar with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosopher, and his idea of the "noble savage." Rousseau believed that original "man" was free from sin, appetite or the concept of right and wrong, and that those deemed "savages" were not brutal but noble.

These second growth softwood trees at Dorwin Falls, Rawdon, represent the forest that faced Michel Nicolas and all settlers when they cleared their farms. In its virgin state the boughs of the trees reached to the base of the tree. These have been trimmed to make better lumber.

"A Visitor at Rawdon" describes the chapel as "modest yet beautiful." The service was attended by "groups of persons," young and old, "issuing from every part of the forest generally on foot," although some came in vehicles of every sort. At 11 o'clock there were 600 people for the mass, followed by an excellent band of amateurs who struck up "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning. The band and choir gave several fine pieces of music at proper intervals. In attendance were Louis-Olivier Deligny, who served the parish from 1832 to 1835, and Roderick Ryder, who succeeded him from 1835 to 1836. Both priests were from St. Jacques-de-l'Achigan. Deligny was too tired from the extensive preparations to preach a sermon, to the disappointment of "A Visitor at Rawdon." The writer nevertheless praised the young clergyman, who was much loved by his congregation and "highly respected by all denominations, a concourse of whom were present." A handsome collection was taken by a young lady "like an Angel from Heaven" for whom "purses flew open by themselves." He continues:

What gave interest was the appearance of a richly clad Indian and his squaw. The beadle had them placed on chairs immediately opposite the Altar and every attention was paid to them, the devotion they manifested contrasted strangely with their wild dress – there was in the man's look something which bespoke his consciousness of his being from the race of those who were once the Lords of the Soil which the white men now possess. I was informed after mass that he was a good man and a great Hunter and sober in his habits & the only red man in those parts. Nieu his wife was a peaceable good creature.

Note that in all official and church documents, this woman is named Marie, which is probably her Catholic baptismal name. The writer seems to have learned that Nieu was her name in her own language.

> *After mass and Vespers, which were said at the same time, our worthy Priest had prepared a good repast for people at a distance in which honour many of the sons of Old Erin, Citizens of Rawdon, partook, among whom was Michel the Indian Prince and his wife and A VISITOR AT RAWDON.*

I believe that "Michel the Indian prince" was Michel Nicolas, accompanied by his wife, Marie. I found him in the "Township of Rawdon: Rawdon & Village Patents, 1852" from *Greffe de l'Arpenteur Général du Québec*. It states that Michel Nicolas was "authorized to occupy" the south-east half of Lot 7 of the 11th Range, and possibly the north-west half as well. There is no date, merely the information "O.C. 2338." In the same registry, Lot 6 of

Photo: Richard Prud'homme.

the 11th Range is marked "Indians," with no further information. The 1840s Holtby township map gives "Mitch" and "Mitchell" for these locations.

To whom did "Indians" refer? There is strong evidence that a small Malecite community existed at Rawdon for a number of years. Some of it is drawn from the parish registers of the Catholic churches at Rawdon and St. Jacques, excerpts of which will follow. But there is more.

Name	Men	Women	Boys (under 14)	Girls (under 14)	Total	
Michel Nicola	1	2	--	--	3	Amalacete
Joachim Denis	1	1	1	2	5	Amalacete
Pierre Nicolas	2	2	1	--	5	Amalacete
Jacque [sic] Laniere	3	4	1	2	10	Abenaquois
Ignace Picard	1	1	2	1	5	Huron
Thomas Laporte	1	1	--	2	4	Amalacete
Jacques Bisonne	1	--	1	--	2	Amalacete
Pierre Joseph	2	1	1	2	6	Abenaquois
Paul Joseph	2	1	--	--	3	Amalacete
Jean Baptiste	1	1	--	1	3	Amalacete
Louis Dofinée Dauphine	1	1	--	--	2	Abenaquois

Note: The Abenaki were Algonquian-speaking people of the Northeastern Woodlands of Canada and the United States, as were the Amalacete /Malecite.

My friend Guillaume Petit of Joliette directed me and other members of *la Société d'histoire de Rawdon* to the files of the Office of the Secretary of Indian Affairs for Lower Canada and Canada East. (See montrealbb.ca/indiens-rawdon.) The Indian Affairs secretary, Duncan C. Napier (c. 1788-1865), was the resident agent at Montreal from 1840 to 1857. A conscientious administrator, Napier attempted to be thorough and fair when administering Indian-White relations in a department whose roots lay in the province's French past. He maintained the Indian Department's status quo in Lower Canada, but the system was totally unsuited to deal with conflicts with the parallel Crown land system for incoming British settlers. Napier's retirement in 1857 coincided with Britain's retreat from Indian affairs in Canada and marked the end of an anachronistic administrative system. (See Douglas Leighton, "Duncan Campbell Napier," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*).

The records of Indian Affairs suggest that free title was promised to Michel Nicolas and his brother John Nicolas by Lord Gosford, Governor-General of British North America. A document from June 6, 1839, states that, since at least the spring of 1836, Michel Nicolas of "River St John has occupied Rawdon Lot 10 [sic], Eleventh Range, of which he has ten acres cleared and a house." The brothers signed the document with their marks. (See *Secretary of Indian Affairs, Lower Canada and Canada East, and Resident Agent at Montreal*, Library and Archives Canada, C-11028.)

James Hughes, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the District of Montreal, was present when Gosford met Michael and John Nicolas. Hughes stated that the brothers had held the Rawdon land for "17 or 20 years & that there were people who wanted to deprive them of their lots without having titles for them." Gosford told the brothers that "they might remain there and that one of them should come to Quebec and his Excellency would order that titles be given them."

On December 9, 1839, William Holtby, a surveyor who would later serve as secretary-treasurer of the Township of Rawdon, wrote that he had known Michel Nicolas for 16 years "as a resident settler… at which time no other settler occupied the land and no improvements made by any other than himself." Holtby, who had settled in Rawdon around 1823, knew Nicolas "as a peaceable man of good character." He had surveyed Lots 5 and 6 in the Eleventh Range for Michel and Lot 5, measuring 100 acres, for his brother. (It gives me a certain satisfaction that Holtby, my maternal three-times great grandfather, knew and worked for Michel Nicolas as he struggled to have his claim recognized.)

William Rogers, a civil servant, wrote: "An Indian friend of mine... sent a petition... for land on which he has been a squatter for 19 years… and can have it under Lord Durham's ordinance but must pay for it. As far as the Indian is concerned this is testament to taking it away for, he has no money." The superintendent (Hughes) confirmed that Lord Gosford told the Indian friend that there would be no charge. Rogers wrote to a superior to see what could be done, adding "as you know Rawdon is a devil of a place & the poor Indian is annoyed in all ways for want of his title."

The "humble petition of Michael and John Nicholas [sic], Malecite Indians, to Charles P. Thompson," the new governor-

general, states that the brothers have resided in Rawdon "above 19 years" and that "they have been driven successfully from the different cabins they resided in… About six years back they situated on two lots then unoccupied and without any improvements and have built on them & cleared & cultivated… They paid Mr. Holsby [sic: Holtby] schoolmaster and surveyor to survey… His certificate [is] attached." The petition was signed on March 23, 1840, by Michel Nicolas, using aboriginal syllabics, and John Nicolas made his mark; it is followed in the file by the official copy filed in Montreal on March 24, 1841, again with the two men's signatures.

But this was not the end of the matter. Edward MacGie, a prominent settler and Crown Land Agent for Rawdon, answered a letter from Indian Affairs concerning "two Indians" on July 15, 1940, stating that "Mitchel Nickles" of Lot 7, 11th Range, was in dispute with Brian Carnie, a commuted pensioner, who "received an order for said lot," adding that if he was "not mistaken Mitchel will hold the lot… As to the other Indian, he claimed a lot proffered to Murphy," but left this lot and resided at Lot 6, 11th Range. MacGie "had no time to visit the lot in question."

As the table shows, the 1842 "Census of Indians of the Township of Rawdon & Chertsey" establishes that the Indigenous settlers named were residents. (See *Correspondence of the Resident Agent of Indian Affairs in Montreal*, Library and Archives Canada, C-13379.)

Transcriptions of events taken from the Société de généalogie de Lanaudière differ slightly from those found in the Drouin Index in Ancestry.ca. The Indigenous communicants each used their own language, but were identified by the priest as "sauvage." The church record is also confused, given that the priest had difficulty determining surnames, even though many of the communicants spoke French and some could write their names in syllabic script. In the following extracts, it has not always been possible to determine the correct names and relationships but it is clear that this was a close-knit community. The name of the Indigenous settler, Michel Nicolas, and others with that surname are represented. One wonders whether Nicolas Joseph, Joseph Nicolas and Peter / Pierre Nicolas were in fact one man? Is one of these men Michel's brother John/Jean? Some basic French terms have not been translated.

- February 29, 1836: Baptism of Michel Nicolas né de légitime mariage de Jacques Michel le 'sauvage' et Magdeleine Pierre Michel de cette paroisse (St. Jacques). It is clear the parents are Indigenous and "Michel" is the surname. The mother's birthname "Pierre" is a surname used by other Indigenous settlers. The sponsors were parishioners Louis Leblanc and Marie-Louise Dugas of St. Jacques-de-l'Achigan, where the baptism took place.

- October 15, 1837: Father Denis McReavy baptized "Peter Michael born the twenty fourth of September last of the lawful marriage of Peter Nicholas [Pierre Nicolas] and Genevieve Lanier [Launier], Indians residing in Rawdon." The child (Pierre Michel Nicolas) was named for his father and uncle. Lanier or Launière is an Amalacete surname. The sponsors were Michael St. Nicholas (Michel Nicolas) and Sarah Mullin, daughter of Irish settler Robert Mullen of Lot 10 N, 8th Range.

- April 3, 1838: Father McReavy "interred in the cemetery of this parish the body of Peter St. Nicholas [Pierre Nicolas] who departed this life the day before yesterday aged six months & seventeen days." He was the child of Pierre Nicolas and "Genevieve Lanier [sic] Indians." The witnesses were Michel Nicolas and Louis Archambault (aka Jean-Louis Archambault of Lot 4, 11th Range, a Canadien neighbour, with family at l'Assomption).

- November 19, 1839: Baptism of François "Sovage," son of Pierre Joseph and Louise Guilmet of Rawdon. The sponsors were Joseph Mercier and Ursule Gagnon.

- March 1, 1840: Baptism at St. Jacques of Jean-Baptiste Nicolas, son of Joseph Nicolas and Thérèse Pierre Joseph de Rawdon. The child died at Montreal on August 10, 1841, and was buried the following day at Notre Dame Church. His parents were of the parish.

- June 6, 1840: Baptism in Rawdon of Charles Picard, son of Ignace Picard and Marie Pierre Joseph. The godparents were Thomas Laporte and Magdeline Pierre Joseph.

- May 20, 1841: Baptism at St. Jacques of Marie Louise Joseph, born April 15, the daughter of Nicolas Joseph "Sauvage" and Geneviève Lornière [Lanier] of Rawdon. The witnesses were Magloire Granger and Dina Marion, both members of the *Société des Défricheurs de St-Jacques de la Nouvelle-Acadie*, founded in 1848 at St. Jacques to support colonization in the Township of Chertsey; they were later neighbours of Michel Nicolas at Chertsey, Lot 19, 5th Range.

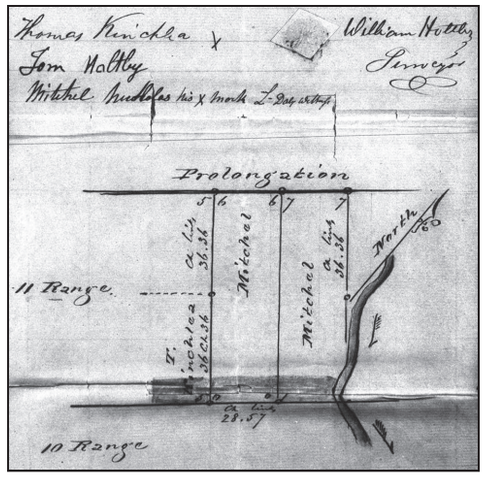
- January 18, 1842: Father Joseph Vallée baptized Marie Scholastique Nicolas, born December 12, 1841, "*du légitime mariage de Joseph Nicolas 'sauvage' et de Therese Salicorne* of the Rawdon mission. Godparents were Jerome Picard and Ursule Gagnon.

- January 18, 1842: After three bans of marriage were read at Rawdon and St. Jacques, "*Louis Dauphini 'sauvage' domicilié à Rawdon*" and Marie Scholastique Picard were married at Rawdon with the permission of Bishop Ignace Bourget. Louis was the son of the late Medard Dauphini of the St. Francis Mission and Agnes Convaque of Rawdon. Marie was the daughter of Pierre Picard, a farmer, and Hélène Zacharie. The witnesses were Joachim Denis, Paul Lelievre, Amable Picard and Pierre Picard. This couple were not Malecites; the groom was perhaps Abenaki and the bride Huron. The St. Francis mission was a noted Catholic Indian mission village under Jesuit control near Pierreville, Yamaska district. It had been originally established at the falls of the Chaudière River, on the south side of the St. Lawrence, as a refuge for the Abenaki and Pennacook who had been driven from New England by war; they were French in sympathy and largely Catholic. (See Catholic Encyclopedia, newadvent.org.)

- October 23, 1942: Baptism of Michel Thomas Laporte at Rawdon, son of Thomas-Joseph Laporte and Magdeleine Pierre, both "sauvage." The witnesses were Jean-Louis

Archambault and Marie Nicolas (wife of Michel Nicolas).

- January 23, 1843: Baptism of Louis Denis, son of Joachim Denis, a farmer, and Catherine Dauphini. Louis was born on January 18. His godparents were Thomas Kinchella (or Kinsella) and Marie Locas (Eleanor Renaud dit Locas), Irish neighbours at Lot 6, 10th Range.



It becomes clear that there was no real communication between Indian Affairs and those who were issuing permits on Crown lands. The system depended on accurate records and mail to Montreal and Quebec City. Military settlers and other new arrivals were on occasion directed to lots previously granted. (I have written about David Petrie, who in 1834 was badly treated and abused in such a case. See uptorawdon.com.)

A memo to civil servant William Rogers from Indian Affairs secretary Duncan Napier, dated March 27, 1840, acknowledges there had been an error and that Lot 7 had been incorrectly labelled Lot 10. A memo to Rogers from John Davidson, Commissioners of Crown Lands, from March 28, 1840, points out this error from the Rawdon Land agent's report. "It is desirable that you forward correct information on this point." A subsequent letter states that "Your friend the Indian will be maintained on paying etc."

A letter from Davidson to Rogers, dated April 9, 1840, reiterates the view that, under Lord Durham's regulation, squatters must pay: "The claims of Brian Carnie and the Indian Mitchell to the SE ½ of 7 / 11 have been inquired into, with favour to Mitchell, as he had done the clearing before Carnie. No one, Indian or otherwise, can claim a free grant… This land when granted must be paid for." Davidson refers to Lot 5 as a clergy reserve and that Lot 6 was "open" (not assigned). All settlers receiving Crown grants paid certain administrative fees.

A statement from the Land Department from March 27, 1841, refers to "the petition of Michael Nicholas and John Nicholas, Indians of the Amalicite Tribe" for titles to Lots 5 and 6 of the 11th Range. This statement continues to list Nicolas' name and the location incorrectly. Brian Carnie had been given an occupation permit by Crown Agent Thomas Griffiths on January 8, 1835, but it was not confirmed by the Land Department. Carnie claimed to have entered the lot and made improvements "but was disturbed by Mitchell, an Indian." It was subsequently confirmed that "Mitchell the Indian" was the first occupant. "Mr. Napier is instructed to confirm if Mitchell and Nicolas are one and the same person. Lot 5 is a clergy reserve and therefore not available. No. 6 is crown reserve but is open on the list of lands and at the government's disposal… These Indians are entitled to prefer for a claim," as per Lord Durham's proclamation "previous to September 1838 without title."

Crown agent Edward MacGie certified on June 10, 1841, that "Mitchel Nicolet [sic] an Indian is a resident squatter (and has been there six [sic] years past) under Lord Durham's proclamation on No. 7 Lot of the Eleventh Range of Rawdon."

A document dated April 30, 1842, states that Ignace Pierre, Paul Joseph, Joseph Nicola and Jean Baptiste were known to be "honorable people of good conduct" by "the undersigned": James McEvoy, Jean Louis Archambault, Bélonie Fortin, Mag Granger, Ovide Leblanc, A. Dugas, Marc Granger, Cyrille Archambault, J. B. Leblanc. Some of these people have been identified as Indigenous or other friends of Michel Nicolas. The identity of others is not known.

On April 18, 1843, "Mitchell" Nicolas and Thomas Kinchella hired surveyor William Holtby (assisted by his 15-year-old son, Tom) to determine the line between 10th and 11th Ranges. Kinchella is associated in various documents with Lots 5 and 6, north of 10th Range. Nicolas wanted to clarify his claim to 400 acres, the whole of Lots 6 and 7. Holtby provided a clear map showing the course of the Lac Quarria (aka Ouareau) River on the east side of the lots.

On September 10, 1844, Rawdon agent Alexander Daly wrote "Mr. Mitchel Nicola, Indian, Rawdon… to inform [him] that the lots have been returned for sale and that only way he may keep them is to pay, otherwise they may be sold to any person." Appended to the document is a note from T. Bouthillier of the Land Office, possibly dated September 18, stating that "the bearer" (Nicolas) is "in possession of lots he has largely improved for which he can pay by [script incomprehensible]. If so, I see no great objection to give him the [incomprehensible word] he requests."

Michel Nicolas believed he was authorized to stay on his land. He appears to have been the occupant when James Dignan, the Irish-born surveyor from Berthier, visited this stretch of the 11th Range on October 26-28, 1844. The surveyor's task was to confirm the exact dimensions of the properties, so that that land and timber could be legally identified and sold. Dignan indicated that Lot 7 was "the clearance of an Indian" and that Lot 6 was the "end of Indians' clearance." His plan also shows the "road to Canadian settlement [Chertsey] in the rear of the township."

On December 3, 1845, Michel Nicolas applied for title to the land he occupied. The document contains a scrambled review of statements made by Hughes and Davidson supporting his claim. He also declared that he has been a Rawdon resident and owner of the lots in question for upwards of twenty years, has cleared 40 acres, and has "erected a substantial house." He is prepared to sell his improvements forthwith. What is being offered to Nicolas is difficult to discern. Affixed to the application is a note from one unnamed government employee to another, stating that Nicolas has been badly treated, since he had been promised free title.

On December 30, 1845, a petition was sent to the new governor-general, Charles Murray, Earl Cathcart, by an unidentified writer. It tells the story again from a sympathetic if somewhat racist perspective:

> *The petition of Michel Nicolas an Indian warrior of the Amalicite tribe of Indian of Canada East, humbly sheweth that unlike the great majority of the members of his tribe abandoned a wandering course of life as a hunter and trapper and has applied himself steadily to the cultivation of land for a*

Secretary of Indian Affairs, Lower Canada and Canada East, Library and Archives Canada, c11028.531.

livelihood. That is now nearly twenty one years since your Lordship's petitioner with the abovementioned in view and with little more than an axe and a blanket and a scanty supply of provisions undertook to clear the land. He is at present settled in the Township of Rawdon… which at the time was an almost impenetrable forest and many miles from the residence of any white man.

The petition outlines Nicolas' trials with bureaucracy over "an ungranted lot… which he had rendered valuable by the sweat of his brow." Nicolas' case for title was not being dealt with, and the writer feels his claim is vulnerable; he is "alarmed by the rapid advance of white settlers into the forest in his neighbourhood."

The 1852 Rawdon Census lists Michel Nicolas, 61, and his wife Marie Nicolas, 65, born at St. Johns [sic] New Brunswick. The birthplace is accurate. "Nicolas" is a common surname of Indigenous families in New Brunswick (see acanadianfamily.wordpress.com). The census also lists their near neighbour, Michael Bowey, who appears on the 1840 Holtby Township Map, as well as in "Rawdon & Village Patents, 1852."

It seems that the December 1845 petition to the governor was successful. A document dated Sept 6, 1856, by notary Aimé Dugas of St. Jacques indicates that Michel and Marie Nicolas gave their property to their friend Magloire Granger. Significantly, this document also mentions the date when Nicolas acquired ownership: February 18, 1846. The gift to Granger was later overruled, according to an entry in the files of Montreal notary John Horan, who handled the business of many Rawdon citizens and had been a resident there. Horan recorded a gift from Michel Nicolas to Patrick Monahan on April 13, 1857, another transfer of property to Patrick Monahan on April 8, 1858, and a Quittance on April 13, 1858. Title was granted to Patrick Managhan [sic] in 1866. (Note that there were two men named Monahan or Managhan at Rawdon: Michael and Patrick, both with sons named Michael and Patrick. I trust that I have finally placed Michael Nicolas with the correct one.) Horan also notarized a gift from Michel Nicolas to Marie Nicolas, dated October 6, 1859. Unfortunately, the actual documents from Horan's practice are "presently lost," according to the BAnQ.

In the 1861 census, Michel Nicolas, 74 [sic], and Marie Nicolas, 72, are identified as "Indian." This is noteworthy: few Indigenous people not on reservations were identified by race. The couple, who had no children, lived on the Chertsey, 5th Range at Lot 19 in a one story frame house with four acres of land. On the same location (in separate houses) lived miller François Mercier, general store keeper Magloire Granger, and the priest, Father Bourbonnais. We may assume this was the centre of the village. It is also only a few miles from where Michel Nicolas had been located on the Rawdon 11th Range.

Marie Nicolas was buried on March 24, 1864, in the St. Théodore Cemetery, Chertsey. According to the burial record, she was "found dead yesterday aged eighty eight years, an inquest having taken place." The priest's wording suggests that her husband Michel Nicolas was still living. The 1871 Rawdon Census lists Patrick Manahan, 67, his wife, Bridget, their children – and "Michael Necalet," who was 90 years old, born in New Brunswick, a Roman Catholic widower; he is described as "Indian," part of an "Indian tribe from St. Johns Newbrunswick [sic]."

There is no record of Michel Nicolas' burial at Rawdon, Chertsey, or anywhere else in Quebec. Perhaps he died in the woods that he loved and was quietly buried there by his friends, although we know he was a loyal Catholic. Nicolas clearly aspired to be a settler and farmer, and he relished his chosen location in the wilderness of the then unsettled township, where he could hunt and live peacefully. The policy at Indian Affairs had encouraged Indigenous settlement, and Michel appears to have had friends and supporters in both government offices and the settler community, who liked and admired him. However, he was seen as an outsider by the Crown Land administrators, who insisted on enforcing their rules, disregarding exceptions made by earlier officials. Rawdon was turned into a "devil of a place" by administrators who mostly operated from a distance; it was difficult for any settler who ran afoul of the system and then had to wait years to receive their letters patent. Despite Michel Nicolas's consistency, patience, and support, he was kept in a state of uncertainty for decades. His story is unique, and he should be recognized alongside the European and American pioneers who helped open the township.

The Malecite

The indigenous people of New Brunswick include the Malecite (or Maliseet). The Malecite are Algonquian-speaking and traditionally lived in the Saint John River valley. In 1840, there were more than 200 members of the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk (Malecite) First Nation living on the banks of Rivière Mitis, which flows north to the south shore of the St. Lawrence River. Many more likely lived between Lévis and Rimouski, particularly on the Viger Reserve. If Michel and Marie had connections there, they would have known French, as they seemed to. (See quebec.ca/en/government/quebec-at-a-glance/first-nations-and-inuit and wolastoqiyikwahsip ekuk.ca.)

In his 2023 book *Autochtones de l'est du Québec*, Serge Goudreau writes of Malecites from the St. John River, New Brunswick, settling at Maskinongé between 1821 and 1827. In February 1842, some of them (through an intervener / interpreter named Ignace Picard) petitioned Indian Affairs secretary Duncan Napier for 1,600 acres of land at Rawdon (Library and Archives Canada, C-13379 RG10, vol. 597, 46087-46088). The 15 petitioners included these surnames Denis, Joseph, Laporte, Launière, Neptune and Nicolas. Some of these families were resident at Rawdon in the period before and after 1840.

Maxime Gohier wrote about Indigenous settlers in *La pratique pétitionnaire des Amérindiens de la vallée du Saint-Laurent sous le Régime britannique* (PhD thesis, UQAR, 2014). He included the names "Michael Nicholas" and "John Nicholas" in 1840 (Library and Archives Canada, C-Il 028, RG 10, vol. 78, 43542-43544). He mentions the movement of Malecite families from Bécancour to Rawdon, where Secretary Duncan Napier hoped to see the emergence of "an extensive Indian settlement in that section of the Province."

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

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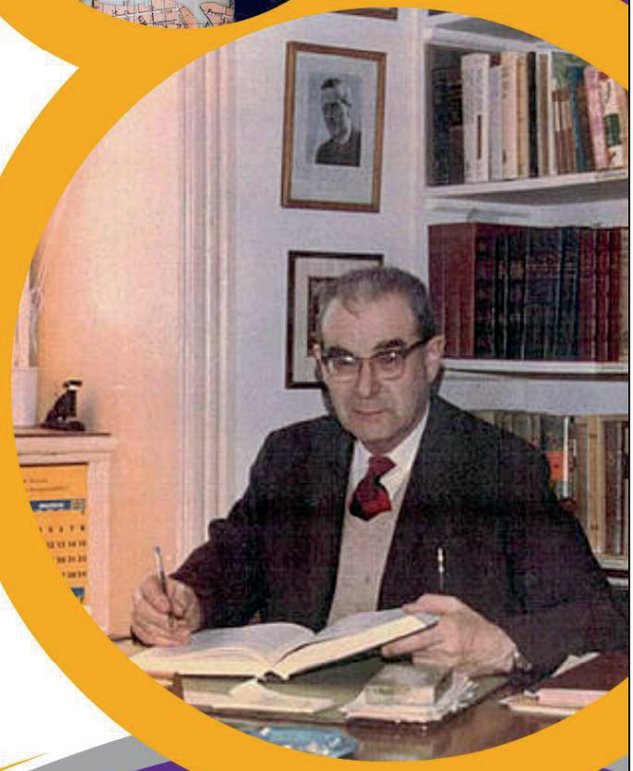

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Captain Holman Hunts for Gold

by Michael Webb

I have spent the past decade undertaking ancestral research, and it was while researching my great-great-grandfather, Josiah Holman (1821-1893), 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.

Leeds

The prospecting expedition that had taken Josiah Holman and his team along the St. Francis River and many of its tributaries now had him heading eastwards, to Leeds. He was following up on an invitation he had received some weeks earlier from Thomas Mackie to help inspect this new corner of the Eastern Townships.

In the village of Cookshire, Holman contacted John Baxter, a local carpenter and joiner, who organized a two-horse team to carry the men, the mining equipment, and their baggage. They set out on September 6, 1853, but by the time they reached the St. Francis River the weather had deteriorated. Before long, they found accommodation: "Slept, paid for Tea, beds and breakfast for 8 persons and feed for horses," Holman wrote.

After the rain had abated, they examined some marble quarries that displayed an assortment of colours, changing from almost white to a light speckled grey resembling granite. The slabs were reasonably large and would be capable of being easily carved into pieces of any required size. The hill being quarried covered several acres and rose to over 50 feet; it seemed an inexhaustible source. The site adjoined a small lake (probably today's Lac Miroir) just west of Dudswell on the 7th Range, Lot 22. From here, the stone could easily be transported to the main road. Another quarry, carved into a steep hill some 60 feet to the east of the main road, had been developed to a lesser extent. Observing the signs of blasting in this quarry of white and grey marble, Holman wrote: "the party that had the management of the Quarrying department left evident marks in blasting and cleaving that he knew but little in this art."

After making enquiries, Holman learned that a deed of sale had been issued by the owner of this land to a group from the United States, but the deposit money had not been received and the payment date had expired. Holman decided further exploration was required for both quarries, especially towards the woodland area, to determine if the area would prove suitable for purchase.

They examined one more quarry before heading over very rough roads to their next lodgings, belonging to a Mr. Rice. Next morning, they headed north for about a mile, and then turned west off the road for about another mile, where they came across a small brook at the foot of Ham Mountain (Mount Ham). Here, they broke a number of shelves, mainly consisting of strata clay slate with very little pyrites. After washing and griddling the gravel residue, they did not obtain even the smallest speck of gold.

Landscape near Leeds, 2013.
Photo: Rod MacLeod.

Not getting any intelligence of veins or Gold being known to exist in this district, we started on the Main Road and before reaching Lake Nicolec saw a pit 4 feet deep by the roadside on Serpentine showing a vein 2 feet wide of Chromate of Iron.

From here, they continued just over three miles to Wolfstown (today's Saint-Jacques-le-Majeur-de-Wolfestown), where they found accommodation for the night. The following day, they travelled north about ten miles, on foot: "The Miners were obliged to walk nearly the whole distance to New Ireland today on account of the rough and hilly state of road." They spent the night along the roadside almost opposite the Inverness mining property of James Douglas, whose company was hoping to raise capital from speculators in London to fund mining development.

Douglas, a doctor from Tayside, Scotland, had acquired properties along the Chaudière River basin in the Beauce region. He had also prospected for gold at Rivière Des Plantes (also known as Rivière Guillaume) and at Rivière Gilbert. The latter site, Lot 75 of Range 1 North-East, was considered a rich find. It lay some four miles downstream from Richard Oatey's mining operation, which Holman had previously visited.

At this point, Holman thanked his guide, John Baxter, and paid him 60 shillings for the four days' teaming, which included taking the baggage and mining equipment eight miles ahead to New Ireland.

The men now met with a new, local guide, and walked to the mines of Inverness, on Lot 4, 2nd Range. Here, they examined a shambles of pits, cuttings and mounds of excess and rubble. Holman first walked to the western pit, which was sunk about 30 feet with a cutting or crosscut driven in from the foot of the hill. South along a vein, about 15 feet below the slope, a shaft had been sunk about 12 to 15 feet. At the surface, the vein was about six feet wide, composed of quartz and yielding knobs of yellow and grey copper intermixed with cavities of rotten dark green gossan. Walking further, about 12 feet north of the original shaft, Holman discovered a trench about 30 feet long, which, where it was 3 to 4 feet deep, opened to the main vein. From the residue dug from the trench he could see fine samples of white slate intermixed throughout with small pieces of green and rich red copper ore. Holman had been informed that about 100 pounds of fine copper ore had been mined so far.

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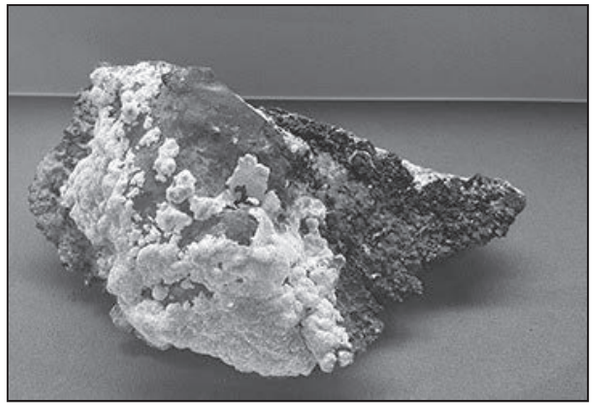
Even so, he was sceptical:

Although there are some favourable indications in this Mining property, still on the whole I fear in depth it will not prove well. Also, the property is somewhat hilly and further mining and crosscutting would prove tedious given that the nearest brook is probably 200 yards away and over 180 feet below where active mining might take place.



After Holman completed his notes and surveyed the mining lease, they walked to Leeds, a five-mile journey. Just off the road, they passed a promising lode of gossan and pyrites. just off the roadway. Accommodation had been arranged with William Harrison, a local Tinsmith in Leeds.

The next day was Sunday, and, finding no place for worship, Holman drove four miles to St. Sylvester and called on Thomas Mackie, who had invited him to visit some weeks earlier. Even so, Holman's arrival caught Mackie by surprise, although he welcomed the visitor warmly and the two caught up on news of family and friends. Holman learned about the area and the promising places to survey. As Mackie had mining interests, he was keen to hear Holman's opinion of the area based on his recent exploration.

On Monday, Holman felt exhausted from the exploits of the past week and decided to rest. He directed the men to prospect areas they had observed over the past two days, but had not yet mined.

The next morning, Holman met Lewis Sleeper, a man he had encountered earlier. The two set out from Harrison's in Sleeper's horse and cart to visit copper mines just outside Leeds. Wandering around the mine area, Holman noted that many of the pits were filled with water, which restricted examination. At Lot 17, 13th Range, Holman examined a pit sunk two or three feet deep and eight or nine feet wide displaying a large outcrop of hard crystalline minerals within a quartz vein. "Mr S says he have seen spots of red and yellow copper from this pit - and Gossan is tolerable plenty." They moved on to Lot 16, 13th Range, and examined two small pits which seemed to confirm that the vein previously examined did in fact continue 20 degrees northeast for some considerable length. Both the pits contained slate: Lot 16 blue, Lot 17 white. Holman and Sleeper then moved on to the 15th Range and examined Lot 17, where a number of shallow pits and trenches had been dug. These were more encouraging, opening up various veins showing stains of copper and fine specimens of rich grey ore.

Some months later, on December 22, 1853, Lewis Sleeper would purchase

Top: Azurite and malachite on iron oxide gossan from Arizona. Photo: James St. John.

Bottom: Malachite on Gossan, Woodlawn Mine near Tarago New South Wales, Australia. Photo: Doug Beckers.

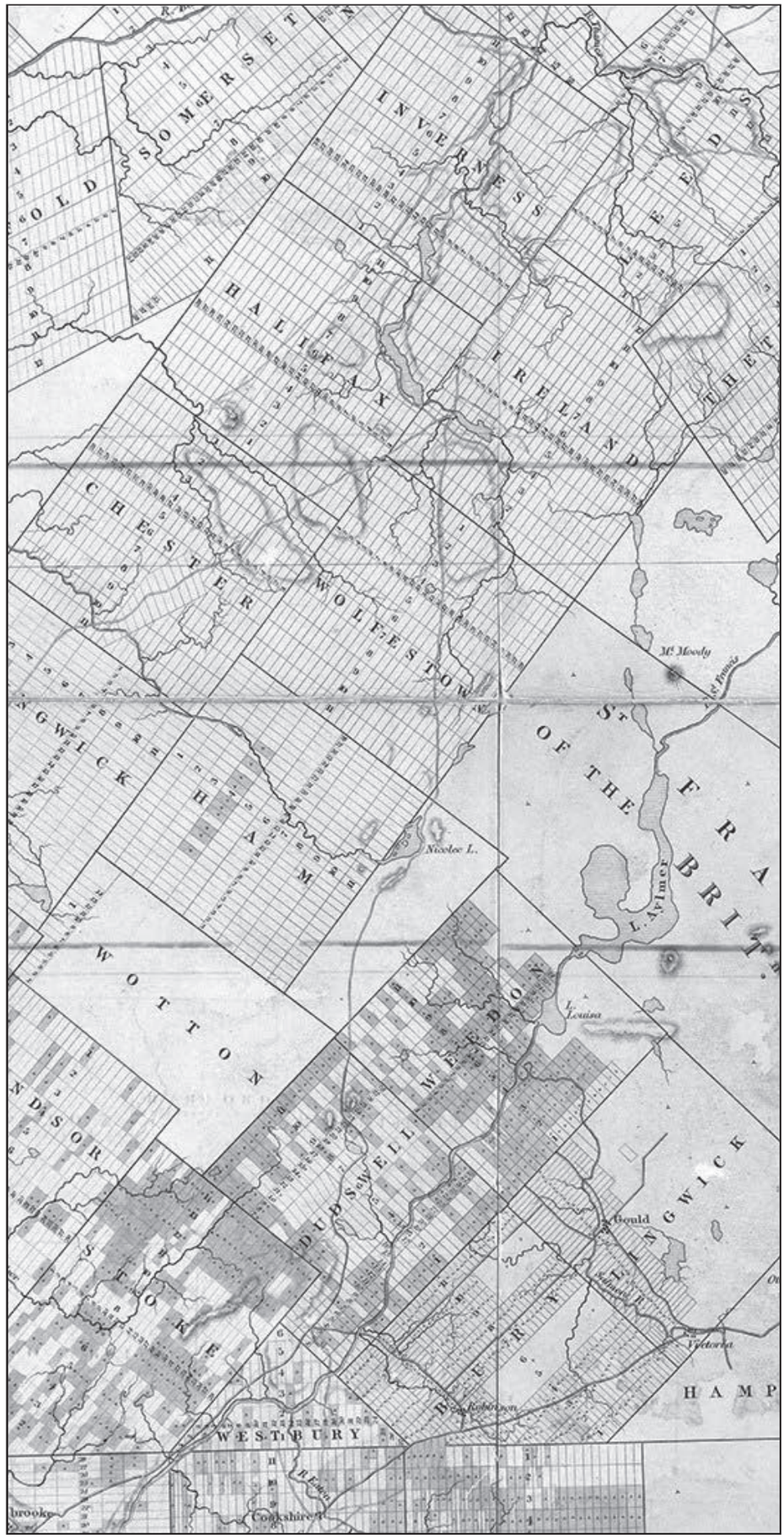
the north-east half of Lot 17, 15th Range. The site was known as Harvey Hill, after the Harvey family who had settled in the area around 1830. It developed into a hive of activity, becoming the centre of major copper mining activity in the Leeds area for many years: over the next decade or so, over 15,000 tons of ore was extracted.

Having spent most of September 13 exploring these pits, Holman left at 4 o'clock and arrived at Harrison's by 7 p.m. He retired early not feeling very well. He was woken next morning by heavy rain. Still feeling unwell, he spent the rest of the day in bed. Feeling a little better on Thursday, and the rain having cleared, Holman instructed five of the miners to examine areas on either side of Harrison's. With a sixth miner, Holman travelled 15 miles by horse and cart to New Ireland to examine areas that looked suitable for further exploration. They returned at the end of the day not having discovered any substantial veins or ores. Following this excursion, Holman's cold seemed to have worsened, and he was also suffering from some conjunctivitis. After sending the men to various areas to explore further, he retired to bed for another day. "Miners out exploring. Felt unwell with milk in my eye." On Sunday, he "kept indoors pretty much during the day. It is fine weather and for some days past have had grey mornings and chilly days giving signs of approaching Winter." Still unwell by Monday, he stayed in to complete his Leeds report.

While he convalesced, Holman sent men out to explore areas they had not yet covered. Two went in a cart ten miles to the north, near St. Sylvester. Another four were dispatched to an area beyond Lambies Mills (later Kinnear's Mills, part of Leeds Township), where Holman had been informed that copper had been discovered on two of the farms.

Finally, Tuesday, September 20, dawned bright and sunny, and Holman rode to Mackie's mine in the parish of St. Sylvester, where he caught up with the two miners who had been sent ahead. Examining the area, they found a few spots of lead scattered in two small courses of limestone running through a slate formation.

Mr Mackie's proceedings are similar



Detail, J. H. Colton, Canada East or Lower Canada and New Brunswick. Colton's Atlas of the World Illustrating, Vol 1, New York, 1855.

to Dr Douglas and Co., purchasing on speculation, thinking to get some London Capitalists to take their dupes through the Agents sent out. I think their designs will be frustrated.

With little indication of any great discovery, they returned earlier than anticipated. Holman later caught up with the four men returning from Lambies Mills, who informed him they had not found any veins containing minerals.

Holman came to the conclusion that the parts of New Ireland, Inverness and Leeds he had seen, being made up of a succession of hills and narrow valleys of stony, shallow soil, were ill adapted for farming purposes.

Finished No 4 Report and copied same into book. Posted it as well. Wrote to Mr Pennoyer and Pemberton. Detained at Harrison's today on account of not being able to get carts to take either my own luggage or Skews [one of the men). Also badly fixed through not having a remittance of cash sent from Sherbrooke by last evenings mail. Shall now be obliged to remain here until tomorrow night's post arrives.

He further observed:

Of the many farmers houses which myself and men have had to put up to, to take dinners whilst out exploring, scarcely a single house would bestow on us a slice of pork or meat of any kind - potatoes, butter and milk with a little fried bread or pancake is the chief food of the majority of poor farmers who call themselves independent. I believe if they would be industrious, that the farms are capable (although the soil is naturally poor) of producing enough to put them in a far better position than they now are. On travelling the country, a labourer is seldom seen in the fields unless about the hay or corn. Fields want clearing of stumps of trees, stones and weeds of many kinds. In tilling time the seed is just muzzled in and not touched till the sickle is wanted and then a good deal is left a fortnight after it is ripe before it is cut.

I am satisfied that about Sherbrooke, Eaton and Lingwick that the land is better for farming purposes. A farmer in this country wants capital to begin with for clearing and stocking his farm. The majority of migrant settlers here begin farming without a dollar, consequently it takes them 14 years with industry to get on their legs, in the meantime suffering many privations both in food and clothing, leaving out the discomfort of a miserable small dirty log house to dwell in of one room only for all domestic purposes. All poorer class of people let their wives and children go barefooted at home during the Summer and Autumn months.

At Leeds Post Office, Holman posted his report and the letters to Pennoyer and Pemberton. He also checked if there was a remittance of cash from the British American Land Company waiting for him, but there was nothing – and still nothing the following day. The men spent the time cleaning and packing equipment for the next week's venture. Holman searched various livery and carriage companies, hoping to secure carts for the trip.

"At 3 p.m. a carter came here and wanted 6 dollars to take Skews, baggage and tools about 14 miles from this place," Holman noted. "After a long debate he came down to 4 dollars and expenses which I declined giving." Exasperated, Holman approached Harrison, his host in Leeds, who agreed to lend him one of his carts.

At 11 o'clock on September 23, Skews and Jennings left for Stoke Mountain with spare tools, camping equipment and blankets.

Holman sent the other four men off on foot some 30 miles via Broughton to St. Joseph (now Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce) on the Chaudière River to await his arrival. As he did each day, Holman checked at the Post Office, but there was still no letter. About to retire for the evening, there was a knock on the door and he was handed a letter that had just arrived, dated September 16, redirected from Sherbrooke. It informed him that Messrs. Galt and Bischoff would be at the Swords Hotel in Quebec City on September 27; could he meet them there, if he were available? The letter also contained a much-needed £30. Even though it was nighttime, Holman began the search again for a horse and cart. Again, he succeeded only by approaching Harrison. It took some time, but finally he and Harrison left at 10 o'clock Saturday morning for St. Mary's, and then to accommodation for the evening near St. Joseph, a 25-mile journey.

The following morning, they found the miners at their lodgings about four miles upstream from St Francis. Holman instructed one of the men, Whitford, to travel about ten miles south to Forsyth (today, Saint-Évariste-de-Forsyth); once there, he was to spend the next few days exploring and examining mineral veins in the area. "Left mid-afternoon for Dr. Douglas' mines near Leeds to examine areas not surveyed earlier on the River du Holantes, and in the evening returned to St Mary's."

Next Episode: Trekking the Wilderness of Mount Megantic.

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

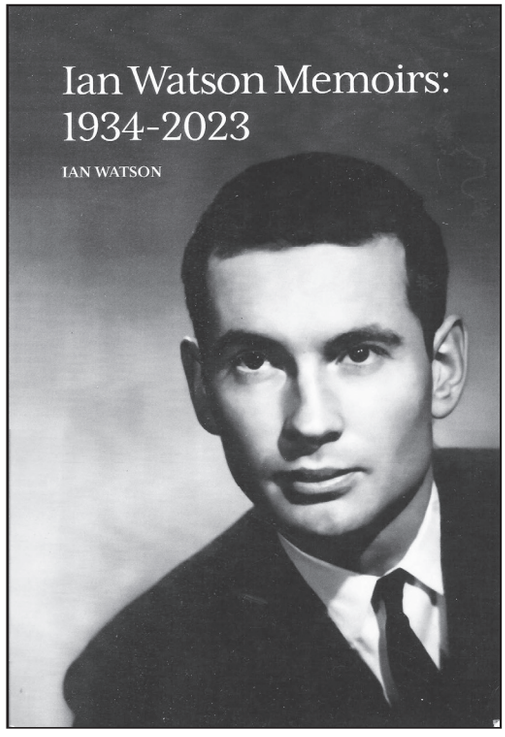
Chaudiere Gold Fields, Beauce County, 1867.
McCord Museum, MP-0000.1087.9.

Review

Slices of Life

Ian Watson Memoirs: 1934-2023
First Choice Books, Victoria, B.C.

There are two kinds of biographies: one that you read to learn more about a famous person, and one that you read even though you have never heard of the person but are willing to be engaged in their story because they are, well, human. The memoirs of the late Ian Watson fall into this second category – although arguably the name should have been more familiar, since he served as a Quebec member of parliament for 21 years. That said, I enjoyed the experience of getting to know this gentleman from scratch.



Towards the end of his life, Watson put pen to paper (or do I do a disservice to the man's computer skills?) and recounted the story of his life, from his childhood in the Chateauguay Valley to his education at Bishop's and McGill (Law) to his political career and to the causes he embraced in retirement. It is told in a straightforward manner that matches the honesty with which Watson describes and considers his life's achievements. There is something endearing about the quietly confident descriptions of modest success; in Watson's tone you can hear both pride in years of hard work for constituents and regret over not having made the kind of political splash that leads inevitably to official biographies. Watson did not rock the boat, but he did put in the time and effort to improve the lives of First Nations in small but discernible ways and to enable fair discussion within government of the Arab-Israeli conflict – both issues dear to his heart.

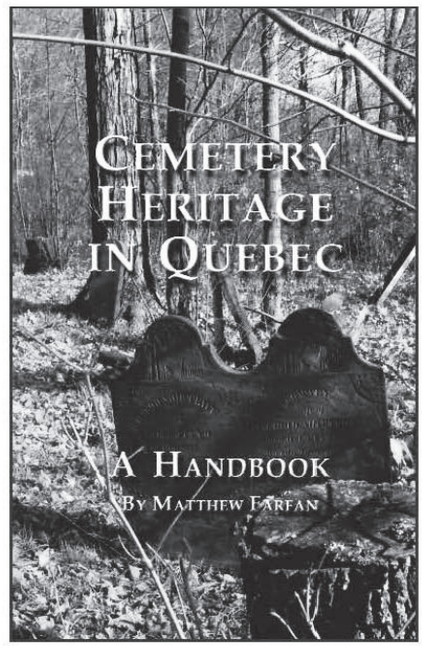
Watson's modesty serves him well as the narrator of his own story, but when it comes to potentially more dramatic events one is often left wanting more. No tea is spilled when Watson recounts his relations with other MPs or even meetings with such international figures as Yassir Arafat, the Aga Khan, and the Crown Prince of Jordan. Resisting the urge to boast is commendable, although it can be a bit disappointing when your guide takes you to fascinating places and then holds back on detail that would give the experience more significance. A career in politics, with its emphasis on massaging rather than bludgeoning and on euphemism rather than bluntness, no doubt makes it particularly difficult to be harsh, even critical. Watson's optimism from the perspective of the late 2010s does clang somewhat when he speaks confidently of Canada's relationship with Trump or Hamas' willingness to be reasonable. But this was a man who strove to see nuance and shade in a world too used to thinking in black and white.

Watson is also restrained when speaking of his own family, although he conveys a clear sense of pride in his four children, their spouses, and his eleven grandchildren. Here, erring on the side of discretion is understandable; even so, the absence of the extended family from the narrative seemed odd – particularly given the book's plethora of lovely photos showing Watson surrounded by family members of all ages on a variety of occasions. Seeing him on hikes with his daughters or heading a long dining table lined with laughing children made Watson come alive to me as a beloved presence in the family in a way that was not echoed in the text. Again, it is a difficult balance, to be sure: too much detail about each child's triumphs and foibles would seem gratuitous, but at the same time we should not be left with the assumption that all happy families resemble one another.

The memoir is strongest when it shows slices of life, insight into unfamiliar (at least to me) worlds. Watson's description of his childhood in Howick is particularly rich: school, chores, swimming in the river, hunting muskrats, spankings. He describes an array of colourful village characters, from the salty dame who kept house for the local political hack to the much-abused girl of loose morals to the old coot whose neighbours finally forced him into a tub to scrub off 30 years of grime. Watson is sensitive to having been brought up Protestant and English-speaking within a larger world that was predominantly French-speaking and Catholic. His father was the veterinarian for the entire area and earned respect across all social divides, instilling in young Ian a sense that one could get a great deal done by meeting people half way and being willing to see the other point of view. Watson's experience going into politics flows naturally from this vivid local description: getting nominated, and then getting elected, is largely about who you know and how they know you – and the young candidate navigating the old boys' network in rural Quebec is vividly depicted. No less vivid is the story of Watson's defeat, after two decades serving under Pearson, Trudeau Senior, and Turner, in the Tory landslide of 1984.

Ian Watson is, in short, worth getting to know. Those familiar with federal politics in the 1960s, 70s and 80s may already know him. Those who recall the early days of heritage activism in the area south of Montreal may also remember him, since Watson helped launch the Chateauguay Valley Historical Society in 1960. Shining throughout the Memoirs is a clear sense of pride in this south-west corner of Quebec.

- Reviewed by Rod MacLeod



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