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# THE CABOOSE



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NEWSLETTER OF THE CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CTHS)

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## President's ramblings (by Dorothy-Jane Smith)

This has been a soggy summer. A hard one for our farmers or even those who just want the kids out of the house. Even so, the Navan Fair parade enjoyed a beautiful warm sunny morning. With Bob and Rita Dessaint providing wheels and know-how and Katie Zeisig with her grandchildren representing the more recent families who have helped to build the Township, we had a winning float—best in the non-commercial class and best of show. More importantly, we had fun and we showed the crowd that the CTHS is alive and well. I think you'll also find the Society doing well in the speakers we have lined up for the coming season. See you at a meeting soon.

### **Our Society**

The Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS) was founded in 1986. We are a non-profit, volunteer and community-based organization whose goal is to preserve Cumberland Township history.

### **Our newsletter**

*The Caboose* is published six times each year by the Cumberland Township Historical Society.

### **Our Executive**

- Dorothy-Jane Smith, President
- Jean-François Beaulieu, Vice President
- Randall Ash, Past President, Newsletter production
- Jeannie Smith, Newsletter Editor
- Bob Kendall, Secretary
- Bill Woodruff, Treasurer
- Verna Cotton, Director
- Dan Brazeau, Director

### **Our address and local history room**

Cumberland Branch  
Ottawa Public Library  
Local History Room  
1599 Tenth Line Road  
Ottawa, ON K1E 3E8

### **Our World Wide Web address**

[www.cths.ca](http://www.cths.ca)



First Place winners! CTHS float at the Navan Fair 2008  
(back: Verna Cotton, Jean-François Beaulieu, Dorothy-Jane Smith, Katie Zeisig and grandchildren  
front: Max Keeping, Rita Dessaint and Helen Burns)

### **Next meeting of the CTHS**

The next meeting of the CTHS will be held on Wednesday, September 3rd, 6:30 pm at the Navan Curling Club, 1305 Fairgreen, beside the Domes at the Navan Fairgrounds. Guest speaker Ross Bradley will present *The History of the Navan Curling Club*. Be sure to bring a friend along. Light refreshments, as always, will be served.

## Society calendar

For more information on these and other upcoming 2008/09 events, please contact a member of the executive committee or visit our website at [www.cths.ca](http://www.cths.ca).



September 3 <sup>rd</sup>	CTHS General Meeting, 6:30pm at the Navan Curling Club; guest speaker: Ross Bradley: The History of the Navan Curling Club
September 7 <sup>th</sup>	Plant Sale, 1:00-3:00 pm; Cumberland Lion's Hall
Now til October 11 <sup>th</sup>	Cumberland Market, Saturdays at the Cumberland arena
September 27	Dance for St. Andrew's United Church 180 <sup>th</sup> anniversary ; 8:00 pm Maple Hall Light lunch 10:00 pm; Tickets \$10.00; from Joan Lancaster, 613-833-2837

Check for events at the Cumberland Museum: [www.Ottawa.ca/residents/heritage/museums/Cumberland](http://www.Ottawa.ca/residents/heritage/museums/Cumberland)

### Contact us

If you have questions or suggestions regarding any aspect of the Society including The Caboose, our local history room or anything else of interest to you or to the Society, you may contact any member of the executive by phone or by email:

- Dorothy-Jane Smith, President (225-3554)
- Jean-François Beaulieu, Vice-President (841-0424) [jeanfb@sympatico.ca](mailto:jeanfb@sympatico.ca)
- Randall Ash, Past President (833-3207) [randall2620@rogers.com](mailto:randall2620@rogers.com)
- Jeannie Smith, Newsletter Editor (833-2877) [gsmith2877@rogers.com](mailto:gsmith2877@rogers.com)
- Verna Cotton, Director (835-2490)
- Dan Brazeau, Director (834-8336) [danbrazeau@rogers.com](mailto:danbrazeau@rogers.com)
- Bob Kendall, Secretary (613-830-0015) [bobkendall@sympatico.ca](mailto:bobkendall@sympatico.ca)
- Bill Woodruff, Treasurer, [b.woodruff@videotron.ca](mailto:b.woodruff@videotron.ca)

## We've got mail!

*I have been researching my ancestors and am seeking information pertaining to them. My great, great grandfather was John Morrison (or Morris). He married a Margaret Pratt and the parish register of Saint John the Baptist Church*

*in Richmond lists the marriage on February 28, 1845. One of the witnesses is Benjamin Morris. The next entry on the same page lists a marriage in Richmond on March 3, 1845 between Patrick Morris and Jemima Gahan. Again one of the witnesses is Benjamin Morris and the other is Hugh Gahan.*

*I have found the names Pat Morris/Morrison, Ben Morris and Hugh Gahan as early settlers in Cumberland and am wondering if the Morrises could be related to my g.g. grandfather, John. From the censuses I believe John was born some time between 1819 and 1822 in Ontario, of Irish background and belonged to the Church of England.*

Anne Johnston. [ajohn4@rogers.com](mailto:ajohn4@rogers.com)

## More information on the Taylor Family

(See March 2007 Caboose, page 7)

- **Fabien Blais** b 1816 Quebec d ? Married Nov. 24, 1846 Louisa Taylor bSept. 5, 1826 Quebec d March 14, 1868 Clarence, Ontario. Their children were:
  - Philomen 1847-1914 married Jane Niswey then Marry Mathews.
    - Children Edward, Ethel and Gladys.
  - Edwin James b 1850 drowned in logging accident on Ottawa River December 31, 1880
  - Lydia 1853-1876 buried in Clarence.
  - Elizabeth 1854-1884 was killed when the horse and buggy ran away. She married Duncan MacI ntrye.
    - Children Louisa 1880-1962, Archibald 1881-?, Elizabeth 1883-1963.
  - Laura 1857-1909 married Duncan MacI ntrye.
    - Child: Aileen Sharpe.
  - Susan 1859-1897 married Daniel Cameron.
  - Alva Isaac 1862 -1929 married I sobella Frances Miller.
    - Children: Lilly Louisa, Ernest Edwin, Alva Erskine, Harold, Reginald, Archibald Edward.
  - William T. 1868-1868 infant died ten days before his mother.

*The children, all born in Ontario were listed as Wes. Meth. In 1861 census Fabian Blais purchased 50 acres of land (pt of lot 7 Conc. I*

*o.s. Clarence Township) from Isaac Taylor on April 4, 1853 and sold the land March 28, 1870. The other part of Lot 7 was owned by James Erskine and his wife Susan and was purchased from Isaac Taylor in 1854. The 1871 Census shows Elizabeth and Susan Blais living with James Erskine.*

Robert Blais  
Bob.Blais@shaw.ca

## Oral history project: progress report

By Bob Kendall

In the July 2008 issue of *The Caboose*, readers were introduced to the "Oral History Project", a collection of 60 taped interviews with long-time Cumberland Township residents. Fifteen of the tapes had been summarized by that date. Also, as an introduction, the first of these recordings, an interview with Mrs. Clara Nuttall, was made available on a limited basis to interested guests at our September 3, 2008 meeting. As of our publication deadline, that meeting has not yet been held, so we are unable to report on the degree of interest in either the summary or the mp3.

The total number of interviews that have been summarized has now reached 30, thanks to the efforts of our team of dedicated volunteers. We are now past the half-way mark in our project. Four of the tapes have proven to be unreadable, probably because of technical malfunctions at the time the original recordings were made; in fact, in one of the tapes a very clear voice breaks into an otherwise unintelligible session to announce that "due to equipment failure, we are unable to proceed with the interview at this time".

It is the intention of the executive of the Cumberland Township Historical Society to make all of these interviews available to every member who is interested. The exact method of doing so remains undefined, and there are logistical hurdles to be overcome. Nevertheless, we have decided to continue our experimental program by providing you with the summary text of a recording which was made by Ann Gonneau at the home of Syd and Verna Cotton on October 17, 1991. The topic is "Funeral Customs in Navan". A few mp3's may be provided at our November meeting, depending on the response to the Nuttall interview in September.

## Funeral customs in Navan

In the 1930s and earlier, deceased family members were laid out in the parlour at home, in their Sunday best. They were always embalmed and coffins were usually open. One could expect an abundance of flowers, because donating to charities in the names of the departed had not yet become the norm. Widows were expected to wear black for six months. Wakes were arduous for the families, as there were no fixed visiting hours, and mourners often stayed late into the night. Of course, neighbours brought plenty of food, and the family provided tea and coffee. Cremations were completely unknown except when they were required for financial reasons, as often happened when people died abroad. By 1940, wakes were sometimes held in funeral homes, but this custom did not become the norm until the end of the decade. Syd remembers his father's wake at home in 1947. Family members and friends were invited to be pallbearers, but Syd was seldom asked to fill that role because he was always in demand as a choir member. Unlike today, family members returned home alone after the interment. Syd and Verna do not remember many differences among English, French, Protestant or Catholic customs at wakes, except that Catholics always provided kneelers at the coffins, and held prayer sessions for the deceased at random times. Of course this required cessation of conversation among the mourners. Syd remembers one wake where a neighbour, "a good Dogan himself", became conspicuous by continuing a loud conversation during the prayers.

The Cottons have had no direct familiarity with "family plots", although they know there are several in the township, including the MacMillan and Dunning graveyards, and the Cameron cemetery near Camelot golf course.

Although most funeral customs remain unchanged today, they note that there is sometimes an observed lessening of respect for the deceased, especially during funeral corteges in traffic, and bell-ringing is much less frequent than when churches would routinely toll once for each year of the decedent's life.



## Hayes Family Letter from the Past



Jan. 22, 1891  
Duluth,  
Minnesota  
Dear Aunt Alice  
(McClelland) and  
Uncle (William  
Hayes):

It is with  
pleasure that I  
write those few  
lines to you to let  
you know that  
we are all well  
hoping that this  
will find you all  
the same. We  
have a little  
baby boy. He is  
very nice but I

don't think we needed him very much. For this is the ninth one and seven of them boys. I think we will call him Steward Crawford. There is no snow here now. And times are very dull on account of it. Uncle James Robert's house is about a block from us. He and Aunt Mary and the baby is well. Pa had a letter from Uncle Joe and he is well. Aunt Margret and Jinnie and the rest of the family is well. Uncle Robert is well and is enjoying his quiet life. It is very lonesome in town when one is used to a farm with horses, hens and pigs. We have two cows and both of them journey in a wagon. We started on the 8 of Sept. and got here on the 25 of Oct. Ma is washing this after-noon. Pa is in bed sleeping for it is about all he has to do. The boys are out in the kitchen making as much noise as they know how. Tillie is just like grandma as she can be and Jimmie is as wild as a deer. I suppose Willie and Ethel is big. Does Alice go to school yet? James and Clifford is nice little boys now. How I would like to see them all now. I would like to see grandma and all the folks of Cumberland. Ma told me to tell you she has not forgotten you although she did not write for she did not have

time. Well it is milking time and I will have to mind the baby so I will have to close for this time Give my love to Uncle William and the family and accept the same yourself. Give my love to Aunt Mary Ann, Uncle Jim and Ada and Grandma.

Good by from your niece

Annie McClelland

2119-6 St. W Duluth Minnesota

Excuse all my mistakes.

Annie never married. Her parents were James McClelland and Rebecca Hayes. Her father was an older brother of Alice McClelland who married William Hayes (older brother of Rebecca Hayes).

Alice and William are the grandparents of Doug Hayes. Letter contributed by Janet and Robert West.



## The MacEachern Family



Back l-r: Keith, Florence, Celia (Malcolm's wife), Mary (Neil's wife), Neil, Bertha, Archie Edwards (bertha's husband), Harry Baldwin, Betty (Ralph's first wife), boarder at Florence's, Ralph, Malcolm, Cameron Smith (Evelyn's husband), Evelyn,  
Middle: Donald Newton, Georgina, Mary (bertha's daughter), Jimima (granny), Robert (Malcolm's son), Don (Malcolm's son)  
Front: Ray (Ralph's son by first wife), Malcolm (Malcolm's 'son 'Mikey'), Gail (Bertha's daughter), Celia (Malcolm's daughter), Cameron Smith (Evelyn's son)

## The Paquette Family

By Irene Paquette Beausejour Cardinal (1988)

The Paquette family came to Cumberland in 1883. All were born around French Hill. Napoleon, Ozibert, Edward and Rose Piper (died August 29th, 1915). Grandmother Paquette died March 12, 1926. Aunt Rose (sister of Napoleon etc) died 1928. Little Napoleon died Dec. 22, 1924.

My Great Grandfather Paquette came from France. He married a German girl. They moved to a small town near Vankleek Hill Ontario. They had 1 boy, Edward Paquette and girl's names I do not know.

Edward Paquette married Caroline Lavergne and they had 3 sons and 1 daughter.

1. Ozibert Gilbert married Clair Lalonde. She was married before. They had 1 daughter and 4 sons and lived in Ottawa.



Crowd taken when we lived at Uncle Gill's house. Grandfather Edward Paquette and his 4 sisters. Notice Maggie and Napoleon Paquette at back with little daughter Irene (Beausejour-Cardinal) peeking out between them. c1912.

2. Napoleon Francis married Margaret Gleason from Masson Quebec.



Paquette Family: Lawrence, Napoleon, Gilbert, Irwin, in front, Redmond and Irene



Back l-r Redmond, Lawrence, Irwin  
Front l-r: Maggie, Napoleon with granddaughter Diane, Irene 1943

They had 1 daughter, Irene Margaret married first to Sylvio Beausejour. They had Diane (married to Gilbert Hamelin from Rockland, their sons Daniel and Donald) and Mark Sylvio (married to Nicole Brindamour). They had 4 children: twin boys Robert and Richard, Denis and fourth child died at birth and is buried in Rockland. Irene's second marriage was to Arthur Cardinal.

Lawrence was not married. He was an electrician by trade. He died at 47 years of cancer. He lived in Cumberland.

Irwin Francis married to Cecile Marion. Children: Edith (married Michael Cuccilotte-children Christina, Anthony, Ronald). Michael married Dawn Nelson (Shannon, Cindy). Suzanne married Lee Ryan (two children Matthew and Timothy).

Redmond married Joan Winegarden. Children: Vaughan (wife Judy), James (wife Danielle Bedard), Paula (husband Allan Benson) live in Hammond. Children: Christopher and Thomas.

3. Rose sister of Napoleon, Ozibert & James (Edward) married Joseph Moreau had 2 boys and 4 girls and lived in Ottawa.

4. Edward (Jim) married Libby Lapointe. 7 girls and 2 boys and lived in Rockland.

## The Paquette Family

By O.C.P. Gilbert Paquette in 1960

Irene Paquette was born in (Ozibert Gilbert) Gill's house in 1910. Loretta Cameron Jones moved to



Napoleon and Gilbert Paquette in front of the house in French Hill where they were born

Cumberland in 1913. They came from Masson Quebec. Mrs. Cameron moved to the CNR Station in 1916. We then had freight trains and also passenger trains. Mrs. Cameron sold tickets and also the freight that came in and off of trains. Mr. Cameron had an accident while working for the CNR. He was crushed in between two freight cars. He had no use of his legs and was in a wheel chair for the rest of his life. The house they lived in when they moved to Cumberland was on the east side of Gill's house on Old Montreal Road.

Paquette's old house on the back street (Market) was built by Edward Paquette Sr. census 1882. His sons O.C. P. (Gilbert) and Napoleon Paquette were at that time 3 and 6 years old. We lived in this house for 18 months then we moved to a place on grandfather's farm on the 5th concession of Cumberland Township, back of Cumberland Village and the following spring we moved to the village of Cumberland in the year 1884 and Napoleon Paquette has lived there ever since but O.C. Paquette moved to Ottawa June 15, 1916 and he is still living in Ottawa. He was a carpenter by trade worked on different construction jobs but has retired since 1951.

O.C. Paquette was born on Dec. 2, 1877 on a farm back of the village of Cumberland at French Hill. Two years later, the family moved to Cumberland. We stayed there for a short time then went back on the farm and built a new house. Finally on March 15, 1885 we came back to Cumberland and stayed there for good. O.C. Paquette learned carpenter trade and worked with his father for 20 years then went up north with a railroad company for a while. They moved to Juliette, Quebec with the CNR railroad as a foreman on the bridge and building dept and when the first Great War broke out I moved to Ottawa. This was on June 5, 1916. I worked on shells as inspector then on July 30, 1917, I moved to J. H. Connor & Sons Ltd working on

machinery. I worked there for 12 years and finally on April 13, 1929, left there and went on my own until July 1933 then I bought a set of tourist camps at Lake Constance and operated those camps for 16 years and in 1948 I sold the camps to Terry Ram from Arnprior. I am now retired at 83 years of age.

In Cumberland we had saw mill, a brick yard, 2 carriage shops, 2 black smith shops, a tannery, wheelbarrow shop, fanning mill shop, a flour mill, woolen mill, 2 hotels, 3 general stores, drug store, undertaker, bakery, a saddler and a good old doctor in the name James Ferguson.

### Boats on the Ottawa River

The Florence, R.R. Foster, Harris, Island Queen, Stewart, Victoria, Doffin, Knotter, Lavendure, Sir Hector, Rover, F. R. Booth, Beaver, E.B. Eddy, John, Rockland, Queens, Swan, Russell, Jones, Ade, St. George, Vermont, Robert Anglin, Earley Ross, Peerless, Princess Louise, Empress, Mansfield, Maud, Nuconus, Princess, Olive, Scotsman, Prince of Wales, Hall, Harry Bate, Welshman, Ottawan.

## Memories of the Cumberland Wharf

*By Jeannie Smith*

The allure of the Ottawa River continually draws me down to the shoreline of our property. I love to spend twilight hours by the glowing embers of a fire at the water's edge and stretch my imagination to the limit. I envision the Kitchessipirini, the first nation's river keepers, paddling fur-laden canoes to trading posts in Hochelaga (Montreal). I picture Champlain battling the strong current up river, heading westward.



Cumberland Ferry 1920s

In reality, I remember swimming and boating during the 1950s, before the river widened with the

opening of the Carillon Dam around 1964. I would perch myself in the bow of the boat and let my hand run through the waves as I hummed in tune to the outboard motor which Father controlled. Often, we would patrol my sisters Suzanne, Charlotte and Margaret and the Irish Water Spaniel 'Pat', as they swam across the wide expanse of water. Lilies, yellow and white, flourished ten yards from the sandy shore and created an enchanting border. Intermingled with the lily pads were slimy reeds and the occasional blood-sucker, so swimmers kept to the clear channel of water that stretched forty feet away from Ferguson's shore, over a floor of rippled sand to a sudden 'drop-off'.

At night, the croakings of bull frogs, the rattling of chains on the ferry and the roll of the logs at the mill in Masson, lulled me to sleep in our family cottage, Cedar Cabin. During the daytime, I took to the water like a fish. My pal Marian Watson and I swam for hours on end, playing with the rubber tires from her dad's garage and with the huge log booms that floated to the shoreline. Mother sat on her canvas chair and was the life-guard. We were never allowed to swim much in August because Father felt that the warmer water, which constantly flowed with emulsion from sewers, harboured bacteria. By 1960, our swimming skills had improved and Marian and I would join the seasoned swimmers at the wharf. Ruth Watson, Pat LaSalle, Marilyn Hansen, Danielle and Joelle LeGuerrier, Sue Paquette, Denise and Carol Lavergne joined us on the top wharf for laughter and fun. We cheered the brave lads who dove off the ferry. Rich Lagimoniere, Jim Levesque, Glen, Ray and 'Huck' Robertson, Bryne and Glenn Nuttall, Don Smith, Mike and Jim Tierney, Mike and Vaughn Paquette, and Eric and Les Von Tobel all demonstrated their prowess. We teens didn't grow up on farms, so couldn't brag about getting our education 'out behind the barn'. We learned more about life at the Cumberland wharf than



Eva Kennedy and baby

at school! The five o'clock whistle from McLaren's Mills called us home for supper. We'd return to the wharf afterwards not wanting to 'miss the action!'

You had to be a good swimmer to survive life at the top wharf. The waters were cold, deep and dung-filled with a mixture of gas and oil. If you weren't fast enough to jump, you'd be thrown in. After swimming about, you'd have to dart around the ferry to avoid being caught up in the propellers. Luckily, no one was ever seriously hurt as they dove off the roof of the operator's hut. You'd climb up the gravelly grit to the top wharf and over the stone barricade, only to be pushed back into the river. We loved every minute of it! It was thrilling. Then we'd sit on the wall

and tan, breathing in the rays of sunshine and the drags of Export-A cigarettes. The swimmers wore bathing suits, but having clothes on didn't guarantee that you wouldn't get thrown in! Ingie Hanson Millar and Marty LeGuerrier Williams will never forget hanging on to the back of the ferry then releasing their grip and swimming back to safety at the wharf.

We tried to behave our best, but did experiment with a bit of foul language and a few quick kisses. Most of the adults didn't pay us much heed, but whenever Eva Kennedy came down for her evening swim, we'd become angelic. A graceful swimmer she was, bathed in her white suit and bathing cap, side-stroking through the water. She had supervised the births of many Cumberland babies and was truly an inspiration. Her daughter Joyce reminisces, "I have multiple memories of the wharf and wonderful river -- except for the flotsam that drifted by from the paper mills. (We tried to avoid it, but couldn't always.) My whole family (including Mom and Dad) enjoyed the cool waters. My biggest scare one summer was when I took my



Lovely Maggie Gleason, Mrs. Napoleon Paquette, dressed in white

duck "Veronica" to the river with me. When someone frightened her she panicked and swam far out into the river, just as the ferry was returning from Masson to Cumberland. I went after her -- and the ferry had to slow and change course -- but I got my sweet duck back safely."

Madame Gertrude LeGuerrier, her lovely figure adorned in a trim bathing suit, would waltz down the steep hill, followed by a line of her younger children. Mrs. Le Guerrier, a non-swimmer at age forty, was taught to swim by Eva Kennedy. Eva's niece, Olive Farmer, tied a rope to the waists of her sons Glen, Ray and Don Robertson, then tossed them into the deep water off the wharf and they learned quickly to 'sink or swim'.

Dorothea and Bryne Nuttall taught Joan Levesque Stoker to swim underwater. Her brother Jim risked his life diving off the ferry. Their father Ernie Levesque was the 'Champion Caller in the Ottawa Valley' well-known throughout Canada from his personal appearances on TV and greatly loved and respected by area residents. He would ferry over or drive across the ice bridge to the Anka Hotel in Angers. Owner, Nick Anka, complained to Ernie that he kicked his nephew Paul (Anka) out of the hotel because he couldn't sing. This was in 1958 and Nick later laughed to Ernie, "I told Paul to take singing lessons!" Ernie, a handsome man, 5'8" tall, 220 lbs, strong as a horse, acted as bouncer in between calling the dances. His voice, famous for leading the squares, rang out with a French-Canadian accent "Promenade. Go h'all the way roun". Tragedy struck on November 29, 1963, Ernie's wife Glennis Galloway's 38th birthday, when Ernie was injured as he worked in construction on a building at Tunney's Pasture. The elevator rope broke and Ernie was wedged between the railing and the elevator, crushing his insides. He lived for nine days but succumbed to a blood clot to the heart. Ernie Levesque's legacy lives on in the memory of many a square dancer and in the recordings that remain.

Napoleon Paquette bought the Cumberland ferry in 1925. He and his wife, Maggie Gleason and children Irene, Lawrence, Irwin and Redmond lived up on the west side of the hill above the wharf. He operated one ferry from April until November and supervised the ice bridge in the winter. Claire Barnett Brown recalls, "As kids, we often asked Redmond, Lawrence or Irwin if we could go over and come

back without paying. Lawrence was always the most agreeable. Paul (Napoleon) usually was the first to cross the river in the winter, measuring the thickness of ice so that vehicles could travel on the areas that he marked." The tragic drowning of Napoleon's son-in-law, Sylvio Beausejour, on September 21, 1944 marked the ending of the Paquette Ferry Operation.



Maggie and Paul Paquette

The newspaper stated "Sylvio Beausejour, 32, of Cumberland, a former resident of Ottawa and an ex-soldier, slipped from the deck of the Cumberland-Masson Ferry shortly after 10:30 pm last night and was drowned in the Ottawa River 50 feet from the Cumberland pier. The water at that point was estimated to be about 60 feet deep. Dragging operations were started early this morning but up to present time no trace of the body had been found. According to Provincial Police, Beausejour, an employee of Canada Bread Company Ltd. at Cumberland was helping his father-in-law Paul (Nap) Paquette, operator of the ferry, aboard the craft at the time. He was standing at one side of the boat near

the railing preparing to cast a mooring line ashore as the boat reached the dock. It is thought that he lost his footing and slipped into the water. Mr. Beausejour was unable to swim and it being dark at the time no one was able to go to his aid. Police Constable Perry Harkness of Cumberland investigated the mishap shortly after its occurrence. Dr. Martin Powers, District Coroner, will notify Sylvio Beausejour's wife, Irene Paquette, when the body is recovered. (Irene's daughter Diane was only two years old and Irene was expecting her son Mark.) "I remember so well the time that Sylvio drowned. He was leaning on the rail when lightning supposedly struck," says Claire Brown. My grandfather, J.D. Ferguson, noted in his diary that he paid his respects to the Paquette family then watched several boats drag the river. Beausejour's body was recovered a few days later. Sylvio Beausejour's daughter Diane Hamelin says that after that tragedy her grandfather, Paul Paquette, sold the business to Andre and Achille Lamarche of Treadwell and that her mother, Irene, didn't go near the wharf for years, nor did she allow her children to swim there. Irene and her second husband, Arthur





Napoleon Paquette and the ferry

Cardinal, had a farm in Thurso, and Irene would walk across the ice road from the Quebec shore to visit her parents in Cumberland.

My husband Glen 'Pinkie' Smith, who is ten years older than I, followed that rite of passage, shared by so many, of quenching one's thirst and appetite for life in Masson! He remembers old Lamarche downing a quart of beer in four gulps and tossing the empty into the water as he maneuvered the ferry. Sometimes the waters were so rough that he was unable to hook up at the Cumberland wharf and had to return to the Quebec side. The Cumberland Gang would head back to Gauthier's Hotel in Masson without hesitation until they could be ferried back home. In winter, they'd venture across the ice road, careful not to go too fast in case the water underneath raced ahead of them in a wave. Some cars went under in such accidents. Other vehicles were purposely driven off the wharf to the car graveyard. A few people committed suicide by driving into the deep. I continued the family tradition by partying in Masson during the mid sixties. My grandfather's sister, Minnie, socialized there in the 1880s. My uncle, Fred Ferguson, imbibed across the river during the 1920s and 30s. My son Brett, and his pals Matt Hill, Jeff Cotton and Jason Minogue, believed that they were the first young lads to find an open beer store on Sundays in Masson!

Glen's cousin, Dorothy-Jane Smith shared, "My memories of the Cumberland ferry are part of the sounds of long-ago summer nights. I was a child staying with my mother's cousin, Mary Cameron, just off the road going down to the ferry. She had daybeds on a large screened-in verandah where my sister and I were sometimes allowed to sleep. I would lie there listening to the adults talking inside, to the crickets and to mysterious bird calls that I would imagine to be ghostly owls. Then would come the sound of the ferry motor as it came into the wharf

followed by the sound of the chains. I would wait for the cars to come up the road and then for the chains rattling again as the next load was secured on and finally the motor sound disappearing across the river. It's a sound I still bring back when thinking of my childhood."

Claire Barnet Brown's memories stem from the 1940s. "Most of all I remember the corn roasts that we enjoyed after raiding a garden. The one at the Catholic Church was always the first so we invited our Catholic friends. The big bags were heavy so we often flagged a policeman and asked him to drive them to the wharf, and he too was invited to join us later. Of course, there were wiener roasts on a Friday evening.

Our Catholic friends realized the following day that they had eaten meat on a day when it was a no-no. I also remember the annoyance that was caused every time Alex Skelton tied up his yacht, thereby preventing divers from diving off the wharf. I remember moonlight excursions that Grandma Watson took Arla and me to when we were very young. That was more than 70 years ago. The ferry took paying passengers a short distance down the river and returned to the pleasure of a marshmallow roast on the wharf. I remember the rounds of cheese that were dropped off by boat to eventually get to Dunning's store. Honest, I never took one bite from one. I remember fighting with kids on the Quebec side. We knew every swear word in the French language. Some swear words provoked a fight more quickly than others. Did sound ever carry across the river on a clear night! About fifty years ago my husband came home from work and asked me if I remembered a Larocque who had lived in Cumberland. A young sailor told him that his grandfather, a man with a wooden leg, had lived in Cumberland at one time. I wonder how many readers can remember "Peg-legged Pete" who lived in a lean-to or a tree house at the wharf, more than seventy years ago.

In 1939, Eugene Seguin operated the Montebello ferry service. His son-in-law, Eugene Bourbonnais, took over in 1947. In 1963, Hector Bourgeois and Eugene Bourbonnais bought the Cumberland ferry from the Lamarches and operated the first eight-car steel ferry. In 1968, Maurice Bourbonnais, Eugene's son, quit his job as a police officer and ran the ferry. By 1969, a second ferry was added to the fleet to accommodate the increased traffic. In 1975, Maurice bought Hector Bourgeois' shares and became sole owner. A third ferry complemented the fleet in 1977. Passengers drove on one end of this ferry and off the other end, thereby speeding up operations. Residents complained about the noise of

the ferries, so special mufflers were installed. That same year, *Les Ateliers Maurice Bourbonnais Ltée* was launched. This second business specialized in building and maintaining ferries. The installation of an air bubble system in 1982 made it possible to operate 24 hours a day, throughout the year. The ferry business today, under the ownership of Maurice Bourbonnais, is flourishing with its five ferries. Two ice breakers play tag in the frozen winter waters and for a few days a year the river is entirely blocked with ice. Once before, I recall the river was blocked, but with logs that had escaped their entrapment within the huge booms, and the waterway was jammed solid.

I remember the smells of polluted, stinky, summer water; the sound of whistling tugboats; the sights of a rainbow ripple of oil escaping from the ferry; the ice cream from Florence Watson Armstrong's canteen; the excitement as you raced your bike down the hill or waited to board the ferry, sometimes having to back your car into the corner beside the control room. We still live at 'Ferguson's Shore' and love to share 'ferry tales'!

*Bob Serre's article in the March 2002 Caboose provides more history of the ferry.*



**Navan School**

- Row 4: L-R Howie Martin, Jim Brown, Bill and Basil O'Neil, Edwin Dashney, \_\_\_\_\_Robinson, Bob Armstrong, Ray Boileau
- Row 3: Lynn Irwin, Roy Cleroux, Marvin Irwin, McNulty, Barry Kinsella, Leonard Kinsella
- Row 2: Mazie Rivington, Helen Smith, McNulty, Inez McFadden, Marilyn Bradley
- Row 1: Irene Thurley, Annie Kinsella, Francis Armstrong, Mary Edwards, Clorine Lavargne, Ruth Nelson, Roberta Newton, Eileen McFadden, Lorna Burns, Irene Brown, Donna McWilliams, June Martin

# School days



**Vars School 1932-33**

- Front l-r-Melville Shirley, Gordon Eadie, Greta Morrison, Freda Becker, May Hill, Laura Griffith, George Smout
- Back l-r Marie Shaw, Vera Eadie, Rebecca Hill.



**Canaan School 1947**

- Row 3: Carl Birch, Joan Miller, Mrs. Wylie, Agathe Belanger, Shirley Thorpe
- Row 2: Dave Birch, Rodney Morrison, Edith Bertram, Ernest Belanger, George Miller, Derwyn Miller
- Row 1: ? Morrison, Annabelle Morrison, Mae Mason, Ken Watson



**Cumberland SS #5**

Row 3: Mrs. Millar, Lloyd Lough, Carl Armstrong, Helen Schryer, Diane Beausejour,  
Sally Dunfield, Gayle Rivers, Linda Watson

Row 2: Shirley Millar, Sheila Rivers, Betty Sommerville, Mary Smith, Gloria Burrige,  
Brenda Barnett

Row 1; Earl Casey, John Galloway, John Williams, Edward Alvery, Robert Lepage,  
Harold Watson



**Navan Continuation School**

Row 1: Annette Lacroix, Verna Webb, Ruth Nelson, June Martin, Roberta Cardiff, Gail Edwards, Helen Hayes, Donna  
McWilliams, Helen Dashney, Viola Waghorn, Carole Huard, Joyce McNulty, Norma Jackson, Elsie Dunning, Wayne  
Kinsella, Allan Cardiff

Row 2: Roberta Newton, Lois Rathwell, Eileen McFadden, Ileen Dunning, Pat Tanner, Verna Rickerd, Gwen Tanner,  
Ronnie Deavy, Cecil Waghorn, Willard McWilliams, Floyd Armstrong, Israel Lacroix, Jim Thurley

Row 3: Bertha Emmett, Isobel Tanner, Lorna Burns, Jean Marshall, Carol Richardson, Joan Miller, Teacher-Miss Nina  
Salisbury, Principal- Mr.W. Panabaker, Sidney Stuart, Glen Kinsella, Jack Sparks, Marvin Irwin, Lynn Irwin, Mike  
McNulty. Absent: Irene Thurley, Marion Moffatt, Bob Thurley, Lyall Huard, Jim Neely, Lawrence Heney.

# Terry Fox



Terry arriving at the Cumberland Museum, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1980



Peter Clark and Marie Hicks  
Canada Day, June 26<sup>th</sup> 1982  
Terry Fox plaque at Cumberland Museum