

The Caboose

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LAST MEETING

Our first public meeting of the 2001-2002 season was held on September 5th, at the Public Library on Tenth Line Road. Our guest speaker was Verna Kinsella, of Vars, and the format was an exchange between Verna and some sixteen participants about the history of Vars and the life of its people through the years. Verna provided information; people asked questions, or added personal comments. The exchange was lively and at times humorous, and afterwards the participants had a chance to look at Verna's photographs and to chat among themselves. It was most enjoyable!

NEXT MEETING

It has not been possible for our Society to organize the public meeting which would normally have been held on Wednesday, November 7th.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Memories of a Squatter and Other Recollections

by Bob Serré

In 1956, Jim Morin sold my father a piece of land between Highway 17 and the Ottawa River in the village of Cumberland. I was a 12-year-old greenhorn from the city, impressionable and curious. In the years that followed, three local figures made a lasting impression on me.

The first one was Fred Ferguson; he had bulging muscles. He could put his big boat in the water and haul it out by himself, and handle his outboard motor with ease. Just scratching his ear would make his biceps bulge so it seemed he would split his short-sleeved shirt.

The second one was John Watson; he could handle anything mechanical. He had gray hair, wore dingy overalls and work boots, and always had a kerchief handy to wipe his greasy hands. I remember him hauling Fred Ferguson's shack some distance back from the river's edge so it wouldn't be flooded in the spring. He lived in the village in a house that looked like it never saw a coat of paint, and he had a garage and gas station next door.

The third one was Mister Moreau, a squatter living on the side of the public road leading from the highway to the river, an extension of present-day Peter Harkness Lane in the village of Cumberland. He was rather plump. His wife was a small, slim woman with a harelip, and she seemed young enough to be his daughter. I didn't know her name, nor his first name. They lived in a shack under the shade of a huge maple tree, with no electricity. In the evening, they would quietly walk down to the river, get into their boat, and row out to their chosen spot, stick a long pole into the bottom of the river, and anchor their boat to it. Then, they would proceed to catch a sackful of catfish in no time at all. My biggest thrill came one day when I paid them a visit, and was actually invited inside the cabin. It had a wood stove, a battery-operated radio for the Saturday night hockey game, a big couch, and a spittoon in which Mister Moreau periodically shot a mouthful of black juice that never missed its mark. An addition had been built onto the back, facing east, as a bedroom. I couldn't imagine a more romantically simple lifestyle.

Some forty years have elapsed since those innocent days of my youth. I turned my attention from the Cottage and the River to studies, a career and married life. Things changed, and my wife and I now own the Cottage facing the River. I've become interested in local history, and I've discovered some of the background of the people who made such an impression on me more than forty years ago.

Fred Ferguson, the brother of Dr. John Douglas Ferguson (dentist), was the son of John Darby Ferguson, himself a son of Dr. James Ferguson, who arrived in the township in 1861, and practised medicine in the community practically until his death in 1921. Fred Ferguson remained a bachelor.

John Watson was born in Sarsfield in 1900; he was the son of Mathias and Lillias Watson, who had been married on November 21, 1894, in St. Paul's Anglican Church, Canaan. John married Mable Scharf, and they had five children; he died in April 1978. Mable was 83 when she died in July 1996.

Alphonse Moreau was the son of François-Xavier Moreau and Delphine Paquette, and the grandson of Alexis Moreau and Virginie Larocque. He had married Hélène Larocque on January 31, 1910 in Sarsfield. When I knew him, he was living with his second wife, Edna Lécuyer. Born around 1920, Edna was the daughter of André Lécuyer and Corinne Chatelain; she married Alphonse in July 1950 in Orleans. She died in March 1975.

Personally, I find all those facts rather uninspiring compared with the fanciful images surrounding the bigger-than-life characters who inhabited the colourful world of my youth.

EARLY PIONEERS

Francis McCullough, who was born in County Monaghan, Ireland, in 1804, married Elizabeth Lyons; they emigrated to Canada in 1832 with their first child, Mary Ann, who had been born the previous year. They settled in Gloucester Township, at Leitrim, south of Bytown, but in February 1846, Francis bought 200 acres of land in Cumberland Township (lot 11, concession 6), and moved his family there in April of the same year. Besides Mary Ann, who married Launcelot Jackson, Francis and Elizabeth had ten children, two of whom died young. Their sons James and William were teachers for a while, and both became Methodist ministers. Francis (Frank) McCullough married Eliza Annable; he managed the farm and served on the Township Council. Another son, John, with his wife Elizabeth, also had a farm in the township. In addition, there were three other daughters. Sarah married Abraham Sparks. Lydia married Reverend George H. Kenny. Elizabeth married James Johnston, in August 1867, shortly after the death of her father. When Francis McCullough died in December 1866, James Johnston, who had bought from him half of lot 12, concession 9, became the foreman of the McCullough farm. Widow McCullough was 75 when she died in 1886.

François Malboeuf was first assessed for lot 36, concession 1, in Cumberland Township in 1840. He was the son of Michel Malboeuf and Geneviève Sautière, who had been married in 1792 at Saint-Cuthbert, halfway between Trois-Rivières and the island of Montreal. François was about 30 years old when he married Marie-Louise Lefebvre in January 1824 at Saint-Hyacinthe, east of Montreal. They had at least eight children. When the 1861 Census was taken, four of their children were married. Soon afterwards, François and Marie-Louise moved to the Upper Gatineau Valley with some of their children; by 1864, they were established in Bouchette, and in that same year, two of the children were married in Maniwaki, north of Bouchette. François was 72 years old when he died in March 1865; he was buried in the Orléans cemetery. Marie-Louise was then 60, and in October 1865 she married Baptiste Robillard, a widower, in Maniwaki. Other Cumberland Township pioneers were drawn to the Upper Gatineau Valley by the booming lumber industry in the mid-nineteenth century, including Hiram Dunning, son of Zalmon Dunning and of Debora Royce, as well as Alexander, Marie and Mathilde Foubert, children of Amable Foubert and of Matilda Dunning.

Thomas Clarke was born in Ireland around 1785. A native of County Wexford, he married Elizabeth Brown, and they had at least eight children, in Ireland, before emigrating to Canada with their son Richard, in 1843, settling at first near Bytown, and then in Navan. Richard, born in 1824, married Rachel Jackson, daughter of Edward Jackson and Rachel Astleford, and they farmed 100 acres of lot 11, concession 9, in Cumberland Township. Richard's brother Edward farmed 50 acres of the same lot, but Edward and another brother, Thomas, moved to the Pembroke area. Another brother, William Jacob, and a sister, Annie, both died when they were in their twenties, and were buried in the Anglican cemetery at Bearbrook. Richard had three other sisters: Susan married Samuel Jackson; Elizabeth married Robert Walsh, son of George and Elizabeth Walsh, in 1865; Sarah had married a Dutch sea captain, Herman Visser, in Ireland, and they settled in Navan, in Cumberland Township, where they operated a general store. Thomas Clarke lived to a ripe old age; he was 88 when he died in November 1873. His wife Elizabeth had died at the age of 60 in February 1860. Both were buried in the Anglican cemetery at Bearbrook.

[The above profiles were prepared by Bob Serré, using, among other sources, Census data and volume I of the Navan Tweedsmuir History.]

OLD NEWSPAPERS

On November 24, 1866, the Saturday Morning edition of the *Ottawa Citizen* ran the following item on page 2:

THE ROADS

Roads leading into the city, not macadamized, are in a deplorable condition just now (...) Farmers will not venture out to market at all at this season except through sheer necessity (...) However, we are approaching the season of hard frosts and snow, and soon we may expect to be in the full enjoyment of good roads, good times, and good weather. May that happy period hasten its coming.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

I recently had mixed emotions while sifting through old photos handed down to me by my father: a window on the past, but no dates, no explanations. I have felt a similar sadness on other occasions. It is essential to identify people, places and dates; otherwise photographs are bound to become meaningless. A member of our Society, Thérèse Messier, specializes in effective and creative photo preservation techniques; she can be reached at 837-2374.

VIEUX REGISTRES

L'abbé Jean-Baptiste Roupe a été curé à Notre-Dame-de-Bonsecours (Montebello) de 1815 à 1828. Voici un extrait du registre paroissial [bobine n° 314 aux Archives nationales du Québec à Hull].

« Le vingt six janvier mil huit cent vingt deux après la publication d'un seul ban de mariage (ayant dispensé les parties de la publication des deux autres bans) faite au prône de notre messe paroissiale le dimanche, entre Antoine Neveu dit Lacroix fils majeur de Joseph Neveu dit Lacroix cultivateur dans le Township de Cumberland sur la rivière des outaouais et de défunte Marie Filiatrau de cette mission d'une part; et Susanne Léger dite Parisien fille majeure de Hyacinthe Léger dit Parisien cultivateur dans le Township de Buckingham et d'une sauvagesse infidelle absente dont on ignore le nom d'autre part; ne s'étant découvert aucun empêchement audit mariage et du consentement des parents, je prêtre soussigné missionnaire ai béni leur alliance selon la forme prescrite par la Sainte église en présence de Pierre Arcan, Casimir Tremblay, Joseph Robillard et Antoine Couillard qui tous quatre ainsi que les époux susdits ne savent signer.

Roupe ptre mission. »

VISAGES DU PASSE

Guillaume Morin a été baptisé à Vaudreuil le 8 juillet 1785. Il était le fils de Jean-Baptiste Morin dit Valcourt et de Marie-Thérèse Léonard, et le petit-fils de Joseph Morin, de Kamouraska, sur la rive sud du Saint-Laurent entre Saint-Jean-Port-Joli et Rivière-du-Loup. Guillaume avait 20 ans lorsqu'il a épousé Angélique Jussiaume le 7 janvier 1806 à Rigaud. Angélique était la fille d'Alexandre Jussiaume et de Marie-Louise Legris.

En 1815, Guillaume travaillait comme « journalier en la Seigneurie d'Argenteuil » (registre paroissial de Rigaud), mais en 1821, il était établi dans le canton de Buckingham, comme l'explique Pierre Louis Lapointe dans son livre sur Buckingham publié en 1990. En 1825, Guillaume était le chef d'un ménage de neuf personnes; il était «squatter » sur le lot 8 du premier rang à Buckingham.

Guillaume et Angélique ont eu plusieurs enfants; quatre de leurs filles (Angélique, Rose, Paulite et Marie) et deux de leurs fils (Baptiste et Charles) ont épousé des enfants de familles de la région de Cumberland-Buckingham. Angélique Morin a épousé Antoine Foubert, fils de Gabriel Foubert et de Marie Houde, le 5 août 1826, mais elle est morte le 7 mars 1827, à l'âge de 17 ans, laissant une petite fille appelée Marie qui épousera Laurent Lafrenière en septembre 1843. Rose Morin a épousé Pierre Hébert, fils de Pierre Hébert et de Cécile Chabot, le 2 février 1829, et ils se sont établis dans le canton de Cumberland (lot A, quatrième concession). Paulite Morin a épousé Amable Foubert, le 4 juin 1832. Marie Morin a épousé Jean-Baptiste Neveu, fils de Joseph Neveu dit Lacroix et de Marie-Josette Filiatrault, le 8 juillet 1839. Baptiste Morin a épousé Jane Bangs, fille de John Bangs et de Sara Case, le 7 novembre 1851. Charles Morin a épousé Rosalie Dionne, fille de Louis Dionne et de Tharsile Branchaud, le 15 avril 1852.

Je n'ai pas réussi à trouver l'endroit ni la date du décès de Guillaume Morin, mais lors du recensement de 1871, son épouse Angélique, devenue veuve, âgée de 88 ans, demeurait dans le canton de Cumberland chez sa fille Paulite et son gendre Amable Foubert, dont le père, Amable Foubert, avait été le premier Canadien-français à s'établir dans le canton, vers 1807, avec son épouse Matilda Dunning.

Robert Serré