

The Caboose

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NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be held at the Cumberland Public Library, 1599 Tenth Line Road, on Wednesday, September 1st, at 7:00 p.m. Bob Serré will give a talk on the Foubert family, one of the first to settle in Cumberland Township; following the talk, there will be an opportunity to ask questions.

FEATURE ARTICLE

The Auld Kirk in Cumberland by Bob Serré

There were several families of Scots among the early pioneers of Cumberland Township. Bare survival required all their efforts at first, but soon they turned their attention to spiritual matters.

Their Presbyterian faith, as sober and proud as it was stern and disciplined, would not find much solace in the ministrations of the Methodist or Baptist preachers who travelled through Cumberland now and then.

The *Illustrated Atlas of the Dominion of Canada*, published in 1881, states that "the first church in the township [of Cumberland] was the Old Kirk, on the river (...) built about 1828." The 16-page booklet marking the 150th anniversary (1828-1978) of St. Andrew's, Cumberland, quotes the 1881 Atlas, but adds that "the first records of our congregation date back to 1844." One clue in the booklet to the period from 1828 to 1844 is the name of Rev. Alexander Fletcher at the top of the list of ministers who served the congregation.

Alexander Fletcher was born in Scotland around 1791. He studied in Glasgow and Edinburgh. With his brother he sailed to America in 1816, landing in Nova Scotia. He spoke Gaelic, and made a good impression on the Scottish settlers in Nova Scotia, but soon he moved on to Glengarry in Upper Canada. There he worked as a teacher, showing considerable promise as a candidate for the ministry in an area where there were few pastors indeed. He was ordained in October 1819, in Martintown, Glengarry County, by the recently established Presbytery of the Canadas. He served in Martintown, and later in Williamstown, until 1824, when he resigned his charge, and moved to Plantagenet. There he worked as a teacher, and preached regularly. Eventually, as Donald Neil MacMillan explains in his book entitled *The Kirk in Glengarry* (1984), "he discontinued teaching and officiated ministerially in Cumberland and Lochaber until a short time before his death which occurred in Plantagenet in the year 1836, at the age of 45."

Another clue to the early history of the Auld Kirk in Cumberland is provided by the diary of Alexander Muir, a Scot who travelled from Aberdeen to Ottawa in 1845, stopping in Cumberland for a few weeks. On Sunday, September 21, he wrote in his diary: "the church having been destroyed by fire last year, and the new one was not finished (...) The service was performed in a settler's house by a Mr. Bell." Alexander Muir's diary was edited by G.A. MacKenzie and published in 1990.

The first resident pastor of the Presbyterian congregation in Cumberland was Rev. George Bell, the youngest son of Rev. William Bell of Perth, who had helped organize the Presbytery of the Canadas in 1818. George Bell was born in Perth in 1819, and completed his studies at Queen's College, Kingston, in 1842-43. He was ordained at Cumberland on 30 May 1844, and that same year helped organize a Presbyterian congregation in Buckingham, which maintained ties with Cumberland until 1871. Rev. Bell served in Cumberland until 1848.

In 1846, the name Auld Kirk was changed to Carmel Presbyterian Church of Cumberland. The stone church on the river witnessed much development in the Township over the next three decades. It was destroyed by fire in the late 1870s, and a beautiful brick church was built to replace it, in the very centre of the village of Cumberland.

Those who would like to know more about social and religious conditions in Eastern Ontario in the days of the pioneers will find much of interest in Isabel Skelton's delightfully insightful biography of William Bell, published in 1947 under the title *A Man Austere*.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

In 1995, the Ontario Genealogical Society published a book edited by Bruce Elliott and others, entitled *Men of Upper Canada*. In it are listed the "names of rateable inhabitants from the assessment roll of 1828" for Russell County, including twelve settlers in Cumberland Township: Alexander GORDEN, Joseph LEFLAM, Limwell COLVIN, William MAN, John CAMERON, Wm T. DUNNING, Lemab FOBEARE, William DUNNING, Joseph DUNNING, Nathaniel NORTEN, Walter BICKWITH, and Joseph BUCK.

This information is found on page 235 of the book, and the source given is the Archives of Ontario, MS 116, Reel 1.

BY THE WAY...

Hi guys... Well, I hope your summer is going as well as mine; they always go too fast, though.

I have been negligent in not passing on our great Web site address to everyone, so you can pass it on to others. Jean-François Beaulieu has done it again by creating a great overview of the Historical Society and the Township (City). To see for yourself go to Web site:

<http://www.storm.ca/~jeanf/index.html>

There is also a hard copy of the Web site at the Library in our Local History Room for those who don't play on the Internet.

Thanks to the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum who once more this year allowed us to display with them at the Navan Fair; the addition of Robert Vaughan and his woodworking display drew a lot of interest (as did the vintage toys we all played with). We appreciate the courtesy. Maybe for the 2000 Navan Fair we can get together with the Museum and LACAC and really do something great.

We are now the proud creators of a souvenir T-shirt, which I hope you will all take part in selling on our behalf. The shirt shows the basic outline of a tree, with each of the villages (surviving and non-surviving) within Cumberland Township, and at the bottom it reads "MY ROOTS ARE IN CUMBERLAND"

TOWNSHIP." We are selling them at \$10.00 each. Presently we have only English shirts, but when we can afford the next plunge, we will be getting some in French. We then hope to get some tea towels made. We are told there are over 50,000 Cumberland residents - if only 5% buy shirts, that comes to 2500 shirts. Remember, people with family who have moved away may want shirts as mementos.....call me for shirts or more information - 835-3252.

We have set our September and November meetings. Bob Serré will speak to us on September 1st about the Foubert family and early area settlement, and on November 3rd, Mr. Angus Wilson will speak to us about the Wilson family. I am really excited about both; I hope I can contain myself and remember the tape recorder!! The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m., and will be held in the meeting room just inside the Library entrance. Come one and all and bring a friend or two.

Emmett Carr has been working his fingers off typing out copies of the volumes of family connections he is aware of, as well as general information on many families connected with early Township history. I am creating a binder just for Emmett's work so we can all benefit from it.

Verna Cotton, as thankfully she always does, has seen a need and is steering the creation of the Navan Walk. Jean-François had created a rough draft from oral history tapes, and Verna detected a "few" (ha! ha!) deviations. Thankfully she has taken over, and with the help of Garrett Rivington and Herb Deavy of Navan, they will have us all straightened out in no time.

There are so many people to thank - thank you - one and all for everything you have done and continue to do to keep our memories of the past from disappearing.

Pat Wright has donated a package of her personal notes on Cumberland Township and its people, which will add many "tidbits". Thanks Pat.

Ruth Parsons, President

RESEARCH TIPS

There are two microfilm reels, at the City of Ottawa Archives on Sussex Drive in Ottawa, that relate directly to the early history of Cumberland. The first is in a cardboard box labelled "Cumberland, Ont. Carmel Presbyterian Church. Minutes of the Session, 1844-1875." Also on this reel are the minutes of the Congregational and Management Committee meetings from 1879 to 1886. The second microfilm is in a box showing simply the number 10. It contains, among several other items, the records of Cumberland Presbyterian baptisms from 1844 to 1874, marriages from 1851 to 1857, and burials from 1858 to 1866. It also contains Bearbrook Methodist records for the years 1860 to 1907.

OLD OBITUARIES

The following item was found in the microfilm version of *The Evening Journal* for Saturday, April 27, 1889, page 1 (consulted at the Ottawa Public Library).

DIED

WILSON - On April 26th, 1889, at the residence of her sister, Mrs. N.S. Blasdell, 249 Wellington street, Ottawa, Mary Francis Wilson, youngest daughter of the late John Wilson, of Cumberland, Ont. Funeral from the residence of her brother, Mr. William Wilson, Cumberland, on Sunday, the 28th April, at 2:30 p.m. Remains will leave Ottawa by boat Sunday at 9 a.m.

CONFÉRENCE DE SEPTEMBRE

La prochaine conférence organisée par notre société aura lieu le 1er septembre à la Bibliothèque publique de Cumberland au 1599 du chemin Tenth Line, à 19 h. Cette conférence portera sur la famille Foubert (Faubert), une des premières à s'établir dans le canton de Cumberland. L'exposé sera donné en anglais, mais les participants pourront poser des questions en français aussi bien qu'en anglais. Le conférencier, Robert Serré, s'intéresse tout particulièrement aux débuts de la colonisation dans le canton. Il accepterait volontiers de reprendre son exposé en français si un groupe lui en faisait la demande.

VIEUX REGISTRES

Amable Foubert, un des pionniers du canton de Cumberland, est né à Vaudreuil en 1782. Voici l'acte de son baptême, inscrit dans le registre paroissial de Saint-Michel de Vaudreuil, conservé sur microfilm aux Archives nationales du Québec à Hull (bobine n° 614) : « L'an mil sept cent quatre vingt deux le trente mars par nous prêtre sousigné a été baptisé Antoine Amable né de ce jour du légitime mariage de gabriel foubert et de marie-josephthe oude ses père et mère. Le parain a été amable duplanty et la maraine charlotte grondin femme d'alexis duplanty qui ont déclaré ne scavoir signer de ce enquis après lecture faite. »

VISAGES DU PASSÉ

Éméril Brisson est né à Embrun, dans le canton de Russell, le 29 septembre 1889. Il était le fils de Joseph Brisson, qui avait épousé Marie Lanoie, le 8 avril 1874, à l'église Sainte-Brigide de Montréal.

Éméril faisait partie de la sixième génération des descendants de Nicolas Brisson, originaire de la Lorraine dans l'est de la France. Nicolas s'était engagé dans l'armée royale en 1755 et, arrivé en Nouvelle-France, il avait fréquenté Marie-Josephthe Paysan, veuve de Joseph Billion.

Dans son beau livre sur la famille Brisson publié en 1997, Madeleine Dagenais raconte comment Nicolas et Marie-Josephthe ont eu deux fils avant 1760. Cette année-là, Nicolas a été fait prisonnier par les Anglais; il est rentré en France, laissant en Amérique sa femme et ses deux enfants, qu'il ne reverra plus jamais.

Toujours est-il que les parents d'Éméril se sont établis à Embrun, où ils ont eu seize enfants. Éméril avait 23 ans lorsqu'il a épousé Albina Sorel à l'église Saint-Viateur de Limoges, village connu jadis sous le nom de South Indian. Albina était la fille de Casimir Sorel et d'Exilia DesGroseillers. Éméril et Albina se sont établis à Vars dans le canton de Cumberland. À un moment donné, trois frères Brisson avaient des terres à Vars dans le rang Saint-Guillaume, connu aujourd'hui sous le nom de chemin Rockdale.

Éméril et Albina ont eu dix enfants, tous nés à Vars : quatre garçons (Rolland, Raymond, Rhéo et Rhéal) et six filles (Alice, Anéda, Lorette, Ida, Gracia et Jeannette). Anéda et Gracia sont devenues religieuses (Soeurs de la Charité) à Ottawa.

Robert Serré