

# The Caboose

Newsletter of the Cumberland Township Historical Society  
Bulletin de la Société historique du canton de Cumberland  
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## LAST MEETING

Our annual general meeting was held on Saturday afternoon, May 4th, at the Public Library on Tenth Line Road, with 12 members in attendance. A new Executive was elected for 2002-2003: Jean-François Beaulieu, President; Bob Serré, Vice-President; Carole Proulx-Lafrance, Secretary-Treasurer; Verna Cotton, Director; Bob Dessaint, Director.

## NEXT MEETING

Traditionally, our Society has not held any meeting in July. The next newsletter will provide details about our September meeting.

## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Less than a week after our Annual General Meeting, we were shocked to learn that Jean-Noël Dessaint, our President for 2001-2002, had died suddenly, on Wednesday, May 8. To his wife Germaine, to his son Robert, a Director of our Society, and to his other children and relatives and many friends, we extend our deepest sympathy.

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### **The Early History of Bearbrook in Cumberland Township**

In the autumn of 1826, there was hardly a trace of human settlement in the "back" of Cumberland Township. The assessment roll for that year listed twelve pioneers on the "front" along the river. Then, some time in October 1826, a Methodist minister named James McNally and five or six other men left Hawkesbury Township in order to do settlement duties on land they had secured in Cumberland Township during the previous fall. They took two days to reach the Dunning homestead in Cumberland, and the next day they set off for Bear Brook, several miles back from the Ottawa River through the dense forest. Their guide was Henry Orton, and they followed a blaze marked out

on the trees to point the way. The men spent five or six weeks building shanties, cutting roads and asserting their claims by making sufficient improvements to meet the conditions set out in their deeds.

Bear Brook, whose water level was much higher than it is today, drained part of the Township of Cumberland. It was a tributary of the South Nation River, which flows into the Ottawa River below Wendover and above Treadwell. Bear Brook gave its name to the second village in the Township, after Cumberland. As elsewhere in the township, the settlement process was slow and difficult. In 1834, James McRae was first assessed for lot 20 of concession 2, and William Hicks for lot 23 of concession 6. In 1836, Charles Armstrong was assessed for lot 24 of concession 6, and John Walsh and Andrew Hicks were both assessed for parts of lot 21 of concession 5. When the Bear Brook post office was opened in July 1855, John Walsh became the first postmaster.

The pace of development increased in the 1840s, as timbering operations reached their full momentum in the Lower Ottawa Valley. The Brook was used to float logs to markets in Bytown (Ottawa) as well as in Hawkesbury. By 1848, the Blasdell and Dunning families had established a saw mill operated by water power. Bearbrook also became known for its production of potash. Nathan G. Dunning, located on lot 19, concession 4, is known to have been a potash manufacturer. Another potashery was that of J. & B. Grier, listed as a "dealer in dry goods, pot and pearl ashes" in the Canada Directory for 1857-58, published in Montreal by Lovell.

Along the front, the Presbyterian congregation built the first church in the township. In the rear of the township, Methodist circuit riders were the first to minister to the spiritual needs of the settlers. They travelled by canoe, on horseback and on foot over a large district called a circuit. Reverend James McNally is known to have preached at Bill Dunning's tavern in Buckingham, and his circuit included Cumberland. He is known to have preached at Bearbrook after 1835.

In 1848, ten acres of crown land were granted to the Church of England in the Bearbrook area, and eventually a wooden church was built. Since 1846, the township had been visited by Mr. Tremayne, a travelling missionary, whose district was centred in Hawkesbury. In 1862, Bearbrook became part of the Mission of Osgoode, Russell and Cumberland, and the resident minister lived in Metcalfe. As Robert Jefferson points out in a book entitled **Faith of Our Fathers**, the Mission of Cumberland became a separate parish in 1863, and the Reverend F.L. Stephenson, M.A., became the first incumbent.

According to The Province of Ontario Gazetteer and Directory for 1869, Bearbrook then had a population of 150, and Cumberland a population of 200. The 1869 Directory lists 28 entries for Bearbrook, including two ministers (Rev. Thomas C. Garrett, Church of England, and Rev. J. Renney, Wesleyan Methodist), as well as William H. Fletcher as proprietor of the Cottage Inn, Brock Grier as postmaster, Alfred Hill as teacher, and Peter McVeigh as Justice of the Peace.

Interested readers will find more information about the early pioneers in a book entitled **Trinity Anglican Church Cemetery**, prepared by the Ottawa Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society (1980, 14 pages). I am particularly grateful to Alison Hare of the Ottawa Branch for bringing to my attention a 22-page handwritten account of his own life and works prepared by Rev. James McNally, and dated West Hawkesbury, September 25, 1869.

## REMINISCENCES - 1852

[The following reminiscences, written in 1896 by a superannuated public school teacher named Benjamin Shirriff who had grown up in Clarence, were published in volume 28 of the *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada* in 1910, page 248.]

1852:— In 1852, I obtained a Second Class Certificate from the Board of Examiners of the County of Carleton. The Board consisted of a few Clergymen from the neighboring Townships; and the examination was altogether oral, except for a few questions on Arithmetic, which I was permitted to do on my Slate.

In the latter part of 1852, I began my life work of Teaching. My first school was in the Township of Cumberland, County of Russell, in a Log Building, a description of which will suffice generally, as they were nearly all alike.

There was always a Stove in the centre of the School Room, with Desks around the Walls, and long Benches, without backs. There were no Maps, Blackboards, nor any other apparatus.

## EARLY PIONEERS

**James Golightly**, a native of Berwickshire, Scotland, was born around 1795. He settled in Cumberland Township in 1833, and was assessed for lot 10, concession 2 (old survey) in 1834, having by then cleared five of his two hundred acres for cultivation. In 1851, he took the oath of office as Councillor for St. Georges Ward. In July 1856, he was ordained an elder of the Presbyterian congregation in Cumberland. When the 1861 Census was taken, he was living with his wife Mary, also born in Scotland, and two of their children, Agnes (aged 24) and William (aged 19), both born in Upper Canada (Canada West). He was 75 years old when he died on September 3, 1869, and was buried in Dale's Cemetery.

Before emigrating, James and Mary had a son, also called James, born in Scotland on January 27, 1822. At the time of the 1861 Census, James Junior was also living on lot 10, concession 2, with his wife, Eliza Walker, and five children (John, Mary, Lorinda Agnes, George and Lucy). Eliza Walker had been born in Lower Canada on September 9, 1827. In 1864, James and Eliza had another daughter, Eliza, who died in 1877. James died in 1908; his wife had died in 1903; they were both buried in Dale's Cemetery.

[The above profile was written by Bob Serré, using, among other sources, the first books of Cumberland Township Council Minutes and By-Laws, and microfilm records of the Presbyterian Church in Cumberland.]

## BY THE WAY...

As springtime was slowly heating up, a new Executive took the reins; the faces were mostly familiar: Jean-François Beaulieu, President; Bob Serré, Vice-President and Newsletter Editor; Carole Proulx-Lafrance, Secretary-Treasurer; Verna Cotton and Bob Dessaint as Directors. Our Executive then welcomed Randy Ash as a new Director. However we started with a bit of sadness in our hearts. Long-time member Jean-Noël Dessaint passed away on May 8, 2002. He was a co-founder, served as Director in 1987, and was President of our Society in 2001-2002. He played an outstanding role in Cumberland Township and the Sarsfield community.

Our Society organized its annual Cumberland Heritage Walk as part of the Doors Open event put on by the City of Ottawa. This year, we formed a partnership with the Heritage Inn Restaurant, with walks taking place on a continuing basis between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday, May 25 and 26. Bob Serré and I met 97 people during this event.

Jean-François Beaulieu, President

## VIEUX JOURNAUX

Dans l'édition du vendredi 12 décembre 1913 du journal *Le Droit* d'Ottawa, on trouve à la page 4 des nouvelles sur Sarsfield.

### SARFIELD

La fête de l'Immaculée Conception nous a procuré le plaisir d'entendre une voix ancienne et connue de nos vieillards. M. le chanoine Philippe a bien voulu, aidé du Rév. Père Larivée, nous prêcher un Triduum. Malgré la température un peu maussade et le mauvais état des chemins, les gens se sont rendus en grand nombre.

Le chœur, sous la direction de M. Darius Farmer, a chanté la messe Royale. Mlle Eugénie Faubert tenait l'orgue. Les soli furent M. Hector Bélisle, André Farmer, Darius Farmer et Henri Gascon; pour la cérémonie des Enfants de Marie, Mlle Clarida Farmer et sa soeur Dame Philiis Raymond. Mlle Léa Giroux et Eva McLean lurent la consécration à la Ste Vierge. Mlle Cécile Dessaint, Gloria Hurtubise et deux demoiselles St Denis se sont unies à leurs aînées dans la congrégation de Marie Immaculée.

## VISAGES DU PASSÉ

Jean-Baptiste Duford est né vers 1790. Il était le fils de Jean-Baptiste Dufort (avec un t et non un d) et de Marie-Madeleine Wathier, qui s'étaient mariés en 1788 à Vaudreuil, au sud-ouest de l'île de Montréal. Son grand-père, qui s'appelait lui aussi Jean-Baptiste et qui était originaire de la Franche-Comté dans l'Est de la France, avait épousé Marie-Joseph Ranger dit Laviolette en 1766 au Lac des Deux Montagnes (Oka).

Jean-Baptiste avait 34 ans environ lorsqu'il s'est marié à Vaudreuil en novembre 1824, épousant Pélagie Gauthier, veuve de Gabriel Lalonde. Lors du recensement de 1861, Jean-Baptiste était veuf et il habitait une terre de 50 acres située sur le lot 37 de la première concession, le long de la rivière, dans le canton de Cumberland. Agé de 70 ans, il était forgeron. Deux de ses fils demeuraient avec lui : Clovis, âgé de 26 ans, et Damase, âgé de 11 ans. Jean-Baptiste a vécu jusqu'à l'âge de 91 ans. Il est mort le 6 décembre 1881 et a été enterré à Saint-Joseph d'Orléans.

Clovis Duford, âgé de 26 ans en 1861, avait épousé, le 16 janvier 1860, Joséphine Bélanger, fille de Jean-Baptiste Bélanger et d'Émélie Séguin. C'est lui qui a hérité de la terre paternelle, qu'il a laissée à son tour à son fils Elphège. Né vers 1878, Elphège a épousé Exilia Bissonnette le 11 février 1901 à l'église Saint-Victor d'Alfred. Exilia était la fille d'Évariste Bissonnette et de Mélitime Brisebois. Elphège et Exilia ont eu quatorze enfants. Exilia n'avait que 48 ans lorsqu'elle est morte en mai 1923. Sept ans plus tard, Elphège s'est remarié, épousant Rose-Alma Cardinal le 15 janvier 1930. Elphège est mort à 89 ans le 3 mars 1967. Il a été enterré à Saint-Joseph d'Orléans.

C'est à son fils Émile qu'Elphège avait légué la terre ancestrale en 1946. Aujourd'hui, on peut visiter la maison Duford au Musée-village du patrimoine de Cumberland. Cette maison a été transportée au Musée au lieu d'être démolie lors des travaux de construction du quartier Queenswood Heights.

On trouvera de plus amples renseignements et des photos de la famille Duford à la page 156 du livre qui a été publié en 1985 pour marquer le 125<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Paroisse Saint-Joseph d'Orléans (notre Société en a un exemplaire).

Robert Serré