

The Caboose

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LAST MEETING

Our last meeting was a public lecture held on March 6 at the Public Library on Tenth Line Road. Gordon Watson used both slides and transparencies to describe the geology of the Rideau and Lower Ottawa valleys as well as some prehistoric artefacts. The fifteen participants then had an opportunity to ask questions and handle a few replicas that the speaker and his wife Margaret had brought along.

NEXT MEETING

Our annual general meeting will be held on Saturday, May 4, at the Public Library, 1599 Tenth Line Road, between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. Come along and bring a friend!

FEATURE ARTICLE

The Life and Times of William Dunning (1792-1871) by Bob Serré

William Dunning was born at Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, southeast of Montreal, in the first week of December, 1792. He was the eldest son of Zalmon Dunning and of Debora Royce, who had been married in Connecticut in February 1790. Zalmon, the son of Abijah Dunning and of Elizabeth Gregory, left the United States with his parents, three brothers and a sister to seek better prospects in the Canadas. After spending a couple of years in Saint-Jean, the Dunnings moved to the Montreal area, and then to Cumberland Township in 1801.

William Dunning had several siblings, including an older sister Matilda born in Saint-Jean in 1791, and a younger brother George Gibb born in Cumberland in 1810. According to a *Memoir of the Abijah Dunning Family* prepared by George Gibb Dunning in October 1889 (a copy of which is held by our Society), Abijah Dunning and his four sons settled on four lots totalling 800 acres in the Township of Cumberland; they cleared up the forest and built homes on those lots, doing so under difficult conditions and at considerable expense.

By 1812, government promises to build roads and bridges and provide other forms of support to settlement had not materialized, so the Dunnings decided to leave, selling off their property and

moving to Cassburn in the Township of Longueuil (Prescott County). William Dunning's sister Matilda had married Amable Foubert, who opened a fur trading post around 1807 on part of the Dunning lands in Cumberland Township. The next decade was one of very slow development with only a few pioneers settling in Cumberland.

In March 1818, William Dunning returned to Cumberland with most of his brothers and sisters. He was a very enterprising young man, taking part in the local fur trade and entering the timbering business, which had become the main economic activity in the Lower Ottawa Valley. Each year, large rafts of squared timber were floated down the river to Quebec City and shipped to England. In 1821, William moved to Buckingham Township, where the Dunnings had received grants of land back in 1802. He soon established a general store in Buckingham, while maintaining lands in Cumberland.

Letters bearing the signature of William Dunning can be found among the *Wright Papers* at the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa. In one letter, dated 28 March 1823 from Buckingham to Philemon Wright in Hull, William wrote: "I am in grate want of a little assistance from yourself to obtain my license as I am going to Montreal tomorrow." This was probably in connection with a request for a tavern keeper's license, which appears to have been granted on June 16, 1825, in the presence of "P. Wright Esq. Justice of Peace for the Township of Buckingham." William wrote to Philemon Wright on June 25, 1825: "Sir I received your letter dated 16 together with my certificate according to your request I send the copy back I am Dear Sir yours truly Wm Dunning."

In his 1991 article on Bytown and the fur trade, Michael Newton quoted from a report dated 7 March 1837, sent by James MacMillan of Lake of Two Mountains west of Montreal to John Severeight of Lachine: "Mr. McDougall (at the Chats post) on his way met with Bill Dunning (independent post operator near Cumberland) who had just purchased 120 Martens and other Furs from the Bytown merchants. Mr McD. could not get these Furs without ready cash, and rather than let the Furs go, he thought best to draw on the Company - They are a very pretty lot of Martens and well worth the purchasing."

An entry made in the register of the Catholic Church in Buckingham in August 1840 mentions "captain William Dunning exercising the office of coroner." Three ledgers of the general store in Buckingham are now kept at the Archives nationales du Québec in Hull; they are dated 1844-47, 1850-52 and 1857-60, and contain the names of a great many early pioneers who made purchases at William Dunning's store.

William married Mary Orten, and they had at least five daughters and one son between 1822 and 1834. William certainly had a rich and varied business career, but his life was not without its share of trials. In the *Memoir* mentioned above, G.G. Dunning described his brother's demise, at an advanced age: "his liberal heart betrayed him into an act of imprudence, and he endorsed for friends in Montreal, who failed out and out to many thousands of dollars ..." This prompted William to quit the lumber trade. He returned to his residence in Cumberland. His son, William Hoyt Dunning, barely 46 years old, died in August 1870. William himself died less than a year later, in April 1871, at the age of 78.

REMINISCENCES - 1849

[The following reminiscences, written in April 1896 by a superannuated public school teacher named Margaret McPhail, were published in volume 8 of the *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada* in 1901, page 301.]

1849: — I commenced teaching in 1849 in the County of Russell. The School House was a small Log building, with a long double desk (that is, one having a sloping board on each side) reaching almost across the room, with a long seat on either side, several movable seats and a stove. None of the seats

had any support for the back; there were no Maps, Blackboard or any other Apparatus of any kind. There was not even a chair or desk for the teacher. They did not think that any of these things were necessary, or at least thought that I could get on very well without them. At first the reading book was the Bible, but after a time we had the Irish National Series, Morse's Geography, Lennie's Grammar, and an Arithmetic and Spelling Book, whose names I have forgotten. The average attendance was about twenty. No Certificate of Qualification was required from the Teachers.

OLD OBITUARIES

[The following obituary is taken from Donald A. McKenzie's latest book, entitled *More Obituaries from Ontario's Methodist Papers*, published in 2001 (page 382). Note that Stephen Walsh was assessed for lot 23, concession 6 of Cumberland Township in 1840, 1841, 1843 and 1844.]

WALSH, Stephen, of Clinton, was born in Ireland, December 6, 1817, came to Canada in 1831, and settled in Cumberland Township. In 1844, he moved to Huron County where he became a local preacher. He died May 1, 1884 and was buried in Kincardine cemetery.

EARLY PIONEERS

Alexander Larmour was first assessed for lot 11, concession 1 (new survey) of Cumberland Township in 1845. He was then 51 years old. Born in 1794 in County Tyrone, Ireland, Alexander had married Mary Smith, who was six years younger than him, and they had emigrated to Upper Canada in 1829. They had five children, the first three born in Ireland, the other two in Canada West: John, James, Alexander, William and Sarah. By the time the 1861 Census was taken, Alexander and Mary, both Anglicans, had settled on a one-hundred-acre farm on lot 11 of concession 2. Lot 11 of concession 1 was now occupied by their son John and his wife Mary (nee Nowland) and four children (they would eventually have four more). In 1861, sons Alex Junior and James were both working as labourers; Alex had married Jane Sullivan in 1854, and they had three children (they were to have four more); as for James, he had married Rose Dale in 1854, but Rose had died in April 1859, leaving two daughters who were living with their grandparents. Alexander Senior lived to be 75; he died in November 1869. His wife Mary died in April 1881. They were both buried in the cemetery of Trinity Anglican Church in Bearbrook.

[The above profile was written by Bob Serré using, among other sources, a nine-page computer printout prepared by Diane Young in August 1998 and kept in our Society's collection.]

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The **second and last** of two renewal notices is being sent to regular members with this issue of *The Caboose*. The July issue will mark the beginning of a new membership year, namely 2002-2003.

At the annual general meeting on May 4th, we will be electing a new President. If you would like to have a closer look at how our Society operates, with no risk of being burdened with specific tasks, why not join our Board as a Director? I was a Director for one year before taking on the job of Secretary, by which time I knew exactly what I was getting into. You could call me for more information at 749-0607, or just show up at the annual meeting.

VIEUX JOURNAUX

Un journal hebdomadaire appelé **Le Ralliement** a été publié à Clarence Creek d'avril 1895 à juin 1897. Le numéro du jeudi 23 mai 1895 de ce journal contient à la page 4 des nouvelles sur Sarsfield.

SARFIELD

Les catholiques de Sarsfield ont été témoins d'une importante cérémonie la semaine dernière. Mgr Duhamel a béni la première pierre de la nouvelle église, au milieu d'une grande foule accourue pour la cérémonie et entouré d'un nombreux clergé.

Le Révd M. Chatelain, curé de Thurso, a fait le sermon en anglais, et le Révd M. Champagne, curé de Pointe Gatineau a prêché en français. M. Bourque de Hull est le contracteur de la nouvelle église qu'il doit livrer le 1er novembre. Nos félicitations à M. l'Abbé Cousineau.

VISAGES DU PASSÉ

Louise Lefebvre est née le 10 juin 1804 dans le Bas-Canada. Elle avait 19 ans lorsqu'elle a épousé François Malboeuf à l'église Notre-Dame-de-Saint-Hyacinthe en janvier 1824. François, alors âgé de 30 ans environ, était le fils de Michel Malboeuf et de Geneviève Sautière.

Louise était la fille de François Lefebvre et de Joseph Desmarais, qui s'étaient mariés à Saint-Denis sur Richelieu en janvier 1797. Louise faisait partie de la sixième génération des descendants de Pierre Lefebvre, originaire de la Normandie, qui avait épousé Marie Châtaigné à Québec en 1656.

Louise et François sont arrivés dans le canton de Cumberland vers 1840, et ils se sont établis dans la première concession, le long de la rivière, sur les lots 36 puis 35. Plusieurs autres familles canadiennes-françaises se sont installées dans ce coin nord-ouest du canton. François et Louise ont eu au moins huit enfants : Louise, Théophile, François, Julie, Angèle, David, Zoé et Joséphine. Lors du recensement de 1861, quatre de leurs enfants étaient mariés. Louise avait épousé Édouard Barnabé en septembre 1843 à Buckingham; les Barnabés étaient des voisins des Malboeufs. Julie avait épousé François Léger dit Parisien en octobre 1851 à Ottawa. Théophile avait épousé Marie-Reine Labelle en mai 1854 à Ottawa. Angèle avait épousé Constant Fassett en mai 1857.

En 1863, Louise et François ont perdu leur fille Zoé, morte à 18 ans et enterrée à Saint-Joseph d'Orléans. Peu après, François et Louise ont quitté le canton de Cumberland, avec les enfants qui faisaient encore partie de leur maisonnée, pour aller s'établir dans la vallée de la Gatineau. Leur fils Théophile a fait de même. C'est l'industrie de la coupe du bois qui a surtout attiré de nombreuses familles vers la Haute-Gatineau à cette époque. En 1864, on trouve les Malboeufs à Bouchette, au sud de Maniwaki. Cette même année, Joséphine Malboeuf épouse Delphis Dufort en janvier, et son frère David épouse Ursule Larivière en avril. Les deux mariages ont été célébrés à l'église Notre-Dame de l'Assomption de Maniwaki.

Le 30 mars 1865, Louise a perdu son mari; François est mort à 72 ans, et il a été enterré à Saint-Joseph d'Orléans. Louise avait alors 60 ans et, peu après, elle a épousé en deuxième nocces Baptiste Robillard, veuf d'Euphémie Fortin; le mariage a été célébré à Maniwaki le 22 octobre 1865. Louise a perdu son deuxième mari le 31 mars 1879; Baptiste est mort à 70 ans, et il a été enterré à Bouchette. Louise avait alors 74 ans, et elle a vécu de nombreuses années encore. Lors du recensement de 1901, elle demeurait chez sa fille Joséphine, devenue veuve elle aussi, dans le canton de Cumberland. Louise avait alors 96 ans. Je n'ai pas réussi à trouver la date, ni l'endroit, de son décès.

Robert Serré