

THE CABOOSE

Newsletter of the Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS)



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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 four times each year by the Cumberland Township Historical Society.

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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



President's message

Surprise, surprise, a second Caboose in less than four months. It's amazing how Covid-19 can have a silver lining. I wish to thank the many people who submitted articles or suggestions for articles for the next few Caboosees. Merci d'abord à Ghyslain Hotte pour son article en français et en anglais sur la porcherie d'Orléans et sur la famille Robert. Thank you to Don and Joan Rathwell who have helped me sort out a mistake that

I made two Caboosees ago and for sending me all kinds of information on the Rathwells of Navan. Thank you to Denise Beaton, Brian and Ellen Findlay, Lynda Rivington, and Jeannie Smith for information on the Russell Rural Telephone Company. This edition is a truly collaborative one.

Nous tenons à remercier Denise Beaton une deuxième fois parce qu'elle nous a envoyé une réponse partielle à l'établissement de la

famille Lemay dans le canton de Cumberland – les Ouellettes les avaient devancés!

Finally thanks to all of you who have renewed your memberships in our society. As hoped for, we will host a general meeting in Navan on September 2 in the Navan Fair Agricultural Building. See our ad for details. And yes, this meeting will be different: we will be masked and we will be distanced!!!

Gérard Boyer

CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7 :00 pm

Wednesday, September 2

at the Cumberland Township Agricultural Building, 1
279 Colonial Rd, Navan, Ontario.

Guest speaker: Ivan Tanner on an 1880 Vars-Bearbrook murder

We wish to thank all of you who indicated back in the spring that we could continue functioning as your executive until we could safely conduct a proper AGM. Well, here it is. We remind everyone to wear a mask. You will be asked to sign a COVID 19 protocol on the way in. An usher will greet you at the door and indicate seating with respect to proper social distancing. We will provide hand sanitization on the way in and on the way out. We hope to see as many of you as are comfortable to attend.

No refreshments provided (please bring your own).

THE ROBERT FAMILY BUSINESSES: PIG FARM ROBERT ET FILS, LA CANADIENNE AND AMEUBLEMENT ORLÉANS



Houses of the Robert families
The Robert families lived on Highway 174, less than one-kilometre east of Champlain Street in the former Cumberland Township. Built during the 1950s and the 1960s, the houses were torn down in 1989 when the highway was widened. Only the one at the back, on the right, escaped demolition. It is now located on Borland Street.

Les maisons des familles Robert
Les maisons des familles Robert étaient situées sur la route 174 à moins d'un kilomètre à l'est de la rue Champlain, soit dans l'ancien Canton de Cumberland. Construites pendant les années 1950 et 1960, les maisons sont détruites en 1989 au moment de l'élargissement de l'autoroute. Seule la maison à l'arrière, à droite, échappe à la démolition. Elle est maintenant située sur la rue Borland.

Ghyslain Hotte

Originally from the Cyrville area (close to the St. Laurent Shopping Centre), the Robert family settled in Orléans in the 1950s (in the former Cumberland Township). In 1955, the eldest brother Ronaldo (Carmen Lachance) built his house on Highway 17, less than one-kilometre east of Champlain Street. He was followed by his brothers Orian (Gabrielle Lachance), Héribert (Carmen Giroux), Hérald (Anita Bélanger), Gérard (Gilberte Morin) and Réginald (Lise Carrier).

Some years before, the Robert brothers had built a pig farm at the back of their property. In the 1960s

and 1970s, the farm housed more than 5,000 pigs. For a long time, Robert et fils was considered one of the largest industrial pig farms in eastern Canada. The barn was in operation until 1976, when the land was sold for the construction of the Chatelaine Village neighbourhood. Overall, 6 families with a total of 21 children lived side by side on the farm.

In 1965, the brothers opened a grocery and meat store, La Canadienne, located at 2404 St. Joseph Boulevard. Four years later, they inaugurated a furniture store, Ameublement Orléans, at 2003 St. Joseph Boulevard. Both

businesses were in operation from 1965 to 1976, and from 1969 to 1981, respectively. These extremely popular businesses serve not only the people of Orléans, but also those of Ottawa, Eastern Ontario and the Outaouais.

Over the years, the Robert family sponsored many softball and hockey teams. Their community involvement included the parish, community and non-profit organizations, events such as softball tournaments at Préseault school, winter carnivals, the Knights of Columbus and the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

LES ENTREPRISES DE LA FAMILLE ROBERT

LA PORCHERIE ROBERT ET FILS, LA CANADIENNE ET AMEUBLEMENT ORLÉANS



Les bâtiments de la porcherie Robert et fils

Construite au début des années 1950, la porcherie Robert et fils abritait plus de 5 000 porcs pendant les décennies 1960 et 1970. Les petites maisons situées à l'avant de la porcherie étaient réservées aux employés.

Robert et fils pig farm building

Built in the early 1950s, the Robert et fils farm housed more than 5,000 pigs during the 1960s and 1970s. The small houses at the front of the barn were for employees.

Ghyslaine Hotte

Originaires de Cyrville (près de l'actuel Centre commercial St-Laurent), la famille Robert s'installe à Orléans (dans l'ancien Canton de Cumberland) au cours des années 1950. En 1955, l'aîné des garçons, Ronaldo (Carmen Lachance) construit sa maison sur la route 174, à moins d'un kilomètre à l'est de l'actuelle rue Champlain. Il est suivi par ses frères : Orian (Gabrielle Lachance), Héribert (Carmen Giroux), Hérald (Anita Bélanger), Gérard (Gilberte Morin) et Réginald (Lise Carrier).

Quelques années auparavant, les frères Robert avaient construit une porcherie au fond de leur terrain. Dans les années 1960 et 1970, celle-ci abritait plus de 5 000 porcs. Robert et fils fut longtemps

considérée comme l'une des plus grosses porcheries industrielles situées dans l'Est du Canada. À l'époque, les Robert récoltaient partout dans la région d'Ottawa des résidus de table (sweal) et autres aliments invendus pour ajouter à l'alimentation des porcs. Ils chauffaient le tout pour ajouter à la moulée. La porcherie fut en activité jusqu'en 1976, jusqu'à la vente du terrain pour la construction du quartier Village Chatelaine. En tout, 6 familles composées de 21 enfants habitaient côte à côte sur la ferme.

En 1965, les 6 frères lancent l'épicerie-boucherie La Canadienne, située au 2404, boulevard Saint-Joseph. Quatre ans plus tard, en 1969, ils ouvrent le magasin de meubles Ameublement Orléans, au 2003, boulevard Saint-

Joseph. Ces deux entreprises demeurent ouvertes de 1965 à 1976 et de 1969 à 1981, respectivement. Très achalandées, ces entreprises desservent non seulement les gens d'Orléans, mais également ceux d'Ottawa, de l'Est ontarien et de l'Outaouais.

Au cours des années, les Robert commanditent plusieurs

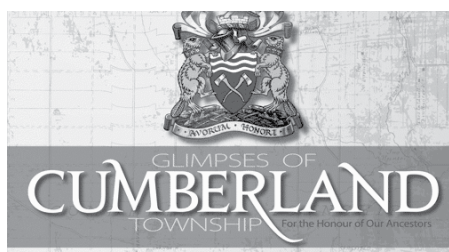
équipes sportives de balle-molle et de hockey. Leur engagement envers la communauté s'étend au niveau de la paroisse, des activités communautaires et des organismes à but non lucratif, dont des tournois de balle-molle à l'école Préseault et des carnivals d'hiver, sans oublier les Chevaliers de Colomb et la Saint-Vincent-de-Paul.

Glimpses of Cumberland Township

For the Honour Of Our Ancestors

\$30.00

Available at the Black Walnut Bakery and Café in Cumberland, Bradley's Store in Navan, Péladeau's store in Vars and the Rockland Museum.



Les Lemay de Sarsfield (la suite)



Baptiste Ouellette et Marguerite Lemay

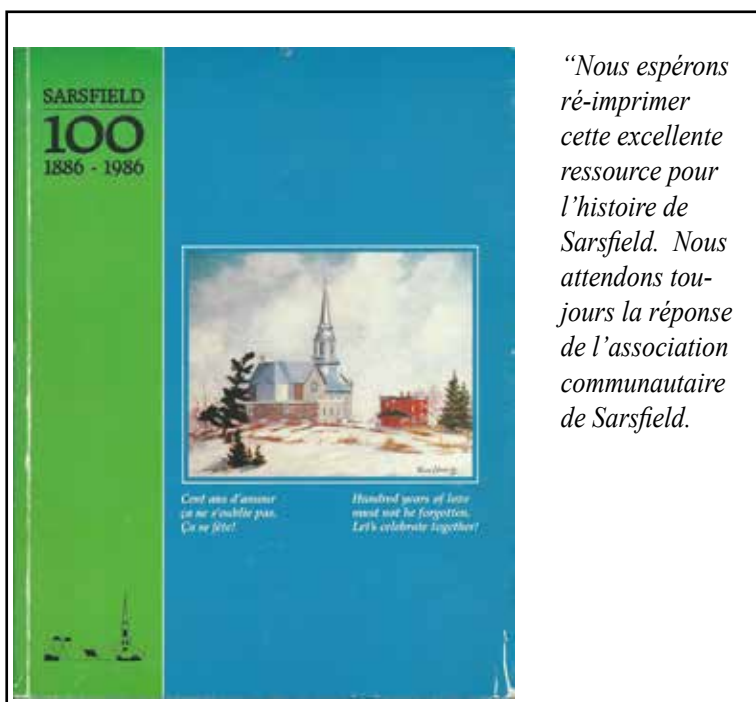
Dans notre dernier numéro du Caboose (spring 2020) nous nous demandions pourquoi la famille de Joseph Wilfrid Lemay est venu s'établir dans le canton de Cumberland. Grâce aux pages du livre anniversaire de Sarsfield (1886-1986) que Denise Beaton m'a envoyées, on lit qu'un Joseph Ouellette de St-Philippe d'Argenteuil, cousin germain de Joseph Wilfrid Lemay, s'était déjà établi dans le canton de Cumberland en 1904, achetant le côté sud du lot 9, concession 2 (New Survey). Il semble bien qu'un cousin suivait l'autre. Son fils Léonard épouse Arthémise Lemay en 1917 à Sarsfield.

Autre note intéressante du livre anniversaire de Sarsfield : un des petits-fils de Joseph Wilfred Lemay, André Lemay, est allé au Petit Séminaire d'Ottawa pendant cinq ans. Quoique je ne l'ai pas connu, il finissait sa dernière année au séminaire en 1963-64 alors que j'y faisais ma première année.

Soumis par Gérard Boyer



Léonard Ouellette et Arthémise Ouellette



Cumberland Township Land Series #3

(Corrected from previous Caboose article from Summer 2019)¹



Lot 8, Concession 8, New Survey

A property search indicated that John Speers obtained the Crown patent on this lot in 1857. We haven't researched the Speers family much, so perhaps some of our readers will contribute more information after reading this article. We do know that a John Speers first settled on Lot A, Concession 7, New Survey in 1848. He shows up on assessment records on the same lot as John Walker. We assume he then moved to Lot 8, Concession 8, getting a patent for it in 1857.

In 1862 he deeded the East ½ to William Speers, who in turn deeded the South East ¼ to George Speers. Then in 1866 John Speers sold the North ½ to Samuel Rathwell for 140 pounds. Both Thomas and Samuel Rathwell first appear on assessment records on Lot 10 Concession 6, New Survey, Thomas owning the East ½ in 1848 and Samuel the West ½.

Back to the Speers family again. In 1868, George Speers sold his South East ¼ to William Wilson, who eventually sold it to Samuel Rathwell in 1884. The farm became the John Rathwell (son of Samuel Rathwell Sr) farm for a number of years, then passing on to his son Nathaniel.

In 1936, Harold George Sparks Shaw, a bachelor, purchased the west half of Lot 8, Concession 8. He eventually secured the east half through the Veterans' Land Act.

When this photo was taken in the 1950's, this was known as the Harold Shaw farm.

CUMBERLAND LAND SERIES # 6



Lot 11, Concession 7, New Survey

This is one of the earliest farms in Navan. Michael O'Meara paid taxes on this lot in 1839 and purchased the North half of the property from the Canada Company in 1847. He eventually purchased the south half from his neighbour William Wilson in 1850.

Michael's eldest daughter, Catherine, married Michael Kenny in 1851. Michael O'Meara sold them the south half of his property in 1856.

Michael O'Meara's son, James, sold the farm to Roderick McDonald in 1880. His son, Charles, sold it to Charles Rathwell in 1919. Charles passed away in 1928 and the farm eventually became the property of Clarke Rathwell, his son.

When this photo was taken in the 1950's, the farm was known as the Clarke Rathwell farm.

The Russell Rural Telephone Company Limited



1911-1963

The Russell Rural Telephone Company was the first telephone system in Cumberland Township. Established in Navan in 1911, it serviced the communities of Navan, Sarsfield, Leonard, Vars, Bearbrook and Cumberland. Its first manager was Marshall Rathwell. The switchboard was located initially in the David Johnston house (today's 3522 Trim Road) in Navan across the street from the Findlay house (today's 3525 Trim Road). Lisa Cox was the first operator.

Marshall Rathwell was the grandson of Samuel Rathwell who had moved to the Navan area in 1848. Marshall seems to have been quite an entrepreneur. His mother's maiden name was Jessie Johnston, so we understand the family connection for the site of the first telephone exchange.

The switchboard was moved into the Findlay house in 1918. This was a large three-storey house belonging to James Findlay and

Mary McWilliams. The house had originally been built as a boarding house by William Munroe, another early Navan entrepreneur. With five daughters who would remain single all of their lives, the Findlays put the house to good use (James and Mary Findlay had 9 girls and 1 boy in total).

There is a story about the Findlay house catching fire in one bad winter storm that prevented local firefighters from reaching the house. The Findlays were able to reach the Nepean volunteer fire company who came to the rescue.

Two of the Findlay daughters, Gertie and Marjorie, took 12-hour shifts running the switchboard with help from Pearle (Derby) Magladry, Katie Pruner and Harriett Lancaster.

In 1944, James Dunfield purchased the telephone company and moved it to a cement block building, the Freezer Plant (today's 1223 Colonial Road), right across from J.T. Bradley & Sons General Store. The building had been

erected by Marshall Rathwell in 1907-08 and operated as a cheese factory. In 1921, there had been a branch of The Royal Bank of Canada in this building.

The door to the room that held the "Central" was always kept closed. There was a bedroom next to this room with just a small opening in the wall. You had to bend down and then walk through.

Along with Pearle Magladry, Katie Pruner and Harriett Lancaster, other operators over the years included Lucille Gagnon, Elsie James, Theresa Sarrazin, Claire Boucher, Pauline Trudeau, Marion Moffatt, Nita Simpson, Betty Gagnon, Pauline Sarrazin, Thelma Smith, Hazel MacDonald, Mary Simpson, Stella Morrison, Pat Rathwell, Louise Wood, Alta McGrath, Mavis Graham, Madeleine St-Denis, Roberta Cardiff and Lynda Rivington.

Interestingly enough, recently acquired service records for Navan's Mervin Dagg indicated

that he had worked as a linesman for this company when he enlisted in World War II. Before he was discharged, he indicated that he might return to being a linesman or work on his father's farm.

The first switchboard in Cumberland was installed at the rear of Eva Kennedy's house, in the room that had served as her prenatal room. Local Cumberland operators were Helen Schryer, Maxine Scharfe and Ceile MacEachern Sr.

In 1951, when Cumberland's Allan & Ethel Findlay got married, they got a telephone. Their number was 1-3-2, which meant they were on line 1 and their ring was 3 longs, 2 shorts. If you wanted to call someone on another line, you pushed in a button and turned the crank to get a hold of "Central" and then asked the switchboard operator to connect you with so and so. But if you wanted to call someone on the same line as you, no need to go through "Central". You simply "cranked" their ring, a full crank for the longs and ½ cranks for the shorts. People kept a list by the phone of all the other people's rings on their line. There were 21 people on line 1, so a lot of people knew your business. If too many neighbours picked up the phone, even if it wasn't their ring, it would cut the power down which meant that you had a hard time hearing. You would have to say, "Could half of you get off the line so that we can hear what this is all about". You then heard a lot of clicks and, all of a sudden, the connection was clear.

If there was a fire or other kind of emergency, the switchboard operator rang one long constant ring to alert the people in the immediate vicinity of the problem. You would then pick up to see who needed help. If it was a very big emergency, "Central" would ring other people

in a larger area for extra help.

There were two big batteries in those old crank phones that an employee came around every year or so to replace.

James Dunfield's widow, Muriel, sold the company to Eldon Kinsella in 1953. And Eldon sold it to the Metcalfe Telephone Company in 1963 which itself was a subsidiary of Bell Canada at the time.

Ivan Tanner has a colorful description of the local telephone company's final years: "I can remember the last years that Eldon owned it. The entire system was falling apart faster than he could patch it together. The phones were out so often. I think it was mid-60's sometime (shortly after Bell took over) I was at Grandpa Walter Griffith's farm on Forced Road when Bell came along with a huge D-9 with a ripper burying the

new cable."

I remember as a child learning how to use the party line at my McNeely grandparents' house. They shared a party line with a few neighbours, one of them being the Sharkeys. I had to remember the one long, one short ring before ever answering the telephone. And, of course, there wasn't guaranteed privacy on a party line.

I also have memories of Muriel, Sam and Sally Dunfield. When Muriel sold the telephone company, she married my great uncle Phil Morin from Cumberland, two farms over from the McNeelys.

Organized by G. Boyer with contributions from Allan and Ethel Findlay, Ivan Tanner, Gladys Scharfe, Margaret MacNeil, Lynda Rivington, Jeannie Smith, Sam Dagg and Denise Beaton.



McCaskills in Cumberland Township

We received a request with regards to McCaskills in Cumberland Township. A Donald McCaskill married Mary McMillan in Buckingham in 1864 and they farmed to the west of Cumberland village. We then developed the following family tree.

Descendants of Hugh McMillan

Generation 1

1. **HUGH¹ MCMILLAN** was born on 05 Dec 1811 in Lochiel, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, Ontario. He married Janet Cameron, daughter of Allan Cameron and Janet Cameron, on 21 Nov 1831 in Cornwall, Ontario. She was born in 1808 in Ontario, Canada¹.

Hugh McMillan and Janet Cameron had the following children:

- i. **MARY ANN² MCMILLAN** was born on 27 Dec 1836 in Buckingham, Québec². She married an unknown spouse on 09 Jun 1873 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada³.
 2.
 - ii. **MARY MCMILLAN** was born on 01 Aug 1838 in Lochaber Township, Québec⁴. She died on 30 Apr 1909 in Orléans, Ontario⁵. She married Donald McCaskill, son of Alexander McCaskill, on 08 Sep 1864 in Buckingham, Québec. He was born on 17 Sep 1832 in Hawkesbury, Ontario⁶⁻⁷. He died on 28 Nov 1919 in Cumberland, Ontario⁸.
 - iii. **HUGH MCMILLAN** was born on 01 Aug 1838 in Lochaber Township, Québec⁹.
 - iv. **ISABELLA MCMILLAN** was born in 1841 in Buckingham, Québec¹. She married Duncan McMillan, son of Donald McMillan and Nancy McMillan, on 06 Oct 1861 in Orléans, Ontario¹⁰.
 - v. **CATHERINE MCMILLAN** was born in 1843 in Buckingham, Québec¹.
 - vi. **HUGH MCMILLAN** was born in 1844 in Buckingham, Québec¹. He married Mary Ann McMillan, daughter of Allan McMillan and Kate McMaster, on 09 Jun 1873 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada¹¹.
 - vii. **DANIEL MCMILLAN** was born in 1847 in Buckingham, Québec.
 - viii. **ALEXANDER MCMILLAN** was born in 1849 in Buckingham, Québec¹.
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Generation 2

2. **MARY² MCMILLAN** (Hugh¹) was born on 01 Aug 1838 in Lochaber Township, Québec⁴. She died on 30 Apr 1909 in Orléans, Ontario⁵. She married Donald McCaskill, son of Alexander McCaskill, on 08 Sep 1864 in Buckingham, Québec. He was born on 17 Sep 1832 in Hawkesbury, Ontario⁶⁻⁷. He died on 28 Nov 1919 in Cumberland, Ontario⁸.

Notes for Mary McMillan:

More commonly known as Margaret.

Donald McCaskill and Mary McMillan had the following children:

- i. **JANE³ MCCASKILL** was born in 1867 in Québec, Canada¹². She died on 13 Jun 1873 in Cumberland Township, Ontario¹³.
 - ii. **EWEN MCCASKILL** was born in 1869 in Ontario, Canada¹². He died on 24 Jul 1873 in Cumberland Township, Ontario¹³.
 - iii. **MARY SARAH MCCASKILL** was born in 1870 in Cumberland Township, Ontario¹⁴. She married Andrew Watters, son of Peter Watters and Maggie Whelan, on 24 Sep 1895 in Orléans, Ontario¹⁵.
 - iv. **JENNIE MCCASKILL** was born in 1875 in Cumberland, Ontario¹⁶. She married John Edward Findlay, son of John Findlay and Mary, on 11 Jun 1896 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada¹⁶.
 - v. **ELLEN MCCASKILL** was born on 17 Sep 1879 in Cumberland, Ontario⁶. She married John S. Martin, son of John Martin and Rachael Beardsley, on 12 Aug 1906 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada¹⁷.

Notes for Ellen McCaskill:

Both Margarets, mother and daughter, are listed as Roman Catholic in the 1901 census. Dad is presbyterian.

Sources

- 1 1861 Census of Canada.