

THE GEORGEVILLE ENTERPRISE

Vol 2 No 1

AN OCCASIONAL PUBLICATION OF

SPRING SUMMER 1993

Société d'histoire de Georgeville / Georgeville Historical Society

BIGELOW GARDEN OPENING SET FOR JULY 10; WILL HONOUR VILLAGE'S PIONEER FAMILIES

As all gardeners know, there is no such thing as an instant garden -- although the historic garden now taking shape in the centre of Georgeville seems to be doing its best to bend that rule.

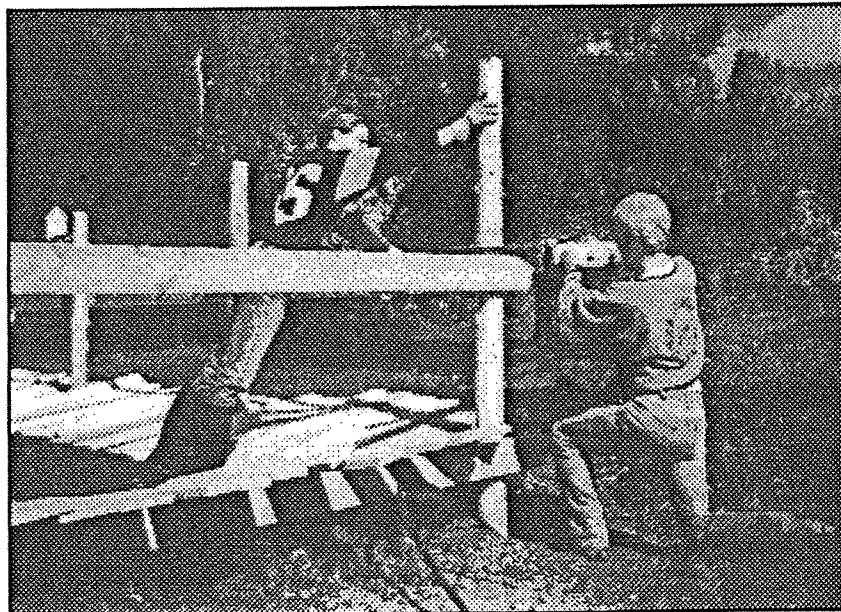
The Société d'histoire de Georgeville/Georgeville Historical Society will formally open the garden as part of its second annual meeting on Saturday afternoon, July 10. All members of the community are invited to attend the annual meeting in the Murray Memorial Centre, followed by a ceremonial opening of the garden to residents and visitors.

The garden has been created to honour the pioneer families who settled in the Georgeville area beginning in the 1790s. It is named "Le Jardin Bigelow -- The Bigelow Garden" for Levi Bigelow, who for many years operated a stage coach inn on the site accommodating travellers to Montreal or Stanstead who crossed Lake Memphremagog on Copp's ferry.

The ceremonial ribbon will be cut by Arlene Probyn, of Stanstead, a descendant of the Rexfords who first settled on the lakeshore north of the village about 1794 and whose family last occupied the Bigelow Inn before it was torn down in 1945. The site of the garden, across from the village green off Carré Copp, has been made available to the society through the great generosity of Joan Murray.

The ground was broken for the Bigelow Garden on a snowy day last September when Wayne McTavish bulldozed the 30 by 40 foot site, laying a base of gravel and sand, and Robert Hutchins trucked in loads of topsoil. Since then, a small army of volunteers has contributed time and an extraordinary range of talents to bring the garden from a gleam in Co-ordinator Katherine Mackenzie's eye to its realization.

As far as possible, the Bigelow garden will display



Geoff Pille and Junior Camber at work on garden fence.

plants of the kind pioneer families grew, including some with histories of their own. For example, Maury Devlin has provided carefully nurtured cuttings from a single white rose that once grew in profusion in the village; there are primroses from Rainbow House (now the Auberge) and tiger lilies

Cont'd. p. 3

MAKE IT A DATE

Sat. July 10 at 2:30
SHG\GHS Annual Meeting

Sat. - Sun. August 14-15
**Heart of the Village
4th Annual Exhibition
of Georgeville Houses**

A Tues. in August
**SHG\GHS History Walk
and Picnic at Belmere**

OF MAPS, THE MOUNTAIN MAID, AND GOLF AT MAGOON'S POINT

by John M. Scott

The Bigelow Garden on Carré Copp may be the most visible evidence of SHG/GHS activity since the Historical Society was formed a year ago. But the Georgeville History Project has also been doing much digging of a non-horticultural kind. Some sample returns from our research-in-progress:

All in the Family

The Packard farm on the East Road has been continuously cultivated since it was settled by Richard Packard who left Rhode Island behind and settled in Georgeville in 1798. Even more remarkably, an unbroken line of his descendants have farmed its 200 acres ever since – Richard for 42 years, his son Hollis Sampson for 34 years, Hollis Sampson's son Addison for 40 years, and Addison's son William for the next 30 years.

In 1946, William's grandson, Bernard Drew, took over the ancestral farm – and with it a tin box of family records going back to 1843. With their help, and a keen memory that reaches back to an image of great-grandfather Addison ("In his early 80s, he was a man of medium height, erect, with a full beard – in appearance somewhat reminiscent of George V"), Bernard has put together an engrossing account of the Packards of the East Road. Bernard will share his findings at the Society's in the Murray Memorial Centre annual meeting on July 10.

Mapping Georgeville of the 1820s

A fairly regular visitor in Georgeville's early years was Ralph Merry, a son of the first settler at the Outlet (Magog). On August 25, 1823, at a time when there were still only eight families at the Outlet, he enviously noted that Georgeville was going through something of a building boom. "At Copp's village," he noted in his diary, "find it has altered greatly in buildings since last Feb."

Georgeville was then busily asserting its place on the map – opening, among other ventures, a winter stage coach service to Montreal. This makes it particularly interesting to know just which buildings Ralph Merry was referring to, and who built them. John Boynton is filling in that gap. Working with property deeds culled from the Archives nationales de Quebec in Sherbrooke by Stephen Moore, he is at work on a painstaking jigsaw puzzle, creating the pieces from often obscure descriptions of property lines. With continuing research, what should emerge is the first map of the village as it was in the 1820s.

The Master Boat Builder

His name is given in traditional accounts as Austin Spear or Mr. Spears, of Burlington, Vt., and he designed the *Mountain Maid*, the first steamboat on Memphremagog, built in Georgeville in 1850. Eager to learn more about him and his background, we sent off our questions to Arthur B. Cohn, of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum at Basin Harbor.

Back came the answer that his name was Orson Spear, and he was indeed a premiere shipwright in Burlington. Better yet, a collection of Spear's papers is housed at the University of Vermont, including the letter in which the *Mountain Maid*'s promoter, George Washington Fogg, invited Spear to come to Georgeville and build the steamer:

Georgeville Jan. 16/49

Sir,

I am informed by a Gentleman from your place that you are a steam Boat builder and as there has been a company formed here for building a Steam Boat I should like to know if you can build us a small Steam Boat of ninety feet keel, and if you can please let us know the lowest you will build it for with the timber furnished on the building ground. Please let us know your terms by the day, and by the job. And if you can build said Boat we want you to either come, or write by return of Mail...

And by doing so you will much oblige

Your Obt.

George W. Fogg

Will Mr. Pearse Come to Dinner?

Samuel June Barrows, a Bostonian, editor of the Unitarian *Christian Register* and a leading social reformer, his wife Isabel, and daughter Mabel were pioneer campers on the lakeshore beginning in 1878, and went on to build Birch Bay and Cedar Lodge. They were also inveterate correspondents, and many letters from Isabel and Mabel reporting Georgeville doings in the years 1890 to 1906 are part of the S.J. Barrows Papers at Harvard's Houghton Library.

Jessie Colby, on a busman's holiday from Dickenson College, has culled several hundred pages of Georgeville correspondence from the Barrows Papers, including letters from such lakeshore friends and neighbours as Gen. Henry M. Lazelle, John B. Pearse, Theodore Clark Smith and the Rev. Christopher Eliot. Here, for example, is Mabel Barrows to "Paza" on October 5, 1901:

This morning Mamma put on all her Saratoga clothes and I drove her to Georgeville. First we went to see the

sights, the bandstand, the Union Hotel, the Ives store, Bullock's glass front, Dr. Keyes' alterations and new wing, the "Shack", the Meat Market and Bakery, the ruins of the Camperdown and the Hotel Elephantis, and Miss Chamberlain's "Ladies Furnishings Rooms." ... We had a present while there from Mr. Douglas Lindsay -- of a piece of venison. He shot two deer this week in the field on the corner where the road turns off to Fitch Bay village as you go towards the Narrows...

You'll never guess, but Mamma, since it was our last Sunday, and we had venison, has invited The Pearses to dinner! Won't it be a picnic if Uncle John comes! Do you think he will, or will he remember his vow never to set foot on our land? We heard in Georgeville, by the way, that Mr. Pearse is going to sell out the farm land to you. Mr. Redpath has just sold about 100 acres for \$800 -- all of the land east of the road except 2 acres round the barns. Sold it to Brookhouse.

And so on.

Meals Fit for a King

From a 1956 letter by Colin MacPherson, provided by Lorne MacPherson: "There were many other smaller boats but there were none at any time that could be compared with the *Lady of the Lake* that was so dear to Georgeville people. Her crew was entirely made up of sons and daughters of the village. The Captain -- C.C. Bullock. The Chief Engineer -- Charlie Shephard. The First Mate -- John McEwan. Deck hands -- William McEwan and Harry Shephard. The Customs Officer was William McGowan...

And I might mention my grandmother's sister, Jessie Taylor, who served meals fit for a king in the dining room below decks."

Missing: One Golf Course

According to another letter by Colin MacPherson, Inverugie was not Georgeville's first golf course. Writing on March 13, 1943, he recalled a steamer named *The Owl* that plied Lake Memphremagog from the Mountain House at Owl's Head to Newport, Magog and Georgeville, "and directly across the lake to the golf course near Bay View Park on Magoon's Point. All this is now grown to trees a foot or more in diameter."

Can anyone tell us anything more about the Magoon's Point golf course?

Why Dr. Slater Became a Parson

In one of his manifestations, Dr. Robert Henry Lawson Slater was a philosopher of religion who was the first director of Harvard's Centre for the Study of World Religions. In another, after his retirement in Georgeville, he became priest-in-charge of St. George's Church in the village for 13 years.

Of all the things written about Bob Slater, he would probably have been most delighted by a profile describing him as "The Most Unusual Person I Have Ever Met" that began: "Dr. Slater was born in England and could not make up his mind whether to be a gardener or a comedian, so he became a parson."

We are indebted to Peter Slater for this stylish and perceptive profile of his father by a sometime Georgeville neighbour of Dr. Slater. Its author? Ten-year-old John Caird, who would later make his own name in London's West End as associate director of *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Les Misérables*.

Garden - cont'd. from p. 1

and peonies from the Colby garden on Magoon's Point. There are hops and wild sweet peas from an 1801 farm at Griffin Corner; and yellow iris and red roses from an old homestead in Tomifobia.

Like most early homestead gardens, the garden also includes not only culinary herbs, but medicinal herbs like chamomile and comfrey, household herbs for making dyes for clothing, and such traditional biblical herbs holy basil, hysop and horehound.

The Bigelow garden will require several years to reach its maturity, but it has already benefited from the help of many hands. The garden is indebted to Albert Eliot for the board fence that evokes the enclosed gardens of early 19th century homesteads, to the Hornby Family Compact (R.T. Hornby, prop.) for putting up the fence. From Cecil Jeffrey's workshop came the entrance arch. Eric Evans had the happy inspiration of placing a wooden sidewalk of the 1890s along the front of the garden, and volunteered to build it.

Important contributions of various kinds were made by Shirley Beasley, Helen Belliard, Maurice Berry, Junior and Daniel Camber, Ritchie Camber, Maureen Cameron, Kennan Cooke, Gilles Derochers, Hood Gambrell, Barbara Gibson, Georgina Hornby, Neils Jensen, Marie Laurin, Juliana Lynch-Staunton, Philip Mackenzie, Doug Patterson, Geoff Pille, Anne Presley, Hughes Richard, Hugh Scott, Roz Smith, Stephen Smith, Betty and David Stanger, Arlette and Tony Straessle, Betty Taylor and Fran Williams.

We are also grateful to Stewart Robertson, garden columnist for *The Gazette* and assistant producer of CBC's *Radio Noon*, who is acting as a consultant for the Bigelow Garden.

THE GEORGEVILLE ENTERPRISE

an occasional publication of SHG\GHS
welcomes your comments and suggestions.

Please write to Peter Smith, Editor
PO Box 27, Georgeville, Quebec JOB 1T0

PROFILE:

JOHN MURRAY: THE OUTDOORSMAN WHO BUILT DUNKELD

by William S. Murray

John Murray was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and was an infant when he was brought to Montreal in 1832 with the rest of his family. Not much is known about his early years, except that he was an average scholar-- he was functional, rather than brilliant, at mathematics; he developed a strong, legible handwriting; though his grammar and spelling were flawless, he was competent, rather than brilliant, at English. His real passion lay out-of-doors. He excelled at athletics, and was an avid camper, hunter, and fisherman. Winter gave him no qualms: he joined the Montreal Snowshoe Club and regularly cleaned up at the club's competitive events (including winning a 150-yard hurdle race in a record 19 seconds).

To go along with all this healthful activity, he became a civil engineer, which in the mid-nineteenth century was the going euphemism for surveyor. John got to spend his working life tramping through the woods and sleeping under the stars which suited him just fine. The pay wasn't any too good, but that didn't bother him as he had a singularly un-Scottish disdain for money and commerce. This trait rather disturbed the rest of his family.

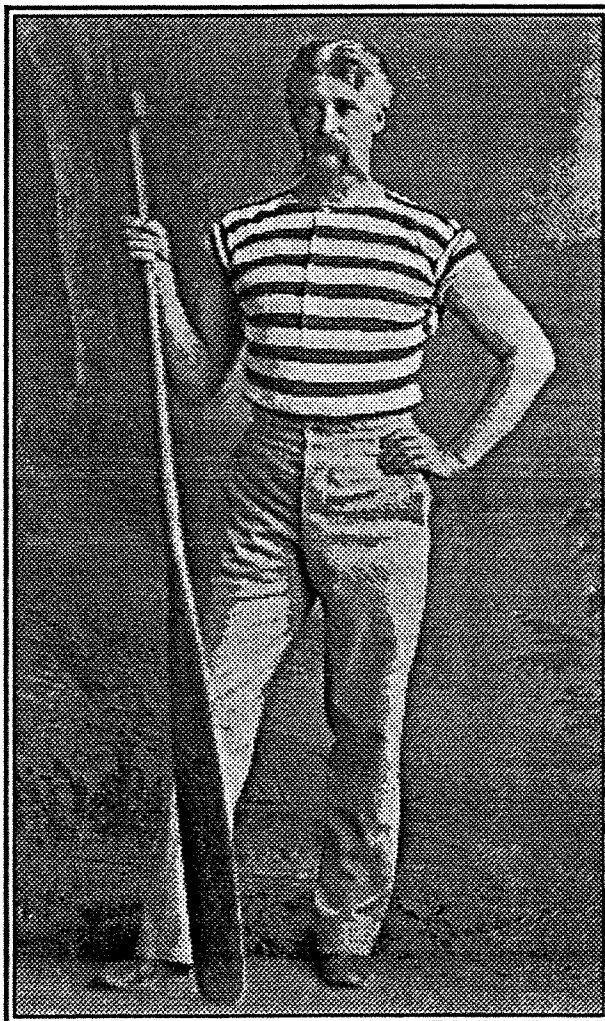
Between surveying jobs, John thought farming would be a suitable and enjoyable occupation. In 1859, he talked his father, William Murray, into buying him the Bullock farm of 185 acres on the south edge of Georgeville. The old man may not have been too hard to convince, but he had other ideas. To him, this would be an ideal place to send the children, to get them out of the way for the summer. He had particularly in mind his son, Walter, who was busily drinking his way to a bad reputation in Montreal. It

didn't help much, for, according to John, Walter regularly "went to the devil" on the steps of the Camperdown House, along with a large portion of the male population of Georgeville. Walter had the last laugh, however. He eventually went to Massawippi, where he had a real farm and a much finer house than his elder brother.

Exactly how John Murray found Georgeville is something we don't know. We do know that he arrived at approximately the same time as Thomas Macduff, a wealthy Montreal lumber dealer. But which man brought the other, or if they came independently, is unknown at this time. Undoubtedly the two families were acquainted in Montreal's close-knit Scottish business community.

Thomas Macduff was an entrepreneur of the frantic sort. Within a very short time of his arrival in Georgeville he had a finger in every available pie. He bought Abe Channell's old hotel (which he renamed the Camperdown) and installed his brother-in-law as manager; he had a sawmill in Mill Bay; he acquired control of the steamer *Mountain Maid*; and he had an interest in one of the stores. This, apparently, was not enough, for he soon rounded up his friends, among whom were William Murray and Hugh Allen, to subscribe a bigger and better steamer, the *Lady of the Lake*. And to further cement friendships and business dealings, in 1866 Thomas Macduff gave his daughter Isabella in marriage to John Murray.

While Macduff was busily buying up as much of Georgeville as he could get his hands on, John Murray was



John Murray ca. 1870s

busily building himself a modest cottage and trying, not very successfully, to make things grow. He was also not very successful at finding and keeping hired help. His farmhand, Joe, turned out to be shiftless as well as brainless, and Joe's sister, the cook and maid-of-all-indoors-work, spent her waning years hounding the Murray family, claiming variously that John either owed her money or was the father of the child she never had or had caused her brother's death. According to John, this woman was a bitter pill even when not angry or demented, which was not often. Her cooking left something to be desired as well. John took to taking his meals at the Camperdown, where his fondness for liver and kidneys and other such offal so horrified the kitchen staff that a complete set of pots and pans was assigned to the exclusive purpose of cooking his unclean foods.

John also kept a rather contemptuous eye on his neighbours. Immediately to the north was a village full of reprobates; immediately to the south, William Wood—who according to John was "almost never sober"—was building a grandiose brick house "framed up all wrong" that looked like "a barrack with a steeple." Further to the south was a place called Belmere, owned by Henry Chapman. Mr. Chapman was ostentatious beyond belief. When the steamer deposited him at his own dock, the entire household staff turned out to greet him with the raising of a flag and the firing of a cannon.

No Room at the Inn

It was to the six room house behind the barn that John brought his bride in 1866. Isabella probably found it cramped, and four children later, it was obvious that something larger was in order. The oldest child, William Alexander, had been born in Montreal, but the next one, John Hector, was born the next year in the cottage in Georgeville. Things were getting tight by this time for when the third child, Katherine Grace, came along the following year, she arrived at the Camperdown Hotel. A few years later, Isabella went to Montreal for the birth of Agnes Edith as there was room at neither the inn nor the cottage.

The little house became known as Hector's Cottage as John Hector Murray not only was born there, he also died there, of smallpox at the age of seven.

Overcrowding and unhappy memories prompted John Murray to start planning a much larger house. He made a bunch of sketches and hired Nathan Beach to carry out the work which commenced in 1880.

Meanwhile, across the lake, rumours of a railway link between Magog and Newport abounded. On the strength of them, in the late 1870s a large summer hotel was built on Gibraltar Point. The



railway never materialised, the hotel venture collapsed, and the building was dismantled. John, ever the bargain hunter, went across the lake and bought up a lot of doors, windows, and hardware which he brought back and incorporated into his new house.

The house was completed in 1882, and grand it was. It had three stories and a basement, a tower on one corner, and upwards of twenty rooms. Doubtless as a concession to style, but perhaps as a reaction to wedging his 6 foot 2 inch frame into a house with six-foot ceilings, John's new home had twelve-foot ceilings. the largest room in the house was the drawing room which at twenty by thirty feet, could have contained the old cottage with room to spare. W.A. Murray, 16 years old at the time, was dispatched to Montreal to bring out the furniture, which arrived in Georgeville by barge from Magog in 1883.

Father-in-law Came Through

All this was more than a surveyor's income could bear, so John went hat in hand to his father-in-law. Mr. Macduff by this time would have paid any price to have his daughter stop complaining about the tiny house she had been living in, so he obligingly dug into his pocket to pay off Mr. Beach, among others. And to commemorate the event (or perhaps not), the new house was named for the Perthshire town from which the Macduffs had come some centuries since, "Dunkeld".

John returned to the serious business of enlarging his own musculature, and was seldom at home any more. On January 6, 1893, he dropped dead after dinner at the Battles House Hotel in Magog. Hector's cottage stood vacant for fifty years and was finally taken down in the 1930s.

Will Murray is a great grandson of John Murray and lived in Dunkeld until it was bought by Donald Sutherland. The views attributed to John Murray come from his letters to his parents in Montreal.

ON THE TRAIL OF MOSES COPP

by Peter Smith

Last August my wife, Rosalyn, and I drove to Warren, New Hampshire to have a look at the town that Moses Copp left in the 1790s when he emigrated to Canada and finally settled in what was to become Georgeville. Warren is a small town at the base of Mount Moosehilauke in the foothills of the White Mountains near the Baker River, about 10 miles--as the crow flies--east of the Connecticut River. In the 19th century it prospered due to the lumber trade. It is a small New England town, not unlike many others in New Hampshire and Vermont.

The trip took us about two hours on the good roads that we followed. After crossing the Connecticut River just south of St. Johnsbury and following the river on the New Hampshire side, we saw historical markers showing the route of the remnants of Roger's Rangers after their ill fated raid against the Abenakis in 1759. We thought of Moses Copp leaving this little town with his wife and his two young sons and setting out on what were, at best, rudimentary roads over what had been Indian paths and, at worst, through trackless wilderness to head for the promise of land in the just opened Canada East. The journey must have taken days and been fraught with both uncertainty and hope.

We really didn't know what we would find in Warren having to do with its past. As we drove in to the town, we passed through a large, round fertile field, which, we would find out later, was originally a beaver pond that Joshua Copp, Moses' father, drained to divert the waters to power his sawmill.

Flashing Black Eyes

We wondered just where young Moses had courted the beautiful Anna Mills at the 1783 Thanksgiving celebration in which they gave thanks for the recently signed Treaty of Paris which finally brought to a conclusion the hostilities between Britain and the colonies. The festivities are wonderfully described by William Little in his *History of Warren* (Manchester, NH, 1870). Anna, he says, "was light and agile in form, as the wild doe; had flashing black eyes, and a wealth of raven tresses...Moses Copp had on a portion of his old Continental uniform. They had a sumptuous feast of fat turkey, potatoes, gravy, venison, chicken and partridge pie, plum puddings, sweet cakes, pies of all kinds, most delicious sauces, maple honey, butter and cheese, the nicest and the richest... By and by they had a slight refreshment, and the 'milk toddy' and 'egg-nog', mild drinks were passed round and disappeared in vast quantities. On this, their spirits rose. The young men scuffled and kicked most vigorously, and now and then gave a

hearty smack, in all honesty of soul, to their buxom partners. Then they used the step called 'shuffle and turn' and 'double trouble,' and cut many a lively fantasy as the short hours wore rapidly away." Moses Copp walked home with Anna Mills that night. Two months later, they were married.

We were shaken from our reverie when we came upon a junction of several roads and, lo and behold, there was a small, neat building with a sign proclaiming "Warren Historical Society". We stopped, went to the door, and found it locked solid. Not to be deterred, we looked for the post office, the hub of all knowledge in any small New England town, and inquired who were the prime movers in the historical society and where they lived. We were directed to Mrs. Eudora Hibbard, who lived a few blocks down the road. She called another member of the WHS, Roland Bixby, who came to Mrs. Hibbard's house to meet us; it turned out that Mr. Bixby had written a more modern *A History of Warren*, which augments and updates Little's work.

Practice in Fire Fighting

What followed was a very complete tour of the town. We saw where Moses Copp's father, Joshua, first built his cabin about 1768 and the place where he then built his sawmill. We saw the field that had been a shallow lake until Joshua Copp broke down the beaver dam and erected his own dam to provide power for his mill. We hopefully asked if the house where he and his wife, Sally, and their fourteen children lived was still in existence. We were told that because it had been in such a state of disrepair by the 1980s, the house had been burned down by the fire department for practice in fire fighting. However we were shown a house that was very similar to the one that Moses grew up in, a low Cape Cod house, seeming very small for such a large family. Our hosts then took us to the Warren Historical Society Museum where we got a good overview of Warren's past. We were struck by many of the names of Warren's pioneers--names common in Georgeville's past. Names like Merrill, Batchelder, Heath, Boynton, and, of course, Copp abounded.

Warren's Historical Society museum and headquarters was built exclusively from donations. Warren has a very active and vital Historical Society. They have been very successful in involving the greater part of the population of Warren. There are frequent and regular meetings of the society as well as outing and picnics that a large percentage of the town participates in. They should serve as an example to the SHG\GHS.

FROM THE COPP AND BULLOCK ASHERIES TO MONTREAL

By Katherine Mackenzie

Potash, that most mundane of materials to us, was of vast importance to the settlers of the Eastern Townships. Potash is crude potassium carbonate obtained by an operation carried out in iron pots. It was used for the manufacture of glass, and after being causticed, for the making of soft soap. The purified carbonate is known as pearl ash.

For the settlers, potash was one of the few cash "crops" available to them. Having cleared the land to build a cabin and, perhaps some space for a garden and some pasture for his horse or oxen, the settler then burned his excess logs and took the ashes to the nearest merchant who owned the large iron pot needed to convert the ashes to potash. Two of Georgeville's early storekeepers operated asheries - Joshua Copp, the son of the village's founder, and his sometime partner or rival, Chauncey Bullock. Copp's ashery was on Wigwam Point and Bullock's was on the site of the present McGowan House.



POTASH KETTLE

POT, MADE IN SCOTLAND, USED FOR BOILING LYE
MADE FROM HARDWOOD ASHES.

Courtesy Brome Co. Hist. Soc.

The product was in great demand to be shipped to European manufacturers of textiles, glass and soap. The timing for making potash, as the settlers cleared their land was just right. However, as soon as alkalis such as soda, could be made cheaply and, later, when potassium mines were developed, the value of home-made potash declined, but it wasn't dead yet. The Canadian settlers were in luck in this business as the British woolen mills still had a voracious appetite for potash and the British had a distaste for trading with their former subjects. These factors resulted in Britain's encouraging the development of an industry in Canada.

Consequently, a good amount of New England potash came to be shipped to Britain from Canadian ports. In late 1823 *The British Colonist*, the weekly newspaper that began publishing in Stanstead that year, reported: "It is computed that 55,000 barrels of Pot and Pearl Ashes will have been shipped during this season from the Port of Quebec. This exceeds by

nearly 20,000 the number shipped last year, which was about 38,000."

For the settlers transporting ashes to Montreal was no small journey. Mrs. Catherine Day, in her *Pioneers of the Eastern Townships* (1863), tells us about the difficult conditions. Travel was easier in the winter, when the frost had frozen the ground, and ice covered the rivers. Under these conditions oxen and sleds could make better time than in the mud bogs of spring. A sleigh with two barrels of ashes and driver, needed two yoke of oxen to pull it.

From Stanstead County and Georgeville, there were two routes to Montreal but they were hardly highways. In fact, in places there was barely room for a team to push through. These routes started as Indian trails, were widened to take a man on horseback, and widened again to take a cart. Stumps were often not removed, and bogs and mud made roads barely passable until the late 1830s. Winter was the best time to move goods. One route was from The Outlet (Magog) via Granby and Chambly, where scows waited to ferry travellers across the Richelieu River and on to Longueuil. The second route crossed the lake at Georgeville, to Knowltons Landing, and worked along the narrow trail to the big hill up to Brome. The road continued on to Farnham, across the Richelieu River, to St. Johns and, finally, on to LaPrairie. At that point the river was crossed by *bateaux* or, more likely, the load was taken on to Longueuil where the river was much narrower.

Dangerous Trip

The trip across the St. Lawrence River was dangerous. There were strong currents, there was floating ice, there was wind and snow--so it is not surprising the *bateaux* operators refused to make the trip if they did not like the conditions. The *bateaux* were strong, much bigger than scows, and made to accommodate oxen, well tied to the sides of the hull in case of accident or panic. Hired truckmen met the *bateaux* and led the teams to the Inspection Office, where the loads were inspected, and then on to the marketplace. Then having money in their pockets, the drivers, would often pick up a load of goods for the Stanstead markets returning home.

Conditions along the routes, especially in the first 25 years of the 19th century, were difficult to say the least. There were no shelters along the routes, only very rough ones for the oxen. The drivers had to wrap up as best they could and sleep under their sleds. The return trip took an average of eighteen days if all went well.

GEORGEVILLE-SUR-LE-LAC: LE PASSÉ DE SON HISTOIRE

Par Bruno d'Anglejan

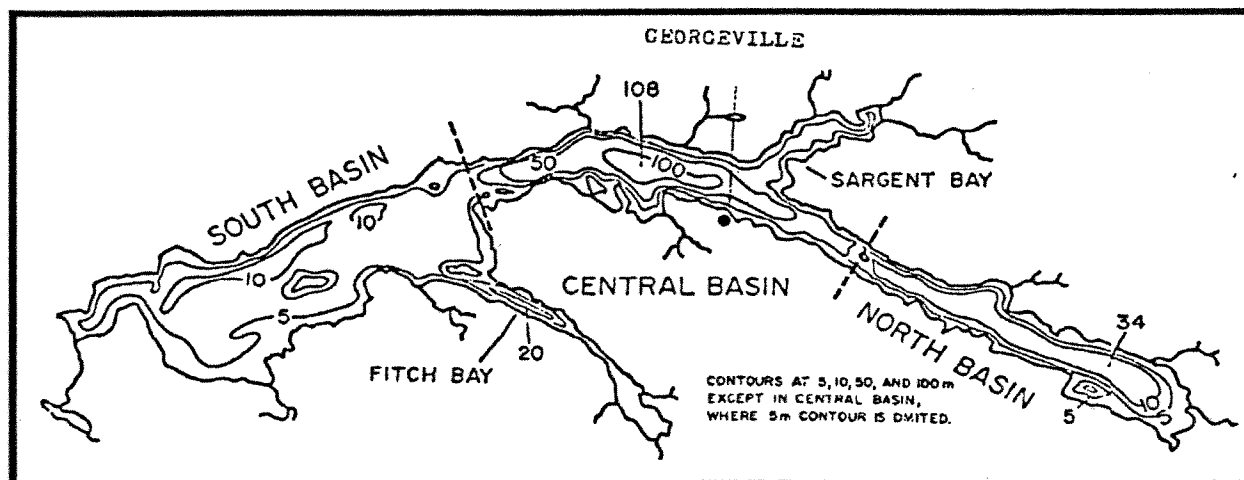
La brève histoire de Georgeville, à peine quelques générations de familles nouvellement venues, prend ses racines profondes dans celle du lac qui, elle, s'étale sur de nombreux millénaires. Dans cette distante perspective, les maisons du village, maintenant bien au sec au bord de l'eau, autour du petit port paisible et de la grande place, ressembleraient plutôt à de minuscules jouets d'enfants semés à marée basse sur fond de vase, - un peu comme sur certaines gravures de Bartlett. A peine visibles sur les collines avoisinantes, quelques anciennes terrasses témoignent de cette époque lointaine où les niveaux d'eau se trouvaient bien au-dessus du toit du centre communautaire.

Un observateur patient et bien emmitoufflé, décidé de suivre le déroulement accéléré de cette histoire du haut du Mont Owl's Head il y a environ 14,000 ans, aurait d'abord vu un grand mûr de glace en direction d'Orford dans le cercle hésitant de sa longue vue. La calotte glaciaire, qui avait enfoui le Québec et la Nouvelle Angleterre jusqu'à Long Island sous plus de deux kilomètres de glace, se retirait toute craquante vers le nord-ouest, laissant de longs sillages de sables et graviers. A ses pieds, notre personnage aurait remarqué à perte de vue une vaste flaque d'eaux brunâtres, irrégulière, noyant tous les fonds de vallées autour de Sherbrooke. Gonflé d'eaux de fontes et prisonnier des glaces, ce premier lac Memphremagog grimpait d'abord à plus de 150 mètres au dessus du nôtre. Bloqué vers le nord, il finit par trouver un petit exutoire vers l'ouest, quelque part au bout de la baie Sargent, par où il déversait ses eaux dans la rivière Mississisquoi vers la vallée du Hudson.

Deux mille ans s'écoulent: à l'horizon, la glace a disparu; une voie d'eau s'est ouverte vers le nord par la vallée de la Saint-François vers les basses terres du

Saint-Laurent qu'occupe temporairement la mer dite de Champlain. Les eaux ont suffisamment baissé pour dégager les contours du lac actuel. Sautons 1,500 cents ans (il y a donc 10,500 ans): les couleurs changent autour du lac. Dans les plis des collines, de maigres taillis de saules, bientôt parsemés de bouleaux et de sapins, ont progressivement gagné sur la toundra. Ancien fond de lac, la grande place de Georgeville est définitivement sortie des eaux. Depuis près de 1,000 ans notre Rip van Winkle, du haut de son perchoir, aurait peut-être pu surprendre les premières chasses: de petits groupes de nomades paleoindiens poursuivant l'été des troupeaux de caribous. Quelques filets de fumée, quelques canots n'apparaîtront sans doute que bien plus tard, il y a 3,000 ans ou moins, à l'embouchure des rivières, avec les premiers campements. Mais déjà le cadre physique est construit pour Monsieur Copp et sa famille.

Depuis cette époque lointaine, le lac n'a guère changé de forme, de volume ou de comportement. De nos jours, il reçoit annuellement à peu près 1 kilomètre cube d'eau en grande partie des rivières Clyde et Black au Vermont, qu'il déverse via la Rivière Magog dans la Saint-François. A ce rythme, il faut compter autour d'un an et demi pour que ses eaux se renouvellent complètement. Celles-ci s'écoulent paresseusement, à une vitesse moyenne d'environ 50 mètres par heure, à travers les trois bassins qui le constituent. Large et peu profond, 19m au plus, dans le bassin sud, il se rétrécit près de l'île Skinner, sous Owl's Head, et se creuse soudainement dans le bassin central, atteignant 108m (351 pieds) au large de la baie MacPherson, pour remonter, passé Georgeville, à hauteur de l'île Lord, vers des profondeurs inférieures à 34m dans le bassin nord. En été, la couche de surface jouit d'une belle



température atteignant parfois 25 degrés Celsius. Mais en dessous de 10 à 15 mètres, très rapidement, il fait uniformément sombre et frais, entre 5 et 6 degrés. Deux fois par an, au printemps mais surtout en automne avant que les glaces prennent, les eaux de surface deviennent plus denses que celles du fond, et le lac se retourne en quelques jours du haut vers le bas, dans un brassage complet qui réalimente les profondeurs en précieux oxygène, et retourne à la lumière les substances nutritives requises pour que la vie se poursuive. Puis vient l'hiver où le lac dort, revivant pour quelques mois son passé des époques froides révolues.

Rappelons qu'il n'y a qu'à peine plus de 50 ans qu'on peut se faire une idée à peu près précise de la topographie des fonds grâce aux travaux de l'ingénieur Julian C. Smith. Celui-ci, utilisant un équipement hydroacoustique de son invention, fit une étude bathymétrique détaillée du lac durant les étés 1936, 37 et 38, à bord de son bateau, le *Bertha Louise*, construit à Georgeville en 1921. Ces relevés lui ont permis de réaliser une première carte du lac, qui sert toujours de base à celle publiée par le Service Hydrographique Canadien*.

MORE ON HISTORICAL DATING

In the last issue of *The Enterprise* we discussed the importance of using as many sources as possible to find information such as birth and death dates. There is one birthday we would very much like to pin down—that of George Fitch Copp. Tradition has it that he was the first child born in Copp's Ferry (1797) and, and because of this fact, is the namesake of the village.

George Fitch Copp's grave stone says that he died on September 27, 1857, aged 60 years, 6 months. This would place his birth in March 1797. Since he was reputedly born in Georgeville and since Moses Copp settled in Georgeville in 1797, it would appear that Moses came with his family across the ice. It also would appear that he was indeed the first child born in the village. But what isn't so obvious is just when

Bruno d'Anglejan est un directeur de la SHG/GHS et professeur au département des sciences de la terre à McGill University.

the village became known as "Georgeville" and whether it was named after George Fitch Copp. Tradition has it that Copp's Ferry became Georgeville in 1822, but so far, in our research, we have found no substantiation of that date. For example, in 1823, Ralph Merry used "Copp's Village", Abraham Channel "King's Ferry" and Joshua Copp "Copp's Ferry". But by 1832 Bouchette in his *The British Dominions in North America* was using "Georgeville".

AUSTIN CELEBRATES ITS BICENTENNIAL

In 1793, Nicolas Austin arrived at the place that now bears his name. It was from there that Moses Copp set out across the lake to set up his ferry and found what was to become Georgeville. The village of Austin is commemorating its bicentennial with a three day celebration starting Thursday, July 11 at 11 am with a parade led off with a team of oxen, much like those that arrived with the town's founder 200 years ago. Among other events, there will be an historical display in the Town Hall from 1 to 5 p.m. on the two following days. On Saturday, July 3, the old Austin Monument will be moved to a more accessible location.

REMINDER

It is time to renew your membership in the SHS/GHS. Please clip and mail the renewal form below and mail it to:

Secretary SHG/GHS
P.O. Box 59
Georgeville, QC
J0B 1T0

Société d'histoire de Georgeville / Georgeville Historical Society

Membership Application \ Renewal

1993-1994

Other Address (if applicable)

Name _____

Number & Street Address _____

Phone _____

New ☐ Renewal ☐ Individual \$ 10 ☐ Family \$ 15 ☐ DONATION \$ _____

BOOK-ENDS

New Additions to the Library & Archives

Members of the Society are welcome to borrow books and periodicals from the Society's research library, and to consult our archives.

The Library & Archives in Joan Murray's carriage house will normally be open on Wednesday afternoons between 3 and 5 p.m., and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. until noon.

The number of books in our library is still quite modest. Our goal is to build a basic library of books that refer to Georgeville, Lake Memphremagog and neighbouring communities, and that help place our history in the context of the history of the Eastern Townships.

If you have any books or archival material bearing on the history of this area that you would like to donate to the library, we would be happy to add them to our collection. Please call Joan Murray at 843-2112. Recent acquisitions include:

From Jayne Greene:

Photocopy of article from *Washington Evening Star* dated 25 October, 1925, on Dr. S.S. Jaffe, a summer visitor who so fell in love with Cedar Lodge that he imported enough cedar logs from that property to build a 10-room log house in suburban Washington.

From Barbara Clift:

"Heart of the Village" Vol. I.

From Maurice Berry:

Bernard Epps, *Eastern Township Adventure*, Vol. I, A History to 1837 (1992).

A portfolio of 58 houses in the village and in the area that he photographed in 1967.

Photograph of the Roll of Honour of 39 volunteers from Georgeville who served in the armed forces during WWII.

Roy H. Stills's *A Romantic and Historic Map of the Lake Region of the Eastern Townships, Quebec, to 1867*.

From Joan Murray:

Thomas E. Appleton, *Ravenscrag The Allen Royal Mail Line* (1974).

Photograph of the "Mountain Maid at Georgeville" by Allan Macduff.

From John Boynton

D.W. Hildreth, *Beautiful Memphremagog*, 1905 (reissued 1987).

Helen Pettengill, *History of Grafton, Vermont* (1971).

From Elizabeth Ensink-Hill

Copy of "Families at Camps along Lake Memphremagog as recalled by Florence Lee Fitch." Typescript n.d.

Copy of Michael M. Davis, "A History of Lake Memphremagog Region," including recollections of the Pearse, Barrows, Mussey, Lazelle, Eliot, Kellogg and Davis families. Typescript, 1964.

From the Eastern Townships Research Centre

Journal of Eastern Townships Studies (Spring 1992).

From the Stanstead Historical Society

Copy of the Diaries of Ralph Merry IV (1786-1863), typescript.

From Arnold A. Smith

Subject index of *The Stanstead Historical Society Journal* vols. 1-14.

Société d'histoire de Georgeville / Georgeville Historical Society

Formulaire de demande d'adhésion/Rénouveaulement

1993-1994

Autre adresse (si applicable)

Nom _____

Numéro
Civique &
Adresse
postale _____

Téléphone _____

Nouvelle ☐ Rénouveaulement ☐ Individuel \$ 10 ☐ Familial \$ 15 ☐ DONATION \$ _____