



Société d'Histoire de Georgeville Georgeville Historical Society



The Loss of Two Originals

The last four months of 2018 proved to be a sad time for the historical society. It was a period marked by the passing of two of the society's most notable members, Adelaide Atkin and John Scott.

In September, the society lost Adelaide. Her death was followed in December by that of John. Both were original organizers of the society, both longtime directors and at the time of their respective deaths, Directors Emeritus of the GHS.

Adelaide, or Addie as she was more commonly known, was the village's original historian, a person keenly interested in the history of the village and the life-stories of those who lived in the community. For years, she collected every item relating to the village's past, from scraps of newspaper references to actual historical artifacts. She is best remembered for her taped interviews with various individuals during the 1960s and '70s.

Her own family ties to local history are well documented, her ancestry tracing back to the early 1800s with the initial settlement of the Hand and Jewett families.

For decades prior to the formation of the society in the early 1990s, Addie's sole companion in the quest to uncover the history of the village and the surrounding area was the late John Boynton. Though they shared a common interest, John's work was more focused on property records and the progression of ownership. Conversely, Addie's perspectives were the individuals and families of Georgeville, as well of the events that made up the community's past.

Unfortunately, her later years were taken up by residency in seniors' homes, thus preventing her from actively participating in the affairs of the society. By this stage of her life, her cognitive abilities had become compromised and she became unaware of her past nor her current situation.



Adelaide Atkin, community historian, GHS founding member and director emeritus. (GHS archives)



John Scott, GHS founding member, president, newsletter editor and director emeritus. (GHS archives)

John Scott on the other hand, did not have the long standing ties to the village as Addie. His family's connection to the village date back only to the 1940s when his father, the Rev. R.B.Y. Scott, first came to Georgeville and eventually acquired property in the community.

It was John, however, who developed an interest in the history of the village after spending the years of his youth here. A journalist and editor by profession, John applied the same principles and guidelines acquired in his professional work to his pastime of documenting the history of the village. He was meticulous in recording the sources of all information gathered on the village and is remembered for his creation of family files, a virtual

biographical dictionary of the local citizenry.

John worked closely with the fore mentioned John Boynton and past GHS president Steve Moore in the digestion of land and notary records, in the quest to secure vital details respecting the history of local families and their respective activities affecting village life.

In contrast to Addie, John was active in the affairs of the society right up until the end of his life, having attended the last board meeting just weeks prior to his death. His recent involvement however, was impacted by an operation in later life which affected his

mobility and eventually, his ability to process information in a timely manner. That said, John was able to retain his recall of facts and dates with great accuracy until just days before his passing.

As the society embarks on its activities for 2019, it is sadden with the loss of two such key individuals from the past. Addie and John now join the ranks of fellow society founders Bernard Drew and John Boynton, all of whom were dedicated to documenting the history of Georgeville, and who set the standard by which the current GHS board of directors and the GHS membership should proceed in the future.

The GHS Annual General Meeting

On Sunday, July 8th, Jeffery Packard will address the membership on the subject of farming in the 19th century borderland region of the Eastern Townships. Jeff, with a background in geology (Ph.D., 1985, University of Ottawa), is the first to admit that he is not an expert in the field of agriculture. A long time summer resident of Cedarville, Jeff's academic credentials nevertheless enable him to tackle any subject that peaks his interest.

At the meeting Jeff will discuss the great evolution in agriculture that witnessed the transformation from a subsistence level of farming to one based on marketable surpluses.

The transformation from a subsistence economy was matched by significant changes in the nature of agriculture as well, including such aspects as the impact

on the landscape in terms of deforestation and cultivation practises, the introduction of labour-saving inventions, and a ever-increasing sensitivity to crop selection and livestock husbandry relative to local and regional market demand.

Jeff and his wife Buffy who collaborated on this study, tracked a resilient farm family, the Grants, over four generations in their progression from a pioneer subsistence level of farming to one that evolved into a market-driven agribusiness.

Using the Grants as a case study, Jeff's aim is to provide an insight into the evolving 19th century farm economies in our region, and hopefully, "a renewed appreciation for the optimism, resilience, tenacity, work ethic and adaptability of farmers" during the period in question.

PHOTOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE



*An unusual perspective of Owl's Head Mountain.
(Stephen Moore)*

Identify the location from which this photo of Owl's Head Mountain was taken and you can win a free one year's membership to the Historical Society for you and your family. This unusual perspective of the mountain will be a challenge for most members. The individual who can most accurately describe the location will win the year's membership.

Please submit your answer to either of the following email or postal addresses:

historicalgeorgeville@gmail.com *or*

judy.bachelder@gmail.com *or*

GHS, 4600 Georgeville Road, Georgeville, QC J0B 1T0

2/GHS NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2019

Research Underway...

Research is currently being undertaken with respect to two stories likely to peak the interest of some of our GHS members.

The first is a biographical sketch of John Anderson Camber, a former resident on Magoon Point and an American Civil War veteran. Following his wartime experiences, John returned home, married a local girl and started a family. He built a house and a barn and settled in to life 'on the Point'. Everything seemed normal until he began suffering from bouts of depression and noticeable mood swings, all symptoms of what is now referred to as post traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD). To make things worse, John drifted towards a dependency on alcohol. All led to his eventual estrangement from his family in the years before his death.

John Anderson Camber is the ancestor of current local members of the Camber family.

The second story deals with an unexplained migration of Missisquoi Bay area families to Stanstead County, more particularly, Stanstead Township. For motivations as yet undetermined, upwards of 10 families from the district surrounding Clarenceville (now Saint-Georges-de-Clarenceville), Missisquoi County, not far from Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River, pulled up stakes and relocated to the east side of Lake Memphremagog. Of note was the time period involved, specifically, a couple of years either side of circa 1860. All of the families knew each other and many had familial connections. Despite the obvious 'follow-the-leader' explanation of the migration, there must be more to the story. The descendants of these various families would like to know exactly the reasoning behind the move, the basis of which may now be lost to history.

The full account of these two stories once research is completed, will appear on the society's website, with excerpts expected to be included in future editions of the newsletter.

News from the GHS Archives:

An update from Judy Bachelder

In 2015 the board of the Georgeville Historical Society decided it was time to find a home. While considering the back room of the United Church, Jacques Valiquette came forward and offered the loft of his coach house. His generous offer was immediately accepted and in the fall of 2016 we moved in. For the first time in many years all the GHS books, files, pictures, maps and artifacts were together in one place again. Since then volunteers have been working on organizing and cataloguing this material and digitizing pictures. While tackling this task, it became apparent that there are no files on many of the old Georgeville families and so an effort is underway to develop them.

This winter we received various pictures and related material from distant members on several Georgeville families. Margaret Sellers sent pictures and information on the Macduff/Armour families. Sarah Krzyzanowski shared the history of the early Webster families (David Simeon Webster was one of the first settlers in the area). Susan Brooks told us about the Peasley and Copp families who moved from Georgeville to Iowa during the early 1840s.

On a local note, one day Larry Bernais dropped by with documents he found in a wall while renovating a garage. Maureen Cameron gave us a newsy letter written by her mother, Addie Atkin, to Jean Davidson in 1992. Pam Cartwright allowed the scanning of some of her photos, negatives and slides of Georgeville buildings for the ongoing project to photograph and record the history of village houses. All this information is appreciated and helps us to document the history of Georgeville. The Society hopes that you too will also share some of your family photos and stories with regards to our beloved community.

If you would like to stop by the archives and see what the GHS has or even just to chat, you will find someone there most Tuesdays and Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. You can also reach us at:

historicalgeorgeville@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you.

— Judy Bachelder

Editor's Note: While a number of GHS members have assisted in the efforts described above, the bulk of the organizing and work is attributable to the contribution of the author, Judy Bachelder.

A Tombstone Far, Far Away

In a cemetery in the city of Burlington, lies an impressive tombstone marking the passing of one of Georgeville's most dynamic entrepreneurs. Not nearby Burlington, Vermont, nor the 20 odd communities by that name throughout the United States, but specifically, Burlington, Iowa.

The grave marker in question was erected for Joshua Copp, an early resident of Georgeville, who later relocated to the distant mid-western state.

Joshua was born in Piermont, New Hampshire about 1791. He immigrated to Canada with his father Moses Copp Senior, the second son of the historically noted ferry operator for whom the village was first named.

Joshua Copp inherited his father's entrepreneurial spirit as demonstrated by his early talents as a trader. When barely a lad, he struck off to Montreal where he acquired goods and wares, which he promptly sold to the residents of the village for a tidy profit. Thus began a mercantile enterprise that spawned other business interests in the years that followed, making him one of the most ambitious and prosperous individuals in Georgeville by the 1820s.

Initially, Joshua sold his wares out of a small shanty located likely on property owned by his father Moses Senior. He acquired his own land holding in 1815, bought from his father upon which he built a residence.

A couple of years later, Joshua Copp entered into a partnership with two other notable Georgevillians, James Carr Peasley and Chauncey Bullock. The new

partnership flourished based on the erection and operation of a general store within the village and a pearlsh factory at the lakeshore. The store and ashery attracted customers from all the townships bordering the lake, not the least of which was Stanstead Township,

the site of their operations. With respect to the ashery, the production of lye, potash and its more refined version, pearlsh, was a common activity in early settlements. With an excess of trees to clear for transformation of forests into farmland, early pioneers burned their hardwoods to manufacture these three products, at the time, a valuable early cash commodity. The partners'

establishment of an ashery reflected a more

intensive factory-oriented operation than could be achieved by an individual settler.

It has been suggested that the village's initial prosperity was attributed in large part to the successful operations of the Copp Peasley Bullock partnership. At the very least, the three entrepreneurs' endeavors had the effect of attracting a diverse accumulation of artisans to the community during this period.

A few years later, Copp and Peasley forced Chauncey Bullock out of the partnership. A subsequent lawsuit notwithstanding, Chauncey and his brother Samuel opened their own mercantile store in retribution, fracturing the heretofore monopoly enjoyed by the original partnership.



Joshua Copp's Memorial, Aspen Grove Cemetery, Burlington, Iowa. His memorial gravestone is surrounded by those of his relatives. (Susan Brooks)

Despite the schism, the three original partners collaborated in the launching of a stagecoach service in 1823 between Stanstead and Montreal. The stage service continued for many years.

Crossing Lake Memphremagog was initially accomplished via Moses Copp's scow. Later in 1829, Joshua Copp was part of a syndicate that built the 'Haut Boy', a horse powered ferry that functioned for two decades before the advent of steam-powered vessels.

Joshua's land holdings increased in 1823 when he acquired property south of the village proper. This was during the period when the land baron Sir Robert Shore Milne began selling off his holdings in the township. But his greatest land acquisitions came in the period between 1833 and 1835. During this brief span of time he bought land from no less than five individuals, making him a major land holder in the immediate area. At the time it was a reflection of his growing wealth and prosperity.

A year earlier, the Copp Peasley partnership joined forces with a trader in Waterloo. The agreement apparently included access to a grist mill. The larger entity enabled greater buying power in terms of acquiring goods for their respective retail operations. This particular arrangement prospered for nearly a decade and was only terminated when circumstances surrounding the initial Copp Peasley partnership forced the dissolution of the agreement during the early 1840s.

In 1838, Joshua went into a separate partnership with his son-in-law Taylor Parsons. This new arrangement operated under the business title of Joshua Copp & Company. The nature of the business appears to have been the sale of pearl ash from the factory on the shoreline. It is unclear as to how this operation affected Joshua's partnership with Peasley as the ashery was part of the original three person deal arranged back in 1817-1818.

Joshua's status was enhanced the following year, in 1839, when he assumed the responsibility as the village's postmaster. He replaced his former partner Chauncey Bullock who had fled south as a result of activities surrounding the political unrest of the late 1830s. In turn, Joshua was succeeded by his son-in-law, Taylor, one year later.

It was the year 1840 that marked a great change in the lives of the Copp and Peasley families, and to an extent, the fortunes of Georgeville as well. For in 1840, James Carr Peasley and his family moved to Burlington, Iowa. The relocation effectively terminated the long lasting and lucrative Copp Peasley partnership. The culmination of the 20-plus year arrangement did not adversely affect either individual as both men were independently wealthy by this point in time.

For Joshua, his partner's dramatic relocation so far away must have been disheartening and the impetus for his own move west. The decision to follow the example of his close friend and partner is likely to have been made soon after Peasley's departure, as Joshua started selling off his parcels of real estate the same year, including the Magog Hotel.

Three years later, in 1843, Joshua left Georgeville for Burlington. Accompanying him was his wife Hannah, his daughter Abigail and her husband, Joshua's business partner, Taylor Parsons. The group also included Joshua's nephew, Turton Copp, the fourth son of his brother, Moses Junior.

Upon arrival in Burlington, the old arrangement between Joshua and Taylor was made anew under the banner of Copp & Parsons. The two partners immediately set about buying real estate and establishing a mercantile business for the sale of general merchandise.

The decision to move to Iowa, first by Peasley and later by Copp has been attributable in part to the economic conditions in Canada during the early 1840s. Apparently, business activity had become stagnant with little hope for recovery in the then foreseeable future. With respect to the local economy centered in Georgeville, it was slowly losing ground to the ever-increasing preeminence of Magog to the north and Newport to the south. It was no longer the centralizing hub of activity on the lake. To this extent, Copp and Peasley knew it was time to move on.

Why the two entrepreneurs selected Burlington is lost to history. It was a frontier town, the center of what was then, the Iowa territory. The town itself was originally a native village, later a trading post and subsequently a small village. Settlement did not really begin until the early 1830s, though population growth was steady and probably reached between 2500 and 3000 by the time the two easterners arrived in the early 1840s. By this time, it was a significantly larger center than the community they left behind in Canada. Given the pace of population growth in their new abode, the two former partners were able to individually establish themselves at an opportune time in the development of the town. The two were thus able to perpetuate the prosperity initiated back in Georgeville: something they could not have achieved in their former community.

For James Carr Peasley, the extended prosperity was short-lived. He died in 1842, just 19 months following his arrival. For Joshua, this must have been a terrible blow, though he followed through with his plans to relocate the following year nevertheless. As fate would have it, his wife Hannah also died shortly after her arrival. Her death in 1845 was the catalyst for the subsequent marriage of the two widows, Joshua Copp and Annis Peasley, a few years later.

As is often the case, relatives are known to follow relatives. For the Copps, the move to Burlington inspired the relocation of both blood relatives as well as in-laws. Joshua and Hannah were soon joined by members of various families, including the Parsons, the Putneys, the Merrills, the Bullocks and the Coles. They didn't know at the time, but these former Georgeville residents would be joined in the state by a lot of other former Townshippers. For some reason, Iowa became a popular destination for disgruntled farmers from the Eastern Townships.

Joshua Copp died in 1865. He had suffered a stroke a few years prior to his passing from which he never recovered. A report of his death summarized the character of the man quite succinctly:

"Mr. Copp was an old citizen, a man of substance, a businessman of the old school, exact and methodical, scrupulously honest, with strong common sense, and good judgment."

In hind sight, the question arises as to what might have happened to both Copp and Peasley had they remained in Georgeville? Would they have prospered regardless of the economic conditions of the time? Would the village have been significantly different had they remained? The questions are valid given a 1877 report in the 'Waterloo Advertiser':

:"Georgeville has been a long time recovering from the loss occasioned by the removal of Peasley and Copp years ago.":

An Unflattering Account

Last winter while sorting through some of the files belonging to the late John Boynton, GHS archives volunteer Judy Rochester came across an interesting newspaper clipping. Under the caption 'Reminiscences' the article in question consisted entirely of a lengthy poem published in 'The RECORD' the 4th of January 2001.

Written by Kenneth Phelan, at the time a resident of Maui, the poem was based on the author's memories relating to a time when his family would visit the town of Cookshire where they spent the summer months. Using the town as a base, the family undertook day trips to various locations in the Townships. The content of the poem is an account of what they found on their various excursions.

Unfortunately, the author does not reveal the time period upon which the poem was based, but a notation left by John suggests circa 1930.

Of interest to GHS members is the excerpt relating to a visit to Lake Memphremagog wherein the village of Georgeville is mentioned, as follows:

*On frequent trips we used to take
When we were staying at the lake,
There plunged a rocky cliff most sheer
To wat'ry depths to disappear.*

*Sometimes we'd see a little beach
There were some islets we could reach.
Among them were The Sisters Three
They were a pretty sight to see.*

*To Georgeville across the lake we went
There was a dock timeworn and spent.
A bandstand in a village park
On which neglect had left its mark.*

*The buildings were in need of paint
There of decay was quite a taint.
The houses were all tumbled down
In truth it looked like a ghost town.*

*We found a store to open be
And learned that for just a nickel we,
Two tiny ice cream cones could buy
That way two flavors you could try.*



Born in Sherbrooke, the author obviously was not overly impressed with the village of the 1930s. Not that Georgeville was always the jewel most residents deem it today, though it is hard to believe that it was ever so degraded and downtrodden as Mr. Phelan implies. His denigration and condescension may thus be the result of an excessive reliance as to the latitude that 'poetic license' allows.



Recently, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) sponsored a number of workshops throughout the province. The title of the workshops was “Digital marketing in non-profits: An entrepreneurial approach”. GHS president Keith Wilcox attended one of these workshops and submitted the following report.

Early in the New Year I received a notice from QAHN which was sponsoring five workshops organized around the topic, Communication Matters. The central focus was how to use web sites and social media platforms, to improve communication with our membership and attract a new generation of members. Anglophone non-profit volunteer groups were the target. The question for me was whether or not the topic was relevant to the GHS.

The workshops were to be given across the province, in Wakefield, Sherbrooke, Stanbridge East, Gaspé and Stanstead. Early, maybe too early, on a cold mid winter morning, off I went to the one in Sherbrooke. It taught us how to be better digital marketers. My first reaction was how does this apply to the GHS? We are not an e-commerce.

Topics explored included:

- Ensuring that our group’s purpose and values are stated clearly on our website.
- Identifying the kinds of volunteers/donors/visitors we hoped to attract in support of our mission.
- Ensuring that our purpose and values are relevant to the interests and values of our potential supporters.
- Publicizing each opportunity for members of the public to contribute to and participate in the life our group.

Part of the problem was the language of the session. At first, I thought it was better suited to business. However, once I got into the session, I quickly realized that my concerns were misplaced. This was a tribute to the presenters who did a good job of helping us see that the needs and interests of non-profits were not that

different from those of an e-commerce entrepreneur. We too needed to know who our clientele was, what their needs and interests were, and how to best meet those needs using the technologies available.

The day was well organized. There were presentations interspersed with activities done either individually or in pairs. Each was designed to lead us, step by step, towards building a web site, using WIX (a widely-used, free on-line web development tool), that met the goals listed in the four points above. At the end, by converting these four goals into questions, we could ask our selves whether our beginning web site was meeting these objectives.

For example, did our web site clearly state our groups purpose and values? Would it succeed in attracting members by dovetailing with their needs and values?

As the day progressed, we had a better sense of the purpose behind some of the activities we worked on the morning. Things came together, made more sense

We had a couple of breaks, morning and afternoon, as well as a tasty lunch, washed down by water, tea or coffee. I came away less intimidated by the task of building a web site.

Not bad considering I started out with some doubts about the whole exercise.

— Keith Wilcox





BIGELOW GARDEN GOSSIP

After what seems like the longest winter ever... The Bigelow Garden Volunteers are beginning to buzz.

Compost will be spread as soon as the snow is gone... if ever. A variety of native plants and shrubs are being sought out to replace any that have been damaged over the winter. Some of these might include Honeysuckle, Baneberry, Toad Lily, Daphne and others.

We are happy to divide existing plants when possible and offer them for a small donation to the donation box. We can also offer seedlings in the spring.

Plans are afoot to place our friend Hannah (Bigelow) beside the garden shed. After much indignation and a few epithets from Herself, she finally agreed with the move when she heard she would be receiving a new burlap skirt and a sunbonnet to replace her winter tuque.

WE HAVE TWO PROBLEMS.... WE NEED YOUR HELP

DOGS. Please make sure to tether your dog to the post by the entrance when visiting the Garden and if you see someone entering with their dog, please ask them to do the same. We don't need them to water the flowers.

CATS. The Garden is not a litter box! We do our best to deter these critters with all the tricks of the trade, however they continue to do damage, so kindly shoo the culprits away if you see them.

THANK YOU!

Please come and visit the Garden whenever you are in the village. You will find the volunteers every Monday morning from May to October bent over, kneeling or just sprawled out with sunhats or rainhats, trowels in hand, chatting, weeding, laughing and chatting some more.

We would love you to see the beautiful Bigelow Garden and the changes therein from week to week.



Upcoming Events

CANADA DAY PARADE on Saturday, June 29th at 1:00 pm



THE GEORGEVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY HISTORICAL CHALLENGE on Wednesday, July 17th at 10:00 am

Society members and guests are invited to participate in the second-ever GHS Historical Challenge. Attendees will gather at the Murray Memorial Center at 10:00 am on Wednesday, July 17th.

Teams of four will be formed and using clues each group will be asked to provide certain information of historical significance about the Greater Georgeville Area, better known as the GGA. In order to find the information, participants will have to visit local sites in the village and surrounding countryside. Teams will have two hours to ascertain the responses requested.

Returning to the village, participants will rendezvous in the park for lunch and for the assessment of their results. The team with the highest number of correct answers will be awarded valuable individual prizes.

Plan to attend on the 17th and see if you can meet the challenge. Participants may organize their own team in advance or be assigned to one before the start of the challenge: the only requirements are a vehicle for transport and your lunch if you are so inclined.

It should be fun, stimulating, and at the end of day you will be much better informed about the history of Georgeville and its hinterland.

See you at the Murray Memorial Center at 10:00 am on the 17th.



TOUR OF MACPHERSON CEMETARY on Wednesday, August 14th at 10:00 am

A tour of the MacPherson Cemetery, located south of the village on Magoon Point Road, will be conducted on Wednesday, August 14th, at 10:00 am.

Led by Stephen Moore, the tour will highlight the stories relating to various individuals and/or families buried there. For those looking for an advance preview of which stories and of which families, you are out of luck; you will simply have to come on the tour at the date and time in question.

Steve, as do many of us in the area, has relatives buried in this cemetery. More importantly, nobody is better informed about the lives of those buried there: the famous, the not so famous, and the infamous. Steve has been a student of history all of his adult life; he has worked as a resident genealogist and freelance historical researcher. In addition, he is a trustee of the cemetery.

To learn more about the unwritten history of Georgeville, join us at the MacPherson Cemetery on August 14th at 10:00 am.

Société d'Histoire de Georgeville • Georgeville Historical Society

Founded 1991

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Keep in Touch

Visit the GHS web site for information on the Society, for stories, photographs, postcards, featured artifacts, past newsletters, and more! Always changing, always improving.

georgevillehistoricalsociety.website

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