

# **Société d'histoire de Georgeville**

## **Georgeville Historical Society**

**Newsletter – Summer 2010**

### **DATES TO REMEMBER SUMMER 2010**

*Saturday July 3rd  
Canada Day Parade  
1 pm*

*Be there to cheer on the GHS float*

*Sunday July 11th  
19th Annual General Meeting and Talk  
Murray Hall  
2:30 pm  
\*\*\*\**

*Wednesday July 21<sup>st</sup>  
A historical tour and picnic  
Birch Bay Revisited  
Car pool from Murray Hall  
10 am  
\*\*\*\**

*Wednesday August 11th  
A guided car ride along Magoon Point  
Road  
Car pool from Murray Hall  
10 am  
\*\*\*\**

#### **In the Steps of Joseph Gibb**

Following a scandal that ruptured his independent congregation in the North Sea coastal town of Banff in Scotland, the Rev. Joseph Gibb emigrated with his family to the village of Stanstead Plain in 1829, where he became the Congregational minister.

Until then, the homesteaders from New England who came north into our region, beginning in the mid-1790s, had the place pretty much to themselves. The Rev. Joseph Gibb's arrival prompted the first significant wave of non-American settlers to the township. A score of Scottish families, led by members of his Banff congregation who remained intensely loyal to him, packed their worldly belongings and set off for the New World. They and their descendants have left an imprint on the township, and in particular on Georgeville and the lakeshore that survives to this day.

What was the scandal that so dramatically changed their lives? Who were the Scottish families who braved the six-week Atlantic crossing to join their minister? John Scott will tell their story after the Society's AGM on July 21<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Magoon Point Road's History**

Magoon Point Road was formerly an important route from Copps Ferry (Georgeville) to a small but thriving community down at the southern end of the Point. Previous historical tours have covered the unpaved and neglected southern track on foot and the Magoon Point Cemetery. This year John Boynton will guide us along the mid-section of Magoon Point Road, starting at the right angle junction with Camber Road and ending at Taylor Brook, a distance of about 4km. We will form a small cavalcade of cars and make about 6 stops en route to look at points of interest: old farms, house sites and extant homes, and benefit from John's research into the succession of landowners, farming families, year-round residents and summer folk who have lived there during the past two centuries. At each stop we will be able to drive into a side road or driveway so that we can safely leave the cars and not block traffic. We will picnic at the last stop so bring your lunch and something to sit on.

## The First Village Green

Did you know that Georgeville enjoyed the distinction of having a “village green” four decades before the present green was created on Carré Copp in 1905?

As far back as the summer of 1840, when the Millenarium William Miller preached from an upper window in the village’s brick Meeting House where the red school house now stands, a large crowd was said to have listened raptly, gathered on the “common” below. By 1863 this space, below the school house between the Channell Hill and Magoon’s Point roads, had graduated from being described as a “common” to the “Village –green.”

So we learn from a letter published in the *Stanstead Journal* that we recently came across. It was dated “Georgeville, September 28, 1863” and written by a correspondent who signed himself “Guildhall.” He complained that the *Journal* had inaccurately described a “Pic-Nic and Bazaar” held earlier that month as a fund-raiser for the village’s Wesleyan Methodist Church. The church was the first to be built in Georgeville, in 1860, on the site of what is now the parking lot behind St. George’s Anglican Church (itself built in 1866).

The “Pic-Nic” raised a handsome \$100, though not in aid of the Methodist Church “Guildhall” wrote. The proceedings were rather to be used for “the improvement of the Village-green in front of the Church and School House.” He conceded that “it is true the appearance of the Church will be greatly enhanced when the contemplated improvements are carried out, as it is intended to fence and sidewalk all around this public property, and the present incumbent, Rev. James Thorneloe is deserving of all praise for the assiduity he has displayed in promoting the object.”

Yet that said. “Guildhall” pointed out, “the real object of our effort has nothing sectarian in its character.”

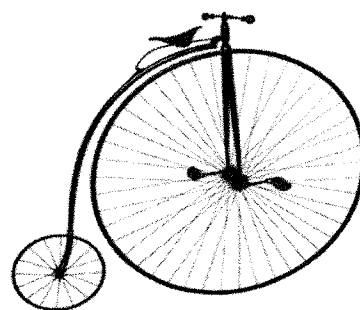
## Cycling comes to Georgeville

In 1882, the *Stanstead Journal* announced the arrival of the first bicycle to Georgeville to the amazement of a crowd of onlookers. Since it was a ‘Penny Farthing’ it must indeed have been an extraordinary sight, hurtling down the Magog road. That tit-bit inspired John Boynton to suggest that we re-enact the event on the GHS float for the 2009 Canada Day parade. John searched far and wide for a penny farthing and finally discovered that Dr. Valiquet had one, right here in Georgeville.

Penny farthings, so named for the huge front wheel and tiny back wheel, were directly driven by pedal cranks attached to the front hub, no chains nor gears. The rider grasped the high handlebars, put one foot on a mounting peg above the rear wheel, pushed himself off and leapt up onto the 100 inch high saddle.

And why the big wheel? Speed and comfort. It covered more ground per pump of the pedal, and the large circumference gave a smoother ride over bumps, potholes and cobbles. Since the tires were solid rubber and the saddle only slightly sprung, this was a significant improvement over the ‘boneshakers’ which preceded the ‘high wheelers’; most roads in those days were unpaved and often very rough.

The disadvantage of the big wheel was the constant danger of being pitched headlong forward over the handlebars, sometimes with fatal results. When coasting downhill, riders would take their feet off the whirling pedals and put their legs over the handlebars so that, in case of an accident, they flew off feet forwards.



Speed was controlled by a 'spoon brake' which pressed on the front wheel rim, operated by levers from the right handlebar. To stop, the rider thrust back on the pedals.

These bicycles enjoyed great popularity in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, first in England then in North America. Dashing young men formed racing clubs, wore tight jackets and knee breeches in the club colours, and demanded lighter machines. The frames became tubular and some even eschewed the brakes and mounting pegs in the cause of speed while hill climbing. A strong rider in 1876 covered 15.8 miles in an hour.

John lashed Dr. Valiquet's penny farthing solidly to the GHS float and probably intended to hop up onto the saddle for the parade round the current village green. Thankfully, caution prevailed and he stood proudly beside it as if he had just coasted successfully down the Magog road without taking a header. The rain teemed down but Marie, Valerie and Stuart, dressed as 1880s Georgevillians, had come prepared with umbrellas.



*John Boynton re-enacts the arrival, in 1882, of the first bicycle in Georgeville, a Penny Farthing, cheered on by the Ven. Stuart Martin, Marie Albert and Valerie Pasztor*

### **Our oldest document**

A bond (a promissory note) signed by one Philo Hurlburt at St. Armand, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1796, has the distinction of being the oldest original document in the archives of our Society. It promises to pay the sum of four hundred pounds to one Philip Peaslee provided that Peaslee perform the

"necessary Duties required by government" on Hurlburt's "share as an associate in the township of Stanstead whereof Col. Fitch is the Proprietor".

The subsequent story surrounding this promise is complex and still incomplete, but the document gives a fascinating glimpse into the early settlement of our region.

It should be remembered that Associates were obligated to settle one family and clear two acres per 100 acres granted before they could get clear title to the land. Hurlburt was one of Col. Fitch's Associates, but presumably was too old to do this work himself, hence the arrangement with Peaslee.

Col. Eleazor Fitch had petitioned for the grant of the Township, but died later in 1796 and in 1800 it was granted to Isaac Ogden and his group of Associates, which did not include Hurlburt.

Sometime thereafter Hurlburt himself died. In 1801, Peaslee, in another document written on the other side of the first one, appointed a "true and loyal Attorney" (the name cannot be read) "to bring action against the Estate of Philo Hurlburt in any court of law in the Province" to satisfy the bond.

It may be assumed that the case went before a judge who ruled in Peaslee's favour. However, the Hurlburts obviously had friends in high places, because in 1805 the Crown granted 200 acres to Philo's widow Mary, but she never lived on it and she transferred the lot, Number 17 in Range 1, to one of the Peaslees, probably Silas, whose name appears in the 1825 census.

Three years later his daughter Sarah sold the property to Abraham Channel, Georgeville innkeeper and land speculator. On another scrap of paper which has survived, Channel noted "holbot & others/Bond/to Siles pesele/deseted of the/ Chaney plas so/cold/this faram bot/of Mrs Saray Chanay/by me/ Abraham F.Channel". (Spelling was not his strong point!)

Lot 17 was briefly owned by David Jewitt 2<sup>nd</sup> and William Ritchie before being purchased by Abraham Boynton in 1839. The documents were passed from owner to owner and remained almost unnoticed among the Boynton family papers until recently when John Boynton donated them to the Society.

Abraham's son Osmond Boynton could not have been aware of their existence when he wrote the history of the Lake Shore Settlement for *Forests and Clearings*, for he described No. 17 as "an associate lot drawn by Silas Peasley in 1800"

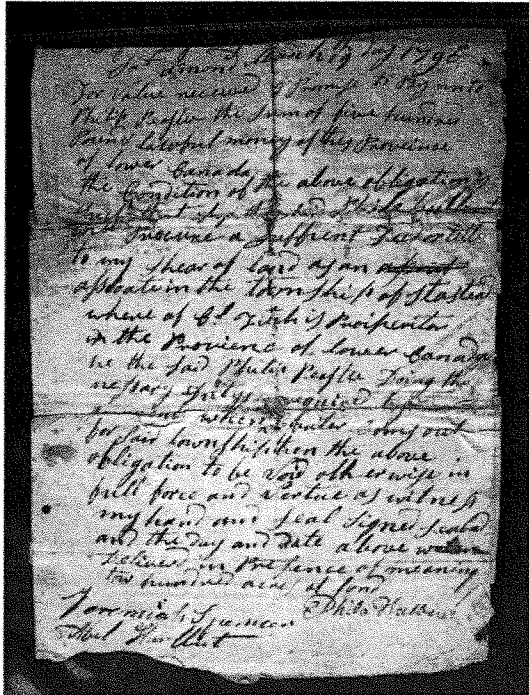


Photo of the original 1796 document from GHS archive

The *GHS Newsletter* is prepared by Valerie Pasztor with contributions from John Scott, John Boynton and Judy Bachelder. Historical stories about our region are always welcome.

### Update on PIIA

In the *Fall 2008 Newsletter* we spoke of the *Plans d'implantation et d'intégration architecturale (PIIA)* which each municipality was encouraged to prepare. At that time, Alison D'Anglejan and Aileen Desbarats were corresponding with other municipalities which had already adopted such sets of guidelines. The replies were mostly positive and their planning committees had found the PIIAs helpful.

Now seems an opportune time to re-visit the preparation and adoption of a PIIA for Georgeville and Fitch bay. GHS will continue to act as a catalyst in this matter and may organize village meetings this summer to encourage widespread discussion. Watch notice boards for further details.

### Membership

July is the time to renew your membership to the Georgeville Historical Society. Our year runs from July 1 to June 31. See the Renewal Form at the bottom of the page. Please take a moment to return it now or bring it with you to the annual meeting in July.

Donations are always appreciated and may be added to your membership cheque. The Society relies completely on your membership fees and donations to fund these newsletters and all the projects undertaken by the society.

## Georgeville Historical Society / Société d'histoire de Georgeville

Renouvellement – Membership Renewal

2010-2011

Nom /Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Adresse /Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Courriel /E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Renouvellement/Renewal  Nouveau Membre/ New Member

Individuelle/Individual \$10  Familiale /Family \$15

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Envoyez votre chèque à la Société d'histoire de Georgeville, / Please send your cheque to: Georgeville Historical Society,  
 4600 Georgeville Road, Georgeville, QC J0B 1T0