

***WORKING CLASS CULTURE***  
***and the development of Hull, Quebec,***  
***1800-1929***

**Michael Martin**  
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*Dedicated to my late beloved, Lillian Marlow.*

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## PREFACE

“The history of a country is the narrative or story of the character and conduct of its prominent citizens or inhabitants.”

– J. L. Gourlay, *History of the Ottawa Valley*, 1896, p. 3.

This, most decidedly, is not only the narrative of the prominent citizens in the history of Hull. Rather, it is the story of thousands of virtually unknown men, women, and children of the working class of Hull, Quebec. Among many others, it's the story of James McConnell, a worker from Nova Scotia, hired by Philemon Wright in Quebec City in 1801. It's the story of Luther Colton, a carpenter from New York, who came to Hull in 1802. It's the story of Joseph Delorme, one of the first French Canadians to be hired by Philemon Wright to work in his shanties, just to give three examples of normally unnamed workers.

This study of the ordinary people of Hull reflects an agenda that emerged in the last half of the 20th century when historians came to see that “the real task of history in our time is to re-create, appreciate and analyze the full spectrum of past societies; that means, pre-eminently to attempt to understand the lives of the working people, the great mass of any society,”<sup>1</sup> rather than merely the politicians and elites who governed past societies.

This book also studies the workers who helped the workers of Hull forge an awareness of themselves as a class in a self-conscious attempt to improve the lot of ordinary working people. Thus, this book is the story of Cuthbert Bordeleau, the shoemaker who founded the most important mutual benefit society for Hull workers in 1863; of Napoléon Fauteux, the millhand who led the 1891 strike of lumber millworkers at the Chaudière; of Napoléon Pagé, the journalist who led the Knights of Labour in Hull during the 1890's; of Achille Morin, the machinist who led the Catholic unions in Hull during the second decade of the 20th century; of Donalda Charron, who led the 1924 strike by women match workers in Hull, the first strike by women in Quebec. Thus, this study describes the bottom of Hull society, but also the militant minority that attempted to give form to the effort by workers to improve their lives. This effort sometimes clashed with the interests of other classes, especially the bourgeoisie and *petite-bourgeoisie*; thus this book also describes the relationship of workers with other classes, and necessarily, how the other classes also developed in Hull.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Cross, *The Workingmen in the Nineteenth Century*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 1.



## HISTORIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

This study is an attempt at local history. Nonetheless, the history of Hull workers and their culture is also relevant, owing to its similarities, with the history of workers in Ottawa and the Ottawa Valley, and in Quebec and Canada, more generally. Sometimes local history displays a certain nostalgia for the 'good old days'. We should have no illusions. Workers in Hull and elsewhere in Canada lived difficult lives in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Survival was not at all assured to a child born to a working class family. Nevertheless, survive, workers did, and we give them their due for the culture that allowed them to survive and grow.

The scientific value of local history would be lessened were it not placed in the larger context -- economic, social, political -- in which people chose to come to Hull and make their lives here. Without this context, the explanatory value of local history is diminished. Thus, theory is needed, as is some understanding of the overall socio-economic development of Canada. These, along with the historical antecedents of the workers who came to Hull, are the subjects of Part I and of the Annex. Part II describes the social and economic development of Hull and of its work force, while Part III describes the working class culture of Hull.

We hope this book will be of interest to historians of various specializations, as well as to social scientists, trade unionists, politicians and political activists but also to workers who want to know more about their history. It is hoped that the writing contained herein is accessible, and that the book stands on its own. The reader shouldn't require a lot of prior, specialized knowledge but only broad culture in order to benefit from this book. Part I and the Annex might be familiar ground to the professional historian, but they provide valuable context to the layperson who wants to understand the history of Hull workers. We hope that all will see that working class consciousness is not a bizarre, marginal phenomenon, but one that has a long, noble, and central role in history, and in the history of one town in particular: Hull, Quebec. It will continue to be essential for the social progress of the majority of the population in Hull and elsewhere.

At various points in the book, I have listed names of workers where germane, deliberately to highlight them and to name normally, unnamed people. Readers from this region may learn about their worker-ancestors should they discover or uncover information herein about their relatives. Finally, the names of the streets in Hull have changed several times over the years; I have used the modern appellations to limit confusion.

MM

## **PART 1 – CONTEXT**

### **CHAPTER 1 – A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter theorizes about the working class; more specifically, what it was during the period covered in this book, 1800 to 1929. The Gage Canadian Dictionary defines theory as “an explanation that has been tested and confirmed as a general principle explaining a large number of related facts, occurrences, or other phenomena.”<sup>2</sup> A theory of the working class permits us to propose an explanation for a certain group of facts, (in this case, related to the workers of Hull), admittedly unproved, but accepted for the time being as highly probable, and therefore, as an experimental guide;<sup>3</sup> in other words, an hypothesis. Once an hypothesis is provided, the writer then marshals facts and arguments in order to prove the validity of the explanation contained in the hypothesis. The reader then can then judge the utility and veracity of the hypothesis, in other words, its scientific value. A successful proving of the hypothesis contributes to the overall understanding of the phenomenon being studied, in this case, the theory and history of the working class.

#### **Definition of the Working Class**

A theoretical discussion requires a definition of the term ‘working class’ and its French-language equivalent, ‘classe ouvriere’. At one and the same time, the term ‘working class’ can be charged with meaning, symbolism, and political weight, or can be unclear and vague. Is the term ‘working class’ an *a priori* condition for a discussion of marxism, socialism, or other politics? Does the term ‘working class’ invite comparisons with other, unclear terms: the ‘poor’, ‘working people’, ‘common people’, ‘ordinary Canadians’, or even ‘middle class’, whatsoever these terms might mean? Is the term ‘working class’ a cultural appellation, or an objective socio-economic reality, or a subjective perception?

A definition of the term ‘working class’ is necessary if the utility of an hypothesis, and the scientific value of a work is to be judged. A good definition is also needed owing to the nature of historical research and writing. History is a story written by an author, always incomplete, imperfect, controversial. There is never an official and fully accurate rendering of historical events. Furthermore, with time, the meaning of past events changes. At the same time, history is potentially the most scientific of the social disciplines because it deals with events that actually took place which do require explanation. For example, in Hull, in 1891, mill workers at the Chaudière lumber mills did wage a long, arduous strike with a spontaneous, seemingly unorganized beginning. In 1924, women match workers in Hull did strike for weeks against E.B. Eddy. The explanation of how events such as these actually occurred, as well as their causes, if sufficiently cogent, well-argued, proven, and situated within theory, can be a contribution to scientific knowledge. The starting point is a definition of the term ‘working class’ that is comprehensible and useful as a premise for an hypothesis.

In our definition, ‘working class’ refers to a relationship between those who buy and those who sell labour. The former are capitalists, the latter are workers. The relationship between these two groups is a class relationship. If one earns a living outside this relationship,

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<sup>2</sup> Gage Canadian Dictionary, Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Company, 1983, p. 1166.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1166.

as did the traditional French Canadian *petite-bourgeoisie* of clergy, lawyers, doctors, and notaries, then one is not part of a working class relationship. 'Working class' refers to a relationship based upon the fundamental reality of the relations of production. Class consciousness is the awareness of this relationship by those experiencing it. The experience of this relationship manifests itself in culture, or traditions, values, ideas, behaviours, attitudes, politics, institutions, and organizations. Working class consciousness, therefore, is this culture of workers. In these of definitions, we are following in the footsteps of two British scholars, E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, of whom more is said later.<sup>4</sup>

Several points should now be made. At any point of history, more than one mode of economic production might exist. For example, some people may be independent farmers, others may work and live in a lord-servant relationship, and still others may be in a relationship where labour is bought and sold. Working class refers to those selling their labour; as such, it can be seen that not everyone is part of the working class simply because they do manual labour. In fact, in the latter part of the 20th century, many doing intellectual work in the white collar and pink collar industries (where women workers predominate) would fit our definition of working class. This brings us to the next point, that is, that patterns of the working class and of working class consciousness are continually changing over time. They are dynamic and not static.<sup>5</sup> Class, furthermore, is not stratification, that is, a hierarchical continuum in which individual people can be placed owing to their possession of certain characteristics. Classes refer to distinct entities.<sup>6</sup> With the social and economic development of the 20th century, confusion about the nature of class developed, owing to the growth of managerial, technological, and bureaucratic strata. These strata, however, just make the class relationship less clear; the strata do not eliminate the fundamental relationship of class; whether one buys or sells labour. Some of these managers and bureaucrats, owing to their functions, can be assimilated to the capitalist class, that is, the class that buys labour. Some others can be classed as similar to the traditional *petite-bourgeoisie*. Still others, for example, low-ranking public servants, might fit into the category of sellers of labour. In the context of the period covered in this book, it is important to recognize that the number of managers and bureaucrats was indeed small, and could be easily assimilated to the capitalist class.<sup>5</sup> For example, the plant manager of the E. B. Eddy Company was safely in the same camp as Mr. Eddy.

The question of stratification versus class leads to a related question. Are the workers who don't perceive themselves to be part of the working class but rather middle class or some other appellation still part of the working class? Several points need to be made here. One pertains to the North American myth of social fluidity in which people and generations move up and down the social ladder, according to their achievements, education, status. This myth might lead to question whether class indeed exists. Discussion of this at the beginning of the 21st century would be complicated, however, in the 19th century and the early 20th century, class was a rigid reality, both to those in the ruling classes, and to those who were ruled. The former referred to the latter as the 'lower orders', the 'mechanics', the 'workingmen'. Class was a stark reality in the period covered by this book. Secondly, much American social science on this

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<sup>4</sup> E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1963; and Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780 – 1950*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1960.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Katz, Michael Doucet and Mark Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982; pg. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Gregory Kealey, *Workers and Canadian History*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985, p. 104.

subject has relied on the social survey, wherein respondents rank their own place in society. The survey assumes that one's perception defines the reality of a person's life. Thirdly, many analyses and perceptions of a person's place in society are actually based upon consumption rather than production. With the growth of mass consumption, advertising, marketing, and media, which began in earnest in the 1920's, analyzing consumption patterns has become a tricky proposition for studying class. In its most extreme manifestation, a certain style of consumption – guzzling beer, listening to country music, watching hockey, holding right-wing social views -- is viewed as being synonymous with the working class. This is a caricature, almost racist-like, and quite trivial. On the other hand, the use of the term 'working class' is not necessarily a pre-condition for a socialist discussion. In the context of this book, it will be seen that the working class culture that workers developed in Hull had little to do directly with socialism. Thus, class – in itself, as historians call it, does have an existence; people can be part of the working class, even if they or other parts of society perceive otherwise.

### Emergence of the Working Class

In the last three or four decades, the study of history has been broadened greatly by the development of social history, the attempt to understand how past societies, functioned. This means understanding not merely the politics and wars of past societies but also the way the majority of people lived, perceived the world and negotiated with it. The results -- women's history, the history of children, work, culture, medicine, sexuality and reproduction -- have all contributed to a more complete knowledge of past societies and, by extension, of our own society. Among the fields of endeavour in social history has been the field of labour history, which has been broadened in recent times to become working class history. Broader than the history of unions, it incorporates the whole range of activities that go to make up the culture of the working class: cooperatives, political parties, municipal politics, church, recreation, and other activities.

Prior to recent social history, the view was that the working class emerged with the development of industrial capitalism in the 19th century. People came in from the countryside, where they often had been dispossessed, to urban factories where steam power was being applied. Living in abominable conditions, the city was the crucible in which a working class emerged. After generations of struggle, overcoming ample resistance by capitalists and the state, workers were able to effect basic improvement to their incomes, health, living conditions, housing, education, and welfare. The chief tool for this social progress was the union. At least, this seemed to be the pattern in England, the most advanced industrial country in the 19th century. In fact, the reality was more complicated. The first unions, "the earliest durable combinations of wage-earners in England precede the factory system by a whole century, and occur in trades carried on exclusively by hand labour"<sup>7</sup>, rather than in mechanized factories. Workers had organizations defending their interests in an England that was primarily rural prior to the development of industrial capitalism in the 19th century. Thus, activism by workers seemed to pre-date the industrial revolution, hence, understanding workers involved more than understanding the development of industrial capitalism and the horrendous conditions it created.

Some reflection is in order here. Work has always been done; therefore, there were always people who might be called workers. When humankind started farming about ten thousand years ago, there emerged a surplus of production. This meant that not all had to work

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<sup>7</sup> Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920, p. 26.

for their subsistence, as had been the case in primitive hunting and culling cultures. A minority emerged that benefited from the surplus that was produced by the majority of the population. This minority at various times in the evolution of human societies has included armed men, priests, the wealthy, nobility, landowners, kings, bishops, merchants, and capitalists. Nevertheless, the work associated with production has always been done by the majority of humankind. This pre-dates by centuries the period covered in our book in Hull, Quebec, 1800-1929. In fact, this also precedes New France, the New World, and the development of industrial capitalism in 19th century England, or in Canada between the 1840's and 1870's when industrial capitalism emerged here. Work has always been done by the majority; a minority has always benefited from the surplus value of the work done by the majority. It might be logical to suppose that, at times, the majority accepted the position of the minority, but that at other times, the majority was forced to accept the dominance of the minority by conquest or other means. At the same time, it is also reasonable to presume that, at various times, the majority rejected the claims of the minority, and attempted to impose its own will on the ruling minority. Not only is it reasonable; we know it happened. We know through documented history and sometimes via legends of such rebellions, revolts, and revolutions. We know about Greek tyrants who fought for the interests of the common people against the oligarchy of wealthy families that dominated Athens; of the Gracchi brothers who advocated agrarian reforms against the interests of the Roman patrician class; of Spartacus, who led a revolt of Roman gladiator slaves; of Wat Tyler, who led English peasants and workers in revolt. These legends and heroes persist in Western culture. There is, if you will, a subterranean consciousness of class among the majority of the population. Finding evidence of this class consciousness among workers, however, might be difficult because most workers were illiterate until a few generations ago and, therefore, did not write the journals and diaries that historians have used to write the history of politicians, generals, and capitalists. The sources for the evidence of working class culture had to be found by more oblique means; from writings of the ruling class, government reports, newspapers, travel accounts, and other sources. Thus, while industrial capitalism increased the number of people who survived by selling their labour to capitalists, evidence for the culture of workers was murkier. It was the English historian, E.P. Thompson, who broke ground to solve the conundrum. His book, *The Making of the English Working Class*, published in the early 1960's, showed the way for a new understanding of the working class. His thesis was that the working class emerged not only as a result of the development of industrial capitalism, but as a result of its own agency as well. To the old equation observed in the first half of the 19th century in England, steam power and cotton mill = the working class, Thompson added not only the labour union movements, but also the politics espoused by workers.<sup>8</sup> "The making of the working class is a fact of political and cultural, as much as economic, history," Thompson wrote.<sup>9</sup> In fact according to Thompson, the key period for the working class in England was 1780 to 1830, prior to the industrial revolution.<sup>10</sup> The crucible for the formation of the working class was the war of Britain with revolutionary, Napoleonic France, which occasioned a counter-revolution in Britain whereby merchants joined forces with the aristocracy, both frightened by the possibilities of democratic revolution. Thompson wrote the history of the radical revolt in England against this reaction, and found a working class version of radicalism, distinct from the middle class

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<sup>8</sup> E.P. Thompson, *op. cit.* P.191.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 194.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 194.

version.<sup>11</sup> This radicalism included Irish nationalists, the Jacobins (radical republicans), and the chartists, workers who fought for electoral reform including the electoral franchise for working men. Thompson linked these workers' movements to radicals at the end of the 18th century such as William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, and especially, Thomas Paine. Thus, workers' movements in the early part of the 19th century could be conceived as an expression of the liberal revolutions that took place in Europe, the United States, Latin America, and even of the French Revolution. Workers were not just victims of the industrial revolution, but were agents of their own class and class consciousness. Historians could look to all manner of workers' organizations, and not just unions, as reflections of the working class and working class consciousness. It also meant that if the working class pre-dated industrial capitalism and the modern era, then perhaps the roots of the working class extended still further back into time. Finally, it meant that re-interpretation was possible of the various liberal, democratic movements of the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, so that the working class content of these movements became more evident. It was always known that workers and other elements of the common folk were involved in the liberal revolutions led by other classes. Perhaps, workers had a larger role than merely being shock troops for others; perhaps they had a leadership role in the development of democracy.

### Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is that workers in Hull developed a working class culture in order to cope with industrial capitalism and improve their lot in life under capitalism. This was a culture partly based on pre-capitalist traditions among French Canadians, the majority of the workers of Hull, but also upon the nationalist and democratic movements of the nineteenth century in Western society and in Canada. This working class culture included parish activities, municipal political activity and partisan political activity at federal and provincial levels, mutual benefit societies, charities, cooperatives, craft unions, industrial unions, and still other forms of organization. Finally, this culture was not the preserve of men, but centrally included women, as well as children.

### Workers and Capitalism

Since workers have always existed, the potential for class and class consciousness among workers has always existed. In the industrial capitalism that developed in the 19th century, however, the number of people who relied upon selling their labour to survive grew enormously. This process of creating workers and the horrendous conditions to which they were submitted varied from country to country. The Canadian experience is summarized in Chapter 2.

The French historian, Marcel David, describes the exploitation to which capitalism subjects workers.<sup>12</sup> There is the nature of capitalism itself, by which the employer draws his profits from the difference between the use value of labour and the exchange value, or cost of labour. The capitalist seeks to enlarge this difference by increasing his fixed capital, which increases the productivity of the worker and increases the margin of profit for his operations, but also the value of his real estate and factory. Secondly, capitalism reduces workers to objects, a process called reification, by which workers are treated as abstract factors of production whose human needs get in the way of efficient production. Thirdly, there is the process of

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<sup>11</sup> Desmond Morton, "E.P. Thompson dans les arpentés de neige", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, volume 37, no. 2, September, 1983, p. 177.

<sup>12</sup> Marcel David, *Les Travailleurs et le sens de leur histoire*, Paris: Cujas, 1967, p. 39, 40.

marginalization, by which those who don't meet criteria for efficiency are shunted aside, eg. the poor, the sick, the elderly, the disabled.

The work site provided workers with ample experience of the injustice wrought by capitalism in the 19th century, certainly enough to provoke class consciousness by workers. Workers' experience at the work site taught them about poverty, poor health, dangerous conditions, growing distance between master and man, the partiality of the stated ranged against workers, workers becoming parts of a machine. Workers encountered the reality of class elsewhere, as well. Writes American David Montgomery: "Married women caring for their children in bleak, congested neighbourhoods and facing creditors, charity officials and the ominous authority of the clergy were reminded of their class as regularly as were their husbands, daughters, and sons in the factories. Children learned early the differences between their parents' attire, bearing, and patterns of speech and those of the gentlemen and ladies..."<sup>13</sup> Thus, neighborhood, institutions, family life, church life, all contributed to the awareness of workers of their existence as a class.

American Harry Braverman has further analyzed this class-consciousness in terms of how it is expressed.

"Its *absolute expression* is a pervasive and durable attitude on the part of a class toward its position in society. Its *long-term relative expression* is found in the slowly changing traditions, experiences, education, and organization of the class. Its *short-term, relative expression* is a dynamic complex of moods and sentiments affected by circumstances and changing with them, sometimes in periods of stress and conflict, almost from day to day."<sup>14</sup>

These expressions of class consciousness are inter-related and ever-changing. They can go into recession, or can become weak and confused, or manipulated by other classes.<sup>15</sup> They are, however, always there, albeit with an ebb and flow, sometimes growing stronger, other times, growing weaker. There have been marked periods of workers' militancy, followed by periods of disarray and acquiescence to capitalist authority. In Canada, workers were particularly militant in the 1830's, in 1872, in the 1880's, in 1919-1921, 1943-1947, and in the late 1960's and early 1970's.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the progress of workers has not been a story of "progressive ascent from oppression to securely established rights, nor has it offered us a past moment of democratic promise that was irretrievably snuffed out by the consolidation of modern capitalism,"<sup>17</sup> partly owing to this ebb and flow of workers' class consciousness.

### Working Class Culture

To what can we look as signs of working class culture? We refer to the work of the Welsh scholar, Raymond Williams.<sup>18</sup> Williams asked in 1960: "Is not industrialism, by its own momentum, producing a culture that is best described as classless?"<sup>19</sup> The mass culture that

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<sup>13</sup> David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p.1

<sup>14</sup> Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the 20th Century*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974, p. 29, 30.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Kealey, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Montgomery, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Raymond Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 324-332.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 324.

many saw during the 1950's was often interpreted as classlessness. Williams saw this rather as uniformity, resulting from the spread of education and mass popular culture and, not necessarily, the end of class. Indeed, if we flash forward to the beginning of the 21st century, we see that this apparent cultural uniformity has broken down to a welter of competing identities based upon ethnicity, language, sexuality, religion, and other means by which people are identified and described. A common means of organizing consciousness today is even lifestyle, wherein people distinguish themselves by a bewildering variety of choices in music, fashion, recreation, and other categories. At the beginning of the 21st century, the idea of class may seem archaic in the light of these myriad ways of organizing consciousness. More likely, however, these competing identities are reflections of the pervasivity of marketing, advertising, mass media, and communications. In other words, people identify themselves in terms of the image-making to which they constantly are subjected. They advertise this image by means of the tee-shirts or the brand labels of the clothes they wear, or the music to which they listen.

Forty years ago, in the face of seeming cultural uniformity, Williams defined working class culture as much more important than patterns of speech or recreational pursuits. His response at that time is just as important today, whether one is analyzing today's society or writing the history of a society in the 19th century. For Williams, "the crucial distinguishing element . . . since the industrial revolution is not language, not dress, not leisure... The crucial distinction is between alternative ideas of the nature of social relationships."<sup>20</sup> Williams describes two alternative views of social relationships. Firstly, the bourgeois, or individualist idea, in which society is viewed as a "neutral area within which each individual is free to pursue his own development and his own advantage as a natural right... the exertion of social power is thought necessary only in so far as it will protect individuals in this basic right to set their own course,"<sup>21</sup> in effect, the classic liberal view. This view was modified over time by the reforming impulse expressed in the idea of service, which emerged in the Victorian era, particularly among the *petite-bourgeoisie*. Among the achievements of the service ethic has been the occupational or career ladder, by which sons and daughters of the working class have been able to improve their lot through education and economic growth. Against this idea, Williams ranges the working class or collective ideal in its various forms: anarchism, communism, socialism, cooperation, trade unionism. In this idea, society is regarded "neither as neutral nor as protective, but as the positive means for all kinds of development, including individual development....The provision of the means of life will, alike in production and distribution, be collective and mutual. Improvement is sought, not in the opportunity to escape from one's class, or to make a career, but in the general and controlled advance of all."<sup>22</sup> Rather than the middle class ideal of service to the community, the working class ideal is solidarity, based upon mutual gain. For Williams, the cultural achievement of the working class has been social, that is, the collective, democratic institutions of trade unions, cooperatives, and political parties. Thus, working class consciousness has both pushed the creation and development of these institutions, while these institutions have also been the expression of working class consciousness.

Reflecting this consciousness in English-speaking societies before the modern collective institutions of the working class were the friendly societies of workers, organizations that were created to provide mutual benefits to workers in times of illness, death or disability, as well as

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 325.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 325.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 326.



mystical and secret societies such as the freemasons. These were the organizational antecedents of the trade union.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the English historians, the Webbs, added that:

“We see the trade union springing, not from any particular institution, but from every opportunity for the meeting together of wage-earners of the same occupation.”<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the wellsprings for modern working class organizations also included the religious fraternities, sports clubs, pubs, travellers’ associations, and any other grouping of people performing the same work. Eventually, these associations crossed work boundaries to encompass more than one occupation under the pressures of industrial capitalism as it developed in the 19th century and early 20th century. In fact, an amazing variety of organizations were produced by working class leaders in an attempt to weld class consciousness. Writes David Montgomery:

“ Working class activists, and some individuals from other social strata who had linked their aspirations to the workers’ movement, persistently sought to foster a sense of unity and purposiveness among their fellow workers through the spoken and printed word, strikes, meetings, reading circles, military drill, dances, athletic and singing clubs, and co-operative stores, and to promote through those activities widely-shared analyses of society and of paths to the ‘emancipation of labour’. Both ‘history from the bottom up’ and the common fixation on great leaders have obscured the decisive role of those whom twentieth-century syndicalists have called the ‘militant minority’: the men and women who endeavoured to weld their workmates and neighbors into a self-aware and purposeful working class.”<sup>25</sup>

### A Tradition of Mutualism

Prior to the industrialization of the 19th century, the western worker had long displayed a tradition of mutualism, of collective solidarity, by which workers of the same trade or of various trades associated for purposes of social betterment. This goes back to the origins of Western society itself, among the ancient Greeks, who organized burial societies for craftsmen. The funeral society is a continuing leitmotif among Western workers, whose organizations also included social / religious guilds; the craft guild, in its time, an important tool of liberation from conquering lords; the religious brotherhood (*confrérie*); journeymen’s associations; workers’ coalitions; masonic orders; and friendly societies. These organizations were the ancestors to the modern political party, cooperative, and trade union. Sometimes public, open organizations, workers’ groups often had to function in secret, owing to repression by state, church, craft guild masters, or merchant guilds. Workers’ groups provided mutual aid in times of traveling, illness, death, or indigence; defense of workers’ interests; occasions for camaraderie; and venues for religious expression. In fact, the liberation and growth of industry during the Middle Ages owes much to these organizations.

In Canada, there is evidence of workers’ organizations, especially *confréries*, prior to the 19th century. The lumber workers, skilled craftsmen, and farm workers who came to Hull during the 19th century would have shared in the mutualist tradition of Western workers, were

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<sup>23</sup> Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *op. cit.*, p.12.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p.2

they French Canadian, American, English, Scottish, or Irish. For people who were illiterate for the most part, the transmission of trades and related cultures via formal organizations would have been very important.

What of workers' culture, beyond formal organizations, that would have been transmitted informally between generations at the beginning of the 19th century? We treat three subjects that go beyond specific organizations: debates over custom, the culture of violence, and the spread of liberal republicanism among workers at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century.

The work environment in the 18th century was the result of hundreds of years of tradition built up over the Middle Ages, at the same time as these traditions were starting to break down under the growth of liberal ideas, the increased size of the merchant class, and the idea of freedom of commerce. Merchants and officials of the state could use, in their discourse about workers and industry, old tools of repression such as laws against conspiracy by journeymen, and legal requirements that the latter give notice before quitting their employ or completing the work assigned to them. Similarly, there is evidence that workers in the 18th century had recourse to old traditions about living wages, working hours, feast days, and the number of apprentices working for individual masters.<sup>26</sup> The long working hours of the average tradesmen during the Middle Ages (14-16 hours per day) had been mitigated by several factors: the copious occasions that religious and secular feast days, and patron-saint days, provided for rest and revelry; and the limit in daylight hours during winter. These were to disappear during the industrialization of the 19th century with the demands of the machine. In the 18th century, working hours were a subject for public debate, as the Church had tried to do in New France when it tried to end holidays for workers on patron-saint days in 1743. For their part, workers defended their natural rhythm of labour, that is, concentrated, intense periods of work followed by rest, ceremony, and revelry.<sup>27</sup> This position of workers continued well into the 19th century. Using religious traditions and pre-industrial culture, workers tried to resist the imposition of the Protestant work ethic dictated by the needs of the machine.<sup>28</sup>

A second, informal element of workers' culture at the beginning of the 19th century was the tradition of recourse to violence. One should not mistake this. All classes could and did use violence to further their interests when the occasion required. Three points need to be made about the use of violence by workers and other common folk: there was a long tradition of violent revolt and rebellion, proceeding right from the slave rebellions of the ancient world, through the peasant revolts and bourgeois revolts of the feudal world, through the tax revolts of the early, modern era. In its milder forms, such as the shivaree, violence was used to regale the rich and powerful for social or cultural transgressions; owing to the continuing repression of workers' organizations by the state, secrecy could be a common tool; the secret society was a key component of workers' culture, and could be combined with violence.

Violence in workers' culture was important locally, since, as we shall see in later chapters, it was a key part of workers' history in the Ottawa Valley during the 19th century. This violence had roots in the culture of workers. It did not emerge from nowhere. The third area of

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<sup>26</sup> E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common*, London: Merlin Press, 1991; Étienne Martin Saint-Léon, *Histoire des corporations de métier*, Paris: Felix Alcan, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1922, p. 420, 421, 422, 502, 503.

<sup>27</sup> Thompson, *Customs in Common*, *op.cit.*.

<sup>28</sup> See Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976, Chapters 1 and 2.

informal workers' culture at the beginning of the 19th century relates to the dramatic expressions of political violence that occurred during the American and French revolutions, and the other liberal revolutions of the 19th century. Workers were front and centre in these revolutions, as part of the mob, as agitators, as key factions, as soldiers, as supporters of these revolutions, even if usually led by bourgeois and *petits-bourgeois*. In both the French-speaking and the English-speaking worlds, the figure of Tom Paine towers. The self-educated son of a corset-maker who had learned the trade as a youth, Paine and his writings had an immense influence on workers, converting them to the cause of radical republicanism. For Paine, the state, such as it existed at the end of the 18th century, was only the legacy of armed conquest by kings and noblemen hundreds of years earlier. The American and French Revolutions were the occasions for industry and the trades to overcome oppression by the nobility and royalty.

This radical republicanism was supported by artisans who pushed it to the borders of modern socialism and the social legislation of the 20th century. In *The Rights of Man*, Paine argued on behalf of such measures as family allowances, public education, old age pensions, maternity benefits, benefits for newly-wedded couples, funeral benefits for the poor, aid to immigrants and the unemployed, and graduated income tax.<sup>29</sup>

At the very least, the British and American workers who came to Hull and the Ottawa Valley during the 19th century would have been exposed to the influence of Tom Paine and radical republicanism within the working class, even as manifested in the American Revolution. The influence of radical republicanism was also strong among the Irish, whose nationalism in the face of oppression by the English was pushing both Catholics and Protestants in this direction. Finally, during the 1790's in Canada, the French Revolution threw some common people into agitation in support of the aims of the French Revolution. In response, British authorities in Canada implemented the Alien and Sedition Acts, which were also used in Britain to repress English supporters of the French Revolution.<sup>30</sup> Thus, while the Tory ascendancy within Canadian history and culture remained strong, it is also true that, among workers, including those who came to Hull and the Ottawa Valley at the beginning of the 19th century, there also existed a tradition of radical republicanism.

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<sup>29</sup> Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, *op. cit.*, p. 93, 160; Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, The Limited Edition Club, 1961.

<sup>30</sup> Stanley Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, Toronto: Progress Books, 1960, p. 230, 231.

## CHAPTER 2 – CANADA’S DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

### Introduction

Canada in 1929 was very different than the Canada of 1800 to which Philemon Wright immigrated when he established his colony in Hull. In 1929, the country was industrialized and most people lived in towns or cities. They worked for wages or salaries paid by someone else. They were workers and part of a working class, irrespective of their awareness of class. In 1800, indeed for most of the 19th century, most people lived on the farm, or were small, independent producers working in the fur trade or the fishery, often occupying more than one of these functions. The number of workers was small, limited to villages or the few towns that existed: Montreal, Quebec City, Trois-Rivières, as well as Saint John and Halifax, in Nova Scotia, the latter two communities not yet part of Canada.

How this transformation occurred is the subject of this chapter. We deal with the Canadian society of the period prior to the 1840’s. After this period, the autonomous Canadian state emerged during the period from 1840 to the 1870’s. This period coincided with the first industrial revolution. A second industrial revolution occurred in the years from the 1880’s to the 1920’s. We analyze the social changes wrought by these two industrial revolutions, which we also describe. Finally, we describe the response of workers to these changing conditions, a response that employed the tradition of mutualism that workers had displayed throughout the history of Western society. The aim of this chapter is not comprehensiveness in terms of the Canadian history of the period; rather, the aim is to provide a broad understanding that will help situate the history of Hull and its workers.

### Canadian Society Before the 1840’s

According to the Constitutional Act of 1791, which divided the Province of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada, Crown lands in the Canadas were to be granted according to English law and custom, free tenure rather than the French seigneurial system, even though the latter was to continue existing in the St. Lawrence Valley in Lower Canada. The measure helped limit French Canadians to their traditional territory, however, it begged the question of who was going to settle the remaining lands. Americans were moving westward from New England, and large-scale emigration from Britain was not to become a reality for another two generations. It appeared obvious that Upper Canada and some parts of Lower Canada, such as the Eastern Townships and the Ottawa Valley, were going to be settled by Americans. While the Loyalists who had come to the Canadas during the American Revolution were faithful to the Crown, and could be counted on to provide some leavening to their cousins moving to the Canadas, the arrival of a large number of Yankees with their radical, republican ways posed security and political problems for British authorities. The problem was how to regulate the settlement of Crown lands so that the colony would remain loyal and British. Furthermore, England was in the throes of reaction owing to the French Revolution. Republican democracy would have been as distasteful and unthinkable to English authorities as would have been independence for the Canadas.

Thus, administration of land settlement was to prove of capital importance. According to one historian:

“The administration of the land regulations...determined not only the direction and extent of settlement, but also the social and economic development, and to a large extent, conditioned the political and constitutional struggles of the period.”<sup>31</sup>

British policy at the turn of the 19th century was to establish a landed gentry in the Canadas to serve as a ruling class, such as existed in Britain. British authorities were well on their way with the immense holdings of the Catholic Church and the seigneurial system in the St. Lawrence Valley, hence, the favourable inclinations of the British toward these French-Canadian institutions. As well, English-speaking merchants were increasingly buying seigneuries.<sup>32</sup>

The ambivalent view of British authorities towards the arrival of Americans was addressed by the use of the ‘leader-and-associate’ system. This solution had the advantage of having been used to settle much of Maine and Massachusetts with Englishmen, thus it was familiar to New Englanders. In this system, a leader would apply for a land grant, part of which he would assign to associates who supported his application for the grant. The leader then served as the local gentry person. The system allowed authorities to determine the suitability and loyalty to the Crown of the potential leader, who could then do the same with his ‘associates.’

Thus, in 1792, on February 7, a proclamation offering land grants with conditions was circulated in the New England states and in the Canadas. The conditions were as follows:

- settlers had to cultivate and improve the lands;
- the leader had six months to conduct a land survey, the costs of which he was to assume;
- grants to individuals were limited to 200 acres, with an additional 1,000 acres to be offered at the discretion of the governor; this additional 1,000 acres came to be seen as an obligation; in fact, the individual associate would often retrocede this land to the leader of the community;
- timber fit for the Royal Navy, and coal and minerals found in the land grant, were reserved for the Crown;
- a report was to be made of all tracts of land suitable for production of flax or hemp;
- 2/7 of the land granted was reserved for the clergy and the Crown, interspersed so it would increase in value as the surrounding land was developed;
- the leader had to swear loyalty to king and Parliament.<sup>33</sup>

The response to this proclamation was good. In 1792 and 1793, 157 groups were initially promised grants. In actual fact, only 50 received land, the rest not meeting the favour of the governor and officials.<sup>34</sup> A system where land was granted according to the whims of the governor and his officials contained the seeds of corruption. In fact, the system was rife with corruption and was little more than a racket, this for many reasons. Firstly, under the seigneurial system, the landowner held the land in fief; he was required to parcel out his land to anyone who asked. Under the free tenure system, the leader had a say in the further settlement of the land, except for the conditions of the original grant. In actual fact, even these conditions usually weren’t followed, therefore, the leader ending up dictating the pace and extent of development of the settlement. In most grants, there was little settlement, and the land was held, in fact, for

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<sup>31</sup> Norman MacDonald, *Canada, 1763-1841: Immigration and Settlement*, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1939, p. vii of preface.

<sup>32</sup> Gustavus Myers, *History of Canadian Wealth*, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, 1914, p. 64.

<sup>33</sup> MacDonald, *op. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> G.F. McGuigan, “Administration of Land Policy and the Growth of Corporate Economic Organization in Lower Canada, 1791-1809”, *The Canadian Historical Association Annual Report*, 1963, p. 72.

speculation.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, from 1796 to 1809, just 70 people received almost 1.5 million acres of Crown lands. Nicholas Austin alone obtained 62,621 acres in Bolton Township in the Eastern Townships.<sup>36</sup> The concentration of land held for speculation purposes rather than development was enormous. Thirdly, each associate normally received 1,200 acres, immediately transferring 1,000 acres to the leader; in fact, associates often had received small cash payments to lend their names to the land grant application, and did not even occupy the smaller amount of land. There came to be a market in the business of obtaining associates for merchants in Quebec City and Montreal. Stationers even sold blank forms for the transfer of land from associate to leader, forms developed by the Attorney-General.<sup>37</sup> Fourthly, in what was an attempt to establish the Anglican Church as a counterweight to the Catholic Church, 3,000,000 acres were granted to the Anglican Church, mostly in Upper Canada.<sup>38</sup> This had the effect of enraging Methodists and other Protestants who were to settle in Upper Canada, conditioning the nature of Upper Canadian politics for many years. Fifthly, officials from the lands commission lined their pockets with the fees paid for supposedly free lands; in effect, they received bribes from the grantees.

The greatest source of corruption was that the people granting the land, members of Executive Council, the Cabinet that advised the Governor, granted themselves much of the land under the leader-and-associate system. Executive Council was composed of fur trade and other merchants. For example, one of the land grantees was fur merchant Simon McTavish, who received 11,550 acres, this to add to the seigneurie of Terrebonne, the rights to which he had already bought for £25,000. Other merchants who received grants included : William McGillivray, 11,550 acres; Edward Ellice, 29,411 acres; John Richardson, 29,800 acres; Thomas Dunn, 52,000 acres; James McGill, 38,000 acres; John Caldwell, 35,000 acres. Smaller grants went to judges and other officials, while Governor Robert Shore Milnes granted himself 48,061 acres.<sup>39</sup> Executive Council had constituted a lands commission to dispose of the Crown Lands. Each member of this body received 12,000 acres for his selfless service.<sup>40</sup> After 1806, the associate fiction was even dropped from the leader-and-associate system, and land was granted directly to an individual or family.

An Upper Canadian reformer, Robert Thorpe, writing in 1806, described the Canadian ruling class as a “shopkeeper aristocracy”, composed of “Scotch pedlars”, linked in a chain from Halifax to Quebec, Montreal, York, Kingston, Niagara, and Detroit, whose goal was to obtain as much land as possible from the Governor, at whatever fees they chose to pay.<sup>41</sup>

If the British policy toward settlement of the Crown lands was to create a landed oligarchy in the Canadas, it was hugely successful even if its means included fraud and corruption. In Upper Canada, the ruling elite was called the Family Compact; in Lower Canada, it was called the Château Clique, for its propensity to meet at the Château Frontenac, in Quebec City. The activities of this elite, composed of merchants, large landholders, and office-holders, constantly enraged the reformers of Upper Canada and the *Patriotes* of Lower Canada. Ultimately, British lands policy contributed to the rebellions of 1837 /1838.

While land had become an important source of wealth for the elite, it supplemented the latter’s traditional source of wealth, trade. In 1821, the Hudson’s Bay and the Northwest fur

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<sup>35</sup> MacDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>36</sup> Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64, 66, 67.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

trading companies merged, with the export trade centralized through the Hudson Bay. Canadian merchants needed new products to export. There were small exports of wheat and potash, the ashes produced by burning trees, the favourite way farmers used to clear land. Potash was used in Europe to produce lye, among other products. As well, the success of the fur trade allowed merchants to enter financial businesses, for example, the Bank of Montreal, founded in 1817. The new and major staple, however, became the lumber trade.<sup>42</sup> This trade relied to a great extent on the labour of French Canadians, who were becoming available owing to the agricultural crisis that was impoverishing rural communities. Population growth and problems of soil fertility led to a crisis that displaced rural French Canadians.<sup>43</sup> Lumber was to provide them with employment, even if subsistence farming continued to meet basic needs of French Canadian families.

How were workers treated by the ruling merchants and other employers in pre-industrial Canada? In a landmark, doctoral thesis, written in the late 1950's, H. Clare Pentland characterized the relationship of employers to employees in pre-industrial Canada as being based on personal relations.<sup>44</sup> These personal relations were part of a system of status, hierarchies, symbols, privileges, and loyalties between employers and their workers. These personal links were more important than the impersonal wage bargain struck between employer and employee. Why did this system emerge? Labour was scarce and so were jobs; employers had little option but to get along without the threat of dismissal, while workers had few options for paid employ. Non-economic attractions and coercions had to be used to obtain and hold employees.<sup>45</sup> In addition, workers who could farm still had this option, either for subsistence or market-based farming. The work done for merchants also required considerable skill and autonomy, eg. voyageur, raftsman, craftsman. This, and the isolation of many communities, meant that owner and worker were mutually dependent. It also meant that scarce, skilled labour had to be paid year-round, if an employer were to keep employees. Thus, the merchant assumed the overhead costs of the workers, even during winter. Often, in smaller enterprises, boss worked side-by-side with his employees. To maintain the respect of his workers, the boss performed feats of bravado, skill, and strength to demonstrate that it was right that he be in charge. Friendship could also develop between boss and worker. In addition to full-time employment, the employer took responsibility for the welfare of his charges and care in old age, and for festivities, favours, and rewards, in order to win loyal service.<sup>46</sup> Generally, under commercial capitalism, "the regulation of labour relations, as of trade relations, was assumed to be necessary; and the right to a living income was accepted", as had existed in centuries-old English laws.<sup>47</sup> For his part, the worker was interested in earning this living income, and not in accumulating money for its own sake.<sup>48</sup>

Historian Bryan Palmer calls this system paternalism; not necessarily kindly in nature, but one that could be cruel and nasty. The employer acted as the ruler of his community as did

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<sup>42</sup> Albert Faucher, *Histoire économique et unité canadienne*, Montreal: Éditions Fides, 1970, p. 14.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Cross and Gregory Kealey, editors, *Pre-industrial Canada, 1760-1849*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 40.

<sup>44</sup> The thesis was later published. See *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860*, Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1981. See also the master's thesis by Steven Langdon, "The Political Economy of Capitalist Transformation: Central Canada from the 1840's to the 1870's", Carleton University, 1972; and Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1992.

<sup>45</sup> Langdon, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>46</sup> Pentland, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>47</sup> Langdon, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>48</sup> Pentland, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

Philemon Wright in Hull or Archibald McNab, at Arnprior, on the Madawaska River. These rulers believed that authority was constituted in the hands of people who were born to rule, or who had earned the right to rule.<sup>49</sup> This paternalism was also seen in master-apprentice relations. Written agreements required that apprentices observe certain moral codes such as abstaining from gambling or fornication; masters were required to provide food, lodging, clothing, and moral education for their charges.<sup>50</sup>

Whether called paternalism or personal labour relations, the system employed by merchants received a rude awakening with the rebellions of 1837 and 1838. The rebellions had many causes, principally demands for democracy and independence. They echoed developments in Europe and Latin America where liberal revolutions, stoked by nationalism, aimed at the establishment of democracy and independence of smaller countries from imperial countries. In the Canadian rebellions, workers played a disproportionate share, far greater than their proportion in the population. This was especially the case in Upper Canada. Of the 855 radicals arrested in the aftermath of the Upper Canadian revolt, 375 were yeoman (independent farmers), 245 were labourers, 80 were tradesmen such as carpenters and smiths, while only 85 were professionals, merchants, or innkeepers.<sup>51</sup> Among the leaders of the rebellion were tailors, wagon-makers, foundrymen, axemakers, carpenters, and blacksmith Samuel Lount, whom the authorities executed for treason in 1838.<sup>52</sup> The influence of workers was reflected in the political program of the rebels. There were demands for democratic reforms of the type that English working class reformers were demanding. William Lyon MacKenzie promised to prohibit the incorporation of trading and banking companies, and made much of his dependence upon the yeomen and mechanics.<sup>53</sup> While the rebellion was led by the *petite-bourgeoisie* as in many other places in the Western world at this time, workers did play a significant leadership role in Upper Canada.

In Lower Canada, the role of workers was less striking. For example, of 108 rebels tried for high treason, only 13 could be characterized as workers: five blacksmiths, two cobblers, two wagon-makers, one miller, one cabinet-maker, one teacher, and one sailor. Sixty-six farmers were tried, while farmers represented five of the twelve Lower Canadians who were hanged. No workers were hanged.<sup>54</sup> Still, 33 workers were imprisoned in the aftermath of the rebellion, while 15 workers were deported to Australia.<sup>55</sup> While the leadership of the Lower Canadian revolt was more clearly *petit-bourgeois*, workers played a large role as troops in the revolt. The *Fils de la liberté*, an organization led by young *petits-bourgeois*, attracted hundreds of craftsmen and unskilled labourers, including Irishmen under the leadership of Thomas Storrow Brown; in total, about 700 to 800 workers, according to Bryan Palmer.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, there was apparently a tendency to cooperate between the *Patriotes* and two workers' organizations in Montreal during the 1830's, the Montreal Trades Union and the Mechanics' Protective Society.<sup>57</sup> An

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<sup>49</sup> Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73, 74.

<sup>53</sup> Catherine Vance, "1837: Labour and the Democratic Tradition", *The Marxist Quarterly*, no. 12, Winter, 1965, p. 40.

<sup>54</sup> Stanley Ryerson, *Capitalisme et Confédération*, Montréal: Éditions Parti pris, 1972, p. 71.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Lipton, *Histoire du syndicalisme au Canada et au Québec, 1827-1959*, Montreal: Éditions Parti pris, 1976, p. 29, 30.

<sup>56</sup> Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>57</sup> Vance, *op. cit.*, p. 37.



interesting source of support for the radicals was the Working Men's Association of London, England, which held a meeting on the theme of "Democracy or Despotism: Meeting of the Working Men's Association in favour of Canadian Rights". Two thousand people came to this meeting, held in response to the *Coercion Act* of 1837, which gave permission to the British government to employ public monies without the approval of the Canadian assemblies. The address resulting from this meeting was circulated widely in the Canadas.<sup>58</sup>

Without knowing it, both the rebels and the Tory victors among the landholding merchants were signing the death-knell of the pre-rebellion society. Partly as a result of the rebellion, the autonomous, Canadian state emerged over the next 30 or 40 years. The activities of the state created an industrial revolution that transformed Canada from a commercial, capitalist society into an industrial, capitalist society. Yeomen farmers and craftsmen were joined in large numbers at the lower orders of society by semi-skilled and unskilled members of an industrial work force. Landholding merchants united with or became industrialists themselves.

### Development of the Autonomous Canadian State

In a curious, Canadian way, while the rebellions of 1837 and 1838 were defeated, some of their objectives were achieved. The analyses of the rebellions and the surrounding state of affairs, as conducted by governors-general Durham and Sydenham, led to responsible government whereby the ministers of the Crown were made accountable to the Assembly. This represented some concession to the idea of democracy, while it also put the colony on the road to independence, at least for the united Canadas.

The governors-general also dealt with the organization of the state and future economic development. Key to the economic development of the Canadas was an issue that had already received considerable attention from British authorities, immigration from Britain. British thinkers had come to see the colonies as a place to invest capital earned from profits owing to industrialization in Britain, and as a way to get rid of the surplus population that was developing owing to economic change. The colonies represented a safety valve for their capacity to absorb people displaced by the factory and by changes in agriculture.<sup>59</sup>

Large-scale immigration had already begun in the 1820's with the arrival of Protestants from Northern Ireland. In the 1830's began the immigration of Irish Catholics, often on lumber ships returning to Canada that would otherwise have been empty. In appalling conditions, the Irish were subjected to death and illness, including cholera, which killed 6,000 in the summer of 1832. Between 1840 and 1857, almost 35,000 Irish landed each year at Quebec City.<sup>60</sup> At the peak of the immigration during the potato famine between 1855 and 1857, almost 10,000 died of typhus while crossing the Atlantic, while a similar number perished of typhus at Grosse-Île, a quarantine station near Quebec City, or in Canadian hospitals.<sup>61</sup>

From the beginning of the British immigration, there was a problem, as far as the authorities were concerned. Many immigrants simply used the Canadas as a way station to the United States. Those that stayed usually became farmers or other independent producers. Creating a wage-earning labour force in Canada would require other measures if the Canadas were to be an outlet for English capital. Land had to be made more expensive so that it would be

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33, 34, and Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>59</sup> Ryerson, *op. cit.*, p. 26, 27.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>61</sup> The figures for cholera and typhus are from *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1985, p. 587, see entry for *epidemic*.

expensive for arriving immigrants, giving them no choice but to seek paid employ. This was done by the creation of two, large land monopolies, in addition to the concentration of land already created by the leader-and-associate system. These monopolies created an artificial shortage of land and speculation, increasing the price of land, thereby creating a land market. In 1825, John Galt was granted a charter in Upper Canada to form the Canada Company. It purchased about 2.5 million acres for \$295, 000. On March 20, 1834, Galt, along with Edward Ellice, Lower Canada's largest absentee landowner, founded the British American Land Company. This company purchased 343, 995 hectares of Crown land in the Eastern Townships for £120, 000. Both land companies endured until the 1950's.<sup>62</sup>

A key element, nevertheless, continuing to be missing from the equation: there would still be not enough jobs to employ the immigrants. The U.S. would be the end destination for those who couldn't afford to farm or establish themselves in business or a craft. The governors-general perceived a solution which also addressed the colony's under-development. The building of public works, especially canals on the St. Lawrence River system, and smaller local works such as roads, bridges, wharves, and harbours, would provide employment to immigrants as soon as they landed in Canada. Among the public works required were the completion of the Welland Canal, construction of the Chambly Canal, improvements to navigation on the St. Lawrence, and construction of improvements on the Ottawa River. These works also served the needs of the lumber trade, as well as improving transportation of other goods, as well. British authorities suggested they would provide profitable investments for English capital, the need for which was estimated at £1.5 million.<sup>63</sup>

To execute this ambitious program of public works required governments. Upper Canada was over-extended and couldn't borrow any more, however, Lower Canada had a surplus. The solution was to unite the two Canadas in one province.<sup>64</sup> The new government could then borrow English capital to undertake the public works. (Durham also adopted a racist explanation for the rebellion in Lower Canada, thus the new Province of Canada would also be an attempt to submerge French Canadians and make them a minority, with all that this would entail for Canadian politics ever since.) Smaller, local projects would be the endeavours of municipalities, which did not yet exist. Eventually, in 1852, municipal borrowing legislation permitted the execution of these public works by organized municipalities. Most public expenditures in the new Province of Canada went to infrastructure, as seen in the fact that one third of public expenditure went to pay interest on the public debt.<sup>65</sup> The works did succeed, however, in the objective of providing employment to the Irish immigrants.

Public works and capital borrowing implied ministerial responsibility of the government to the assembly. This became the case in 1848, when the Governor-General, Lord Elgin, asked Baldwin and Lafontaine, leaders of the reform element in the Assembly, to form a government. The political climate of the time was also a factor in this decision. In Britain, Liberals held sway. In March and April of 1848, in rapid succession, nationalist liberal revolutions took place in France, Germany, Italy, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. British authorities expressed their agreement with the actions of Elgin and their relief, especially since responsible government was granted just before a revolution in France which, they feared, might have influenced Canadians.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, see entries for each company.

<sup>63</sup> Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 62, see his footnote #68.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>65</sup> Langdon, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

<sup>66</sup> Ryerson, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

The liberal reforms, however, were also accompanied by other measures. As part of a movement for freer trade, British tariff protection for Canadian lumber, which had long served the interests of the lumber industry, was reduced significantly, increasing the difficulty facing Canadian merchants in finding markets. This also coincided with an economic recession. All this combined to displease greatly the Tory business element in Canada. In 1849, businessmen, including representatives from the lumber industry in the Ottawa Valley, signed a manifesto supporting annexation to the United States. Their document suggested that Canada could become a favoured place for American capital investments. In particular, Lower Canada, with abundant and cheap water power and labour, could attract American industry.<sup>67</sup> These were to become familiar themes in Canadian history, nevertheless, the annexation manifesto drew little popular support. The year 1849 was also significant for other reasons. In that year, Lord Elgin signed the Rebellion Losses Bill, a bill similar to legislation already adopted for Upper Canada, which compensated Lower Canadians for damage to their property during the 1837 and 1838 rebellions. The bill became law in April; Tories were outraged. They attacked Elgin, burnt down Parliament in Montreal, and rioted for two days, including attacking the property of reform leaders.

Nevertheless, the anger of the Tory merchants was short-lived. Economic boom times and reciprocity in trade of natural resources with the United States meant that business now had new markets, especially for lumber. Capitalists became interested, as well, by railway construction; all of this meant economic recovery. No sooner had the public works projects of the 1840's been completed, especially improving navigation and building canals, than the new technique of railways blossomed. Railways provided access to ports in the U.S., open year-round as compared to the St. Lawrence. The railway boom also led to an industrial revolution, even though its original objective was transportation for resource extraction and export. The railway boom was actually a fever; it was also, as had been the land granting business early in the century, a racket. Merchants, reliant upon the public purse, promoted and built railways at a breathtaking pace. Businessmen from different towns, with local government monies, competed to establish hinterlands for their respective communities. Among the most important railways were: the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad, promoted by John Poor of Portland, Maine and Alexander Galt, son of John Galt, which joined Montreal and Portland; the Great Western Railway, promoted by Allan MacNab, which joined Niagara Falls and Windsor; and the Grand Trunk, from Montreal to Sarnia. As well, there were numerous, smaller regional roads, including those that linked Toronto with a northern hinterland. In all, compared to the 106 kilometres of track that existed in 1850, 3, 200 existed in 1860.<sup>68</sup> The result was drastic overbuilding, using the seemingly, endless supply of British capital and support from the public purse. There was not enough business for the railways, so they required public support to operate even though their ownership remained private. This, after public support for their construction in the form of charters of incorporation, rights-of-way, land grants, cash grants, and loan and interest guarantees. In fact, by 1909, Quebec had 5, 000 kilometres of track that had been built at a cost of \$104, 430, 000, 60% of which was paid by governments.<sup>69</sup> Municipalities also lent or otherwise provided public monies to support the railway projects with the result that they became over-extended.<sup>70</sup> As with the land grants for a previous generation of businessmen, railway

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 186.

<sup>68</sup> *The Canadian Encyclopedia, op. cit.*, p. 779.

<sup>69</sup> Paul-André Linteau et al., *Histoire du Québec contemporaine, de la Confédération à la crise*, Montreal: Boréal Express, 1979, p. 102.

<sup>70</sup> Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

promoters easily received public resources not because they bribed politicians, but because they *were* the politicians. Allan MacNab, who served as Premier of the Province from 1854 to 1856, is reputed to have said that railways were his politics, which summarizes the politics of the 1850's.

While railways were the principal activity of the Province of Canada, its other activities also contributed to the growth in importance of the state. While the liberal myth speaks of purportedly limited government activities in the 19th century as the society was committed to *laissez-faire*, in fact, citizens increasingly came under state supervision during the 19th century. This is because liberal reforms were of a double-edged sword. For example, while responsible government meant that the executive was answerable to the legislature, in actual practice, the former was also more able to control the latter, especially with the advent of formal political parties.<sup>71</sup> While the democratic vote became increasingly important to public life, democracy was limited by electoral fraud and violence, racial and religious differences, and limitations to the electoral franchise, so that poor and working men, most women, and native people were excluded from the vote. Similarly, the advent of public education was a democratic reform; it also provided, however, a method of inculcating the correct political and social behaviour from workers.<sup>72</sup>

Another important reform involved the organization of land ownership in Lower Canada. Land registration required all land transactions and mortgages to be registered. This ended the Custom of Paris system whereby seigneurs, children, women, and heirs had call upon land, replacing it with priority by order of registration. "Registry . . . gave assurance of absolute title, and increased the security of capital by ensuring to mortgage creditors the immovable property of their debtors."<sup>73</sup>

There were other extensions of state activities. Land tenure in Montreal was changed from the seigneurial system to free tenure by permitting cash commutation of obligations; courthouses, sheriffs, and police were established in rural areas; new definitions were adopted for bankruptcy laws, contract, sale, and other business transactions; the Civil Code was honed in Lower Canada; the legal, notarial, and medical professions were organized; social institutions such as asylums, orphanages, and poor-houses were established; orderly philanthropic societies were established whereby *bourgeoises* and *petites-bourgeoises* held sway.<sup>74</sup> These were all necessary for the advent of industrial society. One of the most important state innovations, one whose impact is still ubiquitous, was legislation permitting the establishment of limited liability, joint-stock ownership of corporations. Whereas previously, incorporation charters were granted only by governments, now businessmen were free to set up corporations where they were freed from the risk of personal bankruptcy, and had access to the capital of the community. The railway companies were the models of these corporations.

There have been traditional debates among historians and political thinkers about the nature of the state in the 19th century, and the differences in the state-business relationship in the U.S. and Canada.<sup>75</sup> The traditional view of the limited, 19th century state is generally accepted, even though evidence would indicate otherwise. It is also conventional wisdom that the state-

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<sup>71</sup> Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, editors, *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-nineteenth Century Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992, p. 8.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> Brian Young, "Positive Law, Positive State" in Greer and Radforth, *Ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>75</sup> See as just one example H. Clare Pentland, "How the Wealth was Won – A Review of Gustavus Myers' *History of Canadian Wealth*", *The Canadian Forum*, September, 1972.

business relationship was such that government intervention was still more permissible in Canada than it was in the U.S.. In fact, the reason for this difference was only practical. American business practice was to get alienated as quickly as possible public resources such as land, contracts, railway assistance, military expenditures. American capitalists used a variety of means to control legislatures and bureaucracies, many of them corrupt, such as bribery. Thus, the state was employed by American capitalists to further their interests as also happened in Canada. The major difference was that bribes were usually superfluous in Canada since capitalist and politician were one and the same.

Ultimately, the identity of business and political interests was to result in Confederation. In 1863, Grand Trunk Railway interests, under the leadership of Alexander Galt, acquired control of the Hudson's Bay Company in London, England. Confederation followed in 1867, the sale of Rupert's Land (the Northwest, the former territory of the Hudson's Bay Company) to Canada in 1869, and construction of the Canadian-Pacific Railway.<sup>76</sup> In 1879, Macdonald's National Policy consecrated existing practices: high tariffs to protect Canadian industry; building a railway, this time across the Northwest; and large-scale immigration. This is not to deny the importance of other issues in this simplified explanation of Confederation. Certainly, political deadlock in the Province of Canada owing to railway corruption and religious and racial tensions, the prospect of American expansion, and British disengagement from the Empire also were factors.<sup>77</sup> Confederation did have, however, an economic basis, one that had been developing for thirty years as the Canadian state grew to reflect and fulfill the interests of its capitalist-politicians.

#### The First Industrial Revolution, 1840's to 1890's

It is no accident that our discussion about the growth of the state in Canada precedes the discussion of the industrial revolution, even though they occurred concurrently. Canada was converted from commercial to industrial capitalism by the activities of the state. The chief activity of the state was building railways and, while it was not its purpose, industrialization was the result.

Owing to industrialization, the production process changed dramatically in Canadian towns and villages between the 1840's and the 1870's. Prior to industrialization, work was done by craftsmen working to order and engaged in one-on-one relations with their customers. Gradually, a system developed where work centralized. Some master craftsmen became merchants supplying ready-made products for retail or wholesale. The lumber industry created large-scale demand for axes and other tools of the lumber trade. Work was divided into individual parcels that were performed individually, rather than by workers producing the whole article. This process was aided by the development of manual machine-tools. There was a decline in the number of craftsmen, whether masters or journeymen, and an increase in the number of labourers. The apprentice system evolved to become one of child labour, where the owner of the establishment owed nothing to the child other than employment. Women also entered factories, especially in the production of clothes, on which they had once worked as part of the rural, autarchic system of production. Workers came less and less to own the tools they used, these now being supplied by the factory owner or the logging camp entrepreneur. Discipline increased in the workplace as workers were subjected to regular schedules, fines,

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<sup>76</sup> Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 24, 28.

<sup>77</sup> See Langdon, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

sanctions, and other measures of the industrial ethic. During the 1860's and 1870's, factories began the process of mechanization using steam power.<sup>78</sup>

While railways did result in industrialization, their original purpose was to move wheat and other goods, especially lumber, more efficiently. The market for these goods included Britain, but increasingly the U.S.. The reciprocity treaty of the 1850's permitted free trade in natural resources between Canada and the U.S.. The latter, as per today, has always had a huge influence on the economic development of Canada. For example, the American Civil War meant that American products, capital, and entrepreneurs were occupied otherwise than with Canada. In their absence, Canadian capitalists were given an impetus to serve the Canadian market with manufactured goods, including consumption goods.<sup>79</sup>

Railways also created industrialization since the materials required to build the railways had to be built. The railways required equipment, engines, cars, and locomotives, which were built in Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, and Saint John, New Brunswick. A Toronto manufacturer of stoves produced the first Canadian-made locomotive in 1853. By the end of the 1850's, 78 of the 449 locomotives in service in Canada were Canadian-made, roughly one-sixth of the stock, with the remainder having been produced in Britain or the U.S..<sup>80</sup> This was a great spur to the metallurgical industry, which began producing for Canadian consumption such products as ploughs, stoves, nails, pipes, and kettles. Thus, a nascent iron industry appeared, so did industries that used the non-metallic minerals of the Canadian Shield such as gypsum, sandstone, marble, and clay used in the manufacturing of glass, pottery, pipes, and bricks.<sup>81</sup>

National markets for consumer products emerged partly because of the railway. Production for consumers included whisky, beer, flour, textiles, tobacco, clothing, and shoes, which were transported around the country via railway. These were light industries, as opposed to heavy industry which requires lots of capital. They were concentrated in Montreal owing to its abundance of cheap French-Canadian and Irish labour.

The railway also had impacts upon the lumber trade. The rails themselves had to be built, a considerable source of demand, but railways were also used to transport lumber to the principal market for sawn lumber, the U.S.. Historically, the forest industry had first produced square timbers, then deals, boards three inches thick, for British use. Sawn lumber for American use was now produced using mechanized sawmills that used steam power. All this mechanization required capital which, in turn, concentrated the lumber industry. In 1851, 1, 618 sawmills in Canada West produced 400 million board feet of lumber. In 1871, nearly the same production, 365 million, was produced by six firms.<sup>82</sup> The railways were the means of moving the lumber from the Canadian Shield, allowing the lumber industry to penetrate further into Canadian territory.

Industrialization made industrial towns of such small towns as Bytown and Hull, while it also turned the former commercial centres of Montreal, Toronto, and Hamilton into industrial centres. In these cities, both heavy industry and light industry produced the goods that in pre-

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 121, 122; as well, see James Thwaites, editor, *Travail et syndicalisme*, Quebec City: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1996, articles by Joanne Burgess, "L'industrie de la chaussure à Montréal, 1840-1870", and Robert Tremblay, "La formation matérielle de la classe ouvrière à Montréal entre 1790 et 1830". These provide a useful description of the transition from independent artisan work, to centralized artisan work, to the mechanized factory.

<sup>79</sup> Langdon, *op. cit.*, p. 85, 86.

<sup>80</sup> Ryerson, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p. 210.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p. 204.

industrial Canada had been produced on the farm or by village craftsmen, or by British and American manufacturers. The cities of Canada thus came to be more closely integrated with rural areas, where the majority of Canadians still lived.<sup>83</sup>

Cities contained an industrial class that obtained public support via activities of industrial associations and accompanying industrialist ideology.<sup>84</sup> Industrialization created an environment where capitalists were able to share the risks of enterprise, especially by the development of the corporation. These capitalists were created by three routes: merchants who moved into industry; small craftsmen who grew from being merchant-craftsmen into industrialists by plowing earnings back into the enterprise; immigrants from Britain or the U.S., who imported techniques and capital to Canada.<sup>85</sup> These industrialists, when joined with the old, commercial capitalists, railway and shipping builders and promoters, and capitalists in financial operations such as banks and insurance, now combined to form a national bourgeoisie.

While the industrial revolution of the period from the 1840's to 1870's created this national bourgeoisie, it also increased the size of the working class. All this industry required workers, whether skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled, and was reflected in numbers of workers, and in the number of strikes and other signs of labour's organization. There emerged a continental labour market where workers moved as easily across the U.S.-Canada border as did capital and capitalists. The result was similar wages for similar jobs across the continent, and similar prices for similar goods. The impersonal wage bargains of industry had replaced the customary and personal relations between boss and worker which had existed in pre-industrial Canada.<sup>86</sup>

### Second Industrial Revolution, 1890's to 1920's

In describing the second industrial revolution, we summarize a process that was long, difficult, and complex. Nevertheless, the second industrial revolution must be understood since it corresponds to the period of greatest economic growth and urbanization of Hull. At the time of Confederation, three-fourths of Canadians still worked in agriculture. Only about 20% worked in secondary industries such as lumber and related production of wooden goods, shipbuilding, agricultural implements, flour, machinery and tools, textiles, clothing, footwear, sugar, salt, breweries, and distilleries.<sup>87</sup> This figure of 20% working in secondary industries provides some perspective about the extent of industrialization and the size of the working class at Confederation. Nevertheless, by the time of the hearings of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour in 1888, industrialization was well-established in Canada's cities. Forty years after the Royal Commission hearings, most Canadians lived in cities where industry was the norm. The transformation, however, was not smooth. In addition to the human dislocation of the transformation, a major depression that lasted from 1873 to 1895 added to the problems of adaptation to industrialization. The initial reaction of capital to this depression was not very subtle: wages were cut, working hours increased, and working conditions worsened. In response, workers organized under the rubric of the Knights of Labour into an industrial unionism that presaged the industrial unionism of the Committee for Industrial Organization during the 1930's. Historians refer to the American labour revolt of 1885 and 1886 as the Great

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<sup>83</sup> Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860*, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

<sup>84</sup> Langdon, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, p. 157-163.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 123, 124, 153.

<sup>87</sup> O.J. Firestone, *Industry and Education*, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1969, p. 21.

Upheaval. Canadian workers' response to the depression and to business's tactics, however, was somewhat ambivalent. Urban workers, for reasons particular to their interests, supported the National Policy of Macdonald; thus, they shared interests with their bosses. In the United States, the depression provoked the era of the robber barons, as the leaders of industry were called, known to historians as the Gilded Age. The response of American capital to the depression was so ugly that it provoked a general radicalization of other elements of American society: labour, under the Knights of Labour particularly; farmers, with a variety of populist movements; and the *petite-bourgeoisie*, with the progressive movements of municipal reform, social reform including Prohibition and electoral reform, among others.

As the 1890's wore on, capital's strategy became more complex than merely attacking workers directly. There was a massive capitalization of blue-collar work, so large and significant that it is labeled a second industrial revolution. With the return of prosperity at the turn of the century, a variety of new industries emerged that spurred growth further. Among these were industries that dramatically changed everyday life such as steel, oil, electrical equipment, aluminum, rubber, chemicals, and automobiles. The era also produced inventions such as the cinema, phonograph, and the radio, as well as household appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators. These were important in creating mass media and mass consumption society. In Canada, the development of hydroelectric power was closely tied to the growth of the pulp and paper industry, in large part, to fill American demand for newsprint. This industry created industrial towns of small villages, for example, in the Outaouais, Masson and Templeton.<sup>88</sup> During the first industrial revolution, the railways encouraged the penetration of industry into the Shield for the production of non-metallic minerals. During the second industrial revolution, the mining and refining of metallic minerals in the Shield, such as gold, nickel, and copper, were developed.

The emergence of new industries was just one important trend in the period. There were others. Industries developed into national oligopolies or monopolies that replaced the previous situation of regional companies competing locally. Mass consumer society emerged, as did mass entertainment provided through the new mass media. This mass entertainment culture competed with the local, popular culture of workers. In fact, the escape provided by mass entertainment may have attenuated dissent from workers. In Canada, the ranks of the working class were augmented by the arrival of immigrants from Europe. Canada experienced increased national integration owing to the growth of the state, both federal and provincial.<sup>89</sup> The country became more integrated between town and country, metropolis and hinterland, and among regions and provinces.

In addition to the capitalist strategy during the second industrial revolution of investing massively in the mechanization of blue-collar work, this was also the era of the consolidation of corporations by mergers, and the emergence of the stock market. American capital extended further into Canada, especially in the new industries in the Shield. Furthermore, capitalists made many changes in the internal organization of companies, among them:

- Taylorism, or scientific management;
- Fordism, or use of the assembly line, as best seen in the automobile industry, in imitation of a trend first started in the meat packing industry;

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<sup>88</sup> Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>89</sup> Firestone, *op. cit.*, p. 16, 17.



- the drive system, under which workers were made to work harder and faster under increasing supervision;<sup>90</sup>
- personnel systems, including measures such as artificial job ladders and wage incentives;<sup>91</sup>
- creation of brand marketing via the mass media to ensure consumer loyalty, towards and by extension, greater acceptance of capitalism by the public.

There were many impacts of these social trends and capitalist strategies upon workers. The engineer replaced the craftsman in industry, with the latter now limited to set-up, maintenance, or repair. With craft control significantly lessened, production work was divided into ever smaller, meaningless parcels of work that made blue-collar work boring. The intellectual control of factory work was removed from blue-collar workers and transferred to white-collar workers.<sup>92</sup> This process of transferring work from blue-collar to white-collar greatly increased the number of office workers, and by extension, the employment of women in offices. Historian Gregory Kealey cites, as one example, Imperial Oil, which employed 11 white-collar workers in Canada in 1898, but over 6,000 by 1919.<sup>93</sup> A further source of increased office work was the growth of the public administration in Canada: from 17,000 employees in 1901, to 77,000 in 1911, to 108,000 in 1931.<sup>94</sup>

Unskilled and semi-skilled workers reacted to the new context by creating a radical, industrial unionism. At the same time, capitalists tried, with some success, to co-opt the more conservative craft unions. Both union movements had to deal with a state that was partial to the interests of capital, both in terms of collective bargaining procedures that were increasingly formalized, legalized, and proscribed, and that was more than willing to use the police and the army to crush dissent by workers.

### Social Changes in Quebec

The features of the second industrial revolution remained in place in a broad sense, even through the depression of the 1930's and World War II, and finally into the post-war prosperity of the 1950's and 1960's. Industrialization brought social changes. Since the industrial workers of Hull were largely French-Canadian Quebeckers, it is be important to focus on social changes that were relevant to Quebec, even though they may have also existed elsewhere. The census of 1891 assessed the labour force of Quebec to be 256, 239 persons, of which only about 11% were salaried workers; roughly 2/3 of salaried employees were servants and other domestics. Only 2.7% of the total labour force was industrial workers. The rest of the labour force was comprised of independent workers such as craftsmen, farmers, and members of the liberal professions. In 1941, the work force in Quebec was 1,217, 200 persons, almost 7 of 10 of which were salaried. Industrial workers represented more than half of the labour force.<sup>95</sup> This change in society was not just quantitative; it was also qualitative. Wrote Pentland about the course of industrialization:

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<sup>90</sup> Gregory Kealey, *Workers and Canadian History*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> An important book about this process was written by Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974.

<sup>93</sup> Kealey, *op. cit.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Esdras Minville, *Visions d'histoire du Canada et du Canada français*, Montreal: Les Presses des Hautes Études commerciales/Fides, 1992, p. 215.

“The [...] Canadian population was required to abandon the sociable, traditional, leisurely ways that had marked the era of staple production, and to adopt a grimmer discipline, to pursue change instead of stability . . .”<sup>96</sup>

The factory and the machine demanded long hours and a regular, daily schedule, as compared to the pre-industrial pattern of periods of intense work in response to specific demands, followed by periods of rest and play. As well, winter had been for many a period of light work owing to reduced daylight, a situation that would change when the factory and machine both permitted and demanded activity twelve months of the year.

This transformation in society occurred bit by bit. Deliberate action caused unexpected effects which, in turn, might entail other changes, again either deliberate or unplanned. As well, the process of capitalization was incremental. The precise mechanisms of social change cannot be described in terms of cause and effect.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, we know that society did change with industrialization since the society of 1930 was very different from that of 1840.

One important change during industrialization was the growth of associations, independent of the state, that defended and promoted the interests of their members. For this purpose, workers drew upon their history of collective organization, a history hundreds of years old. Thus, workers began forming mutual aid societies, starting in the 1850's, as well as co-operatives. With much difficulty, despite repression by the state and capital, they also formed unions, often in secret.<sup>98</sup> Business also had organizations for mutual assistance: business associations, both cross-sector, such as boards of trade, and single-sector; political activity, both as lobbyists and politicians; ideologues of industrialism such as Isaac Buchanan, of Hamilton; and most importantly, the corporation. Through these associations, business promoted and defended its interests whereas businessmen had relied previously on kinfolk. In effect, capitalists *created* themselves as a class, as did workers. Others groups also created associations to further and promote their interests. The *petite-bourgeoisie*, for example, created colleges and professional associations for lawyers, doctors, and notaries. The clergy personally benefited from the organization of the Church, while the Church was also involved in creating associations for the rural way of life, for colonization of new territories, and for supporting farmers, who also had organizations.

These associations sometimes drew the distrust of the state, while the reverse is also true. Associations were situated between the state and the individual. They became essential tools of social existence that were both necessary and a right of members, rather than a privilege granted by the authorities. Operating procedures and internal structures of the associations flowed from their purposes; some became democratic and taught members the processes of democracy.<sup>99</sup> Associations gained legal personalities, where the organization had an existence and power distinct from individual members at any particular time.<sup>100</sup> All this might appear banal to a society which honours the freedom to associate as a fundamental principle enshrined in bills of rights, but it was during industrialization that freedom of association became a socially sanctioned right.

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<sup>96</sup> Pentland, *Labour and Capital* . . . , *op. cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>97</sup> See Kealey, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>98</sup> Jean-Marie Fecteau, “État et associationnisme au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle québécois”, in *Travail et syndicalisme*, edited by James Thwaites, *op. cit.*, p. 143, 144.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146, 147, 153.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Voluntary associations also emerged during industrialization for every imaginable purpose. There were religious societies, literary and scientific societies, mechanics' institutes, whose original purpose was self-education for working men -- they eventually became elite business organizations -- and social reform associations that had an important impact on society and on the polity. Among the first of the social reform organizations were the abolitionist societies, which had fought against slavery. There were also societies for prison reform, for assistance to the poor, for establishing and operating hospitals and other public institutions, for social work, and for temperance. The last of these were often led and supported by businessmen who, in pre-industrial days, had furnished liquor to workers as part of the payment of wages; industrialization now demanded sobriety. The object of attention of these associations was often the poor and workers, even though the latter also had their own organizations devoted to temperance. Besides the good they were doing, these social reform organizations interfered with the lives of workers in the interests of social peace and order.<sup>101</sup> In so doing, they stressed moral values of the individual and the family, rather than the actual social conditions in which the poor and the workers were forced to live and survive. Many of the associations advocating social reform were led by women, and were comprised of middle class or wealthy women. Women were encouraged to do so since social reform was seen as a domain involving the family and home, and was, thus, in women's preserve, while politics and economic activity were seen as domains of men.<sup>102</sup> This was the case both for Catholic women in Quebec who were involved with Church-inspired and operated organizations, or became nuns, and Protestant women, whose organizations were also related to churches.

As for the working class that was being reformed, everyday reality was poverty. In England, industrialization had created the 'dark satanic mills' that were the subject of polemics and a persistent image in literature. This is not an image that strikes us as common to Canadian literature or discourse, so conditions may not have been as bad in Canada as they were during the English industrialization. Nevertheless, Canadians did have to cope with winter, which did create special problems for the poor. Perhaps, a reason for the different, popular image of Canadian industrialization was that many Canadians were rural until the 1920's. Rural life provided cleaner sanitary conditions and less crowding in housing; as well, there were opportunities for revenue and for food production via farming, gardening, hunting, fishing, and trapping. In the country, in-home work, especially by women, ensured the provision of some basic necessities such as clothes. In the city, the poor worker was not so fortunate. Unemployment, illness, death of a breadwinner, on-the-job injuries, all of which were frequent, led to destitution.

Rural or urban, everyday life for the majority of Canadians was grinding. As late as during World War II, the Marsh report for the federal government reported that three-fourths of rural Canadians, and two-thirds of urban Canadians were poor. The work week was long, lasting sometimes seven days. Long gone from the calendar during industrialization were the numerous days of festivities on saint's days including the patron-saints of the various trades which had provided some leavening of work hours lasting from dawn to dusk during pre-industrial times. Prior to industrialization, rich and poor lived in proximity. During industrialization, the pattern of segregated housing was established whereby rich and poor lived in separate neighborhoods, which meant that the wealthy had little direct interest in conditions in poor neighborhoods, except as landlords. In their working class neighborhoods, the poor lived in proximity to family members; often, parents and adult children lived in nearby housing. Of course, workers lived in

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<sup>101</sup> See Greer and Radforth, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6, 7.

the legendary, large French-Canadian families. This family had been large, however, not just for religious reasons, but because it had also produced significant economic benefits, that is, additional hands to work, and security in old age as the old could live with the families of their offspring. Although in urban areas, children were normal parts of the industrial work force, eventually, social reformers and working class militants were able to end the scourge of child labour. As well, with children not working as hard, there was more time for public education, although this was thought to be less important for girls, also needed at home for child care. As a result of public education, literacy among workers gradually increased. School also meant children might remain children longer without having to work as hard, but their entry to adulthood was abrupt. Adolescence for the majority of people did not exist. As young adults in the work force, starting at 13 or 14 years old, children would contribute to the family income. Marriage might come early, and married, adult children who could not set up house nearby to their parents for lack of income might continue to live at home.

The urban, French-Canadian worker's life was spent with family. In fact, survival depended upon the family. Even as families grew smaller, all hands working meant that families could survive on the cheap labour salaries that individuals received. While young, single women worked in factories, stores, or in the service of the wealthy, married women usually did not work outside the home unless it was as a domestic. Inside the home, however, women carried on the domestic industry left from traditional, rural autarchy. Many women also did outwork in the home, producing clothes and other goods for use in factories. During the first generations of urbanization and industrialization, workers continued to have relatives living in the country. These could provide a safety valve if an out-of-work person or family had no option but to return to the country to survive. For those who could arrange it, home ownership could provide security in periods of unemployment or in old age, since houses could be passed on to the next generation who could continue to house aging parents. Neighbourhoods were networks of immediate and extended families, childhood and school friends, and co-workers. The neighborhood was a source of solidarity and support. There were religious and other charities, who received some support from governments, although help was miserly, conditional, and given with a heavy dose of morality. The family was a much more reliable source of assistance in hard times.

In addition to poverty, poor public health was also a reality for the urban working class. Before public health activists cleaned up Canadian cities, urban life was not sanitary. Before municipalities collected garbage, it was simply thrown in the back yard or in gutters in front of houses, where it could wash away, it was hoped, in the rain. Back yards contained outdoor toilets with no septic tank, and there were no public sewage systems. Butcher shops, which were numerous before refrigeration, would simply dump offal in their back yards. Horse droppings on unpaved streets were left untended; useful as hockey pucks when frozen in the winter, they reduced the streets to muck in the rain. All this mixed with the smell of firewood burning for cooking stoves and heat; firewood was the commonest of fuels. In the humid, summer heat, there must have been an awful stench. Cities were ideal breeding grounds for rats and disease. Drinking water and milk were often contaminated, and were sources of disease. Unsanitary conditions were common to all towns and cities during industrialization. Only in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was urban life in Canada made more healthful.

Workers faced other public health problems, as well. There were industrial pollution, crowding in poor housing, frequent industrial injuries and deaths and, of great importance in lumber towns where wood was piled endlessly, the persistent risk of fire. Among French-Canadians, rates of child mortality were among the highest in the Western world. The winter

added additional dimensions, some positive, others negative, to the problematic of the urban worker. On the positive side, the winter meant that human and animal waste was often frozen, which would have improved conditions somewhat, including odour and air quality, while reducing the potential for disease. On the negative side, in pre-industrial Canada, winter had been a slow period for business and for work, owing to the shorter days and the nature of business in Canada. Winter was time for the business elite to engage in parties and charity balls, sleighing and skating parties. Workers would work not as hard as in other times of year, and would continue to be paid by their merchant bosses. During industrialization, the mechanized factory and hydroelectric power meant that work continued in the factory at a pace similar to the other seasons. Since workers were now laid off in winter where once they had been maintained on staff, there was now a noticeable surplus of labour. Winter unemployment of many meant lower wages at a time when prices for firewood and food increased, as did requirements for clothing. Thus, capitalists were able to keep their factories running in the winter with a greater supply of even cheaper labour, at the same time as they were able to transfer the overhead costs of maintaining workers in the winter to workers themselves, or to the far-from-adequate charities. Nevertheless, in the Ottawa Valley, winter did present opportunities for young, urban men to work in the logging camps, where necessity forced lumber operators to cover workers' overhead costs, including firewood. Loggers thus could stay warm when they weren't working, unlike in the cities where the increased demand and price for firewood meant that workers often lived in cold housing.

Up to the 1880's, the working class of Quebec was composed chiefly of Irish and French Canadians. During the 1880's, French-Canadians began to outnumber the Irish.<sup>103</sup> Both were joined around the turn of the 20th century by immigrants from Europe, mostly Scandinavians, Slavs, and Jews, especially in Montreal. The working class now included skilled workers, craftsmen, and semi-skilled and unskilled labourers, , as well as farm labourers and domestics. These people were joined at the bottom of the social ladder by the independent farmers, poor or middling, anglophone or francophone, a class distinct from workers, however, because they owned their own means of production.

The *petite-bourgeoisie*, for the most part, comprised local merchants and landlords, members of the liberal professions, clergy, and intellectuals including journalists, academics, and artists. They lived in villages, towns, and cities.

Quebec's social structure was completed by the bourgeoisie. The capitalists were urban-dwellers but could be considerable landholders in the countryside, as well. There were some French-Canadians and Irish, especially among the less wealthy capitalists, but the bourgeoisie was chiefly English-speaking, whether of Scottish, English, American, or Canadian origins. The managerial strata could be assimilated safely to this class.

Historian Fernand Harvey writes about the language and ethnic divisions among the classes, of course, between anglophone bosses and francophone workers, but also about language differences within the working class itself.<sup>103</sup> There were proportionately more English-speakers among the skilled workers in the railway industry and in the crafts. In some fields where both language groups were represented, there were parallel structures, including workers' organizations. This was the case among stevedores, printers, and carpenters.<sup>104</sup>

While the agricultural problems in Quebec meant that thousands of French-Canadians moved to cities, there were never enough jobs to absorb all, including in the industrial centre of

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<sup>103</sup> See above-mentioned article by Fernand Harvey, as well as Paul-André Linteau et al., *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>104</sup> Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

Montreal. Beginning in 1840, there was a persistent exodus of francophone Quebeckers to the United States, which was similar to the situation for other Canadians. French-Canadians moved to the high-paying factories of New England, not just as young, single people, but in whole families, extended families, and villages. Nor was this trend limited to farm people; urban workers and loggers also emigrated.<sup>105</sup> In fact, between 1840 and 1930, 900,000 French Canadian Quebeckers moved to the United States. This was accentuated during the last three decades of the 19th century, when one in ten emigrated. At the turn of the 20th century, there were already almost as many French-Canadians living outside Quebec as there were in the province.<sup>106</sup> This occasioned persistent efforts by the *petite-bourgeoisie*, especially the clergy, to keep French Canadians in Canada. This was done by a continuing discourse about the supposed superiority of rural conditions versus urban. This discourse was less than successful, even if it contained an element of truth. More successful was the effort to colonize new, Canadian territory with French-Canadians for the rural life, such as in the Laurentians and Eastern Townships, Western Canada, Northern Ontario, and the Ottawa Valley.

### Canadian Workers and Mutualism

This chapter has described how business people sought opportunity for wealth in the 19th century and during the first three decades of the 20th century. In effect, they *created* themselves as a class by obliging the British policy, with the complicity of British officials, of creating a landed oligarchy by absconding public lands at the beginning of the 19th century; by using the state that emerged after the 1837/38 rebellions to build the canals, railways, and other public works with public monies to move their lumber and other products to market; by the industrial revolution launched by this state activity; and by the second industrial revolution that started owing to the long crisis of capitalism through the depression of 1873-1895.

The domination of business people of Canadian society was no accident; it wasn't natural but resulted from specific historical events and developments, and from the self-conscious efforts of capitalists. In a sense, capitalists tried to improve their position, just as merchants had always done through the long development of Western society, sometimes even using the same methods as workers, united with workers against king and aristocrat, priest and soldier.

We have described somewhat how independent farmers and the *petite-bourgeoisie* conducted themselves with respect to this domination by businessmen, when they accepted it, and when they resisted it, as in 1837/38. We haven't concentrated on these two classes, since our interest lies with workers and how they placed themselves vis-à-vis the social domination of businessmen, how and when they accepted it, and when, how and why workers resisted it. In so doing, workers continued the process of *creating* themselves as a class. In order to do this, long before most workers were literate, long before mass media, consumer and mass culture, workers referred to their culture hundreds of years old. There were several identifiable sources of that culture.

The first of these were the organizations that European craftsmen had created throughout western history to further their interests, that is, funeral societies, guilds, *confréries*, *compagnonnages*, secret societies, and friendly societies. Workers were closer to this history in the 19th century, when crafts were in the process of being supplanted by industrial capitalism, than they are today. The organizations created by workers often resembled ancient forms.

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<sup>105</sup> Ryerson, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>106</sup> Linteau et al., *op. cit.*, p. 41, 44.

A second source of workers' culture was the tradition of radical republicanism, personified in Tom Paine, a propagandist for the American and French revolutions, and for English working class radicalism. One of Paine's key notions was that king and nobility existed as a result of military conquest and little more. Now, the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th, was the time for other classes to overthrow them. This democratic radicalism, known as jacobinism, was pushed to the borders of socialism by Paine and his worker-followers by promotion of social legislation of the type that came to be common in the 20th century.<sup>107</sup> Paine and his ideas would have been known to the American and British craftsmen, and to other common folk who settled in Canada during our period.

Thirdly, workers resuscitated custom left over from the Middle Ages during industrialization such as guild traditions, religious holidays, and supposed unity of master, journeymen and apprentice in their common interests. In so doing, however, workers encountered just as stubborn resistance from employers who referred to Middle Ages concepts such as conspiracy and anti-coalition laws to keep workers in line. Nevertheless, workers' interest was to constantly challenge the infernal rhythm of work that industrial capitalism imposed on them by referring to their customary traditions of work and life in the past.

Fourthly, a tradition of political and other forms of violence, which was not specific to workers, but included them, would have been part of workers' culture. This had a long tradition in myth and legend and historical reality: slave revolts, peasants' revolts, tax revolts, rebellions, revolutions, luddism. Secrecy would often accompany violence. Also included in this tradition were milder forms of violence, such as the shivaree and recreational fighting.

A fifth tradition would be nationalism in all of its methods, whether manifested in violence, politics, or religion. Nationalism was common to all the Europeans who made up Canada in the 19th century: Irish, Ulstermen, French-Canadian, American, Scots, English. While this tradition could be tapped to enflame the passions of racism and division among workers, it could also be used for defense against perceived aggressions by employers.

A sixth source of tradition is ethereal and hard to identify, that is, the myth that inspired workers as contained in songs, poems, folk tales, and mythic personalities such as Robin Hood, or newer personalities related to the industries of the day such as Paul Bunyan in lumber or John Henry in the railways. These mythic personalities would perform tall tales of bravado and strength. Sometimes, real people such as Jos Montferrand, whose publicity machine greatly exceeded his feats, could become objects of folklore. This whole area benefits from study by anthropologists or practitioners of other disciplines, however, there are some references to this area of workers' culture in later chapters.

We now attempt to treat these traditions as they applied to Canadian workers during our period. The first of these deals with the area of violence and illegality. While not specifically limited to workers, the tax revolts that occurred in New France and the revolts against corruption such as occurred in 1728 deserve mention. More specifically related to workers would have been the mutinies on ships or among fur traders. The illegal fur trade conducted by the *coureurs-de-bois* was another example of workers using illegal means to further themselves. The strike itself was considered to be desertion or conspiracy. Bryan Palmer counts about twenty recognizable strikes among Irish canal workers. Often, the canal workers rioted against intolerable conditions such as unpaid wages. Palmer counts over 200 riots before 1850, with one-third involving canal workers.<sup>108</sup> The Irish experience with British rule and the rule of absentee landlords suggested the

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<sup>107</sup> E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 92, 93, 94; Tom Paine, *The Rights of Man*, 1961.

<sup>108</sup> Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 62, 63.

law would never be on their side. The Irish had to take action themselves if they were to receive justice, or so they believed.

Another area of illegality involved the conduct of apprentices. Under the pressure of changes that were forcing the centralizing of craft work, masters gradually provided only cash for the survival of apprentices, thus making the latter a source of cheap labour. There is evidence of many apprentices deserting their masters at the beginning of the 19th century.<sup>109</sup> During this period, colonial authorities passed several measures to increase control of workers, such as extending the power of the courts to discipline unruly workers.<sup>110</sup>

At a less serious level, the shivaree provided occasions for the poor to react to the strictures of authoritarian society. The best way to describe a shivaree is to recall its modern descendant of painting and attaching tin cans to the car of a newly-married couple. In the 19th century, a shivaree was a less frivolous event. It could involve things like tar-and-feathering people who violated local norms. It could be used to censure, for example, men who married women much younger than themselves or abused their families, at the individual level, or as a form of political protest, as occurred in Lower Canada during the 1837/38 rebellion, at the collective level.<sup>111</sup> Of course, the apparent is also true; the shivaree could be an occasion for racial and other forms of intolerance. This was the case for the conflict between Irish Catholics and French-Canadians in the Ottawa Valley, a subject of later, detailed discussion.

A second area of workers' culture in Canada involved the attempt to resuscitate the customs of the past such as the spirit of the craft guild. Journeymen would invite employers to join with them in their associations to defend and further the interests of their trade. Another example involved re-circulating an old form, the *confrérie*. In the 1820's and 1830's, a mini-movement took place in Quebec City of workers establishing active *confréries*.<sup>112</sup> In 1822, shoemakers under the patronage of St-Crispin, coopers under St-Martin, carpenters under Saint Joseph, bakers under Saint Honoré, all formed *confréries*. In 1823, they were joined by ropemakers, masons, and carters, and in 1829, by shipwrights. By 1832, ten Quebec City trades had *confréries*: shipwrights, boatmen, tanners, carters, canoe-builders, wheelwrights, butchers, saddlers, printers, and milk merchants. All these *confréries* held masses on behalf of their members, usually followed by parties. In fact, as had happened often in the Middle Ages, Church authorities tried to repress these *confréries*. In 1838, the parish priest for Notre-Dame de Québec refused the right to masses for *confréries*, writing that:

“. . . they engage in mischief, especially dancing parties in town or in the countryside; . . . days of celebration that appear to begin in piety usually end in disorder and scandal.”<sup>113</sup> The fact that this priest made these comments in 1838 suggests that they might have been related to the turmoil of the rebellion.

Employers used old tools for controlling workers such as conspiracy and desertion laws, therefore, the few local unions that did exist often had to operate clandestinely under cover of another organizational form. Nevertheless, Bryan Palmer has counted about 45 of these organizations by mid-19th century, although many were of an ephemeral nature.<sup>114</sup> Using a

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, p. 55.

<sup>110</sup> An excellent article in this regard is Robert Tremblay, “Un aspect de la consolidation du pouvoir d'état de la bourgeoisie coloniale: la législation anti-ouvrière dans le bas-Canada, 1800-1850”, *Labour/Le Travailleur*, vol. 8, 9, Fall/Spring, 1981, 1982.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.

<sup>112</sup> Marius Barbeau, *La Confrérie de Ste-Anne*, Ottawa: Société royale du Canada, 1945, p. 13 to 16.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15, 16 (Author's adaptation from French to English).

<sup>114</sup> Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 56.



variety of sources, we have attempted to list some of the trade organizations and/or the strikes workers undertook in pre-industrial Canada.<sup>115</sup>

Year	Location	Occupation	Organization/Strike
1657	Quebec City	carpenter-joiners	Confrérie de Ste-Anne groups masters
1669	Montreal	Barber-surgeons	officially-sanctioned guild
1670's	Montreal	shoemakers	confrérie of masters
1676	Quebec City	locksmiths/gun-smiths	confrérie
1741	Quebec City	shipyard workers	strike
1749	Trois-Rivières	iron-workers	strike at St. Maurice Forges
1794	Rainy River	voyageurs	strike
1798	Halifax	shipwrights and building tradesmen	associations
1815	Quebec City	hatters	strike
1816	Halifax	shipwrights	strike
1818	Montreal	carpenters	union
1823	Montreal	tailors	benevolent society
1824	Montreal	cabinet-makers	strike
1824	Montreal	printers	union
1827-1844	Quebec City	printers	union
1830-1835	Montreal	stonecutters, masons, bakers, firemen, tailors	associations
1830	Montreal	shoemakers	union
1833	Montreal	all trades	Mechanics Mutual Protective Association/strike
1834	Montreal	tailors	Montreal Trades Union/strike
1835	Quebec City	shoemakers	union
1837	Montreal	stonecutters	union
1822-1838	Quebec City	many trades	<i>confréries</i>
1840	Quebec City	shipwrights	friendly society leads to

<sup>115</sup> These sources include Barbeau, *op. cit.*, Louis Fournier et al., *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier au Québec: 150 ans de luttes*, Montreal: CSN/CEQ, 1984; Jean Hamelin, editor, *Les travailleurs québécois, 1857-1896*, Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1973; Jean-Pierre Hardy and David-Thierry Ruddell, *Les apprentis-artisans à Québec, 1660-1815*, Quebec City: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1977; Palmer, *op. cit.*; Marcel Rheault, *La médecine en Nouvelle-France*, Sillery: Septentrion, 2004, p.23; Jacques Rouillard, *Histoire du syndicalisme québécois*, Montreal: Boréal, 1989; Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de Montréal*, Tome I, Montreal: Fides, 1970, p.180; Stanley Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, Toronto: Progress Books, 1960; Robert Tremblay, *Du forgeron au machiniste*, Doctoral Thesis, UQAM, August, 1992, P.308; and Catherine Vance, "Early Trade Unionism in Quebec: 1833-34: The Carpenters ' and Joiners' General Strikes in Montreal", *The Marxist Quarterly*, no. 3, Autumn, 1962.

			union and strike
1841	Quebec City	painters	union

The first, early unions were strictly local affairs, often of short duration, but they did sometimes lead to strikes. What were the causes of early strikes in Canada? Poverty, and the risks of starvation and other calamities caused by low wages, payment by truck, by which employees were paid in provisions from company stores rather than in cash, or non-payment for work done, were among the complaints that led to strikes. As industrialization proceeded, workers became increasingly without defense against unemployment, illness, disability, other than what they could themselves organize. In fact, it was the process of industrialization itself that became the object of contestation by workers. E.P. Thompson listed some of workers' complaints about industrialization in England, which might also be applied to Canada:

- rise of the master class without traditional obligations towards employees;
- growing distance between master and worker;
- transparency of exploitation at work through such things as wage-cutting, payment in truck, fining workers for disciplinary problems;
- loss of status and prestige of journeymen;
- division of work into ever-smaller, more boring duties;
- the partiality of the law and the state, controlled by business, against workers;
- long hours of work with little leisure;
- poor social conditions such as bad housing and urban pollution;
- loss of community cohesion other than that organized by workers themselves.

Thompson described industrialization as a form of violence, both in the pursuit of profit with no means of social control as in previous times, and in the separation of work from life by technology.<sup>116</sup> Strikes provided some defence for workers against industrialization. There were landmark strikes, for instance, among canal workers at Lachine in 1843, printers at the Toronto *Globe* newspaper in 1872, sawmill workers at the Chaudière in Ottawa and Hull in 1891, sawmill workers at the Maclaren plant in Buckingham in 1906. Whether successful or not, these strikes provided lessons to workers, and became *causes célèbres*.

Steven Langdon surveyed 92 strikes in Canada West/Ontario in the period of 1845 to 1874, with the greatest number of strikes occurring in 1854, seven, and again in the period from 1870 to 1874, with 23 in 1872 alone. In earlier years, strikes occurred on public works projects or industries undergoing rapid mechanization such as printing, shoemaking, or tailoring. By the 1870's, however, strikes spread to every occupation in all industries.<sup>117</sup> Historian Jean Hamelin and his colleagues did an inventory of strikes in Canada East/Quebec for the period from 1850 to 1896.<sup>118</sup> They found a total of 167 strikes. The greatest number of strikes, 54, occurred among employees in transportation and communications. About one-half of the strikes didn't even require formally constituted unions; they were wildcat strikes. This last point is important when considering the early union initiatives at the local level. The wildcat strike occurred in spite of the difficulties of organizing unions. On public works projects, seasonality made formal

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, p. 446.

<sup>117</sup> Langdon, Master's thesis, *op. cit.*, p. 132 to 135.

<sup>118</sup> Jean Hamelin, Paul Larocque, Jacques Rouillard, *Répertoire des grèves dans la province du Québec au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Montreal: Les Presses de l'École des Hautes Études commerciales, 1970, p. 116 to 129.

organizing difficult, even though it, and the concentration of men, sometimes temporarily, did increase the bargaining power of workers.

Many friendly societies of workers were actually unions in disguise, of which one example was the Ship Labourers' Benevolent Society in Quebec City, formed in 1857, 95% of which was Irish. Judging by its regulations and the negative response it drew from Quebec's Board of Trade, the society was a thinly disguised union.<sup>119</sup> When French Canadians tried to work on the docks at Lauzon, they drew intimidation from Society members. In response, French Canadians formed their own group, the *Union canadienne*. The two groups held armed clashes but, eventually in 1879, a *modus operandi* was developed whereas work was shared between the two groups more or less equally.<sup>120</sup> On some ships, this stricture was even taken literally with Irish loading one side of the ship and French Canadians the other; sometimes, the two groups competed to see who could work fastest.

Many of the small, local unions were descendants of the old craft guilds where workers sought unity with their masters. With mechanization, these unions became more aggressive and began collaborating among various trades. The first tentative signs of grouping beyond the immediate locale began under British influence. In 1851, mechanics formed chapters of the English union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, in several towns. Around 1860, there were also established local chapters of two other English unions, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners and an union representing bricklayers, masons, and plasterers.<sup>121</sup> The American influence began to be felt just as quickly when Montreal foundry workers affiliated with an American union in 1861, and when Hungarian cigar workers who had immigrated from the U.S. to Montreal affiliated with an American union.

While it is true that many friendly societies were actually local unions in disguise, there were friendly societies that were actually workers' mutual aid societies. In fact, some sociologists refer to fraternal organizations, which include both mutual aid societies and secret societies.<sup>122</sup> Mutual aid societies were started by workers in one trade, and could spread to other workers. For instance, the *Société des Artisans canadiens* began among carpenters. Other trades started their own societies; eventually, there were dozens of these societies throughout Quebec, including Hull. They provided benefits in case of illness or disability, and benefits to widows and orphans. They were life insurance and disability insurance schemes. The descendants of some of these organizations continue today as insurance co-operatives or even as capitalist corporations. The Church encouraged these organizations. Clergy themselves had such organizations for their own needs. They also encouraged them at the parish level for workers. Typical life benefits were \$500 or \$1,000, depending upon amount and length of contributions. Nevertheless, many of the insurance plans had short-lived existences since they were not sound in an actuarial sense, and workers were reluctant and often unable to increase their contributions. At the beginning of the century, an American movement began to re-establish these societies on actuarial bases. This movement spread to Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Workers were also members of many secret societies more or less similar to or offshoots of the masons such as Moose, Elks, etc. These organizations provided self-help (*entraide*) among its members. They were storehouses of secret 'knowledge', which could only be imparted according to a progressive hierarchy among its members. Descended from the secret societies of

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<sup>119</sup> Hamelin et Roby, *op. cit.*, p. 309, 310, 311.

<sup>120</sup> Cross, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

<sup>121</sup> Minville, *La législation ouvrière . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>122</sup> Alvin Schmidt, *Fraternal Organizations*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980.

the Middle Ages, they used rituals of initiation, meetings, passwords, and handshakes, all of these useful in organizations composed of illiterate or semi-literate people. The secret societies provided status and prestige in the days before consumption came to be used for status, as well as camaraderie, and even had a mystical, religious quality. In the 1920's in the United States, one estimate holds that 60% of the adult population, men and women combined, were members of fraternal organizations, that is, mutual aid societies or secret societies.<sup>123</sup> The precise extent of such membership in Quebec and Canada is unknown. Secret societies often led to other things. For instance, one of the principal labour assemblies in the 19th century, the Knights of Labour, had originally started as a secret society.

While workers had mutual aid societies for life and disability, fire insurance was out of the reach of ordinary workers. The first fire insurance associations in Canada were organized in the 1830's to serve merchants and farmers. For the latter group, the parish, municipality, or county was often the organizational catalyst for fire insurance associations; in effect, they were forms of local co-operation.

Among rural, French Canadian communities, there had always been *corvées*, or building bees, after disasters or for things such as barn-raising, as well as community mills left over from seigneurial days for things such as butter-making and sawing wood. This tradition of rural co-operation spread to include the transportation of milk to the cheese factory or grain to the local mill.<sup>124</sup> Among workers, there were sputtering starts at consumer and producer co-operatives as part of the Knights of Labour movement in the 1880's, as well as earlier initiatives in the 1860's and 1870's, but the co-ops with the greatest impact on workers were the *caisses populaires*, or credit unions, started at the beginning of the 20th century by Alphonse Desjardins, a former stenographer at the House of Commons. These *caisses* had the aims of stopping the widespread practice of usurious lending to poor workers and farmers since banks didn't serve this market, and spreading of responsible spending, saving, and borrowing among the poor. In his campaign to spread the gospel of the credit union, Desjardins had the support of clergy, who were coming under similar influences from Europe. The *casse populaire* grew from its humble origins in Lévis, Quebec in 1900, to be the world-wide credit union movement of today.

Mutualism among workers had other manifestations. For instance, workers had theatre, choral and dance groups, orchestras and marching bands, and sports associations for young men. One area of community organization undertaken by workers appears curious to contemporary eyes, the voluntary fire department. In towns and cities where everything was made of wood, however, the costs of fire were painfully evident both to individual workers and communities. This was especially so in lumber towns such as Hull. Other cultural and social organizations, while not specifically limited to workers, became a focus of workers' culture. These included parish and municipality, ethnic or national organizations, and local militia. Festivities, parades, and processions of these organizations provided chances for workers to display their importance and level of organization.

We have seen how mechanization encouraged the beginnings of inter-craft co-operation, the first tentative attempt at assembling workers from larger numbers and different occupations beyond the mutual aid societies. Another effort was the affiliation of Canadian unions, such as those grouping shoemakers, printers, and locomotive mechanics, with American or British unions. A most interesting attempt at assembling workers occurred in 1867 in Montreal with the *Grande Association de protection des ouvriers du Canada*, an organization that left a lasting

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 211, 212.

impression upon French-Canadian workers, even if it only lasted a year. The organization was established by Médéric Lanctôt, a nationalist, *Rouge* lawyer and journalist who had gained credibility with workers by representing railway carters in an 1864 strike, and Quebec City shipwrights in an 1867 strike. Lanctôt had travelled in Europe and viewed the social turmoil there as being a result of the organization of the economy in the sole interests of capitalists. Labour and capital had to co-operate for greater social justice for workers. Even with such an ideology, the *Grande Association* supported several strikes in Montreal during the spring and summer of 1867, strikes by carpenters, printers, cabinet-makers, carters, masons, and bakers.<sup>125</sup> The *Grande Association* also made some abortive attempts at organizing producer co-ops, especially among bakers. On June 10, 1867, Lanctôt organized a great procession through the streets of Montreal in support of the various strikers. Eight thousand workers were grouped according to twenty-six occupations, and the marchers were preceded by the *Patriote* flag from the 1837/38 rebellions, demonstration of a link between radical republicanism and the cause of workers. In September, Lanctôt ran for the *Rouges* in the riding of Montreal-East against George-Étienne Cartier. The issue was Confederation, with Lanctôt strongly opposed. Lanctôt narrowly lost, and the *Grande Association* quickly fell apart after the electoral misadventure owing to lack of organizational strength.

Another attempt at assembling workers was the Knights of Saint Crispin, Saint Crispin being the traditional patron-saint of shoemakers. Founded by German workers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1867, the Knights attracted Quebec City shoemakers to their organization in 1869. The Knights emerged during a period of transition between production by artisans and industrial production; they tried to control the effects of technological change rather than resisting them.<sup>126</sup>

At a local level, workers began to assemble in ever-greater bodies. There were local assemblies in Montreal, Quebec City, Hamilton, and particularly, in Toronto, where the Toronto Trades Assembly formed in 1871. The Assembly played a role in the printers' strike of 1872 against the *Globe*, then a Liberal newspaper owned by George Brown, ex-leader of his party. Brown used old English laws against conspiracy to obtain the arrest of the strikers' leaders. Workers were outraged. Tory leader John A. Macdonald pounced on the opportunity to embarrass his opponents. The government passed the Trade Unions Act in 1872, in imitation of British legislation that legalized unions. This obtained support from workers for the Conservative Party. The Canadian Labour Protective Association launched a country-wide attempt to obtain the nine-hour work day, the object of the *Globe* printers' strike. In Montreal, the *Ligue ouvrière* joined the nine-hour cause. Galvanized by these successes, the Toronto Trades Assembly organized a convention in September, 1873 in order to create the Canadian Labour Union. In spite of its name, the organization never got established beyond Ontario. Furthermore, it lasted only five years owing to the onset of the depression that began during the year of its foundation.

Médéric Lanctôt's electoral campaign in 1867 was the start of another new trend, workers running for elected office. In spite of severe property and income qualifications upon the right to vote, which effectively excluded most workers from voting, after the passage of the Trade Unions Act, some militant workers began supporting the Tories. One worker, H.B. Witton, ran in Hamilton for the Tories, while workers also ran as Tory candidates for federal election in London and Brantford.<sup>127</sup> In Ottawa, a printer, Daniel O'Donoghue, won in a provincial by-election in 1874 as an independent candidate. O'Donoghue ran on a program of workers' issues,

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<sup>125</sup> Fournier et al., *op. cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>126</sup> Hamelin, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>127</sup> Langdon, M.A. thesis, *op. cit.*, p. 333, 334.

such as extension of the electoral franchise. He was nominated by the Ottawa Trades Council, the local labour assembly. In 1875, O'Donoghue was re-elected, defeating prominent candidates for the Liberals and Tories. All these, in spite of franchise restrictions for working class men that endured well into the 20th century. Quebec's electoral requirement was finally lowered to about \$10 of monthly revenue in 1912, while Quebec women only received the provincial vote in 1940.<sup>128</sup> After Médéric Lanctôt, Adélarde Gravel, a painter by trade, was the next Quebec worker to run as an independent candidate for the federal election in 1883. In the 1886 provincial election, three Montreal workers ran: a sadler, a stenographer, and a leading labour organizer.<sup>129</sup> In 1888, printer Alphonse-Téléphore Lépine was elected as federal MP for Montreal-East. The next year, a Quebec City bricklayer, Joseph Béland, was elected provincially in Sainte-Marie, a Montreal riding. A first labour party was formed in Montreal at the turn of the century, while the first, tentative socialist parties began forming in Canada in the 1890's. In 1921, small socialist parties combined in a secret meeting in Guelph to form the Communist Party.

Among the purposes of all this electoral and political activity was obtaining legislation favourable to the interests of workers. Workers eventually succeeded in obtaining such legislative measures as laws against child labour, limits to working hours, government inspection of health and safety in factories, ensuring that workers were paid even though companies were in financial difficulty, payment of wages in cash rather than truck, limiting the use of convict labour on public works projects, and extending the electoral franchise. Significant social legislation came only in the second and third decades of the 20th century, however, with workers' compensation acts to protect workers from industrial accidents, seniors' pensions, and municipal welfare assistance.

The greatest assembly of workers in the 19th century occurred in the 1880's under the aegis of the Knights of Labour.<sup>130</sup> The Knights were formed in 1869 by nine Philadelphia men, garment cutters by trade, who had been members of the Garment Cutters' Association of Philadelphia, a mutual aid society founded in 1862. Originally a secret society, its first 'master workman', or president, was Uriah Stephens, a mason. Under the leadership of Terence Powderley, an Irish Catholic mechanical engineer who was mayor of Scranton, Pennsylvania, the Knights formally dropped secrecy in 1881. Under Powderley, first elected in 1879, the organization became a major force in the lives of North American workers. The Knights entered Canada via Hamilton in 1881, and during 1882 in Quebec. At its peak in 1886, there were 9,000 local assemblies with 730,000 members.<sup>131</sup> In Canada, the organization reached a peak of 12,200 members, organized in 168 local assemblies. Around 1892, the Knights began to disappear in English Canada, except for a few assemblies in Ontario, but they continued into the 20th century in Quebec. By 1901, there remained only 24 assemblies, 9 in Montreal, 6 in Quebec City, 6 in Toronto, and one each in Kingston, Hamilton, and Ottawa.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Fournier et al., *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>129</sup> Hamelin, ed. *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>130</sup> Useful sources about the Knights of Labour include: Richard Desrosiers and Denis Héroux, "Les Chevaliers du travail et la montée de l'organisation ouvrière", in Thwaites, editor, *op. cit.*; Fernand Harvey, *Le mouvement ouvrier au Québec*, Montreal: Boréal Express, 1980; Gregory Kealey and Bryan Palmer, *Dreaming of What Might Be*, Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1987; Douglas Kennedy, *The Knights of Labor in Canada*, London: University of Western Ontario, 1956; Émile Levasseur, *The American Workmen*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press; and Bryan Palmer, *Descent into Discourse*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.

<sup>131</sup> Levasseur, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>132</sup> Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

The Knights were instrumental in the creation of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which assembled craft unions, its parallel Canadian organization, the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, both in 1886. 1886 was a momentous year; during which occurred the infamous Haymarket riot of Chicago police against the movement for an eight hour working day. This event, the basis since of May Day celebrations the world over, involved members of the Knights of Labor.<sup>133</sup> In Canada, under the pressure of the Knights, Prime Minister Macdonald appointed the Royal Commission on Relations of Capital and Labour, also in 1886.

The Knights of Labor collapsed in the late 1880's in the U.S., even though they carried on in Canada. The collapse was the result of many factors; among them, the conflict among the Knights who were also members of the AFL over the use of the strike weapon, and what Bryan Palmer calls the 'producer commonwealth' idea, which supposedly united workers, merchants, and industrialists.<sup>134</sup> More importantly, the Knights assembled workers in locally based industries and were surpassed by the development of national monopolies and oligopolies. The transformation in the economy had not been completed, so the Knights were a form of industrial unionism before its time. Only in the depression of the 1930's, under the Committee for Industrial Organization, were unskilled and semi-skilled industrial workers able to organize successfully.<sup>135</sup>

The Knights were an example of unity among workers: among the skilled and the unskilled, among workers of all races and creeds, and between men and women; in fact, the Knights supported equal pay for equal work. The organization had a broad programme supporting labour legislation and reforms, reduction of working hours, land reform, monetary reform, and political action. The Knights were committed to worker education via libraries, adult education, public technical schools, and political and economic discussion. The Knights established about 135 small co-ops for production and consumption at the peak of their influence, albeit many of short existence.<sup>136</sup> The Knights also offered mutual benefit packages such as life insurance.<sup>137</sup> Through the Knights emerged journalists and intellectuals of the labour movement. One of the leading intellectuals of the movement, Canadian T. Phillips Thompson, wrote that "the rights of labor are the rights of Man", a reference to the title of one of Tom Paine's great works.<sup>138</sup>

After the Knights collapsed in the U.S., the organization became almost exclusively Canadian. In 1895, the Montreal district of the Knights separated from what was left of the American body. It continued in Quebec despite the carping and objections of the Church, obsessed as it was with the dangers presented by freemasonry and the somewhat mystical attraction of the Knights to French Canadian workers. The Knights were active in Hull and Ottawa, and elsewhere in the Ottawa Valley. Remnants of the Knights were involved in the 1906 Maclaren strike in Buckingham. Many of the strikers were ex-Knights, and were members of the *Union internationale des ouvriers de Buckingham*, affiliated with the Building Labourers International Protective Association as well as with the local chapter of the *Union St-Joseph du Canada*, a mutual aid society.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> T. Phillips Thompson, *The Politics of Labor*, Toronto: U of T Press, 1975; see page VIII of the contemporary introduction, written by Jay Atherton.

<sup>134</sup> Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>135</sup> Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>136</sup> Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>137</sup> Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 20, 50.

<sup>138</sup> T. Phillips Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>139</sup> Pierre Louis Lapointe, *The City of Buckingham*, Buckingham, Quebec, 1990.

Mystery and ritual in the Knights movement probably attracted a number of Quebec members to the movement, which harkens back to secret societies and other workers' organizations in pre-industrial times. The most important reason for the success of the Knights among French-Canadians, however, probably lies in the nature of Quebec industry, which used unskilled cheap labour.<sup>140</sup> This was one of the strengths of the Knights movement, its attraction to unskilled workers.

The general collapse of the Knights of Labour meant that women and unskilled workers were now unprotected, while craft unions continued to organize and grow. With the collapse, more radical elements of the Knights began to coalesce around a nascent, socialist movement. In Quebec, ex-Knights formed autonomous, Canadian unions and joined with a few English Canadian unions who had split with the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada to form the National Trades and Labour Congress. These 'national' unions eventually formed the basis in Quebec for the *Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada* (CTCC), originally a pan-Canadian movement, the ancestor to the contemporary *Confédération des syndicats nationaux*. At its 1902 convention in Berlin, Ontario (Kitchener), 27 Knights of Labour groups were expelled for not supporting the Congress's stand in favour of remaining part of the American unions. These 1,600 expelled workers included the members of twelve Knights' organizations in Montreal and seven more in Quebec City. These workers joined in the formation of the aforementioned National Trades and Labour Congress, which became the Canadian Federation of Labour in 1908. Meanwhile, however, the first national, Catholic unions began appearing in Quebec. The first was formed in Chicoutimi under the leadership of Father Eugène Lapointe. In 1911, the Jesuits created the *École sociale populaire* to encourage Catholic trade unionism, and to counter the growth of socialism. This organization became virulently anti-communist in the 1930's and 1940's. Nevertheless, the social involvement of the conservative Quebec Church brought it kicking and screaming into the 20th century. In so doing, it followed the 1891 papal encyclical which established the social doctrine of the Church as being supportive of trade unions and the pursuit of social justice for workers, a doctrine that continues today. The Catholic unions established their national organization in 1921 at a convention held in Hull when the CTCC was created. Most of the nationalist, English Canadian unions, grouped under the Canadian Federation of Labour, joined the All-Canadian Labour Congress in 1927. By July, 1902, there were 1,078 local unions in Canada, of which 547 were in Ontario and 151 in Quebec. The largest industrial sector in terms of unionization was transportation, followed by building trades and metals trades.<sup>141</sup> The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, united with the AFL, attained tremendous growth. In 1901, there were nearly 8, 400 members associated in this Congress; in 1921, this number had reached almost 174, 000, the great majority of Canadian unionists. In 1919, during the Winnipeg General Strike, radical elements of the Congress, mostly from Northern Ontario and Western Canada, split from the Congress in order to support the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The *petite-bourgeoisie* in Quebec was frightened out of its wits by the prospect of international socialism. The national, Catholic unions were to be a bulwark against this possibility in French Canada, however, the Catholic unions, by the 1930's, had themselves started to become radical and secularized, and the direct influence of the clergy was replaced by more aggressive elements among workers.

The Knights of Labour left socialist elements among its survivors. Socialism in Canada demonstrated three trends at the beginning of the 20th century: small, labour parties whose

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<sup>140</sup> Hamelin, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 110, 111.

<sup>141</sup> Minville, *La législation ouvrière . . .*, p. 11.



objectives were to be achieved by winning elections; an anarcho-syndicalist trend, especially among less skilled workers and European immigrants, as seen in the One Big Union and the Wobblies, and whose chief weapon was to be the general strike; and the Communists, who were to be the Canadian wing of a movement of international revolution by workers. The latter two coalesced during the depression of the 1930's in the Workers' Unity League of the Communist Party and then the Committee for Industrial Organization.

## **PART II – ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF HULL**

### **CHAPTER 3 – EARLY HULL**

#### **Introduction**

The Ottawa River, the *Grande Rivière*, as the French called it, or the *Kichissippi*, as the Algonquins called it, had long been the site of competition between the Iroquois, whose territory ran south of the river, and their rivals, the Algonquin and their allies, who inhabited north of the River. With the arrival of Europeans, this rivalry intensified owing to the fur trade since the Iroquois were allied with the Dutch and the English in the American colonies, while their rivals to the north were allied with the French of New France. The River was the site of battles between the two, and one can imagine that the Chaudière at Hull, where the water falls dramatically, might also have been the site of battles owing to its strategic position as the division between the upper and lower parts of the River. Owing to the danger presented by the Iroquois south of the River, French fur traders and their native allies took the habit of traveling and portaging on the north side of the River. The Chaudière was the longest and most difficult of the thirty-seven portages between Montreal and the Georgian Bay.<sup>142</sup> The fur trade route went from the St. Lawrence at Montreal, to Lac des Deux-Montagnes, into the Ottawa, the Mattawa River, Lake Nipissing, the French River, and then on to the Georgian Bay, the country of the Hurons. The fur trade posts nearest to Hull were at Buckingham on the Lièvre River, and at Lac Deschênes in Aylmer.<sup>143</sup> The future site of Hull would have been a rest-stop owing to the length of the portage around the Chaudière, which started around the site of the current Museum of Civilization, and ran on the present-day Hotel-de-Ville Street, Promenade du Portage, and Taché Boulevard, and then into Val-Tétrault.

In 1792, the British authorities advertised for potential settlers of Crown lands including the land in the Ottawa Valley, using the leader-and-associate system. Considerable interest was expressed in Hull Township, which included Aylmer, Hull, Chelsea, and the land alongside the eastern side of the Gatineau River, the present-day Pointe-Gatineau, Touraine, and Limbour neighbourhoods. On October 15, 1792, Samuel Wilson was granted Hull Township, but did not conduct the required land survey, judging the area to be too far from civilization; thus, he lost his title in 1794.<sup>144</sup> In 1795, Philemon Wright, from Woburn, Massachusetts, near Boston, tried unsuccessfully to gain title to Hull Township, but he failed owing to lack of influence with British authorities.<sup>145</sup> The next year, a New Yorker named Benjamin Brown tried to gain title with the same results.<sup>146</sup>

Then occurred a series of events that are murky at best, but typical of the shenanigans surrounding the land granting system at the turn of the 19th century. A former Yankee soldier in the American Revolution, Jonathan Fasset of Montreal, previously from Vermont, requested title to Hull Township in March, 1796. In Boston, he met Wright and sold him one-half of the rights to Hull Township as well as Ripon, Grandison and Harrington townships, for \$2,166.66 U.S., or 600£<sup>147</sup>. In the spring of 1797, Wright went to Montreal and learned that he had been defrauded

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<sup>142</sup> Lucien Brault, *Hull, 1800-1950*, Ottawa: Les Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1950, p. 24.

<sup>143</sup> Guillaume Dunn, "*L'Outaouais: histoire d'une rivière*", *Asticou*, no. 5, March, 1970, p. 13.

<sup>144</sup> Brault, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>145</sup> There are many sources for this point, the earliest probably being Léo Rossignol, "Débuts de Hull, 1792-1842", Master's Thesis, University of Ottawa, June, 1940, p. 3.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>147</sup> *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada*, (D.B.C.) essay about Philemon Wright, p.1004, vol. VII.

by Fasset, since the latter never had had title to Hull Township. At least, this was Wright's version of the story. Fasset's story had Wright cheating Fasset, but the latter was in prison in the United States for unpaid debts when he told this story, thus his story was not believed.

Nevertheless, whoever cheated whomever, in April, 1797, Wright petitioned again for the concession to Hull Township. During that summer, Wright visited the Township and other parts of the Valley. The next year, Wright petitioned yet again for Hull, and tried unsuccessfully to hire Massachusetts axemen to clear the forests in Hull, but none would come so far from civilization. In 1799, Wright hired two 'respectable gentlemen' from Massachusetts to serve as witnesses to the fine quality of the land in Hull Township. During October, 1799, these two gentlemen, perhaps awed by the beauty of the Valley at that time of year, corroborated the authenticity of Wright's claims about Hull. In November, Wright published a favourable account of their visit. This apparently was successful since Wright was able to hire 25 axemen to accompany him to Hull, to which Wright must have believed by then that there was some indication of approval from British authorities for his enterprise. In February, 1800, Wright and his expedition started on the over-600 kilometre trek from Massachusetts to settle Hull Township.

### Settling Hull<sup>148</sup>

Thus, in the same period when Scotsmen were settling Argenteuil County around Lachute, and French-Canadians were settling the Petite-Nation Valley, Hull Township was being settled by Americans.<sup>149</sup> The leader of the Hull expedition, Philemon Wright, was born in 1760 of New England stock that dated to the 1640's, when Wright's ancestors settled near Boston. Wright had served two years in the revolutionary army, and left the army at age 17 with the rank of sergeant. The Wrights were large landowners and apparently possessed considerable wealth and prestige.

The expedition left Massachusetts in February, 1800 with five families including 21 children, 25 axemen, fourteen horses, eight oxen, and five sleighs of food and equipment valued at £2,000. The families were not young and unestablished. Wright and his wife, Abigail Wymen, were each 39 years old, and their eldest child, Philemon Jr, was 18. Wright's other children, who were to be important in the years to come in the history of Hull, were Tiberius, 13, Polly, 10, Ruggles, 8, Abigail, 6, and Christopher, 2. Other families included those of 49 year-old Thomas Wright, Philemon's older brother, and his wife, Mary, 41, and their seven children; Abigail Wright's younger sisters, Margery, 31, and Lavina, 29, and their respective husbands, Samuel Choate, 31, and John Allen, 27, with which each family having four children. A fifth family was possibly that of London Oxford, a free negro who had married in Woburn, and would have left Hull some time after 1809. The age of these families is an important indicator of their reasons for settling Hull; as they were farmers, they needed cheap land to establish their children on their own farms since land was becoming expensive in New England, a fact upon which Wright

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<sup>148</sup> Useful sources for the early settlement of Hull include the following: Courtney Bond, *The Ottawa Country*, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968; Brault, *op. cit.*; Cynthia Helen Craigie, "The Influence of the Timber Trade and Philemon Wright on the Social and Economic Development of Hull Township, 1800-1860", Master's Thesis, Carleton University, 1969; Bruce Eliot, "The Famous Township of Hull: Image and Aspirations of a Pioneer Quebec Community", *Histoire sociale/Social History*, vol. 12, no. 24, November, 1979; Francis Latchford, "Philemon Wright and the Settlement of Hull", *Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa*, February, 1921; Léo Rossignol, *op. cit.*; Philemon Wright, "Les origines du canton de Hull d'après Philemon Wright", *Asticou*, no. 5, March, 1970.

<sup>149</sup> Dunn, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

himself insisted when explaining why he came to Canada. Indeed, Wright's move was typical of the reasons for the westward expansion of New Englanders into Canada. Accompanying the families were some settlers: Elijah Allen, probably related to John Allen; Daniel Wyman, probably related to Abigail Wyman, Wright's wife; and Joel Adams, Amos Childs, Solomon Childs, Thomas Hadley, Henry Kindrick, Harvey Parker, and Isaac Stone. The 25 axemen appear to be unnamed in the archival documents, although these nine men were perhaps among the 25 axemen.

Once in Montreal, Wright learned that his title to Hull Township had not yet received formal recognition. Leaving the expedition in Montreal, Wright went to Quebec City, where his lobbying met with success for, in March, 1800, he received a warrant permitting him to conduct a survey of Hull Township. The expedition resumed and continued by road to the end of civilization, at Carillon, on the Ottawa, about 60 kilometres from Montreal. Then followed a difficult trip around the rapids at Grenville through the bush alongside the north side of the River. The next step was up the frozen and snow-covered River since the forest was too dense to continue the voyage on land. The expedition stalled with trepidation at this step since the New Englanders apparently had never travelled on frozen rivers.

Then followed the first of two important encounters with native people from the region, encounters that were typical of the types of contacts that had always occurred between European and native American. A native man, possibly an Algonquin, correctly judging the expedition's predicament, offered to guide the settlers and did so right to Hull, preceding the expedition by testing the River with an axe. Resting each night on the shore, the expedition finally landed on the low, west bank of the Gatineau River, where it meets the Ottawa, near Leamy Lake. There the first clearing of forest began and shelters were established. Then occurred a second contact with the native peoples. Natives from Lac des Deux-Montagnes, where Algonquin and Iroquois were co-existing peacefully, came to the point where Wright's expedition had landed in order to make maple sugar. After ten days of peaceful contact between the two groups, it became apparent to the Indians that Wright's settlement was to be permanent. Concerned, the Indians demanded to know by what right were the Americans cutting the forest that the Indians had always used for sugaring and hunting. Discussions ensued and Wright paid \$30 to the Indians, who accepted it begrudgingly, without satisfaction as to their basic problem; in fact, Wright's settlers and the Indians would live evermore in peace. Wright returned to Montreal and obtained documentation from the Indian agent, John Johnson, to the effect that the Indians at Lac des Deux-Montagnes, unknowingly apparently, had given up their traditional land at Hull in return for gifts.

The original expedition was eventually joined early in the century by other Americans, such as Samuel Benedict and Nathaniel Chamberlain, from Vermont, and by others from American settlements already in the Rideau Valley. In 1801, Wright returned to Massachusetts with his 25 axemen, who then received their wages from Wright. Some returned to settle in Hull with the promise of land to farm.

On January 3, 1806, the patent for the Hull lands was issued to Wright and his associates, relative to less than a quarter of the 82,429 acres in Hull Township<sup>150</sup>. One of the associates listed in the issue of patent for the Hull lands to the leader Wright was Luther Colton, a carpenter from New York. Colton, along with James McConnell, a worker hired by Wright at Quebec, and Edmond Chamberlain, Ephraim Chamberlain, Isaac Remic, and Tiberius Wright were each granted 1, 200 acres by the government as their share of the Wright expedition. Wright's other

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<sup>150</sup> D.B.C., op.cit., p.1004.

associates were Harvey Parker and Philemon Wright, Jr., each of whom received 1,400 acres, and Daniel Wyman, who received 1,000 acres. The associates then retroceded most of their land to the Wrights while keeping small amounts for themselves. The Wrights continued to receive land grants from the Crown. By 1835, Philemon owned 9,814 acres in Hull, while Tiberius owned 2,240 acres; his brother, Ruggles, owned 1,040 acres; and the two brothers owned jointly another 919 acres. Wright also owned 12,925 acres in Onslow Township, 6,358 acres in Templeton, 2,125 acres in Lochaber, and 1,557 acres in Buckingham, for a total of nearly 37,000 acres. While the Wrights were forced to sell some land eventually to clear debts, they also received thereafter more land from the Crown in their role as land agents for settlement of the Outaouais. Their property made the Wrights the 11th largest landowners in Lower Canada.

### A Rural Arcadia

Land! Land! Land! What were the Wrights to do with all this land? The upshot of Philemon Wright's mania for land was that it proved to be the most durable source of wealth of all the Wright enterprises, providing income for Wright descendants into the 1950's. While much of this wealth was based upon the quasi-monopoly role that Wright land played in the development of Hull, it is also true that the Wrights were good farmers. In fact, some of the Wright obsession for land could be explained by the pursuit of the ideal of a self-sufficient, agrarian community of independent farmers, the community to be supported by the businesses and services that the Wrights would provide. This ideal, however, in large measure, gave way to the reality of the community and the Wrights living off the timber trade, in spite of Wright's persistent desire to avoid the uncertainty of the timber business. The role of the Wrights in the timber trade, the land they held, and the fact that most of the local businesses were owned by the Wrights made Hull, from its earliest beginnings, a company town. This reality, plus the fact that the Wrights, as per many 19th century capitalists, were not above illegal methods, combined with the lawless nature of the timber business in the Ottawa Valley, makes early Hull appear similar to the small town in a Hollywood western dominated by one wealthy 'bad guy'.

Nevertheless, there was a real agricultural side to Hull. In fact, in 1800, the original settlers were impressed with its agricultural potential; the frost left the ground earlier in the spring than it did in Massachusetts, perhaps owing to the snow covering, and crops emerged earlier than in Massachusetts, as well.<sup>151</sup> As part of his commitment to the agricultural mission of Hull, in 1802, Wright offered to lend wheat and other seed to those who wanted to start farms, with re-payment to be made when the new farmers would be able. In 1813, Wright sold 3,000 bushels of wheat for use in the Napoleonic War for \$9,000, thus earning a \$7,000 profit. This he invested in barns, sheds, and a distillery, typical of the capital improvements Wright made in agriculture. The Wrights also imported cattle from England as a result of a business trip by Ruggles Wright. By 1820, there were 420 head of cattle in Hull Township.<sup>152</sup> That same year, the Wrights produced almost 36,000 bushels,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of which were potatoes, while in 1823, the Wrights produced nearly 72,000 bushels of grain<sup>153</sup>. As with everything else in Hull, the Wrights were responsible for a large portion of agricultural production. They owned between  $\frac{1}{3}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the oxen, cows, bulls, and boars,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the swine, and all the goats in the Township. At their peak of animal husbandry, the Wrights owned almost 1,200 animals in 1824<sup>154</sup>. The Wrights owned 56%

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<sup>151</sup> Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, p. 352.

<sup>153</sup> *D.B.C., op.cit.*, P.1005

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*, P.1005.

of the cleared land, 56% of the mowing land, 49% of the pasturage, while their yield per acre of crops was better than the other inhabitants of Hull.<sup>155</sup>

The Wrights produced these crops on several farms. By 1823, these included the so-called Gatineau Farm, near Leamy Lake, the site of the original clearing by the Wright expedition in 1800. This farm was used to raise animals and operate a distillery, and was directed by Sarah Wright, the widow of Philemon Jr., who had died in 1821. There was Philemon Sr.'s farm at the Chaudière. The Columbia Farm of 800 acres was located at the junction of the-then Mountain and Chelsea roads, and was operated by Thomas Brigham, who had married Wright's daughter, Abigail. At the site of the current *Collège St-Alexandre* in Limbour, Tiberius Wright established a farm in 1816. By 1823, nearly 800 acres at this farm had been cleared. Philemon Jr. had also established a farm at Lac Deschênes in Aylmer under the supervision of Charles Symmes, a nephew of Wright. As well, there were additional Wright farms along the Aylmer Road, Mountain Road, and on both shores of the Gatineau River. At the end of his life, Philemon Sr. retired to another farm, this time in Onslow Township. In fact, the Wright agricultural community was more developed than other land grants of the time in Lower Canada, many of which were held only for speculation. Hull's renown in Canada, the U.S., and Britain as a fine agricultural community thus was probably deserved.

### Economic Progress

In 1801, Wright began his settlement at the Chaudière, clearing land, constructing buildings, and beginning the construction of a sawmill and a gristmill, completed the following year. Wright experimented with the growing of hemp, a crop much encouraged by British authorities, which was woven into rope. The hemp experiment was revealing of realities that were important in the economic development of Hull. Firstly, Wright could find a significant market for the crop only in Halifax. Secondly, Wright found the price of labour too high for the unskilled labour of harvesting the hemp, a dollar per day at a time when the price of skilled labour, in comparison, was also a dollar a day. Thus, Wright decided to cultivate only enough hemp for his own purposes, and for this, he built a mill. Thirdly, in a foretaste of a consistent theme in the history of Hull, this mill burnt along with two other mills in 1802, costing Wright £1, 000.<sup>156</sup>

In 1802, ten men helped surveyor Theodore Davis survey Hull Township, at a cost to Wright of £800. The 82,429 acres of Hull Township were divided into concessions of 200 acres. Posts were planted and notes taken regarding land quality, types of trees, and possible minerals, part of the conditions for Wright's land grant. In 1803, Wright hired a blacksmith and a miller. 1804 was a busy year. Wright built a foundry in a stone building large enough for four fires and four bellows operated hydraulically. He built shops for a shoemaker, a tailor, and a baker, as well as a tannery for curing leather; all in an effort to create self-sufficiency for Hull by avoiding travelling to Montreal, a source of expensive labour costs. Wright now employed 75 people in his shops and on his farms: mechanics, craftsmen, and farm workers.<sup>157</sup> In 1807, Wright started quarrying limestone in Hull. On May 8, 1808, disaster struck Wright, once again in the form of fire, which burnt his mills, a large quantity of lumber, and most of his wheat. Wright would have then thrown in the towel on Hull, were it not for the encouragement of his sons.<sup>158</sup> Nevertheless,

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*, p. 348.

<sup>156</sup> Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

Wright recovered from these losses. In 1809, Wright, who still lived at the Leamy Lake farm, built a new house at the Chaudière. The site of this house eventually was used for E.B. Eddy's home, which eventually became the Standish Hotel, a site of much of the night life in Hull during and after Prohibition in Ontario. The Standish, in turn, was replaced by the existing *Terrasses de la Chaudière*, used by the federal government. Thus, this site at the Chaudière is an encapsulation in miniscule of the history of Hull.

In 1811, the first small school was built, while the first chapel opened in 1815. In 1819, another tannery was built, as well as a community meeting-hall. In 1818, Ruggles Wright took over administration of affairs at the Chaudière. To house himself, Ruggles built a fine, landmark house on the first rise on the west side of Brewery Creek, on the north side of Taché Boulevard. In 1820, a new gristmill and sawmill were built, the foundry enlarged, repairs made to the shoemaker's shop and the bakery, while shops for a gunsmith and a sadler were also established. The Wrights also began selling potash and limestone via timber train to Montreal. In 1819, Wright started the first boat service on the Ottawa, joining Hull to Grenville at Long-Sault, then the edge of civilization. In 1820, the Wrights built the three-story Hotel Columbia at the corner of St. Jacques Street and Promenade du Portage at a cost of \$10, 000. In 1823, the first St. James Anglican Church was built. In 1826, the Hull Mining Company was founded, with Philemon Wright as one of its owners, along with Thomas MacKay, John Redpath, and Robert Drummond<sup>159</sup>. The company's mine in Ironside was sold in 1854 to a concern from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, which took out 2, 000 tons of iron ore before closing the mine in 1866.

All this economic activity meant that the Wrights were principal employers of labour. In 1817/1818, Wright businesses employed 63, while another 55 worked for Wright's timbering business. The Wrights employed almost 60% of the workers in the Township. In 1820, the Wrights employed 164 men and 11 women, while 80 or so other families only employed 119 men and 23 women.<sup>160</sup> Hull had become a model of self-sufficiency. Its farms provided food, wool, and hides to the lumberjacks and craftsmen, while the latter made the tools, construction materials, and clothes that the farmers needed.

### Wright's Timber Business

From its inception, Wright's timber business was an attempt to address his labour problem. In the winter, the farms and enterprises only required about 25% of the labour required at other times, but had he laid off his workers in the winter, he would not have been able to hire them in the spring, since Hull was so isolated. Thus, as per many employers in pre-industrial Canada, Wright had to adopt a paternalistic attitude. He had to provide paid employment for his workers during the slow season. This surplus labour was put to work chopping and preparing timber for transport to Quebec City, the principal shipping link to Britain. In fact, chopping wood would have been a principal activity anyway during the winter for obvious purposes of firewood, but also because the forest had to be cleared to make farmland.

The other factor that pushed Wright to begin timbering was that, by 1806, he had already expended \$20,000 of capital. He needed a source of exports to provide cash to offset this investment, so that year, Wright took his first shipment of timber, principally oak, to Quebec City. Wright made a daring calculation that he could find a channel in the St. Lawrence on the north side of the Island of Montreal. This he did, but only after several weeks of difficulty. The first timber train was not a sterling success. It took Wright several weeks to find a buyer for his

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<sup>159</sup> *D.B.C., op.cit.*, P.1006

<sup>160</sup> Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

timber at Quebec. The next year, however, Wright managed the expedition more successfully. Thus, the timber business in the Ottawa Valley had begun.

In 1808, Wright started making lumber from his timber, sawing boards and planks at a sawmill in Hull. In December, 1814, Wright collapsed his various enterprises into a family company named P. Wright and Sons. Hull became the principal entrepôt for the Ottawa Valley timber trade, a role that was eventually taken over by Bytown in the 1830's. In the 1820's, the Wrights operated a wharf near the site of the current Alexandra Bridge for their use, and for that of the forestry companies going up the Ottawa. In 1823, the Wrights sent over 300 cargoes of wood to Quebec. In 1829, Ruggles Wright built the first timber slide on the north side of the Chaudière, allowing wood to pass safely beside the falls. This was a technology that Ruggles had discovered while on a business trip to Scandinavia.

Nevertheless, despite these apparent successes, the timber business was a dangerous and risky one, owing to the layout of capital, considerable labour costs, and the boom-or-bust nature of the export trade, too dependent upon business cycles in Great Britain. Wright constantly bemoaned his dependence upon the timber trade, and tried to increase his independence via agriculture, his preferred business, for which he also had significant skills. The Outaouais, however, developed with a profound dependence upon the timber trade. Wright had Waterloo Village built at Pointe-Gatineau for his French-Canadian workers, while the Irish workers lived in Bytown or Aylmer. Timber operators such as Wright developed the technique of operating the company general store from which they supplied their workers in the woods, a captive market, with supplies on credit for large profits, thus recuperating a portion of their labour costs. Settlers coming to Hull Township to work in the timber business, farms, or other enterprises of the Wrights, or even to farm for themselves, became dependent upon the Wrights for employment, seasonal or permanent, as a supplier of goods and services, and as a buyer of the farm produce used to feed the timbering population.

### Population Growth

New arrivals to Hull Township were now attracted more by the timber business than by the original farming objectives of the Wrights. The first settlers to Hull came chiefly from Massachusetts, Vermont, and New York. Indeed, this was the pattern in both Canadas; by 1815, 4 out of 5 English-speakers in the Canadas were American. In the second decade of the 19th century, French-Canadians started coming to Hull from around Montreal as part of the inward expansion. The construction of the Rideau Canal between 1826 and 1832 attracted still more French Canadians, including those who worked on the contracts that the Wrights obtained on the Canal. In the 1830's, the number of French Canadians increased further as Bytown became a favoured destination when it became the principal entrepôt for the timber trade. There was some spillover to Hull Township from the growth of Bytown, especially with the construction of the French-Canadian village at Pointe-Gatineau. By 1850, 10% of Hull Township was French-Canadian.

Beginning in the 1820's, small numbers of Scottish and English immigrants arrived in Hull Township. Ulster Protestants arrived in the 1820s, while Irish Catholics began arriving in the 1830's as part of their massive immigration to the Canadas. Within Hull Township, most Irish Catholics settled in Aylmer.

As for Wright's village at the Chaudière, the Wrights had wanted to maintain the village as a commercial centre for the Township, with few living there other than the Wrights themselves and their craftsmen. In the 1820s, however, the Wrights began renting establishments



at the Chaudière, rather than operating them themselves. By the 1840's, more land in Wright's village at the Chaudière was sold in order to settle debts. Urban Hull was now coming into existence.

The Township was the largest agglomeration in the County of Ottawa, which covered the Quebec side of the river from Buckingham in the east to Eardley in the west, and included Wakefield and Masham to the north. In 1820, before immigrants from Great Britain arrived in great numbers, Hull Township had a population of 707, including 365 men, 113 women, and 229 children. Note the discrepancy in the number of men and women, owing to the male work of the timber trade. In 1824, there were 106 families and 803 persons. During the rest of the 1820s, the population of Hull doubled, owing to the arrival of Ulster Protestants. By 1851, the population of the County of Ottawa was 11,104, of which 2,811 lived in Hull Township. By comparison, Bytown had a population of 7,760 in 1851. By 1861, Ottawa County now had a population of 15,671, of which 3,711 lived in Hull Township.<sup>161</sup> The gradual move to the Township by French Canadians continued over the years, with the French Canadians growing from 10% of the population in 1850, to 50% in 1870, and 90% in 1920.<sup>162</sup>

### Development of the State<sup>163</sup>

From the beginning, the lot of the Wrights was linked inextricably with the development of the state in the Ottawa Valley. One student of the Wrights, Bruce Elliot, spoke of the veterans of the American Revolution who populated early Hull:

“Their dependence upon the administration for the granting and protection of land titles, the provision of school teachers and appointments to offices, and upon Britain for the support of the timber trade through tariffs and favourable regulations, made the former rebel soldiers a part of the system.”<sup>164</sup>

In fact, right from the contact with the Indians from Lac des Deux-Montagnes who had questioned Wright's right to use their traditional land around Leamy Lake, Wright was acting as an agent of the state. While the Wrights served as agents of the state, the state was also used by the Wrights to serve their interests. In this, they were similar to the other wealthy men created in pre-industrial, 19th century Canada. First, in the land racket, then in the use and manipulation of the state, and its offices, then in the state's acquiescence to the mostly illegal timber trade, the interests of the merchant class were made identical to those of the state. The landed merchant class, as British authorities had envisioned, had become a Tory bulwark, and Wright was part of this class.

Once settled in Hull, Wright proceeded to conduct the land survey of Hull Township, as required as part of the leader-and-associate land grant. While Wright performed this service for the state, Wright also was able to increase the value of his land continually by getting the state to build roads and bridges, and by a variety of other manoeuvres. In 1821, Philemon Wright was

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<sup>161</sup> The source for these figures is Courtney Bond, *op. cit.*, p. 17, 22, 23.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

<sup>163</sup> Useful sources for this section include Eliot, Latchford, and Rossignol, all *op. cit.*, as well as Michael Newton, “La Maison Charron: symbole d'une vision contrariée”, *Outaouais – Le Hull disparu*, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur l'Outaouais, 1988; and Luc Villemare, “Histoire institutionnelle de l'Outaouais québécois: la naissance d'une région (1791-1830)”, Master's Thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, June, 1988.

<sup>164</sup> Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

named land agent for colonization of the Outaouais, through which service he was able to increase his land holdings even further.

This last appointment was just one example of the many offices to which the Wrights were appointed. Wright Sr. was named local Captain of the Militia in 1802, which allowed him to build bridges and roads in the Township, as well as giving him judicial authority for maintaining the peace. Wright led the local militia during the War of 1812. In 1822, local militia officers included Captain Tiberius Wright and Lieutenant Ruggles Wright, while Philemon Sr's sons-in-law, Thomas Brigham and James Finlayson Taylor, each held the rank of lieutenant. In 1806, Wright was named justice of the peace, while Ruggles received a similar appointment in 1821. The Wrights were the law in Hull Township, what with their legal and military roles.

The Wrights also used the state to improve internal communications. In 1817, Wright Sr. was named commissioner of internal communications for York County, the name then used for the Quebec side of the Ottawa Valley. A major project was a road from Montreal to Hull following the River. In 1820, Wright had 50 kilometres of roads built in the county, jobs for which Wright himself held contracts. In the 1820's, Ruggles operated the local post office, which was served by the Wright boat that operated between Hull and Grenville.

Through Wright's lobbying, Ottawa County was created, separating it from the rest of York County. The new county's first member of the legislature during the 1830's was none other than Philemon Wright Sr. This served to increase Wright's presence in Quebec City; in fact, so well-known was he within government circles in Quebec City, that one comedian reproduced him on stage in the character of Obadiah Quincy Bunker, from Boston.<sup>165</sup>

In the timber business, Wright, though the first, was no worse than the other timber merchants who followed. The best timber within the land grants was to be reserved for use of the Royal Navy. This requirement was disregarded. Timber was also cut illegally on unalienated Crown lands. The state eventually was forced to legitimize these illegal carryings-on. It started to collect timber fees using the Wright slides, at the Chaudière. Eventually, the state bought Wright's slides. The most important state project in the Ottawa Valley during the early days of Hull, the 1820's and 1830's, was the construction of the Rideau Canal. By several contemporary accounts, the consensus was that the idea for the canal originated with Wright himself. No doubt, Wright's idea was inspired by patriotism, since the canal was to provide military protection in the event of an American invasion. Wright also saw the Chaudière as the terminus for the project, however, which would have greatly increased the value of his village at the Chaudière. In this, Wright got crossed up when Colonel By, probably with the connivance of Governor-General Lord Dalhousie, who owned property surrounding the eventual terminus of the Canal, established Bytown.<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, the Rideau Canal did provide many economic benefits to Wright, who held important construction contracts at Hog's Back, Burritt's Rapids, and Dow's Lake. As well, Wright was given the projects of joining Hull to Bytown hiring 100 men to build the Union Bridge over the Chaudière, and of improving a channel on the south side of the River, at the Chaudière. Wright also supplied the canal project with food, limestone, bricks, iron, and draught animals. Finally, he operated a tavern at the Chaudière that served the canal workers.<sup>167</sup>

There was one other project related to the Canal that was illustrative of an important future trend. Wright leased out land on the current lands of Jacques Cartier Park and the Museum of Civilization for what he hoped would become the lower village in Hull. This would have

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<sup>165</sup> Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

<sup>166</sup> Villemaire, *op. cit.*, p. 77, 78, 133.

<sup>167</sup> Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

housed canal workers, including the many French-Canadian workers that Wright preferred to hire. Wright leased this land following an initial payment and an annual payment divided into quarterly installments. The project, however, was a flop since most French Canadian workers seemed to prefer setting up quarters in Bytown's Lower Town. The few that did move to this lower village could not meet the payments. The Wrights encountered severe financial difficulties, and foreclosed on inhabitants who couldn't make their payments. Wright was able to acquire the improvements the workers had made to his land at low prices, including, for example, the fine stone house now owned by the National Capital Commission in Jacques Cartier Park. Thus, Wright's land was to save his enterprises from bankruptcy. In fact, this system of leasing land rather than selling it, and re-claiming the land with its improvements during economic hard times, became a method that the Wrights used repeatedly over several generations. This rather unusual form of land tenure came to be known by French-Canadian inhabitants of Hull as the *constitut*.<sup>168</sup>

Hardly surprisingly, the small village at the Chaudière eventually bore Wright's name, called Wrightsville during the 1830's, and Wright by the 1850's.<sup>169</sup> The term Wrightville is now used for the neighborhood in Hull that lies between St. Joseph Boulevard and Gatineau Park, and between Laramée Avenue and Montclair Boulevard, which latter two run east-west.

### Civil Society<sup>170</sup>

There were few manifestations of civil society in Hull beyond the organizations of the state and enterprise. The tendency of Americans to join associations had been well-noted by many observers, however, and the mostly American community of Hull was no exception.<sup>171</sup> Thus, even in the midst of a rough-and-tumble pioneer society, the American settlers of Hull began to make attempts at forming organizations, if somewhat sporadic. As for the other principal ethnic groups in early Hull, the French Canadians and the Irish did not demonstrate such a predilection. It would appear that the organizations established by the Hull Americans were mostly elite affairs that did not reach down too far socially. Nevertheless, whatever organized community life existed, the Wrights were always at the centre.

One early manifestation of community organization was the Hull Masonic Lodge, formed in 1813, with Philemon Wright Sr. as its first master, or president. The social event of the year among the upper crust in early Hull was St. John the Evangelist's Day, this apparently being the patron-saint of the Hull masons.

Although schools were first established at the beginning of the second decade, it was only at the end of this decade that more serious attempts were made to establish schools and obtain

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<sup>168</sup> The episode of the lower village is described in considerable detail in Newton, *op. cit.*. 'Constitut' is a term that still exists in the Quebec Civil Code in both English and French. It describes the Wright method of renting land upon which tenants could build houses or buildings for conducting business. The term does not exist in the common law in use in English Canada, nor in the French Napoleonic Code. There is no such term in modern French, at least according to the *Grand Larousse* or the *Grand Robert*. Neither is there such a term in modern, Canadian English, as per the *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. The Oxford (volume III, second edition, P.789) suggests that it is an archaic, English term for the thing being established or appointed, thus a participle made into a noun. All this suggests that 'constitu' is a French transliteration of an archaic, English term, which has been translated once again into English, with a legal meaning specific to Quebec.

<sup>169</sup> Michael Cross, *The Dark Drudicial Groves: The Lumber Community and the Commercial Frontier in British North America, to 1854*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, p. 240.

<sup>170</sup> The principal source for this section is Eliot, *op. cit.*

<sup>171</sup> Craigie, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

teachers. The growth of schools proceeded in fits and starts, and was aimed at the children of the community's leaders. Philemon Wright was also at the centre of these efforts.

As with schools, the development of organized religion proceeded in lurches. In January, 1820, a Moral Society was formed to promote Sunday school, start a library, and obtain a permanent minister. Up to then, Hull had been served somewhat by itinerant preachers in a small chapel built in 1815. The local elite joined the Moral Society which eventually had sixty members. Philemon Wright was chosen president of the society, even though he was not in Hull when it was created. Nevertheless, the Moral Society had a short existence. In November, 1820, a Benevolent Society was formed, again with the aim of promoting Sunday school. In 1823, a few Hull residents formed a Methodist Society, although it barely continued to survive. This period corresponded with the establishment of the first St. James Anglican Church. Wright was behind this effort, conducted with the support of the Anglican Bishop of Quebec. Supporting the building of the church came to be a status symbol, even if few people actually attended church after it was built.

Given Wright's interest in farming, it is not surprising that early Hull had agricultural societies with activities of holding fairs, awarding prizes, and operating a library in an effort to improve farming methods. In 1823, the Ottawa Agricultural and Domestic Manufacturing Society was formed, with Wright as its first president and Lord Dalhousie as its patron. This organization was short-lived, however, and the following year, a new organization was created, the Columbia Experimental Agricultural Society.

Finally, one political organization in particular bears mentioning. The Constitutional Association of Ottawa County opposed the *Patriotes* in the 1830's. The association's president was Thomas Brigham, Wright's son-in-law and administrator. The existence of this group shows that the elite of Hull was solidly in the government camp during the rebellions of 1837/1838, this in spite of fruitful relations between the Wright and Papineau families. One of the leaders of the *Patriotes*, Louis-Joseph Papineau, was from the Ottawa Valley.<sup>172</sup> This is also a further demonstration that the nascent society in Hull was solidly Tory, and reflected the leadership and interests of the Wrights.

### Assessing the Wrights

There is a difficulty in assessing the role of the Wrights in the early history of Hull. Since there is considerable archival information about the Wrights, there has been much written about them, so much that one can get a distorted picture of the weight of the Wrights in the development of Hull. There were other people and other classes in early Hull -- independent farmers, *petits-bourgeois*, workers -- however, as is the case with much history, there is less documentation about the lower orders. Correcting this shortcoming is one of the very *raison d'être* of this book. Nevertheless, we have shown how the Wrights self-consciously made themselves into wealthy and powerful men. They did so as did the other wealthy men of pre-industrial Canada during the 19th century. The land racket, the manipulation of the state, the illegal and violent timber trade were all among the tools used by business people, this in spite of the hagiographic quality of much of the writing about the Wrights. The only things missing from the Wright recipe were the railway racket and the development of large-scale industry and manufacturing. As the century advanced, local leadership in these fields passed to others such as E.B. Eddy and J.R. Booth. For the most part, even while they continued as business people, the Wrights retreated to their earliest form of wealth, land, as their principal source of wealth when

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

Hull grew to be an important urban centre on Wright-held property. Besides the original land grants, there were other shady land dealings. For example, the Wrights were condemned soundly, even by government authorities, in the case of Henry Fulford and Abraham Olmstead. In this instance, Philemon Sr. received a £50 bribe in his function as land agent for the state, even though the land in question had already been granted.<sup>173</sup>

In terms of the timber business, the Wrights often were unsuccessful, and often carried large debts, which they paid off by selling land. Creditors even seized rafts of wood headed to Quebec City owing to unpaid Wright obligations. Ruggles was imprisoned for unpaid debts. The Wrights narrowly escaped bankruptcy in 1829, a problem that Philemon passed on to his progeny and the rest of the community, so tied up was it with the Wright fortunes. To accuse the Wrights of not being good businessmen is to miss the point. The worse the Wrights' situation became, the more ruthless they were likely to become in businesses that were, in their very nature, shady. Philemon Wright's personality also was a subject of contemporary criticism. Wright squabbled with many, including his nephew, Charles Symmes of Aylmer. Lord Dalhousie, while showing a begrudging and bemused respect for Philemon Sr., also thought him ready to cheat at a moment's notice. To Dalhousie, Wright was the archetype of the shrewd, calculating, speculating Yankee.<sup>174</sup> Even in his beloved farming, Wright's own people often had problems with him and his decisions. Thomas Brigham complained about Wright hiring too many workers and making too many capital improvements to no avail.

As a politician, while Wright claimed to be non-partisan, he usually voted with the government, thus supporting the English Party, as it was called. In fact, the Wrights were solid Tories. For example, in 1849, Ruggles Wright signed the Annexation Manifesto, as did others representing the lumber interests of the Ottawa Valley: Asa Cook of the Petite-Nation Valley, Joseph Aumond of Bytown, and Peter Aylmer Jr. of Aylmer. This Tory nature was probably mitigated by family concerns. For example, in 1849, during the Stoney Monday conflict between Protestants from Carleton County and Catholics from Lower Town over Lord Elgin's support for the Rebellion Losses Bill, the Wrights supported the Bytown Catholics. Ruggles and other members of the Wright clan were arrested trying to bring cannon from the Hull armories to the aid of the Catholic side. Wright politics may have been mitigated by family connections as the young, Catholic mayor of Bytown, R.W. Scott, had married into the Wright clan.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> See Brault, *op. cit.*, p. 39 and Craigie, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>174</sup> Marjory Whitelaw, *The Dalhousie Journals, Volume 2*, Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1981, p. 42.

<sup>175</sup> For more information about the Wrights and Stoney Monday, consult Michael Cross, "Stoney Monday, 1849: The Rebellion Losses Riots in Bytown", *Ontario History*, September, 1971.

## CHAPTER 4 – WORKERS IN EARLY HULL

### Introduction

Philemon Wright's sway in the development of Hull was an example of the paternalism exercised by the ruling class in pre-industrial Canada. According to historian Brian Palmer, there were three parts to this paternalism.<sup>176</sup> One part was self-conscious creation by the business class; we have described the efforts to create wealth by 'Squire' Wright and his children. ('Squire' was an affectation that Wright himself favoured). A second part lay in the circumstances in which business people operated: in isolated communities, separated by great distances from other communities, often with different regional economies; ethnic conflict also was often part of this reality of paternalism. The third part refers to the role played by workers in this system, that is, their acceptance and/or resistance to rule by business people. This is the object of this chapter. Getting at it is difficult, however, since much must be inferred from sources and voices that do not belong to workers. The lack of documentation makes identification of workers, and analysis of their conditions and actions, difficult tasks.

### Identifying Workers

While the names of members of the elite are easy to find in most accounts of the founding of Hull, the names of workers aren't, making it more difficult to follow the evolution of these people. Most accounts speak of five families that made the trek from Massachusetts; these accounts speak of families led by Philemon Wright, Thomas Wright, John Allen, and Samuel Choate.<sup>177</sup> The fifth family is unnamed in most accounts. Bruce Eliot suggests it might have been the family of London Oxford, a free Negro who had married in Woburn, Massachusetts, brought his family with him, had children born in Hull, and left sometime after 1809.<sup>178</sup> This means he was in Hull for nearly ten years, but there appears to be little mention of him or the nature of his work. There is more information about families that came later. These families, as were the families in the original expedition, were usually well-established, financially at ease, older, and farmers. Getting a handle on people from the lower classes, especially single people, who came to Hull in the early years after the Wright expedition is not so easy. With the Wright expedition were 25 axemen that he hired in Massachusetts to clear the land in Hull. Most accounts refer, as well, to nine single settlers: Harvey Parker, Daniel Wyman, Elijah Allen, Joel Adams, Amos Childs, Solomon Childs, Thomas Hadley, Henry Kindrick, and Isaac Stone. It is not clear whether these nine settlers were part of the 25 axemen, or additional to the 25. Some accounts say that many of these workers came back the next year to settle in Hull, others, that few did. Perhaps, we know the names of the nine because they might have been the ones who returned to Hull, although we can't be certain of this. We know that Parker and Wyman stayed, since they were among the associates of Wright who obtained the land grant from the Crown. Two other workers were also Wright associates: Luther Colton, a carpenter originally from New York, who moved from Montreal to Hull in 1802, and James McConnell, a Nova Scotian worker hired along with his younger brother, William, in Quebec City; they arrived in Hull in 1801.

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<sup>176</sup> Bryan Palmer, *Working-class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1992, p. 47.

<sup>177</sup> Bruce Eliot, "The Famous Township of Hull: Image and Aspirations of a Pioneer Quebec Community", *Histoire sociale/Social History*, vol. 12, no. 24, November, 1979, p. 342.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

In March, 1816, Ruggles Wright wrote to Philemon that he had hired 35 men in England to work in Hull. A document lists 17 of these men, all in their twenties, except for Benjamin Simmons, 35, whom Ruggles recommended as manager of the Wright farms. These men were Calvin Radmore, a carpenter; John Snow, a wheelwright; William Jones, a blacksmith; William Wannacott, a tailor; William Tracey, a gardener; Thomas Chatworthy, a labourer and brickmaker, and his wife, Mary, a dairywoman; William Longman, farm labourer and mason; and eight farm labourers: John Heals, William Cooke, Hugh Ackland, George Ratcliffe, Roger Cann, John Rogers, Joseph Saunders, and James Webby.<sup>179</sup>

### Labour Force Growth

In 1804 and 1805, the Wrights employed 75 labourers, mechanics, and craftsmen. In 1806, a petition to the government included a list of people in the Hull settlement. There were 160 children, 63 women, and 68 men living in households. Another 63 men, most of them likely single, worked for the Wrights in Hull, while only 15 worked for all the other inhabitants combined. In addition, 55 men were absent from Hull during the preparation of the petition, since they were working in the Valley in the timber industry. In total, there were 424 people in Hull Township. The 63 single men working for the Wrights were listed in this petition. Almost all were Americans except for eight French Canadians: Joseph Alain, Joseph Delorme, Antoine and Joseph Dubé, Antoine Galipeau, François and Jean-Baptiste Meunier, and François Paquet. Among the English-speakers were Nicholas Sparks and James Finlayson Taylor, who eventually married into the Wright clan and became part of the local elite.<sup>180</sup>

In 1809, Wright employed 80 men. In 1813, 20 men worked on the harvest at the Wright farms, while only seven worked on the farms in winter. By 1815, 80% of English-speakers in Canada were American, including most of the craftsmen, mechanics, and workers in the timber industry, a situation that also applied to Hull Township.<sup>181</sup> In 1820, the population of Hull Township was 707, which included 365 men and 113 women. For a rough estimate of the size of Wright's work force, we subtract the number of women, assuming all of them to have been married, from the total number of men, in order to arrive at an estimate of about 250 single men, most of whom would have been working for the Wrights, with only a small number working for others. In 1824, Wright's village at the Chaudière included a tannery, a foundry, Philemon Wright's house and outbuildings, a store, barns and sheds, a lime kiln, a gunhouse, a school house, the Columbia Hotel, a sawmill, and a grist mill.<sup>182</sup> Wright employed in his village: 7 masons, 6 carpenters, 4 each of blacksmiths, shoemakers, and teamsters, 2 each of clerks, tanners, and millers, one baker and one sadler, for a total of 33.<sup>183</sup> If we use the figure for Wright's farm workers of 20, as it was in 1813, we arrive at an extremely rough estimate of the number of timber employees working for the Wrights of 195 to 200. While rough, the estimate provides an indication of the breakdown of the employment of Wright's workers and, hence, of Wright's economic activity.

A listing of timber employees in the Wright archive around 1825 shows that most, by then, were French-Canadians.<sup>184</sup> This is in marked contrast to a listing of logging camp foremen

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<sup>179</sup> Patrick Evans, *The Wrights*, Ottawa: National Capital Commission, 1977, p. 63.

<sup>180</sup> National Archives of Canada (NAC), Philemon Wright Fonds, MG24 D8, vol. 124, p. 66324, 66326, 66327.

<sup>181</sup> H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860*, Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1981, p. 78.

<sup>182</sup> Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

<sup>184</sup> Philemon Wright Fonds, MG 24 D8, volume 120, p. 64351.

from the same period. Of 44 foremen in 1826 working for the Wrights on the Bonnechère, Madawaska, or Coulonge Rivers, all but one appear to have been English-speakers, with several Irish names now showing up: Aylen, Henessy, Malone, and Sullivan. The sole French-Canadian foreman was Joseph Delorme.<sup>185</sup> The pattern was French-Canadian workers and English-Canadian supervisors, including among the latter an increasing number of Irishmen, which presaged the violent entry of the Irish in large numbers during the 1830's to the forestry in the Ottawa Valley.

### Workers' Contracts

The norm in the early days of Hull was the written contract between employer and employee. These were formal and verbose contracts with moral admonitions about workers not fornicating, gambling, even marrying, but especially about alcohol consumption. For his part, typically, the employer provided room and board. Some examples: on January 10, 1802, Edward Cannon, a mason from Quebec City working for Wright, agreed to apprentice 17 year-old Charles Chambers for 3.5 years until he reached 21. Chambers had to follow the typical moral restrictions, while Cannon had to provide his apprentice with meat, drink, lodging, and 7£10s annually in lieu of clothing. In 1807, in return for food, drink, lodging, and 40£ per year, Frederick Widmark agreed to work as a labourer for Wright for three years. In the same year, Mathew Lower, another labourer, agreed to work for Wright for two years in return for food, drink, clothing, laundry, lodging, tobacco, and after the contract was terminated, a decent suit of clothes.<sup>186</sup>

The contract for building the first St. James Anglican Church is instructive of employers' obsession with the drinking habits of their men, this at the same time as employers themselves often furnished liquor. The contract signed by Philemon Wright and Thomas Brigham on behalf of the management committee of the church, by contractor John Crawford, and by twelve workers, included this requirement of workers:

“ . . . to continue the said work with sobriety and regularity they each agree to refrain from using any spiritous liquours on the scaffolding or walls of the said Church and that each for himself will be answerable for the Liquer drunk by each of the undersigned parties -- and if from any weakness and neglect of sobriety either of the said undersigned Mechanicks or Labours suffer themselves to get Intoxicated with spiritous liquer and in that case he shall loose and forfeit one days wages for each time he gets so intoxicated.”  
(sic)<sup>187</sup>

Of the twelve workers who signed this document, five could not write their name and simply marked a cross.

Terminating such contracts was a step not taken lightly since workers were often paid only in a lump sum at the end of their contract. In addition, the worker would run the risk of being accused of desertion. Indeed, Wright had two English workers imprisoned in Montreal for desertion in 1817. After 1826, agreements between workers and the Wrights appear to be less formal, perhaps owing to the longevity of employees in the employ of the Wrights. As well, the

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid, p. 64439, 64440, 64441.

<sup>186</sup> Philemon Wright Fonds, op. cit., volume 120, p. 62838, 62839, 62841 to 62844, 62845 to 62848.

<sup>187</sup> E.G. May and Walter Millen, *The History of the Parish of Hull, Quebec*, Ottawa: Davidson-Merrill Press, 1923, p. 74.



Wrights increasingly subcontracted for the timber business to men such as Peter Ayles and John Egan. Where written agreements still existed, there were now clauses that permitted the termination of agreements in the event of mutual dissatisfaction, with the worker then being paid his wages.

### Wages

Sometimes in histories of the working class, wages are compared to a supposed cost of living composed of certain basic necessities, described generally, independent of actual use. Invariably, the margin between the two is small or even in the negative; the cost of living exceeds wages. This is supposed proof that workers were poor. There are several problems with this approach. Firstly, generations later, we don't know the value of a dollar to the people in the period we are studying. In pre-industrial Hull, unskilled labourers were paid about 50 cents per day, craftsmen \$1, and master craftsmen and foremen, around \$1.25 or \$1.50. Not understanding what one could do with a dollar, and what people actually did with that dollar, we are at a loss. Secondly, there are problems with time-scale, whether we're speaking of long-term, or short-term trends. Some have argued that over the long term, workers get paid less in order to maintain a decent rate of return for capital. Others argue that workers' wages have increased with increasing productivity owing to capitalization. As well, we don't know how the figures might correspond with upward or downward parts of the economic cycle. In summary, there are some figures available for wages and costs of basic necessities such as foodstuffs, but we don't know what they mean in the actual lives and behaviour of workers. Thirdly, we already know that most Canadians were poor, as late as WWII, except for some foremen and master craftsmen, farmers, some members of the *petite-bourgeoisie*, and the bourgeoisie; even with the last category, debts and bankruptcies meant that capitalists could go through difficult times as well. Most workers and farmers were poor, with the latter at least having the advantage of easier access to food and other necessities. Fourthly, in many ways, pre-industrial Canada was a cashless society. Counting figures alone belies the nature of many payments in kind, as well as other realities about remuneration. Indeed, this is the real substance of interest because it indicates how workers did survive in spite of their poverty. To the wages of a worker would have to be added the wages of other family members, and the homemade production of food, clothes, and other necessities by women and children. As well, subsistence farming paid for overhead costs of workers, especially in the timber industry. Where once employers had to ensure employment during the off-seasons, subsistence farmers now worked in the timber industry in the winter, and farmed produce for sale to the same industry in the summer. Work in the logging camps in winter also meant food and warmth, not assured for an urban worker in 19th century Canada. Being paid in a lump sum at the end of a log drive possibly made the wages of timberers appear enormous to workers. Concentrating on wages alone underestimates the contribution of payments through food, clothes, lodging, tobacco, alcohol, and care in times of illness or injury which employers gave to their workers. On the other hand, being paid in truck often meant workers got short-changed as they would be buying in company stores to be paid for their labour only at the end of their contracts. This reality was reflected in the demands of organized labour later in the 19th century for payment in cash rather than in kind.

Hull and Canada, generally, were nearly cashless, so the impact on workers' wages merits some consideration. The Wrights paid fictional amounts and credited in their ledgers in British pounds or American dollars. They would then deduct money owed to them through the course of a year, for such things as room and board, or tobacco, alcohol and tea that the Wrights

sold from their company store. In fact, very little currency circulated in Canada, with the exception of British pounds or American dollars brought to Canada by immigrants, the occasional Spanish currency, and the Halifax pound used in Nova Scotia.

Some of Wright's workers were farmers who might earn credits in Wright's ledgers by selling produce to Wright. On the other hand, they would be debited when they bought manufactured goods from the Wrights. Therefore, local workers and farmers were both creditors and debtors to the Wrights. When the latter faced serious difficulties, a frequent occurrence, the whole community would suffer. Bankruptcies and failures, both personal and business, were common; they were always in the air, a distinct possibility. Nevertheless, Wright's knowledge of the local economy and control of the books allowed Wright to drive a hard bargain, especially since workers had few options for clients or employment.

The Hull economy was a barter economy that aimed at autarchy, local self-sufficiency. Therefore, Hull workers learned the ways of barter and informal exchange of goods and services, which carried over into urban Hull in the latter years of the 19th century. In fact, among the poor, even today, barter and informal exchanges are important tools of survival.

There are two things we can do with our knowledge of wages. Firstly, we can compare them to expectations -- unfortunately, only using impressionistic sources -- this provides some information about class relations. Secondly, we can gain an appreciation of wage hierarchies within the working class, which gives us some idea of the exchange value of different types of work. In order to compare wages to expectations, we start with the Wright expedition itself. About Wright and his men sleeping on the ground near the Long-Sault, Wright wrote:

“In this situation, about thirty of us spent the night; and I must say that I never saw men more cheerful and happy in their life than they seemed to be -- having no landlord to call upon us for our expenses, nor to complain of our extravagance, nor no dirty floors to sleep on, but the sweet ground which belonged to our ancient sovereign--...”<sup>188</sup>

What can one make of this statement? This is the same Wright who two years earlier couldn't hire men in Massachusetts to clear land in Hull because it was too far from civilization. Nevertheless, it is possible that despite the isolation from civilization and the difficulties this entailed, the members of the founding expedition to Hull did find a new freedom. Certainly, owing to the quality of the farmland in Hull Township, the early settlers in Hull did not suffer from want of food, in itself, an important freedom.

Wright often complained about the high cost of labour; in fact, it was a motivating force in Wright's decisions. For instance, he complained that workers hired to get supplies at Montreal wanted \$3 per day, which would have seemed enormous when unskilled labour fetched \$0.50 per day. This was part of the reason why Wright sought self-sufficiency for the Hull community. In another example, Wright found the cost of labour for harvesting hemp, \$1 per day per worker, too expensive to justify large-scale production of this crop. The timber industry was launched by Wright in order to employ idle hands during the slow, winter season, since he could not lay them off in winter, and expect to re-hire them in the spring. In 1808, Wright began sawing timber into boards and planks for sale in Quebec City, thus beginning the lumber business for the very same reason. Even if we take into account the complaint of Thomas Brigham that Wright hired too many people, it is possible that Wright's impression was true that labour was expensive. This

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<sup>188</sup> Philemon Wright, *An Account of the First Settlement of the Township of Hull*, Report to a Committee of the Legislative Assembly, 1823.

could be translated as meaning that workers were relatively well-paid in early Hull. Unfortunately, we have only sparse evidence indicating that the workers thought so. For example, one settler working for the Wrights, Joseph Holt, wrote home to the U.S.:

“. . . we all feel our selves contented for the present . . . and I think I shall stay with them [the Wrights] some time if they use me as they have done. I Get Good wages My work is not heard and they use the hole family Likewise I have a Good horse Sadle and Bridle Eny time when I want to Wride . . .” (sic)<sup>189</sup>

An outside source, Joseph Bouchette, the Surveyor-General of Lower Canada, wrote in 1825 about Hull that “the people seem universally to enjoy a degree of ease and comfort seldom met with in a dawning colony.”<sup>190</sup>

If it is true that wages were high, it is also true that the Wrights were not always good for them, especially when their frequent financial difficulties arose. There is evidence that Americans working for the Wrights did sue them for overdue wages, and that the Irish often grumbled and fought about wages.<sup>191</sup> Workers, of course, were constrained by the very isolation that potentially increased their bargaining position. Since leaving a job was considered desertion or mutiny, and payment came just at the end of the term of an agreement, workers would have been compelled to remain in their jobs even if dissatisfied with wages, conditions, or the nature of the work. As well, there were few options locally for employment.

As for the level of wages, there was considerable variation according to season, the state of the economy, and the experience and age of the individual workers. Two people doing the same work could be paid differently depending upon conditions when they were hired, and the relative bargaining power of the Wrights and their employees. During the log drive in spring, when time was limited owing to the necessity of using the spring thaw, it appears that wages could increase. Here are some examples of the wages paid to individual workers.

- Amasa Polley received \$1 per day for repairing a sawmill in 1806.<sup>192</sup>
- Simeon Hall, Abram Wilcocks, and Solomon Pemberton were each hired as labourers for a one-year term in December of 1809; Hall and Wilcocks were each paid 37£10s for the year while Pemberton, possibly younger, received 30£10s.<sup>193</sup>
- Jacques Hermès, James McDavett, and James and Denis Sullivan, all from Quebec City, agreed to be raftsmen for the Wrights for \$12 per month in November, 1814.<sup>194</sup>
- Jacques Parent of Quebec City was hired for rafting and farming at \$12 per month in September, 1815.<sup>195</sup>
- Around the same time, the Wrights hired five French Canadians and five Scotsmen from Quebec City to work as teamsters for \$12, 13 and 14 per month, and as raftsmen for \$18 per month.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Eliot, op. cit., p. 352.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, p. 335.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid, p. 366, 367.

<sup>192</sup> A.R.M. Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973, p. 63.

<sup>193</sup> Philemon Wright Fonds, op. cit., vol 117, p. 62853 to 62857. Wage payments to Wright's workers were recorded in the ledgers in English pounds or U.S. dollars. See p. 56 above.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, p. 62898 to 62900.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, p. 62974, 62975.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, p. 62914 to 63038.

- John Thomas, a millwright, was hired at \$20 per month in January, 1817.<sup>197</sup>
- David Boyce received \$15 per month for rafting and timbering in May, 1817.<sup>198</sup>
- Oliver French, a master blacksmith, was hired to work for three years at \$300 per year in November, 1817.<sup>199</sup>
- Lyman Perkins was hired as a master blacksmith at \$30 per month in December, 1823.<sup>200</sup>

Other sources, such as our knowledge of wages paid for building St. James Church in Hull and wages paid on the Rideau Canal, confirm that most skilled labour typically cost from \$1 per work day to \$1.50, while unskilled labour cost \$0.50 per day. Assembled using material in the Wright archives, we can advance a rough estimate of the hierarchy in wages paid to Wright's workers. The hierarchy is as follows, under the caution that the evidence is indeed fragmentary.

<b>Type of work</b>	<b>Wages per month (U.S.\$)</b>
Apprentices	room, board, clothing, or \$4
Unskilled farm labourers and domestic female servants	\$5 to \$10
Farmers, lumberjacks, and some craftsmen, i.e. carters, carpenters, shoemakers, and tanners	\$7 to \$13
Raftsmen	\$10 to \$18
Blacksmiths, millwrights, masons	\$14 to \$20
Logging camp foremen, master carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, millwrights	\$20 to \$32

The treatment of room and board and other payments in kind varies. Sometimes, these payments are specified as additional to the wages, sometimes wages are reduced in company ledgers to cover room and board. The latter was the case for Wright's workers on the Rideau Canal.<sup>201</sup> In any case, entrepreneurs made profit selling to their workers necessities of life including whiskey and tobacco, whether or not the employer did provide room and board as part of the wage package.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid, p. 63040.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, p. 63066.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, p. p. 63133.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, volume 118, p. 63630.

<sup>201</sup> William Wylie, "Poverty, Distress and Disease: Labour and the Construction of the Rideau Canal, 1826-1832", *Labour/Le travailleur*, vol 11, Spring, 1983, p. 14.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

## CHAPTER 5 – THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN THE OTTAWA VALLEY

### Introduction

In British North America, forests were everywhere. The attitude of Canadians was to get rid of the forest as quickly as possible, usually by burn, as the forest constituted an obstacle to settlement and agricultural development. Under the French regime, a little timber was cut for industrial purposes, this chiefly for a small amount of shipbuilding at Quebec. The notion that the forests might constitute a lasting industry was also foreign to the English-speaking settlers of British North America after the conquest of New France. The exception was the trade in potash with England. Potash was produced by leeching the ashes of burnt wood with water, then evaporating the water. This left potassium, which was used in Europe to produce lye for soaps and the garment industry.<sup>203</sup>

Prior to the American Revolution, the state of New Hampshire had met certain needs of the British admiralty for pine masts. After the Revolution, this source of wood no longer existed for the British navy, so a small industry developed in the Saint John River Valley in New Brunswick. In 1782, the first shipment of New Brunswick pines was sent from Halifax to England.<sup>204</sup> This was a small trade as the Baltic region provided Britain with most of its needs for wood owing to transportation costs only a fraction of those for transporting wood from British North America. After the American Revolution, farmers from Maine illicitly shipped timber down the Saint John River, north into New Brunswick, following the current. A similar illicit trade from Vermont farmers occurred, using Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River, which flow north into the St. Lawrence. From there, the timber could either be sold in Montreal, or more often, floated to Quebec City, following the current of the St. Lawrence. At Quebec, there were two big timber merchants, Scott, Iddles and Company, and Henry Osborne and Company, who had contracts with the British navy. These companies had no large investment at Quebec; they were middlemen who bought whatever timber was brought to Quebec City. They were branch plants of British companies, operated by young relatives of their owners. In Montreal, the brewer, John Molson, operated a sawmill early in the 19th century, for which he bought timber from Philemon Wright.<sup>205</sup>

This, then, was the market when Philemon Wright began producing timber and lumber in the Ottawa Valley in 1806: small trades at Montreal, Quebec, and Saint John, New Brunswick. Events in Europe were to change this dramatically. The Napoleonic Wars upset the British economic system. In 1806, Napoleon blockaded trade from Europe with Britain, including Baltic wood. Suddenly, wood from British North America became essential. The British government erected tariffs to ensure that British lumber dealers would be interested in working in Canada. To Quebec City now came additional operators to supply the British navy; among them, William Pemberton and Company, Sharples and Son, and a Scottish concern, Pollock and

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<sup>203</sup> Useful sources for the beginnings of the timber industry prior to Philemon Wright include: Michael Cross, “The Lumber Community of Upper Canada, 1815 – 1867”, *Ontario History*, Autumn, 1960; W.T. Easterbrook and Hugh Aiken, *Canadian Economic History*, Toronto: Gage Publishing Ltd., 1981, chapter 9; Sandra Gillis, *The Timber Trade in the Ottawa Valley, 1806 – 1854*, Manuscript Report no. 153, Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1975; and Léon Robidoux, *Les “cageux”*, Montreal: Les Éditions de l’Aurore, 1974.

<sup>204</sup> Easterbrook and Aiken, *op.cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>205</sup> Robidoux, *op.cit.*, p. 81, 82.

Gilmour, which was to transform itself into one of the major operators in the Ottawa Valley. Thus, the situation was now ripe for Philemon Wright and others from the Ottawa Valley to begin supplying the British operators located at Quebec.

### The Wrights and Forest Industry<sup>206</sup>

On June 11, 1806, Wright and a crew of four men set out from the juncture of the Gatineau and Ottawa rivers on a raft named 'Colombo'.<sup>207</sup> The raft contained a considerable amount of timber made during the previous winter: 700 pieces of squared oak and pine, several thousand staves, and 900 boards.<sup>208</sup> The trip took most of the summer, as it appears to have landed finally in Quebec City in August or September. The inexperienced crew took 36 days to negotiate the Long-Sault at Grenville.<sup>209</sup> Then, Wright gambled successfully, after some difficulty, that he could find a channel on the north side of the Island of Montreal, a shorter voyage than would have been had he taken the southern trip around Montreal. He sold some of his load in Montreal, possibly to John Molson. In Quebec City, it took him until October to find a buyer for his wood, and then, not at a great price. Nevertheless, the forest industry in the Ottawa Valley had begun. The next year, Wright repeated the venture, this time with better results.

In the beginning, Wright cut timber on the land that was eventually to become Hull and Ottawa, using his farmer neighbours as labour. When the timber that was readily available had been cut in his immediate vicinity, Wright began operating in the Rideau Valley. He had only one significant competitor. In 1805, David Pattee and Thomas Mears had built a sawmill in Hawkesbury. This concern was bought by the Hamilton brothers, from Quebec City, who then moved to Hawkesbury. By 1812, the Hamiltons also were operating in the Rideau Valley. In 1819, Reward Sturtevant sub-contracted for the Wrights to make timber in the Bonnechère Valley. In 1824, the Wrights opened a shanty at the Carp River, in addition to their continuing activity on the Rideau River. During the 1820's, the Wrights sent four or five rafts to Quebec City each year.<sup>210</sup> Farmers from Carleton County supplied Wright's shanties with produce. In addition, Wright sub-contracted for timber from Braddish Billings, of Gloucester Township, and from the Moore brothers, of Nepean Township, who were to become major businessmen themselves.

This timber was often obtained by illegal means. In 1820, the government seized several of the Wright rafts since the wood contained on them had been cut illegally on Crown land.<sup>211</sup> In 1826, Ruggles Wright ended up in debtors' prison as the poor market caught him short, unable to

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<sup>206</sup> Useful sources about the progression of the Wrights in the forestry industry include: Cynthia Helen Craigie, "The Influence of the Timber Trade and Philemon Wright on the Social and Economic Development of Hull Township, 1800-1860, Master's Thesis, Carleton University, 1969; Michael Cross, *The Dark Druidical Groves: The Lumber Community and the Commercial Frontier in British North America, to 1854*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto, 1986; Chad Gaffield, editor, *Histoire de l'Outaouais*, Quebec City: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1994; Sandra Gillis, *op.cit.*, John Hughson and Courtney Bond, *Hurling Down the Pine*, Old Chelsea, Quebec: The Historical Society of the Gatineau, 1964; and Léo Rossignol, *Histoire documentaire de Hull, 1792-1900*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Ottawa, June, 1941.

<sup>207</sup> Rossignol, *op.cit.*, p.51.

<sup>208</sup> Gillis, *op.cit.*, p.68.

<sup>209</sup> Rossignol, *op. cit.*, p.51.

<sup>210</sup> Craigie, *op. cit.*, p.67.

<sup>211</sup> Gaffield, *op. cit.*, P.147.

pay his debts.<sup>212</sup> Ruggles must have eventually paid his debts for we next hear that he introduced the first timber slide at the Chaudière in 1829, reproducing a technology he had learned on a business trip to Scandinavia. This was to prove to be a real boon to the industry above the Chaudière as wood now could be passed through the slide. Nevertheless, the slide was still a dangerous, not terribly effective business. In 1835, ten men died at the slide, and \$100,000 of timber was lost.<sup>213</sup>

In the 1830's, the complex nature of the relationship of the forest industry with the state became evident. The slide at the Chaudière now meant that the government could collect tolls for wood obtained above the Chaudière. In 1836, George Buchanan, from Arnprior, built another slide on the south side of the Chaudière. What was previously illegal activity, which the state more or less tried to inhibit, was now an important source of revenue. Furthermore, the revenues derived from the industry went directly to the executive, bypassing the legislative assembly, locked in combat with the British authorities over use of and control of public monies. Government policy came to be the encouragement of the industry. The Wrights and the Hamiltons obtained a monopoly of the industry in the Gatineau Valley, along with Peter Aylen, a former Wright foreman, and a Hamilton partner, Charles Low. In return, the principals were expected to pay timber rights to the Crown, and to make the necessary navigation improvements (dams and booms and the like), to make the Gatineau industry profitable. This arrangement, called the *Gatineau Priviledge*, lasted from 1832 to 1845. Similar monopolies were granted on the Rouge and Noire Rivers to the Hamiltons and Low, and to the Moore brothers. In 1833, the Wrights bought three shanties in the Gatineau Valley from early operators in the region: Burke, Johnson, and Pierce. In 1837, the Wrights opened a farm and dépôt at Gracefield. By the 1840's, the Wrights were sending 8 or 9 rafts each year to Quebec City, and even sent 20 rafts some years.<sup>214</sup> They had shanties on the Blanche, Coulonge, Eagle, and Gatineau rivers in Lower Canada, and on the Rideau, Jock, Bonnechère, Mississippi, and Madawaska rivers in Upper Canada. All this activity and their cozy relationship with the government should have made the Wrights enormously successful. Apparently not, however, since in 1842, Ruggles Wright proved unable to pay the Crown for his timber rights and was arrested and released with bail, only to be acquitted owing to the Wright family's influence.<sup>215</sup>

In 1848, Ruggles Wright Jr. and his cousin, Alonzo Wright, (Philemon Wright's grandsons) contracted to cut saw logs for the Gilmours. During the 1850's, Ruggles Sr. sold his timber concession to other merchants, among them, Allan Gilmour. In 1868, the Wrights invested in a company called Wright, Batson and Currier, which operated a sawmill in Hull, powered by steam, which cut 30,000,000 cubic feet of lumber in 1871.<sup>216</sup> The Wrights, however, had become minor players in the forestry industry. From initiators of the industry, they eventually withdrew from the woods to operate only one of many sawmilling enterprises in the region. Eventually, this operation too ceased, and the Wrights were only minor players in the industrial growth of Hull and in railway development, while they played no role at all in the emergence of the pulp and paper industry. Their story, however, was illustrative of the growth of the forestry industry. Their leadership role was lost in the 1850's to the new American

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<sup>212</sup> Craigie, *op. cit.*, P.67

<sup>213</sup> Cross, *op. cit.*, Doctoral Thesis, P.237.

<sup>214</sup> Craigie, *op. cit.*, P.67; and Gillis, *op. cit.*, P.70.

<sup>215</sup> Rossignol, *op. cit.* P.189.

<sup>216</sup> Gaffield, *op. cit.*

capitalists attracted to the Chaudière such as Eddy, Bronson, and Weston, as well as J.R. Booth, from the Eastern Townships. As urban Hull developed, the Wright descendants retreated to the earliest form of wealth organized by Philemon Sr., the land upon which Hull was to grow.

### From Timber to Lumber to Pulp and Paper<sup>217</sup>

From its humble and basically illegal beginnings with Philemon Wright, the forestry industry grew to become the principal industry and *raison d'être* of the Ottawa Valley and of Hull. While the stages of development of the forestry industry are complex, with considerable overlap, they can be summarized approximately as starting with square timber, proceeding to sawn lumber, and finally, to the pulp and paper industry. In this section, we trace this evolution, as seen in the products, markets, capital, and technology of the industry. The labour employed in the industry is described in Chapter 6. During its evolution, the forestry industry existed through many economic cycles and depressions, and in a complex relationship with farmers and with agriculture, the other major Canadian industry of the 19th century. Through the development of the forestry industry, there emerged a wealthy, powerful industrial bourgeoisie that was the epitome of respectability, and played a predominate role in Canada.

In the 19th century, the principal wood product of the Ottawa Valley was white pine. British buyers demanded the heart of the tree, so trees were cut into square pieces of timber and floated down the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers to Quebec. Originally, roughly-built ships were made in Quebec City using some of the timber in order to ship the loads to Britain. When in Britain, the ships would be torn apart and sold for a song, however, there soon came to be a cargo for the return trips of these ships. The poor Englishman, Scots, Ulstermen, Welsh, and most of all, Irish, displaced by the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain, were that cargo. Arguably, therefore, the second major product of the forestry industry was the immigration from Great Britain.

The original major product of the Valley, red pine, was surpassed by white pine in the 1840's. There were also trades in oak and elm timber; ship masts; oars; spars, poles used on ships; beams; oak staves, hoops used in barrel-making; and potash. Even before the growth of sawn lumber, a market developed for deals, planks three inches thick of high quality pine or spruce, which were then re-sawn in Britain. Among the biggest makers of deals were the Hamiltons in Hawkesbury, Booth at the Chaudière, and Maclaren in Buckingham. The industry also produced heating wood and construction materials used in the building of Montreal and the towns of Upper Canada.

In the 1850's, the production of sawn lumber grew relative to the original products of the square timber trade. There had always been small, commercial sawmills in Canada, often operated by a miller who sawed timber upon demand. As well, there were small, sawmilling capitalists, for example, the Wrights. In the middle of the 19th century, there emerged a new market for sawn lumber as the forests of New England disappeared. In 1848, Thomas MacKay produced 2,400,000 feet of lumber for the American market at a mill where the Rideau falls into the Ottawa, in New Edinburgh. During the 1850's, new American capitalists established

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<sup>217</sup> Useful sources for this section include: Cross, *op. cit.*, *Ontario History* and Cross, *op. cit.*, Doctoral Thesis; Easterbrook and Aiken, *op. cit.*; Albert Faucher, *Histoire économique et unité canadienne*, Montreal: Éditions Fides, 1970; Gaffield, ed. *op. cit.*; Guy Gaudreau, "L'exploitation des forêts publiques au Québec (1874-1905): transition et nouvel essor, *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 24, no. 1, Summer, 1988; Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, *Histoire économique du Québec, 1851 – 1896*, Montreal: Fides, 1971; and Arthur Lower, *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1938.



sawmills at the Chaudière. The American market demanded planks, boards, and beams of any quality or species of wood to be used in constructing the cities around the Great Lakes. Trees inferior in quality to pine and oak were now cut: spruce, hemlock, balsam, jack pine. The waste products of these sawing operations, sawdust and chips, were made into products such as washboards, tubs, pails, barrels, and clothes pegs, especially by E.B. Eddy in Hull, who also produced matches, the original product of his labour.

Towards the end of the century, mechanical and chemical methods of producing pulp were developed for use in manufacturing paper. Making pulpwood now required wood of many kinds, including trees too small to be used in sawmilling, but the chief source of pulp wood was spruce. With the assistance of government policies in Quebec and Ontario, the pulp industry was transformed into the pulp and paper industry. Wood pulp originally shipped to the United States came to be manufactured into paper, cardboard, construction materials, and especially newsprint in Canada. This manufacturing required the development of hydroelectric power, abundant in the Ottawa Valley, including at the Chaudière.

The first major destination for wood exports from the Ottawa Valley was Great Britain. By 1852, there were 25 exporters operating on Saint-Pierre Street in Quebec City, each of whom employed stevedores. Most of these firms were British, while only two were French-Canadian. During the second half of the 19th century, exports to United States surpassed those to Britain, even though the latter continued to grow. Lumber sawn in the Ottawa Valley was exported to New York as the forests in New England and New York, then in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota were depleted. This wood was used to construct the growing Great Lakes cities of Buffalo, Rochester, Detroit, Cleveland, and Duluth. When J.R. Booth built a railway to Parry Sound, wood from the Ottawa Valley reached as far west as Chicago, via the Georgian Bay and the Great Lakes. In 1863, the trade in square timber with Britain reached its zenith and started to decline relative to the sawn lumber exported to the U.S.<sup>218</sup> During the 1880's, the U.S became the main recipient of valley wood products. The foreign trade in pulpwood, then in paper, at the beginning of the 20th century, was almost entirely with the United States. The final cargoes of square timber bound to Britain via Quebec City came out from the Coulonge River onto the Ottawa during the second decade of the 20th century, more precisely, in 1911.

The technological dimensions of the forestry industry focussed on two major problems: turning the trees into timber, lumber, or pulp and paper, and transporting these products to market. The technique for producing timber receives a thorough discussion later in this chapter. The production of lumber in Canada had always occurred where a source of water power permitted a small commercial mill, sometimes first built by seigneurs. Large-scale production of lumber for export required improvements in power and in saws. The sawmill was a race between speed in sawing, and speed in removing the sawn lumber. The technology that accomplished this was the log track, which drew the log out of the water, placed it onto the saw, and removed it to the other side of the mill. As the American market for lumber increased, saws of American invention came into use in the Valley, for example, the band saw. The lumber, once cut, could take up to a year to dry before it could be used. There were large kilns for heating and drying the wood, but most of the lumber was dried by the sun outdoors. Thus, in the region, there were great piles of wood: at the Chaudière, at Ironside, Brewery Creek, and below the Chaudière, in Hull; and at Dow's Lake, Lebreton Flats, and Rockcliffe Park, in Ottawa. These piles increased the risk and the catastrophe of fire. Power for producing lumber greatly

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<sup>218</sup> Hamelin and Roby, *op. cit.*, p.217.

increased with the general use of the iron turbine wheel at the Chaudière in the 1860's. Steam power increased productivity, and allowed mills to operate in winter and during the summer, even when the water flow in rivers was reduced. Damming the Chaudière and other waterfalls in the Valley permitted the development of hydroelectric power. It now became possible to place mills in isolated places near to sources of hydro power. At the end of the 1880's, chemical pulp machines appeared in Hull, introduced by E.B. Eddy. This was followed in the next decade by mechanical methods of producing wood pulp. American capitalists introduced to Quebec large paper making machines that used a lot of hydroelectric power. By 1920, 18 plants in Quebec made pulpwood, while 12 made pulp and paper.

The first method of transporting timber was simply to use the flow of rivers, amplified during the spring runoff. Pine could be floated, while other woods less floatable, such as oak, had to be placed carefully on the raft to ensure buoyancy. The building of canals improved navigation on the Ottawa and St. Lawrence, and movement between lake Erie and Lake Ontario. Canals, as with the Rideau Canal, joined two watersheds, thereby increasing the distance that goods could be transported. When winds were favourable, the speed of the rafts was improved by roughly-made sails. Before the introduction of steam sailing in barges or tugboats, rafts were advanced on lakes by a method of weighing anchor ahead of the raft, and moving the raft forward by winching a rope or cable where the current was too slow, or where winds countered the river flow. By the 1840's, tugs were in general use on the Great Lakes and on the Saint Lawrence between Montreal and Quebec City. Dams were used to increase water flow and to break log jams, especially on small rivers. The Rideau Canal, Welland Canal, and Chambly Canal permitted the shipping of lumber to the United States. Shipping to the U.S. was greatly accelerated, however, by the railways, which permitted shipping across several watersheds. There were important rail links built between Hull and Montreal, Ottawa and Brockville, Ottawa and Prescott, Hull and the Pontiac, and Hull and the Gatineau Valley. When J. R. Booth and his associates built a railway from Ottawa to Parry Sound in the 1880's, wood products from the Ottawa Valley could reach as far west as Chicago. This, combined with several destinations in New York state, and outlets in Boston and Portland, Maine, as well as the ports in Montreal and Quebec City, meant there were markets for Ottawa Valley wood from the middle of the continent, east across the Atlantic, and south down the Atlantic into South America and the Caribbean, the last of these markets served by American companies selling Ottawa Valley wood.

Early in the 19th century, it was easy for a farmer to conceive of making a little timber as a source of cash additional to his farm, which he could not work in winter. Transporting timber proved to be more difficult. It required long absences from the farm during spring and summer. The two were not really compatible businesses. Thus, the timber merchant, such as Philemon Wright, came into his own as a man who both produced and transported the timber, or alternatively, bought the timber from sub-contractors or individual farmers. Wright was exceptional in that, at least in the early days, it was he who financed his own operations. In most cases, the ultimate sources of capital were the English middlemen at Quebec who bought the timber supplied by others, and shipped the timber to head office in Britain. The middlemen were the only ones sure of making money in the industry. Firms in Quebec City would advance capital to suppliers, who then advanced money to timber makers. The latter might advance money to farmers in order that they buy provisions; and farmers would promise to repay with produce from his harvests. The timber merchant might even buy from the farmer by promising to pay upon sale of timber. Thus, farmer and timber merchant were both debtor and creditor to

each other.<sup>219</sup> In Hull, as the Wrights fell into financial difficulties, the entire community suffered when the Wrights recalled their debts and were forced to pay up themselves. The whole system of financing the timber industry rested upon the "thralldom of the merchant", as historian Arthur Lower called it.<sup>220</sup> Poor markets in Britain meant that timber might not be bought in Quebec City; or the price would drop and great stockpiles be inventoried. Bankers from Montreal, who had first earned their money in the fur trade, such as Peter McGill, invested in the timber trade, but they proved as intractable as Quebec City timber merchants. Nevertheless, in spite of their difficulties, timber merchants and makers, perhaps less squeamish in their use of language than people are today, still referred to themselves as *bourgeois*, or the English-language corruption, *boorshaws*.

In 1854, reciprocity with the United States meant free trade in natural resources, defined broadly to include lumber produced in Canada. The state made improvements to the Chaudière in a deliberate attempt to attract American capitalists. Thus came capitalists to the Chaudière such as Young, Baldwin, Harris, Bronson, Perley, Pattee, and Eddy in order to produce lumber for the hungry American market. These capitalists brought capital and new sawmilling techniques and machines from the United States.

The influx of new sawmill operators helped increase concentration of capital in the forestry industry, but there were also other factors in the forestry industry itself that increased concentration. Owing to distance and lack of information, it took a year before poor market conditions in England could be reflected by diminishing production in Canada. Thus, there often was a glut of timber. Furthermore, as the forests of the Valley came to be harvested farther away from Ottawa, costs of labour, provisioning, and transportation increased. Timber production was then even less sensitive to British cycles. The boom-or-bust nature of the industry meant that small operators were continually going out of business. As early as 1836, industry operators tried, without much success, to counter the problem of over-production when the Ottawa Lumber Association was formed.<sup>221</sup>

By 1870, there were four mills at the Chaudière, each producing 30,000,000 cubic feet of lumber and more per year: Eddy, Booth, Perley and Pattee, and Bronson and Weston. Also in the same category, elsewhere in Hull were Wright, Batson and Currier, and the Gilmours. There were also smaller sawmill operators in Hull, just as there were small sawmill operators elsewhere in Ottawa and the Valley. The trend, however, was always toward greater capitalization and concentration. The biggest of these firms came to be that of J.R. Booth, representative of the growth of large, native firms in the industry rather than British or American concerns. In 1903, Booth cut 125,000,000 cubic feet of lumber. A carpenter from the Eastern Townships, Booth died in 1925, only a few years after converting his company to a joint stock corporation. It was reputed at that time that Booth's company was the largest in the world owned by one person.<sup>222</sup>

Railways also contributed to the concentration of capital. In fact, they were the most important items of capital expenditure, even if most of the money came from the public, as had

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<sup>219</sup> Craigie, *op. cit.*, P.59.

<sup>220</sup> Arthur Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763 – 1867*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973, P.164.

<sup>221</sup> A.H.D. Ross, *Ottawa, Past and Present*, Ottawa: Thorburn and Abbott, 1927, P.155. Among the founders of the Ottawa Lumber Association were: Joseph Aumond, Peter Aylen, George Buchanan, John Egan, Joseph Moore, Nicholas Sparks, Charles Symmes, and William Thompson.

<sup>222</sup> Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard*, P.177

been the case with canals. The Bytown and Prescott Railway was an example of the railway fever of the times. Initiated by Boston capitalists trying to draw the Ottawa Valley into their hinterland, the rail line linked Bytown to Prescott. There, cargoes were to be shipped across the St. Lawrence. Rail traffic was to be resumed from Ogdensburg, New York to Boston. Timberers, landowners, manufacturers in Bytown, Kemptville, and Prescott contributed to the project. The Wrights were among the investors.<sup>223</sup> The project was a flop for several reasons, among them, the placement of the terminus at Rideau Falls rather than at the Chaudière. The City of Ottawa, renamed in 1855, lost \$250,000 of loans and unpaid interest, while the government also had to chip in to cover some of the municipality's debt.<sup>224</sup>

The pulp and paper industry introduced large amounts of American capital into the Valley for factories, machine plant, and hydroelectric development. During the 19th century, Canadian governments placed embargoes on unsawn logs produced on Crown Lands shipped out of Canada to encourage adding of value in Canada. Early in the 20th century, Quebec and Ontario repeated the same policy vis-à-vis pulpwood. This meant that American paper manufacturers had to operate in Canada if they wanted access to Canadian wood. Nineteen New York state companies had consolidated into the International Paper and Power Company in 1898. This corporation opened a branch plant, Canadian International paper, in Gatineau, in 1925. The capital invested in pulp and paper production meant that economic growth was fuelled in Central Canada, however, there was also the ever-present over-production, deeply felt during the depression of the 1930's. Towards the end of the 1920's, premiers Taschereau of Quebec and Ferguson of Ontario helped create the Newsprint Institute of Canada in an attempt to divide production among Canadian producers, maintain prices, and limit production.

Over-production was always the bane of the forestry industry. Operators tried in vain to limit production, but the most successful strategy for dealing with the boom-or-bust nature of the industry was concentration, as only companies with large capital reserves were able to weather the storms. There were great slumps in market demand in several periods: 1818 to 1821, 1825 to 1829, 1837 to 1842, and 1846 to 1854. The last of these was occasioned by the British, Liberal government's decision, according to the free trade ideology of the day, to abolish the preferential tariffs that had first spawned the Ottawa Valley timber industry. This slump ended with the growth of American demand facilitated by the Reciprocity Treaty. Finally, there was the depression of 1873 to 1895, with its long period of slow growth and frequent recessions, which worked to dampen demand for Ottawa Valley lumber.

The forestry industry always had a complex relationship with farmers and agriculture. The ebb and flow in this relationship influenced attitudes and policies of governments toward the industry. At first, timber-making parties were often farm families, with wife serving as cook and sons as labour. As the industry developed, labour in the shanties evolved into a system of mutual dependence between farmer and industry. The farmer would farm in the summer, while in the winter, farmer and teenaged sons would go to the shanties, leaving the women to operate the farm and raise the younger children. Such a system solved the problems of overhead costs of labour that hitherto had been supported by the employer, to the benefit of the employer, of course. The farmer would also supply produce, horses, and oxen for the shanty, and would stay on after delivering his goods in the fall. Ottawa Valley farmers supplied shanties with butter, oats, hay, wheat, pork, peas, potatoes, and eggs. As the industry advanced further away from

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<sup>223</sup> Cross, *op.cit.* Doctoral Thesis, P.305.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.* P. 308.

civilization, farmers from Carleton County continued to supply shanties as far away as the Bonnechère and Madawaska Valleys. Many companies solved the provisioning problem by establishing their own farms and hiring workers to operate them, as the Wrights did in Gracefield. When the company farm was closed, the core of a new village and farm community remained. One company farm was the farm of J.R. Booth, now the site of the federal government's experimental farm.

Mutual dependence was one side of the coin in the forestry/agriculture relationship. There was another side: mutual antagonism. This was especially seen with the question of settling the land between the Ottawa River and the Georgian Bay, potentially, prime forestry land. Agriculturists pressed for farmers to have access to these lands. Farmers accused the industry of buying up large tracts of Crown land, denuding them of forest, then holding them for speculation, an accusation that was often true. The industry complained that farmers would burn the forest on their land, and that fires would get out of control and burn good forestry land nearby, or that farmers would become illegal 'pirate' timberers, not paying for timbering rights. The lumber companies became advocates of conservation, fire control, and land-use planning, at least in their rhetoric, arguing that many areas were simply ill-suited for farming. Populist and progressive arguments against the influence of big money succeeded, however, so many madcap schemes for farming bad land in Ontario were launched. Always, the antagonism was laced with the physiocratic belief that farm life was inherently superior to the immoral way of life of the lumberman. The conflict between small farmers and forestry businessmen, in fact, was a continuation of the conflict in the 1837 / 1838 rebellion. In Quebec, this conflict was accentuated by a nationalist discourse about the rural way of life being superior to the godless life of working in the woods for the *Anglais*, while ignoring the farm. A part of the fight for this land was the colonization schemes of the Curé Labelle and the Quebec government, whereby French-Canadians were sent to eke out subsistence in the Laurentian Shield. Whose interests were going to win out in the management of new lands -- the forestry industry or the farmer -- was a continuing, public question during the 19th century in Quebec and Ontario.

#### Ownership in the Forestry Industry<sup>225</sup>

The first owners in the forestry industry in the Ottawa Valley, of course, were the Wrights. In 1814, the Wrights collapsed their enterprises into one company, P. Wright and Sons. To speak of the Wrights and their associates in the forestry industry, however, requires some elucidation. In addition to Philemon Sr., there were his sons: Ruggles, Tiberius, and Christopher. Their brother, Philemon Jr., died relatively young. Ruggles Jr. and his cousin, Alonzo, the son of Tiberius, were also involved in the industry. Philemon Sr.'s sons-in-law were also players in the industry: Thomas Brigham was Wright's administrator; Nicholas Sparks married Sarah Olmstead, the widow of Philemon Jr., and Thomas McGoey took part in the industry as part of the Gatineau Privilege. Charles Symmes, a nephew of Philemon Sr., operated out of Aylmer. Finally, there were a number of other unrelated associates such as Theodore Davis, who conducted the original survey of Hull Township for Wright, and Andrew Leamy, originally a

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<sup>225</sup> Useful sources for this section include: Guy Gaudreau, "Les concessionnaires forestiers québécois de la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle: essai de typologie", *Histoire sociale / Social History*, May, 1988; Hamelin and Roby, *op.cit.*; Robert Leggett, *Ottawa Waterway: Gateway to a Continent*, Toronto: U of T Press, 1975; Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard...*, *op.cit.*; Rossignol, *op.cit.*; and Charlotte Whitton, *A Hundred Years 'A-Fellin'*, Ottawa: Runge Press Ltd., 1943.

violent, rough customer in the woods, who later became a pillar of respectability in the community. As the years advanced, succeeding generations of Wrights, and the families into which the Wright descendants married, continued to play predominant roles in Hull. The Gatineau Privilege was an example of involvement of Wright allies in the forestry industry. In addition to P. Wright and Sons, Christopher Wright and Thomas McGoey were players, as well as Peter Aylen, and the Hamiltons and Low, from Hawkesbury. Not all was continually rosy with the Wrights and their associates, however, for the Wrights consistently squabbled with Symmes and Sparks, while Brigham sometimes had differences of opinion with Philemon Sr..

Symmes, Sparks, and Aylen all took part in the formation of the Ottawa Lumber Association in 1836, from which the Wrights were noticeably absent. Among the other founders of this organization were other key operators of the time such as John Egan, Alexander McDonnell, Joseph Moore, Simon Fraser, William Thompson, and Joseph Aumond of Bytown, one of the few, successful French-Canadians in the industry. (In 1844, Aumond employed a thousand men.) Other early important operators in the Valley included Thomas MacKay from Bytown, George Buchanan from Arnprior, Klock and Conroy from Aylmer, McLachlin from Arnprior, Gillies from Braeside, just west of Arnprior, and the Gilmours.

By 1843, P. Wright and Sons was dissolved. The Wrights' leadership role in Hull was replaced by the American capitalists who came to the Chaudière in the 1850's: Baldwin, from Maine; Young, Bronson, Harris, from New York; the firm of Perley and Pattee, from New Hampshire; and, Eddy, from Vermont; as well as Booth, from the Eastern Townships. Around 1870, there were many enterprises sawmilling in Hull: Wright, Batson and Currier; Gilmour and Hughson; Andrew Leamy; the Hull Lumber Company; Crandel and Whitcomb and Company, in addition to the enterprises at the Chaudière. Concentration, big transportation investments, growth in size, increased capitalization, and use of the legal form of the corporation -- all these were features of the sawmilling industry -- indeed of all the manufacturing enterprises of the forestry industry.

The story in the woods, where timber was created, however, was different. Historian Guy Gaudreau has examined woods activity in Quebec in the latter half of the 19th century and found a different story: fluidity and constant change among operators; not nearly as much concentration as in manufacturing or milling; and persistence of the family-owned company, rather than the publicly traded, joint-stock corporation.<sup>226</sup> This situation persisted until well into the 20th century when demand from American pulp and paper producers brought concentration in the woods. Gaudreau studied the number and extent of forestry permits granted in Quebec on Crown lands in four periods; 1856, 1872/1873, 1890, and 1907. Only four names re-appear in all periods as major permit holders: Gilmour and Hamilton, in the Outaouais; Price, in the Saguenay; and Baptist, in the St. Maurice Valley. Other names re-appear in several periods: Maclaren, Bronson and Weston, Booth, Edwards, and Gillies. At the bottom, among permit holders with under 99 acres, there were many operators coming and going: 71 in 1856, 87 in 1872/73, 83 in 1890, and 132 in 1907. 85% of these operators left the woods after 17 years, from one period to the next. Among a middle range of operators, holding from 100 to 699 acres, 50% disappeared from the forest after 17 years, from one period to the next. Gaudreau counted 23 of these operators in 1856, 64 in 1872/73, 62 in 1890, and 82 in 1907.

The category of the largest operators divided up 55 to 60% of the acreage of timber permits, however, there were quite a few in each period: 10 in 1856, 20 in 1872 / 73, 17 in 1890,

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<sup>226</sup> Gaudreau, *op.cit...*

and 24 in 1907. While concentration was the rule in secondary manufacturing in forestry products, primary production was still very competitive in the 19th century. There were many failures and corporate activity was rare. The typical enterprise was family-owned because only families could play in this risky business. Family businesses present problems of succession so succeeding generations might not follow in the footsteps of the company founder. In fact, sons sometimes established firms in competition with the original firm. Once again, Quebec woods operators were disproportionately English-speakers. Of the important operators, there were only three French-Canadian owned firms in 1872 / 73: Vachon, Robitaille, and Girouard and Beaudet. Only Vachon survived in the woods until the 1890 period.

Within the Outaouais, Hamelin and Roby identified the principal limit-holders in 1872 as follows (unless indicated otherwise, limit-holders were from the Ottawa Valley):<sup>227</sup>

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Total square miles of limits</b>	<b>Above Chaudière</b>	<b>Below Chaudière</b>
Gilmours	2,242.5	1,717	525.5
Hamiltons	2,043	1,784	259
Bronson, Weston, Young	1,503	1,503	--
James Maclaren & Co.	1,036.75	181.75	850
John Roche (Quebec City)	976.25	823	153.25
John Ross (Quebec City)	816	390	426
George Benson Hall (Quebec City)	795.5	795.5	--
Thomas Glover (Quebec City)	782	559	223
Bryson and Co.	766	766	--
Thistle	680	680	--
Alexander Fraser	676	676	--
James Ward (Quebec City)	654.25	232	422.25
Thompson and Company	515.25	--	515.25
Benson, Bennett (Quebec City)	263	263	--
Alexander Baptist (St. Maurice Valley)	82	--	82

While fluidity and competition appear to have been the rule among operators in the woods, within manufacturing and milling, concentration was the case. Writing during WWII, Charlotte Whitton, who served as mayor of Ottawa during the 1950's and 1960's, drew together lists of Valley operators who had dismantled sawmills before 1890 and after 1890.<sup>228</sup> The lists are illustrative of the extent of concentration that took place, as well as the length and breadth of the industry in the Ottawa Valley. These names are familiar, as many have been given to street names and other facilities in the Valley.

<sup>227</sup> Hamelin and Roby, *op.cit.*, p.210, 211.

<sup>228</sup> Whitton, *op.cit.*, p.137, 138.

Dismantled Sawmills in Valley Before 1890

<u>From Hull</u>	
Batson and Currier	
Edward Wright	
Wetherall Wright	
<u>Other Quebec Operators</u>	<u>From</u>
James Aglet	Portage-du-Fort
Benson, Bennett & Co.	Quebec City
Buckingham Manufacturing	Buckingham
R&W Conroy	Aylmer
A.A. Humphrey & Co.	Quebec City
John Lendon	Waltham
David Moore	Aylmer
N. McQuaig	Bryson
McDougall & Sons	Trois-Rivières
McVeigh Bros.	Bryson
John Poupore	Waltham
Walton Smith	Quyon
Henry Usborne	Portage-du-Fort
James Walker	Eardley

Plus 41 operators from Ottawa, Pembroke, Fitzroy Harbour, Arnprior, Pakenham, and other Ontario towns in the Valley. Included among these are only three French Canadian operators of sawmills, all from Ottawa: Aumond, Blondin and Riopelle, and Chevrier and Laframboise.

Dismantled Sawmills in Valley After 1890

<u>Hull</u>	
E.B. Eddy	
Gilmour and Hughson	
Hull Lumber Company	
<u>Other Quebec Operators</u>	<u>From</u>
James Baillie	Aylmer
East Templeton Lumber Co.	East-Templeton
Walter Findlay	Fort Coulonge
Fraser & Co.	Aylmer
J.B. Grier	Montreal
George Lette & Sons	Campbell's Bay
John Lumsden	Timiskaming
John Mann	Ville-Marie
James Maclaren & Co.	Buckingham
McMaster Lumber Co.	Aylmer



McLaren and McLaurin Lumber Co.	East-Templeton
Papineauville Lumber Co.	Papineauville
R. & T. Ritchie	Aylmer

Plus 34 other operators from Ontario towns in the Ottawa Valley. The story of John Egan is illustrative of the way fortunes were made and lost quickly in the forestry industry. In 1852, John Egan, an Irish Catholic from Aylmer, received 71 permits to operate in the Valley on 5,312 square kilometers of timber berths, second only to the Gilmours. In 1855, Egan employed 3,800 men and several hundred animals in 100 establishments. He paid \$2,000,000 of wages that year, and sent 44 rafts to market in Quebec. Under his political pressure, the Opeongo Road in Ontario was built to serve his lumbering interests, only one example of the fruitful product of this man's dubious procedures. Eganville, Ontario is named for him. Egan also served as mayor of Aylmer. In spite of his wealth and influence, Egan died a poor man, with his company in ruins only a few years after 1855.<sup>229</sup>

### Timbering Technique<sup>230</sup>

The basis of the whole industry in the Ottawa Valley was the original production of square timber, begun by Philemon Wright in 1806. An understanding of the technique employed in this industry is important for understanding the problems of the industry and how they were surmounted, as well as the roles of the state and labour.

As stated earlier, in the 1820's, the government recognized the existence of the timber industry by charging for use of the Crown land whence much of the timber came. Prior to this, the wood was simply absconded, either from Crown lands or from private lands held by farmers or others, including other woods operators. The government occasionally and half-heartedly tried to control this business, but as the leading advisors to the British authorities were businessmen, themselves operating in the woods, government control was sporadic. Under a new régime in the latter half of the 1820's, woods operators purchased timber limits on Crown Land by auction. Around Confederation, the price of this auctioned land was \$1 to \$1.50 per acre. The lands were divided into parcels of 24 square miles with maxima of ten miles of river frontage. Limit holders also paid yearly rent and duties on timber taken from Crown lands. Limits were distinguished by the heights of land that divided watersheds. These distinctions were tricky propositions, especially since the land in question had not always been subjected to surveys. The result was quarrels between rival companies and their gangs about who had the right to the timber from a given location. In the beginning, these disputes were resolved by force and violence. As the industry developed through the 19th century, however, capitalists reached amicable agreements over disputed limits.

All the operations within a limit were under the authority of the company agent, called the 'walking boss' or 'woods superintendent', often stationed at a company farm and dépôt. The

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<sup>229</sup> Gaffield, *op.cit.*, p.200.

<sup>230</sup> Useful sources about timbering technique include: D.D. Calvin, *A Saga of the St.Lawrence*, Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1975; Hughson and Bond, *op.cit.*; James Little, *The Lumber Trade of the Ottawa Valley*, Ottawa: Times Steam Printing and Publishing Company, 1872; Arthur Lower, "The Trade in Square Timber", paper presented to the Royal Canadian Institute, February, 1932; *Great Britain's Woodyard..* and *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*, both *op.cit.*; Robidoux; *op.cit.*; and Whitton, *op.cit.*.

initial selection of the timber groves to be harvested was the province of the timber cruiser. Often a Métis or Indian, the timber cruiser was a self-taught surveyor and mapmaker. He would identify where a shanty could be located according to quality, quantity, and types of trees. As well, the camp would have to be near to water, but of a sufficient height to avoid spring flooding. A shanty would be established at this site, under the authority of a foreman, who usually lent his name to identify the shanty. The camp included a clerk who handled books, timesheets, supplies; a cook and his assistants called 'cookees'; and shelters for supplies. The first crews came out by canoe or *bâteau* from Bytown, Hull, or Pembroke, the last of these having been founded in the 1820's. Primitive shanties were log huts without windows about a man's height, with no bunks. Men slept on hay, straw, or boughs surrounding a fire. During the first half of the 19th century, the shanty came to be the 'camboose', a building with a fireplace in the middle raised on sand with a square opening in the roof to let the smoke escape. The term 'camboose' is of Dutch origin, from 'kabin huis', or cabin house, and probably originated in New York. Against the walls were rows of berths which served as sleeping quarters. Over the fireplace on a crane were suspended the pots used for cooking. Initially, the cook was the wife of a farmer or an adolescent, but as the industry developed, the cook evolved into a position important for maintaining discipline in the shanty and for keeping the men satisfied. Later in the 19th century, shanties with stoves, fireplaces, and chimneys replaced the camboose, while living quarters were separated from dining quarters.<sup>231</sup>

A difficult, expensive job was supplying shanties with the necessities for operating during the winter. In the fall, early camp would be established with basic supplies brought by river. With the arrival of snow and ice, Scottish teamsters from Eastern Ontario, or French-Canadians would bring in supplies, following alongside or on the river, often staying to work in the shanty over the winter. Other than smithy supplies such as axes and chains, the supplies were indeed rudimentary: peas, flour, biscuits, pork, barley, rum, tobacco, smoking pipes. In the Gatineau Valley, teamsters were expected to travel twelve miles per day. At various spots were stopover places, where an ex-lumberjack and his wife were paid by the companies to feed men and animals and to provide lodging. These stopover places became the basis for communities in the Gatineau: Chelsea, Wakefield, Low, Kazabazua, Gracefield.

Between the start of the log drive in the spring and the start-up of timbering in the fall, a rudimentary camp might be established at the site of next year's operations. This camp would be staffed by the keep-over custodian, who watched the camp's supplies over the summer. There would be sufficient supplies to begin operations in the fall, before snow permitted sleighs to bring supplies in greater numbers. The custodian was often an anti-social character, sometimes an alcoholic, who would employ his time making spirits of oats, wheat, or whatever else he could use.

The company's agent would be stationed at the company farm and *dépôt*, accompanied by the chief clerk and the log culler, responsible for measuring timber. These farms of 500 or 600 acres would grow hay, straw, oats, livestock, and later in the century, vegetables for use in the shanties. They would be manned by a farmer and his wife and agricultural workers, and would include barns, storehouses, livery stables, pasture land and sometimes, a smithy and workshops for carpenters, boatwrights and blacksmiths.

The timber gang would be divided in two teams, each with a teamster and animals. There were three separate jobs among the lumberjacks: liner, scorer, and hewer. The liner would select

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<sup>231</sup> Hughson and Bond, *op.cit.*, P.80.

the tree to be cut, and chip an indentation on the side of the tree in the direction he wanted the tree to fall. Then, two men would hack alternately on the tree on the other side of the indentation until the tree fell. The tree would then be cleared of branches, and the logger would select the part of the tree that would be squared. This was dangerous work because branches and butts of trees could fly uncontrollably. These, the loggerjacks blithely called 'widow-makers'. The logger would cut out notches to the depth required for the timber every few feet. The hewer, standing on the timber, would cut the timber to the required depth, using a broad axe of 12 pounds. The timber would be canted to another side using levers and chains, and the operation repeated on another side of the timber. The ends of the timber would be carved to oblique butts to permit the timber to bounce off obstructions when floated, otherwise the timber might splinter and break. Sometimes, a hewer would initial his handiwork, while the butts of the timber were branded. For instance, Eddy used an "N" symbol, the Hamiltons an "H", Gilmour and Hughson a "G". The crosscut saw eventually replaced the axe, but only in the 1870's.

This process was extremely wasteful and conducive to fire; as much as a third of the tree was left to rot. The work was labour-intensive. Over a winter, a gang of two teams could produce about 80,000 cubic feet, approximately the contents of a raft. At the beginning of the square timber trade, timbers were sometimes two feet wide. As the industry advanced, timbers were smaller, but they were always at least one foot wide. In the beginning, the timber was cut to a flat surface, but in the 1860's, a less wasteful procedure developed where the timber was cut to a bevelled edge, described as 'waney', that followed the circumference of the tree.

Roads or skidways for transporting the timbers were built in the fall. Roadways had to be selected with no uphill stretches nor grades that were too steep downhill. With the arrival of snow, roadways were watered to make ice. If the grade downhill was steep, hot sand or gravel was applied to break the speed of the sleighs used for transporting timbers. At such locations, there would be stationed a man whose job was to heat the abrasive to keep the road open. Around turns, roadways required additional width to accommodate the turning sleigh.

As timber was produced, it was hauled to the edge of roads by teamsters. There it was piled and canted onto sleighs for transport to the water's edge. The logs were piled alongside the river so they could be rolled onto the water during the spring runoff. This was dangerous work. A teamster had to be careful that the load of timber didn't overtake him and his animals, especially on downhill grades. It was only in the 20th century that mechanized tractors came to be used for this work. While horses were used, oxen were often preferred since they were less skittish, especially in rough terrain. As well, horses had short lives, two or three years, before they collapsed from exhaustion.

The time between the end of the timber cutting, usually in March, and the beginning of the log drive in the spring, was used to build boats, and to assemble and build the materials required for rafting, such as planks with auger holes, floats, oars, traverses, pins, and withes. When the logs were rolled into the water in the spring, they would be held in place with booms. Then, they would be assembled into cribs, which were twenty or so timber sticks held together between floats by cross-pieces, or traverses, wooden pins, and withes (birch twigs that bound the wood together), and planks with holes. These cribs were of such a width (26 feet or less), that they could pass through timber slides at waterfalls. They would be assembled into a raft containing roughly the equivalent of a winter's work of a timber gang. Around 1870, a raft on the Ottawa might contain anywhere from 70 to 110 cribs. The raft would be manned by 40 or 50 men, and would take about two weeks to travel from the juncture of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers to Quebec City. On the St. Lawrence, 6 or 7 rafts would be made into a dram, the basic

unit for shooting the rapids on the great river. Oak was not floatable while pine was, so the former had to be placed carefully among the pine timbers.

On the rafts, hollowed birches or small, squat cabins served as sleeping quarters, while the raft also contained tools of the trade such as winches, anchors, and oars. One crib would serve as the cookery, with sand piled 18" high, on which a fire was made, pots suspended, or buried in the hot sand, the favoured cooking method for beans and bread.

In addition to making, sailing, and paddling the rafts, river drivers were required to guide logs through streams to rivers. This was done by poking at the wood with long poles, by birling, (running on the spot on logs which twirl in the water), and by pushing recalcitrant logs into the middle of the rivers. Jam were a frequent reality at narrow spots where a log that turned sideways could back up the flow of timber. Then, all hands would go into action trying to free the logs. This was dangerous since, when a jam was freed, the force of the timbers was powerful. Dynamite was sometimes used, at considerable cost to timber, life and limb. Jams were mitigated by the construction of dams that could be used to increase water flow. Gilmour and Hughson had up to 500 of these dams in the woods.

The foreman in charge of driving the rafts was the pilot. The rafts were steered by large, 30-foot oars. With fair winds, rudimentary sails were set. During ill winds, or where current was insufficient, such as on lakes, the raft was advanced by kedging, an operation in which an anchor was placed ahead of the raft; the raft was then edged forward by rolling in ropes or chains attached to the anchor with a winch. At slides, the rafts were broken into their constituent cribs and run; when rode by men, they offered a sensation apparently similar to sliding on a toboggan. Rapids were shot in rafts or drams. These crafts were often guided through the rapids around Montreal by Mohawks. At rapids and slides, there were often people who would rustle loose timbers, remove the brandings, and reclaim the wood as their own, apparently an occurrence that was common. By the 1840's, tugs were used on Lake Ontario and on the St. Lawrence between Montreal and Quebec City, but their use and introduction on the Ottawa only came later since the existing rafting and sailing techniques seemed to work well on the Ottawa. Using these methods, timberers were active as far as the Bonnechère Valley by the 1820's. By 1837, the McConnells, from Aylmer, were operating as far north as Lake Timiskaming, over the objections of the Hudson's Bay Company. By 1847, the headwaters of the Madawaska River had been reached. Shortly after Confederation, a cooperative formed by Baldwin, Young, the Hamiltons, Booth, and Perley and Pattee established the Upper Ottawa Improvement Company to bring down the logs collectively from above the Chaudière. This organization was created to take over operation of stations built and operated by the Department of Public Works. Constitutionally, the river surface is provincial jurisdiction, while improvements to rivers are under federal jurisdiction. By creating this organization, the timberers avoided the situation of different rules applying to their operations on either side of the Ottawa River as they took advantage of the federal jurisdiction. At Quebec and nearby Sillery, coves with jetties, wharves, and booms received the timber. Public servants assessed the quality of the wood and measured loads, a load being the equivalent of 50 cubic feet of wood. The ships built at Quebec were then used for shipping the wood to Great Britain.

This, then, was the timbering technique in the Ottawa Valley. When square timber came to be replaced by lumber, the same basic operations survived, however, use of smaller wood and tugboats with booms meant that transportation of the wood was easier. As well, lumber was sawn in the Valley itself, so there was no great log drive to Quebec City, other than for square timber. The transportation of sawn lumber, then pulpwood, and eventually, paper, was usually

done by railway to the United States, although there was some use of the Chambly, Rideau, and Welland canals.

### The State and the Forestry Industry<sup>232</sup>

The relationship of owners of the forestry industry with the state reflected the power held by these capitalists, sometimes called 'lumber lords' or 'lumber barons' by contemporaries. Writes historian Michael Bliss:

"The industry lent itself to creating kings and barons because of the power accumulated by single individuals like [John] Egan or Joseph Cunard [of New Brunswick] -- hirers of thousands of men, purchasers of hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of farmers' products, providers of work and wages and contracts in dozens of settlements where there was no other significant source of employment."<sup>233</sup>

Such power was held by Philemon Wright in the early days of Hull. The original source of this power and wealth? In the assessment of Bliss:

"Consistent with its feudal overtones, timbering was one of the few British North American business which can fairly be said to have been founded largely on theft."<sup>234</sup>

Leaving aside the question of theft or corruption in the fur trade, or in land dealings early in the 19th century, or in the railway fever in the middle of the 19th century, this is a damning indictment of the timbering industry from someone who normally is quite supportive of business. The lumber lords used and manipulated the state so that the interests of the latter coincided with those of the former. The major, transformative industry at the time in Canada, other than agriculture, was timber. It was to be the basis for the accumulation of wealth by capitalists eventually in secondary industries. The classic assessment in Arthur Lower's statement is still valid 3/4 of a century after Lower researched and wrote:

"Wealth has been eagerly seized by fair means or foul... no medieval ravisher could have been more fierce and unscrupulous than the lumberman. His lust of power and wealth have changed the face of the country, built cities and railroads, and created a sort of civilization."<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Useful sources for this section include: Michael Bliss, *Northern Enterprise: Five Centuries of Canadian Business*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990; Bond and Hughson, *op.cit.*; Craigie, *op.cit.*; Cross, Doctoral Thesis, *op.cit.*; Gaffield, *op.cit.*; Robert Peter Gillis, "The Ottawa Lumber Barons and the Conservation Movement", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, February, 1974; Robert Peter Gillis, "E.H. Bronson and Corporate Capitalism: A Study in Canadian Business Thought and Action", Master's Thesis, Queen's University, December, 1975; Sandra Gillis, *op.cit.*; Hamelin and Roby, *op.cit.*, Little, *op.cit.*, Arthur Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard...*, *The North American Assault...*, and "The Trade in Square Timber" all *op.cit.*; Joseph Tassé, *Philemon Wright ou colonisation et commerce du bois*, Montreal: La Minerve, 1871; and Whitton, *op.cit.*

<sup>233</sup> Bliss, *op.cit.*, p.134.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid*, p.135.

<sup>235</sup> Lower, *The North American Assault*, *op.cit.*, p.26.

Broadly speaking, there are three phases to the relationship of the forestry industry and the state. During the first phase, timbering was an illegal activity, sometimes tolerated, sometimes controlled by the state, but never effectively. In the second phase, which lasted from the middle of the 1820's into the 1840's, the state did try to control the industry by taxing it and providing some legal organization. This control was still half-hearted, partly owing to corruption. Importantly, however, the state did recognize the existence of the industry and tried to orient its direction somewhat. Both these first two phases were characterized by the use of violence as a common *modus operandi* to defend interests and settle disputes among industry participants. The third, broad phase corresponds to the two industrial revolutions described in this book, from the late 1840's to the late 1920's. During this period, the state served the interests of big lumber capital, and indeed, the industry could not have continued were it not for the interventions of the state. These interventions included canal and railway building, public works on rivers, licensing and taxing policies, international treaties, land-use policies, and conservation efforts, all aimed at supporting a big, concentrated, capital-intensive industry. At no time was the government a non-factor in a forestry industry in a free enterprise system independent of the interventions of the state.

The chief illegal activity during the first phase, although there were others, was cutting timber without permission on Crown lands, public lands. Sometimes, the justification was advanced that the timber being cut was for navy or other government contracts, and that this meant that the entrepreneur could cut anywhere he pleased. The authorities weakly complained about this practice.<sup>236</sup> Another practice was cutting timber without permission on privately held lands, a practice from which many farmers suffered. Entrepreneurs would even steal timber from land held by other timber entrepreneurs. Of course, in addition to Crown lands, cutting timber took place illicitly on the clergy reserves, which usually were 2/7 of the land granted under the leader-and-associates system. One of these land grantees, McNabb in Arnprior, sold timber rights he never had. There was also the illicit trade in lumber from Vermont down the Richelieu River, and from Maine, down the Saint John River into New Brunswick. Other than wanton theft, sometimes the inadequacy of surveying contributed to disputes. This was often the case at the heights of land that divided watersheds, where one entrepreneur did not really know where his rights ended and another's began, or at least, where confusion reigned and provided an opportunity to express naked power and avarice. Rustling was another practice. Loose logs would be picked up by rustlers who would remove brands. This was often the case below rapids or timber slides. Even the big operators engaged in this practice; in 1814, the Hamiltons accused the Wrights of rustling 40 pieces of timber lost at Rideau Falls; in 1832, Ruggles Wright complained of rustling on the Coulonge River by Nicholas Sparks, his brother-in-law!<sup>237</sup> The Ottawa Lumber Association, founded in 1836, tried to halt rustling but to no avail. Two other important points should be made about these practices. Firstly, violence was often the method used to resolve these disputes, with one gang of workers pitted against another. Secondly, in the days before the union of the two Canadas, an offender could escape justice merely by crossing the Ottawa River, this in an industry where operators worked indiscriminately on either side of the River. The violence that occurred in the 1830's in the Gatineau Valley was one factor that pushed the government to create the Gatineau Priviledge.

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<sup>236</sup> Craigie, *op.cit.*, p.90. See an example of a Hull settler, John Milk, cutting illegally for a government contract.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p.90, 91.

The government responded to these illegal activities in 1819 with a policy of seizing rafts in the Ottawa Valley of wood cut illegally. The wood was to be sold by auction, but timber operators agreed not to bid on each other's wood. In 1825, the militia was called out to seize Wright rafts.<sup>238</sup> This policy was changed when Deputy Sheriff Matheson in Upper Canada started levying fines for illegal cutting.<sup>239</sup>

These controls were of short duration, for in 1826, the trade received legal recognition. Each Canada appointed a Surveyor-general of Woods and Forests. A policy was established whereby operators paid duties to remove timber on land for which they had obtained limits by public auction. The Bytown Timber Office was established in 1841, after the union of the two Canadas, to regulate the industry in the Valley. This ended the problems created by different laws on each side of the River. During this same period, the state enacted a number of other measures to try and bring some order to the industry, and also provide revenue for the government. Since all timber from above the Chaudière, the main source of timber, had to go via the slides at the Chaudière, the government was now able to collect revenues with ease. The other main source of timber, the Gatineau Valley, was covered for revenue purposes by the Gatineau Privilege. Government revenues thus increased measurably, from \$10,612 in 1826, the first year of the new regime, to \$219,533 in 1861. Here are dollar figures for government revenue from the Outaouais. Note the slumps in activity where government revenue also diminished, 1832-1834, 1843-1844, 1847-1851, 1855-1856.

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<sup>238</sup> Sandra Gillis, *op.cit.*, p.215.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p.214.

1826	10,612
1827	13,226
1828	19,792
1829	18,594
1830	33,530
1831	40,090
1832	24,414
1833	26,553
1834	28,290
1835	54,067
1836	57,209
1837	53,260
1838	57,793
1839	62,528
1840	79,606
1841	80,702
1842	137,588
1843	86,382
1844	95,392
1845	137,505
1846	146,908
1847	132,889
1848	93,763
1849	92,117
1850	91,221
1851	110,998
1852	143,351
1853	148,090
1854	184,718
1855	150,368
1856	167,313
1857	197,514
1858	156,800
1859	182,850
1860	203,540
1861	219,533 <sup>240</sup>

In 1836, the government demanded that 1/4 of the duties on timber be paid when the license was granted, and that operators not use the timber they were going to harvest as security. This meant that an operator had to have considerable capital to begin operations, which favoured the big timber operator. In 1841, regulations were passed which meant that a minimum of 5,000

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<sup>240</sup> Tassé, *op.cit.*, p.36.



cubic feet of timber be cut for each mile of river frontage. This again favoured the larger operator over the small operator, as did the measure of paying double-duty on timber below a certain size.

In 1842, the government decided to exact some controls on the quality of timber exported to Britain from Quebec City. It authorized the Quebec Board of Trade to establish a board to conduct exams for cullers, the people who measured and classified timber for export. Criteria were to be regularized, and the mayor of Quebec City was to name the supervisor of cullers. Timber, staves, masts, spars, deals were to be classed as merchantable, acceptable but not top quality, or rejected. The system never worked well since the exporters at Quebec controlled the selection of cullers. The exporters' interest was that timber be under-classified so as to pay less to timber producers. The system was one that bred conflict and corruption. Corruption was also the situation in the granting of timber limits to friends of the administration in return for bribes, a regular practice, apparently, of John Egan. Sometimes, land supposedly obtained for timbering was not even harvested for timber, but rather held for speculation. Alternatively, the land might be denuded of trees and returned worthless to the Crown, with no duties having been paid.

In 1849, the Crown Timber Act provided for minimum limits of 50 square miles in unsurveyed acres and 25 square miles in surveyed areas, another measure that favoured the larger operators. It also provided for automatic renewal of leases under certain conditions. In 1851, ground rents were established, which meant that the government got revenues even if market conditions were such that timbering activity was reduced in a particular year. Again, only large operators could afford such extravagance.<sup>241</sup>

Timber revenues were an important source of income to the colonial government. During the 1840's, the government built public works to ensure the health of the forestry industry. Under the authority of the Department of Public Works, slides and other stations were built up to Rapides-Des-Joachims, in the Pontiac, making the river open to Lake Temiskaming. In 1848, at the request of operators Egan, Gilmour, Aumond, and Ruggles Wright, the government built a huge boom above the juncture of the Gatineau and Ottawa rivers, and built a canal to Leamy Lake where logs could await in tranquility before being carried downriver on the Ottawa.<sup>242</sup> In 1849, Public Works bought the last, privately-owned slide at the Chaudiere from Ruggles Wright for \$40,000. These investments, while essential to the health of the industry, were also profitable for the state. By June, 1867, just before Confederation took effect, Public Works had built in the Valley, between 1845 and 1867, \$719,247.13 of public works and gained net revenues from these works of \$488,423.38<sup>243</sup> In 1870, there were these numbers of Public Works stations, (slides, booms, dams, etc.) on Ottawa Valley rivers: Ottawa River - 11, Gatineau - 1, Madawaska - 15, Coulonge - 1, Noire - 1, Petawawa - 31, and Dumoine - 11.<sup>244</sup> By 1883, the federal government had built on the Saint Lawrence River and its tributaries: 5,071 feet of canals, 22,063 feet of slides, 112,579 feet of booms, 2,440 feet of bridges, 21,402 feet of dams, 274 feet of harbours, and 346 anchorage stations, all of which provided tolls to the Crown.<sup>245</sup>

In the 1840's, the British government began eliminating the preferential tariffs on Canadian wood which had launched the industry in the first place. The timber industry, as were

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<sup>241</sup> Sandra Gillis, *op.cit.*, P.200,201.

<sup>242</sup> Rossignol, *op.cit.*, P.198

<sup>243</sup> Tassé, *op.cit.*, P.67

<sup>244</sup> Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard*, *op.cit.*, P.212.

<sup>245</sup> Hamelin and Roby, *op.cit.*, P.213,214.

the other Tory interests in Canada, were furious and plumped for annexation to the United States. Eventually, this was to prove unnecessary, even as far as the Tories were concerned, owing to the Reciprocity Treaty with the U.S. in 1854, which established free trade in natural resources. A generous definition of natural resources included refined lumber, planks, and boards.<sup>246</sup> Demand was so strong from the U.S. that, even after the treaty ended during the Civil War, American importers easily absorbed a new 20% duty on Canadian lumber.<sup>247</sup>

The public works in the Valley also included the first dam built at the Chaudière in 1857. The Chaudière was also improved with public money, and water lots were sold to American capitalists to establish sawmills. Thus, Bronson and Weston opened a mill at the Chaudière in 1852; A.H. Baldwin in 1853; Levi Young in 1854; Perley and Pattee in 1857; and J.R. Booth in 1858.<sup>248</sup> Private money built the first dam across the length of the entire Chaudière in 1868, 400 feet long and 18 feet high, thus ensuring water levels during summer. This was replaced by another dam in 1896.<sup>249</sup> Government involvement also brought order to the question of privately-owned dams. A policy emerged whereby an entrepreneur had to make his dam available to others, even if he could charge reasonable tolls for the use of his dams. The question of logjams also received government attention. An entrepreneur could clear another's logjam and charge him for the cost. If there was no agreement between the two companies about this charge, the federal government provided arbitration.

The relationship between the government and the industry was complex and intricate. This relationship was nurtured by the many lumbermen who were also politicians: Philemon Wright, Wright's grandson, Alonzo Egan, Hamilton, Eddy, Bronson, Edwards, and others. During the 1920's, the principal owner of E.B. Eddy was none other than R.B. Bennett, Canada's Prime Minister during the Great Depression. Bennett had inherited the company from a former girl friend, E.B. Eddy's widow.<sup>250</sup>

One of the big projects enabled by political influence of the lumber operators was the Ottawa – Opeongo Road, built at the behest of John Egan in order to open up the lumber industry south of the River in the land between Renfrew and the Georgian Bay. In this region, the government alienated land to the lumber companies, often by bribes.<sup>251</sup> The conflict was joined now as to who was to get access to this land, the lumberman or the independent farmer. As part of this conflict, a new term was now heard in public debate, conservation, and the lumbermen were its proponents.<sup>252</sup> They argued for a system of land classification that would permit forestry in areas that couldn't be farmed owing to the poor quality of the soil. They argued for less wasteful cutting and practices, such as diameter limits on harvested trees. They supported measures to control forest fires, such as hiring forest rangers and prohibiting burning of forests by settlers. They were instrumental in the creation of Algonquin Park in Ontario and *parc des Laurentides* in Quebec, in part, to control the access of recreational hunters and fishermen to the forests. They wanted to stop over-cutting which led to floods, desertification, and poor wood quality. They advocated planning, which required large, centralized corporations, working in concert with the state. In one way, this appeal fell on deaf ears as the lands of the Shield were

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<sup>246</sup> Easterbrook and Aiken, *op.cit.*, P.203

<sup>247</sup> Tassé, *op.cit.*, P.4.

<sup>248</sup> Rossignol, *op.cit.*, P.200.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, P.200.

<sup>250</sup> Bliss, *op.cit.* P.415.

<sup>251</sup> Arthur Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada*, Toronto: MacMillian, 1936, P.60

<sup>252</sup> See the writings by Robert Peter Gillis, *op.cit.*.

opened to agricultural settlement in spite of the lumbermen, leaving the forest open to the illegitimate timberer, the 'pirate', as the lumberman called him. Thus, government policy, repeated virtually everywhere else in Canada, was that the primary business of land was settlement for farming; Crown land was not to be alienated except for settlement, Crown lands were also to be used to produce revenues for the public.<sup>253</sup> In the lumbermen's conflict with the farmer, the latter seemed to have won. In a larger sense, however,

“What they [the lumbermen] wanted was government to become an extension of the corporation. Most of the operators saw no other destiny for the nation than as an industrialized state developed by large corporations.”<sup>254</sup>

Arguably, the lumbermen won their bet, to the benefit of all, at least, according to lumbermen. As far as E.H. Bronson was concerned, “the corporation, instead of representing the plutocrat, much more truly typifies the industrious and frugal element of society.”<sup>255</sup>

Thus, the huge pools of capital created during the early illegal and corrupt phases of the industry in the Ottawa Valley were transformed into a situation whereby industry and government lived in mutual dependence, with the former unable to survive without the help of the latter. For politicians, many of them lumbermen themselves, assisting the development of the industry was as natural as breathing. The capital created from timbering was then used in the sawn lumber, pulpwood, and paper industries, part of the manufacturing sector of the economy. The establishment of CIP in Gatineau in 1925 was part of the rapid expansion of the pulp and paper industry by large, centralized, corporate giants. Writing in 1936, Arthur Lower wrote:

“At no time has Canada seen such a rapid industrial development as was based on the pulp and paper industry in the ten years following the War. [WWI]”<sup>256</sup>

All this investment resulted in enormous over-production, and an industry that came crashing down in the Great Depression of the 1930's. Equally, however, it can be argued that industrial development by large corporations in pulp and paper during the 1920's, including in the Ottawa Valley, went a long way towards creating modern, mass consumption, urban society in Canada.

### Quantities

This section tries to provide some indication of the quantities involved in the forestry industry during our period. This quantification is by no means comprehensive; such an exercise is beyond our means, however, we do indicate the value of inputs, or factors of production, and the outputs of the industry, chiefly exports to Britain and the U.S. These figures will demonstrate the importance of the forestry industry, especially to the Outaouais.

The first items were the public resources that were inputs to the industry, the trees that grew on Crown land. In 1847, the government gave out 665 operating licenses for forests on Crown lands.<sup>257</sup> By the time of Confederation, governments rented out 31,600 square miles, for

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<sup>253</sup> Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier...*, op.cit., p.92.

<sup>254</sup> Robert Peter Gillis, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, op.cit., p.24.

<sup>255</sup> Robert Peter Gillis, Master's Thesis, op.cit., p.17.

<sup>256</sup> Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, op.cit., p.127

<sup>257</sup> Hamelin and Roby, op.cit., p.9. Of these licenses, only 30 went to French Canadians, among them, fifteen to Joseph Aumond of Bytown.

which they received \$361,670 in revenues.<sup>258</sup> In 1871, the government of Quebec ceded 611 limits covering 15,794 square miles in the Outaouais.<sup>259</sup> The Ottawa Valley, at the time of Confederation, was the largest forest production area in Canada. Forest production in the Valley was divided roughly in a 2:1 proportion in favour of the Quebec side.<sup>260</sup> The Outaouais was the locus of the largest portion of Quebec forestry rights. By the late 1880's, 1886 – 1890, 71.4% of the land granted for Quebec logging rights was in the upper Outaouais above the Chaudière, while another 11% of this land was in the Lower Outaouais, including the Gatineau Valley. All other Quebec regions combined, the South Shore of the Lower St. Lawrence and the St. Maurice and Saguenay valleys, only totalled 17.2% of the land granted for logging rights in Quebec. Thereafter, the proportion of land granted in logging rights in the Outaouais declined to 57.4% in the period from 1901 to 1905, versus 41.6% in the other three regions of Quebec.<sup>261</sup>

The Ottawa Valley was the subject of considerable public investment in public works. In addition to 11 stations on the Ottawa itself, the Federal government operated 31 stations on the Petawawa and 15 on the Madawaska rivers in Ontario, as well as 11 on the Dumoine River in Quebec, and one each on the Gatineau, Coulonge, and Noire rivers in Quebec. These stations included dams, piers, bridges, booms, slides, canals, and anchorages. Public investment in canals and railways was always justified as necessary for the health of the forestry industry, but what portion of public expenditures on these could be attributable to the forestry industry, while probably an interesting intellectual exercise, is well beyond the scope of this study.

Of course, all this public expenditure was often justified by the employment created by the industry, thus estimates of employment provided by the industry, especially by promoters of the industry, were suspect and greatly inflated. Census information was unreliable as census takers seldom went into the hard-to-reach places in the woods. As well, there was only room on the census for indication of one occupation, while many loggers were also farmers. Realistically, we can say that during the 1840's, the forestry industry in the Valley employed about 2,000 men in the woods and another 8,000, many of them the same men, driving the wood on the rivers to Quebec City. In 1846, according to Joseph Tassé's contemporary account, the Ottawa Valley industry employed 7,200 men, 2,880 horses, and 720 pairs of oxen in order to produce 18,000,000 cubic feet of wood.<sup>262</sup> In 1862, 20,000 men were employed in the Valley shanties, again according to Tassé, while around Confederation, Tassé suggests there were 40,000 in the woods in the Valley, while 15,000 were transporting the wood.<sup>263</sup> These figures seem inflated; in fact, Tassé was a promoter of the industry. A better estimate, by Hamelin and Roby, is that 20,000 worked in the forestry industry in the Outaouais by 1880.<sup>264</sup> More specifically, the Chaudière mills employed 6,000 men while another 3,800 produced the wood in the forest for milling at the Chaudière.<sup>265</sup>

Probably the best and most accurate figures, if we judge the reasonableness of the rest of his contemporary description of the industry, were those advanced by Montreal lumberman

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<sup>258</sup> Little, *op.cit.*, p.16.

<sup>259</sup> Alexis de Barbezieux, *Histoire de la province ecclésiastique d'Ottawa*, Ottawa: La Compagnie d'Imprimerie d'Ottawa, 1897, p.163.

<sup>260</sup> Tassé, *op.cit.*, p.67.

<sup>261</sup> Guy Gaudreau, *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, *op.cit.* p.18,19.

<sup>262</sup> Tassé, *op.cit.*, p.66.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid*, p.66.

<sup>264</sup> Hamelin and Roby, *op.cit.*, p.226.

<sup>265</sup> Arthur Buies, *L'Outaouais supérieur*, Quebec City: C. Darveau, 1889, p.72.

James Little.<sup>266</sup> According to Little, in 1870, there were approximately 15,000 employed in the woods in all of Canada, 10,000 in sawmills, 25,000 moving the wood on lakes, rivers, canals, and rail, while 17,000 seamen served on 1,200 ships engaged in export to Britain. The only thing missing from this estimate is the employment of men building the ships for shipping abroad, but Little was a lumberman and not a shipbuilder.

Little's pamphlet provides a useful estimate of the cost of provisioning the shanties.<sup>267</sup> Little used as an estimate of production, 30,000,000 cubic feet of wood, or 150,000 logs averaging 200 cubic feet a piece, which would constitute 300 rafts averaging 100,000 cubic feet each. This would require \$55,000 of supplies. The scale of supplies required was impressive, even if considered in absolute terms with no points of comparison.

- 825 barrels of pork
- 900 barrels of flour
- 500 bushels of beans
- 37,000 bushels of oats
- 300 tons of hay
- 3,750 gallons of syrup
- 7,500 lb of soap
- 1,000 lb of grindstone
- 3,000 lb of tobacco
- 3,750 lb of rope
- 1,500 boom chains, 7 feet in length
- 45 boats
- 1,800 blankets
- 15 cookeries
- 375 cant-dogs (levers used for handling logs, consisting of a wooden handle with a blunt steel tip and a moveable steel hook at its lower end -- Gage Canadian Dictionary, 1983, p. 169)

As well, there were many items, such as axes, cables, and sleighs, which had to be replaced regularly owing to wear and tear. Little suggested that all these supplies could furnish 1,050 men, 450 producing timber, 300 men transporting, and 300 teamsters along with their teams of horses and oxen.

Another cost of the industry was forest fires. It was only towards the end of the 19th century that industry operators began to espouse conservation. The square timber technique left as much as 1/3 of the trees cut to waste, rot, dry, and become a fire hazard. In areas that were cut over, especially when all species of trees were harvested, rainfall and water flow could diminish, adding to fire hazards. Furthermore, forests are naturally subjected to cycles of burn and regeneration. As well, farmers living near logging areas often set fires to clear the woods, which could spread to prime timber land. One estimate of the loss accruing to forest fires was \$5,000,000 in 1885.<sup>268</sup> To put this loss in perspective, the figure is almost the equivalent of the dollar value of the square timber, pine and spruce beams, and oak staves, barrels and casks

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<sup>266</sup> Little, *op.cit.*.

<sup>267</sup> See Hamelin and Roby, *op. cit.*, P.76.

<sup>268</sup> Buies, *op. cit.*, P.76

exported from Quebec City to Britain in 1885.<sup>269</sup> Many lumbermen, defending their industry, argued that as much forest was destroyed by fire as the relatively small number of trees they harvested. In fact, their own practices contributed to the costs of fires borne by the public.

There have been estimates made of the amount of timber production in the Ottawa Valley. Using the annual returns of the Supervisor of Cullers for the United Canadas, here are figures for the years 1844, 1845, 1846.<sup>270</sup>

#### Timber Production in Ottawa Valley in Cubic Feet

	<b>WHITE PINE</b>		
	1844	1845	1846
Below Chaudière	3,167,031	5,598,523	7,119,545
Above Chaudière	6,052,783	8,319,466	7,532,764
Total Valley	9,219,814	13,917,989	14,652,309
	<b>RED PINE</b>		
	1844	1845	1846
Below Chaudière	118,856	99,658	321,589
Above Chaudière	3,989,197	4,259,184	4,543,549
Total Valley	4,108,053	4,358,842	4,865,138
	<b>OAK</b>		
	1844	1845	1846
Below Chaudière	33,296	73,836	101,003
Above Chaudière	17,488	126,272	126,272
Total Valley	50,884	200,108	227,275

This, most assuredly, represented a dramatic growth from 1806, when Philemon Wright sold one raft at Quebec with considerable difficulty. By the 1860's, the harvesting of timber had been more or less maintained, with a considerable decline of red pine square timber. The new element, however, was the sawn lumber being shipped in ever-increasing quantities to the United States. In 1863, lumberman Allan Gilmour estimated annual production in the Valley to be

<sup>269</sup> These figures are derived by this author using information about wood exports from Quebec City, as reproduced in Hamelin and Roby, *op. cit.*

White and red pine	\$1,868,626	
Oak	747,176	
Elm	293,682	
Birch	114,708	
Ash	78,212	
Sub-total for square timber	\$2,098,404	
Pine and spruce beams	\$2,188,070	
Oak staves, barrels, casks	<u>\$89,493</u>	
Total Exports	\$5,375,965	...

Of exports for 1885 vs. loss in forest fires in the Outaouais in 1885, \$5,000,000.

<sup>270</sup> See Lower, Great Britain's Woodyard, *op.cit.*, p.208.

worth \$3,114,166, comprised of the following: 13,000,000 cubic feet of white pine square timber, comparable to the figures of the 1840's; 2,250,000 cubic feet of red pine square timber; 2,250,000 pieces of pine beams; and 60,000,000 surface feet of other sawn lumber; in addition to small trades in square timber of elm, tamarack, and other species.<sup>271</sup> James Little provided figures for forest production in Canada during the first year of Confederation, July 1, 1867, to June 30, 1868.<sup>272</sup> While these figures would have also included production in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, they do illustrate the increasing importance of sawn lumber products relative to square timber. Here are the dollar values of Canadian forest products in descending order during the first year of Confederation.

Planks & boards	6,640,689
Deals	3,989,761
White pine square timber	2,467,629
Oak staves	782,176
Oak square timber	723,911
Firewood	495,648
Red pine square timber	438,256
Elm square timber	309,518
Birch square timber	164,356
Shingles	157,133
Potash	156,205

The total products of Canadian forests, including some minor products not listed above, were worth \$18,262,170.

Square timber continued to come principally from above the Chaudière, while the Gatineau Valley produced an increasing amount of saw logs. Exclusive of saw logs that went to feed the Chaudière mills, during 1869 / 1870, passing through the Ontario slides on the Chaudière were 13,351 cribs of square timber with 300,689 pieces or roughly 24 pieces per crib; 196 cribs of deals; 81 cribs of flatted timber for a total of 13,628 cribs. Through the Hull slide passed 213,143 saw logs and 2,300 pieces of flatted timber. From the Gatineau Valley came 496,009 saw logs, 7,002 pieces of square timber, 1,124 pieces of flatted timber, and 1,123 pieces of round cedars.<sup>273</sup> These products were transported down the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence, mostly to Quebec City, although some were destined for Montreal.

Production of the Chaudière sawmills, mostly destined for the U.S., was 25,000,000 board feet in 1859. In 1868, production had quadrupled to 100,000,000 board feet and reached 250,000,000 in 1871. In spite of the *fin-de-siècle* depression, production grew to 288,000,000 board feet in 1886, and 343,000,000 in 1896. Production of sawn lumber reached a zenith in

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<sup>271</sup> Tassé, *op.cit.*, p.66.

<sup>272</sup> Little, *op.cit.*, p.26,27.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid*, p.25.

1903 / 1904, then dramatically declined, such that by the late 1920's, the sawn lumber business at the Chaudière had nearly disappeared.<sup>274</sup>

Figures on Crown land production in Quebec for the period 1870 to 1905 are also useful for summarizing the development of the industry.<sup>275</sup> Square timber production peaked in 1871 – 1872, dropped constantly until the 1880's when the bottom fell out of the market. Thereafter, there was a slight recovery but never at previous levels. Sawn lumber production, most of it sold to the U.S., peaked in 1873/74, then diminished during the depression of the 1870's. Thereafter, the market continued to grow steadily until its final zenith, 1903 /1904. The market for pulpwood existed in very small quantities at the end of the 1880's, then exploded in 1900, greatly boosting the overall figures for forestry production in Quebec. Hence, the useful, summary description of the forestry industry in the Ottawa Valley: from timber to lumber to pulp wood to pulp and paper.

Analyzing exports of wood from Quebec provides additional understanding of the role that the forestry industry played in Canada. The sudden growth of the industry during Napoleon's blockade of England is revealed in these figures. In 1805, 170 ships left Quebec City with wood bound for England; in 1810, 661 ships sailed from Quebec City to England with Canadian forestry products.<sup>276</sup> In the first half of the century, wood played a preponderant role in exports from Canada. In 1851, exports totalled £2,666,982, of which 57% was wood products.<sup>277</sup> Four-fifths of this was exported to Great Britain. While exports continued to increase to both Britain and the U.S., by the 1880's, the U.S. was the principal destination of Canadian wood.<sup>278</sup> Although wood remained an important Canadian export, agricultural products, especially wheat, surpassed wood during the first industrial revolution in Canada. Nevertheless, wood products continued to be a more important Quebec export as compared to Canada as a whole. In 1885, 25% of Canadian exports were wood products, while 40% of Quebec exports were wood products.<sup>279</sup>

The backbone of the export trade from Quebec City with Britain was square timber. At its peak in 1876 / 77, 24,694,160 cubic feet were shipped.<sup>280</sup> Hamelin and Roby provide further information about this trade, and the other, smaller, related trades at Quebec.<sup>281</sup> White pine exports were at a high 5-year average in the period of 1862 – 1866: 18,600,000 cubic feet. This fell steadily to the 5-year low, during 1897 – 1901, of 2,800,000 cubic feet. Red pine exports reached a 5-year period high during 1848 – 1852: 4,000,000 cubic feet, declining thereafter to be only 200,000 cubic feet average for year from 1897 – 1901. The exception was 1863, when 4,000,000 cubic feet of red pine were exported in the same year that 23,100,000 cubic feet of white pine were exported, which were the highest levels ever for each product. This trade with England in white and red pine resisted the early years of the 1873 – 1896 depression, but not the later years. Other wood products from Quebec City also resisted the early years of the depression but not later years, for example: square timber oak, from 3.6 million feet in 1877 to

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<sup>274</sup> Courtney Bond, *The Ottawa Country*, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968, p.36.

<sup>275</sup> Gaudreau, *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, op.cit., Table 1, p.6.

<sup>276</sup> Louis-Marie Bourgoïn, "Jos Montferrand, contremaître de chantier et guide de cage", *Asticou*, No.23, June, 1980, p.28.

<sup>277</sup> Hamelin and Roby, *op.cit.*, p.9.

<sup>278</sup> Buies, *op.cit.*, p.65

<sup>279</sup> Gaudreau, *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, op. cit. p.8, Table 2.

<sup>280</sup> See Hamelin and Roby, *op. cit.*, appendices.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*



.5 million in 1901; square timber elm, from 2.1 million feet in 1863 to .5 million in 1900; square timber birch, from .8 million feet in 1874 to .4 million in 1900; square timber ash, .3 million feet in 1876 to .1 million feet in 1901; pine and spruce beams, from a 5-year average of 7.6 million pieces in 1877 to 1881, to 5.4 million pieces in 1896 – 1901. Finally, barrels, staves, and casks worth \$670,134 were exported in 1872, but these exports had virtually disappeared by 1901.<sup>282</sup>

### Summary

From its modest and illegal beginnings, the forestry industry in 19th century Canada, although also present in New Brunswick, was mostly concentrated in Ontario and Quebec, specifically in the Ottawa Valley. Within the Valley, the greatest locus of operation for the industry was above the Chaudière on the Quebec side, although there were other important sub-regions, the Gatineau, Lièvre, and Rideau valleys. The original and most important products were square timber of white and red pine, with smaller, square timber trades in oak, elm, and birch. There was value added in the production of staves, masts, spars, beams, and deals, usually shipped to England. Around the mid-century, as part of the first industrial revolution in Canada, emerged the U.S. market for Canadian sawn lumber. This market grew in relative importance compared to the British market until it surpassed the latter in the 1880's, this in spite of the 1873-1896 depression. As soon as sawn lumber reached its zenith at the beginning of the 20th century, a new product emerged, pulpwood, which surpassed sawn lumber production in the second decade of the 20th century.

Most of the pulpwood was destined for the U.S. When Canadian laws came to require further adding of value in Canada, American capitalists, in the form of the modern corporation, invested massively in paper products in Canada destined mostly for the American market. When combined with the native, Canadian investment in pulp and paper, this investment produced hitherto, unimagined economic growth during the 1920's. All this resulted in the overproduction that heightened the effects of the 1930's depression. Meanwhile, the last raft of square timber from the Valley, via the Coulonge River, reached Quebec City in 1911.

From its illicit and violent beginnings, the forestry industry had created huge pools of capital that helped create the industrial, capitalist class in Canada. With direct, American investment in pulp and paper, and related hydroelectric production during the 1920's, the forestry industry contributed to the creation of modern, urban, mass consumption, Canadian society, a society that more or less continues to exist today. The forestry industry also created a greatly expanded working class working in the woods, the subject of the next chapter.

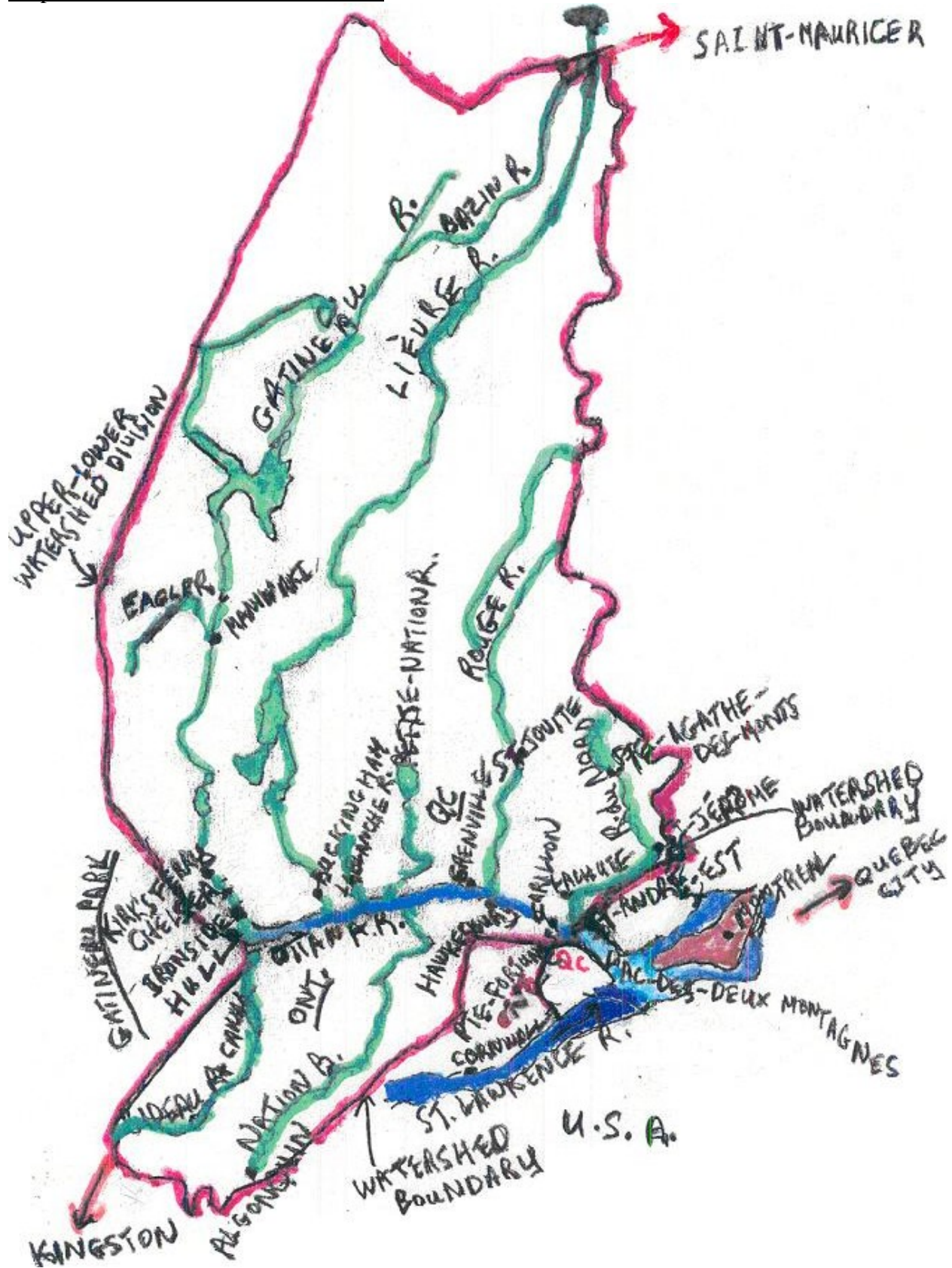
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<sup>282</sup> Robidoux, *op. cit.*, P.76

Map – Upper Ottawa River Watershed



Map – Lower Ottawa River Watershed



## CHAPTER 6 – LABOUR IN THE OTTAWA VALLEY FOREST

### Introduction

While the forest industry contributed to the formation of an industrial bourgeoisie in Canada, it also helped expand the working class. In 1800, the number of workers was small, limited to the fur trade and to artisans in villages and the major towns of the Canadas: Quebec City, Trois-Rivières, and Montreal, as well as Halifax, Nova Scotia and Saint John, New Brunswick. Most people were farmers, while there were small numbers of businessmen and *petits-bourgeois*, such as clergy and professional people. By Confederation, most Canadians were still farmers, but there was now an industrial proletariat and a rural proletariat, the latter composed mostly of forestry workers and farm labourers. By 1929, the majority of Canadians lived in towns and cities, and worked for wages or salaries. Modern Canada had emerged -- a mass, consumption, urban society -- and the forestry industry of the Ottawa Valley helped create this society.

### Sources of Forest Labour

The first workers in the forestry labour in the Ottawa Valley were Americans; not surprising for many reasons, among them, the American origin of the first entrepreneurs in the forestry, and of the Hull settlement. As well, there were American settlements in the Rideau Valley, a principal area of activity of the Wrights and Hamiltons. Philemon Wright had brought axemen from Massachusetts to Hull to clear his land. They introduced techniques such as use of the broad axe, and the use of oxen for hauling wood. Wright's first, local workers were his farmer neighbours, especially when he cut wood in the immediate vicinity of Hull. When the Wrights expanded into the Rideau Valley, the supply of labour became a problem as his neighbours were too busy farming to work on the log drive to Quebec. So, Wright hired workers from Quebec City, workers whom Wright would have met on his forays there; thus, they would have been already somewhat familiar with the timber industry. These workers from Quebec City became the mainstay of Wright's labour force, and were joined by French-Canadians from the Montreal area. By the time of Wright's contracts on the construction of the Rideau Canal, 1826-1832, the majority of Wright's workers were French-Canadian. In one sample of Wright's workers, 90% of 230 were French-Canadians; in another sample of 187, 60% was French-Canadian.<sup>283</sup>

During the 1830's, years of agricultural crisis in the St. Lawrence Valley reached their peak. French Canadians moved from their ancestral homeland in the Saint Lawrence Valley into the Vaudreuil, Soulanges, and Deux-Montagnes regions west of Montreal in search of farmland. This westward movement continued into the counties of Eastern Ontario: Glengary, Stormont-Dundas, Prescott, Russell, and Carleton, into Bytown, the Outaouais, and to points, still further west in Ontario, such as Renfrew, Kingston, Pembroke, North Bay, and other points further west and north. Everywhere that French-Canadians colonized, they had to clear the land. It is not surprising that they developed a skill with the axe that was a normal, necessary part of everyday life. In addition, French-Canadians had been *voyageurs* in the fur, trade and had developed skills and knowledge of the rivers of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence valleys. This natural predilection for the work of the lumberjack evolved into a system of mutual dependence between farm and forest. A settler and his teenaged sons would go into the woods in the winter, and return to tend

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<sup>283</sup> Douglas McCalla, "Forest Products and Upper Canadian Development, 1815-1846", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. LXVIII, no. 2, June, 1987, p. 184.

the farm in the summer. As well, the produce of his farm would be sold to the timber operator, along with the animals that drove farm supplies to the timber camp. Thus agriculture grew in the Ottawa Valley, following the path traced by the timberers. Most forest workers in the Outaouais came from Lower Canada. Historian Douglas McCalla adds that at least one-half of the forest workers in Ontario shanties also came from Quebec.<sup>284</sup> The men were mostly young and unmarried. In the 1852 census, 69% of forestry workers in the Outaouais were unmarried.<sup>285</sup> 75% were between 15 and 34 years old, with the biggest tranche of 29.3% between 20 and 24 years of age.<sup>286</sup>

The first capitalists in the forestry industry were Americans such as Wright as well as Baxter Bowman and Levi Bigelow, of Buckingham. They were joined by younger relatives of the British owners of the firms that bought timber in Quebec City for shipment to Britain, and by the American capitalists who invested in the sawmills at the Chaudière. There were only a few Irishmen such as John Egan and Peter Ayles, and only a few French-Canadians later in the 19th century. A pool of native Canadian capitalists emerged, usually of Scottish origin as revealed in the names of major timber operators in the Valley: Maclaren, Gillies, Fraser, Thompson, McGill, etc.. Some of these merchants had first made their money in the fur trade, then moved into banking and other financial business.

Scots had another role in the labour force of the forestry industry. It appears that they inherited from Americans the jobs of tending oxen and working with horses, although French-Canadians also handled this work.<sup>287</sup> Germans from loyalist settlements in Eastern Ontario were used to man rafts at the Long-Sault rapids near Grenville, while Iroquois were used at the Lachine rapids.<sup>288</sup> Indians and Métis were often employed as timber scouts who went into the woods to locate the stands of wood to be harvested, and to select the site of the timber shanty. One other ethnic group deserves specific mention, the Irish. Firstly, Protestants, then beginning in the 1830's, Irish Catholics, found employment in the forestry industry. 'Found employment' is euphemistic. The entry of the Irish was dramatic, as we shall see later. By the end of the 19th century, French-Canadians were attracted to the better paying jobs of the city. In many cases, their places in the forestry were taken by immigrants from Scandinavia, Finland, and the Slavic countries, people also familiar with life in the woods.

### Division of Labour

The original shanty group was often based on a settler's family. Five or six people might include a liner, scorer, hewer, trail-maker, teamster and cook, the last often being the wife or a young son. Eventually, permanency and professionalization emerged among these workers around mid-century, when the industrial revolution began in Canada. The work came to be divided into specializations. When axes were used to fell trees, a timber team would be composed of three axemen: liner, scorer, and hewer, along with a teamster and accompanying horses or oxen. Around 1870, with the advent of the crosscut saw, a timber team became just two men: a feller and his assistant. Skidders would serve two teams. Their job was to collect the

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<sup>284</sup> *Ibid*, p. 184.

<sup>285</sup> Chad Gaffield, editor, *Histoire de l'Outaouais*, Quebec City: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1994, p. 182.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid*, p. 204.

<sup>287</sup> Arthur Lower, *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973, p. 184.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid*, p. 186. See Lapointe, *L'Île de Hull*, P. 48-56, for some excellent photographs of forestry work during our period.

timbers and assemble them, often on sleighs, near to the road. Roads were laid out by the roadmakers. Where grades were too steep, a man might be stationed to heat and apply abrasives to the road to slow down the descent of the timber sleighs.

A large shanty could house 40 to 60 men, although shanties of twenty men were also common. The camp was under the control of a foreman. A clerk would record time worked by the men, supplies (such as tobacco or clothes) purchased by the men from the 'van', the company store, as well as keeping the shanty's books. The cook was responsible for the domestic life of the shanty, and he might be assisted by a cookee, a young boy. The cook was an important position for maintaining discipline and a happy work force with full stomachs.

The original felling team, when axes were used, was comprised of a liner, who selected the tree to be cut and the orientation of the cut, as well the portion of the tree that was to be squared into timber. He was assisted in the work of felling the tree by the scorer, who would subsequently remove the branches of the fallen tree, and standing on the tree, would chop notches every few feet to the depth required to produce the timber. The hewer would hew the timber to the right proportions using a broad axe and the notches laid out by the scorer. The hewer would often initial his work, then apply the company's brand to the butt of the timber.

The teamsters were responsible for the hauling of both supplies and logs. The loaders were responsible for loading the timber onto sleighs, using oxen and horses. A large shanty might also house boatwrights who built the boats and canoes used in the drive; carpenters, who constructed the shanty buildings and the material to bind rafts; and blacksmiths who maintained axes and sleighs. These positions could also be located at the farm dépôt to serve more than one shanty. The farm dépôt housed the 'walking boss' or company agent, who was responsible for the company's operations within a timber limit, usually defined as a watershed. He was accompanied by a farmer and his wife, farm workers, and the company clerk. Companies maintained stopover points, often run by ex-loggers and their wives, to house and feed men and animals on their way to the timber camp. Shanties were maintained during the summer months by a keep over custodian.

During the drive, the principal tasks of the men were to keep the timbers in open water, especially to avoid jams where creeks, streams, or rivers narrowed. Often, ponds or creeks were dammed to create small lakes to store logs and create sufficient water flow. The drivers followed the logs from shore or from boats, poking and prodding the logs. At the main river, logs were collected in booms that were assembled into cribs and rafts. The drive started in April during the spring runoff that increased the volume of waterflow in streams. The last rafts would reach Quebec City during July. In August, men would be employed assembling logs that had tailed offshore during the drive in order to clean up the rivers for the drive the following year.

### Wages

During the early years of the forestry industry, Philemon Wright complained of high wages. While it is questionable whether the men he employed shared this opinion, it is possible that wages were high when the Wrights first started operating in the Rideau Valley, and labour was in short supply. Once French-Canadians started arriving in the region in numbers, to work alongside the original Americans however, there was a continual supply of cheap labour seeking employment in the timber camps, a supply that increased with the arrival of the Irish. Douglas McCalla suggests that the men working in the industry in its initial years received \$8 to \$12 per month, with room and board provided.<sup>289</sup> Other estimates were \$10 in 1820, \$12 in 1840, \$15 by

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<sup>289</sup> McCalla, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

Confederation, and \$30 by the 1880's.<sup>290</sup> By 1900, wages doubled and tripled to compete for French-Canadians who were attracted to the better-paying jobs in the cities. At the same time, hours and quantity of work diminished. It was only with WWII and the post-war period however, that wages in the woods would increase again significantly.

There could be considerable variation in the wages paid individual workers depending upon their experience, or when indeed they were hired. Frequent depressions in the lumber market, and too much supply, constantly conspired against workers. Within the industry, there were other trends. Some trades typically received more, for example, hewers, river pilots and cooks, as well as men in traditional trades such as smiths, sadlers, carpenters, and boatwrights. Foremen typically earned two or three times the going rate for men. For example, it is reputed that Jos Montferrand, who worked as a shanty foreman for Joseph Moore, Baxter Bowman, Peter McGill, and Allan Gilmour, retired from the woods at 54 years of age with a small fortune.<sup>291</sup>

In urban Hull and Ottawa, wages at the Chaudière were controlled at low levels, as they were in the woods. The lumber operators had unwritten agreements for wage rates for various types of work in the Valley. As well, they refused to hire each other's men so that labour prices could not be bid upward.<sup>292</sup> In total, about ¼ to ½ of the cost of producing timber went for wages, roughly the same amount that went to feeding men and animals, and providing basic supplies such as axes and sleighs.<sup>293</sup> These wages were reduced, furthermore, depending upon purchases that the men made at company stores for tobacco, tea, or clothing. These reductions were not insignificant. Accounts for 269 Wright workers during the 1832-1840 period were analyzed by Douglas McCalla. 29 workers, or 11%, received nothing from the Wrights at the end of their term, since they had spent all of their wages in goods advanced from the company store. Five workers, or two percent, actually completed their terms owing money to the employer. 114 workers, or 42%, the largest tranche, were owed less than \$40. Another 80, or 30%, received between \$40 and \$80. Only 11, or 4%, were owed between \$80 and \$100. The average credit left to the men at the end of the term was \$48.<sup>294</sup> Obviously, the company store selling to a captive market was a good way to recover a significant portion of labour costs, which could amount to nearly one-half of costs.

### Daily Life

One student of the forestry industry characterized life for the men in the woods as being “womanless, homeless, voteless”.<sup>295</sup> The woods in the winter offered advantages to the workers who toiled there, however, when compared to life on the farm or in the city. Winter on the farm offered under-employment, and boredom for young men. Urban life in the winter when Canada was industrializing could be a struggle for survival in the face of reduced working hours or unemployment, and rising prices of food, firewood, and clothing. The heating in rented housing was often insufficient. Life in the woods offered camaraderie and excitement; warm quarters at

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<sup>290</sup> Cynthia Helen Craigie, “The Influence of the Timber Trade and Philemon Wright on the Social and Economic Development of Hull Township, 1800-1860”, Master's Thesis, Carleton University, 1969, p. 94.

<sup>291</sup> Louis-Marie Bourgouin, “Jos Montferrand, contremaître de chantier et guide de cage”, *Asticou*, no. 23, June, 1980.

<sup>292</sup> Peter Gillis, “E.H. Bronson and Corporate Capitalism: A Study in Canadian Business Thought and Action”, Master's Thesis, Queen's University, December, 1975, p. 72.

<sup>293</sup> McCalla, *op. cit.*

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>295</sup> H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860*, Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1981, p. 178.

night; healthful, if strenuous work; and ample food, even though simple and not always of great quality. There were occasions for revelry when men mustered in the fall in Hull, Bytown, or Pembroke, at shebeens (informal bars) during the drive or at Quebec at the end of the drive. Since workers were paid only at the end of their terms of employment, a cash payment, even though not large, might seem enormous to serve even if quickly spent.

Hours of work in the woods were limited by sunlight. Men would rise about 6 a.m. to start work at first light. Work would end at nightfall, although teamsters could work longer owing to the need to tend to the animals. Pay settlements would be reduced by days of illness, injury, or bad weather, as well as by the value of goods purchased in advance at the company store. Sundays were days of rest given to various forms of recreation, such as singing or fiddling the jigs and reels of Celtic origin which French-Canadians adopted as their own. Many of the French Canadian *chansons à répondre* (call-and-response songs) originated in the Outaouais and spread throughout French Canada, since the Outaouais forest attracted workers from all over Quebec. There would have been some reading during time off, but most workers were illiterate, so story-telling was a common pursuit. These were often tall tales of bravado and strength, such as the legends of Paul Bunyan. Arthur Lower suggests that this Americanized name was actually Paul Bouillon in the beginning, a plausible notion.<sup>296</sup> In the beginning of the industry, operators freely supplied liquor to workers but, as Canada industrialized, the lumber camp became a site of temperance, at least, officially.

In the early part of the 19th century, food in the lumber camps was simple: biscuits, peas, pea soup, bread, boiled and salt pork, and fish or game from the surrounding woods. The men drank a concoction called 'tea' made from the branches of hemlock or spruce trees, which was vital for fighting off scurvy. During the 1850's, Chinese tea and beans from Vermont were introduced. The latter, as was the bread, were cooked in large pots buried in hot ashes or sand, a traditional method still used by some French Canadian cooks. Towards the end of the 19th century, the fare improved considerably, especially with products added from the farm *dépôts* such as vegetables, potatoes, beef, butter, apples, eggs, and syrup, and even more exotic products such as molasses, pastries, and sugar. Food was of vital importance to the men. There were frequent labour disputes over the quality of food. In 1854, 25 lumberjacks left their jobs before the end of their terms as they complained about the quality of the pork being fed to them. Their employer successfully brought them before the courts for desertion under master and servant legislation in Lower Canada.<sup>297</sup> In 1857, a controversy hit the Valley as timber operators decided to stop serving fried pork owing to the wastage caused by frying. Boiled pork may have been less wasteful, but the men objected and won their point.<sup>298</sup> There is no evidence of unions in the woods, so resistance by workers to conditions took the form of disputes over the quality of food, desertions, drunkenness, or violence.

Sleeping arrangements were simple. Men slept on rows of berths against the walls with their feet against the fire. The *camboose*, a cabin with a hearth and an opening in the roof, also offered the advantage of mitigating the odours of the cramped quarters. The *camboose* was replaced by stoves with chimneys towards the end of the 19th century, when separate buildings were built for sleeping and eating. During the drive, men slept on the rafts in squat cabins or hollowed birch trunks. During the drive, the men were continually wet, in and out of water,

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<sup>296</sup> Arthur Lower, *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest*, Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1938.

<sup>297</sup> Gaffield, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

<sup>298</sup> Sandra Gillis, *The Timber Trade in the Ottawa Valley, 1806-1854*, Manuscript Report no. 153, Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1975, p. 137.



birling or being splashed at rapids. Shooting the rapids on a raft apparently was great fun, as was guiding a crib down a timber slide.

### Religion

Throughout the 19th century, the clergy in Canada, both Protestant and Catholic, railed against the supposed immorality of life in the woods. The lumber camps were held to be centres of blasphemy, drunkenness, ignorance of God and things religious, and fighting, while the men were subject to whoring when in Bytown or Quebec City. One Protestant minister in 1849 complained that men in the woods sacrificed all to the 'God of Pine'.<sup>299</sup> The whole question of the morality of lumber workers bears some reflection. Indeed, at the beginning of the timber industry, there was little religion practiced in the lumber camps. There were few practicing Protestants and not many more, practicing Catholics. One source, Father Desautels, writing from Aylmer in the 1840's, complained that of an estimated 5,000 men in the woods, only 250 were practicing Christians.<sup>300</sup>

Claims about the profligacy of lumber workers, however, must be taken with more than a grain of salt, for several reasons. Firstly, violence and illegality was a *modus operandi* of the industry itself, starting with the capitalists themselves. Secondly, at least in the beginning years of the industry, bosses provided liquor to their workers as a matter of course as payment. Thirdly, the rough life of the frontier simply offended notions of respectability held by the *petits-bourgeois*, among them, the clergy. We do not know for a fact whether or not more alcohol was consumed in the 19th century than today, since much of the writing about the subject was written by temperance advocates and Prohibitionists. Among Protestants, the anti-drinking campaign contained anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant feeling, the latter especially vis-à-vis the Irish. Among French-Canadian clergy, the anti-alcohol discourse vis-à-vis lumber workers contained nationalist elements about the moral superiority of the French-Canadian farm life. Throughout, opponents of the lumber industry were imbued with the physiocratic notion that agriculture was the most noble calling of humankind, and the only true source of wealth. As well, especially in Upper Canada, the anti-lumbering discourse was part of the conflict between small landowners, the farmers, and large landowners, the timber operators. Furthermore, the revelry of young lumberjacks, after being cooped up all winter among men, without women, would have been similar to the behaviour of any comparable group of young men such as students, sailors, or soldiers. All this suggests that the notion that lumberjacks were wilder or more drunken than other groups is dubious. Ultimately, their work demanded skill, clearheadedness, planning, and teamwork, without which the industry or its workers could not have survived.

While we can't say one way or the other whether lumber workers were more or less religious than other groups, there was one religious element in the life of lumberjacks, however, that was to prove of great importance in the history of Hull. In the 1840's, the Oblate order of priests established itself in Bytown. The Oblates were a French order with a particular mission of serving the poor and working people. Among their tasks was the mission of the Catholic workers in the shanties. An enterprising Father Durocher obtained \$1,000 in subscriptions from the raftsmen gathered at the Chaudière to build a chapel in Hull. In 1846, the so-called *chapelle des chantiers* was built on land below the Chaudière, in order to be also accessible to the French-

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<sup>299</sup> Michael Cross, *The Dark Druidical Groves: The Lumber Community and the Commercial Frontier in British North America, to 1854*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto, 1968, p. 2.

<sup>300</sup> Alexis de Barbezieux, *Histoire de la province ecclésiastique d'Ottawa*, Ottawa: La Compagnie d'Imprimerie d'Ottawa, 1897, p. 68.

Canadians at Pointe-Gatineau. Ruggles Wright donated the land to the Church on condition that the chapel also be made available to local people in Hull Township. Sometimes, the men might wait five or six days before they could run their timber through the Chaudière slides during the spring drive. In the basement of the chapel, sleeping quarters were organized for the men to protect them from the evils of godless Bytown. A priest would say Mass at 4 a.m. for the workers before their workday started. In 1852, an Oblate named Louis-Étienne Delille Reboul moved to the region. In the spring of 1854, accompanied by a priest named Brunet, Reboul went around to serve the men in the logging camps. He became known as the *apôtre des chantiers* ('apostle of the shanties'). Every spring, the logging camps were his mission. A rough-and-tumble character, Reboul, who seems to have won acceptance by the lumberjacks, died in Mattawa in 1877. Before his death, Reboul was to be a key character in the history of Hull by establishing schools, getting a church built in Hull in the late 1860's, establishing a parish in Hull, and by the separation of the French-speaking village of Hull from English-speaking Hull Township.

### Dangers

While the moral dangers of life in the woods and on the rivers of the Ottawa Valley were probably overstated, the physical dangers were not. The life of a lumberjack was dangerous. He was always exposed to the risk of being struck by falling timbers or flying branches. Getting lost in the woods was easy to do. In one such incident in January, 1857, four men froze to death, lost in the woods.<sup>301</sup> Accidents were frequent during the hauling and loading of timbers, and a frequent occurrence was wood loads overtaking the team pulling it. The limited diet, bereft of fruits and vegetables, left men susceptible to scurvy. Until diets improved around the end of the century, spruce or hemlock tea were the only protections against scurvy. During the drive, for weeks on end, men were wet. Loggers called a condition of rot that resulted from the perpetual wetness 'blackleg'. Since many loggers couldn't swim, falling into the water might mean drowning, while working in low light meant that it could be difficult to find a man overboard. Jams were frequent, at least until there were enough dams built to control the flow of water. In the absence of these dams, men had to free jams by chopping or poking at the piles until the offending logs could be freed, then making dashes for the shore. Sometimes, dynamite was used, but this was just as dangerous. In 1845, 80 men died in logjams on the Ottawa; the next year, 50 men died.<sup>302</sup> Accidents were also frequent at slides or rapids. Other constraints during the drive included the forest fires that could strike early in the summer, before the drive was completed. At stopover points, there might be shebeens that sold rotgut to the men. If more than one crew was waiting at a stopover, especially if they were of a different ethnic group fueled by booze, fighting could erupt. Through it all, however, for the young farm boys, life in the forestry industry was still more exciting than farm life in the winter. The songs and tales of the lumberjacks celebrated these dangers with bravado.

### Women

In the beginning of the timber industry, some women worked as cooks in family timber-making parties, but as the industry developed, it became an all-male preserve. The exceptions were the stopover points or the *dépôt* farms, where women did domestic work. Indeed, the presence of women at these operations was seen as having a stabilizing influence. Other than

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<sup>301</sup> Gaffield, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

<sup>302</sup> Lower, *The North American Assault.*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

whores in Bytown or Quebec City, the men's contact with women would be limited to the summer months. In the early days of the industry, the farmer-lumberjack and his teenaged sons would return to tend the farm in the spring and summer, however, as the industry grew, lumberjacks took on work as raftsmen, and would only return home late in the summer. In fact, they ceased to be farmers for all intents and purposes.

Women and teenaged girls were still left with the job of maintaining farms and gardens. Unless there were young boys at home, women and girls had to do the chores of milking cows, tending to animals, chopping firewood, etc. This, in addition to household chores and childcare responsibilities. As well, the women did the traditional work of making clothes and other household necessities. For several generations, this became a common pattern among some French-Canadian workers. While the men were away in logging camps, at sea, on the railways, at construction sites, or in the mines, women operated their households and raised their children, more or less without the presence of their husbands. With urbanization, working class women were presented with more options for work as domestics, in factories, doing piece-work, or as nuns or lay teachers. Nevertheless, the traditional domestic industry of women, as we shall see in a later chapter, was essential to the survival of poor workers in Canadian cities during the industrial revolutions.

### The Shiner War<sup>303</sup>

The Shiner War in the timber industry has come down in legend and myth as part of the folklore and history of the Ottawa Valley. It serves as a guide to understanding the culture, language etiquette, and power relations between English and French-speakers in the Ottawa Valley. 'Shiner' is a term that certain Irish, Catholic forestry workers applied to themselves. Hence, the term 'Shiner War' refers to their conflicts with French Canadians in the Ottawa Valley. The origin of the term 'shiner' is mysterious, and none of the explanations that have been offered makes much sense.<sup>304</sup>

As elsewhere in Canada, politics in the Valley involved the Orange-Green conflict between Irish Protestants and Catholics, as in the Stoney Monday incident of 1849. A more frequent theme in the Valley, however, centred on the relationship between Irish Catholics and their co-religionists, French-Canadians. Combined, both groups comprised most of the working class in the region, so that conflict between the two meant a lack of unity among workers that capitalists didn't hesitate to exploit. While the 'Shiner War' was an extreme example of the conflict between that existed between French and Irish, it is also true that at various times, for example, during the cholera epidemics during the Irish immigration, Irish and French collaborated. The two groups have inter-married over the generations, so much so that it is common to find Irish with French-Canadian ancestors and relatives, and vice versa. One

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<sup>303</sup> Useful sources about the Shiners include: Jack Brown, editor, *The Ottawa Shiners*, Mallorytown, Ontario, 1968; Michael Cross, "The Shiners' War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830s", *The Canadian Historical Review*, vol. LIV, no. 1, March, 1973; *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, "Peter Aylen", by Michael Cross, vol. IX, p. 13, 14; Miller Stewart, "King of the Shiners", in Ellen Stafford, editor, *The Flamboyant Canadians*, Toronto: Baxter Publishing Company, 1964; and Benjamin Sulte, *Histoire de Jos. Montferrand: l'athlète canadien*, Montreal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1912.

<sup>304</sup> Suggestions here include 'shiner' as a transliteration of 'cheneur'; 'chêne' is the French word for oak, which was used in building bridges. Alternatively, 'shiner', because the Irish should shine above all others; or 'shiner', owing to the shiny, black hats worn by Irish immigrants. Possibly, 'shiner' was an English transliteration of an Irish, Gaelic term. What is most important is that this is the term that Irish ruffians ascribed to themselves, as did the rest of the community.

regularly finds French-Canadians with Irish names, or the contrary, in the Ottawa Valley. Nevertheless, members of the two groups often have lived in splendid isolation, quite ignorant of each other, with each group proudly holding on to unilingualism. At the same time, others have been bilingual and lived with one foot in each world.

The Shiner War was the extreme example of conflict between the two groups. Between 1828 and 1843, there was at least one outbreak of Shiner violence per year. Fifty men died, and many more were seriously injured in a low-grade civil war that left a legacy of mistrust between the two groups.<sup>305</sup> The quality of the historical explanations for the conflict varies greatly, among them, the intolerance of an earlier era; retrojection of the politics of today; complex, sociological explanations about integration of immigrants; silly racist claims about the savagery of the Irish and timidity of the French Canadians; or worst of all, apologies on behalf of one side or the other. In fact, the Shiner War had a specific history in which the use of violence and illegality was an important part of the development of the bourgeoisie. Men were made wealthy and fortunes made in the lumber industry in the Ottawa Valley by recourse to violence and illegality. The Shiner War was part of this process of making some men rich and powerful.

As already discussed, the first timber workers were Americans, but they were surpassed quickly in numbers by the French-Canadians who became the majority of the forestry work force. Beginning in the 1820's, Irishmen began moving into the region, especially with the construction of the Rideau Canal. Catholics settled in Lower Town in Bytown, and in an area called Corktown on the eastern bank of the Rideau Canal. The Irish Protestants working on the canal settled in the Valley south of Bytown, and in the Upper Town of Bytown west of the Rideau Canal. Conditions among the canal workers in Bytown were dismal. When the canal was completed in 1832, the Irish workers were unemployed and reduced to poverty similar to the oppressive conditions they had left in Ireland.

The established timber operators, such as the Wrights, the Hamiltons, Levi Bigelow, and Baxter Bowman, preferred to hire French-Canadians as they were familiar with Canadian conditions. Even as the timber operators dealt with the ever-present over-production with respect to the British market, new operators began to work their way into the industry. One of these was an Irish Protestant named Vallilley. Originally a sailor, Vallilley ran away from his employer at Quebec, and made his way into the Ottawa Valley forest in 1815 when he was 16 years old. He changed his name to Peter Aylen, found work with Philemon Wright, and eventually became a shanty foreman for Wright. He soon became a successful timber operator, so much so that by 1829, at age 30, Aylen was wealthy, with timber limits in the Madawaska, Bonnechère, and Gatineau valleys. Aylen married well, to a sister of the Thompson brothers, themselves wealthy lumber merchants. This was probably a factor in his ascension up the economic ladder. Between 1832 and 1845, Aylen was one of the operators in the Gatineau Privilege, established in part to curb the violence in the Gatineau Valley in which Aylen willingly participated.

Early in the 1830's, Aylen made a move to increase his power in the Valley and its lumber trade. In return for their support, Aylen agreed to hire only Irish workers. He made the same pitch to other operators, but satisfied with their French-Canadian workers and leery of the inexperienced Irish, the other operators refused Aylen's plan, except for Walter Beckwith, near Pembroke. In response to the refusal of Aylen's plan, his men took matters into their own hands. During the 1830's, Aylen and 200 of his Irish supporters terrorized residents of Lower Town, robbing, raping, assaulting, and killing all who stood in their way, virtually at will. No small part of Aylen's appeal to the Irishmen were the drunken orgies and feasts that Aylen hosted in his

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<sup>305</sup> Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

Richmond Road home. While the French-Canadian raftsmen were partying in Bytown, the Irish captured and beat them, even killing some of them, then took their places on the rafts. They so terrorized the French-Canadian workers that the Shiners gained control of the River around Bytown. Perhaps, Aylen's ultimate aim was to gain control of the shipping on the River, thus allowing him to drive hard bargains with competitors and buyers of Ottawa Valley wood in Quebec City. Possibly, Aylmer was genuinely concerned about the welfare of his countrymen.

The incidents of violence were replete. They remind one of nothing less than a movie about the American Wild West. For example, in 1833, Aylen's bodyguard, the very large Martin Hennessey, rode his horse into a French-Canadian tavern operated by Joseph Galipault. The latter shot Hennessey, leaving him blind in one eye. In June of 1835, Matt Power sought revenge on Galipault by attacking him on the Union Bridge between Hull and Bytown with an axe. Galipault took out his pistol and shot Power. A local justice of the peace acquitted Galipault, so Bobby Boyle exacted revenge by burning down Galipault's home. In July, 1835, Aylen was arrested for assault and imprisoned in the county jail in Perth, but Aylen's supporters rioted, and he escaped during the riot. In fact, typically, whenever Aylen's men were imprisoned in Perth, they managed to escape, as rioters would free the prisoners. One of Aylen's followers, a man named McClellan, established a shebeen on the Union Bridge while the Shiners forced passers-by to pay a toll, obviously illegal. When people refused to pay, they would be thrown over the bridge into the Chaudière and their death.

Having assured domination of Lower Town and having terrified the French-Canadian workers who lived or worked there, Aylen turned to the more polite Protestant society. He and his men rioted during a meeting of the local agricultural society in Bytown, an organization of the wealthy. On Jan. 2, 1837, Aylen and 50 followers invaded a meeting of the Bytown Town Council to demand, unsuccessfully, the electoral franchise for the Irish. The Shiners set up a picture of St. Patrick on a sleigh near the Sapper's Bridge, and forced all passers-by to doff their hats. William Scott refused to do so and was beaten, as were George Patterson and James Johnston, a local justice of the peace who came to the rescue of Scott. In March, 1837, Johnston gathered some men, and went to Aylen's house to try to arrest him. Aylen heard about this, and fled to Hull. In response, Shiners tried unsuccessfully to burn Johnston's house. Another time, they fired bullets into Johnston's bedroom, but his house was unoccupied at the time. The vendetta against Johnston continued when Aylen ordered the assassination of Johnston. Aylen hired Thomas Burke, Patrick O'Brien, and James McDonald for the task. One day, they attacked Johnston when he was crossing the Sappers' Bridge over the canal. Johnston fled, falling down an embankment twelve feet into deep snow on the canal. He was an easy target for O'Brien and McDonald, who then fired stones and bullets at him. Burke followed below with a whip. Citizens heard Johnston's yells, rescued him, and captured the three would-be assassins.

The Bytown community seemed to be galvanized by the resistance of Johnston. The three thugs were convoyed by a platoon of soldiers to the jail in Perth. Aylen boasted that the three prisoners would soon be free. On May 1, as advertised by Aylen, Shiners broke into the prison and freed the three. Nevertheless, they were soon captured in New York, and each was sentenced to three years of hard labour. During their trials, it became apparent that Aylen had ordered the assassination attempt. Local peace officers then went to Aylen's mansion to try to arrest him, but Aylen once again fled to Hull. A riot ensued that lasted all night.

The Protestants next established the Bytown Association for the Preservation of the Public Peace, and signed up 200 men as special constables. The Lieutenant-Governor also let them have access to the resources of the army. In the past, the position of the government had

been that peace in the timber industry was a matter for the merchants themselves. In 1836, the merchants formed the Ottawa Lumber Association, putatively to curb the violence in the industry. As an example of how much Aylen held Bytown in his sway, the first major project of the Association was to effect improvements on the Madawaska River where Aylen had limits, under the supervision of Aylen himself! The other timber operators, as much afraid of British intervention as anything else, finally agreed to the request by the Bytown Association for the Preservation of the Public Peace that something be done about the violence between French-Canadian and Shiner. The timber operators agreed not to hire men who had misbehaved with previous employers or left an employer without permission. Each man had to obtain a written certificate of good character from his employer before leaving to work elsewhere. The operators agreed to bring the guilty to justice, and to take responsibility for the good conduct of their men. This went a long way to ending Shiner activity. It also greatly increased employers' sway over the life of the workers.

French-Canadians had resisted somewhat the Shiner terror, for example, in an incident at Grand Calumet Island in the Pontiac. During 1837, the French-Canadians struck back; controlling the River at Long-Sault, near Grenville, French-Canadians boarded Shiner rafts and removed the Shiners, who were now known to all. Aylen's rafts were simply stopped, and not allowed to pass. The blockade of the Shiners was effective. The French-Canadians were rallied by Jos Montferrand, who became their champion. Montferrand is a mythic character, much of the myth created by Benjamin Sulte, a Liberal MP from Trois-Rivières and a popular historian. Sulte attributed many tales to Montferrand, although there is little actual evidence for these feats. For example, one story has that Montferrand broke up McClellan's shebeen on the Union Bridge, however, there is no precise evidence for this claim. A large man, nearly 6'4", Montferrand and his brother Louis, of the same size, gained national renown. Unofficial boxing champion of Canada, it is reputed that Jos beat all comers, twenty or so men, including the Shiner champion, Martin Henessy. In fact, other than rallying the French-Canadians against the Shiners, we can probably say little of certainty about Montferrand. His mythic status is the stuff of tall tales and bravado that lumberjacks probably told on Sunday afternoons in logging shanties.

By the fall of 1837, Aylen could see the writing on the wall. He sold his properties around Bytown and moved to relatively, unpopulated Aylmer. There, he became a pillar of respectability. He even occupied various public offices in Aylmer, Hull Township, and the County of Ottawa. His sons became respected lawyers and doctors. He hadn't changed entirely; in 1851, Aylen's timber limits on the Madawaska were confiscated by the Crown Land Office owing to illegalities.<sup>306</sup>

Aylen's fate was similar to that of one of his henchmen, Andrew Leamy, who opened a sawmill on the lake that bears his name, and became a pillar of the Hull community. Others of Aylen's henchmen were not so fortunate. Jimmey the 'Wren', whose specialty was deadly accurate stone throwing, died when a French Canadian, whom he had tried to crowd off the sidewalk, beat him. Martin Henessy was killed in a brawl in a bar. One Shiner was killed when his gun discharged while he was boarding a stage coach. Another died when his buggy toppled. Others were executed for murders in the U.S..

Aylen and the Shiners could get away with their reign of terror when it was directed against French Canadians in Lower Town. They reached the beginning of the end, however, when they fought against the Protestant elite of Upper Town in Bytown. This author, therefore, agrees, with this assessment:

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<sup>306</sup> *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, op. cit.*, p. 14.

“Murder in Lower Town, if deplorable, was not a direct threat to the ruling group. Assaults on middle class gentlemen, however, could not be tolerated. And when the leaders reacted strongly, they gave confidence to the community-at-large. In such a society, the solution to the problem of violence by the disadvantaged was not to meet their grievances; it was to establish authority with sufficient power that the disadvantaged did not dare challenge it.”<sup>307</sup>

Over the next few years, Shiner activity petered out but this activity was symptomatic of the fact that fortunes were made in the forestry industry by violence and illegality. Aylen and the Shiners were only the best-known of this process.

### Culture of the Forestry Workers

The culture of the Ottawa Valley forestry industry was a culture of young men where strength, daring, and agility were valued, values necessary for life in the woods. It was a culture where men greatly outnumbered women and children; in fact, where contacts with them were limited. In this culture, fighting played important roles for settling disputes, bonding among men, establishing social order and hierarchy, advancing interests, and just plain recreation. It was a culture in which physical danger was a reality, as was economic insecurity. When businesses failed, it was workers who were hurt most when they didn't get paid. The culture was a crucible for the development and diffusion of French-Canadian popular culture as seen in music, cuisine, and folk tales, since the Ottawa Valley attracted French-Canadians from all over Quebec, and French-Canadian lumberjacks then moved to many parts of the continent. It was a culture in which kinfolk relations were important since a shanty would often include fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, and cousins. It was a culture that, in spite of its frontier aspect, was Tory, tied to British and American markets, and dominated by a few powerful men. It was a culture that existed in the first place as an illegal activity, and continued to survive owing to the use of violence and flaunting of the law. Then, it became a culture in which large fortunes were made using the same methods. When the Canadian state developed, the forestry industry, with its accompanying culture, relied upon the support of the state. Finally, it was a culture that helped change the class make-up of Canada, that created industrialists out of merchants, and greatly expanded the size of the working class.

According to our thesis, the working class in the woods displayed a distinct culture. As well, workers took deliberate actions to improve their social position. How distinct was the working class culture in the woods from that of other classes? It was certainly distinct from the culture of the farmer, even though many forestry workers were also farmers in the beginning years of the industry. As the first industrial revolution took hold in the mid-nineteenth century, the work force of the forestry industry professionalized. Lumberjacks were no longer truly farmers, even if they might respond as such in the census. They might nominally own farms that wives and children tended, while men worked full-time in the woods and on the rivers. It might not even be exaggerating to ask if the farm wives of absent lumberjacks almost constituted a class distinct from their own since they did own and operate, their means of production, as opposed to their men working in the woods. Certainly, farmer and lumberjack were sometimes directly opposed about such questions as settlement of the Canadian Shield and activities of 'pirate' timberers.

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<sup>307</sup> Cross, "The Shiners' War .", *op. cit.*, p. 23.

The working class culture of the woods was distinct from the culture of the *petite-bourgeoisie*, especially the members of the clergy who persistently railed against the supposed immorality and drunkenness of forestry workers. Nevertheless, when clergy accepted the lumberjacks on their own terms, as did the Oblate missionaries — Reboul, Brunet, Durocher — clergy were welcomed by forestry workers. In fact, in Hull, clerics became allies of the working class.

Working class culture was obviously distinct from that of ‘old money’ bourgeois such as Peter McGill, who first made his money in fur and banking. The situation was less clear with respect to the bourgeoisie that grew rich from the forestry industry. In the woods and on the rivers, bosses often worked alongside their men, demonstrating the same skills as their men, becoming leaders and even buddies of their men. They might participate in or lead the violence in the woods in disputes about watersheds or rustling, fighting with men of rival shanties. They certainly encouraged and profited from this violence. Perhaps, the distinction between forestry workers and businessmen only became clear when the latter became wealthy pillars of social respectability, as happened with the erstwhile thugs Peter Ayles, Andrew Leamy and Nicholas Sparks.

With respect to agency of the working class, where workers undertook collective action to improve their lot, evidence is indeed sketchy. There is no direct evidence of organizational forms in the woods such as unions, or even pre-industrial forms such as brotherhoods. These forms however, were not wholly implausible. Indeed, dock workers at Quebec loading timber for shipment to Britain did organize rival Irish and French-Canadian organizations. It is not impossible that when workers from this milieu moved to the Ottawa Valley woods, they brought some semblance of these organizations. Nevertheless, we don’t know one way or the other. Hence we are left with a notion that within the perennial complaints by workers about quality of food in the camps, complaints that persisted until the end of the nineteenth century, desertions by dissatisfied workers, and social violence between Irish and French, there were occasions of class conflict within which workers were trying to improve their lot. Achieving working class solidarity to improve workers’ lives was enhanced when workers belonged to immediate or extended families. On the other hand, solidarity was inhibited when workers were used by bosses as pawns in Orange-Green conflicts, or in the more frequent conflicts between Irish Catholics and French-Canadians.

In order to find agency by forestry workers, that is, where workers deliberately tried to improve their position, we have to turn to the informal culture of workers, beyond typical, collective forms of action. Firstly, for many young men, going into the woods itself presented an adventure more exciting and lucrative than the boredom and poverty of farm or town in the winter, freezing or nearly freezing, all the while being unemployed or under-employed. Secondly, work in the woods required skill, teamwork, and initiative. The lumberjack was proud of his endurance, strength, bravado in the face of dangers, camaraderie, and fighting ability. We can summarize all this with the concept of prowess, from which forestry workers derived much self-worth. Thirdly, this prowess added to existing traditions and myths of workers, thus inspiring other workers. An example of this process is the story of Jos Montferrend, which first inspired French-Canadian lumberjacks, then French-Canadians as a whole, then finally all workers. A latter-day example of the last of this can be heard in the folk song written by Stompin’ Tom Connors, “Mufferaw Joe”. Finally, the lumberjack myth and narrative were added to the national story of French-Canadians to include the lumberjack alongside the *patriote*, *habitant*, *coureur-de-bois*, *voyageur*, and saint. By such a process, the lumberjack and his work



and culture eventually gained social acceptance and respectability among French Canadians, thus increasing the social status of the lumberjack.

## CHAPTER 7 - URBAN HULL

### Introduction

The population of the Outaouais grew throughout the 19th century, and at the beginning of the 20th century. As it concerns the working class, the two main streams of migrants to the Ottawa Valley were the Irish and the French-Canadians. For the most part, workers did not settle in Wright's village until the 1860's. It was never the intention of the Wrights to make an urban area of their property by the Chaudière. When the industrial revolution began in Canada in the late 1840's, Wright's village was a small community of businesses and tradespeople that served the agricultural community of Hull Township, and which also served as a mustering point for the forestry industry in the Valley. Hull itself was only organized as a distinct municipality, separate from rural Hull Township in 1875. With the development of the sawmilling industry at the Chaudière, which began in the 1850's, however, Hull was to become one of the most important urban areas in Quebec.

### Population Growth<sup>308</sup>

By 1851, the County of Ottawa, which included the Outaouais in Quebec minus the County of Pontiac, had a population of about 13, 000. Seventy percent of the population was English-speaking, while about one half was Irish. There were small French-Canadian settlements at Pointe-Gatineau where Wright workers lived, in the Petite-Nation Valley, and in Masham, Lac Ste-Marie, Gracefield, and Bouchette, villages in the Gatineau Valley. Most of Hull Township, including Wright's village at the Chaudière, was English-speaking.

The historic, movement westward of French-Canadians from the St. Lawrence Valley began in earnest in the 1830's. By the 1860's, this movement had reached the Outaouais, including Hull, as French-Canadians were attracted by the sawmilling industry. By 1871, of a total population of 38, 629 in the County of Ottawa, 21,514 were French-Canadians, while only 17,115 were English-speakers. By 1881, the majority of the Outaouais, combining Ottawa and Pontiac counties, was now French-Canadian. The population kept growing: 81, 065 in 1891, 89,998 in 1901; 96,635 in 1911; 101,511 in 1921; and 114,357 in 1931. By 1931, French-Canadians comprised 70% of the Outaouais population.

The essentially, rural Township of Hull had a population of 707 in 1820, 803 in 1824, and 1,066 in 1828. In 1851, there were only 243 French-Canadians. In 1861, of a total population of 2,711 in Hull Township, only 420 were French-Canadian. Within this population, the forestry industry created an important imbalance in the proportion of men to women, 1,171 men and 964 women among the adult population. Ten years later, the anglo/franco mix had changed substantially in Hull Township, with French-Canadians now constituting the majority. Of a total population in 1871 of 8,318; 4, 461 were French Canadian and 3,857 were English-speakers. The

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<sup>308</sup> Sources for these population figures include: Raoul Blanchard, "Les pays de l'Ottawa", extract from the *Revue de Géographie alpine*, Grenoble, France, 1949; Edgar Boutet, *Le bon vieux temps à Hull*, Hull: Éditions Gauvin, Tome I, p. 12, 113, 121, 122, and Tome II, p. 25, 26, 1971, 1974; Ernest Cinq-Mars, *Hull: son origine, son progrès, son avenir*, Hull: Bérubé Frères, 1908, p. 171, 174; Chad Gaffield, editor, *Histoire de l'Outaouais*, Quebec City: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1994, p. 116, 117, 256, 285; Bibliothèque municipale de Hull, *Procès-verbaux du Conseil municipal de Hull, 1875 à 1924*, see 1919, p. 283, 284; Edmond Kayser, "Industry in Hull: Its Origins and Development", Master's Thesis, University of Ottawa, September, 1967, p. 46, 49; Paul-Andre Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, *Histoire du Québec contemporaine: de la Confédération à la crise*, Montreal: Boréal Express, 1979, p. 55; *Deux siècles de développement à Hull, Outaouais*, number 7, Hull: Société d'histoire de l'Outaouais, 2000, p. 116, 117; and Charles Roger, *Ottawa, Past and Present*, Ottawa, 1871.

population of Hull Township kept growing owing to industrialization: 15,748 in 1891; 19,354 in 1901; 23,535 in 1911; 29,033 in 1921; and 36,945 in 1931.

In the 1830's, Wright's English-speaking village, had only three French-Canadian families, headed by Messrs. Bédard, Morin, and Mousseau. In 1851, there were 16 families in Wright's village, 9 proprietors and 7 tenants. The latter's names are unknown to this author, but may have included French-Canadians. The names of the proprietors in the village were Ruggles Jr., Alonzo and Joshua Wright, Philemon Wright's grandsons; hotel-keepers William Battison and M. Gunn; Alex Dole, agent for the Hamiltons' enterprise; Sexton Washburn, an axe-maker; H. McLaughlin, postmaster and operator of the general store; and S.H. Wagner, a miller.<sup>309</sup>

In 1871, Wright's Hull village had a population of 3,800. In 1901, urban Hull's population of 13,993 made it the 3rd largest urban area in Quebec, behind Montreal and Quebec City, but ahead of Trois-Rivières, Saint-Hyacinthe, and Sherbrooke. Here is how the population of urban Hull grew through the years:

1881 – 6,890  
1883 – 7,609  
1891 – 11,264  
1899 – 13,461  
1900 – 11,887 (decrease owed to the 1900 fire)  
1901 – 13,993  
1907 – 14,520  
1911 – 18,222  
1912 – 19,256  
1913 – 19,334  
1914 – 19,929  
1915 – 20,257  
1916 – 22,190  
1917 – 25,422  
1918 – 22,392  
1919 – 30,856  
1921 – 24,464 (decrease owed to post-war recession)  
1931 – 29,433

By far, the majority of urban Hull now was French-Canadian. For example, in 1919, 93% was French Canadian, 6% English-speaking, with one percent divided among others.<sup>310</sup>

The original Wright village was a small quadrilateral defined by the Ottawa River to the south, Frontenac Street to the North, Montcalm Street to the West, and Laval Street to the East. The French Canadian workers, for the most part, settled in what came to be known as the lower village, or *village d'en-bas*, that is, the area east of Laval Street proceeding towards the River below the Chaudière, where are now found the Canadian Museum of Civilization and Jacques Cartier Park. On a petition in 1866 appear the signatures of 32 property owners living in the Lower Village. This would appear to include the first French-Canadian workers who settled in Hull. Since names of workers are often absent from historical documents, these names are worth listing: Joseph Phillion, François Rollet, François Ouellet, Pierre Meilleur, France Courval,

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<sup>309</sup> Cinq-Mars, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>310</sup> Bibliothèque municipale de Hull, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

Onésime Cardinal, Hermas Renault, Thomas Synott, Agnace Renault, Frédéric Vanasse, Moïse Ouellet, Baptiste Villeneuve, Uldéric Lauzon, Pierre Renault, Joseph Pépin, Pierre Rivais, Charles Bouvet, François Sauriol, Félix Montreuil, Baptiste Boulianne, Stanislas Aubry, Camille Chenevert, Florian Villeneuve, Élie Champagne, Pierre Champagne, Isidore Sarrazin, and Ubald Laporte. The signature of five others were illegible. These people were heads of families; only one, France Courval, was a woman; she might have been a widow.<sup>311</sup>

### Early Sawmills

Very early, the Wrights sawed wood for local use, including for construction of the Rideau Canal. In 1849, Tiberius Wright employed 180 workers at a sawmill on the eastern shore of the Gatineau, probably at Limbour. The Hamiltons in Hawkesbury were important producers of deals for the British market. The Blasdell brothers, blacksmiths, built a mill in 1841 at Chelsea Falls on the Gatineau River, and were assisted financially by the Gilmours. In 1849, this mill was rebuilt to operate by steam, one of the first in the region.<sup>312</sup> John Egan also opened a deal mill at Quyon in 1848.<sup>313</sup>

These operations were aimed at the local market or the British market. In the 1840's, however, milling operations began that were aimed at the American market. In 1842, Philip Thompson and John Perkins built a sawmill at the Chaudière. In 1843, William Farmer constructed a mill on the east side of the Gatineau River. In 1848, Thomas MacKay and his son-in-law, John MacKinnon, rebuilt a mill at Rideau Falls in New Edinburgh which had been built in 1838.<sup>314</sup> In 1854, this mill was taken over by Joseph Merrill Currier, from Vermont.<sup>315</sup> At Pointe-Gatineau, there were mills operated by Whitcomb and Stevens, and by Pierre Charette.<sup>316</sup> By 1851, before the American influx to the Chaudière, the region had a capacity of 3,000,000 board/feet of lumber per year.<sup>317</sup>

### The Americans at the Chaudière

The Americans came to the Chaudière during the 1850's from New Hampshire, Vermont, and the Lake Champlain area of New York, where they were involved in sawmilling. The first to come was Henry Franklin Bronson, who visited the Chaudière in the winter of 1848/1849. The next year he returned with the senior partner in the firm of Harris and Bronson, John Harris. The latter was impressed with the potential of the region, but wanted guarantees as to power and the supply of timber. Other Americans, such as Levi Young and C.B. Pattee, also demonstrated interest in the Chaudière in 1851. The government, at the behest of promoters such as John Egan, Thomas MacKay and J.M. Currier, and encouraged by the boosterism of Bytown's municipal council, authorized the creation of hydraulic lots at the Chaudière. These lots were then sold just above cost to American entrepreneurs.<sup>318</sup>

Thus, Harris and Bronson set up shop in 1852; A.H. Baldwin began operating in 1853; Levi Young in 1854; and Perley, Pattee and Brown in 1859. J.R. Booth came from the Eastern

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<sup>311</sup> Boutet, Tome I, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>312</sup> Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, *Histoire économique du Québec, 1851-1896*, Montreal: Fides, 1971, p. 218.

<sup>313</sup> Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Actes du Colloque sur l'identité régionale dans l'Outaouais*, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur l'Outaouais, 1982, p. 55.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>315</sup> Joseph Tassé, *La Vallée de l'Outaouais*, Montreal: Eusèbe Senécal, Imprimeur-Éditeur, 1873, p. 32.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>317</sup> Lapointe, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56, 57.

Townships in 1858. Bronson, himself a millwright, and Perley brought with them the latest technology, the Yankee gang-saw, new to the Valley. They also had their own credit lines from the U.S. and their own markets; Harris and Bronson's lumber was sold to wholesale firms in New York with which Harris and Bronson were associated.

By 1871 A.H. Baldwin operated two sawmills, a machine shop, a forge, and a shipbuilding business. He had 14 barges, 2 tugboats, and one steam-operated barge. He employed 400 men, was the first to sail barges of planks to the U.S., and was the first of the Chaudière entrepreneurs to cut saw logs above Rapides-des-Joachims. He eventually sold out to the MacKay enterprise but the mill operated by the latter was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1900. J.R. Booth bought this land to establish a pulp mill in 1904.<sup>319</sup> Perley, Pattee and Brown employed 800 men until 1892, when J.R. Booth bought their mills.<sup>320</sup> Levi Young, originally from Maine, employed up to 500 men, until bought out by Ottawans Ahearn and Soper, who established an electricity plant used by the streetcars of Ottawa. There were also smaller mills on the south shore of the Chaudière operated by Law and Johnson and by John Rochester and Company.<sup>321</sup> The four most important mills in the region were operated by Bronson, Booth, Eddy, and Gilmour, each of which deserve special attention.

### Bronson

In 1855, Bronson and his new, Canadian partner, Weston, built a mill at the Chaudière. In 1866, the company was reformed as Bronson and Weston, with management centered at the Chaudière. The company was now independent from its U.S. parent company for its decision-making.<sup>322</sup> It produced annually from 30,000,000 to 40,000,000 board feet of lumber.<sup>323</sup> Later in the 19th century, Bronson interest turned from sawmilling to hydroelectric power production.

### Booth<sup>324</sup>

John Rodolphus Booth was born in 1827 in Waterloo, Quebec, in the Eastern Townships. He started his working life as a carpenter for the Central Vermont Railway, building covered bridges. He arrived at 25 years of age in Hull and went to work for Andrew Leamy, building the latter's sawmill at Leamy Lake. He rented a small factory from Alonzo Wright, and began making shingles. This building burnt, so in 1858, he rented Philip Thompson's mill on the south shore of the Chaudière. By 1871, Booth was producing up to 30,000,000 board feet of lumber per year. He employed 400 men at his mill and 850 lumberjacks at his concessions in the forest. He sold out to hydroelectric companies in the 1890's, and in 1893, bought the property of Perley, Pattee, and Brown. In the great fire of 1900, Booth's warehouse burnt, but most of his mills, equipped with automatic sprinklers, were saved. Nevertheless, these mills were destroyed in another fire in 1903; still Booth rebuilt and expanded. In 1904, he bought the MacKay mill, and the land on which had been situated the Bronson enterprise, where he built a pulp factory. In 1906, he began producing newsprint, and in 1912, cardboard. Booth typically employed between one and two thousand Hull residents. In 1921, his operation finally became a publicly-traded

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<sup>319</sup> Léo Rossignol, *Histoire documentaire de Hull, 1792-1900*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Ottawa, June, 1941, p. 206.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid*, p. 207.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid*, p. 207.

<sup>322</sup> Lapointe, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>323</sup> James Little, *The Lumber Trade of the Ottawa Valley*, Ottawa: Times Steam Printing and Publishing Company, 1872, p. 33.

<sup>324</sup> Rossignol, *op. cit.*, P. 203, 204, 205.

company. It was reputed at the time to be the largest enterprise in the world owned by one man. When he died in 1926, he left a will of \$7,626,092, an incredible sum for the times. Booth's company was eventually absorbed by the E.B. Eddy Company in 1946.

### Gilmour<sup>325</sup>

John Gilmour, from Montreal, was descended from the owners of the Scottish firm of Pollack and Gilmour, one of the middlemen operators at Quebec that bought timber for export to Britain. Gilmour financed the Blasdell brothers in their mill at Chelsea on the Gatineau during the 1840's, and eventually took operation of the mill. Up to 36,000,000 board feet of lumber were produced each year. In 1873, Gilmour sold his mill in Chelsea, and established a mill in Hull near present-day Jacques Cartier Park, where he employed up to 500 men in the summer. Gilmour was one of the largest operators in the woods in the Ottawa Valley, employing 1,000 men in the winter on almost 1,700 square miles of forest limits. The Gilmours operated nine farms each 1,500 acres, and four dépôt operations on the Gatineau, including one 200 miles from Hull.<sup>326</sup> Like many others, Gilmour was the victim of fire when the entire enterprise in Hull was burnt in 1883. In the fall of 1892, however, the firm was reborn as Gilmour and Hughson, with the infusion of new American capital.

### Eddy

Ezra Butler Eddy was 24 years old when he arrived in Hull. A match worker from Burlington, Vermont, Eddy set about making matches with an employee, Jean Dupuis. Eddy travelled as far as Sarnia, selling his matches. In 1852, he opened a store in Hull. In 1854, Eddy started making wooden washtubs and pales in a factory he rented from Alonzo Wright. His workers were French-Canadians from Michigan, Nelson Trudel and his brother Moïse, Ambroise Roy, and Joseph and Émery Ruel. In 1860, Eddy's factory burnt, but Ambroise Roy lent him the money to continue making matches. By this time, his workers also included Joseph Courval, Napoléon Lalonde, Albert Roy, Joseph Proulx, Joseph Normand, and Joseph Harper.<sup>327</sup>

In 1866, Eddy built his first sawmills. On land he bought from the Wrights, Eddy built a complex which included a pale factory, a match factory, four large sawmills, a sash and door factory, a general store, and a number of offices and garages. Eddy's company was probably the biggest forest products operation on the entire continent. His sawmills annually produced about 40,000,000 board feet of pine. His products included 600,000 pales, 45,000 washtubs, 75,000 washboards, and 270,000 gross of matches (a gross is 12 dozen, or 144) per year, just before the depression of 1873. Eddy employed 400 lumberjacks on his 500 square miles of forest limits, and between 1,700 and 1,800 people in his Hull factories.<sup>328</sup> Many of his employees in the match factory were girls and women who did the extremely dangerous work of dipping matches into sulphur and phosphorous. In 1876, Eddy began making products of fibreboard, such as pales and washtubs. In 1883, another fire destroyed Eddy's factories, but once again he re-emerged, this time buying the land once held by Wright, Batson, and Currier near the Ottawa River.<sup>329</sup>

All this economic leadership made Eddy an extremely, important man in Hull. In 1870, he was elected mayor of Hull Township, and set about separating the village of Hull from the

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<sup>325</sup> *Ibid*, p. 212.

<sup>326</sup> Roger, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>327</sup> The information in this paragraph comes from Boutet, Tome III, *op. cit.*, p. 6, 7, 8.

<sup>328</sup> This information comes from Rossignol, *op. cit.*, p. 209, 210.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid*, p. 211.

Township. In the 1880's, Eddy served as provincial member for Hull. Up until 1886, Eddy operated his firm as sole owner, but that year, the company was re-organized as a joint-stock corporation. In 1886, another fire destroyed his plank warehouse, Eddy slowly started shifting his emphasis to pulp and paper production. After the great fire of 1900, the company Eddy chose not to rebuild its sawmills, but its paper mill became the largest in Canada. By 1902, about 2,000 citizens of Hull worked on Eddy's seven paper machines, and in his mechanical and chemical pulp, paper bag, fibreboard, and match manufactures.<sup>330</sup> Eddy had 675 square miles of forest concessions in 1918, and 1,846 square miles in 1936.<sup>331</sup> The company was bought to a significant degree in 1929 by Canadian HydroElectric, a branch plant of International Paper.<sup>332</sup> In 1928, the match operations were bought by a British firm, Bryant and May, who closed the Hull operation in order to centralize at Pembroke. In 1946, the Eddy company bought out the Booth operations.

### Other Sawmills

At its height, the sawmilling industry in and around Hull also included other smaller operations. Wright, Batson, and Currier went into business in 1868 on Wright land near the River opposite Parliament Hill. Currier originally came from Vermont in the 1840's to manage Thomas MacKay's mill at the Rideau Falls. He rented this mill in 1843 and operated it until 1868, when he went into partnership with Batson and the Wrights. Their steam-powered mill could produce 30, 000, 000 board feet of lumber per year.<sup>333</sup> The firm held 275 square miles of timber limits in the Madawaska Valley.<sup>334</sup> It employed 250 to 300 men in its mill.<sup>335</sup>

Conroy's mill operated at the Des Chênes Rapids. The site was sold to Hull Electric in 1896 and Capital Power in 1900. The Hull Lumber Company burnt in 1900. William Hurdman owned a sawmill in Hull that burnt in 1894. In 1901, Ottawa and Hull Power set up shop at Hurdman's site. A mill belonging to someone named Lemay operated at Brewery Creek near Montcalm Street. In 1854, Andrew Leamy built a mill on Leamy Lake. It operated until an explosion in 1885, which killed several members of the Leamy family. Finally, a Hull company called Crandall and Company milled 10,000,000 feet of lumber per year.<sup>336</sup>

### Rise and Fall of Lumber

In the second half of the 19th century, sawmill production in the Ottawa Valley boomed: 25,000, 000 board feet (bd.feet) in 1859; 44,000,000 in 1861; 100,000,000 in 1868; 260,000,000 in 1871; 288,000,000 in 1886.<sup>337</sup> In 1872, just before the onset of the depression, the principal producers in the region were:

Eddy – 40,000,000 bd. feet – 700 to 800 employees;

Gilmour – 35,000,000 bd. feet – 500 to 600 employees;

Perley and Pattee – 30 to 40,000,000 bd. feet – 800 employees;

Bronson and Weston – 30 to 40,000,000 bd. feet – 222 employees;

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<sup>330</sup> Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

<sup>331</sup> Jean Dandurand, "Les syndicats catholiques dans le secteur des pâtes et papiers et la société québécoise de 1900 à 1930", Master's Thesis, Laval University, February, 1976, p. 226.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>333</sup> Rolf Wesche and Marianne Kugler-Gagnon, editors, *Ottawa-Hull: Spatial Perspectives and Planning*, Ottawa University Press, 1978, p. 15.

<sup>334</sup> Little, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>336</sup> Information in this paragraph comes from Rossignol, *op. cit.*, p. 213, 214.

<sup>337</sup> Hamelin and Roby, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

Booth – 26 to 30,000,000 bd. feet – 400 employees;  
Baldwin – 25,000,000 bd. feet – 400 employees;  
Wright, Batson and Currier – 16 to 25,000,000 bd. feet – 250 to 300 employees;  
Young – 20,000,000 bd. feet – 400 to 500 employees.<sup>338</sup>

In spite of the depression at the end of the century, sawmill production continued to grow moderately, reaching 343,000,000 board feet in 1896.<sup>339</sup>

What appeared to be an industry in good order at the end of the century, in fact, disguised the reality. The quantity of good available pine in the Valley was greatly reduced, and conservation practice did not match conservation rhetoric. Operators searched for new products using lesser-grade wood. In 1888, Eddy acquired American licenses to produce mechanical and chemical pulp, and in 1890, Eddy began using the Wright, Batson, and Currier property to produce pulp. Soon, Booth, Bronson, and others began producing pulp, then paper. Before the 1890's, the competitive situation in the lumber industry meant there were often new entrants. After 1890, concentration and oligopoly grew. Booth bought out the Perley plant in 1893. Bronson and Weston absorbed Young, then Baldwin, then ceased milling in 1899 in favour of hydroelectric production. The only serious competitors to Eddy and Booth at the turn of the 20th century were Edwards, originally from Rockland, Ontario, who took over and expanded the mill at Rideau Falls, and Gilmour and Hughson in Hull. Nevertheless, their production was far from that of Booth, 125,000,000 board feet in 1902, and 115,000,000 board feet in 1904.<sup>340</sup> The Great Fire of 1900 further increased the dominance of the local industry by Booth and Eddy, as they were the only companies to rebuild, and mostly for pulp and paper production, not sawmilling. By the 1920's, the sawmilling industry almost ceased to exist; even Booth only produced 50 to 60, 000, 000 board feet of lumber per year.<sup>341</sup>

### Pulp and Paper production

The replacement of the lumber industry by pulp and paper production at the end of the 19th century reflected a trend seen everywhere in Quebec, and not just in Hull. While the dollar value of lumber production in Quebec decreased from \$18, 500, 000 in 1891 to \$16, 340, 000 in 1901, pulp and paper production almost tripled in the same period, going from \$2, 300, 000 to \$6, 461, 000.<sup>342</sup> Much of this increased production was made possible by the invention of a Frenchman, Fourdrinier, who developed a machine that could make paper non-stop, up to 10 tons per day. This machine appeared in Quebec in the 1880's. By 1888, 45 of these machines were operating in 30 mills in Canada.<sup>343</sup>

Pulp and paper production was fed by American demands for newsprint as the American forest, disappeared particularly in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota. Provincial government policy in Ontario and Quebec included an export tax, then an outright embargo, on the shipment of pulp to the U.S.. If Americans wanted access to Canadian forests, they would have to build paper plants on Canadian soil. As this policy change was occurring, American newspaper publishers won a long-standing battle with American newsprint suppliers in favour of the tariff-

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<sup>338</sup> *Ibid*, p. 264.

<sup>339</sup> Wesche and Kugler, editors, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>340</sup> C.J. Coons, "The John R. Booth Story", in *The Industrial History of the Chaudière*, Ottawa: NCC, 1982.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>342</sup> Hamelin and Roby, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid*, p. 268.



free entry of Canadian newsprint to the American market. Northern Ontario and Quebec offered lakes and rivers to transport timber for use in pulp and paper production and hydroelectric power, needed in ample supply for this production. Furthermore, provincial governments offered generous terms to ensure timber supply, and they vigorously promoted the abundant, cheap labour available in Canada. American direct investment in pulp and paper production went from \$20,000,000 in 1897 to \$74,000,000 in 1914, an increase in American investment that also occurred in other sectors of the economy.<sup>344</sup> Between 1911 and 1921, the number of pulp and paper mills in Canada increased from 72 to 100; between 1914 and 1920, newsprint production in Canadian mills increased from \$39,000,000 to \$81,000,000. By the end of WWI, over 90% of American imports of newsprint came from Canada. Newsprint was the largest, single item of Canadian export trade to the U.S.<sup>345</sup> Capital investment in pulp and paper production in Quebec went from \$80,000,000 in 1917 to \$375,000,000 in 1929.<sup>346</sup>

One of the biggest American investors in pulp and paper production was International Paper, a consolidation of twenty or so enterprises in New York, which made it the biggest paper producer in the world. International Paper owned St. Maurice Paper of Trois-Rivières. In 1916, C.I.P., Canadian International Paper, a wholly-owned branch plant of International Paper, was incorporated in Quebec. In 1921, C.I.P. built a new mill at Trois-Rivières. In 1925, C.I.P. bought out Riordan, with mills in Hawkesbury and Témiscamingue, Quebec. Riordan was a Canadian company, originally from the Niagara area, which had bought the Gilmour and Hughson interests. The Riordan mill in Témiscamingue had been built in 1920. With this purchase, C.I.P. also obtained hydroelectric sites on the Gatineau, which it organized into Gatineau Power, a branch plant of Canadian Hydroelectric Corporation, itself a branch plant of International Paper.<sup>347</sup> This acquisition was part of a corporate strategy of International Paper which involved getting hold of as many forest concessions as possible, construction of modern mills, diversification into hydro and all possible paper products, using both vertical and horizontal integration strategies. At the end of the 1920's, C.I.P. acquired 3,600 square kilometres of Crown forest in the Gatineau and Ottawa valleys, in return for which the government demanded construction of a new mill in Gatineau. The company then closed the Edwards mill at Rideau Falls, and the Gilmour and Hughson mill in Hull. In 1929, International Paper was the largest producer of paper and electricity in the world.<sup>348</sup> In Hull, the Hull Electric Company and Ottawa and Hull Power Company were acquired by Gatineau Power. Thus, Gatineau Power controlled all the power sites in the lower Ottawa Valley, except for those of the Eddy operation and the Maclaren operations in Buckingham.<sup>349</sup> In fact, Canadian Hydroelectric Corporation bought and held 49% of Eddy until 1937.<sup>350</sup> One estimate has C.I.P. controlling between 10 and 15,000 square miles of forest in 1931.<sup>351</sup> At its Gatineau plant, completed in 1927, C.I.P. produced 546 metric tons of newsprint per day. In 1928, it bought International Fiberboard, a company located in Gatineau. At the height of production, the company employed from 1,000 to 1,500 workers at

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<sup>344</sup> Dandurand, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>345</sup> W.C. Greening, *Paper Makers in Canada*, Cornwall, Ontario: International Brotherhood of Paper Makers, 1952, p. 7.

<sup>346</sup> Dandurand, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111 is the source of information in this paragraph.

<sup>348</sup> Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

<sup>349</sup> Wesche and Kugler-Gagnon, editors, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>350</sup> Dandurand, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

its Gatineau Mills operation, and between 2 and 4,000 men around Maniwaki, the center of its timber-making operations.<sup>352</sup>

By way of summary, up to 1900, as had been the timber and lumber industries during the 19th century, the pulp and paper industry was competitive, with many small enterprises. The recession of 1921 accentuated concentration, as seen in the activity of International Paper. In response, Canadian companies concentrated and increased production capacity to compete with C.I.P.. This caused tremendous over-production, and the price of newsprint fell from \$112 per ton in 1921, to \$64 in 1929, then to \$40 in 1933.<sup>353</sup> Premiers Taschereau of Quebec and Ferguson of Ontario organized a cartel of Canadian producers in the late 1920's to try to maintain, even if not too successfully, the price of newsprint.

### Proto-industry

From the beginning, the isolation of the Hull community and the desire of Philemon Wright to construct a self-sufficient, agricultural community meant that there was nascent manufacturing activity in Hull. In 1803, Wright hired a blacksmith and a miller, and in 1806, a baker, tailor, and shoemaker. By 1828, Hull Township, in addition to four sawmills, had a corn mill, carding mill, two tanneries, a brewery, two distilleries, two potash manufactures, twelve lime kilns, two brick kilns, and a grist mill, all for meeting local needs.<sup>354</sup> These industries were indeed busy during construction of the Rideau Canal. One local need, in particular, was equipment for the timber industry. During the 1840's, Nathaniel Blasdell's foundry at the Chaudière built equipment for the timber industry.<sup>355</sup> The next decade, two other blacksmiths started making axes in Hull. In 1851, there were two paper mills in Hull that employed 51 workers, making paper out of cloth.<sup>356</sup> The census of 1851/1852 revealed that there were in Ottawa County 16 grist mills, one carding mill, one wool factory, 44 potassium manufactures, three tanneries, and six other factories.<sup>357</sup> Thus, local needs had meant that even as the first Industrial Revolution was beginning, there was already a base of small manufactures in the Hull region.

### Petite-bourgeoisie

Much of the land in Hull was owned by the Wrights, the inheritance from the land that Philemon Wright obtained during the operation of the leader-and-associate system. Nevertheless, most of the small commerces and professions, such as lawyers and notaries, were the province of the French-Canadian *petite-bourgeoisie*. In 1851, before the major influx of French-Canadians to the region, Wright's village had an inn and a general store. Elsewhere, in the Township, there were eight stores and five inns. As the region was settled by French-Canadians in large numbers beginning in the 1860's, small commerces serving local needs were established by French-Canadians. Among these merchants were pharmacists, shoe merchants, watchmakers, tobacconists, tailors, hardware merchants, photographers, dentists, and newspaper publishers (Le Courrier d'Outaouais and La Vallée de l'Outaouais).<sup>358</sup> By the end of the century, there were French Canadian businesses in Hull serving local needs in all areas: innkeepers and

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<sup>352</sup> Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

<sup>353</sup> Dandurand, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>354</sup> Kayser, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>355</sup> Gaffield, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>356</sup> Hamelin and Roby, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

<sup>357</sup> Kayser, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>358</sup> Boutet, Tome II, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

restauranters, printers, construction contractors, wine and liquor merchants, coal merchants, grocers; in fact, all the normal, small businesses one might find in an urban area.

### Other Manufacturing

The forestry was the economic *raison d'être* of urban Hull, nevertheless, there was other industrial activity, in addition to the small industrial establishments that pre-dated the industrial revolution and the economic activity of the *petite-bourgeoisie*. This activity resulted from growth of local population, the relative isolation of Hull, high transportation costs, and tariffs on foreign manufactured goods, which had begun in 1859, and became a formal part of Macdonald's national policy of 1878. This meant that Hull had manufacturing concerns to meet local and regional needs, but also national needs. The basis of this economic activity was the natural resources of the region, but it also included spinoff activities from the forestry industry.

One of the first sources of industrial activity were secondary products from the forestry industry. In addition to the products of the Eddy operation, there were several, other establishments in Ottawa County that made secondary wood products.<sup>359</sup>

### Secondary Wood Product Manufacturing in Ottawa County

#### **1870/71**

	<b>Establishments</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>\$ production</b>
Cabinet and furniture making	3	4	3,800
carriage making	9	27	16,810
Shingles	4	5	2,731
sash, door, blinds	1	50	17,000

#### **1881**

	<b>Establishments</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>\$ production</b>
Cabinet and furniture making	2	4	1,770
carriage making	28	56	37,935
Shingles	2	5	900
sash, door, blinds	2	32	41,500
Shipyards	1	7	21,000
wood turning	1	3	1,400

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<sup>359</sup> Kayser, *op. cit.*, p. 33 to 37.

**1891**

	<b>Establishments</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>\$ production</b>
cabinet and furniture making	14	18	19,560
carriage making	37	66	58,366
Shingles	2	4	1,280
sash, door, blinds	4	88	75,657
Shipyards	1	1	not available
packing case factories	1	100	16,621
lath mills	1	30	7,200

An industry of long standing in Hull was the cement industry. The Wrights had established limestone and brick kilns to take advantage of the limestone available in Hull. The limestone quarry near the site of the current *Casino du Lac-Leamy* was first mined by the Wrights. Material from this quarry was used for the construction of the Rideau Canal, and likely, for the construction of the Parliament Buildings. The Wright factory burnt in the great fire of 1900 and was not rebuilt, but in the aftermath, International Portland Cement built a factory at the quarry. As early as the 1880s, cement production from Hull and from Hochelaga, in Montreal, had eliminated American cement from the Quebec market, a successful example of a large-scale manufacturing concern created by Macdonald's national policy.<sup>360</sup>

The Seward Company located in Hull in 1903, and produced industrial oil and grease for national markets at an average of \$36,000 of annual production.<sup>361</sup> The use of explosives in the lumber industry and the cement industry led to there being a small explosives industry in Hull. There were also small manufactures of soaps and pharmaceutical products.<sup>362</sup> Hull also became a regional centre for manufacturing of dairy products, soft drinks, and asphalt.<sup>363</sup>

The timber and lumber industry provided a market for certain products, which eventually found national markets. For instance, the Ottawa Foundry Company built mill equipment and axes. In Hull, blacksmith Sexton Washburn began operating in the 1850's and was joined in axe production in the 1860's by the Walters, John and Henry. The Walters eventually absorbed Washburn, and by 1924, they were operating on Hanson Street, near Montcalm Street. With the advent of the chainsaw in the woods, the Walters Axe Company had to re-orient its business towards the use of axes by sportsmen. This, it did successfully until 1970, when the company ceased operation.<sup>364</sup>

A similar situation occurred in textiles, where the timber industry provided a local market which grew to national proportions. The Hanson mills made wool items, especially socks, for the forestry industry, and eventually served a national market. Started in 1878, the Hanson operation went through various incarnations -- Hanson's Woolen Mill, Hanson Hosiery Mills, Hanson-Mohawk -- before it closed in 1993 at which time, making it the oldest woolen manufactory in

<sup>360</sup> Linteau et al., *op. cit.*, p. 279.

<sup>361</sup> V.P. Aubin and A.E Bérubé, *Hull industriel*, Ottawa Printing Company, 1908, p. 38.

<sup>362</sup> Blanchard, *op. cit.*, p. 98, 102.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid*, p. 102.

<sup>364</sup> Chantal Berniquez and Luc Villemaire, "La hache hulloise: la «Walters»", *Outaouais – Le Hull disparu*, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur L'Outaouais, 1988.

all of North America.<sup>365</sup> There were other textile factories in Hull, as well: Holden and Sparks-Harrison, which made clothing for men; Sobies, which made underwear; and Woods, which made tents and other textile products used in the woods. There were also smaller operations that made mittens, hats, and mattresses. One estimate had approximately 160 men, and 750 women and girls, working at the height of the Hull textile industry.<sup>366</sup>

A meat packing industry also grew in Hull in response to the demands of the forestry industry; it also eventually served national markets. In 1886, as a public health measure, the City of Hull rented ten acres of land near Brewery Creek to serve as a public slaughterhouse. Butchers were required to kill and treat their animals there rather than creating a health hazard throughout Hull. As might be expected, however, the site near Brewery Creek also became a source of pollution.<sup>367</sup> In 1889, the George Mathews Company Ltd., from Lindsay, Ontario, set up an operation in Ottawa. In 1894, this operation was transferred to Hull, to be operated by W.E. Mathews, son of George. The City was so delighted by this decision, it gave a 15-year property tax exemption to the company, especially since it appeared that it would control the public health problems of public slaughterhouses at Brewery Creek. Operations at the Mathews plant in Hull included killing, curing, and smoking up to 3,000 hogs per week, and some beef. Two-thirds of the plant's output went to exports; at its peak, 120 employees were employed. The plant was merged into Canada Packers in the 20th century, and continued to operate for many years in Hull. An apology written for the company stated that, in the early days, "the 60-hour week was common practice with no extra rate paid for overtime; labour troubles were unknown."<sup>368</sup>

### Mining

It is hard to imagine that one of the prime industries in the Ottawa Valley during the 19th century was mining, but such was the case. Within Hull Township and vicinity were mined barite, phosphates, mica, clay, and iron, in addition to the limestone, gravel, and sand used in the cement industry. As far back as 1826, Philemon Wright presided over the Hull Mining Company; among its more notable investors were John Redpath and Robert Dummond. The company was established to mine iron, lead, marble, and granite in the Gatineau Hills, but it never became operational. At Ironside, Wright had found a deposit of iron ore. In 1854, Tiberius Wright sold the mineral rights to this land to Forsyth and Company, from Pennsylvania. Forsyth took out about 15,000 tons between 1854 and 1860, loaded onto boats on the Gatineau, shipped down the Rideau Canal to Kingston, then loaded on lake vessels bound for Cleveland, Ohio.<sup>369</sup> In 1866, the Canadian Iron Mining and Manufacturing Company constructed a coal-fired furnace to refine the iron near Freeman Road in order to save on transportation costs. A forest fire in 1870 burnt the buildings at the mine, the houses of fifty Ironside miners, the furnace, and a harbour on the Gatineau.<sup>370</sup> Lumber merchant Alanson Baldwin bought the land and opened a second mine. Baldwin shipped about 38,000 tons to the U.S. during 1871-1874. Legal difficulties and debts beset him, however, and he lost his claim to his mine and eventually went bankrupt.<sup>371</sup> Although some ore was mined in the 1950's, basically, the iron mines went dormant. A similar experiment on the eastern shore of the Gatineau at the so-called Haycock mine, presided by an Ottawa

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<sup>365</sup> Michelle Guitard, *Site et bâtiment de la compagnie Hanson Mills*, 82, rue Front, Hull, City of Hull, 1996, p. 8.

<sup>366</sup> Blanchard, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>367</sup> Rossignol, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

<sup>368</sup> *Archives nationales du Québec en Outaouais*, fonds Canada Packers, p. 55, document 27, "Hull Plant History".

<sup>369</sup> Katherine Fletcher, *Historical Walks: The Gatineau Park Story*, Ottawa: Chesley House Publications, p. 23.

<sup>370</sup> *Outaouais*, number 7, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57, and Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 24, 25.

capitalist, James Skead, also went nowhere in the late 1870's, probably inhibited by the depression.<sup>372</sup>

A more lasting and successful operation in the region involved the mining and production of mica. This substance, since it did not conduct electricity, was a useful insulant for electrical equipment. It was mined in ample quantities in Buckingham, Templeton, Perkins, and in Hull Township. The product was refined in Hull, Ottawa, Aylmer, Rockland, and Carleton Place. In fact, Ottawa-Hull became the centre of the Canadian industry until a depression in the world market in 1907/1908 forced 80% of the mica operations in central Canada to close. In Ottawa, the Laurentide Mica Company, a branch plant of Westinghouse, employed about 150 people splitting and trimming the leaves of mica from the quartz on which mica is found. In Hull, Fortin and Gravelle operated, as did Canada Mica Manufacturing and Blackburn. In total, there were about twenty firms operating at the height of the local industry. Women and girls also worked at home doing the work of separating mica from the quartz. Between 1884 and 1892, there were 35 mica mines operating in the Outaouais; 27 were still operating in 1900. The work of separating the mica crystals was done by women, thought to be ideally suited for the delicate work involved, and the low pay, \$0.14 to \$0.20 per pound of mica split. In addition, 300 or so girls aged 14 and 15 travelled from Hull each day to work in the mica operations in Ottawa. In the 1920's, Canada's mica industry was largely surpassed by low-cost and better quality mica from India and Madagascar.<sup>373</sup>

### Construction Industry

From the time when Philemon Wright was a contractor on the construction of the Rideau Canal, workers from Hull worked on construction projects in Bytown and Ottawa. This was particularly true during the construction of the Parliament Buildings when many workers, particularly masons, were French-Canadians who settled in Hull. This situation also applied during the construction, over several generations, of other federal government buildings in Ottawa. There were simply never enough construction workers in Ottawa to meet demand, so there were always Quebec residents working in construction in Ottawa. This employment situation increased the comings-and-goings of workers from one side of the River to the other, thus increasing the economic integration between the two sides of the Ottawa Valley.

### Utilities

Utilities in Hull and the Outaouais were initiated to meet the needs of the local forestry industry. The initiators of such projects were often the same capitalists who profited from the forestry industry. This was the situation for the rivers, roads, railways, and hydroelectric facilities; a broad history of each of these is outlined herein.

The rivers of the Ottawa Valley were the first means of transport in the region, as in the fur trade. With the advent of widespread settlement, however, roads were needed. Philemon Wright moved to Hull in a sleigh train up the frozen Ottawa river in 1800. Sleigh transportation worked on land if the forest was passable, and of course, only in winter. Roads were needed if the Outaouais were to be settled. Philemon Wright received construction contracts to build a road

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<sup>372</sup> See *Prospectus of the Ottawa Iron and Steel Manufacturing Company*, Ottawa, 1875; and Charles Millar, "Certains aspects de l'histoire de l'Outaouais", *Asticou*, no. 3, December, 1985.

<sup>373</sup> About the local mica industry, see the following: Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 289; Joseph Obalski, *Mica dans la province de Québec, Canada*, Quebec City: *Département de la Colonisation et des Mines*, June, 1901; Hugh Spence, *Mica: Its Occurrence, Exploitation, and Uses*, Ottawa: Department of Mines, 1912; and Cinq-Mars, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

between Grenville and Hull in 1817 and 1821. This road was indeed rough and mostly passable only in winter, since it often deteriorated into mud. As well, there were ravines and gullies, and areas where there were no bridges over water. In fact, Philemon Wright Jr. died when his coach overturned at a gully near Grenville in 1821.<sup>374</sup>

The solution to this problem was surfacing roads with gravel and stone. A group of timber merchants built such a toll road between Hull and Aylmer. The toll was one shilling return fare for a team of horses. In 1868, Allan Gilmour built a similar toll road, the Gatineau Macadamized and Gravelled Road, between Hull and the Gilmour mill at Chelsea, which cost \$0.90 for a return fare. The next year, the road was extended to Wakefield. By the end of the century, the City of Hull expropriated the portions of the roads lying within its boundaries, a move imitated by other municipalities. Only in the 1920's were these toll roads finally eliminated in the region, thus making automobile traffic easier.<sup>375</sup>

Travelling on the unfrozen river became easier when Philemon Wright started a regular bateau service, *The Packet*, between Grenville and Hull, of importance especially for the postal service; Ruggles Wright was the local postmaster. In 1823, *Union of the Ottawa*, a steamship, went into service for the Wrights between Grenville and Hull. Completion of the Rideau Canal meant increased steamer traffic on the River, and by the 1860's, lumber merchants were building barges and tugboats in Ottawa and Hull for the transportation needs of the lumber industry.<sup>376</sup>

In 1868, lumber merchants George Perley, Henry Bronson, and James Skead formed the Upper Ottawa Steamboat Company, by then, the best system for moving men and supplies to and from the lumber camps and dépôts.<sup>377</sup> Denis Murphy presided over the Ottawa Transportation Company, which operated six tugboats and eighty barges to move lumber downriver from the Chaudière. Even so, we can see the gradual effect of the competition afforded by the railway on this company. In 1899, it had 72 barges; in 1900, 60 barges; and in 1919, only 40 barges.<sup>378</sup>

Two sawmill owners, Thomas MacKay and John McKinnon, were principal promoters of a rail link between Ottawa and the St. Lawrence. They supported the Bytown and Prescott Railway, later re-organized as the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Company, a project of Boston capitalists eager to absorb the Ottawa Valley within their hinterland. The project never made money, however, since the railroad ended at New Edinburgh, rather than at the Chaudière. Once a line was run between these two points, however, it became a rail link useful for the lumber trade.

In 1866, lumbermen Perley and Currier joined with engineer Thomas Keefer to promote the Ottawa City Passenger Railway Company. This horse-drawn rail link carried freight, lumber, and passengers from New Edinburgh to the Chaudière via downtown Ottawa.<sup>379</sup> In 1859, the Brockville and Ottawa Railway started construction from Brockville to Smiths Falls, then from Carleton Place to Arnprior. In 1870, a line was built west from the Chaudière to meet this line called the Canada Central. In 1877, the Quebec government completed construction of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occident railway, linking Hull to Quebec City. A bridge over the Chaudière joined this road to Ottawa. In 1881, the Canadian Pacific Railway, formed to build a transcontinental railway, bought all these lines: the Canada Central, the Brockville and Ottawa,

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<sup>374</sup> Courtney Bond, *The Ottawa Country*, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968, p. 29.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>377</sup> Wesche and Kugler-Gagnon, editors, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>378</sup> Hamelin and Roby, *op. cit.*, p. 223; and Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

<sup>379</sup> Wesche and Kugler-Gagnon, editors, *op. cit.*, p. 16, 17.

the Quebec line, and the St. Lawrence and Ottawa. CP's main dépôt and terminus was at the Chaudière. The company had a monopoly on rail traffic into the region except for a railway started by J.R. Booth and William Perley, who had constructed in 1882 a line from Côteau at the Quebec-Ontario border on the St. Lawrence, to Ottawa, ending just south of the city near the Rideau Canal. Booth and Perley extended this line, the Canada Atlantic Railway, to meet American lines at Lake Champlain in 1888. By 1896, the line was extended westward to the Georgian Bay at Parry Sound, using subsidies which Booth demanded and extracted from the federal and Ontario governments. In 1895, Booth opened a new terminus near Rideau Street in downtown Ottawa. In Quebec, small lines were built around the turn of the century to link Aylmer with Portage-du-Fort, and Gatineau with Maniwaki. In 1901, these two roads were linked with Ottawa via construction of the Alexandra Bridge, which reached Booth's terminus. CP soon purchased the bridge. Early in the 20th century, the Grand Trunk, a competitor of the CP, obtained access to Ottawa when it bought Booth's railway and terminus in downtown Ottawa. Grand Trunk was one of the three companies that the federal government folded into one to create the Canadian Northern Railway, a crown corporation, when the railways which competed with CP started to go bankrupt during WWI. In 1960, the tracks of Booth's railway west across Ottawa were lifted, and construction of the Queensway started in the former right-of-way of the railroad.<sup>380</sup>

A similar pattern occurred in the provision of local hydroelectric services, that is, lumbermen diversifying their interests. In 1885, the Perley family joined with local capitalists, Clemow and Blackburn, to create the Ottawa Gas Company to generate and sell electricity. In 1888, lumberman Robert Hurdman joined with two engineers, Thomas Ahearn and Warren Soper, to start the Chaudière Electric Power Company. In 1891, Bronson and Weston established the Standard Electric Company to generate electricity. In 1894, Bronson and Ahearn promoted the merger of electric utilities in Ottawa to create the Ottawa Electric Company and the Ottawa Electric Railway Company, which operated streetcars as a monopoly until 1905, when Ottawa set up its own hydro facility. These two companies sold out to the City of Ottawa between 1947 and 1951.<sup>381</sup> The Hull Electric Company started running street cars in Hull, and among Ottawa, Hull, Deschênes, and Aylmer in 1896. Capital Power Company used the Deschênes rapids to supply E.B. Eddy and the Mathews Meat Packing Company at Brewery Creek. Eventually, in the 1920's, International Paper, through its branch plant, Gatineau Power, acquired all hydro facilities in the Outaouais, except for the Maclaren facilities at Buckingham and the Eddy Plant. By 1929, however, Gatineau Power also owned 49.9% of E.B. Eddy.<sup>382</sup>

### Housing and Neighbourhoods

The original neighbourhoods in Hull were the old traditional 'Wrightstown', and a newer, 'lower village' of French Canadian workers, east of Laval Street near the Ottawa River. With industrialization, these neighbourhoods spread east along the River then north to cover all of Hull Island. New parishes eventually were created in the eastern part of the island (Sacré-Coeur), and in the western part (Saint-Rédempteur and Sainte-Bernadette), along with the original parish, Notre-Dame de Hull, which corresponded to the original, lower village. At the northern part of the island, Brewery Creek was the site of considerable industrial development including, among others, the Mathews meat packing plant. Residential development leapfrogged this industrial

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<sup>380</sup> Courtney Bond, *op. cit.*, p. 32, 33, provides a good summary of rail development in the region.

<sup>381</sup> Wesche and Kugler-Gagnon, editors, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>382</sup> Dandurand, *op. cit.*, p. 139.



area in two areas around St. Joseph Boulevard early in the 20th century, thereby creating two newer neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods came to be known as St-Jean Bosco and Wrightville, and were divided by Laramée Avenue which runs east and west between Gatineau Park and St. Joseph Blvd. Subsequently, a parish was established for St-Jean Bosco, separating it from the parish of St. Joseph. Finally, a newer neighbourhood also sprang up early in the 20th century, Val-Tétreau, above the Chaudière, west of the hill on Taché Blvd. where there now is a campus of the *Université du Québec en Outaouais*. In a similar fashion, a new parish was established in Val-Tétreault named Notre-Dame de Lorette.

This physical expansion of urban Hull resulted from industrialization and population growth. The original neighbourhoods were physically limited by the fact of being on Hull Island, the island created by Brewery Creek, which enters from the Ottawa above the Chaudière and re-enters the Ottawa below the Chaudière at the easternmost end of Jacques Cartier Park. Beyond the period covered in this study, during the 1940's and 1950's there was a working class, shacktown along Brewery Creek itself, called Creekside. From the southern edge of lac de la Carrière moving west across St. Joseph Boulevard, grew a parish called St-Raymond de Pennafort, whose main arteries running east-west from the quarry are St. Raymond and Gamelin boulevards. Eventually, there was also a small, working class neighbourhood in the Boulevard Fournier sector on a near-island east of Hull Island, bounded by Leamy Lake and Leamy Lake Creek, which empties in the Ottawa River. East of the Fournier sector, on the other bank of the Gatineau River, is Pointe-Gatineau, where the Gatineau empties into the Ottawa. The proximity of the Fournier sector to Pointe-Gatineau, and its physical isolation from the rest of Hull, gave the Fournier neighborhood a unique position. Its people historically more closely associated with the former City of Gatineau than with the rest of Hull.

After WWII, there was a suburban expansion of Hull, facilitated by the automobile, into the northern limits of Hull. There emerged neighbourhoods in Lac-des-Fées, Parc-de-la Montagne, and Mont-Bleu. In the last generation, this suburban expansion has continued further into the Hautes-Plaines, Plâteau, Dôme, and Mountain Road areas. Up to the 1890's, Hull was a walk-to-work city, where workers walked to work sites on Hull Island, at Brewery Creek, or in Ottawa. Post-WWII, a mode of transport available to most, the automobile, provoked the suburban expansion of Hull. Around the turn of the 20th century, another mode of transport, widely available, had facilitated the expansion of Hull beyond Hull Island. This was the electric streetcar, fuelled with power made at the Chaudière and at the Deschênes Rapids.

When the original, lower village was built, it was the workers themselves who built their houses during their frequent periods of unemployment, or after work hours. There were several types of housing but one of the most frequent was a housing style unique to Hull. On long, narrow lots, ten metres by 30 metres, were houses built close to the sidewalk, with a gabled façade, often with a covered balcony in front. The house itself was long and narrow with the main room, the kitchen, in back. This design was probably of American influence. It was built in great numbers using the cheapest, local building product, lumber.<sup>383</sup> These houses could vary in price, costing from \$200 to \$1,000, but averaged about \$400 in the 1880's.<sup>384</sup>

Thus, Hull workers, already familiar with working in wood, might build a house that would provide some protection against the vagaries of industrial life. Indeed, home ownership

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<sup>383</sup> See *Hull et son patrimoine*, City of Hull, March, 1989, p. 11, 12, for examples of typical Hull housing.

<sup>384</sup> See *Report of the Royal Commission on Relations of Capital and Labour*, vol. 6, Quebec Evidence, Part II, 1889, p. 1353.

was often a useful strategy for workers for building protection in times of illness or hard times.<sup>385</sup> There was a difference in Hull, however, which owed to a unique land tenure system. This was referred to locally as the *constitut*. While the worker would build and own his own house, he did so on land that he never owned, only rented. The Wright descendants steadfastly refused to sell their land in Hull since it provided a continuing source of income. This was a practice that Philemon Wright had used when he tried unsuccessfully to set up a lower village during construction of the Rideau Canal. When hard times hit the Wrights, they would call in debts on land they had rented out to others. Thus, they absconded with improvements to the land at low prices, including the buildings on the land. As Hull industrialized, the Wrights' economic sway declined, except for the land on which Hull was being built.

The system worked like this. A worker would rent the land for a five-year period at, say, \$5 or \$6 per year, to be paid in quarterly installments. He would also agree to pay the municipal and school property taxes. The worker also agreed "that at the end of the present lease, if the said lessee [the worker] does not accept the sum which then may be offered him by the said lessor or his representative [the Wrights] for the improvements or ameliorations which he shall have then made on the said lot or premises, he [the worker] shall have the right to remove the same at his own cost and expenses." Thus, at the end of the lease, the Wrights could choose not to rent the land anymore, or to buy the house that the worker had built at the sum that the Wrights could name. If the worker did not like the sum proposed, he was free to remove the house at his own expense. A further clause stated that, should the worker fall one year late in payment of his rent, then the Wrights could simply abscond the house without paying an indemnity.<sup>386</sup>

Hypothetically, the Wrights could simply raise rents across-the-board and reclaim all the houses built on their land as their own. There is no evidence that this took place regularly. In fact, landlords would have been left with an abundant supply of houses and not enough tenants or house buyers, and prices would have decreased again. In actual fact, when inflation pushed these rents up to the level of \$30-40 per year after WWI, it proved to be the beginning of the end for the system. Nevertheless, until such time, the effect of the land tenure régime usually worked at the level of the individual. For the individual Hull worker, unemployment, accident, illness, disability, widowhood were all real possibilities in one's lifetime. As well, workers were often required to move away in hard economic times. This meant that workers were always being squeezed for their housing, both in terms of cost and availability of housing. In effect, the *constitut* was a tax that Hull workers paid to the principal landlords of the town, the Wrights.

Why did this system continue for so long, in spite of its transparent injustice? Firstly, the Wrights insisted on it, since land came to be their most important source of wealth. Secondly, French-Canadians were familiar with the seigneurial system, whereby they made regular payments to a seigneur for land, which they cultivated. Unlike seigneurialism, however, in which land was held in fief and seigneurs couldn't stop people from using the land, under freehold tenure, no one could tell the landowner how to dispose of his land. Thirdly, workers had no or little capital to buy land. Other than the small capital required to buy low-cost, locally abundant lumber, workers could do the work necessary to build the house, even if they couldn't afford outright the land on which the house was built. Finally, of no small import was the fact

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<sup>385</sup> For example, see how workers relied on home ownership in Hamilton, Ontario in Michael Katz, Michael Doucet and Mark Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982.

<sup>386</sup> See *Report of the Royal Commission, op. cit.*, p. 1358, 1359 for copy of lease made between Nancy Louisa Wright and Aristide Thibault in February, 1886.

that often illiterate francophones were forced to sign complicated documents in English. In fact, *constitut* is itself an odd rendering in French of an archaic English term. Thus, in a transparent manner did the Wrights abscond surplus value of the work done by workers in building their own housing.

The system of land tenure became the object of local protests in the 1890's, and again in the 1920's. Part III of this book describes legislation that was enacted in 1924 as a result of local agitation on the subject. Nevertheless, the system only finally disappeared for good in the 1950's, when the Province passed the necessary legislation, this in the same period that the remainders of the giant land companies founded by the British government early in the 19th century also went out of existence.

### Prohibition

A reality of life in Hull was the proximity of Ottawa, with both good and bad effects. There was a curious spillover of Ontario laws and culture that had a lasting impact on the physical aspects of Hull and working class life in the town. In particular, there was the situation created by the difference in liquor laws between the two provinces. During WWI, Ontario, hence Ottawa, joined the rest of English-speaking North America in the madness of Prohibition. Throughout the second industrial revolution, there was a vigorous campaign to limit and even eliminate alcohol consumption. Rather than explain the misery of the working class and the poor by the development and workings of industrial capitalism, some found it more propitious and safer to blame the lower social orders for their own ills, a phenomenon that has a continuing resonance even today. Limiting alcohol consumption became a major goal of social reformers, a goal that found support among the *petite-bourgeoisie*, among feminist and suffragette movements, within the clergy, and among the same bourgeois who often had supplied their workers with alcoholic beverages. In the United States, this movement crowned its success with a constitutional amendment that made drinking alcohol unamerican. In Canada, local governments moved in uneven steps towards Prohibition. Finally, the provinces, one by one, legislated Prohibition during WWI as a patriotic measure towards the war effort.

In Quebec, there were halting efforts at Prohibition at local levels, for instance, in Buckingham and Hull, and a short-lived provincial prohibition in 1919. Prohibition, however, was an anglo and Protestant phenomenon, and to Quebeckers, it was an abomination. The Province stepped in to sell liquor itself as a means of limiting and directing consumption. The *Commission des liquers*, the provincial liquor control board, became the model eventually adopted by other Canadian provinces. Nevertheless, for a generation, Prohibition was the way of life in Ottawa. This did not mean, however, as per elsewhere on the continent, that people stopped drinking. It simply criminalized drinkers, and established a market for organized crime organizations that continues to exist even today. With more liberal drinking laws in Hull, Ottawans turned to Quebec for their sinful pleasures. Hull abounded with bars, including illegal bars called 'blind pigs' ('speakeasies', as the Americans called them.) One estimate has that there were 77 blind pigs in Hull, most of them in proximity to Ottawa on Hull Island, where much of the working class lived.<sup>387</sup> As well, there were illegal gambling houses and brothels in Hull. Another source reveals that 175 blind pigs were closed by the authorities in April, 1922, and that \$140,000 in illegal booze was seized that year.<sup>388</sup> Besides the local populace and

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<sup>387</sup> Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Actes du colloque . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

<sup>388</sup> Danielle Potvin, "À la recherche d'hospes . . .", unpublished research, Ottawa, 1983/1984, p. 3, 4; available at the *Archives nationales du Québec*, in Gatineau.

Ottawans, clients for these services included the soldiers brought into the region during WWI and, during the 1920's, construction workers from the hydroelectric projects in the Gatineau Valley. Of course, Hull and Ottawa had always been traditional roistering grounds for the forestry workers of the Valley. Even when Prohibition finally ended in Ontario, laws in Ottawa continued to be more restrictive vis-à-vis alcohol, including earlier closing hours than in Hull. The experience of local, Hull entrepreneurs, whether they had been illicit or legitimate, served them well in maintaining a local entertainment industry. Well through WWII and into the post-war period, Hull bars thrived, serving Ontarians seeking to escape the stuffy atmosphere of Ottawa.

This experience left several effects on the region. Firstly, during Prohibition, Hull earned the nickname of 'little Chicago', an image that embarrassed the local clergy and *petite-bourgeoisie*. Even in latter years, frequent campaigns to clean up Hull have been persistent. Recalling past, negative images of Hull scores political points and resonates with many voters. Secondly, the night industry became an important part of the economic life of Hull residents, providing employment to local workers. Thirdly, night life became part of the physical or social landscape of the working class neighbourhoods on Hull Island. This included petty, organized crime; bars, brothels, and gambling houses; and a large police presence in Hull to control social disorder.

## Fire

Perhaps even more than Prohibition was another reality that affected Hull workers in their memory and legend. This was the reality of living in a town where the risk and costs of fire were ever-present. Hull was a lumber town, with huge woodpiles everywhere, houses built of the local lumber, and matches as a prominent local industry. So, French Canadians ironically referred to Hull as *la ville aux allumettes* since the town could go up in smoke just as easily as matches.

Fire was an ever-present danger, even from the beginning of Wright's settlement. In 1808, fire burnt Philemon Wright's mills, lumber, wheat, and other facilities and supplies. Wright wrote that he would have thrown in the towel on Hull but for the insistence of his sons. Forest fires in the summer around Hull were a persistent reality, such as during 1850, when fires in the region threatened both Hull and Ottawa. In July of that year, the air in Hull was thick with smoke and cinders dropping from local forest fires. Rain put out the menace. In August, 1870, a fire started in Constance Bay, 25 kilometres west of Ottawa, near the River. The wind pushed flames and cinders across the River to Breckenbridge, a hamlet west of Aylmer. Wind swept the fire madly and the fire travelled 33 kilometres north in 30 minutes to reach Ironside on the Gatineau, burning everything in its path. At Ironside, the fire destroyed iron-making facilities, a harbour, and the houses of the mine workers. In total, the fire burnt 130 square kilometres (50 square miles) of Hull Township. On August 16 of the same year, Bell's Corners burnt, as did 5,000,000 pieces of lumber at the Gilmour mill in Chelsea. 1,500 workers from the Chaudière left work to prevent the Chelsea fire from reaching Hull.<sup>389</sup>

Fire often struck in Hull itself, independent of forest fires. Fire could destroy a whole block, easily spreading from one wooden house to another. Ten houses burnt in July, 1869; sixteen houses in December, 1875; and eight more in May, 1876. Eight buildings burnt in August, 1887; sixteen in June, 1896 and once again, in April, 1902. Thirty-six burnt in June,

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<sup>389</sup> See the impressive record put together by local historian Raymond Ouimet in his book, *Une ville en flammes*, Hull: Éditions Vent d'Ouest, 1997; p. 18 and 19 deal with the 1870 forest fires.

1903; 38 in August, 1906. Fires destroyed whole sectors of town in April, 1880 when 400 houses burnt and left 600 families homeless, and again in May, 1886, when 110 houses burnt, leaving 150 families homeless.<sup>390</sup>

Fires often burnt the housing of workers, but workers were also affected by loss of employment when shops, businesses, and institutions burnt. Here is a list of some of these losses:

- Summer, 1865 – St. James Anglican Church;
- June, 1877 – the local farmers’ market on Hull Island;
- July, 1877 – 10 buildings on Promenade du Portage, the main commercial artery;
- June, 1888 – City Hall, Notre-Dame de Grace Church, and 125 other buildings;
- May, 1897 – several buildings on Promenade du Portage;
- December, 1905 – the coal dépôt of the cement company operating at Leamy Lake;
- May, 1907 – part of the Interprovincial (Alexandra) Bridge;
- June, 1910 – *St-Jean Baptiste* school;
- October, 1915 – *Saint-Rédempteur* Church;
- January, 1927 – the Windsor Hotel on Promenade du Portage;
- January, 1928 – *parc Royal*, an amusement park on Laurier St. near the River;
- Christmas Day, 1928 – *Sacré-Coeur* Hospital.<sup>391</sup>

The largest fire with lasting effects on Hull was the Great Fire of 1900. The fire started in a worker’s house around parc Sainte-Bernadette (then Minnow Lake, since drained), near Saint-Rédempteur St. on April 26, 1900, about 10:00 a.m. In twelve hours, it burnt about one-half of Hull and one-tenth of Ottawa, ie. the Rochesterville neighbourhood on LeBreton Flats, and all mills in its path, including those at the Chaudière. Winds of 30 m.p.h. meant that the fire had reached Hull’s Promenade du Portage by noon, the Hull Lumber Company and Eddy Company by one p.m., and crossed the bridge at the Chaudière into Ottawa. By midnight, both communities were pronounced safe after the fire had burnt an area three miles long by ½ mile wide. Seven people died and 15,000 were left homeless. Fortunately, the weather was warm so the homeless did not suffer as much as had the weather been cold.<sup>392</sup>

Dealing with the aftermath of the great fire became an international cause célèbre. About \$1,000,000 in donations were received in a relief fund, with donations from France, Britain, the British colonies, and 21 American states. The Mayor of London, England, raised \$210,000; the federal government contributed \$100,000; the Ontario and Quebec governments \$25,000 each; with \$99,000 coming from the City of Ottawa. Newspapers in Ontario and Quebec raised money and rail shipments to Hull were provided free of charge. Boats of the Ottawa Transportation Company shipped supplies to Hull since bridges to Hull were out of commission. Within 48 hours, all victims of the fire were housed temporarily, many in public buildings in Ottawa, others in the Mathews meat packing plant at Brewery Creek, which was untouched by the fire. For three and a half weeks, local clergy distributed food free of charge to 6,000 Hull victims. Money was then distributed according to claims. The general financial statement is reproduced at the end of this chapter for its informational value.<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> *Ibid*; see «Annex II – Les principaux incendies dans l’histoire de Hull, 1808 à aujourd’hui».

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>392</sup> A useful account is found in the *Report of the Ottawa and Hull Fire Relief Fund*, written in Ottawa in 1900 by lumberman George Perley, p. 3 to 6. See Pierre Louis Lapointe, *l’île de Hull: une promenade dans le temps*, chapter 1 for an excellent photographic rendering of the Great Fire of 1900.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid*, p. 107.

As impressive as the fire itself was the display of solidarity and the resolve with which people from Hull rebuilt their community. By the end of 1900 the people of Hull had already rebuilt about 300 houses, 100 shops and businesses, churches, the post office, banks, schools, and E.B. Eddy's operations. A similar process occurred in Ottawa.<sup>394</sup> Nevertheless, for many in Hull, the fire was too much. Nearly 2,000 people left Hull, even if population growth did resume in the coming years.

The ubiquitousness of fire was a tax on life in urban, working class Hull. Coping with fire absorbed considerable political and social efforts to bring the problem under control. These fires were fed by the cheap, wooden housing of workers, but also by enormous woodpiles throughout Hull and Ottawa. When there was talk of businesses taking responsibility by moving their woodpiles, lumbermen threatened to take their businesses elsewhere, even if there was little likelihood of this occurring. Instead, workers were blamed for building their houses out of wood, the local building material available in such abundance. Such was the opinion of the esteemed members of the Senate during a debate about the subject following the 1900 fire.

These fires stirred the images and memories of Hull workers, besides being downright dangerous. Fires also made workers' economic survival even more precarious and problematic, since they created unemployment, loss of business, and costs and efforts of rebuilding. E.B. Eddy's mills burnt in 1860, 1877, 1882, and 1890, only to be rebuilt and enlarged each time. The Gilmour mill near Jacques Cartier Park burnt in 1875 and 1883; Wright, Batson and Currier in 1878; Hurdman's mills in 1887 and 1897; the Hull Lumber Company in 1900; and most of the mills at the Chaudière, except for Booth's facilities, in 1900. These were the fires that destroyed entire mills; there were also numerous fires that destroyed parts of a factory or woodpiles. Then, there were the economic losses that accrued to other businesses and factories, as well as to social institutions such as churches and schools, all of which had to be rebuilt. After the 1900 fire, lumber mills at the Chaudière, other than those of Eddy and Booth, were closed and not rebuilt. Increasingly, Eddy and Booth slowly started to de-emphasize lumber production in favour of pulp and paper production, an industry concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer.

Unknown at the time, moreover, was that the cost of continual rebuilding was catching up to Hull. It was a contributing element to the de-industrialization of Hull, a process that only started to be overtly noticeable in the 1920's, although it had been developing for a generation already after the great fire of 1900.

### De-industrialization

That Hull, at some point in its history, experienced de-industrialization is clear simply by comparing the current economic and employment profiles of Hull's citizens with those of the 19th century. From the industrial and blue-collar society of the 19th century, Hull is now mostly a white-collar and pink-collar town where the federal government is the largest single source of employment and economic activity. The difference is unmistakable.

When and how de-industrialization took place, however, is a matter for debate. Did it occur during the federal government's expansion into the physical space of urban Hull during the 1960's and 1970's, during the post-war period in the 1950's, during WWII or WWI, or during the Great Depression of the 1930's? In fact, during all these periods, the de-industrialization process continued apace. Even by the 1920's, de-industrialization was well underway and could be perceived statistically. The trigger element for de-industrialization was the Great Fire of 1900, which destroyed most of Hull's major industry, the lumber business. That these businesses were

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<sup>394</sup> Ouimet, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

not rebuilt as had happened after previous conflagrations was a reflection of structural weakness in the local economy. It is true that the lumber business was transformed into pulp and paper, at least, by the Booth and Eddy firms that survived the great fire. Nevertheless, whereas in the days of lumber, the Ottawa Valley was the leading region in the country in the lumber industry, it was just one region among many in the days of pulp and paper.

At the turn of the 20th century, the weaknesses of local industry could be missed in the apparent prosperity of the period. Moreover, there were several companies operating in Hull that still served national and provincial markets for cement, bricks, meat packing, axes, and textiles. Hull was also a centre for regional production of consumption goods such as dairy products and bakery products, and there were the traditional, artisan industries in such areas as carriage making, sash and door, and blacksmithing.<sup>395</sup> The weaknesses in the local lumber industry, however, were significant. The Valley's pinery was being used and not replaced; conservation and renewal were more wishes than reality. Wood was of lesser quality and of a greater cost to harvest and transport, since the companies were going further into the woods. Labour costs increased when French-Canadians left the woods to live permanently in more prosperous towns and cities. Wood was being surpassed by other materials for fuel and building material purposes. Finally, as per the stages of capitalist development, the second industrial revolution meant that the lumber industry was being concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer. In the past, there had been a steady stream of new entrants to the timber and lumber industries. This group of capitalists, through mergers, buyouts, centralization, and plant closures, was indeed becoming small.

The development of the state in Canada triggered the first industrial revolution, which began during the late 1840's. This revolution featured government involvement in local, public works; canal, then railway building; immigration; timber, then lumber exports; wheat exports; the use of British portfolio capital investment; and the development of protected national industries to substitute for imports, all part of a deliberate, national industrial policy. In all this, Hull and Ottawa were at the centre of the action owing to the development of the state and the chief local industry, lumber. In this industry, the Ottawa Valley was the leading region in the country, far exceeding activity in the Saint John, St. Maurice, and Saguenay Valleys.

The first industrial revolution ran out of steam during the depression of 1873-1895. For a generation, the local lumber industry experienced modest growth, slow and gradual despite the depression. This was the case, as well, for activities that could be characterized as upstream and downstream to the sawmilling business, the former being companies that produced factors of production such as axes, lumberjacks' clothing, and tents for the woods, the latter being secondary products such as the pail, tub, and match businesses of Eddy and other operators.

The second industrial revolution manifested itself in a constellation of developments: new products such as steel, aluminum, electrical equipment and appliances, automobiles; hydroelectric power and pulp and paper; mining of metallic rather than non-metallic minerals; and petroleum. There were new processes at work: assembly-line production; Taylorism ('scientific' management); corporate concentration; brand development; mass marketing, mass media, and mass consumption; American direct investment as opposed to the traditional British portfolio investment of the first industrial revolution; and massive capital investment in blue-collar work. One of the first victims of the second industrial revolution was the local mining industry, based on non-metallic minerals. One estimate has that there were about 2,000 people working in this industry in the Outaouais in 1906; twenty years later, very little of this industry

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<sup>395</sup> Kayser, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

remained.<sup>396</sup> As for the lumber industry, lumber operators were already complaining during the recession of 1913 and the early war years. Labour was rare and expensive, and transportation by sea and rail was becoming increasingly expensive. There was some improvement owing to wartime demands for such locally produced items as shellboxes and paper bags for explosives, but not enough to compensate for the structural problems of the lumber industry.<sup>397</sup> The more serious demands of the wartime economy were for production of steel and metallic minerals, economic activity not based in the Ottawa Valley. Even within the Ottawa Valley, communities other than Hull received most of the new, corporate investment in pulp and paper and hydroelectric power, for example, Buckingham, Masson, Gatineau Mills, and the Gatineau Valley. At the same time, the Gilmour and Hughson plant in Hull and the Edwards plant in New Edinburgh were closed owing to corporate concentration. Furthermore, activities upstream and downstream to the milling industry, or in unrelated fields such as cement and meat packing, were also experiencing concentration, especially during the 1920's. In 1927, Wood Gundy bought the twenty companies of International Portland Cement, which operated at the Hull quarry, in order to create Canada Cement. In 1929, this company added *La compagnie de Ciment de Montréal-Est*, in Hochelega, to its stable. In 1927, the Mathews meat packing plant joined with three other companies to create Canada Packers.<sup>398</sup> In later years, additional concentration in these companies closed Hull operations. During 1928, a British match company, Bryant and May, bought out Eddy's match operation in Hull in order to centralize its production in Pembroke. In 1926, CIP, through its Gatineau Power branch, bought out hydro facilities in the Gatineau Valley, on the Ottawa River, and at the Chaudière. In 1927, CIP closed its Hull and New Edinburgh factories, and opened its mill in Gatineau Mills. In 1928, it bought out a Gatineau company, International Fiberboard.

All these developments left Hull workers with fewer options in terms of employment. A worker from Hull could work only for Booth or Eddy, Canada Cement, Canada Packers or the textile firms if he or she were not skilled and expected to work in manufacturing. Certainly, Hull workers could move to Buckingham, Masson, Gatineau Mills, or elsewhere in the Valley; it can be imagined that many did so, even though we have no figures about this. Working in Hull, otherwise, meant working in local regional concerns such as dairies; in the traditional commercial enterprises of the *petite-bourgeoisie*; in white collar work in regional offices of such industries as banks and insurance companies; or not insignificantly, in the night life industry in Hull created during Prohibition in Ontario. Beginning around 1910, the federal government began to be a leading employer in the region, but access to Hull workers was mostly limited to English-speakers. Hull workers were limited in that not much of this federal employment went to blue collar workers, women, or francophones. Hull workers were often not very literate, ill-educated, and spoke little English. Finally, the federal Public Service was resolutely English only, and adamantly so. Only during the 1960's and 1970's, did the federal Public Service open to francophones in significant numbers.

The people of Hull, as did other North Americans, participated in the second industrial revolution as consumers of automobiles, electrical equipment, and all the other developments of the age. Their role as producers, however, became more limited. As such, most people of Hull were condemned to the poverty in which most Canadian workers lived until WWII. While this

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<sup>396</sup> Gaffield, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>397</sup> See Wesche and Kugler-Gagnon, editors, *op. cit.*, p. 20, and Gaffield, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>398</sup> Caroline Andrew, Serge Bordeleau and Alain Guimault, *L'Urbanization: une affaire*, University of Ottawa Press, 1981, p. 22.



poverty was the lot of most Canadians, the effects on Hull workers were accentuated, owing to the loss of the prime local industry, lumber. This loss had been triggered by the Great Fire of 1900. By the second and third decades of the 20th century, the de-industrialization of Hull could be seen in figures, some of which follow.

#### Manufacturing in Hull<sup>399</sup>

Year	# of establishments, ≥ 5 workers	# of employees	\$ value production
1891	70	1,573	1,287,292
1900	45	1,508	3,182,050
1910	31	2,918	7,259,301
1925	19	2,260	6,737,274

#### # persons ≥ 10 years-old in Hull labour market<sup>400</sup>

Year	All workers	Manufacturing workers	% manufacturing vs. total
1911	6,668	3,643	54
1921	8,284	3,625	43
1931	9,902	2,926	30

This trend of declining percentage of manufacturing workers, as compared to the total number of workers, continued until modern times, with the exception of a small, temporary increase during WWII.<sup>401</sup>

#### Industrial Activity in Hull during 1920's<sup>402</sup>

Year	# of establishments	Capital (\$)	\$ production
1919	75	16,896,399	15,181,622
1920	70	17,14,736	16,623,648
1923	28	11,593,960	12,123,870
1924	39	15,638,376	10,056,907
1925	36	13,633,808	10,767,244
1926	38	14,340,102	12,234,012
1927	38	13,771,199	11,705,232
1928	41	13,077,202	11,623,773
1929	37	10,815,418	9,930,547

During the 1920-1929 period, for Quebec as a whole, the number of industrial establishments diminished by 6.7%, but capital increased by 62.7%, while the dollar value of production increased by 20%.

<sup>399</sup> Kayser, *op. cit.*, p. 55; and Robert Moreau, "Intempérance et prostitution" in Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Actes du colloque . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

<sup>400</sup> Kayser, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>401</sup> Andrews et al., *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>402</sup> Serge Lalonde, "Condition ouvrière entre 1919 et 1929", in Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Actes du colloque . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 49, 50.

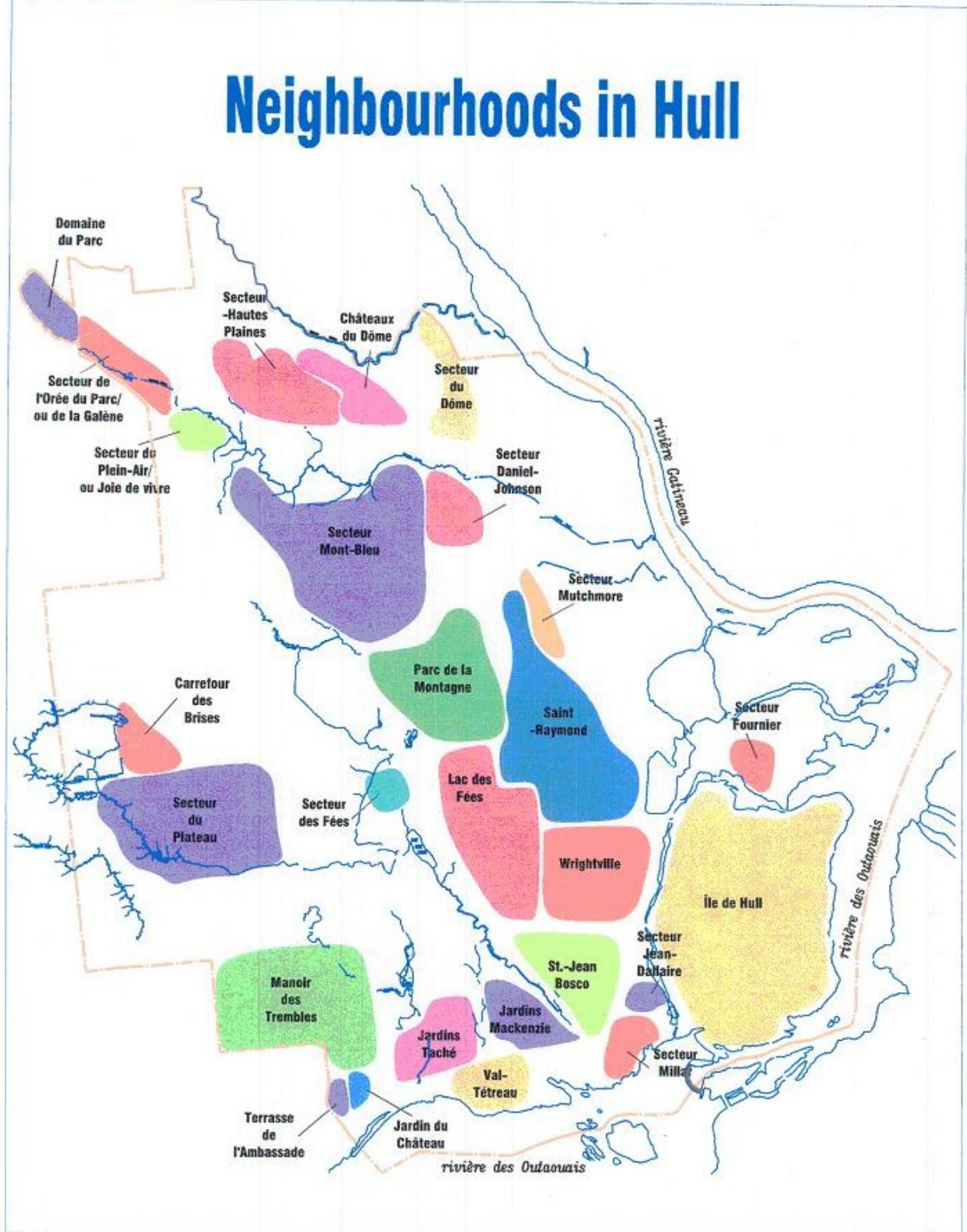
**GREAT FIRE OF 1900  
GENERAL STATEMENT  
OF TOTAL LOSSES, INSURANCE, ETC.**

	Number of Claims	Amount of Losses Claimed	Insurance	Number of Owners	Number of Tenants	Number in Family		Orders for Goods given Claimants		Cash paid Claimants		Total amount to Individual Claimants		Total	Z	
						Over 12	Under 12									
Ottawa	1904	\$6,215,355	\$3,085,203	640	1126	4133	2471	\$5769	20	\$534,150	79	\$539,919	99		7867	
Hull	1321	3,300,494	770,392	458	824	2776	1726	1534	58	\$373,653	85	\$375,188	43	.	6932	
Total	3225	\$9,515,849	\$3,855,595	1098	1950	6909	4197	\$7,303	78	\$907,804.64		\$915,108.42		\$26,868.04	\$14,986.31	14,799

J. C. Browne  
Administrator and Treasurer.  
Ottawa and Hull Fire Relief Fund.



Map – Neighbourhoods in Hull



## CHAPTER 8 – WORKERS IN URBAN HULL

### Introduction

Beginning in the 1860's, French Canadians moved to Hull in large numbers. They came from the surrounding countryside and villages of the Outaouais, from Eastern Ontario, from the greater Montreal region, from parts of Eastern Quebec such as the Gaspé and the Saguenay regions and even from New England and Michigan.<sup>403</sup>

### A Life of Mobility

Workers in Hull were a mobile lot. French Canadians were attracted to Hull from the U.S. and from Northern Ontario, an example of repatriation of French Canadians to Quebec, but workers might also leave Hull for the regions whence they came, or for other regions to try their luck there. Locally, as much as a border, the Ottawa River was a point of contact for Hull workers, who crossed the border daily to work as domestics, or in construction, the mica industry, the clothing and textiles industries, retail and eventually, in the federal public service, as well as the lumber and pulp and paper mills at the Chaudière.

Hull workers also displayed seasonal mobility. During the first generation of Hull's urbanization, men continued to work in the woods in the winter, and return to the mills in Hull during spring and summer. In fact, during winter, the mills closed as the River froze, eliminating the source of power for the mills. Men could engage in other work in Hull during the winter months, for example, snow removal from railroads, making ice on the rivers, or building the ships used in the lumber trade.<sup>404</sup> Gradually, men preferred to stay in town during winter, as they lost their taste for the isolation of the woods. Thus, workers had to deal continually with the precarious nature of their work for, even in summer, before electrification, the River could run dry and mills close, a frequent occurrence. Beginning in the early years of the 20th century, some industries were able to remain open all year, depending upon economic cycles. Pulp and paper, meat packing, textiles, and cement became industries that operated nearly the entire year. This would have meant an improvement in the standard and quality of living of Hull's workers.<sup>405</sup> On the other side of the equation, however, winter and poverty went together in Hull as they did elsewhere in Canada. Wages often were lowered simply because businessmen could do so. Prices of necessities such as firewood and clothing would increase in the winter at the same time as jobs became more scarce. The cold and inadequate heating meant that infectious diseases such as flu, measles, and smallpox increased during the winter. Relying upon charity was a distasteful necessity for the urban poor. In the assessment of historian Judith Fingard, "poverty and winter were inseparable conditions in nineteenth century Canada".<sup>406</sup> This assessment also applied to workers in Hull.

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<sup>403</sup> A novel written about Hull's matchworkers provides some impressionistic comments about the migration from the Saguenay to Hull. See Louis Lebel, *Magdal, ou "Ta vie sera ton châtime"*, Montreal: Éditions Bernard Valiquette, 1940, p. 32, 33. E.B. Eddy's first match workers came from Michigan (see p. 116.)

<sup>404</sup> Chad Gaffield, editor, *Histoire de l'Outaouais*, Quebec City: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1994, p. 293.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid*, p. 293.

<sup>406</sup> Judith Fingard, "The Poor in Winter: Seasonality and Society in Pre-industrial Canada", in Michael Cross and Gregory Kealey, editors, *Pre-industrial Canada, 1760-1849*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 77.

## Men's Work<sup>407</sup>

The male portion of the working class in Hull comprised several components. Firstly, there were the skilled artisans, including in industries where industrialization was removing control of production from workers, for example, blacksmiths and other metal tradesmen. There were traditional artisans in the construction industry, for example, masons and carpenters. Then, there were skilled workers in technologically advanced fields, workers such as machinists, paper makers, railway mechanics, and millwrights. Secondly, there were specialized workers who worked on specific tasks in factories, but had only minor training; these workers could be found in the lumber industry. Thirdly, some workers had neither recognized skills nor training. These men found work as labourers in construction, transportation, and public works. A fourth component would have been white-collar workers, such as clerks in offices, banks or in retail commerce. Finally, there would have been a small element of men in domestic service, such as butlers, drivers, and gardeners.

Ethnically, most workers in Hull were French Canadian, although there were some Irish. A disproportionate number of skilled workers were English-speakers. By the end of the 1920's, about 6% of pulp and paper workers in Canada were Americans, chiefly in the skilled work of paper making.<sup>408</sup> Men in the pulp and paper industry were young, at least, if we go by the figures available for Quebec as a whole. In 1921, 18.3% of these workers were under 19, of which 3%, furthermore, were under 15 years of age; 45.8% were between 20 and 34 years old; and 24.7% were between 35 and 49 years old.<sup>409</sup> Almost 9 workers out of 10 thus were under 50 years old.

There was a disproportionately large number of men as compared to women in Hull, the opposite of the trend that existed in Quebec as a whole. This was a legacy of the forestry industry where employees were mostly men. In Ottawa County, the men/women ratio was also greatly imbalanced, again a legacy of the forestry industry. The ratios for Ottawa County were 1.07 in 1891, 1.08 in 1901, 1.18 in 1911, and 1.04 in 1921. In Hull, the ratios in the same period were 1.03, 1.02, 1.01, and .98. Only in 1921 did this situation reverse such that there were more women in Hull than men, perhaps a result of the recession of the early 1920's, when many workers left Hull.<sup>410</sup>

## Children's Work

The public discourse of the day held that the father worked to provide for the needs of his wife and children. The reality for working class families was that all worked as soon as they were able if they were to survive. Parents brought their children to work in factories where children were paid minimally, often by piece-work. This was the case in the mica, sawmilling, and match making industries of Hull, regardless of what laws said about minimum age for factory work or for work at night by children.<sup>411</sup> In Quebec, the minimum age for working was set at 14 in 1907, while obligatory schooling only came into effect in 1943.

The life course for girls was different, especially if there were younger children at home who required care. Girls learned their expected role by helping in the housework, and in the

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<sup>407</sup> Louis Fournier et al., *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier au Québec: 150 ans de luttes*, Montreal: CSN/CEQ, 1984, p. 28, 29, provides useful categorizations of the work done by the working class.

<sup>408</sup> *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985, p. 52; see entry for Americans.

<sup>409</sup> Jean-Pierre Charland, *Les Pâtes et papiers au Québec, 1880-1890; Technologies, travail et travailleurs*, Quebec City: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1990, p. 278.

<sup>410</sup> Robert Moreau, "Intempérance et prostitution", in Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Actes du Colloque sur l'identité régionale dans l'Outaouais*, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur l'Outaouais, 1982, p. 93.

<sup>411</sup> Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

domestic industry of making clothes and foodstuffs. As they became adolescents, it would be expected that they would work in factories in such industries as textiles, matches, or mica, or help their mothers in the making of clothes, part of the cottage industry in the garment sector known as the 'sweating system'. Early marriage followed for most girls. During the first generations of urban Hull, girls rarely attended school so boys were more literate than girls but, during the 20th century, the situation reversed since girls were preserved longer from the factory, so they could continue in school. This allowed them to attend school longer than boys, as long as the needs of housework or child care did not call. It was this group of slightly educated girls that produced many of the lay school teachers in Quebec.

### Women's Work

The work of women was limited strictly according to marital status, age, child care responsibilities, family life cycle, and the official, public discourse of the Church. Employment was segregated by sex; where women and men worked side-by-side, women were paid about half as much as men. Often, women were paid by piece-work.<sup>412</sup> For the most part, married women did not work for pay, at least, not visibly. Paid employ for women was limited to adolescents, young unmarried women, spinsters, widows, and separated women.

Nevertheless, while only 10% of Quebec women were employed in the middle of the 19th century, by the turn of the century, this proportion had doubled.<sup>413</sup> Much of this coterie of women was employed in domestic service, working impossible hours for little pay. Many such women from Hull worked in Ottawa homes, while others worked as cleaners in factories, hospitals, churches, and other institutions. In Hull, women represented 19.2% of the labour force in 1911, and 20.4% in 1931.<sup>414</sup> Of the women in the labour force in 1911 in Hull, 781 of 1, 288 worked in manufacturing: mica, matches, clothing, and textiles. There, the supposed, manual superiority of women, dexterity, speed, and precision was put to good use. By 1931, however, only 360 of 2,022 women workers worked in manufacturing, owing to the loss of the Eddy match plant and the mica industry. In the latter industry, up to 800 women had been employed in the greater Ottawa region. Otherwise, the largest employers of women were Eddy, employing up to 400 women, depending upon economic circumstances, and the textiles firm Woods, which employed as many as 200 women. By 1931, white-collar office work had opened to women; 277 worked in offices, whereas only 26 women had worked in offices in 1911, then still the preserve of men. Another avenue of employment for lay women was teaching; about 4 out of 5 lay teachers in this period were women.<sup>415</sup>

So much for the visible work of women, but there was other work that married women and their daughters did that escaped the attention of census-takers. Much of the clothing worn by Canadians was made by women in cottage industry decentralized in small shops or in homes. In a seemingly, endless system of sub-contracting from fabric manufacturer to wholesaler to retailer to small shops, the actual work of sewing and making up clothes was done by married women and their daughters at ridiculously low wages. Many Hull women worked this way for Ottawa firms. This production method, the sweating system, was denounced by many reformers including Mackenzie King, who served as Canada's first deputy minister of Labour before getting elected. This method of production, in fact, borrowed from the domestic industry that had

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<sup>412</sup> Fournier et al., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>414</sup> Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298, 299 is the source for this information about women's employment in Hull.

always engaged rural, French Canadian women in the production of clothing and other essential household items. Even in urban Hull, another rural tradition maintained, the keeping of animals such as chickens, horses, cows, and pigs, the responsibility for which often accrued to women. Then, there was housework, including collecting firewood from the lumber mills for domestic use. Child care responsibilities fell to girls and women, even more so if the men and teenaged boys of the house were working away from home in the woods. For many women, the only options left were activities of petty crime, night life work, and prostitution, which flourished in Hull owing to the shortage of women versus men in the region and Prohibition in Ontario; exile to the U.S.; or moving to Montreal. In the opinion of the French historian of the working class, Marcel David, “the arrival of women in the industrial and commercial workforce caused a disruption in their traditional way of life and an exploitation from which women are still not free.”<sup>416</sup> Written in 1967, these words certainly applied to Hull during our period.

Women in Hull or elsewhere in Quebec had another life option other than factory or domestic work, motherhood, or spinsterhood. This option was the convent. The increase in numbers of religious women in Quebec corresponds with the periods of the two industrial revolutions. Between the British conquest and the 1837/1838 rebellions, the number of nuns in Quebec remained about 230 to 260. In the 1840’s, it increased to 560, reaching almost 7,000 in 1900, and nearly 14,000 in 1920. Here are figures for the number of nuns in Quebec during the course of the two industrial revolutions.<sup>417</sup>

	<b>Number of nuns</b>	<b>% of female pop. over 20</b>	<b>% of single women over 20</b>
1851	650	0.3	1.4
1871	2,320	0.9	4.1
1881	3,783	1.1	4.4
1901	6,629	1.5	6.1
1911	9,964	1.9	8.0
1921	13,579	2.2	9.1

The industrial revolutions correspond to the rise of women’s religious vocations in Quebec in education, health care, and social services. The period ended with the emergence of feminism, which aimed at increasing the social role of laywomen in Quebec. Historian Marta Danlewycz argued that the decision to enter the convent was not just religious, or taken to escape the material world through cloistering, though it certainly sometimes was. In fact, becoming a nun was often a professional decision, whereby women could choose their field of endeavour. Women chose religious orders that suited their individual temperaments, occupational preferences, and social aspirations.<sup>418</sup> The expansion of religious women’s role in Quebec history is not just a question of influence of the Church, but also a social and economic phenomenon of the role of women. Under the protection of their religious vocations, “women pursued life-long careers, wielded power, and on occasion, entered the public sphere”.<sup>419</sup> Many Hull women joined

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<sup>416</sup> Marcel David, *Les Travailleurs et le sens de leur histoire*, Paris: Cujas, 1967, p. 190; author’s adaptation from French to English.

<sup>417</sup> The source for this information is Marta Danlewycz, *Taking the Veil*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987, p. 17.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.



this movement in order to teach school, work in hospitals, or conduct social work, by joining one of several orders, as shall be seen more thoroughly in Part III.

### Family Life

A useful way to think about families is to consider three things: their cycle, structure, and economy.<sup>420</sup> Cycle refers to the process of formation of the family through to its dissolution. It includes the life stages of birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, widowhood, old age, and death. Structure refers to the organization of family membership, and roles and status assigned by age and sex. The economy of the family refers to how resources are obtained, used, and allocated, and how work is divided and performed. This sociology of the family is useful for understanding the family life of Hull workers.

The key to understanding the functioning of the working class family in Hull was the preponderance of the economic reality facing workers, in other words, the crushing poverty that stared workers in the face. This economic concern was reflected in the structures of the family as it moved through its cycle. The family was the most important line of defense for individual workers against the workings of industrial capitalism. It was the locus of survival for the individual, but at the same time, the family was an important resource used by capitalists for the accumulation process. The cheap labour that Quebeckers provided to capitalists during the industrial revolutions was part of a system. By underpaying the men of the families, capitalists had access to the work of the adolescents, children, and women of the family. All had to work if the members of a family were to survive. This contrasted in a transparent manner with the public discourse, which held that the father should be able to support his wife and children through his own work and income. This was the reality for the bourgeoisie and *petite-bourgeoisie*, but for working people, this dictum did not apply in spite of its pervasiveness. On the positive side, however, many workers in Hull were recent migrants from the country. This meant that they were used to the idea, left from farm life, that all had to work if the family was to survive. That children, adolescents and married women worked, even if invisibly, was accepted as normal. The family was a unit of production; the contemporary family focused on consumption, education, and emotional sharing was far from the reality of life for Hull workers. Thus, all worked for money, but as well women and children, contributed to the unpaid work of housework, child care, food preparation, the domestic industry of making clothes and other household items, collecting firewood, and maintaining livestock and gardens.

In addition to the organization of work, there were other strategies employed as the family moved through its life cycle. Young adults lived at home until marriage, and sometimes, even in the early years of marriage, until resources permitted them to establish their own household. When they did leave, often it was to the house next door or elsewhere in the neighbourhood. In hard times, related households would exchange services even more than normally; in fact, barter exchange was an important element of survival. Widows might remarry to ensure income, while widowers would remarry for purposes of childcare and for operating households. Aged parents lived with their adult offspring, often in the same houses in which they had raised their children, after ownership of the house was transferred to adult children. Households might also include boarders, sometimes part of the extended family.

One feature of life for Hull workers was early marriage, in part, owing to the factory work that allowed boys and girls to be working for pay during adolescence. This meant that

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<sup>420</sup> See, for instance, Michael Katz, Michael Doucet and Mark Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982, chapter 8.

young workers had resources that allowed them to establish their own households relatively early. In 1891, while the average marriage age for men was 27.2 years of age in Quebec as a whole, in Hull, the average marrying age for men was 24.5 years; women in Quebec married on average at 24.7 years of age, but at 20.7 years in Hull.<sup>421</sup>

Since child labour and work by adolescents was encouraged and deemed necessary, it is easy to understand how schooling of working class children received short shrift. The first laws limiting work by children were adopted in Quebec in 1885. Boys had to be 12 years old, girls 14 years. In 1907, the age was made 14 for both. These laws were observed only in their breach. There were few inspectors, and both capitalists and parents ignored the law.<sup>422</sup> Furthermore, until 1923, there were fees that mitigated against workers sending their children to schools in Hull. Parents paid \$0.10 per month per child in elementary school, \$0.20 per month per student in secondary school, expenditures that would have cooled the ardour of parents of working class children.<sup>423</sup>

In Hull, as in Quebec, illiteracy was the norm for working people. In 1871, 37% of the total Quebec population, including children, was illiterate. In 1891, 11.2% of Quebecers was still illiterate, while 36% of the adult population was illiterate. At the same time in Ontario, 7.9% and 3.7% of these population categories were illiterate.<sup>424</sup> Free and obligatory public schooling was a rallying-cry of working class militants and liberal reformers in Quebec, which only came to fruition in 1943.

### Wages and Working Conditions

One can put together a portrait of local wages during the industrial revolutions using fragmentary data from various sources. Nevertheless, one has to be cautious about such figures as we can't be sure of the value of a dollar in previous times. Always, when compared to cost-of-living figures, workers come up short using existing wages, or at very best, in a precarious financial position. Moreover, we know that workers were poor, and survival depended upon everyone in the family working in spite of the official discourse about father, the breadwinner, being able to provide for woman and children. More important and more reliable than quantitative comparison between wages and cost-of-living is qualitative information. One has to study this latter information to obtain an appreciation of the economic realities facing workers. Part of this qualitative information is the hierarchy of wages for different types of work and different groups of workers. In order to do this, we look at wage figures for five different periods: 1870, just before the 1873-1895 depression began; 1875, during the depression; 1886, during the hearings of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour; the first, two decades of the 20th century; and the 1920's, after the first blush of effective trade unionism in Hull. This wage information is only fragmentary, but it permits us to understand the going wages for different categories of workers: for skilled workers; for semi-skilled workers; for unskilled workers doing specialized work in a factory setting; for labourers; for service employees; and for white-collar workers.

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<sup>421</sup> Odette Vincent-Domey, *Filles et familles en milieu ouvrier*, Collection du Regroupement des chercheurs en histoire des travailleurs du Québec, study no. 4, Montreal, 1991, p. 77.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>424</sup> Fournier et al., *op cit.*, p. 34; and Jean Hamelin, editor, *Les travailleurs québécois, 1851-1896*, Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1973, p. 56.

The first source is average wage rates for skilled artisans working in Ottawa in 1870.<sup>425</sup> We can assume that, owing to the mobility of Hull workers back and forth across the River, that wage rates would have been similar in Hull and the fact that a disproportionate share of skilled workers in Ottawa were Hull residents. The hierarchy is as follows:

- masons and stonecutters - \$2/day
- plumbers, millwrights, machinists - \$1.75/day
- carpenters, cabinet-makers, blacksmiths, painters, plasterers, brickmakers - \$1.25/day
- millers, printers - \$1.10/day
- bakers - \$12 to \$14 per month plus board
- butchers - \$8 to \$10 per month plus board

Traditionally, masons were paid more than other craftsmen. Part of the explanation for this difference accrued locally to the demand created by construction of Parliament and other federal buildings. These skilled craftsmen managed to resist the loss of wages that affected most workers during the 1873-1895 depression, even making small gains. For instance, in 1875, masons along with bricklayers, stonecutters, and carpenters earned \$2 to \$3 per day. Printers were paid \$10 per week, and furthermore, worked all year round, owing to government demand for their services.<sup>426</sup>

Workers in the forestry industry were not so fortunate as wages were cut during the 1870's. For example, Baldwin, a lumber merchant at the Chaudière, cut wages by 25 percent. Bronson and Weston cut their staff in half, and paid \$11 per month per employee in 1875, rather than the \$17 paid in 1874. In the woods, wages were reduced to levels seen in earlier years. Hewers, liners, scorers, sawyers earned from \$12 to \$35 per month, cooks earned \$20, blacksmiths \$17, teamsters and road makers \$10, and labourers \$9 per month, or \$0.30 per day.<sup>427</sup>

Labourers employed by the City of Ottawa earned \$1.25 early in the decade but only \$0.80 per day in 1877. Painters and plasterers made only \$1 per day, whereas they had earned 25% more in 1870. Servants were paid \$6 per month plus board. A skilled workman probably made about \$500 per year, while a Cabinet minister earned ten times this amount. Figures from the U.S. Bureau of Statistics published in 1875 indicate a yearly salary of \$468 for the average male worker in Ottawa, but this did not include much lower women's and children's salaries. As well, these figures assumed 52 weeks per year of employment, so they did not count seasonal nor market-driven unemployment, nor lower wages in the winter.<sup>428</sup>

In May, 1886, the Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour held audiences in Ottawa and Hull. These audiences, along with figures from the Department of Agriculture for 1886, provide useful information about the wages of that period.<sup>429</sup> Firstly, for service employees: domestic servants were paid \$6 to \$8 per month plus board; washerwomen received \$8 per month plus board; cooks received \$8 to \$12 per month plus board; gardeners received \$16 to \$20 per month plus board, or \$1.25 per day without board; hotel employees in

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<sup>425</sup> Steven Langdon, "The Political Economy of Capitalist Transformation: Central Canada from the 1840's to the 1870's", Master's Thesis, Carleton University, 1972, p. 140, 141.

<sup>426</sup> Debi Wells, "The Hardest Lines of the Sternest School": Working-class Ottawa in the Depression of the 1870's", Master's Thesis, Carleton University, September, 1983, p. 61.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid*, p. 60, 61.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>429</sup> Hamelin, editor, *op. cit.*, Tableau no. II, and *Report of the Royal Commission on Relations of Capital and Labour*, volume 6, Quebec Evidence, Part II, 1889, p. 1334 to p. 1364.

Hull received \$0.75 to \$1 per day and supper; the basic annual salary for policemen in Hull was \$450.

Among labourers: a farm labourer, without board, received \$12 to \$15 per month; logging camp labourers were paid \$12 to \$25 per month, but this included board; general labourers received \$1.25 per day without board; miners were paid \$0.70 to \$1.25 per day without board; labourers working for the City of Hull received \$1.25 per day with no board, but general labourers working for contractors to the City received \$0.75 to \$1 per day.

Among skilled artisans, masons and bricklayers received \$2.50 per day without board, more or less holding steady from the previous decade, as did construction carpenters who earned \$1.75 per day. Wheelwrights earned \$1 to \$1.50 per day, and saddlers \$1 to \$1.25. These figures reflected the traditional hierarchy of pay levels among skilled workers.

In the factory, the difference in pay for men and for women and children was baldly transparent. Male mill workers earned \$1 to \$1.50 per day, while boys could earn as low as \$0.50 per day. Male match workers in the dipping room, where combustible was applied to match sticks, earned \$1.50 per day, while women earned \$0.50 to \$0.75 per day. Girls and women were paid by piece in the packing room, where matches were packed in boxes, at about \$0.35 to \$0.75 per day; some girls earned as little as \$0.25 per day when first starting. Male machine hands in the sawmills earned around \$1.40 per day, but were paid only \$0.50 when they started as boys. A semi-skilled man, Joseph Carrière of Hull, got \$1.75 for sharpening saws at a mill. Ruggles Wright Jr. testified that he paid those who operated the cement kilns at his factory \$1.25 to \$1.50 per day, while those making bricks were paid \$1.50 to \$2.50 per day.

For the first two decades of 1900, we have some information about wages in the pulp and paper industry.<sup>430</sup> Unfortunately, these figures are for Quebec and aren't specific to Hull. This is important since Quebec workers were paid less than their Ontario counterparts during this period, therefore, we don't know if Hull workers were paid more or less than the Quebec norm, owing to the proximity of Ontario. Nevertheless, one set of figures to which we have access says that 1,803 Quebec workers received \$583, 687 in wood pulp mills in the year 1900, an average of \$323 per worker. In the paper mills, 2, 040 workers received \$771, 928, or about \$378 per year each. In 1911, growth in this sector meant that wood pulp workers earned an average of \$469 per year, since there were 2, 037 workers earning \$956, 955. In the paper mills, 4, 542 workers earned \$2, 314, 509, or \$510 per year per worker.<sup>431</sup> Note the increase in numbers of employees, as well as the pay they received, a reflection of the growth of the sector. The difference in pay in the two industries possibly reflects workers in paper mills being older and more skilled.<sup>432</sup> A second source, Jean-Pierre Charland, generally corroborates these figures. Annual average wage for workers in pulp and paper combined was \$316 in 1901, \$454 in 1911, \$851 in 1918, and \$994 in 1919, the last jump a reflection of post-war inflation in Canada. Furthermore, the traditional different payments for men, women and children is also apparent in these figures for 1901. In pulp mills, men averaged \$301 per year, women \$150, and children, although they were rare, \$109. In paper mills, men earned \$401, women \$162, (many women were employed at Eddy's paper bag factory), and children earned \$78. Finally, workers averaged about one month per year of unemployment.

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<sup>430</sup> Charland, *op. cit.*, p. 287; and Jean Dandurand, "Les syndicats catholiques dans le secteur des pâtes et papiers et la société québécois de 1900 au 1930", Master's Thesis, Laval University, February, 1976, p. 144, 147.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>432</sup> Charland, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

During the decade of the 1920's, the average salary of Hull workers in all fields was lower than that of Quebec workers generally.<sup>433</sup> Here are the figures:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Quebec average salary (\$)</b>	<b>Hull Average Salary (\$)</b>
1919	925	888
1920	1, 104	995
1921	1, 032	not available
1922	975	not available
1923	1, 004	914
1924	1, 004	837
1925	1, 008	1027
1926	1, 047	1, 009
1927	1, 038	1, 044
1928	1, 063	1, 000
1929	1, 095	1, 104

For the entire decade, Hull workers were paid 7% less than the Quebec average.

Even if we are cautious about the utility of comparisons between income and a putative cost-of-living, the following figures show how low the salary of the average Hull worker was, therefore, survival required the work of as many family members as possible.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Annual average salary of Hull workers (\$)</b>	<b>Annual Expenditures for a Family of Five (\$)</b>
1919	888	1, 614
1920	995	1, 837
1925	1, 027	1, 649
1928	1, 000	1, 704

By the 1920's, some Hull workers were unionized. Here are figures for hourly wages for several categories of workers: skilled workers, labourers, semi-skilled, factory workers, and service workers.<sup>434</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, these workers were members of Catholic unions.

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<sup>433</sup> Serge Lalonde, "Condition ouvrière entre 1919 et 1929" in Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Actes du colloque . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 51-54 is the source of information about Hull workers during the 1920's.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

### Skilled Workers

	<b>1921</b>	<b>1923</b>	<b>1926</b>	<b>1929</b>
Carpenter-joiners			\$0.70	\$0.65-\$0.75
Bricklayers-masons		\$0.70-\$0.85	\$1	\$1 to \$1.25
Plumbers		\$0.65-\$0.70	\$0.75-\$0.80	
Printers	\$0.73-\$0.82	\$0.82	\$0.66-\$0.79	\$0.82-\$0.85 (approx.)
Paper makers (American union)		\$0.46-\$0.98		
Electricians (American union)				\$0.80
Construction carpenters (American union)			\$0.75	\$0.90

### Labourers

	<b>1921</b>	<b>1923</b>	<b>1926</b>	<b>1929</b>
Construction	\$0.60-\$0.80	\$0.60-\$0.70		
General	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.40	\$0.40
City employees	\$0.50			
Non-unionized City labourers (sub- contracted)	\$0.35			

### Semi-skilled, Factory Workers

	<b>1921</b>	<b>1923</b>	<b>1926</b>	<b>1929</b>
Pulp and paper workers (American union)	\$0.51			
Paper workers (men)	\$0.46-\$0.77	\$0.40-\$0.90		
Paper workers (women)	\$0.15-\$0.30			
Match workers (men)	\$0.21-\$0.62		\$0.24-\$0.48	
Match workers (women)	\$0.15-\$0.37	\$0.30		
Non-unionized lumber mill workers	\$0.27-\$0.35			
Seamstresses	\$0.14-\$0.34	\$0.11-\$0.34		

## Service Workers

	1921	1923	1926	1929
Firemen (American union until 1928)	\$0.27-\$0.35	\$0.27-\$0.32	\$0.27-\$0.32	\$0.27-\$0.32
Policemen	\$0.24-\$0.29	\$0.22-\$0.29	\$0.22-\$0.23	\$0.24
Streetcar employees	\$0.39-\$0.47	\$0.36-\$0.44	\$0.38-\$0.45	\$0.38-\$0.45
Store clerks	\$0.11-\$0.36		\$0.35-\$0.70	
Office clerks		\$0.26-\$0.92	\$0.18-\$0.85	\$0.50-\$0.67

This information is incomplete in that not all unions filed their information every year. Nevertheless, the hierarchy among workers' pay is evident, as is the difference in pay between men and women.

Hours of work were long in the 1920's. The basic work week was 60 hours, 6 days of 10 hours, or 5 days of 11 hours plus Saturday morning, however, there were considerable variations. In fact, working hours were at the discretion of the employer, depending upon the nature of the business. For instance, while office clerks worked from 36 to 48 hours as one might expect in an office, store clerks could work up to 68 hours per week.<sup>435</sup> Construction workers worked long hours in the summer, but were unemployed in the winter. Ruggles Wright Jr. testified before the Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour that his cement factory worked seven days per week in the summer, and that his men were obliged to work all seven days.<sup>436</sup> Streetcar employees worked 63 hours per week, while firemen and policemen worked 84 hours per week. In fact, firemen and policemen only obtained a double shift in 1919; before that, they were on duty 24 hours a day! Match workers worked 48 hours per week, as did the less skilled pulp and paper workers, while labourers worked 48 to 54 hours. Only skilled workers, such as the carpenters, electricians, and paper makers represented by American unions, were able to obtain reduced hours of 44 hours per week.

Legislated limits on working hours and minimum ages for working came in Quebec and Ontario as a result of labour union activism, but implementing these limits was another matter. There were insufficient inspectors, and businessmen generally did as they wished. Of course, working class families also needed the income from the work of children and adolescents. An example of disregard of legislation by a local employer, J.R. Booth, was evident in Booth's testimony to the Royal Commission in 1886.

*Question from a Commissioner* "Are you aware, Mr. Booth, that the Factory Act of Ontario says that boys under a certain age are not to work more than 60 hours a week?"

*Booth* No, I cannot say that I do; I never paid any attention to it.

*Commissioner* Do you know if the factory inspector has ever inspected your mill?

*Booth* No, not that I am aware of.

*Commissioner* He never gave you a copy of the Ontario Inspection Act?

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

<sup>436</sup> *Report on the Royal Commission . . . , op. cit.*, p. 1347.

*Booth* No.

*Another Commissioner* He has done nothing in that direction?

*Booth* No.

*Chairman of Commission* I would advise that you get a copy of the Factory Act and peruse it. It can be enforced any day.

*Booth* I am not aware that I have done anything contrary to the law . . . <sup>437</sup>

From the same Royal Commission comes an example of the testimony of a boy working in a box factory in Ottawa, which displays attitudes about work by children.

“BY MR. BOIVIN:

Q. How old are you? A. I do not know.

Q. Have you made your First Communion? A. No, sir.

Q. Can you read? A. No, sir.

Q. Have you been in this place long? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you got your father and mother? A. Yes.

Q. What does your father do? A. He is a mechanic.

Q. Have you been working long in the mill? A. No, sir; not long.

Q. How long? A. About a week.

Q. Have you worked anywhere else before? A. yes, sir; with farmers.

Q. How long did you work elsewhere? A. About three months.

Q. How much do you make a day, at present? A. I do not know; I have not been told.

Q. Have you any little brothers working with you? A. No.

Q. What do you do at the box factory? A. I load up and carry little planks that are cut.

Q. Do you go near the machinery? A. Yes, sir; I work near a saw, with a man.

Q. Do the boys get caught sometimes in the saw? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you like that kind of work? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Wouldn't you like better to go to school? A. It's all the same to me. ... <sup>438</sup>

The low absolute wages are not the complete story about workers' pay during the industrial revolutions. There were other features about workers' wages that served to make workers' existence even more precarious. Chief among them was the piece-work method of payment for girls and women in the sweating system of clothes manufacture, the mica trade, or the match industry, whereas men were most likely to be paid by straight time in other industries. Then, there was the widespread practice of companies paying in scrip, rather than cash, which often was discounted, and could only be used at company stores. This meant that workers were captive to the prices that the company would charge, that workers couldn't shop elsewhere, that they built up debt to company stores, that they couldn't save, that they couldn't leave readily to find other employment, and that resistance during a strike was more difficult. Similarly, the practice of paying a part of wages in board and housing meant that businessmen could further

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<sup>437</sup> Gregory Kealey, *Canada Investigates Industrialism*, Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1973, p. 203.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199, 200.



recoup their labour costs. In spite of opposition from workers' organizations, the practice of paying by scrip continued well into the 20th century.<sup>439</sup>

Payment of wages was often irregular as payments were withheld, sometimes indefinitely and deliberately, in order to maintain workers. Often, wages simply weren't paid. For instance, Arthur Courville, a Hull labourer, told the Royal Commission in 1886 that Eddy owed him \$6, which the company refused to pay when Courville left the job. Joseph Corneau, a construction labourer from Hull, told a similar story about a local construction entrepreneur.<sup>440</sup> Certain employers used fines to reduce wage payments further, fines for such things as lateness, refusal to work overtime, poor quality work, or bad-mouthing supervisors.<sup>441</sup> With children, discipline could even include corporal punishment. In the winter, wages were lowered; Ruggles Wright Jr. testified to the Royal Commission in 1886 that he paid quarrymen \$1.50 per day in the summer, but only \$1 per day in the winter.<sup>442</sup> Of course, wages were lowered during hard times, as was the number of workers employed. There was also seasonal unemployment; for instance, the match works closed at the height of summer as the risk of fire was too great owing to the ambient heat. Finally, there was no financial protection against unemployment, illness, or accidents.

In spite of all this, when Hull workers were asked point-blank whether they had complaints about their employers during the audiences of the Royal Commission, few dared to complain.<sup>443</sup> Perhaps, they were afraid of the consequences.

In 1872, lumberman James Little wrote about the forestry industry in the Ottawa Valley:

“. . . in all the great lumbering establishments where so many workmen are constantly employed, not only in the villages which surround the mills, but on the farms and in the distant forest shanties, great care has been paid to the comfort of the working classes, and every indulgence and encouragement given by the proprietors to the people under their control. Indeed, in all the phases of this trade, none of the squalor and sickness which too frequently meet the eye, and offend the senses in other branches of industry are to be found; the people are healthy, well-fed, and well-clothed, and the order and regularity -- though obtained at considerable expense to the proprietors -- is highly commendable and satisfactory.”<sup>444</sup>

Would this have been an opinion that Hull workers shared?

### Workers' Health

Being a member of the working class in Hull during the industrial revolutions was a dangerous proposition. The first threat to workers' health came from the ever-present possibility of accidents in the workplace, occurrences for which workers were held to be entirely responsible. Life in the woods had always presented dangers from falling logs and limbs of trees, flying butts of timbers, frostbite and cold, getting lost, logjams, or drowning or being soaked

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<sup>439</sup> Charland, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

<sup>440</sup> *Report on the Royal Commission . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 1355, 1356, 1363.

<sup>441</sup> Fournier et al, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>442</sup> *Report on the Royal Commission, op. cit.*, p. 1346.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.* See testimonies of Rose Deschênes, Julie Dorion, Marie Dufaux, Adeline Ouimet, Domina Dupuis, Alphonse Gratton, Eucher Carron, Edward Murphy, all of whom expressed no complaints before the Royal Commission.

<sup>444</sup> Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

during the log drive. At the Chaudière, as per other waterfalls and rapids, many workers lost their lives. These dangers remained throughout our period, but the main industries of urban Hull, lumber and pulp and paper, brought new dangers to workers. Safety was not a concern of capitalists. Saws often cut body parts; workers were not shielded from machinery or moving logs; and wood chips flew from the saws.<sup>445</sup> In 1888, an E.B. Eddy employee reported that 562 workers were killed in accidents at Eddy over a 30-year period, roughly 20 per year.<sup>446</sup> The non-fatal injuries were legion; among them the time E.B. Eddy himself had his leg crushed.<sup>447</sup> Match workers in Hull faced the constant danger of fires caused by the phosphorous and sulphur that was applied to match sticks to make them combustible. Sometimes, as many as twenty small fires could break out each day in the match works. The match sticks were dipped by hand into the volatile, phosphorous solution. Prolonged inhalation of the fumes from the phosphorous exposed the workers, mostly girls and women, to tooth decay and to deterioration of the jaw bones, a disease called maxillary necrosis, where the bones actually decayed and died. This common condition was known popularly in Hull as 'phossy jaw'. As a young MP, Mackenzie King obtained the deformed skull of a woman who had died from the condition, and brandished it during a debate in the House of Commons. As a result, the use of phosphorous for matches was banned but, in any case, technical innovations brought new combustibles for matches which were less volatile and dangerous.<sup>448</sup> (King's theatrical maneuver sounds ghoulish, but it was hardly out of character for a man who, during seances as Prime Minister, communicated with his late parents, his deceased dog, 'Pat', and still others, including the late Wilfrid Laurier.)

Work in the pulp and paper mills was noisy, humid, hot, and poorly ventilated. In some Quebec mills, workers worked barefoot.<sup>449</sup> Respiratory illnesses were commonplace as were accidents. At the Eddy plant, there were 16 accidents, including one death, during the 1897/1898 fiscal year, and 14 accidents the following year.<sup>450</sup> The victims of such accidents were disproportionately young, as young people had to learn their jobs the hard way, without adequate training. In other fields of employment, there were other dangers. Construction workers were often victims of falls from scaffolding, of cave-ins, or of explosions.<sup>451</sup> Women who worked in the manufacture of clothing suffered from poor ventilation and excessive heat; the term 'sweatshop' was no misnomer.<sup>452</sup> Stonecutters suffered from a condition popularly called 'stonecutters consumption', which resulted from stone dust on the lungs, while marble cutters worked in excessive humidity, which also caused respiratory problems.<sup>453</sup>

Accidents were entirely the responsibility of the workers, while the employer could be forced to accept responsibility only if a worker could prove negligence in the courts. Needless to say, workers could not afford such legal recourse. Workers' compensation, whereby recognition was given to the fact that some level of industrial injury was inevitable, and that compensation was needed for the injured without reference to responsibility, only came into being with 1914 legislation in Ontario. Over the following years, similar legislation was adopted in other provinces.

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<sup>445</sup> Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>446</sup> Tom Spears, "The Ghost Town", *Ottawa Citizen*, Saturday, May 2, 1998, p. B2.

<sup>447</sup> Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>448</sup> Spears, *op. cit.*, p. B2; also see Lebel, *op. cit.*, p. 24-29 and p. 79.

<sup>449</sup> Charland, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302, 303.

<sup>451</sup> Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

The workplace was not the only source of danger to a Hull worker, for he or she faced dangers in other parts of his or her life. These people fuelled themselves for their ridiculously long workdays on a diet of starch, fat, and carbohydrates. The diet of the working class consisted, in the main, of peas, beans, potatoes, bread, molasses, pork, and pork fat. This diet was deficient in proteins, vitamins, and minerals, and this, in combination with stress, fatigue, and winter, made workers easily susceptible to infectious diseases, such as measles, diphtheria, scarlet fever, flu, and smallpox. For instance, a major epidemic of smallpox in 1885 killed 3, 000 Montrealers, mostly poor and working class. Tuberculosis, popularly called ‘consumption’, was a common respiratory illness among the poor, and was often fatal. The threat of epidemics of these diseases was commonplace, and several epidemics did strike Hull.

Poor sanitation in cities contributed to the public health problems of workers. In the days before public sanitation improvements, garbage was piled in back yards and in gutters on streets. Every building had an outdoor toilet in the back yard. Butcher shops were ubiquitous, as was their waste. In Hull, the waters of the Ottawa and Gatineau rivers, and of Brewery Creek, were filled with industrial waste such as woodchips and sawdust. There were two small lakes on Hull Island: Flora Lake and Minnow Lake, which served mostly as refuse dumps, and became sources of water-borne diseases such as typhoid fever and cholera, bacterial diseases that often proved fatal. In fact, working class militants in Hull worked to have the lakes drained.<sup>454</sup> They were eventually successful. The shallows that were created by the draining were turned into public parks: parc Fontaine at the site of Flora Lake, and parc Sainte-Bernadette at the site of Minnow Lake. How times have changed! Militants today might argue for a public swimming area to be made of an urban lake, but a few generations ago progress came by draining the same lakes. What we would consider an asset and a public resource was a liability for previous generations in Hull. The polluted rivers were the sources of drinking water. Water was carried by cart, and sold by water-vendors in the days before municipal provision of water. Milk was also often infected, and the sale of milk was only regulated during the first decade of the 20th century.

One epidemic that struck Hull, as it did most of the western world, was the Spanish flu that killed millions at the end of WWI. Although exact figures don’t exist, about 130 Hull citizens died during the Spanish flu epidemic, while hundreds more went ill.<sup>455</sup> Among the victims were many infants. At normal times, infant mortality rates were high in Quebec, among the highest in the western world. A Hull doctor, Edmond Aubry, wrote in 1911 that one of four newborn infants in Hull died in their first three months.<sup>456</sup>

We have already seen how fire exacted a huge economic and social cost on Hull workers and the community, and how fire became a part of the local culture. The obvious must also be stated. Many people were injured by these fires, and some died. During each decade, people died from the fires that ravaged Hull: four during the 1880’s; one in the next decade; twelve in the first decade of the 20th century; ten more in the second decade; and five in the third decade.<sup>457</sup> What is perhaps surprising is that more did not die in these conflagrations.

One other danger of life in Hull came from explosions at the explosives factories that had established themselves in Hull in order to serve the cement and forestry industries. During the 1890’s, seven people died in three different explosions.<sup>458</sup> The largest explosion in Hull history

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<sup>454</sup> Vincent-Domey, *op. cit.*, p. 52, 53.

<sup>455</sup> Raymond Ouimet, “La grippe espagnole à Hull”, *Asticou*, vol. XXII, no. 43, November, 1990.

<sup>456</sup> Moreau, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>457</sup> Raymond Ouimet, *Une ville en flammes*, Hull: Éditions Vents d’Ouest, 1997, p. 177.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

took place on May 8, 1910, at the site of the General Explosives Company, west of Brewery Creek. A brush fire reached the factory, and caused three successive explosions that could be felt in a ten-mile radius. The explosion shattered window panes as far away as Pointe-Gatineau and Ottawa. The factory was a write-off, and 30 houses nearby were demolished. More importantly, eleven died and 37 were injured. In total, between 1889 and 1923, eight explosions killed eighteen and injured 70.<sup>459</sup>

All these dangers meant that the chances of survival and a long life were not great for a child born to a working class family in Hull during the industrial revolutions. These dangers became public health issues that animated public debate and became a focus for public action by working class militants, as we shall see in Part III.

### Conclusion

While public health issues and other questions facing the Hull working class were addressed by formal, collective organizations, as will be described in Part III, there were also informal means of endeavour whereby the working class worked hard to improve the lot of its members. These areas included mobility by individuals and families, family life, and neighbourhoods. The first of these has been used by the poor and working people the world over from time immemorial, migration. Migrate the workers of Hull did, whether it was young men and their fathers taking work in the woods; workers and their families moving to Hull, attracted by manufacturing jobs; or even families leaving Hull to seek better fortunes elsewhere. The last of these was the case particularly after the Great Fire of 1900, when the population of Hull decreased by 1,574, 12%, or when the population declined by 6,393, 22%, during the recession of 1919-1921 following WWI. After these periods of population decline, better times meant that Hull continued to grow, attracting returnees and new inhabitants. There was another form of short-term migration that families could use in hard times. They could return to the countryside whence many hailed and still had family, thus ensuring that they could eat, at the very least.

Another type of mobility occurred each working day in the lives of many Hull workers: crossing the Ottawa River, at first, on foot, then, by streetcar, and eventually, by bus and automobile to work in Ottawa. This applied to those who worked on the Ontario side of the Chaudière, including the 1,000 to 2,000 Hull residents who worked regularly for Booth. It also applied to construction workers, among them, the masons and carpenters who built the Parliamentary precinct and other federal buildings in Ottawa. It was also the case for women doing low-paid work in Ottawa as domestics or in cleaning and maintenance in institutions; or mica workers, sweatshop workers, retail clerks, and office workers. This daily movement across the River presaged the daily movements of the modern armies of federal public servants. These movements also bring to mind the first teachers in Hull, who were Ottawa nuns who crossed the River daily by rowboat, or by foot on the frozen River... Which also permits us to segue to another point about mobility. Decisions of sons and daughters of the working class to join religious orders as nuns, brothers, or priests were not just religious decisions, but in fact, decisions about social mobility that permitted them to escape the drudgery of working class life by undertaking potentially interesting work in education, health care, social services, or pastoral care, and which also permitted escape from manual labour. As well, members of religious orders might conceive that they were doing something to improve the life of workers, even though religious and clergy also did serve a custodial role over workers on behalf of bosses and the state.

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<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7, 177. Also see Pierre Louis Lapointe, *Hull, 1800-1975, pictorial, Grande Fête*, 1975, p. 57.

A second, informal area for improving the lives of workers, which did not require formal, collective action, was the family. The family was the first line of defence against poverty; it ensured survival and full stomachs. Nonetheless, all had to work if family members were to survive. This was so even if the work was of the invisible variety that married women and young girls did at home: child care; domestic industry, such as making clothes and other products of handiwork; tending gardens and animals; cooking and making preserves and other foodstuffs; housework; or producing clothes for Ottawa sweatshops.

Home ownership, where possible, was a good bet for working class families, who were thus also able to house aging parents, single boarders from the extended family, or young married couples who did not yet have the resources to establish their own households. This last case might still occur even if the average marriage age was lower in Hull than elsewhere in Quebec, a sign that jobs were usually available locally for young husbands. Nonetheless, young, married couples often established households next door, or in the immediate vicinity of their relatives. Until marriage, adolescents worked, paid room and board to contribute to the family income, and shared in housework. In especially hard times, home ownership might permit related families to share housing.

A third arena for informal working class agency involved the neighbourhood. The fact that the neighbourhood was filled with immediate and extended family members, former schoolmates, and workmates meant that an individual member of a family was hardly ever alone, *sans famille* or friends. This was a source of solidarity for workers. Neighbourhoods also served economic needs by permitting informal exchange of services and barter of goods. Finally, the neighbourhood -- whether in the local park, schoolyard, street or church grounds -- was the site of the public recreation activities by which workers engaged and amused themselves.

There is, however, a major shortcoming in our knowledge of working class Hull, or for that matter, of the working class in Quebec and Canada, more generally. This concerns the lives of workers who remained single more or less permanently, about whom information is lacking, owing to the historic emphasis on the family in Quebec and in historical study about Quebec. In fact, moderns emanate, usually by definition, from families. Looking backwards, it appears to contemporaries that families were ubiquitous, and that all in previous generations lived in families. This perception even leads conservatives to bemoan the loss of family today, as compared to previous times, with all the presumed, attendant social losses. In fact, there were always permanently, single people throughout our historical period who did not produce progeny: spinsters and bachelors; drifters and migrant workers; soldiers, sailors, lumberjacks, miners; prostitutes and criminals within the *lumpenproletariat*; orphans, bastards, and the abandoned; homosexuals and bohemians; clergy and religious. They have not been emphasized in our history of the working class of Hull since there exists little historical research about many of these people. In fact, this is a situation that, we venture to guess, exists for much social history of 19th century Canada. A possible agenda for further research about the permanently single could involve studying various industries where these workers were found, in order to develop knowledge about social conditions, for example, among miners, soldiers, railway workers, or other places of work where single people might congregate. Similarly, for the space that these people occupied in boarding houses, rooming houses, hotels, brothels, and taverns. All this is, however, unfortunately beyond the scope of this present study.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> In fact, we have touched on the social life of one of these historic groups, lumberjacks. A very interesting study of widows and permanently, single women was done by Bettina Bradbury, in *Familles ouvrières de Montréal, Boréal*, 1995. See especially chapters 2 and 6.

Most French-Canadians did live in families, production units where all had to work to ensure survival. These families provided cheap labour that capitalists used to develop the light industry which indeed defined the nature of much of the Quebec economy. This cheap labour in Quebec had first been available in a virtually endless supply of Irishmen, then, of French-Canadians, and eventually, of European immigrants.

The pattern of working class life in Hull did not apply to the bourgeoisie, usually English speaking, which segregated itself from the rest of Hull in the westernmost part of Hull Island around the southern end of Brewery Creek. In these neighbourhoods, small families, servants, ease, comfort, fine housing, higher education, travel were among the features of the bourgeois family, features that modern workers in Hull and elsewhere even strive to obtain for themselves. The working class culture of urban Hull was also distinct from the members of the local *petite-bourgeoisie*, who lived in large houses that often included their place of business, located on or close to the main arteries where their shops and offices were found.

Nevertheless, as per workers, the *petite-bourgeoisie* could also produce large families. The clerical element within this class lived in relative comfort in convents, presbyteries, group homes or other institutions, with a principal feature being their shared living space. Within both the bourgeoisie and the *petite-bourgeoisie*, father could supply his family comfortably by himself, which distinguished these people from workers, where all had to work to survive.

## Appendix – 1872 Listing of Hull Residents and their Occupations

In 1908, Hull journalist Ernest Cinq-Mars published *Hull: son origine, ses progrès, son avenir*, (Hull: Bérubé Frères). In it, he repeated the 1872 Directory of Hull residents and their occupations (see pages 91 to 103 of Cinq Mars' book). A copy of this alphabetical listing is reproduced herein, accompanied by an English-language lexicon for the occupations. Most Hull residents were simply characterized as labourers, *journaliers*, which probably included factory workers. The listing just covers heads of families, therefore, it does not include married women, boys and girls, nor adolescent workers still living at home.

### Lexicon of Occupations

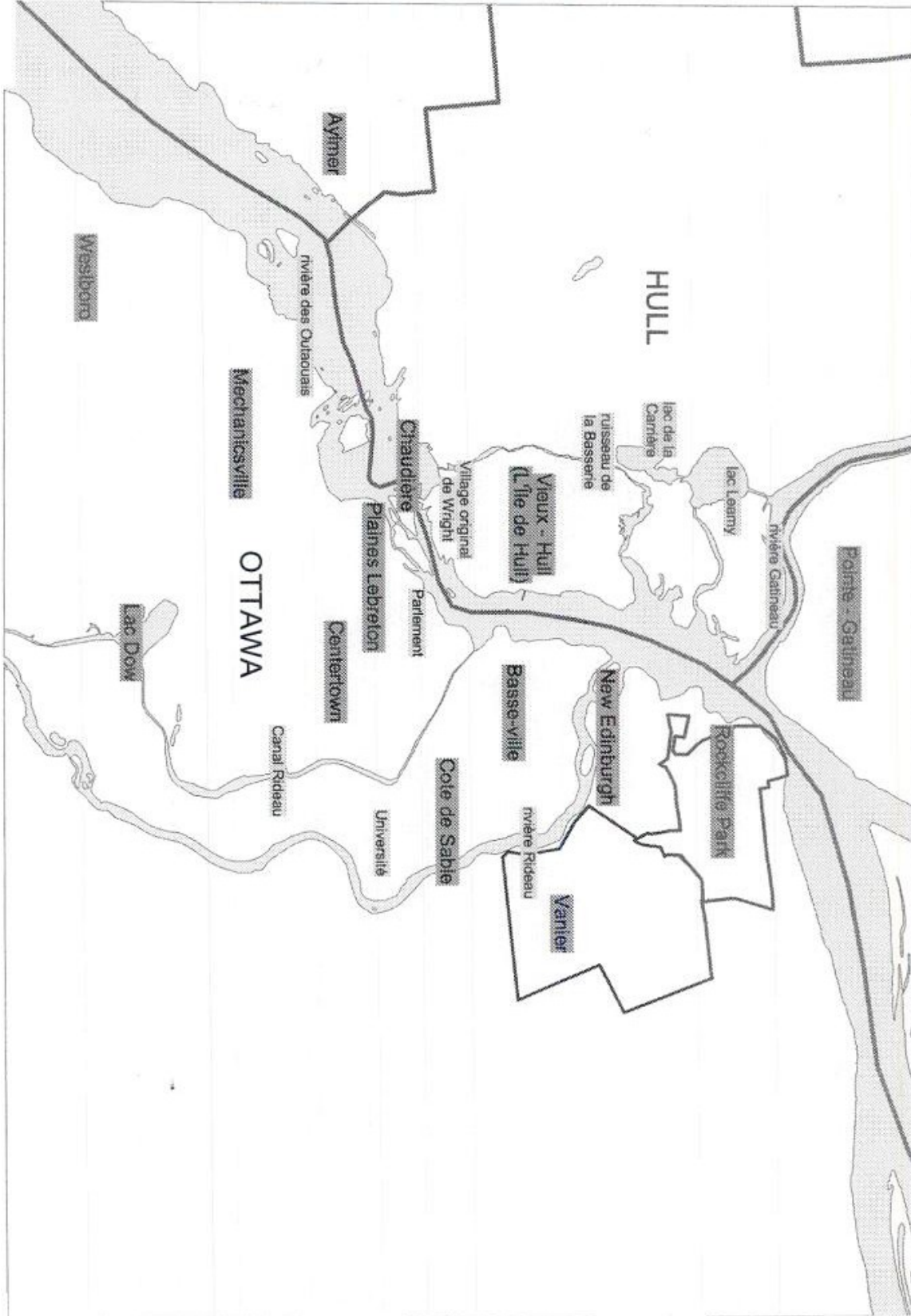
<u>French term</u>	<u>English equivalent</u>
agent	salesman
agent-general	sales manager
aiguiseur	saw-filer
avocat	lawyer
barbier	barber
boucher	butcher
boulangier	baker
capitaine	boat captain
carrier	quarryman
charpentier	construction carpenter
charretier	carter
chasseur et guide	hunting guide
chef de la tribu sauvage	native chief
commerçant	merchant
commerçant de bois	lumber merchant
commis	clerk
comptable	accountant
constructeur de moulins	millwright
cordonnier	shoemaker
contre-maître	foreman
département de finances	Federal Finance Department employee
département de la Milice	Militia Department employee
ébéniste	cabinet-maker
entrepreneur	businessman
entrepreneur de pompes-funèbres	undertaker
épicier	grocer
étudiant	student
fabricant	manufacturer
fabricant d'allumettes	match manufacturer
fabricant de chaises	chair manufacturer
fabricant de chaux	limestone manufacturer
ferblantier	tinsmith
flotteur	boat-operator
fondeur	smelter

forgeron	blacksmith
gardien de nuit	night-watchman
gérant	manager
horloger	watchmaker
hôtelier/hôtelière	hotel-keeper
industriel	industrialist
ingénieur	engineer
institutrice	female teacher
journalier	labourer
laitier	milkman
machiniste	machinist
maçon	mason
maître de postes	postmaster
magasin du tabac	tobacco store operator
magasin général	general store operator
manufacturier	manufacturer
manufacturier de chaussures	shoe manufacturer
marchand	merchant
maire	mayor
médecin	doctor
médecin vétérinaire	veterinarian
menuisier	carpenter-joiner
mesureur de bois	wood culler
meunier	miller
modiste	milliner (women's hat merchant)
navigateur	boat navigator
notaire public	notary public
pêcheur	fisherman
peintre	painter
photographe	photographer
plâtrier	plasterer
porteur d'eau	water-carrier
propriétaire	entrepreneur
pourvoyeur	caterer
rentier	rentier
sacristain	sexton (church caretaker)
scieries	sawmills
sculpteur	sculptor
sellier	sadler
serviteur	domestic servant
tailleur	tailor
tanneur	tanner
tourneur	turner (lathe-operator)
voiturier	wagon-maker





Map – Hull-Ottawa



## **PART III: THE WORKING CLASS CULTURE OF HULL**

### **CHAPTER 9 – PARISH AND MUNICIPALITY**

#### **Introduction**

In Part III, we consider the working class culture of Hull as a culture distinct from that of other classes in the region, particularly how workers organized formally to make a better life for themselves during the first two industrial revolutions, then into the third decade of the last century. As per other Canadian workers, prosperity for Hull workers only came about during WWII and the post-war period, prosperity that has been under siege in our own time. Nevertheless, by the 1920's, workers in Hull had achieved considerably, establishing organizations of solidarity in order to defend themselves and improve their lives. These achievements were sometimes accomplished with the collaboration of other classes; at other times, in opposition to other classes; and sometimes, classes evolved in parallel paths that did not intersect.

Chapter 9 describes the involvement of workers in parish organization in Hull, and in the introduction of municipal government. Chapter 10 describes the electoral activity of workers in the municipality, and in the senior levels of politics, federal and provincial. Chapter 11 describes the mutual aid organizations of Hull workers. Chapter 12 deals with trade unionism. We use a functional approach rather than a chronological one, therefore, each chapter covers the whole period of urban Hull, 1850's to 1920's. This necessitates cross-referencing and recall of other chapters to keep things clear. The danger of this approach is repetition. We have been mindful of this, and tried to avoid unnecessary repetition. A chronological approach would have required explanatory and discursive tangents that would have confused the story of what is, after all, a brief period in historical terms, only 80 years.

The Township of Hull, as first settled by Philemon Wright, covered the western portion of the contemporary municipality of Gatineau. It included urban Hull, Aylmer, including Lucerne and Deschênes, Ironside, as well as Old Chelsea and Chelsea. On the eastern side of the Gatineau River, Hull Township included Pointe-Gatineau at the mouth of the Gatineau and Ottawa rivers, and the areas alongside the Gatineau River known today as Touraine and Limbour. There were also geographic appellations applied to Lucerne and Deschênes -- Hull South; to the Chelseas and environs -- Hull West; to Touraine and Limbour -- Hull North.

The vocation of Hull Township in 1850 was agricultural, although the forestry industry was also well-established. There were small villages at Wright's community at the Chaudière, and at Symmes' landing in Aylmer. These villages served the largely, rural community with services, commerce, and small-scale artisan industry. Both Hull Township and Wright's village at the Chaudière were, in the majority, English-speaking and mostly Protestant, of American or Irish origin although, beginning in the 1830's, there was a growing number of Irish Catholics in the Township. In the 1850's began the development of the sawmilling industry at the Chaudière. In 1857, Queen Victoria named Ottawa, known as Bytown until 1855, the capital of the United Canadas: Canada East, the former Lower Canada, Quebec, and Canada West, the former Upper Canada, Ontario. Construction of Parliament and other government buildings began in 1858.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Courtney Bond, *The Ottawa Country*, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968, p. 27.

Thus, began the migration of French Canadians to Hull in order to perform the work of building the new capital and operating the lumber mills. By the early 1870's, French Canadians comprised the majority of Hull Township. Workers, farmers, and *petits-bourgeois* set about building a community, establishing local institutions in a manner typical of French Canada, evolving from mission to parish to municipality. We now examine how this pattern applied to Hull and its working class, and how public services and institutions developed in the parish and municipality. We focus on one area in particular, public health and health care, so important to the lives of workers. We also raise theoretical issues about the local history of the working class in light of the history of local, institutional development. Finally, we analyse working class agency in areas of endeavour not under the immediate control and direction of workers, ie. parish and municipality.

### Mission to Parish to Municipality

Well before urban Hull existed as a parish or municipality, the Chaudière was a stopping-off point and a mustering point for forestry industry workers. These workers, along with Wright's French Canadian workers at Pointe-Gatineau and local Algonquins, were the subjects of missions organized by the Catholic diocese of Ottawa, headquartered in Bytown. The missionaries were Oblates, a French order with a mission of serving the poor and common people. The Oblates arrived in Canada in 1841, in Bytown in 1843, and in Hull Township in 1845.<sup>462</sup>

Forestry workers would collect in the fall at the Chaudière to go upriver to the shanties, and during spring and summer, while waiting to run timbers by the Chaudière. An enterprising Father Durocher obtained the impressive sum of \$1, 000 in subscriptions from these workers in order to build a chapel at the Chaudière in 1846. Ruggles Wright sold two lots below the Chaudière to Durocher with the understanding that the chapel might also serve the Wright workers at Pointe-Gatineau. Called the *chapelle des chantiers*, masses were said there early in the morning during the fall mustering and the spring and summer drive. Sleeping quarters were arranged in the basement of the chapel to house workers while they were waiting at the Chaudière. The chapel provided permanent evidence of a French-Canadian community at the Chaudière. This was not the only missionary activity of the Oblates. Every winter, Durocher and his colleague, Father Brunet, would travel from camp to camp, administering to the religious needs of the forest workers. Durocher wrote to Bishop Bourget of Montreal in 1845, describing their work:

“. . . nous nous sommes trouvés jusqu'au milieu de la nuit dans l'eau, dans la neige, et, par un très grand froid, égarés dans le bois ou sur des lacs où nous perdions le chemin. Le Père Brunet s'est gelé les doigts. Nous avons appris à dormir sur la dure, à nous brûler d'un côté pendant que nous gelions de l'autre. Nous savons manger le lard sur le pouce et prendre notre dîner sur la neige, n'ayant d'autre toit que les branches de sapins et la calotte des cieux. Nous parlons quasi toutes les langues. Le Père Brunet est chargé de parler l'anglais et moi l'algonquin car il nous a fallu exercer notre ministère dans ces langues.”<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> Joseph Bonhomme, *Notre-Dame de Hull*, Ottawa: Le Droit, 1931, p. 14.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid*, p. 52, 53.

Author's adaptation: “. . . we found ourselves in the middle of the night in water or snow. In deep cold, we got lost in the woods or on frozen lakes. Father Brunet once froze his fingers. We learned to sleep on the frozen ground against a fire, burning on one side while freezing on the other. We learned how to eat pork with our fingers, and how to eat on the snow, with no roof other than pine branches and the dome of heaven. We speak the local languages. Father Brunet learned English and I learned Algonquin, since we had to conduct our mission in these languages.”

Starting in 1855, the Oblates said mass every Sunday at the *chapelle des chantiers*.<sup>464</sup> In 1861, the growing town of Hull was formally established as a mission. As the lower village in Hull began filling with French Canadians, the chapel became the centre of the local community. A partial list of chapel pew buyers in 1862 reveals the following names, most of whom would have been workers.<sup>465</sup>

H. Gravelle	M. Gravel
N. Fréchette	J. Pépin
M. Lemée	M. Lauzon
M. Prévost	M. Racine
M. Dupuy	S. Dumontier
M. Pichette	M. Vallée
A. Roy	H. Villeau (Viau)
M. Larose	A. Pépin
A. Charette	M. Bisson
M. Rivet	M. Leroy
P. Racine	M. Despatie
M. Lemée	O. Villiot
H. Dorion	M. Beaudoin
M. Rivet	M. Gibault
H. Gravel	M. Larose
M. Roy	E. Dumontier
W. Leclerc	M. Fréchette
E. Dumontier	N. Déroutin
A. Dumontier	P. Saint-Martin
Mme Leclerc	Mme Fréchette

The last women were possibly widows, while the others were men, usually heads of families.

The head of the Hull mission was Louis-Étienne Reboul. Reboul, arrived from France in 1853 at the age of 26. He was named head of the mission to the forestry camps in 1858, and head of the Hull mission in 1861. Reboul set about getting a stone church built, Notre-Dame de Grace de Hull, completed by the end of 1870. Indefatigable and popular, Reboul was more than a priest; he was also a community leader and builder. Under his leadership emerged typical institutions of French-Canadian civilization. In 1866, Reboul obtained a Catholic school board, separate from the Protestant board, which sat in Old Chelsea. Reboul presided over this school board, which opened a school for girls in 1870, and a school for boys in 1878. In 1866, Reboul

<sup>464</sup> Hector Legros and Soeur Paul-Émile, *Le Diocèse d'Ottawa 1847-1948*, Ottawa: Le Droit, 1949, p. 252.

<sup>465</sup> Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 41, 42.

organized the opening and naming of the first streets in the lower village by organizing a petition to the government by 32 property owners. In this way were built Victoria, from Laval to the River; Kent, from Promenade du Portage to Victoria; Saint-Jean Baptiste, from Notre-Dame de l'Île to the River; Hôtel-de-Ville, from Laval to the River; and Laval, from Promenade du Portage to parc Fontaine, at the time Flora Lake. These streets were built with the voluntary labour of the original French-Canadian workers in the lower village.<sup>466</sup> In addition to the church and the first streets, Reboul oversaw the building of a college served by the Christian Brothers, a convent of the Grey Nuns, a presbytery, and a bridge over Brewery Creek.

In 1878, the Hull mission was formally constituted as a parish after 250 local residents signed a petition to the Diocese to this effect. Father Chapenay was the first parish priest, while Reboul continued his missionary work in the shanties. In the 1880's, more schools were opened. In 1886, the parish organized a temperance society aimed at forestry workers.<sup>467</sup> To Notre-Dame de Grace de Hull parish came religious orders to fill the vocations in local institutions. The Grey Nuns from Ottawa came to teach girls in Hull in 1870. Until the Grey Nuns were established permanently in Hull, two nuns crossed the River every day by rowboat, or walked across the frozen River from Ottawa to teach in Hull. The Christian Brothers arrived in 1878; the cloistered Servantes de Jésus-Marie in 1902. The *Petites Soeurs de la Sainte-Famille* operated the presbytery, beginning in 1908; the hospitalers, the *Soeurs de la Providence*, came in 1911 to operate *Sacré-Coeur* Hospital; the *Soeurs du Sacré-Coeur* operated an institution for religious retreats, beginning in 1925.<sup>468</sup> The parish also produced five recruits to the Oblate priesthood and four to other orders of priests. By the 1940's, the parish had also produced about 30 brothers and 50 nuns, demonstrating that religious life was a real option for Hull workers.<sup>469</sup>

In a manner similar to Notre-Dame de Grâce de Hull, other parishes opened. In 1900, a chapel was built in Val-Tétreault. In 1902, a new parish was created at the west end of Hull Island, *Très-Saint-Rédempteur*. In 1912, *St-Joseph de Wrightville* parish, located beyond Hull Island west of Brewery Creek, was separated from *Très-Saint-Rédempteur*. In 1915, a new parish was hived off again, this time from St-Joseph de Wrightville, to create Notre-Dame de Lorette in Val-Tétreault.<sup>470</sup> In a manner similar to the first parish, schools were opened in the new parishes, and religious orders were invited to occupy the social and institutional functions of the new parishes.

The parish of Notre-Dame de Grace was a social reality, serving the lower village by 1871. Nevertheless, the village still had no legal status. Reboul obtained a consensus among his parishioners that it was time that the French-Canadian village of Hull became a municipality. This was also the opinion of E.B. Eddy, elected with French-Canadians from the lower village on a ticket of separating the village from the Township. The proposed separation was resisted by representatives from the rest of the Township, but unsuccessfully, as we'll see in the next chapter. Hull Township held its council meetings in Old Chelsea. Once elected, Eddy began holding council meetings at the office of a Hull notary public, Nérée Tétreau. The incorporation of the new City of Hull by the Province took place in 1875, but only after considerable political conflict.

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<sup>466</sup> Edgar Boutet, *Le bon vieux temps à Hull, Tome I*, Hull: Éditions Gauvin, 1971, p. 136, 137 has a list of these people, which is also included in chapter 7 of this book, on p.114.

<sup>467</sup> Legros and Soeur Paul-Émile, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256, and Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>469</sup> Legros and Soeur Paul-Émile, *op. cit.*, p. 256, 257.

<sup>470</sup> Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 26, 27.

## Parish Life

The parish was the centre of religious and devotional life in Hull, as it was in the rest of French Canada, however, the parish was also the centre of social and cultural life. It absorbed considerable energy, physical, financial, and psychic, from the workers who were its members, not only for building and operating institutions such as churches, convents, schools, colleges, and presbyteries, but also for the social services that the parish organized.

The Oblate priests of Notre-Dame de Grace de Hull were involved in most of the important initiatives of the working class in Hull. Father Guertin, parish priest from 1910 to 1916, was active in the establishment of the first *caisse populaire*, or credit union, and in setting up bursaries for poor students. His successor was Father Bernier, who served until 1920. Under Bernier's régime, Catholic trade unionism was initiated in Hull. He also helped establish the *Cercle catholique des voyageurs de commerce*, an association of sales people, which fought on behalf of the French language in the Outaouais and against Sunday work. His successor, Philémon Bourassa, served as parish priest during the 1920's. Under his leadership, the Oblates established the *Bourse du Travail*, a building in downtown Hull that served as a meeting hall and headquarters for Catholic, working class militants, trade unions, and parish associations. Oblates on both sides of the River were devoted to the cause of French-Canadians, as seen in their establishment and patronage of *Le Droit*, the Ottawa-area newspaper, which began in 1913.<sup>471</sup> The priests were strong supporters of the mutual aid societies that served Hull workers, while the parish operated a library with 3,000 titles by 1930.<sup>472</sup>

Under Catholic social doctrine, when family members could no longer meet the needs of their poor, the parish was the site for charity. The *Conférence Saint-Vincent-de-Paul* was this charity, first founded in Hull in 1878. Each parish had its *conférence* and the four *conférences* organized a co-ordinating body in 1929. The *conférence* provided assistance to the poor and raised money through collections, including the traditional collection held between Christmas and New Year's Day called the *guignolée*, whereby items such as firewood, food, and clothes were collected for the poor.<sup>473</sup> There were other charitable organizations organized by the parish.<sup>474</sup> The Société Sainte-Élisabeth organized sixty women who, working in the *Bourse du Travail*, made clothing for the poor. In 1929, the organization distributed 3,000 pieces of clothing to the poor. Each year, the *Oeuvre de la quête des pauvres* collected up to \$6, 000 going door-to-door in Hull. In 1926, the *Oeuvre des layettes* began distributing baby clothes to poor mothers of newborns. All this charitable giving was an even more impressive act of solidarity when one remembers that most of Hull was poor; it was a case of the poor helping the poor.

The parish also organized the *Ligue du dimanche*, which worked to have Sunday work abolished.<sup>475</sup> The local *Société Saint-Jean Baptiste* organized the national activities of local French Canadians, including celebration of the national holiday on June 24. The parish was also the site of the founding, in 1929, of the local chapter of the *Ligue catholique féminine*, which aimed at modesty in the clothing worn by women. Its object: that women follow the dictates of the Church about this matter. Six hundred local women and girls joined the association,

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<sup>471</sup> Legros and Soeur Paul-Emile, *op. cit.*, p. 254, 255.

<sup>472</sup> Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>473</sup> Serge Lalonde, "Condition ouvrière", in Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Actes du Colloque sur l'identité régionale dans l'Outaouais, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur l'Outaouais*, 1982.

<sup>474</sup> Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 74, 75, 76.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

ostensibly made necessary by the foolhardiness and liberation wrought by the Jazz Age in the 1920's. The organization was a seat of social conservatism whose official mission was:

“ . . . soustraire la femme chrétienne à l'esclavage des mauvaises modes, inventées et propagées par la juiverie et la franc-maçonnerie pour la perte de la société: l'heure est venue où tous les fidèles doivent se lier fortement pour combattre ce fléau dévastateur”.<sup>476</sup>

Author's adaptation: “. . . protect Christian women from slavery to the sinful fashions created and spread by Jews and Freemasons for social ruination; the time has come for all believers to join together to fight this catastrophic scourge.”

This reminds us that anti-semitism, paranoia about freemasonry, and crypto-fascism lay not too far below the surface within the French-Canadian *petite-bourgeoisie*. In fact, the *Ligue catholique féminine* fought against the right to vote for Quebec women since it was seen as being destructive of the family and social order.

In Hull, as elsewhere in French Canada, the parish was the locus of collective, social effort. As social needs grew during the industrial revolutions, it fell to the Church and parish to develop and operate the institutions that have become ubiquitous in modern life -- hospitals, schools, orphanages, asylums, hospices for the elderly and disabled, nurseries for the young -- staffed by women, usually members of religious orders. During the post-WWI recession, the Church-operated institutions became overwhelmed, at least, in the opinion of the Quebec government. Over the objections of many in the Church hierarchy, the Quebec government timidly increased its involvement in social services with the Public Assistance Act of 1921. Using money partly obtained from amusement taxes and horse racing licenses, the Province agreed to fund one-third of the cost of caring for individuals in institutions, while another third was to be funded by the municipality, with the remainder funded by the institutions. This money was available to various categories of hospitals, sanatoria, hospices, orphanages, and nurseries. By 1929, the Province was spending \$2.2 million for these programs. In 1921, there were 4, 267 available institutional beds in Quebec; by 1936, this figure was now 21,604 beds, a sign of the increasing need for social services in Quebec society.<sup>477</sup>

### Regional Particularities

In terms of social institutions, the Outaouais and Hull suffered from a particularity in that the diocesan center was in Ottawa, and the Diocese covered both sides of the River. Hull developed with a dependence upon Ottawa for social institutions and services. In 1927, Hull still had no orphanage nor hospice. Hull citizens in need of these services were sent to Ottawa. One-third of the orphans residing at St-Joseph's Orphanage in Ottawa were from Hull. The General Hospital on Bruyère St. in Lower Town Ottawa was regarded by all as the hospital for Hull patients. The fees charged by Ontario institutions for their services were higher than the amounts paid by the Quebec government, so the municipality had to make up the difference. In 1927, the *Société de bienfaisance de Hull* was founded to raise the money to cover this difference. In

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<sup>476</sup> *Ibid*, p. 89.

<sup>477</sup> Esdras Minville, *La législation ouvrière et le régime social dans la Province de Quebec*, Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude, The King's Printer, 1939, p. 56, 57.



1928, partly owing to the work of the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Hull, Aimé Guertin, Ste-Thérèse orphanage was finally established in Hull.<sup>478</sup>

This unique situation locally meant a lagging of services in the region as the Quebec government relied on Ontario institutions, especially diocesan, to meet the social needs of people in the Outaouais and Hull. Even in recent, more secular times, the region has lagged behind other regions in Quebec. The provincial government only slowly addresses this problem, for example, repatriating health care patients during the last generation. The situation was also a source of tension between French-Canadians in Ottawa and Hull, since the former argued in favour of the benefits of concentrating regional services to francophones in Ottawa. Many have argued that this regional particularity was especially costly for the poor of Hull, who paid for the underdevelopment of social services. On the other hand, this is not how the situation was described in a municipally authorized brochure produced in 1908.

“By special arrangements between the (municipal) council and the hospitals of Ottawa, the sick of Hull are received at these institutions. Other public charitable houses of Ottawa are open as well to Hull people, who are thus relieved of considerable expenditures in keeping up special homes or orphanages or hospitals, when better ones in close proximity are available.”<sup>479</sup>

Living close to Ottawa was a mixed blessing in terms of local services; not all the impact was negative. The first streetcar services in Canada were inaugurated in Ottawa in 1891, which provided an impetus for similar services in Hull. On March 7, 1894, municipal council led by a mayor who had been elected with direct labour support, Dr. Edmond Aubry, resolved that Hull should have a streetcar system.

“( . . . ) Qu’il est avantageux pour cette Cité et spécialement pour la classe des travailleurs, d’établir une ligne de chars électriques reliant Hull avec Aylmer, et la Pointe-Gatineau et Ironside, et aussi un système d’éclairage et de chauffage soit par l’électricité, par le gaz naturel ou autrement.”<sup>480</sup>

Streetcar service began on July 1, 1896, and continued operating until November, 1946. The streetcar service did much to permit the population of Hull to overflow Hull Island and move into Val-Tétreault and Wrightville. It was all the more valuable since there were toll roads in key parts of the municipality which limited mobility via automobile. There were toll stations at the corner of Montcalm and Taché boulevards, on St. Joseph Boulevard near Montclair, and on Montcalm at the Mathews plant, near Brewery Creek. The first of these stations was the property of the Bytown and Aylmer Turnpike Road Company, which had bought the Aylmer Road from Philemon Wright in 1832. The latter two stations were the property of the Gatineau Macadamized and Gravelled Road Company, originally established by the Gilmours to link Hull and Wakefield.<sup>481</sup> After years of lobbying and public discussion, the Province bought out the two

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<sup>478</sup> Chad Gaffield, editor, *Histoire de l’Outaouais*, Quebec City: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1994, p. 395, 396.

<sup>479</sup> V.P. Aubin and A.E. Bérubé, *Hull industriel*, Ottawa Printing Company, 1908, p. 24.

<sup>480</sup> Chantal Berniquez, “La Hull Electric Company”, *Outaouais: Le Hull industriel*, Hull: Institut d’histoire et de recherche sur l’Outaouais, 1986, p. 43.

<sup>481</sup> Boutet, *op. cit.*, Tome II, p. 44 to 47.

roads, and the toll stations were moved outside the borders of Hull into Aylmer and Kirk's Ferry, a hamlet near the Gatineau River. Finally, in 1923, the Province removed the toll stations when it bought the right to complete and fully use the Hull-Aylmer and Hull-Wakefield roads.

Fire services lagged in Hull, as seen in the never-ending saga of local fires. There were two voluntary firefighting organizations early in the 1870's: the Victoria Brigade and the *Voltigeurs canadiens*, but both had ceased to function a decade later. In July, 1885, the local chief of police, Ludger Genest, succeeded in organizing about thirty volunteers in the Jacques-Cartier Brigade. The City gave the Brigade \$200 per year, and issued regulations requiring that homeowners maintain good ladders for reaching roofs in the event of fire. A system was established where carters and water-truck operators were required to provide water in the event of fire, in return for payment. The City, however, refused to build an aqueduct to provide water throughout Hull, or to buy a steam-operated pump.<sup>482</sup>

After the Great Fire of 1900, Hull citizens were treated to a polemic about the cause of fire being the wooden homes with wooden roofs that workers had built. Municipal council passed regulation 78 one month after the Great Fire, which prohibited building such houses, and provided for the destruction of any new such houses within 48 hours. The greater risk of fire, as reflected in fire insurance rates, was from the lumber companies and their woodpiles, but there was no touching the sacrosanct property of business.<sup>483</sup>

### Public Health Services

An important regional particularity about Hull and its working class was the state of public health, as was described in a previous chapter. Besides the border problem which caused problems of access to social institutions, workers in Hull simply couldn't afford recourse to doctors. Hospitalization was reserved for serious illnesses, often in their end stage. For everyday ills, workers had to rely upon their rural antecedents. They used *guérisseurs*, (folk healers), *traiteurs* (faith healers), *rebouteurs* (bonesetters), midwives, and traditional folk remedies and native medications. Ironically, in spite of the social and political leadership that doctors exercised in French Canada, doctors had a long way to go to gain the confidence of the common person in their medicine. Facing the infectious diseases that raged among workers during the industrial revolutions, diseases such as tuberculosis, smallpox, cholera and typhoid fever, doctors had trouble coping and seemingly had little to offer in the way of solutions. The science that followed the discoveries of Lister and Pasteur about germ theory, and epidemiology, or public health medicine, which eventually provided answers to these diseases, were still in their infancy.

Government response to public health problems was timid. In 1886, the Province established a provincial health board following a murderous smallpox epidemic that killed 3,000 Montrealers the year before. Hull, as did many other Quebec municipalities, named a local public health officer, Dr. Joseph Beaudin, in 1886, and established a public health office in 1889. Among the activities of this office was the supervision, however rudimentary, of sanitary facilities.<sup>484</sup> In 1922, the Province established tuberculosis clinics, including one in Hull. Also, during the 1920's, municipalities began obligatory vaccination, often resisted by common folk as being itself a cause of disease.<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>482</sup> Raymond Ouimet, *Une ville en flammes*, Hull: Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 2000, p. 35, 36.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128, 129.

<sup>484</sup> Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 391.

The worksite was still dangerous. There were about 50 industrial accidents in the period between 1897 and 1908 at the Eddy company. Quebec legislation in 1909 and 1926 increased the responsibility of employers with respect to industrial accidents, but these laws were applied perfunctorily. In 1926, however, Eddy introduced life insurance and health insurance plans for its employees.<sup>486</sup>

The City of Hull was constantly criticized by medical professionals for its lack of attention to health matters. The provincial inspector-general of public health, Doctor Delisle, complained in his report for 1928 that Hull authorities did not report instances of contagious diseases, that drinking water was unsafe, that inspection of foodstuffs was non-existent, that garbage was piled outside, and that slums, nests for tuberculosis, continued to be built in Hull.<sup>487</sup> In 1907, after an increase in infant mortality the year before, the City tried to regulate the safety of milk.<sup>488</sup> Nevertheless, this regulation was incomplete, if we judge by a complaint of the provincial health board. In a letter to the City dated March 26, 1927, the Board complained that there was still unpasteurized milk being sold in Hull, which might lead to typhoid fever.<sup>489</sup>

The case of Flora Lake is instructive of public health issues in Hull.<sup>490</sup> The land around this shallow lake, located in the middle of Hull Island, began to be settled during the 1870's. Each spring and fall, flooding occurred. To arrest this, in 1885, a canal was built to drain part of the lake. With its level lowered, the lake began to stagnate. As development occurred around the lake, outhouses were built that leaked into the lake. A new sewer was drained into the lake, as was waste from a neighbouring hog farm. Soon the lake was a cesspool into which locals dumped all manner of garbage. In the winter of 1905, an outbreak of cholera left 180 people in Hull sick. Dr. Beaudin, the public health officer, traced the outbreak to Flora Lake.<sup>491</sup> Once again, the lake was drained further, and completely emptied in 1917. The trough thus created was used during the 1930's as parkland.<sup>492</sup>

Other than the limited interventions of the municipality in the area of public health, most public health services were delivered by the parishes. In 1923, Notre-Dame de Grâce parish established the *Ligue d'hygiène sociale* to coordinate efforts of public health, and to provide information to the public. The *Association des Dames du dispensaire* was formed to permit volunteer women to conduct home visits with respect to tuberculosis. In 1925, a most important program was organized, called the *Goutte de lait* (literally, 'drop of milk'). Nurses taught proper infant care, especially feeding technique. Parents often used infected milk or other liquids to feed babies. This contributed much to infant mortality, specifically from diarrhea and gastro-intestinal infections. The milk program probably contributed much to reducing infant morbidity and mortality. In 1892, 46 babies died in July in Hull; during the same month in 1930, ten died.<sup>493</sup>

The major health care institution in Hull was *Sacré-Coeur* hospital. At the end of the 19th century, the municipality started to envision opening a hospital in Hull as the municipality sometimes had trouble getting Hull indigents placed in Ottawa. In actual fact, Hull was overtaken by Maniwaki in 1902 and Buckingham in 1906, which had religious orders operating hospitals before Hull. The wife of the Governor-General, Lady Minto, wanted to organize

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<sup>486</sup> *Ibid*, p. 391.

<sup>487</sup> Lalonde, *op. cit.*.

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid*, p. 90.

<sup>489</sup> Municipal archives, City of Hull, Fonds I, City of Hull correspondence, box 004, document no. 3464.

<sup>490</sup> See Raymond Ouimet, *Hull: mémoire vive*, Hull: Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 2000, p. 129, 130.

<sup>491</sup> Joseph Jolicoeur, *Histoire Anécdotique de Hull*, Hull: Société historique de l'Ouest du Québec, 1979, p. 94.

<sup>492</sup> Ouimet, *Hull: mémoire vive, op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>493</sup> Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 76, and Lalonde, *op. cit.*.

hospitals in the Outaouais, which would have been run by the Victorian Order of Nurses. The prospect of Protestant hospitals in the Outaouais was too much for the Catholic Diocese of Ottawa, so religious orders were encouraged to establish hospitals in the Outaouais.<sup>494</sup> With the involvement of the Mayor, Dr. Urgel Archambault, the first *Sacré-Coeur* hospital opened on Laurier Avenue, next to the convent of the *Soeurs Servantes de Jésus et Marie*, near present-day Jacques Cartier Park. With the intention of establishing a hospital, the City had bought the palatial house of Judge Champagne for \$16, 500. The Diocese sent two nuns from the *Soeurs de la Providence*, who were given the keys to the building with the promise that they would provide 825 days of free hospitalization for the poor of Hull. A tag day raised over \$2, 000 to purchase equipment for the hospital. Eight beds were available, while the nuns slept in the attic to save space. In 1913, the hospital was expanded to accommodate 45 beds; the number of beds doubled again with another addition in 1924. In 1928, the hospital, as did other things regularly in Hull, burnt, killing a nun, Soeur Cécile. It was rebuilt with 125 beds, 55 of which were reserved for public assistance cases. The hospital also operated a free public clinic, a venereal disease clinic, and a school for nurses. In 1958, the hospital was re-opened at its current sight in the Saint-Raymond neighbourhood, as the federal government conducted expropriations in order to create Jacques Cartier Park.<sup>495</sup>

### Theoretical Reflections

Some theoretical reflections are in order if we wish to understand the development of social institutions in the Outaouais and in Hull, and its effects on the local working class. Understanding the regional particularity of Hull is complex and multi-layered. To understand it, one must peel away the layers, as with an onion.

Of overarching importance are the industrial revolutions which took place in North America. Everywhere on the continent, the growth of industrial capitalism meant an increase in the number and importance of social institutions: schools, hospitals, prisons, asylums, hospices, each resembling the other owing to their custodial functions. Where once state and church were the only collective organizations tolerated, the newly-won freedom of association in the late 19th century meant an array of voluntary membership organizations dedicated to specific purposes. Among these were the organizations of the *petite-bourgeoisie* which set out to reform the evils of industrial capitalism. Institutions were established for all manner and purpose, organized by bureaucracies and experts. Among their jobs was dividing the deserving poor from the feckless, the lazy, the immigrant, and the criminal.<sup>496</sup> Whereas the original impetus for these organizations might have come from a reforming impulse, in actual fact, their goals and methods were custodial and conservative. They were moulding the working class to the needs of industrial capitalism, usually without the invitation of workers themselves. For example, rather than the intellectual development of children, public schools were more concerned with instilling morality and character. Students learned that advancement had to be earned, that people were to be graded and categorized, that they were to sit quietly, that helping their mates was cheating, that they had to be punctual and follow discipline, all qualities needed in the industrial workplace. All these lessons were important for domesticating workers. Of crucial importance to the *petite-bourgeoisie* was the temperance movement, since the poverty and disarray of workers

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<sup>494</sup> Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

<sup>495</sup> Sources of information about *Sacré-Coeur* Hospital include Rita Bourgeois, "Soins infirmiers et hygiène", *Outaouais – Le Hull industriel*, *op. cit.*, p. 80; and Hector Legros and Soeur Paul-Émile, *op. cit.*, p. 724-727.

<sup>496</sup> Michael Cross, editor, *The Workingman in the Nineteenth Century*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974.

and the poor could thus be explained in moralistic terms using alcoholism as an explanation, rather than being a result of industrial capitalism itself. As well, workers were a dangerous class which had to be tamed; there was a myth of a criminal sub-class waiting to cut the throats of respectable members of society.<sup>497</sup> Says one writer, with such a fear commonplace, this myth fit into the temper of the times:

“The Victorian age had a penchant for organization, of everything and anything. It was a business-like time, dominated by organization-minded, middle class men.”<sup>498</sup>

In English-speaking North America, the Protestant churches were no stranger to social reform movements, particularly among women. In fact, reform activities of women led them to the conclusion that women must have the vote, thus, to the suffragette movement. In French Canada, the Church was also involved with these reform efforts, for which many women found roles within the Church as nuns. It was they who operated the nurseries, asylums, hospitals, schools, and all manner of social institution.

By the 1920's, the Church was triumphalist in its hegemony within French Canadian society. Any significant differences of opinion left from the 1837/38 rebellion and from the Confederation debates between clergy and the civil *petite-bourgeoisie* of professionals and small businessmen, had melted away, owing in part to the Church's control of education. In 1928, in Vanier, Ontario, just east of Ottawa, members of this class, both clergy and lay, formed a secret society, the *Ordre de Jacques-Cartier*, to organize the nationalist aims of French-Canadian society. In the Ottawa area, the organization focussed on opening the federal administration to French-Canadians, and on fighting for French-language, public, Catholic education in Ontario. These aims resonated in Hull and the Outaouais, but elsewhere in Quebec, other concerns took center stage for the *Ordre*. The French-Canadian nationalism of the *Ordre* was anti-communist and, sometimes, even fascistic. This was the discourse of the *petite-bourgeoisie*, which was to have a large role in the initiation and development of Catholic trade unionism. This discourse was sometimes progressive and left-leaning, but at other times, downright regressive. The leadership of the trade union and similar movements by clergy meant that they also reflected the interests of the *petite-bourgeoisie*, rather than only those of workers. Sometimes, the two forces clashed; at other times, they collaborated. This influence from the *petite-bourgeoisie* is thus another factor in understanding the Hull working class.

At still another level, there was the regional particularity of diocesan borders not corresponding to political borders. When the state became directly involved in social services, this regional anomaly became more important. The region suffered an institutional and social under-development that, even today, is still being corrected. It has been argued that this under-development had a greater incidence on the poor and on workers, people who could not readily have access to Ontario institutions. Analyzing the impact of the border on Hull workers is difficult; we can't be sure of its effects, positive or negative. It is true, however, that a polemic about Hull's under-development in comparison to Ottawa was a continuing theme of public discussion in the region. The interests of workers were often assumed to be covered in this discussion. The most that can be said with certainty about this is, not necessarily, the well-

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<sup>497</sup> Michael Katz, Michael Doucet and Mark Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982; chapter 9 provides a useful discussion of the phenomenon of the growth of social institutions during the 19th century.

<sup>498</sup> Cross, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

foundedness of the argument, but that the argument itself existed as a regular element of Hull's politics.

Thus, as per elsewhere in North America, Hull workers were subjected to increasing institutionalization with industrialization, often against their will. As per elsewhere in French Canada, the *petite-bourgeoisie*, including the clergy, played a large role in shaping the response of Hull workers to capitalism and to the industrial revolutions. Finally, the border, and its implications for relations with the larger city of Ottawa, affected the search to develop local social institutions, for better or for worse, in terms of impact on workers.

### Working Class Agency

The thought might have occurred to readers why the development of parish and municipality would be relevant to understanding the distinct culture of the working class, and its effort to improve its lot in Hull. After all, parish and municipality were ubiquitous institutions, usually under the sway of people who weren't workers. Nonetheless, the population of Hull was composed predominantly of workers; the size of the other classes was indeed small. This meant that any social endeavour which involved the general public affected workers. Even if the parish and the municipality were led by *petits-bourgeois* and bourgeois, both institutions did bring benefits to the working class; as well, both parish and municipality sought and employed the collaboration of workers.

We see this collaboration at work in several examples of the municipal development of Hull. The first example of this collaboration was the consensus during the 1870's among all classes that separating urban Hull from Hull Township, thereby creating a new municipality, was good for all in urban Hull, even though anglophone farmers in rural areas resisted the separation. Secondly, establishing a distinct school board for urban Hull, although this effort was led by local clergy, did benefit francophone workers, who would have been without schooling in the new municipality, were it not for the creation of the new board. Thirdly, building the first municipal services in Hull, such as roads and bridges, required the direct, physical labour of workers organized into *corvées* or building bees, a tradition left from the seigneurial system in rural, French-Canadian communities, whence hailed many Hull workers. Fourthly, as Hull grew to become an important Quebec town, public services inevitably were organized more formally. At the insistence of working class militants, services were developed in such areas as public health and transportation, which sought to improve the lives of workers. Fifthly, municipal council did include workers whose election became commonplace, and who served on council alongside the usual coterie of notaries, lawyers, doctors, and businessmen.

With respect to the parish, working class involvement was necessary to build and maintain religious institutions: chapel, church, presbytery, convent, retreat, living quarters for clergy. Obviously, the parish was the focus of the religious life of Hull's workers. Other obvious examples were the parish charities that served the poor of Hull. It is true that non-workers contributed to these charities. We also can imagine that receiving charity from these organizations might often have been a nasty business that exposed the poor to pedantic moralizing from social betters. Nonetheless, parish charities did depend upon workers for financial contributions and labour. Charitable giving in Hull, therefore, was a case of the poor helping the poor, an expression of solidarity among workers. On other fronts, the parish and its members and clergy undertook some impressive social organization aimed at improving the lives of workers. These included: Catholic unions, including building a union hall; the first *caisse populaire*, or credit union; health care institutions; education, including providing bursaries to

poor students; mutual aid societies; public health activities; affordable fire insurance; women's organizations; a library; organizing against Sunday work; working on behalf of the progress of the French language and its speakers. The list is perhaps incomplete but the point remains. The parish was a ubiquitous, social force, which involved and benefited workers.

Recognizing class collaboration in matters of parish and municipality does not belie social conflict among classes. For example, while French-Canadian nationalism, as espoused by clerics and other *petits-bourgeois* was sometimes socially progressive, at the same time, it could also be regressive. The church in Quebec was often right-wing and virulently anti-communist, in fact, crypto-fascist. The clergy was also paranoid about freemasonry, a suspicion to which any secular organization was subjected. Then, there was the ever-present anti-semitism, an important part of the mythology of the *petite-bourgeoisie* in French Canada or anywhere else. (Those who want to understand the social and cultural functions of anti-semitism for the *petite-bourgeoisie* should read the masterful exposition by Jean-Paul Sartre in his booklet, *Antisemitism* published in October, 1944, shortly after the August liberation of Paris during WWII.)

Our purpose, however, is not to conduct the process of the Church and its role in Quebec history. In fact, the Church in Hull, at the insistence of workers, and with the expenditure of their energy, generally was a force for the social progress of the working class. In addition, except for a few, Protestant anglophones, most workers, including the few Irishmen in Hull, were Catholic, which meant that Catholicism was an important part of life for almost the entire working class of Hull.

The collaboration of *petits-bourgeois* and workers on social matters was comparable to workers' interest in the employment that resulted from industrial development, an interest that they would have shared with the local bourgeoisie. By no means, however, does a general, shared interest in economic growth preclude the many industrial conflicts that did occur in Hull. Thus, at one and the same time, there were both class collaboration and class conflict in the working class experience in Hull. Classes, after all, are relationships among groups of people who might oppose each other, but not enough normally to want to eliminate the other group, since each group needs the other, or at least, perceives it so.

Map - Historic Parishes of Working Class Hull





## Legend for map

1. Jacques-Cartier Park  
Over the Park is the current Macdonald-Cartier Bridge to Ottawa. West of the Park is the site of the original *Sacré-Coeur* Church (A), which now serves as the seat of Notre-Dame de l'Île de Hull parish, which covers all of Hull Island where once there were four parishes.
2. Chaudière Bridge  
NE of this bridge is the modern St. James Anglican Church, the original version of which was the first church in Hull. To the east of the Chaudière Bridge is the Portage Bridge.
3. Canadian Museum of Civilization  
Immediately to the north is the Alexandra Bridge, also known popularly as the Interprovincial Bridge.
4. Chaudière  
Islands in the Ottawa River and original falls, long since dammed.
5. Parc Ste-Bernadette  
The former Minnow Lake; Ste-Bernadette Church (B) to the west is now used by the local Portuguese community.
6. University Campus (*Université du Québec en Outaouais*)
7. Conservatoire de musique  
To the NW are newer neighbourhoods in Hull.
8. Gatineau Park
9. Alonzo-Wright Bridge  
Crossing the Gatineau River from Hull, a left turn brings one to the Limbour neighbourhood, a right turn, to the Touraine neighbourhood. South of the bridge are more newer neighbourhoods in Hull.
10. Parc Fontaine  
The former Flora Lake.

## CHAPTER 10 – ELECTORAL POLITICS

### Introduction

It could hardly be expected that in the course of a single decade, Hull Township would become majority French-speaking, that a new town would emerge near the Chaudière, and that a new municipality be created of this town without there being serious ramifications for local, electoral politics. In fact, the transformation was accompanied by drama, including resistance by the English-speaking farmers that had comprised the majority of Hull Township prior to the French-Canadian migration to Hull.

### Shaky Beginnings

Hull Township held its council meetings in Old Chelsea until 1866. Thereafter, council met in Chelsea or in the village of Hull. In 1868, Hercule Gravel, from the village of Hull, was the first French-Canadian elected to Township council.<sup>499</sup> Hull's priest, Louis Reboul, held the view that a distinct municipality was needed for the village of Hull, a view which local parishioners came to share. E.B. Eddy, who paid much of the property tax in Hull Township, shared this view. During the municipal election of 1870, candidates from Hull village argued on behalf of separation. Eddy, Gravel, Dr. Charles Everett Graham, and Moïse Bisson, all from Hull village, were elected, while only one rural farmer, Samuel Pink, was elected. On January 17, 1870, the new council chose Eddy as mayor, a position not directly elected by the citizens. At its second meeting, the new council advised the secretary-treasurer of the previous council, William Aylen, son of Peter, that he was being replaced in his functions by Hull notary, Nérée Tétréau. Aylen ignored this notice while the previous council, presided by Thomas McGoey, continued to sit, ignoring the new council. On May 14, 1870, the new council announced its plan to request that the village of Hull be separated from the Township. The new council then prepared to collect property taxes. The assessment committee appointed by the previous council, however, refused to work under the new council. The new council then asked the Province to name three new assessors, positions that were patronage appointments. The new council was thus able to collect property taxes from the citizenry. Aylen, however, still refused to hand over his files to Tétréau. Finally, after a year of stalling, Aylen handed over the Township files to Tétréau.<sup>500</sup>

In the 1872 Township election, all six councillors elected were from Hull village, including four French-Canadians. Little happened on the dossier of separation, however, until 200 citizens signed a formal petition to the Province from Township council in December, 1874. On February 23, 1875, the new City of Hull was created.

The moment should have been one of rejoicing for the Hull villagers but the next month, something happened to ruin the party. The local newspaper, the *Courrier d'Outaouais*, now being edited by a new editor, Médéric Lanctôt, published an anonymous letter, perhaps written by Reboul, which informed the public that, according to the charter of the new City of Hull, schools would be built and operated according to the religion of land owners. Most Hull workers weren't land owners -- village property was for the most part owned by the Wrights and a few others -- this meant that Catholics would have no schools in the new municipality. In Hull Township, there had been a distinct school board for Catholics. Whether this shortcoming was

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<sup>499</sup> Lucien Brault, *Hull, 1800-1950*, Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1950, p. 42, 43.

<sup>500</sup> For an excellent account of these shenanigans, see Edgar Boutet, *Le bon vieux temps à Hull*, Tome III, Hull: Éditions Gauvin, 1975, p. 138-141.

merely an oversight or deliberately organized, the effect on French-Canadian workers in Hull was clear. Reboul, along with a delegation of municipal councillors, went to Quebec City to get the shortcoming corrected, with success.<sup>501</sup> Moreover, a new political force had entered the local arena: the new editor of the local newspaper, recently arrived from Montreal, Médéric Lanctôt, who established himself as a defender of Hull's working class.

### Médéric Lanctôt<sup>502</sup>

To describe Lanctôt as controversial is to be euphemistic. In fact, Lanctôt left few indifferent. He was a bundle of contradictions, not the least of which that he, as a *petit-bourgeois*, came to be such a champion of the working class. Médéric Lanctôt was born in December, 1838, at the end of the *Patriote* rebellions in Lower Canada, to Mary Miller and Hippolyte Lanctôt, a notary public. Shortly after Médéric's birth, Lanctôt's father, a noted *patriote*, was deported to Australia, where he remained until January, 1845. Upon his return, Lanctôt Sr. worked in the Richelieu Valley as a notary public, remaining a convinced democrat, republican, and nationalist throughout his life. The experience of the father had a formative effect on the son.

As a youth, Médéric undertook classical college studies, then apprenticed in Montreal as a clerk. There, he became involved with the *Institut canadien* in the late 1840's. This organization was a rallying-point for liberal causes. In 1855, he moved to Saint-Hyacinthe to become a journalist. In 1858, he returned to Montreal to begin the study of law. In Montreal, in conjunction with a *rouge* friend, Médéric shattered the windows of the *Oeuvre des Bons Livres*, a library of suitable, politically correct literature organized by Bishop Bourget as part of his campaign against *rougisme*. Lanctôt was found guilty of this act and fined \$20. In 1860, he completed his law studies, and in the summer of 1862, he travelled to Europe. There, he witnessed firsthand the industrial revolution and the poverty and class strife it engendered. He foresaw that these would come to French Canada as it industrialized. Upon his return, Lanctôt decided to become a crusading journalist. In 1863, he started publishing a liberal, nationalist paper called *La Presse*. In 1864, Tories, Reformers, and Grits formed a grand coalition to promote Confederation of the British colonies in North America. The *rouges* in Quebec were opposed to the project. Along with other *rouges* such as Wilfrid Laurier, Lanctôt began campaigning against Confederation. For this purpose, he established a new newspaper called the *Union nationale*.

Parallel to all this, Lanctôt began his work of championing the interests of workers. He defended carters successfully in their strike against the Grand Trunk Railroad, whose lawyer was George-Étienne Cartier. Lanctôt thought that capital must share in the benefits of industrialization with labour, or the problems of Europe would soon beset French Canada, including the possibility of revolution. Lanctôt organized 26 groups of workers, according to trade, in the *Grande Association de protection des ouvriers*. Each trade had a central office, while Lanctôt presided over the whole association. The goals of the *Grande Association* were to

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<sup>501</sup> Raymond Ouimet, *Hull: mémoire vive*, Hull: Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 2000, p. 108-109.

<sup>502</sup> Sources about Médéric Lanctôt include the following: Edgar Boutet, Tomes II and III, *op. cit.*; Boutet, "Les journaux de Hull: des origines à 1955", *Asticou*, March, 1973; *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, "Médéric Lanctôt", by Jean Hamelin, Vol. X, p. 420-425; Jean Hamelin, editor, *Les travailleurs québécois, 1851-1896*, Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1973; Médéric Lanctôt, *Association de capital et du travail*, Montreal: John Wilson, 1872; Raymond Ouimet, *Une ville en flammes*, Hull: Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 1997; Ouimet, *Hull: mémoire vive, op. cit.*; and Mario Pelletier, "Luttes et polémiques politiques à Hull dans les années 1870", *Asticou*, no. 13, Autumn, 1974.

promote harmony between capital and labour, and to improve the well-being of workers. As head of the *Grande Association*, nevertheless, Lanctôt led successful strikes by carpenters and by bakers. He also established a low-cost bakery, and consumer cooperatives. The crowning achievement of labour solidarity by the *Grande Association* was a procession of 8, 000 workers through the streets of Montreal behind Lanctôt and the red, green and white flag of the 1837-1838 *Patriotes*.

Lanctôt narrowly defeated a Tory in the spring of 1867 for a seat on municipal council, but his election was annulled on the same day as the great procession, June 10, 1867, since he did not possess the necessary property to qualify for council. In the federal election of September 5, 1867, Lanctôt ran against George-Étienne Cartier in Montreal East and lost by 348 votes. He ran on an anti-Confederation platform, while Cartier was buoyed by the official support of the Church, opposed to the *rouges*.

Having lost the Confederation battle, Lanctôt next became an annexationist, and moved to the U.S.. He started a new paper, *L'Indépendance canadienne*, which proposed annexation to the U.S.. His annexationist appeal to French-Canadian expatriates in Detroit and New England, however, fell on deaf ears. During this period, Lanctôt had a crisis of faith and became a Baptist. Furthermore, he began publishing a virulent, anti-Catholic paper called the *Anti-Roman Advocate*, which foundered after a few issues. He returned to Montreal and ran provincially, unsuccessfully, in 1871. He began to practice law, not too successfully, and also recovered his Catholic faith.

In 1875, scandal raged about the federal Tories, and Alexander Mackenzie led the Liberals to power. Lanctôt saw his chance and moved to Ottawa. Friends working for the Liberal Cabinet got him jobs as a stenographer at the House of Commons, and as the editor of an Ottawa newspaper, *Le Courrier d'Outaouais*. In June, 1875, Lanctôt bought the newspaper and moved it to Promenade du Portage in Hull. Lanctôt quickly made a name for himself by editorializing energetically about the school problem in the new municipality.

Then followed a strange incident indeed. The local elite that had worked for the separation of Hull village from Hull Township made a silly mistake. A putative election for the new municipal council was held, however, voters were not notified publicly. On the evening of March 24, 1875, a small gathering of twenty or so citizens met in a shed behind Nérée Tétreau's office, and elected the first city council. In fact, it was the old township council with E.B. Eddy still as mayor. Tétreau boasted publicly that he'd put over a good one on the citizenry, and that he'd do it again if he had to do so. The next day, Lanctôt got wind of the whole business. He drew together citizens to protest to Quebec City that proper election procedures had not been followed. Fifty citizens signed a letter written by Lanctôt. On business in Ottawa, Quebec Premier de Boucherville, a Tory anxious to avoid further scandals, agreed with Lanctôt. Another election was held on April 22, 1875. The new council sat for the first time on April 30, and chose as its mayor George Marston.

Lanctôt appeared to have found a home. He set to work decrying the local Tory establishment in his newspaper. Lanctôt called the local elite the *clique*; in return, his opponents baptized Lanctôt and his group the *potée* (hodgepodge). Lanctôt's nemesis, Nérée Tétreau, set up a rival paper, *Le Canada central*. Meanwhile, the new City named Lanctôt its legal advisor for the handsome sum of \$800 per year. His paper was chosen as the official publication of the City under the name of *L'Écho de Hull*. Lanctôt now held control at the City, including obtaining its printing contracts. Lanctôt also set about working for the removal of E.B. Eddy from his position as Member of the Legislative Assembly. Lanctôt supported Dr. Duhamel for the Tory

nomination; Eddy indeed did lose his seat. In an eerie repeat of the earlier story with William Aylen, Nérée Tétreau refused to hand over municipal files to Lanctôt. The latter sued successfully for the files. As well, the City pursued Tétreau for a deficit of \$2, 525 in the Township's books. It also claimed that Eddy owed the new City \$15, 000.

The stakes in this little war were rising. While in Aylmer, Lanctôt was attacked in the street by *clique* henchmen. These thugs also later attacked one of Lanctôt's allies in Hull, a municipal councillor named François-Xavier Gauthier. The attack on Gauthier was perpetrated, among others, by Charles Leduc, who was elected to council in 1876, a victory which Lanctôt unsuccessfully contested. Leduc eventually served three times as mayor of Hull. Another perpetrator of Gauthier's beating, Théophile Viau, eventually won the first streetcar contract in Hull. Also involved in this incident was Andrew Leamy, the lumberman who had been one of Peter Aylen's thugs. Leamy eventually moved to British Columbia, where he became a judge. This incident was another example of the local elite of Hull using violence to advance its interests. In fact, it was another example of how Hull resembled the mythical, American West.

During the night of April 5, 1876, the office of Lanctôt's newspaper, *Le Courrier d'Outaouais*, was sacked by unknown parties. The City offered a reward of \$200 for information about the incident, but no information emerged. Lanctôt's store started to diminish. His enemy, Charles Leduc, acceded to council in spite of Lanctôt's protests about supposed irregularities. Council then found a bill for printing from Lanctôt excessive, and reduced his payment by one-third. In the 1877 municipal election, Tories regained control of City Hall. Lanctôt lost his job as legal advisor, and the *Écho de Hull* was replaced by the *Aylmer Times* as the municipality's official publication.

Exhausted by his interminable combats, Lanctôt established himself on a farm in Lucerne in order to rest. In fact, he was now gravely ill. On July 30, 1877, around 1:30 in the morning, Lanctôt died in Lucerne at the ripe old age of 39, possibly of pneumonia. About ten minutes later, in a climax worthy of a classical tragedy, the building that housed Lanctôt's newspaper began to burn, probably from arson. The fire destroyed eight buildings on Promenade du Portage. Fortunately, there was no wind that night so locals were able to control the fire. The owner of the building that housed Lanctôt's newspaper was the mayor elected in April of that year, Isaïe Richer. Richer was a small businessman, and an ally of Lanctôt. After the fire, Richer skedaddled out of Hull, and moved to Manitoba, where he lived until his death in 1911. Richer recognized that local Tories played a little too rough in Hull.

The Tories had weathered the storm of the Médéric Lanctôt episode. More or less until the end of the century, local Tories controlled elected office in Hull. Eddy served as mayor from 1881 to 1884, then again in 1887 and 1891. Charles Leduc, the erstwhile thug, was mayor in 1879, 1880, and 1885. Dr. Charles Everett Graham was mayor in 1878 and 1895. Nérée Tétreau served as provincial member from 1892 to 1897.<sup>503</sup>

Lanctôt was a living personification of all the traditions that went to making working class culture in Quebec in the 19th century. At one and the same time, he was a nationalist, a radical republican, a democrat, an initiator of unions and cooperatives. He was an anti-cleric but at the same time, wanted to re-install the past glories of the master-worker collaboration of the Middle Ages, and the Catholic ideal of harmony and charity among the classes. He perpetrated political violence and broke the law, and was himself a victim of political violence and lawbreaking. Through all this, he was a crusading journalist, lawyer, and a not-too-successful member of the *petite-bourgeoisie*, adding to the contradictions that made him a fitting example

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<sup>503</sup> Pelletier, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

of the relationship between *petits-bourgeois* and workers, and a personification of working class history in French Canada.

With Lanctôt conveniently out of the way, local politics in Hull, including at the municipal level, was usually in the hands of the Tories until the end of the 19th century. This was the situation in most of French Canada. After the Riel hanging in 1885, however, the Liberals started to replace the Tories as the party of choice for French Canadians. The Tories came to be known as the *parti pendard*, the hanging party. In spite of the Church's objections, virulent orangism in English Canada pushed most French-Canadians to the Liberals. For their part, the Liberals toned down their anti-clericalism, and started to imitate English rather than French liberals. Even the *rougiste* Laurier became an ardent supporter of Confederation.

### Knights of Labour

Before the transferral of French-Canadian support in Hull from Tories to Liberals was completed, however, there was an interesting interval, the period of the sway of the Knights of Labour during the 1890's. The Knights were very popular in French Canada, in spite of the vigorous opposition of the Church hierarchy. The Knights were part trade union and part political reform movement, part brotherhood and part fraternal order. Thus they recalled historical traditions of workers.<sup>504</sup> The 1891 strike by sawmill employees at the Chaudière, though not organized officially by a union, brought many Hull workers into the fold of the Knights, and new assemblies were started in the Hull-Ottawa region. As the 19th century ended, the store of the Knights in North America diminished, giving way to the craft unions of the AF of L in the U.S. and English Canada. In Quebec, however, the Knights continued to be strong. They united all workers, skilled and unskilled, men and women, in a sort of pre-CIO, industrial union movement. Also importantly, they maintained their independence in national unions. This corresponded to the nature of Quebec's economy which employed unskilled, low-paid workers. The elitism of the craft unions didn't fit with the realities facing most French-Canadian workers.

After the 1891 strike, membership in the Knights' local assemblies increased. In the 1894 municipal election, nine of the twelve councillors elected were members of the Knights, the leader being a baker named Victor-Ovide Falardeau, a man who was involved in Hull politics for many years. These councillors sat beside the two obligatory members of the Wright clan and Dr. Charles Everett Graham. The mayor was Dr. Edmond Aubrey, who enjoyed the support of the Knights, and was the first mayor of Hull directly elected by voters rather than by municipal council.<sup>505</sup> The 1894 municipal council adjusted property tax assessment rates, introduced a streetcar service, increased local government revenues with taxes and license fees on businesses and professions, and set regulations for early closing hours for stores and trades.<sup>506</sup>

Unfortunately, the work of council was disrupted by a scandal in which the *mayor* appeared to have accepted bribes. Nevertheless, councillors who were members of the Knights continued to hold public office thereafter. A pattern was established whereby Hull workers regularly sat on municipal council. Beside the ubiquitous lawyers and other representatives of the *petite*-bourgeoisie and businessmen were found clerks and public servants, bakers and butchers, factory workers and labourers, carpenters and machinists, and other workers. This pattern of worker participation in municipal politics continued into the 20th century. For example, the 1908

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<sup>504</sup> Bryan Palmer, *Descent into Discourse*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990, p. 121.

<sup>505</sup> Bureau du Greffier, Ville de Hull, *Élections municipales, 1875-1877 à 1995-1999*, 1995, p. 111.

<sup>506</sup> Hull Municipal Library, *Procès-verbaux du Conseil municipal de Hull, 1875 à 1924*; see page 33 for regulation 58, p. 40 for regulation 60, and p. 101 for regulation 63.

council included James Walsh, a machinist, Thomas Kelly, a clerk, and Joseph Chevalier, a mason. The mayor of the council was a baker, Augustin Thibault.<sup>507</sup> The municipal council of 1916 comprised three entrepreneurs, three public servants, two doctors, and one each of these occupations: grocer, store clerk, baker, butcher, and labourer. Five were members of the *Association ouvrière de Hull*. The mayor, Dr. Urgel Archambault, successfully ran on a ticket of the *Association ouvrière*.<sup>508</sup>

An inventory of municipal councillors and their occupations in the period of 1896-1925 reveals how many were workers. There were four each of labourers, clerks, and butchers; three each of machinists, bakers, carpenters, and printers; two each of masons and foremen; and one from each of the following occupations: mechanic, electrician, blacksmith, train conductor, barber, painter, and cabinet-maker. There were many other workers, as well, who ran unsuccessfully for municipal council. We should have no illusions nonetheless. Municipal councillors were still disproportionately bourgeois or *petits-bourgeois*. Workers in Hull, however, realistically could hope to be elected to municipal council.<sup>509</sup>

All classes in Hull continued to have their Tory or Liberal allegiances. Workers had their reasons for supporting each of the two parties. In the latter part of the 19th century, Tories enjoyed the support of some urban workers owing to the National Policy of Macdonald. Liberals, on the other hand, appealed to French-Canadian workers as the party of French Canadians after the Riel business. Furthermore, in Hull, *petits-bourgeois* had to make specific appeals to workers in order to get elected, if only for the size of this population. Three outstanding examples were doctors: Aubrey, Archambault, and Joseph-Éloi Fontaine, all of whom managed to make significant improvements in public health with the support of workers. When Fontaine was mayor, municipal council purchased the building that was to become the first hospital in Hull, which opened later during Archambault's term of office.<sup>510</sup> Municipal council was contested ground where the working class of Hull had its representatives and its say.

### Urgel Archambault

The municipal councils led by Urgel Archambault, beginning in 1916 are worthy of further examination. This was the period of the initiation of the *Association ouvrière de Hull*. We've already alluded to this organization; it gets a fuller treatment in chapter 12. Municipally, the organization had considerable influence, while Archambault also enjoyed its support. Archambault was a noteworthy figure in education, and on the Prohibition question. Working class militants in Hull, as they did everywhere else, put considerable store in education. In 1901, municipal council offered a room at the police station for trades education. The next year, the Province opened a school for arts and trades in Hull.<sup>511</sup> Previously in 1891, more than 700 Hull workers had attended night school organized by the Province.<sup>512</sup> Consensus grew in Hull that the city needed a technical school, as existed elsewhere in Quebec. The 1916 council and the *Association ouvrière* began lobbying the Province for such an establishment. The school,

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<sup>507</sup> V.P. Aubin and A.E. Bérubé, *Hull industriel*, Ottawa Printing Company, 1908, p. 20.

<sup>508</sup> *Le Droit*, January 20, 1916, p. 3.

<sup>509</sup> Appended to this chapter is a listing of these municipal councillors, divided by occupation. There possibly is some double-counting as individual councillors might have changed occupations. The source for this inventory is the Bureau du Greffier, Ville de Hull, *Élections municipales, 1875-1877 à 1995-1999*, 1995.

<sup>510</sup> Denise Latrémouille, *D'or et d'azur, de sueur et de labeur*, Hull, 2000, p. 41, 42.

<sup>511</sup> Boutet, *op. cit.*, p. 65, 66.

<sup>512</sup> Joseph Jolicoeur, *Histoire Anecdote de Hull*, Hull: Société historique de l'Ouest du Québec, 1979, p. 94.

eventually located on Hull Island on Wright Street between Leduc and Saint-Jacques streets, opened in 1924. It continued to serve the citizens of Hull into the 1960's.<sup>513</sup>

Another activity of the 1916 council, which also obtained the support of the *Association ouvrière*, was the effort to obtain early closing hours for businesses operating in Hull, including those that served liquor. In actual fact, the question of closing hours for liquor establishments was part of a polemic that raged in Hull for years, as it did elsewhere in North America, about alcoholism among the working class. As far back as 1886, the Catholic clergy in Hull had established the *société de tempérance*, to combat the supposed, rampant drunkenness among forestry workers.<sup>514</sup> A prohibitionist league also existed among Hull anglophones; although secular, the anglophone association, which began in 1898, enjoyed the support of local, Protestant clergy.<sup>515</sup> Temperance was one of the most important causes, as well, of the local *Saint-Jean Baptiste* society. During the years 1906 to 1908, the local *Société de tempérance* held several successful demonstrations, with the result that membership increased from 120 to 250.<sup>516</sup>

The strategy chosen by temperance advocates was to reduce the number of licensed drinking establishments in Hull. In 1908, temperance forces succeeded in reducing the number of establishments from 21 to 16. In 1911, the *Société de tempérance* got involved directly with the municipal campaign. Archambault, running for mayor, promised to reduce further the number of bars, for which he received the support of the *Société de tempérance*. Once in office, Archambault did as he had promised; he reduced the number of establishments, exactly by one. The incensed temperance advocates then extracted a municipal council agreement to reduce the number of bars to eight, nonetheless, each spring, council continued to grant fifteen licenses. To mollify the temperance forces, council agreed to limit opening hours of bars to 11 p.m. on weekdays, and 7 p.m. on Saturdays, a change that seemed to enjoy unanimity, including from many workers interested in reducing retail hours generally. Temperance advocates eventually saw that it was no sense in trying to reach the goal of eight bars in Hull, so they began a different tack. They set a goal of no more licenses being issued in Hull until the population reached 30,000, and then only one additional license for every additional 2,000 people in Hull. In fact, this was the quota of 15 bars for the population of 30,000 which existed. The City accepted this notion, and the policy was inscribed in the City charter, then adopted as a provincial law on December 19, 1912.<sup>517</sup>

The local consensus seemed to work until 1917, when the local prohibitionist movement took on a new fervour. We don't know what happened to increase this fervour locally, although Archambault himself was an ardent nationalist and member of the *Société Saint-Jean Baptiste*, for whom reducing drinking was an important cause. Possibly, it was simply the tenor of the times as English-speaking North America got caught up in the prohibitionist fever. In fact, during WWI, some thought that Prohibition would provide a patriotic contribution to the war effort. By the winter of 1917, the prohibitionist fever hit the citizenry of Hull. Via regulation 186 in March, hundreds of citizens signed a petition demanding a referendum about Prohibition. These citizens included Anglophones, among them, the local clergy, the French-Canadian clergy, members of the *Saint-Jean Baptiste* Society, and members of all occupations. The *Association*

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<sup>513</sup> Boutet, *op. cit.*, p. 42, 66. See also *Outaouais – Le Hull disparu*, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur l'Outaouais, 1988, p. 85.

<sup>514</sup> Joseph Bonhomme, *Notre-Dame de Hull*, Ottawa: Le Droit, 1931, p. 58.

<sup>515</sup> Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>516</sup> Ernest Cinq-Mars, *Hull: son origine, ses progrès, son avenir*, Hull: Bérubé Frères, 1908, p. 76.

<sup>517</sup> Robert Moreau, "Intempérance et prostitution", Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Actes du Colloque sur l'identité régionale dans l'Outaouais*, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur l'Outaouais, 1982, p. 91.



*ouvrière* took no formal position during the referendum debate, letting individual workers decide for themselves.<sup>518</sup> On April 20, 1917, Prohibition was accepted by the Hull citizenry, 2,487 votes to 1,306.<sup>519</sup>

A little over two years later, however, another campaign by local citizens asked for repeal. On July 21, 1919, a referendum repealed Prohibition in a manner as convincing as the first referendum.<sup>520</sup> Obviously, the tide had turned. Hull authorities thereafter complied with the rules in the rest of Quebec, even though Prohibition was still in effect across the River, with all its resulting consequences for Hull, as we shall see later.

### Senior Level Politics

While Hull workers were directly involved by being elected to municipal government, the same cannot be said at the senior levels of government. The list of Ottawa County representatives in the Province of Canada, and in Parliament after Confederation, reads like a who's who of the local bourgeoisie: Philemon Wright's grandson, Alonzo Wright; Theodore Davis and Charles Dewey Day, both associates of the Wrights; Denis-Benjamin Papineau, son of Louis-Joseph Papineau, seigneur of Montebello; several, big lumber merchants: Baxter Bowman, from Buckingham, Alanson Cook, from the Petite-Nation Valley, and John Egan and James Blackburn, from Aylmer. After Confederation, the first provincial representatives for Hull were Dr. Levi Ruggles Church, a member of the Wright clan, and E.B. Eddy, who also served as municipal councillor and mayor during three different decades: the 1870's, 1880's and 1890's.<sup>521</sup>

In 1875, the election of Dr. Louis Duhamel, with the active support of Lanctôt and the *potée*, signaled the beginning of the *petit-bourgeois* ascendancy in provincial politics. In 1887, a Liberal lawyer, Alfred Rochon, was elected in a provincial by-election in the wake of the Riel hanging. The Liberals, with one short interval when Tory Nérée Tétreau was the provincial representative, continued to win Hull into the 1920's. Workers and working class militants were not involved in this politics as candidates. One exception was the baker Victor-Ovide Falardeau, who ran unsuccessfully for the Tories in 1904 against Liberal Ferdinand-Ambroise Gendron.

The national issues that motivated senior level politics, for example, the conscription issue in WWI, did directly affect Hull workers. At the beginning of WWI, most French-Canadians supported the war effort. There was talk of a *union sacrée* between the two Canadian peoples for the war effort.<sup>522</sup> On the other hand, labour activists and French-Canadians generally, were opposed to conscription. On another subject related to the war, Hull municipal council sent a resolution to Prime Minister Borden in August, 1914, asking for the creation of an organization to control prices and prevent hoarding, so that the working class not be exploited. This project apparently was already in the works since Borden responded immediately by establishing a special commission for these purposes. The next week, Hull council sent a message to Borden, thanking him along with the message of :

“. . . la plus profonde gratitude de la population de la ville de Hull, dont les sept huitièmes sont des journaliers; ce conseil étant honoré de votre prompte attention et a toute confiance que vous saurez prendre les moyens nécessaires pour protéger surtout la classe ouvrière.”<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> See *Procès-verbaux . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 354-361.

<sup>519</sup> Boutet, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>520</sup> See *Procès-verbaux . . .*, *op. cit.*, for bylaw 204, p. 147, 148.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36, and Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>522</sup> Elizabeth Howard Armstrong, *The Crisis of Quebec, 1914-1918*, New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967, chapter 4.

<sup>523</sup> See *Procès-verbaux . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 183, 185, 186.

Author's adaptation: “. . . the most profound gratitude of the population of the City of Hull, of which 7/8 are labourers. This council is honoured by your quick attention to this matter. Council is confident that you will take the necessary measures to protect the working class.”

The conscription issue turned French Canadians against the war. On May 28, 1917, 5,000 people in Hull demonstrated against conscription, including 3,000 young men of military service age, from 18 to 26. The young men threatened to cross into Ottawa to continue their demonstration, but Mayor Archambault, a Tory, convinced them to confine their protest to Hull.<sup>524</sup> The rally was organized by Achille Morin, president of the *Association ouvrière*.

In September, 1917, a special convention of union activists met in Ottawa at the invitation of the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress to consider what to do about their opposition to conscription, since the government seemed determined to proceed with the measure. Achille Morin attended the conference, and observed that he had never seen labour so divided.<sup>525</sup> Some supported the war and conscription; some the war, but not conscription; still others neither. Those who were opposed to conscription were divided as to strategy. Should workers use direct action, such as a general strike, or electoral activity, and if the latter, whether or not an independent labour party was the best route. In actual fact, two-thirds voted to establish such a party, for which a further meeting was called for November in Ottawa. On November 3, 208 delegates from 104 labour organizations in Quebec met in Montreal to form a Quebec wing of the party. Present at this meeting were delegates from Hull.<sup>526</sup> Morin was impressed with the idea. In December of 1917, there was a provincial by-election in Hull, owing to the death earlier that year of the Liberal Gendron. Hull delegates to the new party proposed that Morin run on the Independent Labour ticket, an honour which he accepted. Before the election, however, a controversy emerged owing to supposed irregularities in Morin's nomination forms, and the president of the elections withdrew Morin's name from the ballot. This decision was contested in the courts, but there was no decision for years. In fact, Joseph Caron, the Liberal, was acclaimed without opposition in both the December, 1917 by-election, and in the 1919 provincial general election.<sup>527</sup>

Labour's confusion about how to approach WWI and the question of military service, including conscription, existed throughout the western world. Labour and socialists were divided on whether to denounce WWI as a war of imperialism, versus their support of the various combatant countries. In Canada, a federal election was held in December, 1917. Opposition to conscription came to be centred in the Liberal Party, especially in French Canada. Unions were left virtually on the sidelines, especially since in the U.S., the AF of L supported the war effort. Labour activists in Canada were stuck in a legalistic, never-never land of opposing conscription, but not being able to agree to do anything about it, and certainly not contravening the law of the land.<sup>528</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, May 29, 1917.

<sup>525</sup> Boutet, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>526</sup> Louis Fournier et al., *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier au Québec: 150 ans de luttes*, Montreal: CSN/CEQ, 1984, p. 114.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>528</sup> For a useful discussion about working class militants and their predicament during WWI, see Bernard Dansereau, “Le mouvement ouvrier montréalais et la Première Guerre mondiale”, *Cahiers d'histoire politique*, no. 2, Winter, 1996.

In Hull, the new Independent Labour Party ran a candidate in the provincial election of 1923. Joseph Chénier, a labourer, received 920 votes, while Archambault received 1,543 votes for the Tories, and Joseph-Roméo Lafond, a Liberal, received 2,263 votes.<sup>529</sup>

### Aimé Guertin<sup>530</sup>

For the most part, senior level politics in Hull was conducted on national issues with little direct, active involvement by or even, it could be argued, on behalf of the working class. An exception occurred in 1927 with the provincial election of a Tory in Hull, Aimé Guertin. Guertin proved to be a stolid champion of Hull workers, even accused by his opponents of bolshevism and socialism. In fact, Guertin was an avid supporter of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. A son of workers from Aylmer, Guertin was a self-made, self-taught man with a grade six education. He became a local businessmen in insurance and the travel industry. Once in elected office, Guertin took on the hydro trusts who, he said, took local hydro and shipped it elsewhere, with no benefit to locals. He became an advocate of municipal takeover of hydro services. Guertin also obtained considerable provincial investments for Hull, an area long neglected by Quebec City; for example, Ste-Thérèse orphanage, in 1928, and the Saint-Laurent sanatorium for tuberculosis patients, in 1935, now Pierre-Janet psychiatric hospital. He served as party whip, but eventually opposed Duplessis' leadership of the Conservative Party. Guertin argued in favour of such social measures as family allowance, minimum wage requirements, seniors' pensions, welfare, and industrial accident insurance. During the Depression, he fell out with his party. In 1935, he considered running federally for the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, the CCF, the ancestor of the New Democratic Party, but instead ran for Tory Harry Stevens' League for Social Reconstruction. Guertin lost, as did all of Stevens' candidates, other than the leader himself. Guertin's local Tory organization would have nothing to do with his conversion. Guertin retired from partisan politics, but he continued to comment upon local public matters for many years, all the while remaining highly respected in Hull.

### The Constituts Question<sup>531</sup>

Resolving this public problem entailed a considerable expenditure of resources and an associated polemic. Most Hull workers, even if they owned their modest house, did not own the land on which the house was located. Most of the land in Hull was in the hands of Wright descendants who refused to sell the land. In June, 1895, a lawyer named Alfred Cloutier led a movement of local workers against this system of land tenure. Two hundred people refused to pay their rent for the lands they occupied but the movement was ephemeral.<sup>532</sup>

During the period following WWI, a recession struck the Canadian economy, and workers in Hull were hit hard. At the same time, the prices they were paying to the landowners were increasing. The *constitut* system became a focus of local political dissent. At a large public

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<sup>529</sup> Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale, *Les résultats électoraux depuis 1867*, Quebec City: Assemblée nationale, 1995, p. 86.

<sup>530</sup> The best source about Aimé Guertin is a film entitled "Un homme du peuple", produced in 1982 by Roger Gauthier for Radio-Québec Outaouais, which first aired on March 1, 1983. The film features the late writer, Bernard Assiniwi, in dramatic reconstructions in the role of Aimé Guertin.

<sup>531</sup> Useful sources about this question include: "Libération en 1924 du servage des constituts dans la ville de Hull", *Asticou*, no. 28, July, 1983; Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Loi relative aux constituts . . .*, *Outaouais – Le Hull industriel*, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur l'Outaouais, 1986, p. 19-22; and Boutet, Tome II, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>532</sup> Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

assembly held at parc Royal during a provincial election campaign, local working class militants obtained a promise from Quebec Premier Gouin to intervene on this subject. The workers were led by Achille Morin, president of the *Association ouvrière*; a municipal councillor named Edgar Gauthier from an organization called the *Ligue des petits propriétaires*; and Wilfrid Gravelle, president of the *Comité du constitut*. Fourteen-hundred local homeowners signed a petition in favour of ending the land tenure régime. The Liberal member from Hull, Joseph Caron, made interventions in the Legislative Assembly in support of the demands of the Hull citizens. Gouin's successor as Premier, Louis-Alexandre Taschereau, agreed with Caron, and asked Quebec's Public Service Commission to conduct an enquiry. The Commission reported in September, 1923 that 1, 334 homeowners had built their houses on rented lots for annual rates of between four and ten dollars, and that prices were increasing dramatically in recent times, to \$30 and more. Most of the land in Hull was owned by the intertwined Scott, Graham, and Wright families, and ironically, by the Oblates, embarrassed in their role as big landowners. In February, 1924, the *Loi relative aux constituts et au régime de tenure dans la Cité de Hull* was adopted. This law proposed how homeowners could buy the land on which their house was located. If the house and buildings on the land exceeded the dollar value of the land, the homeowner could oblige the landowner to sell the land at a price not greater than 1.5 times the value of the land, as assessed in 1921/1922. If landowner and homeowner couldn't agree on the price within thirty days, the Public Service Commission intervened to set a price.

At the time, the measure was greeted as a great liberation. Originally to be in effect for three years, the period of applicability of the arrangement kept being extended, however, since few Hull homeowners were able to take advantage of it. Putting the money together to buy the land was similar to gathering a down payment on a house. In fact, many Hull workers continued within the *constitut* régime, rather than buying the land on which their house was located. The régime was finally ended only in the 1950's by provincial legislation.

At least in Hull, British authorities had succeeded in their aim of creating a landowning gentry as a Tory bulwark after the conquest of Canada. Their initial, immense land grants to individual favourites of the administration at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century succeeded admirably in this aim, in fact for many generations, in the case of Hull.

## Women

We have not talked about the participation of working-class women from Hull in local, electoral politics. This is not an oversight. For the most part in Quebec, women did not have the right to vote until 1940, when they obtained the provincial vote under Liberal reformer Adélar Godbout. Municipally, the right to vote in Quebec was limited to single women and to widows. Marriage meant that a woman's social functions were in the home. Voting was part of the responsibility of being a man. For the nationalist *petite-bourgeoisie*, giving women the vote was disruptive of the primary element of social order, the family. The efforts of feminists such as Marie Gérin-Lajoie, Thérèse Casgrain, and Idola Saint-Jean to obtain the vote were countered by those of the Church. In 1929, the *Ligue catholique féminine* fought against the vote for women. Six hundred had enrolled in this group in Hull, while throughout the province, 10,000 joined the *Ligue*.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, *Histoire du Québec contemporaine: de la Confédération à la crise*, Montreal: Boréal Express, 1979; p. 510-516 contain a useful discussion of the women's suffrage movement in Quebec.

Federally, the Tories extended the right to vote to military women, wives, fiancées, mothers, and sisters prior to the 1917 election. This was seen by French Canadians as a cynical measure to increase support for conscription, which it certainly was, especially since the same law also removed the right to vote from citizens naturalized after 1902. It was a bald attempt to deny the vote to people who the Tories thought, probably correctly, did not support conscription. So, the 1917 legislation gave the federal vote to many women, only to withdraw it from non-British immigrants. In May of the following year, the federal franchise was extended to all women 21 years of age and older, regardless of province, including Quebec. Nevertheless, the initial introduction of women's suffrage federally in an atmosphere of manipulation, racism, and anglo-franco tension over conscription and WWI, made the idea of Quebec women voting federally a tainted idea. Women voting federally was tolerated socially, but barely. Women were expected to vote as their husbands, even if voting was secret. In such an environment, we have to look elsewhere than the electoral process to find evidence of political and social activity by working class women in Hull.

Appendix – Hull Workers Who Sat on Municipal Council, 1896-1925

Labourers

Élie Scott  
Xavier Laurier  
Joseph Chénier  
Ovila Jeanette

Clerks

Thomas Kelly  
Israël Charette  
Napoléon Bélanger  
Victor Navion

Butchers

Adrien Labelle  
Joseph Simard  
Étienne Talbot  
Christopher Boland

Machinists

Thomas Gagnon  
Michael Burns  
James Walsh

Bakers (served as mayor)

Augustin Thibault  
Jean-Baptiste Larose  
Victor-Ovide Falardeau (served as mayor)

Carpenters

Octave St-Laurent  
Jules Hamelin  
Arthur Ouellette

Printers

Polycarpe Doucet  
George Gauvin  
Edouard Forcier

Masons

Alfred Rochon  
Jérémis Dufresne

Foremen

Félix Legault  
Charles Gervais

and Edouard Mousseau, mechanic  
André Coursol, electrician  
Hector Lebanc, blacksmith  
Andrew Stafford, train conductor  
Cléophas Léonard, barber  
Félix Charron, painter  
Ernest Roy, cabinet-maker

## CHAPTER 11- MUTUAL AID

### Introduction

In Part 1, we asked about the tradition of mutual aid that workers would have brought with them when they moved to Hull. The Annex to this book provides a history of mutual aid among workers in Western society. In our inquiry, we found that workers always had organizations that sought to improve their social position. From the Greeks and Romans to modern times, workers had organizations that offered venues of religious expression, social support, and advancement of interests. These organizations displayed a variety of forms: burial societies, colleges, guilds, journeymen's associations, *confréries*, *compagnonnages*, secret societies, friendly societies and still other associations. These organizations were the ancestors of the modern day cooperative, political party, and trade union. Although their history largely is buried and unknown to most, workers and their organizations played a central role in the development of work, industry and, generally speaking, of Western society and culture.

The tradition of workers associating in organizations in pre-industrial society saw its greatest manifestations in the medieval town, with its organizations of neighbourhood, commune, parish, and guild. In fact, anarchists celebrate this period as a high point in the human search for community.<sup>534</sup> With time, however, European society developed in such a manner that church and state came to dominate all, owing to the growth of the power of kings, nobility, and the institutional church. All collective efforts had to go through these channels, unless they were conducted secretly and underground. Coincidental with the victory of liberalism in the 19th century and the emergence of industrial capitalism, free associations began to flourish again, as seen the business corporation and in organizations devoted to many purposes. Organizations of workers, however, continued to be repressed, and it was only with considerable struggle that workers gained the right to associate. This chapter deals with the development of workers' organizations in Hull of mutual aid, beyond those of the trade union movement, which were, in fact, less subjected to repression than unions.

### Mutual Aid Societies

The mutual aid society is a group of people that unites to protect itself in the event of illness, injury, death, or widowhood. This can take many forms: the mutual insurance society, which provides life insurance or disability insurance, the British friendly society, the French *société de secours mutuels*, the American fraternal group. All display the same principles of mutual aid. During the 19th century and early in the 20th century, the mutual aid society was important tool of workers. Its roots extend far back in time. In Canada, in 1789, the *Société amicable de Québec*, founded in 1810. The *Société ecclésiastique Saint-Michel* was formed in 1799 for French-Canadian clergy; it was incorporated in 1853. It also appears that the *Société Saint-Jean Baptiste*, founded in Montreal in 1834, also operated a mutual aid society.<sup>535</sup> The last example leads us to observe that ethnic organizations in Canada often established mutual aid societies for their members throughout the 19th century and early in the 20th century. There

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<sup>534</sup> As just one example, there is the classic work by Petr Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*, Montreal: BlackRose Books, 1989

<sup>535</sup> Gaston Deschênes, "Associations cooperatives et institutions similaires au XIXe siècle", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 29, no. 4, March, 1976, p. 545.

were such societies among Ulstermen, Englishmen, Scotsmen, Irish, Norwegians, Germans, Croatians and Slovaks. Religions also operated mutual aid societies, as did a number of professions.<sup>536</sup> Of most immediate interest with respect to Hull workers were the mutual aid societies established among French-Canadians. Between 1840 and the end of the 19th century, 109 mutual aid societies were formed in Canada East and Quebec, including 44 in one decade alone, the 1860's. Of these societies, 30 still existed in 1900, while 40 survived at least twenty years.<sup>537</sup>

French-Canadian clerics contributed as much as 40 percent of their salary to mutual aid societies for support during illness and old age. The names of these societies changed over time – sometimes called *Association ecclésiastique de secours mutuels*, *Société Saint-Michel*, or *Société Saint-Joseph* – the principle of these organizations was the same.<sup>538</sup> Members of the clergy also played important roles in the founding of similar organizations for French-Canadian workers. There were such organizations among firemen, policemen, printers, clerks, public servants, carpenters, shoemakers, bricklayers, plumbers, and butchers.<sup>539</sup> There were also societies organized for specific trades or occupations, which gradually offered their services to other workers. These societies typically were given names of saints, just as in the Middle Ages when workers had patron-saints for specific trades, or among the ancients, who had gods that protected members of trades. One of the first workers' mutual aid societies in Quebec was the *Union Saint-Joseph de Montréal*, founded by a stonecutter, Louis Leclaire. The motto of this organization was “s'aider les un et les autres”. The members of this organization came from all manner of trade.<sup>540</sup> In 1848, Montreal stonecutters struck for two weeks in order to obtain better wages. During this strike, these workers formed an organization to protect themselves against wage reductions. This union-like organization metamorphosed under the leadership of Louis Jetté, a stonecutter, to become the *Société de bienfaisance des tailleurs de pierre*, and eventually, the *Société Saint-Pierre*, open to all workers. In April, 1859, 22 workers signed on to the original organization.<sup>541</sup> In order to become a member, one had to be French-Canadian and Catholic.<sup>542</sup> The mutual aid society, even if unofficially, sometimes functioned almost as a union. The *Union Saint-Jacques*, founded in 1863, specified that a member had to belong to the working class; the organization could not include professionals or businessmen as its members.<sup>543</sup> The *Union Saint-Roch de Montreal* was founded by Henri Louis, a roofer. The constitution for this society stated that:

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<sup>536</sup> Joseph Lamarche, *Les 100 ans d'une coopvie*, Montreal: Éditions du Jour, 1977, p. 55, 56.

<sup>537</sup> Deschênes, *op. cit.*, p.546

<sup>538</sup> Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Quebec, *Circulaire de l'Archevêque Taschereau aux membres de le Société Saint-Joseph*, 1875.

<sup>539</sup> Deschênes, *op.cit.*, p.547

<sup>540</sup> *Constitution et règlements de l'Union Saint-Joseph de Montréal*, founded on March 22, 1851 by Louis Leclaire, incorporated July 1, 1856, Montreal; Les presses à vapeur de J.A. Plinguet, September, 1879.

<sup>541</sup> Joseph Constant, *L'Union Saint-Pierre de Montréal: notes sur sa fondation et ses acte jusqu'à nos jours*, Montreal, 1890.

<sup>542</sup> *Constitution et règlements de l'Union Saint-Pierre de Montréal, fondée le 19 avril 1849*, Montreal: Eusébe Senécal, 1867.

<sup>543</sup> *Constitution et règlements de l'Union St-Jacques de Montréal*, Montreal, Imprimerie de Plinguet et Laplante, 1867.



“...tout membre de cette association doit employer son confrère (s’il est possible) préférablement à toute autre personne, dans son métier ou autre manière quelconque.”<sup>544</sup>

Author’s adaptation:

“...each member of this association, where possible, should hire a fellow-member before hiring others, either within his trade or elsewhere.”

The members of these societies were required to participate in the festivities of the organization held on the day in which their patron-saint was honoured, as well as in the festivities on *Saint Jean-Baptiste Day*.

Most of these organizations frankly and openly were aimed at the working class. Others were not so categorical. The *Société des Artisans canadiens-français* was established in 1853 to serve carpenters. By 1875, it was reformed by Louis Archambault to serve all professions, except for workers in a number of supposedly dangerous occupations, such as sewer cleaners, garbage men, firemen, locomotive engineers, miners, railway brakemen or others that a doctor might reject as doing dangerous work.<sup>545</sup> In a similar fashion, the *Alliance nationale*, founded in 1892, was aimed at the merchants and professionals of Montreal. It excluded those doing dangerous work, such as mechanics, firemen, soldiers, and miners.<sup>546</sup>

In spite of their different memberships, these mutual aid societies resembled each other. In fact, the wording of their constitutions is more or less the same from group to group, indicating common ancestry and influence, that is, the clergy, using workers’ pre-industrial traditions as examples. In the 1890’s, mutual aid societies in Montreal started to federate and merge. Processions common to all groups were first held on August 14, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, but gradually, common festivities were organized on June 24, *St-Jean Baptiste Day*, a sign of a link between the societies and the nationalist cause. In actual fact, trying to separate one group from another is not an easy task. Many societies had short lives, or might be resuscitated with the same name, even though it was substantially a different organization, or separate organizations might merge. Many of these groups did not behave in a matter that was sound from an actuarial basis. Normally, in insurance schemes, the cost of membership increases with risk and with the age of its members. This was a difficult principle to put into practice. When a society would raise its fees, many members would simply leave, and the organization would fold. In the first decade of the 20th century, a movement occurred among American fraternal groups aimed at achieving actuarial soundness. During the first two decades of the 20th century, this movement spread to Canada and Quebec. With considerable turmoil, mutual aid societies converted their payment and membership schemes. Many even became private insurance companies that operated for profit.

In Hull, there is evidence of a number of mutual aid societies among workers and other classes. On *Saint-Jean Baptiste Day* in 1875, the *Saint-Pierre* and *Saint-Joseph* societies paraded. In 1886, G.V. Ardouin launched chapter 68 of a mutual aid society that had started among French-Canadians in the Detroit area called the *Association de Secours mutuels*, (not the

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<sup>544</sup> Constitution et règlements de l’Union St-Roch de Montréal, 1865, article 17.

<sup>545</sup> Constitution et règlements de la Société des Artisans canadiens-français de la cité de Montréal, Montreal: Imprimerie Gebhardt-Berthiaume, 1889.

<sup>546</sup> *Chartes et statuts de l’Alliance nationale*, Montreal: C.O. Beauchemin et Fils, Libraires Imprimeurs, 1893.

same organization as the clergy's mutual aid society of the same name).<sup>547</sup> In February, 1904, there is evidence of a Hull chapter of a mutual aid society, *Notre Dame de Bon-Secours*. On April 24, 1904, mutual aid societies in Hull paraded, held a mass, and heard speeches in a joint celebration by the: *Union St-Thomas de Hull*, *Union Saint-Joseph de Hull*, *Forestiers catholiques de Hull*, the *Forestiers indépendents*, *Artisans canadiens-français*, and *Alliance nationale*. The meeting was hosted by what had become the largest of the societies, the Hull chapter, local #2 of the *Union Saint-Joseph d'Ottawa*, which also invited their confrères in the Ottawa chapter, local #1, to the celebration.<sup>548</sup> Firemen in Hull developed their own mutual aid society, the *Société de bienfaisance des Pompiers de Hull*, which organized during the summer of 1925.<sup>549</sup>

The most important of the mutual aid societies in Hull was the local chapter of the *Union St-Joseph d'Ottawa*. This society was started by 23 French-Canadians in Ottawa in the spring of 1863. Its first president was a shoemaker, Cuthbert Bordeleau. The inspiration for the group had been a mutual aid society in Joliette, Quebec, called the *Société de l'Industrie de Joliette*.<sup>550</sup> In the 1880's, the Ottawa group started merging with other mutual aid societies. Soon it had spread to cover most of French-speaking Ontario. In 1895, it crossed the border into Quebec when it established the #2 in Hull. From there, it spread throughout Quebec. In 1905, the organization changed its name to *Union St-Joseph du Canada* and, again, to *Union du Canada* in 1959.<sup>551</sup>

In fact, in Hull, there had earlier been societies called *Saint-Joseph*, of Quebec origin. There was the group that demonstrated in 1875 on *St-Jean Baptiste Day*. Another appears to have been started in 1884; in 1886, this group bought a building on Promenade du Portage in Hull; it seems to have had about 500 members; its president was Anselme Bédard.<sup>552</sup> By the second decade of the 20th century, however, it appears that it had closed in favour of the Hull chapter of the Ottawa organization. In 1911, the *Union Saint-Joseph de Notre-Dame de Grâce de la Cité de Hull* (the official name of the local, Quebec organization) liquidated itself, upon orders of the Quebec government's inspector of mutual aid societies. The 185 remaining members received back-payments of \$2 to \$57 on September 23.<sup>553</sup>

The first president of the Hull chapter of the Ottawa-based organization was Napoléon Pagé, an important labour leader in Hull, whom we also meet elsewhere in this book. Hundreds of Hull workers of all occupations signed on for life insurance benefits of \$500 or \$1,000, and disability benefits of \$3 per week. By 1917, the *Union St-Joseph du Canada* had reached financial and actuarial soundness; members' contributions were graduated according to age. Its slogan was "l'union fait la force"<sup>554</sup> The second federal council of the organization was hosted by the Hull chapter in October, 1900. The doctor who examined Hull entrants to the society was

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<sup>547</sup> Joseph Jolicoeur, *Histoire Anécdotique de Hull*, Hull: Société historique de l'Ouest du Québec, 1979, p. 52.

<sup>548</sup> See *Le Pionnier canadien* for February 27, 1904, April 20, 1904, and April 27, 1904.

<sup>549</sup> See Hull municipal archives, correspondence, Fonds I Box 03, document #2827; and Esdras Minville, *Syndicalisme, législation ouvrière et régime social au Québec avant 1940*, Montreal: Les Presses H.E.C. /Fides, 1986, p. 529-531.

<sup>550</sup> Florian Carrière, *Union du Canada: Notes historiques, 1863-1963*, p. 6, 7.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>552</sup> *Le Canada*, May 8, 1888; and *La Vallée d'Ottawa*, January 26, 1885.

<sup>553</sup> Archives Deschâtelets, St. Paul University, Ottawa, Archives of Notre-Dame de Hull Parish, JC 4026.C2IL.

<sup>554</sup> Charles Leclerc, *L'Union St-Joseph du Canada*, Ottawa, 1939, p. 20, 24.

Urgel Archambault, who eventually served as mayor of Hull.<sup>555</sup> Eventually, there were chapters of the *Union Saint-Joseph du Canada* in all of the Hull parishes: *Notre-Dame de Grâce*, *St-Rédempteur*, *Notre-Dame de Lorette*, *Saint-Jean-Bosco*, and *St-Joseph de Wrightville*. In 1939, several of the original members from Hull were still alive, having first joined the organization in 1895: Godfrey Schryer, Joseph Joanisse, Xavier Menard, Albert Beausejour, and Joseph Kirouack.<sup>556</sup>

### Cooperatives

A cooperative is an enterprise organized for production, consumption, or for providing services, where decision making in the governing body follows a rule of one person, one vote, rather than a rule of distributing votes according to the amount of capital a person invests in the enterprise, as in capitalist enterprises. The decision making body uses volunteer committees to make decisions about business issues. Surplus or profit from operations is distributed among users according to their use of the products or services of the enterprise, rather than according to capital invested by the member. During the development of industrial capitalism in Western society, workers developed the cooperative as a way of taming the beast of capitalism. What evidence is there for this activity among workers in Hull?

The roots of cooperation among French-Canadians are many. There is, of course, the tradition of mutual aid societies. Then, there was the tradition of mutual fire insurance schemes among French Canadian farmers. Organized by county or parish, these organizations followed the example set in 1852 by English-speaking farmers in Beauharnois County, south of Montreal. In the latter part of the 19th century, about 30 of these organizations were established.<sup>557</sup> In Europe, cooperatives were part and parcel of the working class movements related to trade unionism and socialism. In Quebec, workers made ephemeral attempts at cooperatives under the leadership of Médéric Lanctôt, the Knights of Labour, and the socialist ideologue early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Albert Saint-Martin.<sup>558</sup> Nevertheless, in North America, the greatest leadership for cooperatives came from farmers. In Quebec, beginning in the 1880's, farmers started organizing co-ops for the production of butter, cheese and milk. By WWI, there were about 100 local, agricultural cooperatives and three co-op centrals in Quebec.

Another source of inspiration for the cooperative movement in French Canada came from the clergy. Co-ops were seen to be a tool of national economic and social development that was suited to French-Canadians. They represented an attempt to reform the abuses of capitalism in a way that did not encourage class conflict, socialism, or communism. Under the leadership of J.A.B. Allaire and other theoreticians, Victor Barbeau, Henri Levesque, Esdras Minville, and the Jesuits' *École sociale populaire*, cooperation was proposed as an ideology useful for French-Canadians. During the depression of the 1930's, co-operation grew in massive strides within French Canada. Co-ops came to be seen as a basis for restoring collaboration among the classes,

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<sup>555</sup> Archives of the *Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française*, University of Ottawa, Fonds Union du Canada, C20/volume 53, Registre des Installations en Conseil, 1895- 1932; Liste d'inscriptions, C20/vol. 58, Registre des membres, 1895-1901; Deuxième session du Conseil fédéral, à Hull, p. 88-107, C20/volume 13.

<sup>556</sup> Leclerc, *op. cit.*, p. 83-88.

<sup>557</sup> Claire Minguy, *Histoire du mouvement coopératif au Québec*, Québec: Ministère des Institutions financières, 1981, p. 7; and André Leclerc, *Les doctrines coopératifs en Europe et au Canada*: Sherbrooke, IRECUS, 1982, p. 53.

<sup>558</sup> André Leclerc, *op. cit.*, p. 47-50.

which was needed if there were to be social peace and progress. It was an ideology perfectly suited to the nationalist, *petite-bourgeoisie* that guided the development of French Canada.

The leading example of the French-Canadian cooperative was the *caisse populaire*, or credit union, founded and promoted by Alphonse Desjardins. Desjardins had been a stenographer at the House of Commons who became concerned about the effects of borrowing by workers and farmers from money lenders who charged usurious rates of interest. The common people had to rely upon these money-lenders since the banks, more interested in lending to business, would not provide credit to the lower social orders. In 1900, Desjardins founded the first *caisse populaire* at Levis. Desjardins was assisted in this work by people who were leaders in the mutual aid society, the *Société des Artisans canadiens-français*.<sup>559</sup> Desjardins benefited from the support of the Catholic clergy. In fact, to Desjardins, the *caisses* would complete parish life; that is, church for the religious life of the parish, school for the educational life of the parish, municipal council for the life of the parish, while the *caisse* would provide economic organization for the parish.<sup>560</sup> Nevertheless, Desjardins could not get legal endorsement of his movement from the federal government, as the latter responded to lobbying pressure by French-Canadian banks fearful of the competitive threat posed by the *caisses*. Therefore, the Province had to provide a legal framework for the *caisses*, which it did in the *Loi des syndicats coopératifs* of 1906. Local autonomy was important as each *caisse* was independent, however, many *caisses* were not that well-administered. To Desjardins, the solution lay in a federation that would ensure good management. In 1917, Desjardins set about organizing a federation of the 140 local *caisses* that then existed, however, he died in 1920. Nevertheless, a regional federation was started in the 1920s in Trois-Rivieres, and by the end of the decade, two other federations also existed.

In Hull, baker Victor-Ovide Falardeau established the Club indépendant ouvrier de Hull in 1907. Imitating a trend seen elsewhere in Quebec, workers had set up clubs to discuss local issues. By the spring of 1909, the Hull group had figured out a plan. In April and May, it held meetings to establish a consumer cooperative “pour acheter et revendre à ses membres les articles nécessaires à l’existence du foyer et au soutien de la famille”. For this purpose, the co-op received the right to conduct real estate dealings and to buy, lend, and sell to its members.<sup>561</sup> The organization was called the *Maison du Peuple*; in effect, the co-op operated a grocery store. Membership in the co-op cost \$5. About 100 workers from all occupations signed the co-op, which held its founding meeting on May 1st at the Pagé Room of the *Spectateur* newspaper.<sup>562</sup>

In 1897, a local priest had expressed a wish that had a particular relevance to local workers:

“Plaise à Dieu qu’une société de bienfaisance, ayant pour but de repatrier les voyageurs à la fin de leur contrat, et de déposer a une caisse d’épargne les économies de leur hivernage, réussisse à se fonder, sous le haut patronage de nos évêques.”<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>559</sup> Lamarche, *op. cit.*, p. 80

<sup>560</sup> This point is made by Allan Brockway Latham in *The Catholic and National Labour Unions of Canada*, Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1930, p. 75.

<sup>561</sup> Hull Municipal Archives, Correspondence, Fonds I, Box 001, document 1239.

<sup>562</sup> *Ibid*, Box 099, document chemise #12464; *Le Temps*, April 17, 19; Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p.104. This author doesn’t know what became of this co-op. It is possible that it joined in the movement to federate that took place among Quebec consumer co-ops during the 1930’s, if indeed it survived until then.

<sup>563</sup> Alexis de Barbezieux, *Histoire de la province ecclésiastique d’Ottawa*, Ottawa: La Compagnie d’Imprimerie d’Ottawa, 1897, p. 283.

Author's adaptation:

“God willing, a benefit society will be started with the aim of welcoming forestry workers at the end of their contracts, and depositing their winter savings in a savings bank, and that this organization will receive the support of our bishops.”

This was a commonly-held opinion among local clerics, but such an organization never emerged until the movement initiated by Alphonse Desjardins.

In fact, while no such organization existed for forestry workers, there was a credit union started in 1908 which would have had an influence on Hull workers. Desjardins helped found the Civil Service Co-op Society, which served public servants in Ottawa. In 1916, Achille Morin, president of the *Association ouvrière de Hull*, and local Oblate priests invited Alphonse Desjardins to help establish a *caisse populaire*. The result was the establishment of the *Caisse populaire de Notre-Dame de Hull* on July 10, 1916, with 29 members and \$100 in subscriptions. On August 19, 1916, the *Caisse* made its first loan at 8 percent.<sup>564</sup> In its early days, as with all *caisses*, progress was slow. Its office was located at the *Bourse du Travail*, in downtown Hull, and was open only in the evenings. By the late 1920s, however, there were 500 members. By 1959, the *Caisse* had nearly 8,000 members.<sup>565</sup> During the 1930's, the other parishes in Hull also set up *caisses*.

### Sports Organizations

In the 19th century, people began to associate in organizations for the purpose of pursuing sports and other forms of leisure. In Hull, most people were workers, therefore, sports organizations aimed at the general public involved workers, at least as participants. As well, sports organizations were often bottom-up efforts created by working people, therefore, sports organizations often could be manifestations of working class culture. Furthermore, leaders in sports, music, theatre, or other fields of recreation were often the same people who led unions and political organizations. For instance, Napoléon Pagé was a labour leader in Hull active in the Knights of Labour. He was the first president of the Hull chapter of the mutual aid organization, the *Société Saint-Joseph d'Ottawa*. He also started a local theatre troupe, and was one of the leading organizers of the *Association athlétique et sportive* in the first decade of the twentieth century.

In our time, leisure pursuits are private affairs based upon the nuclear family, the automobile, and the home. Mass consumption culture isolates people in their respective leisure pursuits, for example, watching television. It even serves to define the identity of individual consumers via their 'lifestyle' choices. During the period covered in this study, leisure among workers was a public affair. Organized according to neighborhood, playground or parish, leisure was a collective, public process, with more emphasis upon participation than spectatorship. Workers amused themselves with festivities, parades, picnics, processions, speeches, sports,

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<sup>564</sup> Pierre Louis Lapointe, “La Caisse populaire St-Joseph de Hull: un survol historique”, Pierre Louis Lapointe, *Actes du Colloque sur l'identité régionale dans l'Outaouais*, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur l'Outaouais, 1982, p. 68, 69; and Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>565</sup> Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p 93; and Archives Deschâtelets, St. Paul University, Ottawa, Archives of Notre-Dame de Hull Parish, JC 4026.C21M, article no. 49; see “Programme-Souvenir des Unions nationales catholiques”, Fête du Travail, Hull, 2 et 3 septembre 1928”.

shows, and other social manifestations. The neighborhood included family members, members of extended families, and longtime friends, whose leisure activities were visible to all.<sup>566</sup>

Developing sports organizations and other leisure pursuits for workers were part of the general effort to tame the beast of capitalism and make life more tolerable. Along with unions, controls in factories, and general suffrage, workers managed to “win for themselves one great victory, freedom on Saturday afternoon; they were waiting to be amused.”<sup>567</sup> As working hours were reduced, working class militants organized activities to profit from this time. Workers gave themselves the opportunity to escape the boredom and drudgery of work that was increasingly fragmentary and unsatisfying. As with many things in the development of the working class, however, it was a two-edged sword. For certain members of the *petite-bourgeoisie* and the bourgeoisie, organizing sports and other leisure organizations for workers became another way of instilling useful discipline, competitiveness, and indoctrination of the poor and workers to the correct ways of behaviour under capitalism.<sup>568</sup> For example, the man most responsible for propagating the legend of the local, working class hero Jos Montferrand, Benjamin Sulte, titled his book about Montferrand *L’Athlete canadien*.<sup>569</sup> Sulte made much of Montferrand’s prowess as a swimmer, boxer, and strongman as part of the myth of Montferrand.

In the woods, violence seemed to have had, at times, a recreational character. This fighting skill, along with other skills such as hunting, fishing, canoeing, tobogganing, snowshoeing, shooting the rapids, would have been expressions of skills useful in the lives of local workers. In fact, they were among the earliest of the sporting activities of local workers. For example, around the turn of the 20th century, there were three snowshoeing clubs in Hull: Le National, *L’Indépendant*, and Le Club Royal.<sup>570</sup> Snowshoeing was a favourite sport of previous generations, and race and expeditions were frequently organized. There were also less legitimate sports left over from rural life or life in the woods which were practiced by Hull workers, such as dog races and the illegal cockfights still practiced until about 1910 or so.<sup>571</sup>

Legitimate sports grew in Hull as part of the local culture as the population grew. In fact, there was an impressive array of sports associations and clubs launched in the period from 1870 to 1929. There were umbrella athletic associations, the Maple Leaf Athletic Association and the previously mentioned *Association athlétique et sportive*. The first lacrosse club, the Montcalm Club, had been organized in 1886.<sup>572</sup> In May, 1904, an ex-mayor named Dupuis organized the Hull Canoe Club, with 50 members who went on expeditions on Sundays.<sup>573</sup> In August, 1923, the *Association de Boxe de Hull* was created, an organization that still exists today, which proved to be very popular among Hull workers.<sup>574</sup> There is also evidence of a camping association for young men in the 1920’s.<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> Bryan Palmer has an interesting discussion about working class leisure in *Descent into Discourse*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990, p. 329.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58, 59.

<sup>568</sup> Michael Cross, editor, *The Workingmen in the Nineteenth Century*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 185.

<sup>569</sup> Benjamin Sulte, *Histoire de Jos Montferrand: l’athlète canadien*, Montreal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1912.

<sup>570</sup> Lucien Brault, *Hull 1800-1950*, Ottawa: Éditions de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1950, p. 175.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177, and Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 79

<sup>572</sup> Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.* p. 90.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.* p. 92

<sup>575</sup> Fonds Joseph Jolicoeur, ANQ de l’Outaouais, p.130, photo #7-5.

Hockey came to be the winter sport favoured by working class men in Canada, both as participants and spectators, during the 1890s. The first Stanley Cup game took place on March 22, 1894 between the Montreal Athletic Association and a team from Ottawa. In Hull, Victor Cholette organized hockey games about this same time on a rink at Minnow Lake, now parc *Ste-Bernadette*. The Great Fire of 1900 put a brake on local hockey, as with most social endeavours in Hull, but by 1905, Hull had a covered arena, parc Royal, where local teams played visiting teams from nearby towns.<sup>576</sup>

The prime summer sport organized by Hull workers during the period was baseball. As far back as 1870, a team called the *Club des Anglais* was organized, with many team members being French-Canadian despite the team's name.<sup>577</sup> Other teams were also started in 1877, 1891, 1895, and 1910. The biggest boost to baseball, however, occurred under the leadership of Victor Cholette. Between 1892 and 1899, a year before the Great Fire of 1900, Cholette's Hull club played against teams from out of town. In fact, the team even went semi-professional for a period, competing in an international league composed of teams from Quebec, Ontario, Vermont, and New York. The team from Hull lured professionals from St-Hyacinthe, Ottawa, and Guelph, as well as the pitcher-catcher battery of Fournier and Malone from Syracuse at the handsome sum of \$175 per week for each player. In 1897, Cholette re-organized the team, but with local amateurs. Baseball re-emerged after the Great Fire with new organizations. Around 1920, the Hull Athletic Club played against Ottawa teams in an interprovincial amateur league. A big moment for Hull baseball fans occurred in October, 1928. Three thousand Hull residents gathered at parc Dupuis, near the Alexandra Bridge, to meet New York Yankee greats, Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth, who were barnstorming in Canada after winning the 1928 World Series.

It is a commonly-held view that baseball was introduced to Canada by Americans. In fact, baseball was a sport indigenous to the Canadian working class, at least as would indicate evidence from the case of Hull. Organized baseball was also a veritable achievement of workers. For instance, Cholette and his friends, D.-A. Décosse, E.-C. Leblanc, Paschal Gagné, Wilfrid Perras and others, formed a syndicate in 1894 for the purpose of building a new ball park. They combined \$200, and did the work themselves of draining land which they had rented on Saint-Redempteur Street, then building the park. The next year, three of Cholette's group left to build the Perras ballpark on Eddy Street. A publication of the Hull-Volant sports association, founded in the 1930's, describes Cholette and his mates as "... ces jeunes gens, tous des ouvriers sans fortune...", (these young people, all of them poor workers.)<sup>578</sup>

Thus, there is some information to indicate working class agency in the case of organized sports in Hull. We have Cholette and his group, organizers of the two most popular sports in Hull, hockey and baseball, being poor workers. As well, there is the labour leader, Napoléon Pagé, who was also involved with the *Association athlétique et sportive*. Even though organizing sports was indeed an initiative of the working class, there were also business-supported clubs such as company teams. Archival information is indeed slim with respect to the organized sports

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<sup>576</sup> Brault, *op. cit.*, p.175

<sup>577</sup> There are many sources about Hull baseball. They include Brault, *op.cit*, Jolicoeur, *op.cit*, Ernest Cinq-Mars, *Hull; son origine, ses progrès, son avenir*, Hull: Bérubé Frères, 1908, p. 112- 115; Raymond Ouimet, *Hull: mémoire vive*, Hull: Editions Vents d'Ouest, 1997, p. 141; Kelly Egan, "An Ottawa History Lesson for Bush", *Ottawa Citizen* December 1, 2004, P.B9; Association athlétique amateur Hull-Volant, *Brochure historique*, Hull, 1940; and André Bigras et al; *Hull- Volant (1932-1982): Cinquante ans déjà*, Hull, Association athletique et sociale Hull-Volant, 1982

<sup>578</sup> Association Hull-Volant, *op.cit*.

practiced by young men in Hull. Information about boys, girls, and young women and their sporting activities is simply non-existent, so we can say little of substance about them. We should also bear in mind that most of the play of children and young adults of the working class took place without formal organization in parks, schoolyards, streets, and church grounds.

In 1895, the year after Cholette and his group built a new ballpark on Saint-Rédempteur St., occurred an event there during fundraising for the park that indicates the popular character of sporting activities in Hull, best described, most colourfully and comically, in the Hull-Volant historical brochure of 1940.<sup>579</sup>

“Dans le cours de la saison, un incident sérieo-comique vint grossir la caisse du club. Ce dernier avait annoncé à grand renfort de titres, l’ascension en ballon du professeur Hauner, de Cleveland, Ohio, qui devait faire l’ascension en compagnie d’une vache, faute d’une victime humaine. La vache, une superbe bête noire achetée de M. Aug. Lafleur, fut promenée de par les rues de la ville, toute enrubanée, et escortée par la fanfare de la cité. M. Bell, officier de la *Société de la Protection des Animaux d’Ottawa*, intervint pour empêcher cette ascension de la vache. L’Américain était bien libre de se tordre le cou; mais, pour la vache, nenni.

Montera, ne montera pas, s’écriaient les gamins? Et la foule de courrir, en masse, au terrain du club de baseball de Hull, pour voir ce qui s’y passerait. Bref, la vache resta sur le terrain, et seul l’aéronaute fit l’ascension, laquelle faillit lui coûter la vie. Le malheureux fut repêché au troisième plongeon, dans la rivière Ottawa. Tout de même, cet incident permit au club de construire une estrade pour les spectateurs, et a affirmé qu’il y eut des miettes dans le fond de la caisse pour festoyer.”

Author’s adaptation:

“During the 1895 season, a tragico-comic incident added to the finances of (Cholette’s) club. With much fanfare, the club announced that a hot air balloon, piloted by a certain Professor Hauner from Cleveland, Ohio, was going to ascend over Hull, accompanied by a cow, being that a human volunteer could not be found. The cow, a superb, black animal, was purchased from Auguste Lafleur. The cow was decorated and paraded through the city streets, escorted by the city’s marching band. A certain Mr. Bell, an official with Ottawa’s Society for the Protection of Animals, however, intervened to prevent the balloonist from taking the cow with him. It was okay for an American to risk his neck, but not that of a cow.

“Is he going up or not?” children yelled. A large crowd ran to the diamond of the Hull baseball club to see what was going to happen. In fact, the cow stayed on the ground, while the balloonist went up, which almost cost him his life when he landed in the Ottawa River. It took three dives to rescue him. Nevertheless, the whole event permitted the club to install stands for spectators. There was even money left over to pay for a celebration for club members.”

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<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*



## Leisure Pursuits

By 1889, there were at least four brass bands in Hull, including company-sponsored bands at E.B. Eddy and Gilmour and Hughson, as well as a band called the *Union musicale* and the original brass band, the *Fanfare de Hull* which had been formed in 1870 by a blacksmith named Honoré Dumontier. Practices for this band took place in Dumontier's smithy; each player supplied his own instrument and contributed \$1.50 per month to the band, a significant sum in those days, to cover its expenses. The band played at religious or national celebrations.<sup>580</sup> In addition to the brass bands, Hull had, at various times, up to four different orchestras. There were also several theatre troupes in Hull that played at the Notre-Dame theatre on Alma Street, which was owned by the Oblates and sat over 800 people.<sup>581</sup> In 1895, one troupe even was founded by the *Canadienne* assembly of the Knights of Labour.<sup>582</sup>

Picnics were great fun for Hull workers. Couples, families, and organizations would regularly hold picnics on Sundays, or on holidays such as *St-Jean Baptiste Day*, Confederation Day and Labour Day. Perhaps surprisingly, these celebrations had a working class provenance, at least, in the beginning. Labour Day celebrations, obviously, were organized by workers, especially the *Association ouvrière de Hull*, beginning in the second decade of the 20th century. In addition, *Saint-Jean Baptiste* parades and celebrations were organized historically by the trades throughout Quebec, and interesting reminder of pre-industrial times. In the latter part of our period, however, *Saint-Jean Baptiste* celebrations came under the sway of the nationalist organization of the same name. Even Confederation Day, at least during the 1880's, was organized, rather successfully, by the volunteer firefighters of the Jacques Cartier Brigade, a working class organization. We can safely assume, nevertheless, that at some time unknown to this author, Confederation Day celebrations came to be assumed by government organizations.

Picnics were usually held at water's edge on the outskirts of the urban area, for example, around Brewery Creek, the Ottawa or Gatineau rivers, or Leamy Lake. This inspired businessmen to establish amusement parks featuring dances, zoos, racetracks, skating rinks, picnic tables, roller-skating rinks, gymnasias, and swimming facilities. There was a succession of these parks in Hull: Jardin Day, Jardin Leduc, parc Perras, parc Royal, Parc Moussette. At these venues were also held vaudeville shows, and other theatrical or musical events.<sup>583</sup>

In the patriotic fervour at the start of WWI, locals organized the *Régiment de Hull*. The regiment still exists as an armoured, reserve regiment. In WWI, the 70th Regiment, as it was originally named, was part of the 230th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The Hull regiment was absorbed into the Canadian Forestry Corps upon arrival in England in March, 1917. Local workers who had signed on to the Regiment were given the job of chopping trees and producing the lumber that was used in prodigious quantities by the Allies in the trench and tunnel warfare of WWI. Most appropriate for workers whose work experience was in the forestry sawmills and pulp and paper mills.<sup>584</sup> In 1923, the Christian Brothers at *Collège Notre-Dame* formed a regiment of cadets. Cadet membership was widely thought at the time to be an

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<sup>580</sup> Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 61; Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 92; Bourgoïn, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>581</sup> Bonhomme, *op. cit.*, p. 93, and Ouimet, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

<sup>582</sup> *Le Temps d'Ottawa*, June 19, 1895.

<sup>583</sup> Brault, *op. cit.*, p. 178, and Cinq-Mars, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>584</sup> See *The Regiment and Corps of the Canadian Army*, Army Historical Section, Ottawa, DND, 1964, p.105; and A.J. Kerry and W.A. McDill, *The History of the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers* vol 1, Ottawa: Military Engineers Association of Canada, Appendix "E" re. the Canadian Forestry Corps, p. 325

excellent way of instilling discipline, physical fitness, and correct behaviour among young working class boys.<sup>585</sup>

Lastly, during the 1920's, Hull workers, as per elsewhere in North America, became exposed to the mass medium of cinema, there being at least three movie-houses in this period in Hull.<sup>586</sup>

### Mutual Aid and Fire<sup>587</sup>

In a town beset by problems of fire, one might expect that private fire insurance companies would do good business. In fact, most Hull workers could not afford the fire insurance services offered by these companies. This only added to the devastating impact of fire, along with poor fire-fighting services, inadequate municipal regulations, lack of constraints upon local mills, and polemics against the working class when fire struck. In Hull, the prime protection from fire came from voluntary fire brigades. There were two in the 1870's: the Victoria Brigade and the *voltigeurs canadiens*. In the 1880's, the chief of police organized the Jacques Cartier Brigade. In addition to fighting fire as best it could, the Jacques Cartier Brigade organized the annual picnic on July 1, at which over 5,000 people regularly attended.

Only in the twentieth century was affordable fire insurance organized for local workers. In 1910, the Pontiac and Ottawa Fire Insurance Mutual, headquartered in Papineauville, began operations. In 1916, the fabriques (lay administrators) of the parishes in the Outaouais began providing fire insurance. In the 1920's, seven of these insurance societies merged.

### Other Classes

We'd be remiss if we didn't talk about the other classes in urban Hull, the *petite-bourgeoisie* and the bourgeoisie, and their efforts to associate to advance their interests. It wasn't just workers who associated; others also did so, however, their efforts were blessed as legitimate by respectable society, contrary to the suppression of labour unions that occurred in the same period. Merchants and other business people had always associated in Western history, sometimes in association with workers. With the emergence of industrial capitalism, their organizations at times clashed with those representing the interests of workers; at other times, the two collaborated where interests were deemed to meet. Capitalists developed industrial sector associations, for example, in the lumber industry, while they also developed cross-sector organizations such as manufacturing associations. At local levels, mechanics' institutes served to group business leaders as did chambers of commerce. The ultimate tool of mutual aid among business people was the joint-stock, limited liability corporation, which began with the railway fever of the 1850s, and became the ubiquitous form of business organization in modern times. In Hull, this form came to be used in many industries, but especially in pulp and paper and in hydroelectric power.

We've seen how the political parties, both Liberal and Conservative, served the interests of the local bourgeoisie and *petite-bourgeoisie*. At the same time, professions such as notaries, doctors, and lawyers developed their own organizations during the 19th century. Locally,

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<sup>585</sup> Bonhomme, *op.cit.*.

<sup>586</sup> Ouimet, *op.cit.*.

<sup>587</sup> Sources for this section include: Diane Saint-Pierre, *La mutualité-incendie au Québec depuis 1835* Sillery: Promutuel, 1997; Deschênes, *op. cit*; Raymond Ouimet, *Une ville en flammes*, Hull: Éditions Vents d'Ouest, 1997; and Erard Séguin, "Le mouvement coopératif régional, sources, survol, avenues de recherche in Lapointe, editor, *op. cit.*

lawyers formed the Hull bar in 1889. The *Ordre des notaires* had long been formally organized in Quebec. Doctors associated with the *Sacré-Coeur* Hospital in Hull formed a *Bureau des médecins* to defend their interests. Doctors in Quebec had first associated during the 1850's when Dr. Wolfred Nelson, a veteran of the 1837/38 rebellions, formed the Canada East Medical College.

Local businessmen assembled in a retail merchants association and in a chamber of commerce in the first decade of the 20th century. In November, 1902, an association of drinking establishment owners was created, particularly to deal with Prohibition forces. The *Saint-Jean Baptiste* Society was founded in 1870. It grouped leaders of the local *petite-bourgeoisie*; its first president was a young law student named Charles Leduc, whom we met earlier in his conflicts with Médéric Lanctôt.

One Ottawa organization, in particular, attracted *petits-bourgeois* from Hull. The *Institut canadien-français d'Ottawa* had been formed by Jean-Baptiste Turgeon early in the 1850's. Turgeon became mayor of Bytown in 1853. He separated the *Institut* from the original, Mechanics' Institute. The *Institut* was a literary circle with a library, social activities, bars, and scientific associations. While no small part of the attraction of the *Institut canadien-français* was the fact that alcohol could be served there in spite of Prohibition, the *Institut* also became a focus for the national issues that engaged the *petite-bourgeoisie* of Ottawa. The *Institut* attracted lawyers, judges, MPs, doctors, and federal public servants from Hull.<sup>588</sup>

### Conclusion

We have seen that during the industrial revolution which began in the 19th century, social classes established all manner of voluntary organizations to improve the lives of their members. This was a dramatic change from pre-industrial times when church and state exercised virtual monopoly over social endeavours. In fact, organizations beyond those sanctioned by church and state even had had difficulty asserting rights to exist. During the early days of industrialization, union organization and membership continued to be suppressed as in pre-industrial times. The struggle for recognition of unions as a legitimate, social form was a large part of the history of the working class and the effort to improve the lives of workers.

Unions, however, were not the only tool of collective action that workers employed. There were other organizations that were not usually repressed. We have seen how Hull workers established voluntary fire fighting brigades, of vital importance in a community continually beset by fires, as well as fire insurance schemes. Workers also set up mutual aid societies and cooperatives, including the *caisse populaires* so resoundingly successful in Hull, as elsewhere in French Canada, eventually in the world as a whole.

We would be remiss, however, if we did not mention that members of the *petite-bourgeoisie*, the bourgeoisie, and farmers also established similar organizations of mutual aid, including what came to be the most ubiquitous tool of mutual aid within the bourgeoisie, the modern corporation.

During our period, workers came to organize sports and leisure activities as never before, and to be organized as participants and consumers, also as never before, of sports and leisure activities. How and when did the working class benefit from these phenomena? The answers are not clear and unambiguous. In fact, they are complex, however, at the same time interesting,

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<sup>588</sup> *Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française*, University of Ottawa, *Fonds Institut canadien-français d'Ottawa*, C 36, dossier B1/1, "Les Cents ans de l'Institut canadien-français d'Ottawa", 1952; C36 vol. 24, membership lists and addresses, 1918-1920.

since these phenomena were harbingers of social changes that continue today. The phenomena of growing sports and leisure among workers must be analyzed carefully, one layer at a time.

A first cut at the question reveals that workers won increasing leisure time at the same time as they were winning political rights and improved social and economic conditions in the workplace and neighbourhood. Specific to this region, the working class was proud of the prowess of forestry workers in areas of activity that could be described as athletic. These involved skills, developed in the woods, of strength, endurance, and fighting, skills which showed up in the sports that workers practiced in this region: hunting, fishing, rowing, canoeing, tobogganing, boxing, snowshoeing. These sports were among the first to be organized formally as legitimate sports. For instance, at the beginning of the 20 century, Hull had three snowshoeing clubs. Organizing the many sports organizations in Hull was often a bottom-up affair that demonstrated working class leadership. This was the case for many sports, but especially for the most popular sports practiced by young men in Hull, baseball and hockey. Archival information about sports undertaken by working class girls and women - sports such as rowing, skating, swimming, softball - is non-existent, therefore, we can say little of intelligence about it.

Not all sports were organized by workers. Businessmen also organized sports played by workers. These business people could justify their efforts by referring to service to the community. In fact, physical improvements resulted from any sports organizing. Ball diamonds, skating rinks, arenas, and parks all brought benefits and pleasure to Hull workers. Business people might also justify their expenditure and social leadership with respect to sports as helping to instill proper values and behaviour in young workers, evidence of a propaganda role.

While sports and leisure activities benefited from greater organization, at the same time, one must remember that many sports and leisure affairs within the working class were part of the spontaneous play in which children and young adults engaged, without a heavy apparatus of organization. Give kids of the working class a ball and stick, and a game would quickly begin.

In fact, this leads to another observation about the nature of sports and leisure activities among the working class in our period. Generally, even in organized activities, the emphasis was on participation rather than spectatorship. These pursuits were also public affairs, visible to all whether in schoolyards, church grounds, streets, parks, or even around a local piano. For example, an evening of musical entertainment meant workers making their own music, rather than listening to recorded music or to a formally-organized musical group.

If we allow ourselves to flash forward a hundred years or so, sports and leisure today are often private affairs. Hidden from public view, they emphasize spectatorship rather than participation. Consider the contemporary sports or entertainment industries, multi-billion dollar enterprises that feed television with cheap programming in order to attract audiences for advertisers. Even if sports industries enjoy popularity among the working class, most workers participate as spectators. The hundred-year old messages about the value of sports for instilling discipline and correct behaviour have been 'souped up' to such an extent that the propaganda role of sports vis-à-vis workers passes unnoticed, as being completely normal. Consider how a good athlete is described in terms that echo the rewarding of good behaviour from workers. A player "gives 110%, plays when hurt, knows the difference between pain and injury, is a lunch-pail kind of guy, displays a blue-collar work ethic, works overtime willingly", and so forth. Here one just begins to scratch the surface of how modern sports fulfills a propaganda role vis-à-vis worker-spectators by encouraging and symbolically rewarding correct behaviour and

speaking of propaganda, what to say of the persistent war analogies surrounding sports? Or the racism that seems endemic to sports? Or the social conservatism surrounding sports?

Mass consumption society emerged in the 1920s at the end of our period, with the arrival of mass spectator sports but also with cinema, radio, and recorded music. As with sports activities, leisure activities might demonstrate a working class presence at community picnics or for theatre, musical or choral groups. At the same time, members of the *petite-bourgeoisie* also organized similar activities for workers, including also more obviously propaganda-oriented activities such as military cadets. Furthermore businessmen became more involved in organizing for-profit leisure activity, such as the numerous, private leisure parks that existed in Hull early in the 20 century. Hull also had commercial movie houses and radio by the 1920's.

Thus, we see evidence both for working class leadership and membership in sports and leisure organizations in Hull, but also signals that, as mass society emerges for good in the 1920s, sports and leisure activities are moving away from working class control and direction to be part of the mass consumption, mass media society and industries in which workers now live and work.

## **CHAPTER 12: TRADE UNIONISM**

### Introduction

The historian deals with the written record. This presents *prima facie* problems when trying to identify workers' organizations. Workers were generally illiterate during the 19th century, therefore, they left few written documents. As well, laws against combinations of workers, which treated them as illegal conspiracies, meant that workers often organized secretly. Sometimes, organizations such as mutual aid societies or clubs, created for recreational, social, or religious purposes among workers, doubled as clandestine unions or political organizations. The British historians of trade unions, Webbs, argued that the most common ancestor of the union was the mutual aid society, friendly society, or charity.<sup>589</sup> To make a clear distinction between modern unions and an apparent absence in the 19th century, is ahistorical. Dismissing pre-industrial workers' organizations as being only religious or social, or some other, apparently lesser categorization misses the point of how the working class evolved.

### Early Unions

The legal framework facing workers in Canada derived from laws in Great Britain, whereby workers combining to improve their wages and other conditions faced repression as illegal conspiracies. In Lower Canada, the Masters and Apprentices Act dated from 1821. It was succeeded in Canada East, and later, the Province of Quebec, by the Masters and Servants Act of 1847. This legislation provided for fines and imprisonment for workers judged guilty by municipal courts of breaking a contract or of causing other inconveniences to the employer, including encouraging other workers to do likewise. Thus, encouraging workmates to conduct job action was in itself illegal, let alone undertaking the actions in question.<sup>590</sup> Leaving a job required 15 days of notice, otherwise a worker could be fined or arrested for abandoning his work. As late as the 1880's, employers used this legislation. Between 1884 and 1890, 535 Quebec workers were sentenced for abandoning their work.<sup>591</sup>

Working class militants fought against the masters-and-servants legislation as a form of slavery, but progress in the field of labour legislation was slow. In 1872, the Trade Unions Act was adopted by the Conservative government of John A. Macdonald, which imitated British legislation which removed the limits on trade unionism as being a form of illegal conspiracy. In Quebec, the *Acte des manufactures* of 1885 and the *Loi des établissements industriels* of 1894 tried to regulate the work of women and children. These laws were often ignored by capitalists, while there were too few inspectors to give the law any teeth. In 1909, a timid law provided some protection for workers in the event of workplace accidents. In the second decade of the 20th century, there were a few minor improvements. In 1910, legislation forbade hiring children under 16 who couldn't read or write, and the minimum wage for working was set at 14 for both

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<sup>589</sup> Allan Brockway Latham, *The National and Catholic Labour Unions of Canada*, Toronto: MacMillan, 1930; and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism*, London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1920.

<sup>590</sup> See Jacques Rouillard, *Histoire du syndicalisme québécois*, Montreal: Boréal, 1989, p. 28, 29, 30; Louis Fournier et al., *Histoire du mouvement ouvrier au Québec: 150 ans de luttes*, Montreal: CSN/CEQ, 1984, p. 39.

<sup>591</sup> Rouillard, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

boys and girls. Placement bureaux also were established in the same year to help find employment for workers.<sup>592</sup>

To search for union activity in Hull against such a backdrop is not easy. We do know that the Wrights pursued several of their workers imported from England for breach-of-contract. In addition, the Rideau Canal project was the site of several, violent work stoppages. The Wrights were important contractors on the Canal who sometimes had trouble paying their employees, so it is possible that their workers were involved in such actions.

In 1857, construction of the federal buildings began in Ottawa, after it had been named the new capital of the united Canadas. Many construction workers, especially masons, were French-Canadians who settled in Hull. There is evidence of early organization among the building trades in Ottawa during this period. By the early 1870's, organization had advanced among many workers. There is evidence of organizing among labourers, painters, bricklayers, masons, cabinet-makers, carpenters, plasterers, messengers, printers, moulders, cigar-makers, coopers, shoemakers, railway workers, bakers, tailors, harness-makers, and cabmen.<sup>593</sup> Ottawa workers were important in the 9-hour movement, in the formation of the Canadian Labour Protective Association in 1872, and the Canadian Labour Union in 1873. An Ottawa printer named Daniel O'Donoghue got elected provincially on a working class platform early in the 1870's. O'Donoghue, married to French-Canadian Marie Cloutier, was eventually called by some 'the father of the Canadian labour movement'. The Tories benefited considerably from working class support in Ottawa. In September, 1878, the Liberal-Conservative Workingmen's Association was formed to rally labour support for the Tories. (At the time, the Tories were known as Liberal-Conservatives.) In December of that year, a meeting of 2,000 workers fêted John A. Macdonald as a friend of the working class. A non-partisan organization, the Workingman's Association of the City of Ottawa, also formed about the same time, and it included members from both major parties. In the mid-1880's, the Ottawa Trades and Labour Council was formed, replacing the District Labour Council of 1872. During the 1890's, Ottawa became the headquarters for the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress.<sup>594</sup>

All this labour activity was even more impressive when one considers that there were serious electoral franchise restrictions, such as income requirements, that mitigated against political activity by workers. In fact, removing franchise restrictions was among the elements of labour's program. Working class militants also worked for bureaux to collect labour statistics; to end the use of prison labour in public works; to restrict working hours of women and children; to obtain mechanics' lien laws to protect workers' wages when businesses failed; and to obtain protection for workers' household effects from debt and bankruptcy.

All this union activity, both at the level of union locals and of regional and national organizations in Ottawa, had to have had some influence on Hull workers, many of whom worked in Ottawa. As well, other Hull workers who didn't work in Ottawa would have heard

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<sup>592</sup> Serge Lalonde, "Condition ouvrière", in Pierre Louis Lapointe, editor, *Actes du Colloque sur l'identité régionale dans l'Outaouais*, Hull: Institut d'histoire et de recherche sur l'Outaouais, 1982, p. 59.

<sup>593</sup> Debi Wells, "The Hardest Lines of the Sternest School': Working-class Ottawa in the Depression of the 1870's", Master's Thesis, Carleton University, September, 1983, p. 26, 27, 28.

Press, 1987; and Jacques Rouillard, *Histoire du syndicalisme québécois*, Montreal: Boréal, 1989.

<sup>594</sup> For information about early labour activity in Ottawa, see Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 42, 54, 108; Ken Clavette, "A Working-class Hero is Something to Be", *Ottawa Citizen*, September 3, 2001, p. A15; and Steven Langdon, "The Political Economy of Capitalist Transformation: Central Canada from the 1840's to the 1870's", Master's Thesis, Carleton University, 1972, p. 303, 305, 320.

about union activity from French-Canadian friends and relatives in Ottawa, or from coverage by the local press. Nevertheless, we have little tangible evidence of early union activity among Hull workers. We know that a Frenchman named Nazaire Pétrin organized a union of carpenters and labourers in Hull in 1885, but it appears to have had a short life.<sup>595</sup> In 1887, water-carriers organized a short-lived job action when someone, not of their trade, was given the job of hosing down the streets of Hull.<sup>596</sup> The best indicator of possible labour organization in Hull, however, is indirect. During the *Saint-Jean Baptiste* Day festivities in Hull in 1875, members of trades paraded on floats demonstrating workers at their tasks. These trades included carpenters, tinsmiths, bakers, tailors, barbers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, plasterers, stonecutters, and bricklayers. Butchers even slaughtered two calves and one sheep on their mobile butcher shop. There were demonstrations of the work of the *habitant*, and of maple sugar making. Also parading were representatives of the mutual aid societies, the *Union Saint-Pierre* and the *Union Saint-Joseph*, and of the volunteer fire brigades. The event was capped by nationalist speeches including one by Médéric Lanctôt, newly arrived in town.<sup>597</sup> All this could not have been organized by Lanctôt since he had just arrived in town, although ex-Montrealers familiar with Lanctôt could have been involved. It demonstrates a surprising level of organization and of working class pride, about which we have little other evidence in Hull. In actual fact, *Saint Jean Baptiste* Day festivities were organized by the trades throughout Quebec during industrialization.

#### Knights of Labour<sup>598</sup>

The Knights of Labour came to prominence in Canada in the 1880's, but only during the next decade in the Ottawa Valley. The Knights were a precursor to the industrial unions of the Committee for Industrial Organization, which came to prominence during the depression of the 1930's. The Knights grouped all labour: skilled and unskilled, men and women, all races and creeds in a movement of working class solidarity. The programme of the Knights was vast and covered just about every possible claim of working people: in favour of the establishment of labour statistics bureaux, employment bureaux and ministries of labour; for legal recognition of labour organizations, and for improvements to labour legislation; for workplace safety legislation; for payment to workers in cash rather than truck; for equal pay for women and men for equal work; for cooperatives; for municipal tax reform and progressive income tax; for monetary reform; for nationalization of railways and telegraphs; for keeping public lands away from speculators and corporate ownership; for improved public health legislation; and for public education for working people via night school, public libraries, and schooling for literacy. The Knights also campaigned for removing electoral franchise restrictions upon workers, for ending child labour, for reducing working hours, for ending importation of contract labour, and for ending use of prison labour on public works projects. In theory, the Knights supported use of the

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<sup>595</sup> Edgar Boutet, *Le bon vieux temps à Hull, Tome III*, Hull: Éditions Gauvin, 1975, p.35.

<sup>596</sup> Joseph Jolicoeur, *Histoire Anécdotique de Hull*, Hull: Société historique de l'Ouest du Québec, 1979, p. 74.

<sup>597</sup> "La célébration de la Saint Jean-Baptiste à Hull en 1875", extracted from the *Courrier d'Outaouais* of June 25, 1875, *Asticou*, no 14, Autumn, 1974.

<sup>598</sup> Useful sources about Knights' activity in Hull and the Ottawa region include: Eugene Forsey, *Trade Unions in Canada, 1812-1902*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982; Chad Gaffield, editor, *Histoire de l'Outaouais*, Quebec City: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1994; Jean Hamelin, editor, *Les travailleurs québécois, 1851-1896*, Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1973; Gregory Kealey and Bryan Palmer, *Dreaming of What Might Be*, Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1987; and Jacques Rouillard, *Histoire du syndicalisme québécois*, Montreal: Boréal, 1989.



strike only as a last resort, and preferred obligatory arbitration to solve labour disputes. In actual practice, the Knights were involved in many important strikes of the era.

Such a vast program of social reform created many enemies for the Knights, including the Church hierarchy in Quebec. In September, 1884, the Vatican, at the behest of the bishops of Quebec, suggested that French-Canadians not join the Knights. In February, 1885, Archbishop Taschereau, of Quebec City, issued such directives, followed by the rest of the bishops in June, 1886. Fear of freemasonry led the bishops to condemn membership in the Knights as being sinful, since they were a secret society and of foreign origin. These instructions seem to have been followed to the extent that membership numbers were affected, even though the number of Knight's assemblies continued to grow. English-speaking Catholics in Quebec objected to the bishops' admonitions, arguing that the Knights were acceptable to the American church hierarchy. American cardinals, Gibbons and Manning, intervened at the request of American Knights, and the Vatican changed its opinion. In July, 1887 the Vatican said there was no reason to ban the Knights, who were then able to re-integrate the Church and receive anew the sacraments, this despite bureaucratic stalling by Taschereau. This obstacle, once removed, permitted the Knights to grow substantially in Quebec, both in terms of number of members and number of local assemblies.<sup>599</sup>

In actual fact, the Knights had been founded by a freemason named Uriah Stephens in 1869. Freemasonry was the model for many workers' organizations, including the secrecy that was used to resist repression. Many workers were members of fraternal organizations, so they were familiar with its motifs and methods; in fact, this increased the attraction of the Knights. The Knights made considerable use of ritual, symbolism, initiation rites, secret greetings, passwords, ceremony, festivities, and parades.<sup>600</sup> Within the ranks of the Knights emerged intellectuals devoted to the cause of labour. Many of these started local newspapers. In fact, *Le Spectateur*, which operated in Hull in various forms until 1933, was started by such a man. The journalist Napoléon Pagé initiated the Hull assembly of the Knights known as the *Canadienne*.

With their vast programme, the Knights were involved in every form of working class activity: union organizing, collective bargaining, strikes, lobbying, independent political action, the co-operative movement, labour journalism, and the promotion of local and national central labour organizations.<sup>601</sup> About one-third of the Knights' assemblies had members from various occupations, but there were also assemblies specific to 75 occupations and trades.<sup>602</sup>

Even after the movement began to decline in the United States and in English Canada, there was a flurry of activity in the Ottawa region, beginning in the late 1880's, and continuing in the 20th century. By 1887, two assemblies, Capital local assembly 5222 and assembly 2806 of clerks, joined the already existing telegraphers' local. In 1888, Frontenac lumber workers assembly 193 was formed, although it appears to have had a short existence. In 1890 appeared Chaudière lumberhandlers 2966. During the same year, Ottawa plumbers 1034 and Rideau cabinet-makers 1619 were organized. There also appear to have been local assemblies in Ottawa of letter-carriers 2422, Progress 406 of labourers, and Invincible 540 of coal carters. In 1890, Knights established a new Trades and Labour Council, a Knights' hall at the corner of Sparks

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<sup>599</sup> This account of the conflict with the Quebec Church follows the broad outline laid out by Forsey, *op. cit.*, p. 141, 142, 143.

<sup>600</sup> For a discussion of this aspect, see Kealey and Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 83-93.

<sup>601</sup> Forsey, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

and O'Connor Streets in Ottawa, and took steps to establish local labour newspapers.<sup>603</sup> In Hull, Pagé started the *Canadienne* assembly 2676 in 1890. Another assembly was started in Hull in 1893, with the local number 3724. Another assembly that included Hull workers was assembly 2966 of Chaudière lumbermill workers.

Just as important as the local organizing work of the Knights was organization of international craft unions. During the period of the Knights, the American Federation of Labor was formed. In Canada, this corresponded to the creation of the Canadian Labour Congress, which eventually took the name of Canadian Trades and Labour Congress. The Knights also spawned regional and district labour bodies such as existed in Ottawa, a body in which the *Canadienne* from Hull was a member. In 1920, the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress established a local central in Hull. Prior to this, Hull locals were affiliated with the Ottawa Trades and Labour Assodation. Even after 1920, Hull locals were encouraged to be members of both the Ottawa and Hull centrals, as were certain Ottawa locals that, in turn, affiliated to the Hull central. Five Hull locals were part of the Ottawa central, while five Ottawa affiliates joined the Hull Central, owing to the fact that many of their members lived in Hull.<sup>604</sup> The Hull locals early in the 1920's included Construction Carpenters International 1169; Firefighters 174; two lodges of Papermakers, locals 34 and 35; local 70 of the Pulp, Sulphite and Papermill Workers, a women's local; the Pulp, Sulphite and Papermill Workers, local 73, a men's local; and local 591 of the International Street Railway Employees, the streetcar workers.<sup>605</sup>

The period of sway of the Knights of Labour corresponded with the beginnings of the second industrial revolution in North America. The Knights harkened back to an earlier time of locally and regionally based economic organization. The time for national organization implied in the form of the industrial union had not yet come, however, and was only to come for good with the CIO during the 1930's and 1940's.

In the prime local industry, the forestry, labour organization was difficult owing to the mobility of workers and the seasonal nature of the work. Knights tried to organize the Chaudière lumberworkers, beginning in 1888, but only managed to organize a small number. An unorganized strike occurred in 1891 at the Chaudière, which spread elsewhere in Ottawa and Hull. By the third week of the strike, Napoléon Pagé of the Hull assembly of Knights, the *Canadienne*, had assumed leadership of the workers. The Knights paid out considerable money in benefits to the striking mill workers. As a result, the Knights' membership grew dramatically after the strike; it was given a boost locally that lasted into the 20th century.

### The Strike of 1891<sup>606</sup>

Collaboration among the lumber mill operators in the Ottawa-Hull area was commonplace. Capitalists collaborated in political parties, social clubs, and charity works. They also met in the work of the Timber and Lumber Association, and in the work of a variety of local

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<sup>603</sup> Kealey and Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 89, 90.

<sup>604</sup> Peggy Sykes, "A History of the Ottawa Allied and Trades Association, 1897-1922", Master's Thesis, Carleton University, April 1922, see footnote #45 on p. 38, 39.

<sup>605</sup> Forsey, *op. cit.*, p. 403, 404, 405; and Sykes, *op. cit.*, p. 38, 39, and 150-158.

<sup>606</sup> There are several useful accounts of the 1891 strike: Forsey, *op. cit.*, p. 157-161; Jean Hamelin et al., *Répertoire des grèves dans la province de Québec au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Montreal: Les Presses de l'École des Hautes Etudes commerciales, 1970, p. 111, 112; Kealey and Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 362-365; Edward McKenna, "Unorganized Labor Versus Management: the Strike at the Chaudière Lumber Mills, 1891", *Histoire sociale/Social History*, November, 1972; and Mario Pelletier, "La grève de 1891 à Hull", *Asticou*, no. 13, Autumn, 1974.

companies involved in railways and hydro-electric power, as well as in their traditional cooperation for the log drive, public works in the Ottawa Valley, and transportation upriver and downriver from the Chaudière. For instance, Booth, Bronson, Eddy, and Perley, were directors and customers of the Madawaska Improvement Company, founded in 1888 to move logs on the Madawaska River. Bronson and Pattee were president and vice-president respectively of the Standard Electric Company of Ottawa. Perley was vice-president of Booth's Atlantic Railway.<sup>607</sup> In spite of supposed competition among all these enterprises, there were gentlemen's agreements not to hire away workers from each other so as not to bid up the price of labour.

In 1887, a strike of lumber workers in the Gravenhurst area of Muskoka Bay was organized by Knights of Labour. The Knights sought a reduction in the working day from eleven hours to ten, a measure that local capitalists agreed would be implemented in 1888. Before this could take place, however, lumber companies in Muskoka, the Georgian Bay region, and the Ottawa Valley signed an agreement that they would not reduce work hours, and put forward bonds that would be forfeited should they do so. By June, 1888, 300 of the 375 workers at Gravenhurst had joined the Knights, who then sought to negotiate with the mill owners. The latter refused to negotiate. In July, the Gravenhurst workers went out on strike. It was to no avail as the mill owners held tight. In September, the workers went back to work with no gains.<sup>608</sup> During this same period, Knights tried with little success to organize at the Chaudière. Only in the fall of 1890 did they gain a foothold in the mills when Chaudière assembly 2966 of the Knights was formed. Even so, of the 300 men at the Perley and Pattee Company where the 1891 strike started, at most a dozen were members of the Knights.<sup>609</sup>

In 1891, a severe winter delayed the onset of operations at the Chaudière. Late in spring, work finally began, but owing to conditions in the industry, wages were lowered by \$0.50 per week. In return, work hours were to be decreased to ten hours per day. With some grumbling, the men accepted these conditions but, by May, they were once again working eleven and twelve hours per day. Some of the men who were members of the Knights appealed to the Knights for organizational and strike assistance. The ambivalent attitude of the Knights' leadership towards strikes became evident. Six months notice was needed before a strike could be sanctioned, in order to permit other means of dispute resolution to take place. Since the mills would be closed again in six months during winter, the timing was bad, and the Knights would negotiate only the next year. Reluctantly, the workers continued to work at the lower pay with longer working hours throughout the summer. Finally, on September 12, 1891, several men at Perley and Pattee, perhaps members of the Knights, asked for wages to be restored to the 1890 level. Two days later, wage levels still had not been restored. The men stopped working, then successfully encouraged other outside workers to join them. The company closed the mill. 350 men crowded into the millyard to hear George Pattee argue that it was not his fault that wages were lowered; he was only following the policy of all the lumber companies.

The men reacted by upping the stakes in the dispute. The workers left Perley and Pattee's yard, went to Booth's mills and asked the workers there to stop working. Eight hundred workers joined them from Booth's mills. They continued; 300 more workers from Buell, Orr and Hurdman joined the movement, as did 500 workers from Bronson and Weston. There were now 1,500 workers that had calmly stopped working, and they continued to add workers at the

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<sup>607</sup> McKenna, *op. cit.*

<sup>608</sup> Gregory Kealey, *Workers and Canadian History*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995, p. 277.

<sup>609</sup> See footnote 13 in McKenna, *op. cit.*

Chaudière to their ranks. Nervous managers called out the Ottawa police, but no violence occurred. The men gathered in front of Booth's operation. They were addressed by a man named Napoléon Fauteux, a mill worker who was not a member of a union. Fauteux demanded the restoration of the wage to the 1890 level, and a reduction in working hours to ten per day from the existing 11 and 12 hours. There was considerable optimism and hope among the men that their cause would win the day. What began by several men grumbling about a long standing disagreement grew to involve 2,400 men in nine firms, including some not directly involved in sawmilling.

The strike moved to William Mason's sawmill in Mechanicsville, in Ottawa, where work soon stopped. When work resumed later that afternoon, 1,300 strikers returned to Mason. In a confrontation, William Mason Jr., son of the mill owner, picked up a stick and hit one of the strikers on the head. Workers jumped on Mason Jr. and beat him. He was rescued, and order re-established when the Ottawa police arrived. No arrests were made then Mason Sr. addressed the workers, announcing that he would meet their demands. This was a victory for the workers, even though Mason's operation was not a large mill. That same evening, 1,500 workers met in Hull, and were addressed by Fauteux. The Hull workers then crossed the Chaudière, and now numbered 3,000 in front of the Booth property. The men were exhorted to maintain good behaviour and solidarity, while it was also determined to ask for the help of the Knights of Labour and the Ottawa Trades and Labour Association. The owners were intransigent, blaming outsiders from the Knights for the agitation.

On Tuesday, September 15, the striking workers tried to extend the strike to women and boys employed by E.B. Eddy. In Eddy's new paper mill, labourers were working 13-hour days, so the strikers tried to stop work. Eddy himself tried to prevent the men from entering the premises. In the process, Eddy was kicked and struck with a stone. The workers then visited C.B. Wright's cement factory and quarry. Wright was forced to close his operations, and was injured trying to resist the strikers. There was also renewed violence at Mason's mill involving teamsters.

Later that day, a rally was held at the Chaudière. The men were addressed by Fauteux and J.W. Patterson, President of the Ottawa Trades and Labour Association. Fauteux was now being called the *Bonaparte des Chaudières* for his leadership role among the workers. Patterson expressed the support of workers everywhere for the cause of the strikers. In Hull, the Knights appointed a delegation to confer with representatives of the strikers.

The mill owners closed ranks more than ever. Eddy, mayor of Hull, called up the Militia. This request was approved by two local magistrates, Théophile Viau and C.B. Wright. The Militia was called out in aid of the civil power, under local and provincial authority. Fauteux got wind of this move, and unsuccessfully tried to stop it. Four Militia companies from Ottawa, two each from the 43rd and 45th battalions were mustered at 5 a.m. at the Ottawa drill hall. The men were each issued ten bullets. At 6 a.m., they were marched to the Chaudière. There were no major demonstrations, other than hooting and hollering at the soldiers, mostly federal public servants from Ottawa. The Militia was dispatched, one company each to four different yards. Games were organized for the militiamen to relieve the monotony. Fauteux and Patterson visited Eddy, and offered to provide reliable people to protect Eddy's property. They disavowed the principal person involved in the violence against Eddy, one Calixte Goanette, as not being one of the strikers, nor from the region. Finally, the workers asked Eddy to call off the Militia, to which Eddy objected, but when the Militia colonel suggested that the soldiers might go home, local magistrates agreed, and the Militia was demobilized. The next day, strikers replaced the Militia.

A massive march to Parliament Hill was organized; 4,000 strikers and their sympathizers marched to and from the Chaudière. The men were read a statement signed by representatives of the Booth, Bronson and Weston, Perley and Pattee, William Mason and Sons, and Orr and Hurdman companies, saying that they could not meet the workers' demands since they would add 20% to the price of their lumber, this at a time of depressed markets in Britain and South America.

That evening, a meeting was held in Lower Town in Ottawa, where representatives of the French-Canadian communities of Hull and Lower Town expressed their support for the strikers. J.W. Patterson intimated to the meeting that the major stumbling-block to the strikers was the resistance of J.R. Booth. The workers now began to obtain broader support from the Ottawa and Hull communities. A meeting was held on Saturday, September 19 in Hull, in which the Knights of Labour officially participated. The next day, over 5,000 people attended a public meeting to discuss the strike. The meeting was organized by small businessmen in Hull. MP's and provincial legislative members spoke in favour of the strikers, as did Ottawa's mayor, Thomas Birkett, and local clergymen, Protestant and Catholic. Hull's member of the legislative assembly, Alfred Rochon, agreed to present a motion to the Quebec legislature in favour of the ten-hour work day. Before the assembly ended, a citizens' committee was struck to negotiate with the mill owners on behalf of the strikers. The committee included local politicians, clergymen, and J.W. Patterson, but no one from the strikers, an ominous sign. On Tuesday, September 22, the citizens' committee met mill owners, and engaged them in three and a half hours of futile discussion. The committee then advised the workers to return to work, with the promise that the mill owners would reconsider for the next year. The mill workers conceded their wage claim, but insisted that they would continue the strike for the reduced work hours. The citizens' committee had achieved nothing, had acted as a buffer between workers and the mill owners, and only prolonged the dispute.

The men continued the strike, while the Chaudière and *Canadienne* assemblies of the Knights became directly involved in the strike. Each assembly contributed \$75 to a strike fund; printers at the federal printing bureau contributed \$30; the Ottawa hackmen's union contributed \$100. Local merchants and individuals started contributing foodstuffs, while two stores for the strikers were opened, one on Promenade du Portage in Hull, a second at the Chaudière. Patterson went to Toronto to meet labour people to get their support; Pagé undertook a similar mission to Montreal. Patterson obtained a promise of money from Toronto Knights, but the Knights' leadership nixed the idea since the Chaudière workers were not members of the Knights. In Montreal, transportation workers promised Pagé that they would not handle lumber from the Chaudière while the strike was proceeding.

On September 24, a glimmer of hope appeared. A mill foreman promised a settlement. The strike leaders approved the return to work, and at 6 a.m., workers started gathering outside the Eddy works. After waiting for an hour, the men finally heard management's offer: return to work for an extra 15 minutes for lunch. The strike continued.

By the next week, some of the companies started yielding. Sheppard and Morse, not located at the Chaudière, conceded the ten-hour day, and restored their 1890 wage levels, as did William Mason and Sons, this time fulfilling a promise already made. By the third week, the number of strikers was thinning, not because the strike was ending. Instead, strikers were encouraging workers to accept the job offers that were coming in from New York, Michigan, and the Ottawa and Gatineau valleys. By September 30, over 600 men had left Ottawa and Hull for jobs elsewhere. The relief effort for the strikers continued; 200 families were helped daily. By

the end of the third week, Buell, Orr and Hurdman met the striking workers' conditions, but the mills of Booth, Perley and Pattee, and Bronson and Weston, where most of the workers worked, remained closed. Bronson and Weston continued to meet its commitments to wholesale firms in New York and New England by agreeing quietly to meet the workers' demands so that its shipping subsidiary, the Export Lumber Company, could keep working.<sup>610</sup> Nevertheless, Bronson and Weston continued to hold fast publicly with Booth, and Perley and Pattee. In fact, all three operations were offering board and \$1.50 per day to workers from outside the region. The strikers got wind of this, and tried to stop the scab workers on September 30, but the entire Ottawa police force intervened. On October 1, 600 workers marched onto the Bronson and Weston property to stop work. However, with police presence and scab labour, the three firms slowly started working and shipping again. By now, however, there were only about 1,000 workers left at the Chaudière.

The companies yielded on the \$0.50 in dispute, but not on working hours. The workers' relief effort closed on October 7 and for all intents and purposes, the strike was over by October 12. On October 14, Bronson and Weston workers tried to resume the strike over working hours, but the workers and the community were exhausted, outlasted by the mill owners and the Ottawa police. The strike had been costly on all sides, and had gained few immediate results for the workers. However, a combination of factors led to mill workers eventually obtaining better wages and lower working hours later in the decade. The mill workers' bargaining power increased since so many had left the region. Those that remained were organized by the Knights in Ottawa and Hull into an effective bargaining force. As well, E.H. Bronson, a Liberal provincial cabinet minister in Ontario, appears to have been shaken by the strike into making positive changes vis-à-vis his workers. The result was that, by 1895, the mill workers had won the ten-hour day.<sup>611</sup>

In the aftermath of the strike, the Militia billed the City of Hull \$236.04 for the use of its services. On December 7, 1891, municipal councillors C.M. Wright and J. Wright, along with mayor E.B. Eddy, proposed that the City pay the bill, but municipal council, the majority of which had supported the strikers, refused the bill.<sup>612</sup> While we do not know what came of this bill, we do know what happened to Napoléon Fauteux, the *Bonaparte des Chaudières*. He did not return to the Chaudière. Perhaps enamoured of his experiences before a large crowd, Fauteux went into showbiz, working in vaudeville acts as an acrobat and magician. He ended his working life training horses.<sup>613</sup>

### In the Wake of the Knights

In the wake of the 1891 strike, membership in Hull among the Knights increased considerably. In December, 1891, Hull Knights formed a union of masons and bricklayers but the union had a short existence. In 1894, Quebec barbers organized themselves in the *Association des Barbiers de la Province de Québec*. This organization was chartered by the Quebec legislative assembly to license barber shops, to examine candidates to the trade, and to make sanitary regulations. By 1899, barbers had locals of this association in every town of 5,000

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<sup>610</sup> Robert Peter Gillis, "E.H. Bronson and Corporate Capitalism: A Study in Canadian Business Thought and Action", Master's Thesis, Queen's University, December, 1975, p. 73, 74.

<sup>611</sup> Kealey, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

<sup>612</sup> Hull Municipal Library, Procès-verbaux du Conseil municipal de Hull, 1875 à 1924, p. 56.

<sup>613</sup> Ernest Cinq-Mars, Hull: *son origine, ses progrès, son avenir*, Hull: Bérubé Frères, 1908, p.146.

people, including Hull.<sup>614</sup> Barbers in Hull had been trying for years to obtain reduced working hours. Finally, municipal council, under the leadership of mayor Falardeau, regulated reduced working hours in 1904, making closing obligatory on Sundays.<sup>615</sup> In April, 1920, these regulations were extended to limit opening hours for barbers from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. during the work week.<sup>616</sup>

After the 1902 Berlin convention, when the Knights were expelled from the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress, they re-assembled in an organization of mostly, Quebec unions called national unions. Historian Jacques Rouillard reports that there was one national union in Hull with forty members in 1904, however, this author does not know which one it was.<sup>617</sup>

Knights of Labour also organized the Hull Labourers' International Protective Association in October, 1899. This local was related to the parent American organization of the same name. By the summer of 1902, there is evidence that the organization was still operating in Hull.<sup>618</sup> This organization was also active in local number 7 in Buckingham, twenty miles east of Hull. In 1906, the local attempted to negotiate minimum wages with the Maclarens company. Not only did the Maclarens resist negotiating, they hired a detective agency specialized in strike-breaking. Men from this agency, on instructions from the Maclarens, shot dead two of the leaders of the strike, Thomas Bélanger and François Thériault. In the aftermath, the Militia occupied Buckingham. The Maclarens, the detectives, some policemen, and several workers were charged with criminal responsibility for the deaths. The Maclarens, with the active intervention of Prime Minister Laurier and Quebec Premier Gouin, got off scot-free. The Maclarens were important Liberals. The events in Buckingham became a *cause célèbre* throughout North America. They provoked labour demonstrations throughout the region. A caravan of workers from Hull went by rail to the funeral of the two Buckingham workers and again, a year later, at the unveiling of a monument to the slain workers.<sup>619</sup>

In 1907, Hull printer J.V. Montminy formed a group called the *Association ouvrière de Hull*. The following year, the same man formed a group called the *Travail fédéré de Hull*.<sup>620</sup> Both of these organizations appear to have been aimed at organizing the unemployed and finding work for them, but they had short-lived existences. In 1908, baker and ex-mayor Falardeau formed the *Club ouvrier indépendant*, which debated local and municipal questions. This was part of a broad movement that occurred throughout Quebec. In fact, in 1910, workers' municipal clubs federated.<sup>621</sup> This group, under the leadership of local printer Auguste Foucault, formed a local cooperative called *La Maison du Peuple*.

On May 1, 1909, the first convention was held in Ottawa of the Federation of the Civil Service, which represented 5,000 federal public servants. Its goals were uniformity in salaries and pension reforms.<sup>622</sup> Once again, as per many other developments in Ottawa, there would

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<sup>614</sup> Forsey, *op. cit.*, p. 372, 373.

<sup>615</sup> Hull Municipal Library, *Procès-verbaux. . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 193-195, Regulation no. 95, September 9, 1904.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibid*, p. 54-57.

<sup>617</sup> Jacques Rouillard, *Les syndicats nationaux au Québec de 1900 à 1930*, Quebec City: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1979, p. 90.

<sup>618</sup> Forsey, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

<sup>619</sup> See Kealey and Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 365; and Pierre Louis Lapointe, *The City of Buckingham*, Buckingham, Quebec, 1990, p. 246, 247.

<sup>620</sup> Boutet, *op. cit.*, p. 36 and Jolicoeur, *op. cit.*, p.71.

<sup>621</sup> Louis Fournier et al *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>622</sup> *Le Temps*, May 1, 1909.

have been a spillover effect into Hull, firstly, among public servants who lived in Hull, and secondly, by workers in Hull reading and hearing about the initiative.

In May of 1911, Hull store clerks formed the *Association des commis-marchands*. Its president was Wilfrid Monette, who worked at the Pharand department store. Its prime issue was obtaining a reduction in store opening hours. It quickly obtained positive results when municipal council adopted regulations to this effect in the spring of 1911.<sup>623</sup> This was part of a never-ending battle in Hull; merchants would try to obtain longer working hours, while their workers would try to obtain shorter working hours. The site of this battle was municipal council and its regulations.

In May, 1919, Hull local 174 of the International Association of Fire Fighters got into a dispute with the City. For 30 hours, the firemen struck over the issue of obtaining a second shift; in fact, firemen were on duty 24 hours a day. The issue went to federal arbitration but eventually, accommodation was reached with the firemen. They obtained a maximum shift of twelve hours, which went into effect on November 1, 1919. In return, the workers had to agree not to engage in any sympathy strikes, and to renounce membership in any foreign organization, in effect, their own union.<sup>624</sup> In actual fact, it was almost a decade before local firemen switched their allegiance from the American union to a national, Catholic union.

### Forestry Industry

The prime industry in the region was the forestry industry. There is no evidence that workers in the woods organized unions. This does not mean that there were no attempts at organizing these workers. It just means that we have no evidence of such efforts. As such, we are left with a notion that, within the violence in the woods or the perennial complaints about the quality of food, there were informal manifestations of working class discontent. In the sawmills, the 1891 strike was the first, known manifestation of working class organization in the local forestry industry.

In the pulp and paper mills, in November 1902, an American union, the United Brotherhood of Paper Makers, organized a local in Hull.<sup>625</sup> The local had sixty members, and chose as its president William Smith. The executive, also included Fred Bishop, W.A. Anderson, Thomas McAvoy, and William Hamilton.<sup>626</sup> The membership of this local was limited to the most skilled of the paper workers and, was mostly anglophone; in fact, many of its members probably were American. The first craft-type organization among paper workers occurred in Holyoke, Massachusetts in the late 1880s. When the union received its charter from the American Federation of Labor, membership was restricted to machine tenders and beater engineers. These workers were very mobile owing to their skills. If they didn't like conditions or the pay in one mill, they simply moved another town. Many of the first skilled workers in the paper industry in Canada were American immigrants. These workers, as did other unionists in the AF of L, pioneered the use of modern union methods such as the union label, collective bargaining, strikes, boycotts, picketing, and strike funds.<sup>627</sup>

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<sup>623</sup> Hull Municipal Library, *Procès-Verbaux*. . . , *op. cit.*, p. 137, 138, 152.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid*, p. 115, 116; and Municipal Archives, City of Hull, Fonds I, City of Hull correspondence, Box 1, documents in series number 684.

<sup>625</sup> Forsey, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

<sup>626</sup> *Le Temps*, November 24, 1902.

<sup>627</sup> Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 303.



In January, 1904, E.B. Eddy installed a Saturday night shift. The year previous, the paper makers had won a concession from the company to close the mill at 5:30 p.m. Saturday evening, but Eddy claimed it needed the additional work time. When the local announced that it wouldn't work Saturday night, Eddy locked out the paper workers as the company was determined to maintain an open shop. Eddy then advertised in Montreal for personnel. Hull municipal court named six special constables to allow the non-striking workers to work. By February, many of Eddy's strikers had found work elsewhere, but Eddy continued to operate most of his paper-making machines. On February 29, Eddy sued paper makers Scully, Smith, Draper, and Boudreault for defamation of character, as the unionists had produced a pamphlet criticizing Eddy. By May, the strike was over; Eddy had successfully outlasted the workers' local.<sup>628</sup>

Throughout the first decade of the 20th century, American paper makers were in conflict with the less skilled workers represented by the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers. In 1906, the latter union was expelled from the AF of L. The warfare between the two unions was open, and the unions spent more energy fighting each other than capitalists. Finally, in 1909, the unions settled their jurisdictional dispute, with the Paper Makers gaining assurance that beater engineers would remain with them. All other workers, including those in newsprint, pulp mills and paper bag mills, were conceded to the industrial union.<sup>629</sup> This resolution permitted both unions to enter successfully into Canada. By 1911, the Paper Makers had installed themselves officially at Eddy. In fact, this local was the first in Canada to obtain an 8-hour day for its members. In 1914, the Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill workers established a local at Eddy.<sup>630</sup> In 1920, this union held its national convention in Ottawa. On the executive of the national organization was Maurice Labelle from Hull. These unions made important strides in improving working conditions in the industry. By 1914, the eight-hour day was the norm at both Eddy and Booth.<sup>631</sup> Wages of members of the Paper Makers union doubled in the period from 1914 to 1920.<sup>632</sup> In 1921, the post-war recession hit the pulp and paper industry hard. Eddy reduced wages, so 250 workers struck for 15 days, in the end, unsuccessfully.<sup>633</sup>

In 1911, a Hull machinist named Achille Morin left the Paper Makers to work on pulp-making machines. When he returned to paper making, his union local wanted membership dues paid for the period he was working in the other jurisdiction. This annoyed Morin to no end, but must have been the straw that broke the camel's back for a dozen workers at Eddy started discussing their grievances with their union. The next year, they formed the *Association ouvrière de Hull*, which was to play an important leadership role in working class development in Hull. In 1913, Morin re-integrated the Paper Makers local, but he left definitively in 1917 during the conscription crisis of WWI.

Morin's organization formed the basis of the local of the Catholic forestry union when it formed in 1923. *The Fédération catholique des employés des pulperies et papeteries du Canada*

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<sup>628</sup> *Citizen*, January 11, 1904, January 19, 1904, February 3, 1904; *Le Pionnier canadien*, February 19, 1904 and February 29, 1904.

<sup>629</sup> H. A. Logan, *Trade Unions in Canada*, Toronto: MacMillan, 1948, p. 118, 119.

<sup>630</sup> Egil Schonning, *Union-Management Relations in the Pulp and Paper Industry of Ontario and Quebec, 1914 to 1950*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto, April, 1955, p. 46.

<sup>631</sup> W.C. Greening, *Paper Makers in Canada*, Cornwall, Ontario: International Brotherhood of Paper Makers, 1952, p. 15.

<sup>632</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

<sup>633</sup> Jean-Pierre Charland, *Les Pâtes et papiers au Québec, 1880-1950; Technologies, travail et travailleurs*, Quebec City: *Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture*, 1990, p. 318.

included locals in Hull and Gatineau, and grouped workers of all trades. Membership growth was slow, however. There were only twenty members in Hull in 1925, ten in 1926 and 1927, and sixteen in 1928. In March, 1928, 22 women working at Eddy were unionized in this federation.<sup>634</sup>

### Association ouvrière de Hull

The Knights of Labour had a ricochet effect in Hull for many years. Achille Morin had been provincial secretary of the Quebec Knights while in Sherbrooke. When he moved to Hull, one of his neighbours was Napoleon Pagé, who had started the *Canadienne* assembly of the Knights in Hull in 1890. Pagé seems to have had a mentoring role vis-à-vis Morin.<sup>635</sup> In 1911, after Morin's conflict with the local of the Paper Makers union, Morin and eleven other workers from E.B. Eddy started meeting regularly at the home of Denis Murphy. These men came to be known locally as the *douze apôtres* (twelve apostles). They included, besides Morin and Murphy: Joseph Simard, Edouard Pilote, Wilfred Simard, Elzéar Tremblay, Auguste Deschênes, Joe Molloy, Evariste Duchesne, Arthur Cousineau, Joseph Maheu, and Edgar Matte.<sup>636</sup> Using the model of the Knights, the *Association ouvrière* was open to workers of all religions and races who wished to improve their lot by political activity, or wished to obtain work, if unemployed. Gradually, under pressure from local clergy, especially Father Carrière, parish priest at St-Rédempteur, the organization came to be limited to Catholics. By 1915, the Oblates were appointing official chaplains to the *Association ouvrière*. The last Protestant to leave the organization was one of its vice-presidents, a man named Booth. The Oblates convinced Morin and his colleagues that the social doctrine of the Church provided the correct direction for a union. Anti-american, Canadian nationalism also played a part in this, as did the *petite-bourgeoisie's* fear of the radical politics espoused by American socialists and some American unions. Local politics, however, also played a role. During WWII, conflict between English and French Canadians in Ontario was exacerbated by the conscription crisis. In fact, Regulation XVII, adopted in 1912, had made the teaching of French in Ontario schools illegal. The centre for resistance to this was Ottawa, and among the leading resisters were the Oblate priests who also served the people of Hull.<sup>637</sup> Once again, Hull politics was affected by a spillover of developments in Ottawa.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII produced an encyclical about the social position of the Church vis-à-vis industrialization. This forward-looking document, *Rerum Novarum*, continues even today to summarize the social doctrine of the Church. Its main points are that workers have a right to associate, even though socialism and religious neutrality are to be avoided in these associations. The document rejected the doctrine of class conflict, and proposed solidarity of all, beyond class interests, based on Christian charity. It took almost a generation but the Church in Quebec finally integrated *Rerum Novarum*. In 1909, the Church started a daily newspaper to promote its social doctrine called *Action sociale*. In 1911, a Jesuit named Joseph Papin-Archambault formed the *École sociale populaire* to train militants in the social doctrine, and to serve as a barrier against communism and socialism. Then followed the formation of a series of organizations among farmers, salesmen, youth groups and, finally in 1927, the *Jeunesse ouvrière*

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<sup>634</sup> Jean Dandurand, "Les syndicats catholiques dans le secteur des pâtes et papiers et la société québécoise de 1900 à 1930", Master's Thesis, Laval University, February, 1976, p. 175, 181.

<sup>635</sup> Boutet, Tome III, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37, 38.

<sup>637</sup> Brian Hogan, "Church and Union, the Case of Hull, 1912-1921", *Labour/Le Travailleur*, vol. 7, Spring, 1981, p. 134.

*catholique* (Young Catholic Workers). Key to the social strategy of the Church was the Catholic union movement.<sup>638</sup>

The commitment of the Oblates to Hull workers was not just ideological or intellectual. It involved bricks and mortar. In downtown Hull, close to Promenade du Portage, the Oblates built a building known as the *Bourse du Travail*. ('Bourse' is the French term for the stock market; 'Bourse du Travail' was a term used in France.) This building housed the activities of the Catholic unions in Hull, as well as women's organizations, a cooperative, the first *caisse populaire* in Hull, the local office of *Le Droit*, and other community facilities including a gymnasium. The Church bought the land in 1920 and built the *Bourse* the following year.<sup>639</sup>

The *Association ouvrière* was first organized with only two decision making bodies, a general assembly and a central executive, but the *Association* soon developed specialized unions for match workers, policemen, labourers, office employees, and paper mill workers. During the 1920's, a number of other unions were established. Here, the influence of the Oblates was explicit. Since they were employers on printing and construction contracts, local clergy obliged some workers to join Catholic unions. To train union leaders, the clergy started the *Cercle Benoît XV* which had several organizational re-incarnations through the years. Meetings of this group were held at the *Bourse du Travail* under the watchful eye of local chaplains, and they began with prayers.<sup>640</sup>

Under the influence of the Church, Catholic professional unions began their growth in Hull. In 1919, there were unions among policemen, carpenters, painters, pulp and paper employees, and store clerks. In 1923, office workers formed a union, as did bricklayers and masons in 1924. In 1928, taxi drivers formed a union, and an inter-professional union was established for workers in diverse occupations. In 1930, plasterers separated from the bricklayers and masons to form their own separate union. Two other noteworthy unions also formed in the 1920's. In 1928, local firemen, after a decade of pressure, left the American union to establish their own Catholic local. In 1921, printers across the continent went on a sympathy strike. The Oblates at *Le Droit* locked out their printers, and demanded that the workers join a national, Catholic Union. This they did, organizing themselves into three unions: workshop employees, office workers, and journalists.<sup>641</sup> The local union leader at *Le Droit* was Armand Morin, son of Achille. Armand Morin had also founded the first *Cercle d'étude Benoît XV* in March, 1918, had many false starts until October, 1925, when it finally organized for good. One feature of Hull's organization of workers was its strength among women. There were unions for match workers, paper workers, seamstresses, and office workers, grouped into a women's central organization, alongside a men's central organization.

The achievements of the *Association ouvrière* were many and impressive. At one point, the organization had over 1,000 members. By 1925, it had been involved in the launching of the first *caisse populaire* in Hull; in a consumers' cooperative; in the organization of night courses for workers, including for women; in the establishment of a municipal affairs committee to observe and influence municipal council; in an employment placement office; and in recreation

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<sup>638</sup> This evolution is documented in Paul-André Linteau et al, *Histoire du Québec contemporaine: de la Confédération à la crise*, Montreal: Boréal Express, 1979, p. 522, 523.

<sup>639</sup> University of Saint Paul, Archives Deschâtelets, records of Notre-Dame de Hull Parish, JC 4027. C21D, articles 26 and 27.

<sup>640</sup> See Lalonde, op. cit., p. 58; and Michelle Lapointe, "Le syndicat catholique des allumettlères de Hull, 1919-1924", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 32, no 4, March, 1979, p. 607.

<sup>641</sup> Lalonde, op. cit., p. 58 and Joseph Bonhomme, *Notre-Dame de Hull*, Ottawa: Le Droit, 1931, p.80-83.

rooms for adults and for young people. The *Bourse du Travail* provided both facilities and a symbolic representation of the strength of the working class. In 1925, Hull obtained a technical school, in part, owing to efforts by the *Association ouvrière*.

In terms of its unions and the labour conflicts led by the *Association*, there were a number of successes. In 1912, the *Association* obtained wage increases from Eddy, as well as some official recognition. In June, 1919, Hull Iron and Steel was struck, successfully, for salary gains. The threat of a strike by seamstresses at Sparks and Harrison in 1920 resulted in a 20 per cent wage increase. Women lay teachers obtained wage increases in 1919 and the principle of substitute teachers in the event of illness. City employees, including labourers and carters, won wage increases in 1920, as did store clerks. Throughout this period, the *Association ouvrière* was successful in obtaining reductions in working hours for many workers to eight and nine hours per day.<sup>642</sup>

Achille Morin won the respect of the citizens of Hull. In January of 1919, 200 of his fellow-citizens fêted Morin at City Hall on the occasion of his 38th birthday. Later that year, on Labour Day, the Prince of Wales was making an official visit to Canada to celebrate the victory of the Allies in the Great War. The Prince was formally received by dignitaries in Hull. Nearby, 7,000 workers were celebrating Labour Day at parc Dupuis. In a speech, Morin asked veterans of WWI to join the *Association ouvrière*. Then, somehow, with the connivance of Morin and/or of the Prince himself, the latter unexpectedly joined the workers in their celebration. This event provided symbolic legitimation of the *Association ouvrière*, and of its work among Hull workers.<sup>643</sup>

### Unionism among Women

One of the highlights of Catholic unionism, particularly during the period of the *Association ouvrière* de Hull, was its success among working women in Hull. Indeed, at one point, of approximately 1,000 Hull women officially in the work force, about 550 women were included in the unions of the *Association ouvrière*. In order to understand the evolution of unionism among Hull women, one must understand the contribution of one organization in particular, the *Fédération nationale Saint-Jean Baptiste*. In 1919, the *Fédération* sent an organizer to Hull to help organize the women's unions of the *Association ouvrière*.<sup>644</sup> This women's organization had separated from its parent organization, the *Saint-Jean Baptiste* society, the nationalist organization, in 1907. It received a provincial charter in 1912. Under the leadership of Marie Gérin-Lajoie, the *Fédération* established six professional societies of women workers: office employees, telephone employees, store clerks, factory workers, teachers, and domestic servants. One of the particularities of the *Fédération* was that it treated organization of working woman as part of the feminist question, and not one of working class organization. The *Fédération* was devoted to combatting alcoholism, educating women, organizing trades,

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<sup>642</sup> For information about these achievements, see Joseph Bonhomme, "Notes historiques", *Labour/Le Travailleur*, vol. 7, Spring, 1981, p. 144, 145; Ludovic Maltais, *Les syndicats catholiques canadiens*, Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1925, p. 25; Hull Municipal Library, *Procès-verbaux. . .*, op. cit., p. 19; Gaffield, editor, op. cit., p. 306, 307.

<sup>643</sup> Hull Municipal Library, op. cit., p. 268-270; and *Ottawa Citizen*, September 3, 1919.

<sup>644</sup> Marie Gérin-Lajoie, "Le syndicalisme féminin", in *Semaine sociale du Canada, deuxième session*, Quebec City, 1921, Montreal: l'Action paroissiale, 1922.

protecting women workers, and organizing charity. Indeed, in the last category, the *Fédération* was very involved in the establishment and development of Quebec's hospitals.<sup>645</sup>

With respect to the role of the working women's associations, Marie Gérin-Lajoie wrote that they attempted

“ . . se prévenir contre les exigences excessives de certains patrons, à pourvoir à la bonne hygiène, à procurer à ces membres la protection morale suffisante.”

Author's Adaption:

“ . . to protect women from the excessive demands of some employers, to work for proper hygiene, and to provide members with sufficient moral protection”.

The associations trained women for their roles in industry, in the trades, and in the family. They had to be on the watch against certain employers, even while not being too aggressive. The model was the Catholic feminism that had developed in Europe during the 1890's. A healthful, moral environment was the best protection for the dignity of women workers.<sup>646</sup> As per many organizations of the working class at this time, the working women's associations of the *Fédération* also operated mutual aid societies.

The women's unions in Hull had some success in its dealings with employers, however, they had a difficult beginning. In April, 1916, seamstresses at Smart-Woods struck over unmet salary demands; the strike was unsuccessful.<sup>647</sup> In May, 1920, the women's unions had a couple of successes. Seamstresses won a wage increase at Sparks and Harrison. Women lay teachers won an increase of 20% in wages, a salary scale that increased according to experience, and the use of substitute teachers in case of illness.<sup>648</sup> This success among teachers was not the first sign of organization among teachers. An inspector of schools named Gilman had referred to associations of rural, lay women teachers in Wakefield and Hull, as far back as 1898.<sup>649</sup> The more recent effort stemmed from the work of the *Association ouvrière* and the *Fédération nationale Saint-Jean Baptiste*. In 1919, 70 or so local, lay teachers formed the *Cercle des institutrices*, which seems to have played mostly an educational role. Also during the 1920's, an organization of alumnae from the local teacher's college was formed. Called the *Amicale de l'École normale de Hull*, the organization provided educational and social opportunities for local, women teachers.<sup>650</sup> Later in the decade, under the leadership of Emma Massie, teachers resumed meeting for recreational and social purposes. Only in the 1930's, under the leadership of Massie, did unionism among Hull teachers become successful, as per developments elsewhere in Quebec. The first, useful collective agreement for Hull teachers only came about during the years of WWII, at the same time as union recognition occurred for many Canadian workers.<sup>651</sup>

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<sup>645</sup> A useful summary of *Fédération* activities can be found in Latham, *op. cit.*, p. 89-91.

<sup>646</sup> Gérin-Lajoie, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

<sup>647</sup> *Le Droit*, April 29, 1916, p. 3.

<sup>648</sup> Joseph Bonhomme, *Notre-Dame de Hull*, Ottawa: Le Droit, 1931, p. 88.

<sup>649</sup> 1990: *Une étape. . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>650</sup> Bonhomme, *Notre-Dame de Hull*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>651</sup> Chantal Berniquez, *Emma Massie: l'enseignement et les associations*, Hull: MédiaRecherche, 1990, and; Latham, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

### The Match Workers' Strike<sup>652</sup>

One of the most successful of the women's unions in Hull was the match workers' union. This union was involved in major conflicts with E.B. Eddy in 1919 and 1924. The second of these appears to have been the first, (at least, first known official) strike by Quebec women.

The first conflict began in December, 1919. In response to high demand, the company proposed to introduce two shifts in the factory. The second shift would have finished at 8 p.m., unacceptable to the girls and young women at Eddy. In return, the workers proposed a 10-hour day for a two-month period, with just one shift. This proved insufficient for the company, so it re-proposed the double shift, which the workers continued to reject. On Saturday, December 13, the company closed the factory and began negotiating, with Achille Morin representing the workers. The company offered the workers a wage increase of 25 percent and a work week of 44.5 hours, but still with a double shift. Workers also would have to sign agreements accepting these terms as long as the company deemed necessary. Furthermore, they had to agree to leave the union or face immediate layoff. The workers refused. The factory opened again on December 16, this time with Arthur Myre and Denis Murphy negotiating on behalf of the workers. The workers won a pay increase of 50%, days off on four religious holidays, and union recognition. In return, the workers promised to work the double shift for three months, and a deal was signed to this effect.

In 1921, E.B. Eddy's second wife died. The Eddy company became the property of Eddy's brother-in-law, Harry, and R.B. Bennett, who served as Canada's Prime Minister during the depression of the 1930's.<sup>653</sup> This was to prove important as the new owners claimed not to be bound by the 1919 agreement; in fact, company management claimed it could not find its copy of the signed 1919 agreement. On September 2, 1924, the company posted notices that it would be lowering wages owing to a decrease in demand. Without consulting their union, the workers walked off the job to demand respect of the 1919 agreement. The company immediately backed down but on September 6, the company closed the factory, locking out the workers. The walkout was led by Donalda Charron. She was what the company called a *contremaîtresse*, a female supervisor who had authority to hire workers. When the company closed the mill on September 6, it obtained the addresses of these *contremaîtresses*, so that it could recall the workers. On September 23, the company made contact with individual workers, asking them to return. If they wanted their jobs back, they would have to sign a form renouncing their membership in their union. The union found out about the company's tactics, and the workers refused to sign the forms. Once again, the factory remained closed. The company now sought to replace the *contremaîtresses* with male supervisors. The issue came to be one of control of the workplace. In addition, this issue provoked the community, particularly the local clergy, concerned that the moral dignity and integrity of the young women would be compromised if they were supervised by men. Three of the local parish priests, excepting Father Carrière, the parish priest of St-Rédempteur, wrote to the company complaining about its intentions. The absence of Carrière was to prove crucial as events unfolded. On September 25, 27, and 29, union chaplains met with company officials, and appeared to come up with overall terms of an agreement, but on September 30, at the behest of Bennett, the apparent agreement of the day before was squelched.

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<sup>652</sup> The best sources about the match workers' strike are: *La Contre-grève chez Eddy: historique, appréciation, documents*, Ottawa: *Le Droit*, 1924; Michelle Lapointe, *op. cit.*; Michael Martin, "Pioneer Union Leader in Quebec: Donalda Charron of Hull", *Catholic New Times*, January 19, 1992.

<sup>653</sup> Denise Latrémouille, *D'or et d'azur, de sueur et de labeur*, Hull, 2000, p. 70.

Negotiations stalled for nine days. On October 10, Bennett went to meet the union's chaplain and, on October 14, a new proposal was made to the union. While there was some progress, the workers would still have to sign a form renouncing the union, and the *contremaîtresse* positions would disappear. The union rejected these measures. On October 17, the company complained to the clergy about its meddling in company business.

On October 20, an incident occurred at the picket line when the company's superintendant, Arthur Wood, tried to run through the picket line with his car. The car was stopped by a male passer-by not involved in the strike. The police arrived, and escorted Wood to his safety. The provincial government appointed a third party to investigate the conflict. On October 22, the company informed the government that it had no intention of negotiating with the union. On October 27, however, negotiations began anew with the union. While the company insisted on removing the right of *contremaîtresses* to hire and fire, it did promise to rehire them.

Then, events took place that revealed the divisions within the clergy about supporting the match workers. On Sunday, November 2, Carrière, the parish priest of St-Rédempteur, returned to Hull from an absence. He argued from the pulpit on behalf of the company. The next day, company representatives went to Carrière, and said it was ready to rehire everyone except Donald Charron, who led the original walkout. The other *contremaîtresses* would be rehired, although they could not hire nor fire, and the form renouncing the union would be dropped as a requirement of the company. Would the union accept these terms? Put it in writing, Carrière said to the company. The next day, however, the company pressed its advantage, and refused to rehire the *contremaîtresses*. Charron had been left out to dry by Carrière. She was offered a full-time job with the union, which Charron refused since she insisted on keeping her *contremaîtresse* job. Still, this was not good enough for the company; it still wanted to fire all the *contremaîtresses*. For the union chaplain, Father Bonhomme the negative role played by Carrière was crucial. Writing to the chaplain-general of the Catholic unions, Bonhomme wrote:

“La compagnie se voyant approuvée par un curé de la ville a décidé de poursuivre sa lutte et d'écraser le syndicat. À partir de ce moment, elle a cessé de tenir compte du syndicat et de son aumônier. Ce fut Monsieur l'abbé Carrière qui devint l'homme de confiance. Après l'entente, elle exigea de chaque demoiselle qui voulait entrer au département de se munir d'une lettre de Monsieur le curé. Celui-ci s'est prêté avec joie à cette triste manoeuvre. Il n'a pas manqué une seule occasion dans la suite pour dénigrer le syndicat. Comme la plupart des ouvrières de ce département appartiennent à la paroisse de Saint-Rédempteur, elles ont suivi l'exemple et les conseils de leur curé pour se tourner contre l'union qui les avait protégées depuis six ans. Aujourd'hui, notre syndicat compte à peine les officières. Il a perdu les trois cents membres qui formaient ce beau groupement.”<sup>654</sup>

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<sup>654</sup> Archives Deschâtelets, Fonds de Notre-Dame de Hull Parish, JC 4026. C21M, article #7, Rapport sur l'an 1924/1925.

Author's Adaptation:

“Once the company received the approval of a local parish priest, it decided to continue the fight, and crush the union. From that moment on, the company stopped heeding the union and its chaplain. Father Carrière became the contact-point for the company. After the ultimate agreement, the company demanded that each employee obtain a letter of reference from Father Carrière, a move in which he gladly collaborated. Afterwards, Carrière never missed a chance to denigrate the union. Since most of the match workers belong to Saint-Rédempteur parish, they followed Carrière's advice, and turned against the union that had protected them for six years. Today, the union barely maintains its officers, and has lost its 300 members.”

Nevertheless, community pressure started to have an effect on the company. Local merchants in Hull began to boycott Eddy, as did wholesalers in Ottawa. In November, Hull's municipal council intervened, and threatened Eddy with removing its right to exclusive use of some municipal roads. On November 11, municipal council offered its services to mediate the dispute, an offer that both parties accepted.<sup>655</sup> On November 20, the company finally agreed to restore the 1919 contract, its only gain being that the *contremaîtresses* could not hire nor fire. For its part, the company abandoned its form renouncing the union; in fact, it provided official recognition of the union, once again. All employees and the *contremaîtresses*, including Donalda Charron, were rehired. The agreement was signed by company representatives, by the members of municipal council, and by union representatives, including Charron. One of the reasons that the company bent was community support for the strikers, both in Hull and in the rest of Quebec. The strikers also received the support of the local and national bodies of the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress, even though the strikers were from a Catholic union.<sup>656</sup>

1924 was a momentous year for Donalda Charron, as well, for other reasons. She was taking a train to Blackburn Hamlet, east of Ottawa, when she slipped embarking the train. She had to have a leg removed and replaced with a prosthetic leg. She continued to work in later years, however, first in the laundry room of the local hospital, then as a seamstress at the Woods factory in Hull. During WWII, over 60 years of age, she led another strike, this time at Woods.<sup>657</sup>

All this effort to restore the 1919 contract proved to have only a short-term value. In 1928, Eddy sold out to an English concern, Bryant and May, which centralized its match works in Pembroke. The local, with its 300 members, moreover, could not survive the strike as its members left the Catholic union, encouraged to do so by Father Carrière, parish priest at St-Rédempteur.

### Confédération des travailleurs catholiques Canada (CTCC)

In the aftermath of World War I, it appeared that the Catholic unions of Quebec had the wind in their sails. With the encouragement of the clergy, over a period of several years, Catholic unionists organized a central body, the CTCC, to represent their interests. It might be useful, at this point, to summarize the ideology of clerical involvement in the Catholic unions. This involvement was motivated by a fear of socialism and communism, by anti-American nationalism, and by a preference for negotiated and arbitrated labour settlements, rather than by

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<sup>655</sup> Hull Municipal Library, *Procès-verbaux*. . . , *op. cit.*, p. 243.

<sup>656</sup> Fonds de N-D de Hull, *op. cit.*, JC 4026, C21M, article #57.

<sup>657</sup> Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 9; and Latrémouille, *op. cit.*, p. 71.



recourse to the strike. The inspiration was the social doctrine of the Church, which eschewed both religious neutrality and the inevitability of class conflict. Social reform must involve moral reform, the triumph of Christian charity, and where necessary, the active intervention of the state. The model to be sought was corporatism, as had been seen in the corporations of the Middle Ages, where master and worker were joined in one enterprise. Since the model was, in essence, moral, then it was important and right that the clergy be involved in Catholic unions. It should be pointed out that the nationalism involved was pan-Canadian. It was thought applicable to Catholics throughout Canada, not just in Quebec, but bishops elsewhere in Canada, including in French Canada outside Quebec, saw little need to support the Catholic unions. The international unions fit the bill in terms of the social doctrine of the Church, so these bishops thought.

Over three years, the CTCC formed. At a convention in Trois-Rivières in 1919, the Catholic unions nominated an executive to speak collectively on their behalf. In 1920, a Chicoutimi convention mandated a committee to produce a draft constitution of the CTCC. Between September 24 and 28 in 1921, 220 delegates from 80 organizations met in Hull to establish the CTCC. The meeting was held at the *Bourse du Travail*. Pierre Beaulé, a machinist from Quebec City, was voted president, while Achille Morin was named vice-president.<sup>658</sup> Resolutions discussed touched on workplace health, minimum wages for women, changes to industrial relations laws, and limiting working hours.<sup>659</sup> The CTCC was organized such that each union local had three memberships: in the local central body; in the national federation devoted to the particular industry; and in the national, central body.

During the following August, the CTCC held its *Semaine sociale du Canada*, a week-long meeting of conferences to discuss social issues, once again at the *Bourse du Travail*. Speakers such as Achille Morin and local priests, however, complained about apathy of Catholic workers in Hull towards the Catholic unions.<sup>660</sup> In fact, no sooner had the CTCC formed in an atmosphere of optimism than spirits began to sag. In effect, the CTCC ran smack-dab into the recession of 1924/25. In a report to the chaplain-general of the CTCC, Hull chaplain Bonhomme complained about the lack of support of certain members of the clergy for Catholic unions. Bonhomme complained that local clergy were constructing buildings using labour from American unions, and that the local clergy seemed ill-disposed to help the cause of local, Catholic unions. He also complained about the situation of the women match workers' union following the 1924 strike. In fact, there were now only ten members in this union, all of them elected officers. The figures for the other locals were not much more encouraging: 19 policemen, 20 paper workers, 25 masons, 28 carpenters, 10 plumbers, 10 store clerks, 30 office workers, 25 labourers, 12 seamstresses, and 5 female paper workers. Bonhomme counted a total of 194 workers in the CTCC unions in Hull at the end of 1924/1925.<sup>661</sup>

By 1928, the situation had improved somewhat locally. The new archbishop of Ottawa, Forbes, issued directives to clergy requiring that they employ Catholic unions on their construction projects. The *Association ouvrière de Hull* was replaced with a secretariat for

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<sup>658</sup> Jacques Rouillard, *Les syndicats nationaux au Québec de 1900 à 1930*, Quebec City: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1979, p. 219, 220.

<sup>659</sup> Maltais, *op. cit.*, p. 117, 118.

<sup>660</sup> *Semaine sociale du Canada*, 3<sup>e</sup> session, Ottawa, 1922, Capital et travail, Montreal: Bibliothèque de l'Action française, 1923, p. 260-263.

<sup>661</sup> Fonds de Notre-Dame de Hull, *op. cit.*, JC 4026, C21M, article #7.

Catholic unions covering both Ottawa and Hull, reversing the typical spillover influence of Ottawa politics into Hull.<sup>662</sup> This did give a boost to the local, Catholic construction unions.

Nevertheless, the general situation in Hull was similar to the situation elsewhere in Quebec. In spite of initial optimism after WWI, growth of Catholic unions was slow during the 1920's. Here are useful figures from the federal Department of Labour as to numbers of unionists.<sup>663</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Catholic unionists</u>	<u>Number of other Unionists</u>
1921	8,003	44,057
1922	10,631	42,173
1923	12,102	48,659
1924	9,718	45,202
1925	7,816	46,495
1926	10,942	41,748
1927	11,983	41,566

Of 240 strikes conducted in Quebec in the 1920's, only 32, or 13%, were conducted by Catholic unions. Union membership in Quebec continued to usually mean membership in an American union. The areas of strength for the Catholic unions were in the Saguenay, the St. Maurice Valley, and most of all, in the Quebec City region, where the Knights of Labour and the pre-CTCC, national unions had been strongest. The Quebec City region now became the chief heir to the nationalist tradition, as manifested in the Catholic unions.

The success that local, Catholic unions did enjoy involved active support by the clergy. For the *petite-bourgeoisie*, Catholic unions represented a useful innovation, certainly less threatening than other unions, and one that more closely resembled the class interests of the *petite-bourgeoisie*. This was also its limit. During the depression and WWII, Catholic unions secularized and radicalized, increasingly behaving like any other union, American or Canadian. The overall objective of corporatism came to be discredited, as corporatism came to be associated with the Vichy government of wartime France, the Salazar régime in Portugal, and other fascist phenomena. Workers knew this, and they either pushed the Catholic unions to the left, remained in American unions, or joined communist unions. Nonetheless, during the 1920s, Hull workers did play an important part in the creation of a labour central in Quebec that eventually became effective, while remaining nationalist. It did take considerable time, however, for this finally to occur.

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<sup>662</sup> Gaffield, editor, *op. cit.*, p. 398, 309.

<sup>663</sup> Latham, *op. cit.*, p.77

## CONCLUSION

In this study, we have seen how Hull developed, first as an agricultural community, then as a centre of the forestry industry, then as an urban centre against the backdrop of the emergence of the autonomous Canadian state and two industrial revolutions. We have seen how Hull became a working class community, similar to other Canadian, working class communities such as Trois-Rivières, Drummondville, Hamilton, or Sudbury. Hull workers used their culture to mitigate the negative impacts of industrial capitalism and to make their lives better. This culture manifested itself in activities of family, neighbourhood, parish, municipality, cooperative, club, association, charity, political party, public services, and, of course, unions. As well, this culture involved not just men but intimately, as well, women and children.

For a theoretical perspective for this study, we borrowed two ideas from British scholars: the first, that of E.P. Thompson, that workers were agents of their own culture, not just victims of capitalism; the second, that of Raymond Williams, that the culture of workers was distinct from that of people in other classes. Sometimes, agency and culture of workers worked in collaboration with those of other classes: farmers, bourgeois, and *petits-bourgeois*; at other times, in opposition; and at still other times, on planes that did not intersect.

The working class culture of Hull plumbed its roots, as did workers elsewhere during the industrial revolutions, in pre-industrial traditions of funeral societies, guilds, *confréries*, *compagnonnages*, mutual aid societies, secret societies, and religious organizations. The working class culture of Hull, as per elsewhere as well, also was fed by violence, nationalism, and the myth that inspired workers.

Hull's working class culture manifested itself in two kinds of agency where workers undertook specific action to improve their lives: formal and informal. Formal agency was seen in collective organizations of workers: unions, political parties, cooperatives, firefighting brigades and fire insurance schemes, life and disability insurance schemes which workers organized in mutual aid societies, and some sports and leisure activities. The *petite-bourgeoisie* and the bourgeoisie also led organizations that did offer benefits to workers, for example, parishes, municipality, and political parties, even though these organizations were also the site of conflicts among classes.

The report card with respect to workers' sports and leisure activities where they were formally organized in Hull, however, is ambiguous. As well, it raises larger social questions still relevant today. While in many cases, these activities were led and organized by workers to their advantage; at other times, they were organized by other classes, the better to control and direct workers. As our period drew to a close in the 1920's, Hull participated in the emergence of mass media and mass consumption society. This produced material benefits for workers, but also might also have attenuated workers' desire for social change to improve their lot, and increased control by other classes over workers. A similar ambiguity exists with respect to public services, many of which were useful to workers who were adamant in obtaining them, but which also exposed workers to greater control and direction by other classes. At the same time, the region also lagged in terms of the development of public services, partly owing to its proximity to Ottawa. On the other hand, this same proximity to Ottawa also worked to the benefit of Hull's development in other areas. The proximity of Ottawa to Hull was, and still is even today, an overwhelming reality. Its overall impact on the working class, however, was nebulous and difficult to seize with certainty.

The reality of Hull being a working class community, perceived as such within Hull and elsewhere, was evident since its population was mostly comprised of workers, with only small numbers among the other classes. This meant that any community, social, public, or even business endeavour aimed at the Hull public necessarily involved the members of the working class as beneficiaries and participants, even if not as its organizers and leaders.

The second type of working class agency was informal. It included family, neighbourhood, and geographic -- and to a lesser extent -- social mobility of workers. French-Canadian nationalism also was sometimes a source of strength for Hull's workers, sometimes a liability, and other times irrelevant, depending whether it came from the right or left. At least in its beginnings, Hull took part in the violence and myth that defined the region as a frontier, forestry community. The Ottawa Valley lumberjack became part of the national myth of French Canadians, which was indeed exported elsewhere in Quebec, Canada and even on the continent, in fact, wherever French-Canadians lived or worked. The violence and myth surrounding the forestry, combined with the social position of the bosses in the company towns of the Ottawa Valley, including early Hull, made Hull sometimes appear as the community in the mythic, American western dominated by one or a few powerful men.

Alongside the self-image of Hull, and its image to others, must be added the proximity to Ottawa and its impact on Hull. This impact on Hull could be seen in the employment opportunities offered to Hull workers, in the physical and social effects of Ontario's Prohibition, and in the skewed development of Hull, to summarize using only a few examples. We must add the ever-present reality of fire and its effects on the community and on individuals of the working class in Hull, including the relentless process of de-industrialization that began after the Great Fire of 1900, elements that also directly affected Hull's workers.

Hull's working class reality and image at times embarrassed other classes, especially its *petite-bourgeoisie*, for whom the image of Hull as a roistering, working class community was most annoying, for example, during the perpetual, public debate about the quantity of bars in Hull, a debate that continues even today. Working class culture in Hull, in fact, was distinct from the cultures of the other classes: farmers, *petite-bourgeoisie*, and bourgeoisie. These distinctions showed up in formal and informal ways, collective or individual, organized or spontaneous. Sometimes classes in Hull collaborated on certain issues, while inevitably, they clashed on other questions.

We provided a Canadian context for understanding the development of Hull. The first industrial revolution corresponded, generally, with the development of forestry and sawmilling locally. The second industrial revolution corresponded approximately to the development of hydroelectric power and the pulp and paper industry. As part of the Canadian context, the development of the autonomous, Canadian state also had a direct impact on Hull workers, especially owing to the proximity of Hull to the National Capital.

If we have succeeded in elucidating the working class culture of one small, Canadian town, Hull, Quebec, and how it was related to the development of industrial capitalism and its resulting society, then we will have made a small, scientific contribution. If this approach works at a 'micro' level such as in Hull, why not repeat the approach for Trois-Rivières or Drummondville, Hamilton or Sudbury, or for other, Canadian, working class communities? Combined, these studies will give us a good idea of the history of the working class of Canada, with its regional and local variations, the class that does constitute the majority of Canadian society.

Hull is still a working class community, although it does not define itself as such to as great an extent as during our period. Rather, people conceive of Hull as representing a particular version of Quebec life, or as a middle class or public servants' town, or life lived in the shadow of the Nation's Capital. In fact, most Hull citizens are workers. Class awareness of this appears to be subterranean, not very evident, as it is also for many other Canadians today, regardless of objective reality. Understanding class during the third, industrial revolution in our contemporary times is beyond the scope of the present study. Nevertheless, understanding class during the course of the first, two industrial revolutions, when both workers and others identified workers as constituting a distinct class seeking deliberately to improve its social position, as in Hull, might help us understand the nature of social class in our own time.

## ANNEX — A GENEALOGY OF WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS

### Introduction

As Hull was industrializing, Hull workers, as workers elsewhere in Canada and in the Western world, organized to protect themselves against the vicissitudes of industrial capitalism. There were several factors, however, that mitigated against workers, among them, the lack of universal suffrage, the repression of unions, and the illiteracy of many workers. So workers looked backwards to their ancient traditions, including the organizations that workers had created over hundreds of years. This annex explores the organizations that workers created prior to the industrial revolutions. While understanding this history is not strictly necessary to understanding the history of workers in Hull, it is of interest to students of the working class, generally speaking. This history was part of the mutualist tradition to which Hull workers referred during industrialization, as did their *confrères* elsewhere in the Western world.

The tradition of mutualism must be understood in the context of the history of work and of the history of workers. It is reasonable to posit some axioms about the history of work and of workers. Firstly, work was always organized in some fashion or another; it had a social structure and was part of the larger culture. Secondly, the organization of work changed over time. Thirdly, the history of work, and the changing organization of work are part of the history of development. This is the context in which workers created their organizations, thus they merit some thought.

### Pre-history

The historian works with the written record. Thus, the pre-history of work presents obvious problems. The lack of documentation forces the historian to make observations from the history of the empires of the Mediterranean world and the Mid-east, often using archaeological sources. In this period, the number of people who could be called workers seems to have increased, as did their conditions of servitude to their masters, coincidentally with the development of large-scale agriculture and irrigation.<sup>664</sup>

Prior to these empires, the historian steps gingerly into the domains of the anthropologist and the archaeologist. Using little specific evidence, we conclude that work was barely distinguished from the collection and hunting of food, that the technique that did exist formed a part of magic and priestly functions, and that divisions of labour that may have existed by sex and age can be only understood partially.<sup>665</sup>

### Slavery

With the growth of the empires of the Mid-east emerged the conquering state with its power to subjugate masses of people to the condition of slavery. This was the reality for most work during these periods. Most work was ensured for property-owners by means of slavery. In the view of the American, 19th century abolitionist, William Blake:

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<sup>664</sup> Marcel David, *Les Travailleurs et le sens de leur histoire*, Paris: Cujas, 1967, p. 156.

<sup>665</sup> *Ibid.* p. 156.

“One of the most obvious causes of this is to be found in the almost incessant wars which were carried on in the early periods of the world between tribes and nations, in which the prisoners taken were either slain or reduced to slavery.”<sup>666</sup>

Other scholars have argued that, while warfare was an important cause of slavery, the roots of slavery went to the family itself and the practice of primogeniture, by which the eldest-born son inherited all the property of the father. Children and younger branches of the family lived in a precarious state of servitude to the father-master; in fact, children could be sold into slavery by their fathers.<sup>667</sup> Other sources of slavery included piracy, non-payment of debts, and breeding. Whatever its causes, slavery had a long existence, existing well before the time of the great lawgivers of the ancient western world: Moses of the Hebrews, Solon of the Greeks, and King Numa of the Romans. In fact, most work in the ancient world was performed by slaves.

Slaves did stage armed revolts, as did Spartacus and Eunus in ancient Rome, even if they did meet bloody and futile endings. Except for some improvements to the condition of free workers in ancient Greece and Rome, workers were held down by the attitude of ancient societies that manual work was demeaning and had to be extracted by force, and that it was demeaning for free men to take orders.<sup>668</sup>

### Greco-Roman Civilization

Ancient Greece represents the birthplace of modern civilization, including democracy among the free men of Athens and other Greek cities. Nevertheless, even in this society of free men, the base edifice of economic life was slavery. Osborne Ward estimated that in Athens in 300 B.C., of a total population of 515,000, only from 9,000 to 21,000 were citizens with full political and property rights. There were 100,000 foreigners living in Athens, 400,000 slaves, with the remainder being free, but without full rights of the city, what Romans called the plebs. These numbered about 84,000, if we use the larger figure of 21,000 free citizens.<sup>669</sup>

Among these free men were craftsmen or artisans, who left evidence of burial societies which appear to have been fraternal in nature.<sup>670</sup> Among the most prominent of these societies were those that grouped boatmen, who would have been workers important to the inter-city trade of Greece.<sup>671</sup> The burial society among free workers is a leitmotif of the history of the western worker. The need for a decent and respectful burial within religious norms forced the poor and working people within a craft, often related by family, to group together in order to ensure a decent funeral.<sup>672</sup> The ancient burial societies in Greece also appear to have been political societies, and were organized for mutual benefit. They were known as *hetairai* and *hetaroi*,

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<sup>666</sup> William O. Blake, *The History of Slavery and the Slave Trade, Ancient and Modern*, New York: Haskell House of Publishers Ltd., 1969, p. 17.

<sup>667</sup> For example, Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1956; Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac, *Histoire des classes ouvrières et des classes bourgeoises*, Paris: Auguste Desprez, Éditeur, 1838; Osborne Ward, *The Ancient Lowly, Volume 1*, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company Cooperative, 1907.

<sup>668</sup> David, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>669</sup> Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>670</sup> Alvin Schmidt, *Fraternal Organizations*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980, p. 5.

<sup>671</sup> Étienne Martin Saint-Léon, *Histoire des corporations de métier*, Paris: Félix Aican, 3rd edition, 1922, p. 2

<sup>672</sup> Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

female and male associates of the free labouring class.<sup>673</sup> There may have been such societies among masons, marble cutters, carvers, and religious image makers, in addition to those of the boatmen.<sup>674</sup> There is not much documentation about these organizations in ancient Greece. By inference, we learn more about ancient workers' organizations via Roman civilization, which left more historical documentation about the subject. Indeed, owing to the existing documentation about Rome, we learn much about plausible, historical processes throughout the Mediterranean and Mid-eastern worlds in the development of work and workers' organizations.

As with Athens and other Greek cities, it is difficult to under-estimate the impact of slavery in the social organization of Rome. From the standpoint of numbers alone, various estimates have 50% of the Roman Empire being slave at the time of Claudius during the fifth and sixth decades of the Common Era. The proportion of slaves was still higher in Italy, that is 2/3 of the population. Another estimate has that slaves represented 3/4 of the population of the city of Rome between the conquest of Greece in 146 B.C. and the rule of Alexander Severus, from 222 to 235 in the Common Era.<sup>675</sup>

Manual labour was held in low regard, and deemed to be necessary to extract by force. Free men were not required to work. Those that did work however, worked alongside artisans, among whose number were freed ex-slaves called 'freedmen', foreigners, and even slaves. By definition, such artisans were available for hire in return for money or barter, however, the organization of most work by slavery meant that free artisans faced difficult competition.

The reality of slavery lay against a backdrop of hundreds of years of class conflict between the patricians, descendants of the oldest and earliest families of Romans, and the plebs, the popular classes of Rome. The patrician class descended from the original families that had founded Rome. Students of ancient civilizations describe a process whereby the fathers and masters of families grouped together in *phatries*, as they were called in Greece, or *curies*, as they were called in Rome. These confederated into tribes, which then founded cities for religious, economic, and military purposes.<sup>676</sup> Servants attached to the various families were known as clients. These clients eventually became part of the plebian population, but in the early days of Rome, clients did have access to the city including its religious usages. Religion was central to the lives of the ancient Roman patrons and their clients. Not all, however, practiced the state religion, or were even allowed to enter the city. Such people grouped together outside the walls of the city. They included later arrivals to Rome, nomads, runaway slaves, freedmen, foreigners, illegitimate children, outcasts from the founding families, younger branches of the founding families who had little chance of acceding to family property, descendants of the original clients, peasant farmers, soldiers, sometimes, mercenaries. This was the plebian class whose struggle with the patrician class was persistent. Eventually, the *plebs* successfully entered the city. From its original position of holding the monopoly of public offices in republican Rome, the patrician class was forced to open membership to offices to the plebs.

Perpetually at war with its neighbours, firstly in Italy, then in the rest of the Mediterranean world, Rome was a militaristic society where contribution to the state was the most highly-cherished value. The Roman citizen was, first and foremost, a soldier. The Roman

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<sup>673</sup> Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit.*, p. 2, and Ward, *op. cit.* p. 72.

<sup>674</sup> Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>675</sup> Blake, *op. cit.*, p. 53. Ward used an estimate of 2/3 of the Roman population being slave (p.302). Modern scholarship may have lent more precision to these estimates, but the important point is to recognize that more than half the population was slave whose labour was essential, to ancient economies.

<sup>676</sup> See, in particular, Fustel de Coulanges, *op. cit.*



heritage to western civilization, lays in mechanisms of the state, mechanisms that are still with us: taxation, law, military organization, roads and communication systems, bureaucracies, and the pursuit of power by citizen-participants in the state.

As the Roman state grew in size and importance, the patrician class gobbled up the new, conquered lands and their peoples, the latter in the form of slaves. This exacerbated the conflict between the patricians and the now-proportionately diminished class of plebs. In reaction, two patrician politicians led counter-movements aimed at agrarian reform in the conquered lands, the legendary Gracchi brothers. The older Gracchus, Tiberius, born in 162 B.C.E., was killed in 133 B.C.E., while his younger brother, Gaius, born in 154 B.C.E., was killed during a riot in 121 B.C.E. The brothers did enjoy some success with their land reforms, while many of the ideas of the younger Gracchus eventually came to pass after his death.<sup>677</sup> Like the figure, Spartacus, who had led a slave revolt in Rome, legend outlived achievements, as the name of the Gracchi continued to resonate with the cause of common people throughout the ages.

This picture emerges of later, republican Rome and of imperial Rome. A state devoted to military conquest, owing to its development of techniques of state, supported a patrician class, whose wealth grew enormously with the addition of conquered lands and slaves to its property, thus exacerbating the centuries-old conflict between patrician and plebs, indeed marginalizing the latter. The latter class reacted to this process using its own means. The class conflict between patricians and plebs was reflected in a bewildering set of political arrangements and traditions. Nevertheless, in spite of public institutions that were meant to serve the interests of the plebs, Rome continued to be dominated by the patrician class.

An area of more immediate interest to us are the associations of the plebs organized around economic activity. One example of organization among free workers that had always existed in Rome was found among the artisans whose work was essential to the military success of Rome as were its citizen-soldiers. These were the artisans who made swords and shields, called *aerarii*, and those who built weapons of destruction such as catapults of wood, called *tignarii*. These artisans were organized into groups called colleges that received official state and religious recognition, and probably held a measure of political power and rights, including that its members be absolved from actual military duty, since they were needed to make the instruments used by Roman armies.<sup>678</sup>

Similarly, ancient colleges existed for other artisans, among them: potters, goldsmiths, dyers, shoemakers, and drapers. It is not likely, however, that these colleges were invested with the same honours and powers as were practitioners of the crafts directly related to the military arts, given the ancient world's disdain among ruling classes for practitioners of manual labour.<sup>679</sup> Nevertheless, the right to associate, *jus coendi*, was recognized in ancient Roman law in the Twelve Tables of King Numa, the first king of Rome who divided artisans into nine orders. The Roman college of artisans was recognized by the Senate, and was composed of all the members of a profession or trade in a given locality, grouped for religious purposes. Some colleges, in fact, were open to foreigners, others to women or slaves, while still others were composed uniquely of slaves or women, this in spite of them having no political rights. The college had a common house, or *schola*, where members met for religious purposes, sacrifice, feast-days and banquets in honour of its patron-god. The member at the base of the college hierarchy was the

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<sup>677</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th edition, 1998, p. 399-401.

<sup>678</sup> Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

*collegiatus*, usually the son of an artisan, or his heir or son-in-law, or sometimes a slave. *Collegiati* were grouped by ten, led by a *decurion*. Curators and trustees administered common property, while the college was led by magistrates. Under the republic at one time, butchers had one free magistrate and one slave magistrate. The college would often arrange for a wealthy patron so as to increase its influence. The college had entry fees and regular membership payments, and could receive legacies and gifts. There is some evidence that the college assumed responsibility for orphans of its members. Martin Saint-Léon wrote that these colleges provided mutual assistance to members in times of need, especially after the penetration of Christian ideas of charity.<sup>680</sup> Much of the money of the college, however, was used for funerals of its members, distributed according to length of membership in the college. Martin Saint-Léon describes in some detail the funeral of a *collegiatus*.

“Accompanied by all the *collegiati*, preceded by musicians and mourners, the body was led to the butcher’s shop and cremated; the ashes were placed in the *columbarium*; a stone inscription related the name, age, trade, and dignity of the deceased. The *collegiati* returned to the home of the deceased to engage in a purification ceremony called the *suffitio*. . . . for nine days, up to a feast called the *silicernium*, college members met for a solemn meal to mourn their loss and exalt the memory of the departed. At certain times of the year called the *parentalia* and the *rosalia*, college members would place offerings at the tomb of their fallen colleague and decorate it with flowers.”<sup>681</sup>

Professional colleges of the artisan class were subjected in latter years of Rome to rigorous administrative controls, for example, limiting membership to just one college, or limiting the number of banquets to one per month. Under imperial rule, professional colleges acquired a different and official role, becoming part of the administration of the Roman state. The mass of free men in Rome were, for the most part, unemployed or under-employed, marginalized as they were by the slave system. Nevertheless, the Empire had to feed and entertain these people; it was this population that was subjected to ‘bread and circuses’. The colleges of some artisans were administered to ensure public order under the policy of ‘bread and circuses’. Thus, public colleges became an important element of subsistence of the people and security of the state. The principal colleges involved boatmen, responsible for transporting wheat from the provinces to Rome, bakers, butchers, and the workers who produced and transported the limestone necessary for public works. These workers were salaried by the state, and were exempted from municipal charges and military duties. Nevertheless, the college, under imperial rule, became a veritable prison; whereas it had enjoyed legal powers during the republic, under the empire, its members were constrained to remain in their positions. Sons, even sons-in-law married to only daughters, were required to continue in their trade, unless they could find replacements. Property was inalienable from the exercise of the trade.

There were a number of private colleges, grouping workers who didn’t work in the essential trades of feeding the plebs. They were not paid by the state, but were subjected increasingly to imperial regulation. Among these were the *argentarii*, or bankers and money lenders, woodworkers, stoneworkers, blanket makers, wine merchants, pottery merchants, doctors, teachers, tailors, drapers, and water carriers. Whereas the attitude of the Roman state

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<sup>680</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27, 28. (author’s adaptation from French to English)

was sometimes one of toleration, sometimes one of suppression of the workers' colleges, by the time of Emperor Alexander Severus, who ruled from 222 to 235 of the Common Era, there were 32 colleges more or less run by the state.<sup>682</sup>

We don't know if the colleges had officially recognized roles of professional regulation, however, there is some evidence of strike-like activity, which the imperial administration worked quickly to squelch.<sup>683</sup> There is some debate among historians about whether or not the colleges originally were primarily religious, or whether they played political roles among the *plebs*. There is no reason why they didn't do both; in fact, the workers' organization was almost always in western history also a religious organization. Once they were a political tool of Roman administration, the artisans' colleges grew more important, even if directed by the state. The workers' college had become a vital cog of the industrial structure of Rome, and in the control of its plebian and slave populations. Eventually, the supply of new slaves for Rome diminished as the limits of Roman conquest were reached.<sup>684</sup> Many slaves were freed, and the growth of Christianity both softened the administration of slavery, and spread ideas of charity and equality among free workers and slaves. Thus, the importance of free workers increased in Rome as the number of available slaves diminished.

## Gaul

Ancient Gaul was the most romanized of the Roman provinces. Conquered by Julius Caesar, Gallic culture was Latin in its customs, language and culture for four and a half centuries before it was detached from the Empire by German invaders in 406 and 412. It would be reasonable to expect the Roman structures of work and industry would also have been present in ancient Gaul, and they were. While some cities had important municipal structures, especially in southern Gaul, Roman culture generally centred on the rural villa. Most work was performed by slaves; while the Romans did not import slavery into Gaul, they made slavery an integral institution.<sup>685</sup> In the cities, colleges of artisans existed, similar to those of Rome itself. Although not as widespread as in the South, there is evidence of collective organization among artisans in Paris and other cities in the North. Archaeological digs conducted in 1715 under Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris uncovered an inscription by Paris boatmen to the Roman god, Jupiter.<sup>686</sup> There is also evidence that Paris butchers had a collective organization in Roman Gaul.<sup>687</sup>

From 406 to 911, Gaul was subjected to invasions by the Germans, Moslems, Huns, and Vikings. Only at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup>, century when the Duchy of Normandy was formally constituted, did the invasions end. During the invasions, Gaul was looted and pillaged, and in the process, Roman institutions disappeared. Gaul was germanized as the new property owners who imposed themselves on the country were Germans. Charlemagne, himself a Frankish German, tried to prevent further invasions by Germans fleeing the Huns from the East by conquering neighboring Germans and christianizing them under the Holy Roman Empire. Even though the empire later disintegrated into a number of independent states, the Empire did diminish German invasions of Gaul.

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<sup>682</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>684</sup> Émile Levasseur, *Histoire des classes ouvrières et de l'industrie en France avant 1789*, Geneva/Paris: Slatkine, 1981, p. 127.

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid*, vol. 2, p. 882, 883.

<sup>686</sup> Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit*, p. 34.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid*, p. 34.

The industrial organization of ancient Gaul, based upon the cities in the South and the rural villas, now became concentrated in the countryside, where “lived in his castle, the great German landholder, loving the great outdoors, hunting, horse races, and arms much more than the refinements of the cities”.<sup>688</sup> Industrial life changed dramatically. Whereas, under Roman Gaul, there was considerable trade based on the Mediterranean cities and exchange of money, the economy of post-Roman Gaul displayed less trade and money exchange. Economic production on behalf of the German landholder often was small-scale and autarchic. Roman Gaul had a considerable class of merchants, bankers, municipal magistrates and officials, and large landowners involved in economic production. Post-Roman Gaul had seigneurs and royal officials too occupied with the dignity inherent in being clergy or warriors to attend to economic life. The working population of Roman Gaul had been slaves working for masters, with an ever-increasing number of freedmen and free men. In post-Roman Gaul, slaves, freedmen, settlers, free men, tenant farmers all rolled up to become serfs working for the lord of the manor whose land they farmed.<sup>689</sup>

Another major change occurred, however, with the status of manual labour. Under Roman Gaul, as elsewhere in the ancient world, manual labour and those who performed it were subjected to considerable disdain. In post-Roman Gaul, a major change started to be felt, the increase in prestige of those who worked. Christian faith had spread first to Roman Gaul, and by the end of the 7th century, through most of Northern Europe. By the 10th century, workers were considered by the Church as part of *ordo laboratorum*, which now had a place in God’s plan for the universe. That Jesus himself had been a carpenter and the son of another carpenter, Joseph, had much to do with the changed status of the person who worked. With this place, legal recognition of rights developed beyond the abject condition of being owned by a slave-holder or landowner.<sup>690</sup>

During the invasions of Gaul, popular classes started grouping together for physical security. Villas became villages, and abbeys, monasteries and convents emerged everywhere. Towns emerged outside of castles and religious institutions that were called burghs; their inhabitants were known as burghers or ‘bourgeois’. Monasteries became the seat of industrial skills and repository of culture. Work was encouraged for all. Besides the liberal arts work of copying books and producing religious artifacts, monasteries’ industrial products included bread, beer, wine, and cheese. Lay brothers from the surrounding towns, or *convers*, were assigned manual labour by the monasteries. Stewards of the lord began to set standards for work produced in the neighboring town, perhaps an impetus for the development of the feudal craft guild.

### Germanic Banquets

Before describing feudalism and its industrial structures, a little digression is in order to discuss another of the roots of working people’s organizations, the germanic or anglo-saxon guilds. For the germanic peoples, the banquet always had had a special place. At banquets where beer and food were shared, alliances were struck, oaths of loyalty sworn among warriors, and vengeance was sworn should participants at the banquet be killed by enemies. Thus, the banquet, in the absence of a state, served to provide fraternity, mutual defence, and assistance.<sup>691</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> Levasseur, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 866 (Author’s adaptation from French to English).

<sup>689</sup> David, *op. cit.*, p. 181, 182.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>691</sup> Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit.*, p. 35, 36, 37.

When did this tradition grow into regularly-constituted guilds? To Martin Saint-Léon, the guild was the result of the melding of the germanic, pagan traditions of the banquet with the Roman college brought north by Christians, mixed with Christian ideas of charity and brotherhood.<sup>692</sup> The guild shows up among Anglo-Saxons in the 7th century when Christianity first triumphed in Anglo-saxon England at which time there also appears written evidence of the existence of guilds.<sup>693</sup>

### Early Guilds

The commonly-known organization of workers during the Middle Ages from the advent of feudalism until the French Revolution was the craft guild. Workers had other organizations as well, but it is important that we first understand the guild.

There were three types of guilds: religious/social guilds, merchant guilds, and craft guilds. The religious/social guilds were the first to appear, and by the 10th century, they are still the only guilds that existed. The *judicia civitatis Londoniae*, written during the régime of Atheslstan from 925 to 940, seems to codify the existence of guilds in London. There also appear to have been guilds in Canterbury. These religious/social guilds seem to have had a role very similar to the role played by banquets within Germanic traditions.<sup>694</sup> They may have been common among knights.

At the start of the 11th century, there appear to have been guilds in England, in Abbotsbury, Exeter, and Cambridge. These guilds held regular meetings to worship God and pray to a patron saint; there was a regular banquet at which local poor participated; mutual aid was provided in case of illness, fire, or travelling; offences towards members were punished by other members; and there were common funeral services.<sup>695</sup>

Religious/social guilds spread throughout England after the Norman conquest of 1066, as did the merchant guilds. The latter played a social role among merchants, as well as providing protection for the members and their goods. Often called a *hanse*, the merchant guild was descended from the organizations of boatmen and merchants who traded on rivers. The *hanses* of several cities might federate, thus becoming powerful social organizations.

The first craft guilds appear in England during the reign of Henry I from 1100 to 1133 among weavers in Oxford, Huntingdon, and London, and among drapers in Winchester. At about the same time in Germany, craft guilds started appearing among weavers, fishermen, bakers, carpenters, and tailors.<sup>696</sup> The craft guilds were administered by elected wardens or aldermen. To join a guild, one had to practice the trade within the town in which one was resident; seldom did outsiders have access to the practice of a trade within a given town. One had to be of good moral conduct, pay entry fees, and normally have served an apprenticeship of seven years, as described by a written contract. In the beginning, guilds held little place for journeymen; the guild was composed mostly of masters and their apprentices, usually one per master. In the 14th century, the development of industry resulted in the growth of a class of proletarian journeymen, called *valets* or *compagnons* in France. The guild held regular meetings, supervised the quality of work and materials used by its members, provided mutual assistance in

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<sup>692</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40.

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40, 41.

<sup>694</sup> Étienne Martin Saint-Léon, *Histoire des corporations de métier*, Paris: Félix Alcan, 1922, p. 42, 43

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid*, p. 44, 45.

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

case of illness or death, and regulated differences among members. Women could join guilds; indeed, within certain trades, especially those related to the garment industry, the majority of guild members might be women.

### Feudalism

As per the guild, feudalism was a German innovation, developed by the Frankish invaders of Gaul. Under the Holy Roman Empire and its descendant states, emperors lacked the means to man their territory for military purposes. The solution was the feudal system, in which fiefdoms were granted to lesser lords in return for supplying soldiers, particularly knights, to the higher-ranking lord.

In our time, to describe an arrangement or situation as feudal is to characterize it as retrograde, indeed oppressive. For the common people of the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, during the later period of feudalism, however feudalism represented an advance. We have seen how Europeans, during the period of invasions after the fall of the Roman Empire, grouped together near abbeys, monasteries, and castles for purposes of security in burghs. Burghers succeeded in an operation of imposing limits on the invaders, warlords, feuding groups of armed men, and seigneurs that dominated Europe. The conquered assimilated the conquerors by acknowledging, usually by force, the sovereignty of landed property held by military or ecclesiastical lords, but at the same time, they obtained rights and privileges for the ruled. How was this operation achieved? By a variety of means described below: the freeing of a large number of serfs; the municipal movement; the development of the central royal power; the development of merchant guilds; and, finally, of greatest concern for a history of the working class, the development of craft guilds.

Much of the impetus for this levelling process between conquerors and the conquered came from the Christian faith, which produced two, great material manifestations during the feudal era: the Crusades and the building of the great Gothic cathedrals. The former united conquerors and conquered in a common mission of liberating the Holy Lands from the Moslems. Besides the levelling impulse this introduced, the Crusades exposed Europeans to the knowledge of the Moslem world, and to trade in the East and the Mediterranean, as well as ending the isolation of Western Europeans by making travel more common. As for the great cathedrals, their scope alone required new industrial structures. The completion of a cathedral could take several generations, and required grouping people of many skills from different regions. These new industrial structures implied important social changes.

Feudalism produced liberation for many common folk, firstly, the serfs. A certain number of serfs had always gained freedom by escaping to neighbouring seigneuries; one easily imagines a certain incentive to do so, if only to escape local wars. The Church increasingly freed serfs to simplify administration of domains, while crusading serfs could also gain freedom, however, the biggest incentive for freeing serfs was economic. Population growth among poor peasants meant a need for development of new agricultural land, which also corresponded to seigneur's need for money. The latter became increasingly preoccupied with the economy of their land. Therefore, peasant serfs received increasing freedom in return for payments, an improvement over their status as abject property of the lord.<sup>697</sup>

In the urban areas of France, another movement was taking place, the municipal movement. Roughly on the same timeline as the liberation of rural serfs began, that is, during

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<sup>697</sup> Émile Levasseur, *op. cit.*, volume 2, p. 888, 889.

the 12th and 13th centuries, burghers were acquiring the right to administer their municipalities, often from their lords who had departed to fight the Crusades. This right they obtained, sometimes by revolt and force, but more often by contract with the seigneur, regular payment of money to the lord. In return, the burghers could elect mayors and aldermen, operate militia and police, and collect taxes. For the most part, these municipal privileges were acquired by the wealthy burghers who had lived longest in the respective towns and were grouped in merchants guilds.

The king often resisted the acquisition of municipal privileges within his domain, but he also understood that what weakened local lords strengthened the central power. By a variety of legal means, it came to be that to create a municipality required royal approval, and that municipal authority flowed from royal authority. Many French municipalities came to acquire the status of *villes royales*. Some bourgeois acquired the title of *bourgeoisie royale*, which gave them the right to royal justice in return for payment to the king, allowing them to escape the justice of local seigneurs. Local seigneurs reacted to royal manouvres by created *villes franchises* and *villes neuves*, by which they tried to attract inhabitants to their territories, and extended certain municipal privileges to inhabitants of these new towns, in return for regular payments of money.<sup>698</sup>

As part of increasing political and judicial rights for the bourgeoisie, there operated another phenomenon, this more specifically in the economic realm, the emergence of merchant and craft guilds. Both types of guild can claim a common ancestry. For the historian of the working class, it is tempting to separate the evolution of the merchant class from that of the craft class. In fact, the two developed together, often responding to and creating the same movements. The crucible for the evolution of both types of guild was the municipal movement, for the guild extended privileges to those who practiced a trade or engaged in commerce within a locality. Thus, organizations of Paris boatmen of Roman times eventually evolved into the *hanse* of feudal times which had the monopoly of trade, for example, on the River Seine into Paris. The differences between a merchant guild and a craft guild were less of quality than of quantity. To be a member of the former required more money; the principles, however, were the same, that is, monopoly privilege to carry on an economic activity within a locality, payment to a seigneur for the right to do so, and the right of guild members to govern the said economic activity.

In France, shoemakers and cobblers in Rouen, in Normandy, were acknowledged by King Henry I of England, at the beginning of the 12th century, as having special rights and privileges of ancient duration.<sup>699</sup> This appears to be one of the first, French craft guilds, indeed appearing to exist even before those of Paris. Guilds for bakers, similar to those of butchers, whose role in feeding the people of towns and cities was vital, also appear to be among the first guilds. Also among the first guilds would have been those related to the clothing industry. The spate of cathedral and castle building in feudal times meant that craft guilds also appeared during feudal times among the building trades.

Guilds drew their authority from the municipality where they were located. The job of the guild was to ensure the effective operation of the trade, and exclusive control over the exercise of the trade in the municipality. The members of the guild then sought the approval of the local seigneur for its constitution. The guild had the threefold structure of apprentices, journeymen, and masters. To join the last category often required payments, a part of which went to the

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<sup>698</sup> *Ibid*, 890, 891.

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid*, p. 73, 74.

seigneur. The interests of the guild were served by stewards elected by the masters, theoretically at least, in the interest of all those involved in the trade.

In France, around 1260, the guild system was codified by Étienne Boileau. *Prévôt* of Paris, Boileau was the principal magistrate of the town and the representative of the king; as such, he administered the finances of Paris. His *Livre des métiers* described the regulation of one hundred trades and professions in Paris. Boileau asked representatives of the various occupations to report to his clerks, who wrote down the description of the regulations. At times, representatives of the guilds pleaded special cases; sometimes, these were included as part of the codification.

Émile Levasseur summarized the later feudalism, and its accompanying municipal and guild movements as movements of liberation of common folk. “The 12th and 13th centuries were a time of renaissance, of renaissance of monarchical government, of arts and literature, of business and industry, and of the bourgeois class who, oppressed by serfdom until the end of the 11th century, began to free itself in the 12th century by work, revolt, and royal protection.”<sup>700</sup>

### Confréries

Philosophically, at least, the guild attempted to provide a family-like link among members, including responding to charitable needs in event of illness or death. In practice, these charitable functions and other religious and social functions were often provided by *confréries*, religious brotherhoods. These *Confréries* were established parallel to the merchant or craft guilds, but sometimes grouped more than one guild. Sometimes, a *confrérie* covered an entire neighbourhood. In fact, often a *confrérie* coincided with a particular neighbourhood where a trade was concentrated. At other times, a *confrérie* included the people of an ethnic group. Boundaries among *confréries* could be fluid. In New France, in the 1650’s, carpenter-joiners formed a *confrérie* dedicated to Ste-Anne, mother of Mary, as had existed in Paris. In time, other tradesmen joined the brotherhood, and eventually Sainte-Anne came to be known as the patron-saint of French-Canadians generally, as can be seen in the many Quebec towns named for Saint-Anne, e.g. Ste-Anne de Beaupré, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue.

The religious brotherhood recalled the Roman workers’ colleges, the germanic or anglo-saxon guilds, and the religious/social guilds that preceded the merchant and craft guilds. In fact, the lineage is, at least, one of form, if not of substance. For example, the pre-Christian Roman college had a patron-god as an element of worship and organization. The *confrérie*, in the Christian era, achieved similar goals by use of patron-saints. These patron-saints had a longevity that was remarkable, well into the 19th century: for instance, Saint Crispin, among shoemakers, Saint Eloi, among metal-workers, Saint John the Evangelist, among book merchants. The last example serves to remind us, as well, that merchants were also grouped into religious brotherhoods. The distinction between workers’ and merchants’ brotherhoods, it bears repeating, as was the case of guilds themselves, was one of quantity and not of kind. It cost more to join a merchants’ brotherhood than a workers’ brotherhood, but the two were similar.

What was the goal of the religious brotherhood in feudal times? According to Levasseur, “the *confréries*” goal, even if only partially achieved; was to join all men of the same trade, as in one family, united by faith, under one patron-saint, assembled for joyful festivities.”<sup>701</sup> Martin Saint-Léon further described the goals of the *confrérie* as “the union of all members in the same

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<sup>700</sup> Levasseur, *op. cit.*, p. 449 (Author’s adaptation from French to English).

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 579 (Author’s adaptation from French to English).



pious sentiment for worshipping God, for beseeching Him for the welfare of living members and the eternal happiness of deceased members, and for operating charitable institutions for the benefit of elderly, ill, and handicapped members of the *confrérie*.”<sup>702</sup>

The latter author found early examples of *confréries* in France the latter half of the 12th century, among river merchants and drapers in Paris.<sup>703</sup> Religious ceremonies of the *confréries* consisted of masses on behalf of the deceased and special ceremonies on certain days, at which all members were expected to participate. The charitable work undertaken by the *confréries* is more documented. Martin Saint-Léon describes several French examples from feudal times.<sup>704</sup> Among goldsmiths, one boutique would remain open on Sundays and holidays, and sales from these days would go to the poor. Surgeons within the *confrérie* of Saints Cosmos and Damien agreed occasionally to treat the poor free of charge. Among tailors and cooks, a percentage of fines paid to the guild went to support the poor practitioners of these trades. A portion of money collected by drapers in their normal course of work went to support the poor, not simply of the trade but, generally, in the prisons and the hospitals for the indigent. One *confrérie* of furriers, founded in 1319, reminds one of a latter-day, mutual insurance society. Members paid a special entry fee and weekly fees, in return for specific payments in the event of illness. Management of this fund was achieved by six members, who reported once a year to the guild. Most guilds set aside a portion of entry fees and fines collected for use by the related *confréries*. More is known about *confréries* in more recent times.<sup>705</sup> In the 17th century, *confréries* had chaplains assigned to them, as well as chapels within church buildings. A church could be the seat of chapels of several *confréries*. There were masses on behalf of the deceased, and annual masses and processions. There were offerings, festivities, and banquets on the days of the patron-saint. Martin Saint-Léon describes charitable provisions similar to feudal times among French grocers, carpenters, writers, tailors, and cutlers, while goldsmiths used an annex to the Saint Eloi chapel as a retirement home for poor guild members,

The *confrérie* was a religious and social manifestation of the solidarity of guild members. It encountered, however, an ambivalent attitude from the Church. The latter, as seigneurs, made money from the payments of guilds. Presumably, the church would be interested in displays of religiosity by guild members. *Confréries*, however, often used secrecy and mysterious ceremonies that recalled pagan rites and appeared to be caricatures of Christianity. As well, annual festivities on the days of patron-saints could become rather secular parties, out of control of ecclesiastical authorities. A more profound problem vis-à-vis the *confréries*, however, issued from the fact that *confréries* sometimes crossed the boundary of religious and charitable activities to engage in political and economic activities. For example, at the beginning of the 14th century, French *confréries* formed a sort of political federation, resulting in their temporary abolition in 1306.<sup>706</sup> In fact, throughout the Middle Ages, states often repressed the *confréries*, mistrusting organizations that easily could become tools of militancy by the merchant or working classes, if there was sufficient social turmoil in the background. This recalled the shifting attitudes of the Roman state towards Roman colleges.

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<sup>702</sup> Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit.*, p. 190 (Author’s adaptation from French to English).

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192, 193.

<sup>705</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438-432.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193, 194.

## Compagnonnages

A particular strain of *confrérie* developed as a result of the massive cathedral building projects in Europe such as those at Paris, Cologne, Strasbourg, Chartres, Amiens, and Rouen. These projects grouped people of many trades, from many regions, over many years, sometimes even for generations. The work required large numbers of people, a sort of industrial workforce. The craft guild limited to one locality was overwhelmed by the demands created by cathedral building. *Confréries* started appearing among workers devoted to masonry work, often in secret societies, as well as among other workers. *Confréries* that grouped journeymen, often in a clandestine fashion, were called *compagnonnages*, since journeymen workers in France were then called *compagnons*, rather than the earlier *valets*.

The origins of these *compagnonnages* was ascribed to fabulous tales, about which members of the various and rival *compagnonnages* even engaged in pitched battles.<sup>707</sup> These legends are described below. The real source for the emergence of these societies of journeymen workers, however, is that they responded to a real need. Industry was no longer limited to a specific locality, therefore, industrial structures broader than that of the craft guilds, limited as they were to a specific municipality, were also required. In practical terms, during the 14th and 15th centuries, *compagnonnages* permitted travelling journeymen to work throughout the realm. In France, this was called the *tour de France*; in Germany, the *wanderschaft*. The societies provided money to workers for travelling, assistance, and information regarding work in other localities, camaraderie and social support, and a venue for religious expression. From time to time, the societies even behaved as unions, trying to increase wages.<sup>708</sup>

As one can well imagine, journeymen's associations, often clandestine, clashed with the public, craft guilds dominated by the masters of the trade. Even in latter times, for instance, in the 17th and 18th centuries, journeymen associations continued to be suppressed. In France, *compagnonnages* among printers and shoemakers were suppressed. Theologians at the Sorbonne condemned as sacrilegious and impious the rites of the *compagnonnages* of sadlers, shoemakers, tailors, cutlers, and hatters.<sup>709</sup> After the Black Death, states and seigneurs tried to impose limits on wages, which the *compagnonnages* resisted. In England, this resistance corresponded to the revolt led by Wat Tyler in 1381, and the revolt of the *Maillotins* in 1382 in France.<sup>710</sup> In England, beginning in the 14th century, associations or coalitions attempting to increase wages were punished as conspiracy, a legal principle still used by capitalists in Canada late in the 19th century. In more modern times, during the 18th century, the number of journeymen workers increased greatly, as did their militancy and their distinction from master craftsmen. The French state countered by prohibiting assemblies of journeymen, by preventing workers from leaving their employer without several days warning, by requiring that workers

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<sup>707</sup> The rivalry among the various orders of *compagnons* became violent during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the orders battled either for honour or for the exclusive privilege of working in a particular locality. Martin Saint-Léon inventoried violent outbursts in France in 1803, 1804, 1808, 1816, 1825, 1827, 1834, 1835, 1842, 1845, 1851, and 1855. This had followed similar violence in 1730 and 1742. See *Le Compagnonnage*, Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1901, p. 270-274.

<sup>708</sup> Levasseur, *op. cit.*, p. 966.

<sup>709</sup> Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit.*, p. 558.

<sup>710</sup> Levasseur, *op. cit.*, p. 966. The 'Maillotins' were so-called because they were men who worked with hammers, or 'maillots', which they used during the revolt as weapons.

leaving their employ obtain written permission from their employer, and by legally requiring workers to complete the work for which they were hired.<sup>711</sup>

In spite of the conflict reflected by the growth of *compagnonnages*, the latter did demonstrate longevity. They endured from feudal times until the development of industrial capitalism in the 19th century. In the judgement of Martin Saint-Léon:

“ [the *compagnonnages*] escaped all measures of coercion, including police investigations. They maintained among workers of different trades links of a secret federation, distinct from and often opposed to the public craft guilds.”<sup>712</sup>

Just as importantly, the *compagnonnages* were signs of the development of industry and extra-local markets where one had to travel to earn a living. Travel was still a risky and dangerous proposition in feudal times, and organizations were needed to ensure security. An organization similar to the *compagnonnages* was the freemasons, which grouped masters, journeymen, and apprentice masons in secret societies that crossed the local boundaries of craft guilds, making conflict with the latter inevitable. Another example of organizations devoted to the security of the traveller within an occupation was the French *roi des merciers*, an informal but police-like structure that served to protect travelling merchants in the fabric and garment industry. The *roi des merciers* was alternately suppressed and tolerated by royal authorities. The example serves to remind us once again that not just workers but merchants, as well, had to develop social structures to permit themselves to earn a living while travelling in security. They were subject to repression by the state, as were journeymen's *compagnonnages*.

There were three orders of *compagnonnages* in France, often engaged in bitter rivalry, and the fables of their origins were part of this rivalry.<sup>713</sup> The first order appeared among journeymen stonemasons working on the cathedral projects. Eventually known by various names, the Sons of Solomon were reputed to have descended from stonemasons who worked on Solomon's Temple, then emigrated to Gaul. Once in Europe they were called variously *compagnons étrangers*, *loups*, *compagnons passants*, *loups garous* (werewolves), *compagnons de liberté*, or *gavots*.

A second order originally grouped journeymen among carpenter-joiners, locksmiths, blacksmiths, and eventually other trades such as shoemakers, dyers, and cartwrights. Originally known as the Sons of Jacques or the *compagnons du devoir*, they eventually came to be called the *dévorants*. The Jacques in question, from which the *dévorants* were reputed to have descended, was either Jacques de Molay, last grandmaster of the Order of Knights Templar, killed in 1314 by the French king, Philippe le Bel, or a worker from Gaul named Jacques who was summoned by Solomon to work on the construction of Solomon's Temple. Upon his return to Gaul, Jacques was killed by Soubise, the latter jealous of his ability.

The third order grouped construction carpenters, and was originally called the Sons of Soubise, and eventually the *drilles*. These were reputed to have descended from the master Soubise, who was either the assassin of the master Jacques, as related above, or a monk craftsman of the 12th century.

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<sup>711</sup> *Ibid* p. 968.

<sup>712</sup> Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit.*, p. 558 (Author's adaptation from French to English).

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid*, p. 558-561, for an account of the fabled origins of these *compagnonnages*.

Eventually, the latter two orders merged into one order arrayed against the *gavots*. Still later, by the latter half of the 19th century, all three orders had merged into the Union *compagnonnique* in France, which grouped 10,000 workers in organizations devoted to mutual insurance and education.<sup>714</sup> This was, however, long after, engaging in bitter rivalry amongst themselves, with the guilds operated by master craftsmen, and with the various police and administrative wings of states that tried to control and suppress the *compagnonnages*.

### Evolution of Workers' Organizations

In the beginning, merchant and craft guilds were powerful tools of liberation of merchants and workers from the seigneurial class. The workers' guild and the *confrérie*, in addition to reflecting mutualism among workers, also contributed greatly to the expansion of industrial production. In this liberation, the common people often received the support of the king, as both joined forces in order to gain ascendancy over local lords.

The 14th century, however, brought new class relations. Wars, the need for money for kings, and the Black Death brought the bourgeoisie and workers into conflict with the seigneurs and the king, who were now allied, since kings now issued from the ranks of the local seigneurs, rather than from foreign conquerors. In February, 1351, the French King, Jean le Bon, in the aftermath of the Black Death, established maxima for wages, prices of goods, and profits, and lowered barriers of monopoly privilege in an attempt to counter rising prices after millions had died in the plague. This was ill-received by merchants and workers. In March, 1357, Étienne Marcel, *prévôt* of the merchants of Paris, led a revolution that attempted to diminish royal power. The institution of the *roi des merciers* emerged at this time to protect merchants. Class relations between journeymen and masters also became more complicated. *Compagnonnages* grew in importance, as did the custom of requiring journeymen to complete a masterpiece before being permitted to become masters, which added barriers of time and expense to journeymen.<sup>715</sup>

During the next century, there began a process whereby French royalty began to remove the autonomy of guilds, turning them into royal institutions in an attempt to increase royal revenues and royal control over the country's industry.<sup>716</sup> The king started creating special masteries for which payment was required. One such example was the trade of barber-surgeon. Within the guilds themselves, masterpiece requirements became increasingly complicated, regulations of the trades became more and more picayune, monopoly became more airtight and inter-trade disputes increased over who had the right to make specific products or how they were to be made. The numbers of *confréries* among masters, and of illicit, secret *compagnonnages* also increased.

During the 16th century, these trends continued, while there emerged increasing separation within the guild among masters, journeymen, and apprentices. Masterpieces were sold to the rich who then could become masters, bypassing years of training. Steward and other elected positions within guilds came to be sold. Among masters, gradations started to appear according to age: young masters, under ten years; moderns, under twenty years; ancients, over twenty years; and bachelors, the category of those who occupied guild offices. The governance of the guilds themselves started to reflect these new divisions among masters, with each group of masters entitled to representation. Journeymen started to use *compagnonnages* to conduct strikes

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<sup>714</sup> *Ibid*, p. 825, 826.

<sup>715</sup> *Ibid*, p. vii.

<sup>716</sup> *Ibid*, p. vii.

about excessive use by masters of cheap apprentices, without giving the latter a chance to advance, about decreasing journeymen's wages, and about the quality of food supplied by masters. Royalty reacted by trying to suppress *compagnonnages* and workers' *confréries*, and by developing legal tools such as the requirement that journeymen complete the work to which they were assigned. In 1581 and 1597, the king of France tried to extend guilds to cover the entire country, including rural areas, in an attempt to increase royal revenues and royal authority. The measures met with only limited success as rural craftsmen resisted measures that seemed to be little more than a royal tax-grab.

The 16th century saw two important trends that affected workers' organizations: the growth of European empires in the New World, and the emergence of absolute monarchy in France. The former meant the introduction of gold and silver from the New World and great inflation. This changed the balance of economic power within European countries, increasing the importance of moveable property versus immovable property, land and buildings. Seigniorial revenues based upon landed property proportionately declined, while the importance of cash increased. This also meant that guilds, both merchant and craft became increasingly important sources of royal revenue. Kings converted some guilds into royal offices and created royal offices to oversee other guilds. State manufactures led to large-scale industry outside the control of guilds, and under the control of capitalists. The king permitted local nobility to authorize masteries in certain towns for payments, especially where local nobles were relatives of the king; in fact, local lords originally had been the authorities for local guilds.

Within the guild itself, the number of masters who had served as apprentices diminished. Many masters were sons or sons-in-law of masters, while others had simply bought masters' licenses or royal appointments with payments that became increasingly expensive. Masterpieces became increasingly arcane and success in these ventures often depended upon the quality and quantity of liquid at the party thrown for the jury judging the masterpiece.

The number of guilds increased, as the king saw it in his interest to cover just about every economic activity. Many guild members became rich license-holders who rented out the right to craftsmen; this apparently became the situation among butchers in Paris. As the number of guilds increased, so did conflicts among them over which guild had the right to produce certain products. In France, there were major conflicts between shoemakers and cobblers, tailors and second-hand clothes dealers, fabric wholesalers and just about everybody else. The worst examples were the smelters, who sued just about every other guild in the business of touching metal: coppersmiths, sculptors, gilders, edge-tool makers. Royalty and guild members themselves tried to prevent abuses of these legal pursuits by requiring general assemblies of guilds before legal measures were launched by guild leaders, but only with a limited success. As a result, many guilds were constantly ruining themselves financially with inter-trade, legal disputes.<sup>717</sup>

A group that always had enjoyed special privileges and recognition was the *Six Corps des marchands* of Paris, six merchants' guilds. In 1625, a royal edict established an order of precedence for ceremonial and other purposes: drapers, grocers, fabric wholesalers, furriers, hosiers, and goldsmiths. This same statute was silent about the pretensions of wine merchants, who wanted into the club, but had always encountered the resistance of the other merchants.<sup>718</sup>

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<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 444, 445.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

How does one assess the contributions of the craft guilds historically? According to Levasseur, the guild was “the fortress, the homeland of nascent industry; as such, it afforded craftsmen protection against oppression,”<sup>719</sup> at least during feudal times.

The following summary describes the evolution of the guilds in France. In the beginning, guilds were constituted by the feudal lord; over time, seigneurial authority came to be replaced by royal authority. The guild’s jurisdiction was always limited to specific locality, contrary to royal jurisdiction over the entire country. Guilds now became the object of royal revenues and royal controls; the price of entry to master status continually rose; royal offices increasingly replaced independent guilds; royally sanctioned crafts were created that applied to the entire realm rather than specific localities. Masters emerged who didn’t practice the trade, but had bought the right to do so; these masters came to be more like merchants than craftsmen. Masterpiece requirements became more complicated, expensive, and time-consuming, thus freezing out many journeymen from the possibility of becoming masters. This was part of the growing separation of journeymen and masters, reflected in the rise of *compagnonnages* and *confréries* of the former, which became objects of guild and royal oppression. Even among master craftsmen, hierarchy and gradations grew more complicated, depending on age and wealth. The original, democratic control of the guild was lost in the purchase of offices and the growth of hierarchy. The guild structure became increasingly bizarre, with each guild trying to enforce an airtight monopoly around products and work procedures that were too similar to be easily distinguished one from another. The results were ruinous legal and administrative disputes and attempts to apply stultifying routine that hindered innovation. In short, as industry became more complicated and productive, the guild structure became surpassed; whereas it had once liberated industry, it now became a stumbling-block to industrial development. This was a contributing element to the demise of the craft guilds in France during the French Revolution. The guild structure could not survive the latter, nor the ideology of the freedom of commerce during the 18th century. The French Revolution ended the guild structure without a bang, by a mere administrative whimper. “It did not distinguish between the economic role of the guild and its social role, between those regulations that were obstacles to liberty, between its good points and its abuses... 1791 ended the era of the craft guild; the reign of individualism was to begin.”<sup>720</sup> Aspects of mutual aid and religious brotherhood that did survive only applied to masters. The latter now had complete run of the trades, and increasingly, were part of the merchant class, more involved with selling final product or raw material than producing themselves. During the 19th century, some of these master craftsmen joined the class of industrial capitalists.

In England, there had been religious/social guilds comprised of associations of members of families and clans, similar to the Germanic guilds that appeared with the spread of Christianity. Merchant guilds appeared after the Norman conquest of 1066. During the 12th and 13th centuries, merchant guilds appeared in about 150 towns, more or less related to municipal organization.<sup>721</sup> From these merchant guilds were detached craft guilds composed of workers. Early in the 12th century, weavers in London were organized in a guild, while there were guilds for masons, carpenters, and fullers at the same time in towns such as Oxford and Manchester.<sup>722</sup> As in France during the 14th century, guilds assiduously tried to enforce monopoly; legal

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<sup>719</sup> Levasseur, *op. cit.*, volume 2, p. 944 (Author’s adaptation from French to English).

<sup>720</sup> Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit.*, p. 617.

<sup>721</sup> Levasseur, *op. cit.*, volume 2, p. 936.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 936.

pursuits among guilds increased; the masterpiece became the norm for entry to master status. Also, as in France, *compagnonnages* of journeymen in England revolted against the control exercised by the masters of the guild. In France, royal control extended gradually over guild life and industry in the 16th century. In England, industrial activity increasingly spread to towns where guilds did not exist, for example, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, making these towns important industrial centres. The ultimate blow to the guild system came in legislation in 1545, by which Henry VIII confiscated, on behalf of the Crown, the property of religious communities, colleges, hospices, and guilds. Only guilds in London escaped royal takeover. Organizations supported by guilds such as *confréries* disappeared, or were transformed into friendly societies, mutual aid organizations with little legal authority.<sup>723</sup> For guild control was substituted royal control, as seen in the Elizabethan statutes about apprenticeship, wages, workers' coalitions, and other matters.<sup>724</sup>

The situation in Germany was very different. While corruption of the guild system did occur as in France, as well as attempted reforms of the system, generally speaking, the guild system survived intact well into the 19th century. Without the French Revolution or central, royal power to end the guilds, during much of the 19th century, guilds continued to rule industrial production in Germany with the old, medieval rules intact: one apprentice per master, one workshop per master, along with the other traditional features of guilds.<sup>725</sup>

### New France

The industrial structures of France were important since the majority of workers who came to Hull in the 19th century were French-Canadian. Part of the legacy of these workers would have been the economic and industrial structures of New France. The starting-point for an analysis of these structures is the situation in France during the 17th century, when New France was first settled and populated.

Royal edicts in 1581 and 1597 presented important changes in royal policy towards the merchant and craft guilds of France. These edicts required all craftsmen and merchants to enroll in guilds throughout the realm. The intentions of the king were to stabilize his revenues, and extend his control over matters economic. At the same time, the king increasingly extended industrial privileges to persons operating outside the guild structure, who thus became immediately responsible to the king. When Louis XIII called Estates General in 1614, the conflict between king merchants and workers, became clear. "The former claimed for himself the right to legislate, to control industry, and to regulate the organization of work; the latter fought with energy for their freedoms. Royalty wanted state-controlled guilds, instruments of government; merchants and workers wanted independent guilds."<sup>726</sup>

Owing to this conflict, many merchants and craftsmen, particularly in rural areas, resisted the edicts of 1581 and 1597. Another edict, this time by Louis XIV in 1673, repeated the policy of requiring the constitution of all merchants and workers into guilds. At the time of the edict of 1673, there were only 60 guilds in Paris, much fewer than the number of trades actually in existence. A further edict in 1691 set the number of guilds in Paris at 127. The 1691 edict

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<sup>723</sup> *Ibid*, p. 937, 938.

<sup>724</sup> *Ibid*, p. 938.

<sup>725</sup> *Ibid*, p. 940.

<sup>726</sup> Étienne Martin Saint-Léon, *L 'histoire des corporations de métier*, Paris: Felix Alcan, 1922, p. 375 (Author's adaptation from French to English)

established four classes of guilds. Masters of each guild had to pay specific amounts to the king for the right to set up shop, according to the size and importance of the town in which the master was located. This meant that royal rights could vary from 3 livres to 30 livres, according to the class of guild and the size of the town.<sup>727</sup> Here are examples of guilds contained in each class.<sup>728</sup>

First class — the guilds included in the *Six corps de marchands* of Paris: drapers, grocers, fabric wholesalers, furriers, hosiers, goldsmiths plus 19 others, among them: butchers, brewers, surgeons, hatters, construction carpenters, booksellers, wine merchants, masons.

Second class — cartwrights, coppersmiths, roofers, writers, smelters, carpenter-joiners, clockmakers, plumbers, sadlers, locksmiths, cooperers.

Third class — shoemakers, cutlers, seamsters and seamstresses, cooks, fullers, midwives, tailors.

Fourth class — boatmen, nail makers, paper makers, box makers, rope makers, weavers, cobblers.

In actual fact, the industrial structure of France applied incompletely to New France, owing to the shortage of skilled labour and the small population. Nevertheless, the French seigneurial system was reproduced in rural Canada in agriculture. Peasants and indentured labourers, numbering with their families around 18,000, supported 90 or so seigneurs, half of whom were ecclesiastical, at the start of the 18th century.<sup>729</sup> Whatever trades a worker had practiced in France, in New France, he learned to practice several, owing to the lack of specialization in the pioneer economy. In fact, the early economic régime in the countryside was one of autarchy, whereby the peasant produced himself, or herself, most of what was required for survival. The term ‘herself’ is important since much of domestic industry fell to women: baking bread, weaving cloth, making clothes, preparation of flax and hemp, maple sugar, spruce beer, candles, and just about every other household product imaginable.<sup>730</sup> Peasants’ labour also went to support the seigneur; the latter were paid in products of the peasants’ labour: grain, eggs, honey, chickens, milk, livestock, or in the provision of work directly. This reminds one somewhat of early feudal times in rural France, before the urbanization in later feudal times.<sup>731</sup>

Eventually, alongside the reality of rural autarchy and domestic industry developed small villages in New France where craftsmen were able to ply their trades. Some historians have designated three periods for this evolution of the trades.<sup>732</sup> The first of these periods covers the start of the colony, from the beginning of the 17th century to the second decade of the 18th century. Production was for such basic elements as houses, barns, boats, and forts. Thus, certain tradesmen were able to establish themselves: shipbuilders, carpenters, masons, and blacksmiths, at the same time as domestic industry continued to meet most needs of the household. The second period covers from about 1710 to 1740. During this period, trades emerged related to

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<sup>727</sup> *Ibid*, p. 446, 447.

<sup>728</sup> *Ibid*, p. 447, 448.

<sup>729</sup> Stanley Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, Toronto: Progress Books, 1960, p. 110.

<sup>730</sup> *Ibid*, p. 113.

<sup>731</sup> Martin Saint-Léon, *op. cit.*, p. 65, 66, 67. . .

<sup>732</sup> See Jean-Pierre Hardy and David-Thierry Ruddell, *Les apprentis artisans à Québec*, 1660-1815, Québec City: Les Presses de l’Université du Québec, 1977, p. 186, 187.



luxuries not required in the early days of the colony, for example, seamstresses, tailors, wig-makers, florists, and candle-makers. During this period, apprenticeship expanded in New France. Production was related to the demand of specific clients, and thus, occasioned one-to-one relationships between craftsman and customer. The third period in the evolution of the trades in Canada covers the period from about 1740 until the beginning of the 19th century. There was a growth in the number of tradesmen, owing to an increase in commercial activity and the expansion of Quebec City and its fortifications. Thus, there was an increased number of coopers, masons, and carpenters. Secondly, apprenticeship appeared in trades where the amount of new business warranted, for example, among printers and hatters. Thirdly, specialization grew among tradesmen; for example, the trades of locksmith and blacksmith split, and such specialized tradesmen as cabinet-makers, pastry-chefs, and tinsmiths appeared in greater numbers. Finally, trades people, such as blacksmiths, shoemakers, and tinsmiths started producing standard products rather than those required by immediate customer demand. This proto-industrialization created many craftsmen who were at the same time merchants; eventually, some of these people became industrial capitalists in the 19th century.

The trades which emerged in the 18th century in Canada, for the most part, did so without the formal guild structure that existed in France, or we should say, in much of France, since there was considerable diversity in French industrial structures. In spite of an early concern about a shortage of skilled labour and the need for an apprenticeship system, evidence seems to indicate that well into the 18th century, there was no guild system in effect in Canada.<sup>733</sup> Nevertheless, as trades developed in the 18th century, so did a system of masters and apprentices very similar to the French system, since the substance of the trades still had to be imparted to young people. An exception to this rule appears to have been a guild of barbers and surgeons, formed in 1658. This does appear to be a possible candidate for guild status, five men under the leadership of barber-surgeon Étienne Bouchard, even though the primary sources are somewhat unclear.<sup>734</sup> Two other possible candidates for guild status were the *Société de serruriers, armuriers et arquebusiers* formed in 1676, (locksmiths, gunsmiths, and harquebus-makers), and shoemakers in Montreal, who formed a brotherhood of masters, with Saint Crispin as its patron-saint, some time in the 1670's.<sup>735</sup> More likely, however, these were *confréries* rather than guilds.<sup>736</sup> In fact, the *confrérie* is the most common organizational structure of workers transferred from France to Canada. As for *compagnonnages*, there were very few journeymen in Canada, even when the master-apprentice system was in full operation in the 18th century, therefore, it is unlikely that these organizations would have existed in large numbers in Canada. The *confrérie* had a long existence in New France. In 1646, in Quebec City, six trades were represented in the procession of the Holy Sacrament: carpenters, masons, sailors, edge-tool makers, brewers, and bakers.<sup>737</sup> Two years later, twelve trades were represented at the same event: lathe operators, carpenter-joiners, shoemakers, coopers, locksmiths, gunsmiths, cartwrights, nail makers, construction carpenters, masons, edge-tool makers, and bakers.<sup>738</sup> This would seem to indicate some level of organization, and since we believe that guilds or corporations in the French manner were rare, it

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<sup>733</sup> *Ibid*, p.20,21.

<sup>734</sup> See Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de Montréal*, Tome I, Montreal: Fides, 1970, p. 180; and Marcel Rhéault, *La médecine en Nouvelle-France*, Sillery: Septentrion, 2004, Pages 23, 79 and 258.

<sup>735</sup> Hardy and Ruddel, *op. cit.*, P.18

<sup>736</sup> Ryerson, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>737</sup> Marius Barbeau, *La Confrérie de Sainte-Anne*, Ottawa: Société royale du Canada, 1945, p.1.

<sup>738</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

is likely these workers were grouped in *confréries*. In 1657, several master carpenter-joiners working in Quebec City formed a *confrérie*, with Ste. Anne as its patron-saint, establishing an organization similar to one in which they had been members in Paris. On April 20, 1657, this *confrérie* requested the use of a chapel at Notre-Dame de Québec.<sup>739</sup> In addition to religious observances, the *confrérie* provided mutual aid in times of illness, accident, or indigence. It elected officials, had a chaplain, and organized into neighbourhood groups. This *confrérie* eventually included some who were not carpenter-joiners. It required of its members ‘zeal for the public welfare’, opposition to ‘manifest injustices and shameful dishonesties’, the latter responsibility being the special concern of the group leaders.<sup>740</sup> The *confrérie* of Ste-Anne developed a special relationship with French-Canadians generally. As Ste-Anne became the patron-saint of French-Canadians, *confréries* devoted to her, albeit for religious, not necessarily working class purposes, emerged throughout Quebec.<sup>741</sup> *Confréries* had a certain resonance, nevertheless, among French-Canadian workers. In 1748, Bishop Pontchartrain decreed the suppression of 17 feast days that workers and their *confréries* celebrated, ordering them moved to Sundays. Among them were the celebrations that took place to honour the patron-saints of the trades. In the early 19th century, a mini-movement of these celebrations re-emerged, once again encountering the disapproval of the Church establishment.<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>739</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>740</sup> Ryerson, *op. cit.*, p. 102, 103.

<sup>741</sup> Georges Bélanger, *La Bonne Saint-Anne*, Quebec City : L’Action sociale, 1923.

<sup>742</sup> Ryerson, p. 170.

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