



The Story of GORE

VI – August 2015

The following is the conclusion to “Gore and neighbouring communities,” which appeared in the July, 2015 edition of *Gore Express*.

Gore and St. Columban revisited

The optimists among us would like to think the only reason the women in St. Columban did not speak to James Hammond was because of language difficulties. Historians always suspect a deeper cause, however, and evidently one existed.

In 1847, ten years after the Rebellion of 1837, Thomas Barron—then a lieutenant colonel of the Two Mountains militia—became entangled in what appears to have been some longstanding tensions between the peoples of Gore and St. Columban. According to correspondence between Thomas Barron and Colonel E.P. Taché of Montreal, on July 12, 1847, the Orange Lodges of Gore and Lachute and some from eastern Ontario, held a procession in Lachute. About 140 men were involved in the march.

The parade created friction with the Irish Roman Catholics of St. Columban and forced Thomas Barron to defend his honour as a military leader and a gentleman. Barron was in a tight spot—as the Lieutenant Colonel of 6th Two Mountains Battalion he was the commander of both the Gore and St. Columban militias companies.

Why is July 12 important? Called Orangemen's Day, July 12 is the date on which the Orange Order commemorates the Battle of the Boyne (1690) when William of Orange, a Protestant, defeated James II, a Roman Catholic in what is called “The Glorious Revolution”. Celebrating The Twelfth (as the day is called) became popular in the Irish province of Ulster (now called Northern Ireland) in the eighteenth century and continues to this day. These victory marches have been the cause of political strife, social unrest and bloodshed between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland.

As noted earlier, Orange Lodges were formed in Argenteuil as Protestant Irish immigrants moved into the region. The Orange Order developed a particularly strong presence in Gore that went hand-in-hand with the development of the militia.

What was the importance of 1847? In that year—Black '47—the famine in Ireland reached new

heights. Thousands upon thousands died of starvation and hundreds of thousand fled the country, boarding ships for Canada and elsewhere. As poverty-stricken, starving immigrants arrived at the port of Saint John, New Brunswick, for example, tensions between Irish Protestants and Irish Roman Catholics exploded in bloody riots on July 12. Meanwhile, in Lower Canada typhus raged claiming thousands of lives at Grosse Ile and in Montreal.

Fear that typhus could reach Argenteuil or simply fear of the “other” may have been precipitating factors in events here. According to Thomas Barron the 1847 parade was the first time the Orangemen “of this neighbourhood,” had met in Lachute. They were, he wrote, “assembled for some time before I was appraised of it.... I had the curiosity to see Orangemen for the first time, and thinking that my presence might contribute to orderly conduct, I walked out... and saw them there....” Thomas Barron went on to say the assembly broke up shortly thereafter; the crowd gave him and the Queen three cheers and left. They were, said Barron, “harmless and inoffensive and went away sober and peaceable.”

However, the people of St. Columban heard a different story. Militiamen from St. Columban were in Lachute that day, saw the gathering and reported that Barron had met with the Orangemen, had “paraded with them and given them money to drink and to play offensive tunes....” The people of St. Columban were used to the Orangemen of Gore parading yearly near their community—they had been doing so for some 20 years. The difference this time was Thomas Barron's apparent involvement in the event.

In overwhelming numbers, the men of the St. Columban militia signed a petition demanding he be removed as the lieutenant colonel of their battalion. The petition charged that Barron, a military leader and a Justice of the Peace had “in open defiance of the consequences” met with the Orangemen, supplied them with liquor and encouraged them to play “the fife and drum.”

The accusations were all false, said Thomas Barron, but the damage was done. He was hurt and saddened by the whole affair. He knew the situation was a delicate one since he, a Scots Protestant, was head of an Irish Roman Catholic militia. In fact, in the early part of the summer Barron had been in St.

Columban, had gone to church on Sunday and had met with John Phelan the major of the militia force, at his house. They received me kindly, wrote Barron, and when he explained to Major Phelan that a number of military duties would devolve to him, he "seemed well pleased" and "all seemed to be pleasant and satisfactory."

Barron lamented the state of affairs, not the least for the social fallout the incident could create. In fifteen years as the only Justice of the Peace in this section of the country, wrote Barron, he had settled "all the

bickerings of both parties". In all that time, he said, "I never had a complaint from the Catholics against the Orangemen, till now...." He continued: "I am happy to say... that I have heretofore succeeded so well in cultivating harmony between the two parties, that they are good neighbours, they have daily intercourse, and are very obliging, hospitable and kind to each other."

A year later, feelings of ill will were still running high and in July of 1848 Thomas Barron wrote to Colonel M-A. de Salaberry in Montreal with the express

| FOURTH BATTALION, TWO MOUNTAINS. | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------|------------------|
| Colonel..... | Thomas Barron | 20 jany., 1847.. | Lachute. |
| | John Phelan..... | do do .. | St. Columban. |
| | Paul Doig..... | 25 nov., 1859.. | Lachute. |
| | Lieutenant Thomas Barron, junior..... | 31 dec., 1856.. | Lachute. |
| | Thomas Christie..... | 28 june, 1849.. | Lachute. |
| | Reverend Thomas Henry..... | 28 june, 1849.. | Lachute. |
| | William Evans..... | 23 june, 1847.. | Gore. |
| "..... | John Kenny..... | do do .. | St. Columban. |
| "..... | Thomas Pollock..... | 28 june, 1849.. | Lachute. |
| "..... | James Casey..... | 31 dec., 1856.. | St. Columban. |
| "..... | George Sheritt..... | do do .. | Gore. |
| "..... | John Smith..... | 25 nov., 1859.. | Lachute. |
| "..... | Thomas Morrison..... | do do .. | do |
| "..... | James Wilson..... | do do .. | East Settlement. |
| Lieutenant..... | Thomas Brëen..... | 23 june, 1847.. | St. Columban. |
| "..... | John Kelly..... | 31 dec., 1856.. | do |
| "..... | George Rogers..... | do do .. | Gore. |
| "..... | John Gibson..... | 25 nov., 1859.. | Lachute. |
| "..... | Thomas Miller..... | do do .. | East Settlement. |
| "..... | William Evans..... | do do .. | Gore. |
| "..... | Samuel S. Hills..... | do do .. | Lachute. |
| "..... | Thomas Barron, junior, (Adjutant)..... | do do .. | do |
| Ensign..... | James Murray..... | 23 june, 1847.. | St. Columban. |
| "..... | William Smith..... | 31 dec., 1856.. | Gore. |

From *List of Officers of the Sedentary Militia of Lower Canada, 1862, p. 177*

purpose of making sure the militia companies in St. Columban did not have any officers from Gore.

In 1862 Thomas Barron was still a lieutenant colonel of a Two Mountains battalion and John Phelan was still the major of the St. Columban militia. Lieutenant Thomas Barron, junior (the elder Barron's nephew) was Adjutant. The various companies in St. Columban and Gore each had their own captains.

In that same year Sir John Abbott founded the Argenteuil Rangers and the four militia companies of Gore joined with companies from St. Andrews, Lachute and Grenville to form the 11th Infantry Battalion. As we will see in a future installment of the *Story of Gore*, the Argenteuil Rangers, including the men of Gore, enjoyed a long and at times distinguished history before they disbanded in 1911 and became part of the Royal Canadian Hussars.

What of relations between the people of Gore and St. Columban? Religious discord between the Orange and the Green reached this little corner of the world even though the two shared so much in common: Both left Ireland for a better life in Canada; both struggled to put down roots in a unforgiving land; both worked hard to build a community. Thomas Barron's rather poignant remark that he had succeeded in cultivating harmony between them and that they were hospitable and kind to one another is worth remembering since, more often than not, the small encounters of daily life rarely make it into the historical record.

LJ

Notes & references

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The following sources have been used in the research and preparation of these articles:

National Archives of Canada, Correspondence of Thomas Barron, RG9.

List of Officers of the Sedentary Militia of Lower Canada, 1862. Québec: Stewart Derbyshire and George Desbarats, p. 177.

Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec pour 1944-1945. Correspondance of Mgr. J.J. Lartigue, p. 263.

Clarification: We wish to thank Doug Armstrong of Montreal for the following clarification on “George Rogers and his descendants”, which appeared in the June 2014 edition of *The Gore Express*.

At mid-century there were two George Rogers in the community. The first Rogers who arrived were Frederick Rogers, Samuel Rogers, and George Rogers (1797-1871), husband of Ann Moore; these three Rogers all lived on the 3rd range of Gore. In the 1840s several more Rogers arrived, including George Rogers (1806-1884). This later George Rogers was a merchant, post master and Justice of the Peace; he married first Dora Moore and later Sarah Robinson; I don't know where he and his family lived.

The settler of the 3rd range was the first George Rogers. George Rogers and Ann Moore had six sons and one daughter. Judging from the 1881 census when Ann Moore was living with their youngest son, Matthew Rogers, his wife Isabella Hicks and their children, I would guess that Matthew inherited the farm. George L. Rogers was the son of Matthew and Isabella. The Samuel Rogers, mentioned in the piece, was the third son of George Rogers and Ann Moore, brother of Matthew etc.; he was briefly married to Sarah Patterson of Mille Isles.

The George Rogers problem is even more confusing in the next generation when there were at least three George Rogers, all grandsons of the original George Rogers (1797-1871) living in the community.

Bourguignon, Claude, *Saint-Colomban: Une épopée irlandaise au piémont des Laurentides.* Montréal: Éditions d'ici là, 1988, p. 53.

Hawkins, Ernest, *Annals of the [Anglican] Diocese of Quebec.* London: 1849, *passim*.

Schull, Joseph, *Rebellion: The Rising in French Canada, 1837.* Toronto; Macmillan of Canada, 1971, p. 97.

Thomas, Cyrus, *A History of Argenteuil and Prescott Counties from the Earliest Settlement to the Present.* Montréal: John Lovell & Son, 1896, *passim*. Available online at Archive.org.

For information on the history of St. Columban (St. Columban) including the article by Brother Jerome Hart, please see: stcolumban-irish.com.