

Lives Lived: Old Pontiac Cemetery.



by Michael McBane



“The dead are our nearest neighbors.”

- John O'Donohue, *Anam Cara*, 1998.

« Le cimetière des pionniers irlandais, ce survivants de
l' 'Irish Potato Famine' ...éloquents et silencieux...»

- Armand Ducharme, *Village Pontiac*, 1981.

‘St. Augustine says the dead are invisible, they are not absent.’

- Hilary Mantel , 2017.

Graveyards tell us so much about the people who went before us and about ourselves. The Irish people in the older graves in Old Pontiac Cemetery, for example, came from a world of ancient customs around death, wakes, funerals, burials and graveyards. They lived and died with strong beliefs in the Otherworld. Traditional Irish culture included: i) banshees (*Bean Sí, Ir.* for Fairy Woman) - a female spirit that is heard to cry when the death of a member of an Irish family is imminent; ii) keening - a eulogy in verse sung, often by women, on the qualities of the dead person and a lament on their passing; iii) wake rituals and amusements - an elaborate set of ritual behaviour covering two days of mourning, including prayers, a big meal and all-night vigil in the wake house; and iv) folk beliefs surrounding burials and behaviour in graveyards.

Elzene Gibbons Lenihan (1904-2006) remembered stories from childhood about the old Irish wakes back of Quyon: *“Ritchie Gibbons would tell us that they took Old Paddy McHale out of his casket and stood him in a corner. ‘You’re goin’ to Ireland, stand up straight now!’ They’d all get drunk. An old Irish wake.”* The Irish tradition has, in the words of John O’Donohue, a “great hospitality to death.” Kevin Toolis, in his recent book, *My Father’s Wake*, observed: *“The Irish wake, where the living, the bereaved and the dead remain bound together, shows us the way things could be done.”*

Old Pontiac Cemetery is full and many markers have disappeared. Some were wooden crosses; some graves may never have had markers. There is no map of who was buried where. However, we know the names of some of those buried here in unmarked graves from the records of St. Mary’s parish church in Quyon. But there is a large gap in the records between 1851 and 1862, the period when Pontiac Village was at its peak. For the Catholic Irish, the rituals of death were far more important than lasting monuments (the wake and vigil, the funeral Mass, procession to and oration at the graveside) and above all else – to be buried among one’s kin. It is not what we see - impressive gravestones or elaborate monuments - that makes this space sacred.

The burial ground of a vanished village, Old Pontiac Catholic Cemetery is located in what is today an out of the way place. But it served a once growing community nearby called ‘Pontiac Village’ or simply ‘Pontiac’. Pontiac Village was situated on the Ottawa River below the Chats Falls in Pontiac Bay, three miles above Quyon, Quebec. Pontiac Bay was the site of important historical events starting with indigenous peoples who used this part of the Ottawa River as a meeting place during their seasonal hunting; an Anishnabeg burial ground; an ancient indigenous portage at the Falls; the first settler, Joseph Mondion in 1786; a NorthWest and later Hudson Bay trading post; followed by a booming lumber trade.

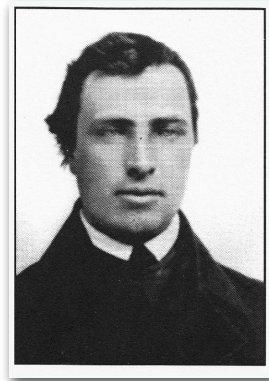
During the conflict between the two fur trading companies, both sides tried to enlist the ‘fighting Irish’ working in the lumber trade. The 22-year-old John McLean, in charge of HBC at the Chats, reported on a fruitful meeting with an Irish raftsman, named Jack Hall, in Pontiac Bay in 1822: *“A number of lumber men were making up their rafts within a short distance of us at the time, who were for the most part natives of the Emerald Isle. Paddy’s ‘knocking down for love’ is proverbial. Our opponents immediately sent them word that the Hudson’s Bay Company had brought up a bully from Montreal who defied ‘the whole of the Grand River.’ ‘By my faith, does he thin,’ said Pat; “let us have a look at him, any how.’... A little conversation with my guest, proved him to be a shrewd sensible man; and when I explained the nature of our dispute with our rivals, he comprehended in an instant the object they had in view in circulating the reports which induced him and others to assemble at the portage...”* After sharing a whiskey with McLean, Hall told his crew to return to assembling their rafts.

The land in Pontiac Village was owned by P. Wright & Sons, which operated lumber shanties at the site starting in 1814 and built a timber slide nearby in 1840. The Union Forwarding Co. also established a steamboat landing and terminal there. In 1846-47, a horse-drawn railroad was built around the Chats Falls for settlers and cargo headed for the Upper Ottawa. The settlement grew significantly in 1853 when hundreds of labourers were hired to build a canal (the

Georgian Bay Ship Canal) which can still be seen. In 1854, John Egan & Co. built a large saw mill employing 120 men a few hundred yards from the village. Pontiac Village's predominantly Irish population peaked at 400 by 1857. (Quyon's population at the time was 90; Aylmer 1,500 and Ottawa 10,000.) Pontiac had four stores, a bakery, a butcher shop, a shoemaker, two boarding houses, two 'public houses of entertainment', a post office, a blacksmith shop, a log school house, a Catholic church served by this cemetery, and even a holy well.

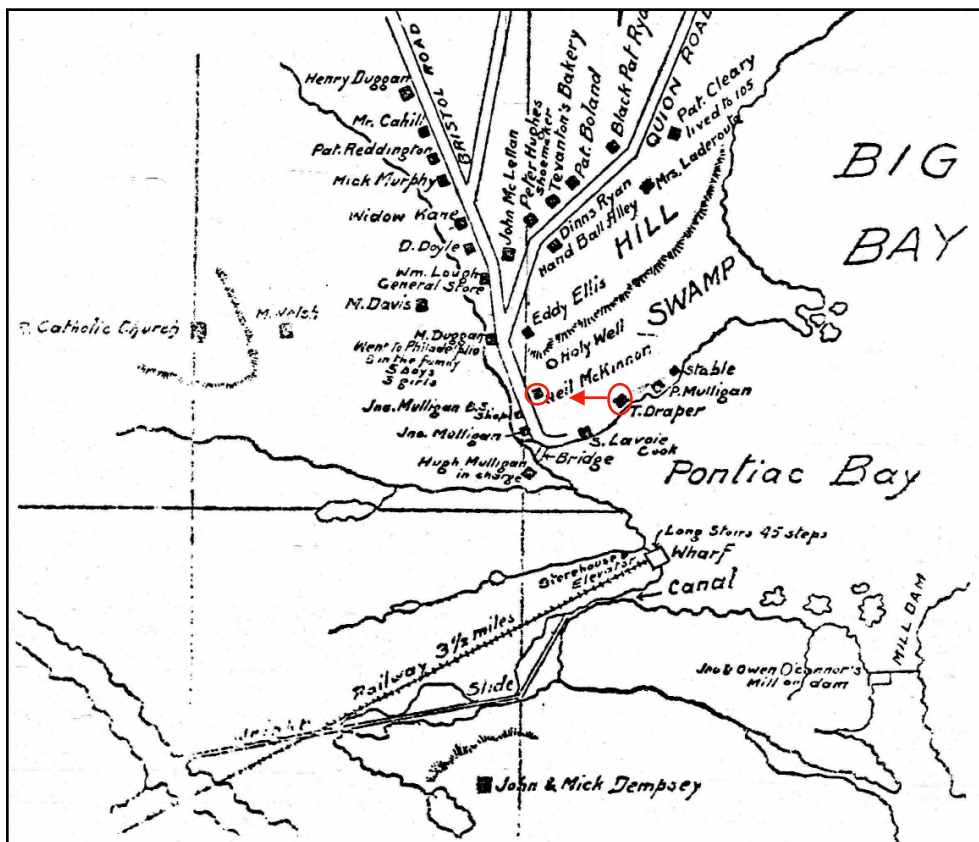
What do we know about life and events that happened in Pontiac Village? There are but a few traces left behind. In the mid-1850's for example, there was a labour strike, sectarian violence and a St. Patrick's celebration never seen before or since in the Pontiac. In the winter of 1856, the canal workers at Pontiac Village went on strike because they hadn't been paid. Equipment was destroyed, the *Toronto Globe* referred to "the riot at the Chats Canal," and the military was called in. A letter in the *Ottawa Tribune* dated 19 March 1856 advised: "*Enforce the laws respecting whiskey shops in which Pontiac abounds, and that will have a greater effect for the preservation of order than your military is capable of rendering. In fact they are not worth one iota in Pontiac for the preservation of peace. They rest in their barracks whilst a canaler in the whiskey shops would murder and destroy your fellow creature... If you are really for the benefit of the community, get policemen who are a thousand times more beneficial to Pontiac than soldiers.*" The Onslow Municipal Council passed a bylaw in July of 1856 "prohibiting the sale of spiritous liquors in the said Village of Pontiac without licence." The same year Council decided to have a road built "from Pontiac Village as straight as possible to the Quio Village," instead of going through Bristol.

The first resident priest at Pontiac Village was Fr. Bernard McFeely, who lived in a rented house. McFeely, born in Ireland in 1826, was ordained by Bytown Bishop Guigues in 1852. He oversaw the building of a chapel on land donated by Ruggles Wright. A wood frame with a stone foundation (laid by the Mulligan brothers), it measured 70' X 35' and opened in 1860, but only completed in 1868. Prior to moving there Fr. McFeely served Pontiac Village and North Onslow from Fitzroy Harbour (1852-1861). He was said to be "greatly beloved by his people."

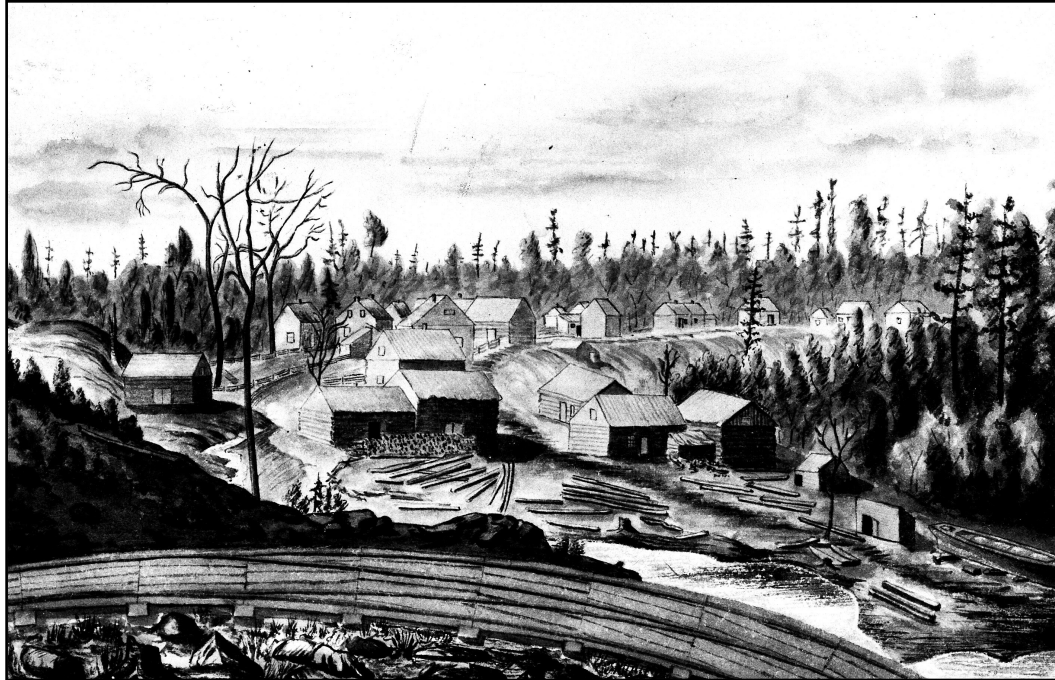


Fr. Bernard McFeely.

Fr. McFeely also oversaw the construction of a log church in Bristol (just over the Onslow town line). It was burned down by Orangemen on August 8th, 1854 after he received a life-threatening letter from an Orangeman. Fr. McFeely's church in Fitzroy was also destroyed by fire on September 11, 1854. At this point, Bishop Guigues wrote the Governor General, Lord Elgin: "*Up to this day I preached patience and encouraged resignation. But these exhortations have a limit if these barbarous acts cannot be stopped by the Government and the influence of men upholding public order. I will then end up telling the Catholics to defend themselves.*" Fortunately, the church burning stopped. Fr. McFeely supervised the construction of a new church in North Onslow, a couple of miles south of the old one. The new site was chosen by the parishioners as it was closer to a large Catholic farming community who



Map of Pontiac Village from Wyman MacKechnie's *What Men They Were*, 1975, p. 102.
 The Drapers moved to Neil McKinnon's house in 1860.



Pontiac Village, 1855. Rail track in foreground. Behind the old Wright shanties, centre, are the original houses of Thomas Draper & Patrick Mulligan, right of centre.
Library and Archives Canada.

could keep a closer eye on their church. He also supervised the building of a beautiful new stone church in the village Fitzroy Harbour.

Residents of Pontiac Village witnessed an extraordinary sight on St. Patrick's Day, 1856. A parade of 2300 people marched in a body, two by two, the four miles from Onslow to Pontiac Village. St. Patrick Society members came from up to 40 miles away including Ottawa, and Aylmer. A brass band from Ottawa led the way. After Mass and an outdoor address by Fr. McFeely, they marched across the ice on the Ottawa River to Fitzroy Harbour and then back to Onslow through Pontiac Village. Fr. McFeely commented on the show of Irish Catholic strength in a letter the next day to an Ottawa newspaper: *"...it showed that the Irish practice the doctrine of O'Connell in all instances up here, so far as I am aware, viz., 'he who commits a crime gives strength to the enemy'; as also it manifested the sympathy felt towards us for the malicious destruction of our two churches, and showed Irishmen in this locality they had brothers numerous, not alone in faith..."* With peace restored and churches rebuilt, Fr. McFeely took a year's sabbatical in Ireland and then left the diocese in 1864 for California.

Plans were made for a series of new streets at Pontiac. A land surveyor was hired by Ruggles Wright, Sr. (1793-1863) and a development plan was drawn up in 1854. Nine streets ran from the the shore line of Pontiac Bay, all the way over to the east side of the Bay, (encompassing all of what is much more). The street

near Indian Point
now Tim Horton's Camp and
names, in ascending order,

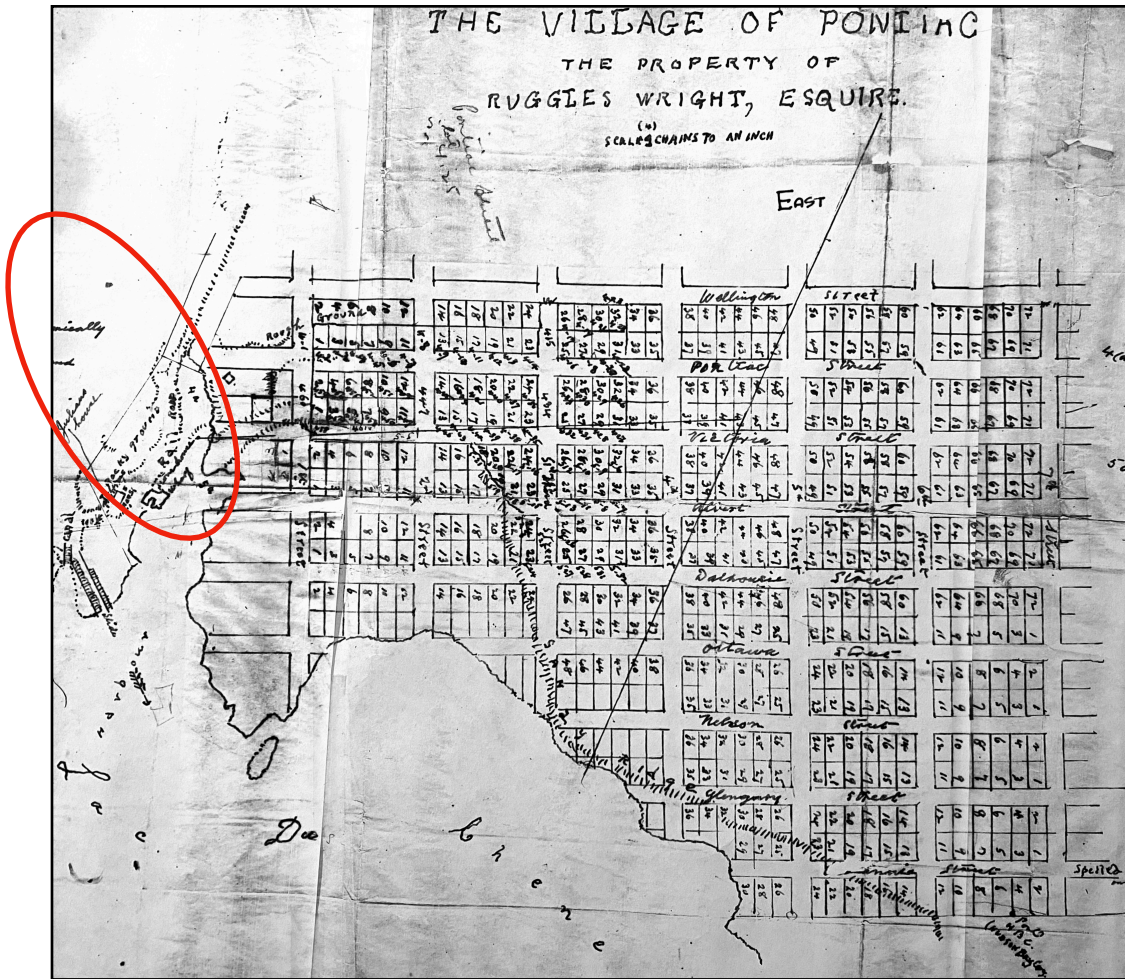


were: Britannia, Glengarry, Nelson, Ottawa, Dalhousie, Albert, Victoria, Pontiac and Wellington. But canal construction was suddenly stopped by the government following the death of John Egan, M.P.P. in 1857, and never resumed. The economic power brokers in Canada West were against the ambitious canal plan and the project lost its political champion. Across the river, a railway reached Sand Point in 1866 and river transportation was in decline. Land value immediately dropped when the canal was left uncompleted and the development plan was never implemented. The original small village was gradually abandoned in favour of Quyon. One of the last of the original residents, Patrick and Bridget Draper and their family, moved out to Quyon in 1907.

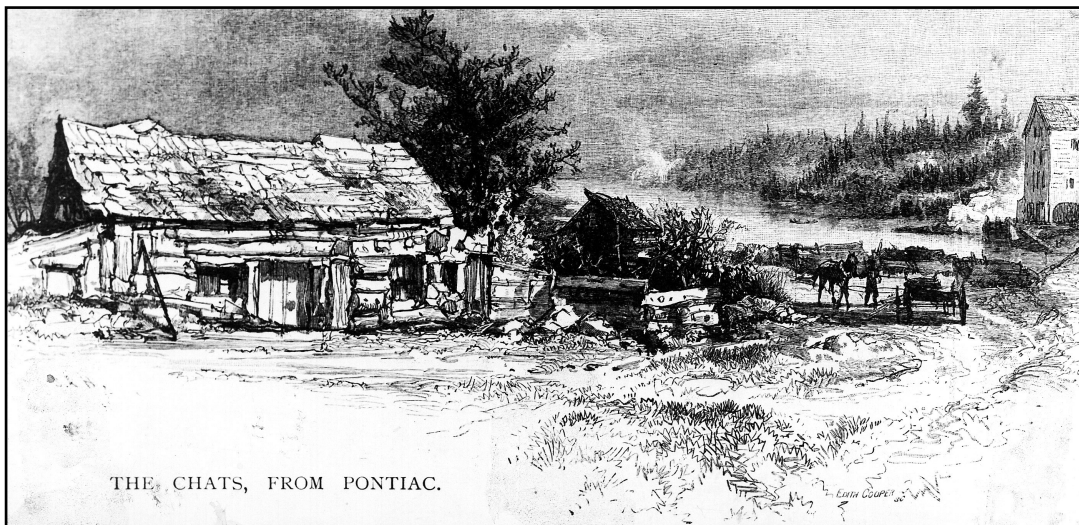
The land for the Pontiac cemetery was donated by John Mulligan, the village blacksmith. He buried his mother, Hannah, there in 1861 following a funeral in the village's Catholic church. This cemetery continued to be used by Catholics in Quyon and South Onslow. (North Onslow Catholics were buried in St. Bridget's cemetery.) It ran out of space in the mid-1920's, except for a few who had purchased family plots. A new cemetery, St. Mary's on Chemin du Cimetière, was then opened and is still in use.



Steamer *Ann Sisson* at Pontiac Village landing, c.1868. Horse and railcar can be seen on right, above boat.,
Library and Archives Canada.



A Plan of The Village of Pontiac,
 John A. Snow, Land Surveyor, Hull, August 25, 1854. (Location of original village marked in red.)
 Tracing of a copy by E.L. Brittain, 1911.



The old shanties of P. Wright & Sons in Pontiac Village, c.1870's.
 Union Forwarding Co. depot and steamboat landing can be seen on right.

No. of IRISH gravestones still standing in Old Pontiac Cemetery: (48)

E.g. - Mulligan, Draper, Moyle, O'Reilly, O'Connor, O'Donnell, O'Meara, Gavan, Foran, Hickey, Regan, Kennedy, Kilroy, Daly, Lynch, Moran, Stanton, McColgan, Muldoon, Ryan, Bolan, Murphy, Walsh, Rowan, Moore, Sheehan.

No. of ENGLISH gravestones: (9)

E.g.- Blair, Bradley, Derbyshire, Grey, Hughes, Leonard, Potts, Spellman, Hester.

No. of FRENCH-CANADIAN gravestones: (7)

E.g. - Chevrier, Lafleur, Lalonde, Jean Marie, Thérien, Lamorie, Rainville.

No. of SCOTTISH: (2) McDonald, McLean.

No. of SWEDISH: (1) Sunstrum.

The Mulligans & The Drapers

The two big Irish clans at Pontiac Village were the **Mulligans** and the **Drapers**. John and Mary Mulligan had eight children. Thomas and Catherine Draper had eleven children. Naturally enough, they married into each other's family. Three Mulligans married three Drapers. Patrick Mulligan m. Bridget Draper; Bridget Mulligan m. Patrick Draper; and Catherine Draper m. David Mulligan.

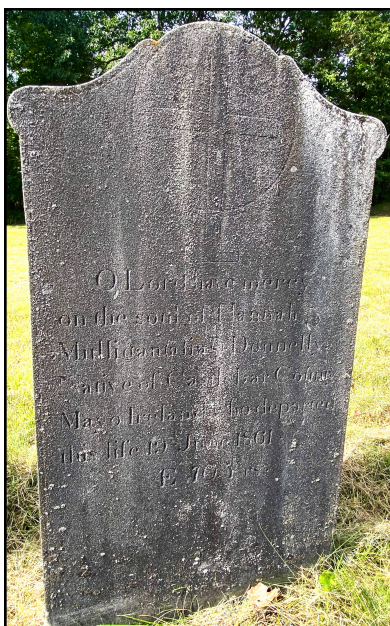
John Mulligan (1813-1900) m. **Mary Devine** (1814-1884) both from Castlebar, Co. Mayo, Ireland. John came to Canada in the early 1840's. Eventually his mother, four brothers and one sister joined him in Pontiac. He worked under Squire Wright (Philemon) on the government works in Hull and then went to the Union Forwarding & Railway Co. He was a shipwright and blacksmith who worked on the horse-drawn railway around Chats Falls, completed in 1847. John Mulligan is credited with donating the land for Pontiac cemetery. His obituary read: *"The deceased was a man of sterling integrity, and was respected by all who know him, as was evinced by the large concourse of friends and acquaintances who in accompanying his remains to their last resting place sought an opportunity of paying a tribute to his memory."*



Capt. **David Mulligan** (1822-1904) A riverboat captain (*Victoria*). Educated in an Irish hedge school. He married **Catherine Draper** (1833-1922), daughter of Thomas and Catherine. They lived in Pembroke. Catherine's brother, Thomas Draper, also was a riverboat captain (*E.H. Bronson*) in Pembroke. (*Two large slab monuments on the ground.*) Their son, David B. Mulligan (1871-1954), a hotelman, ran the Waldorf Astoria in NYC and owned the Windsor Hotel in Montreal. He was credited with originating the golfing term "take a Mulligan," denoting the privilege of taking an extra drive from the first tee. A second son was James A. Mulligan, (1862-1928) - Judge of the County Court of Carleton. A third son was William H. Mulligan, Doctor in Sudbury.



Capt. **Bernard Mulligan** (1828-1899) – Riverboat pilot and captain and then purchased a farm in South Onslow’s 6th concession in 1877. He married **Catherine Dean** (1840-1917). Grandparents of Edgar Mulligan; g-grandparents of Sharon Sommer-Mulligan.

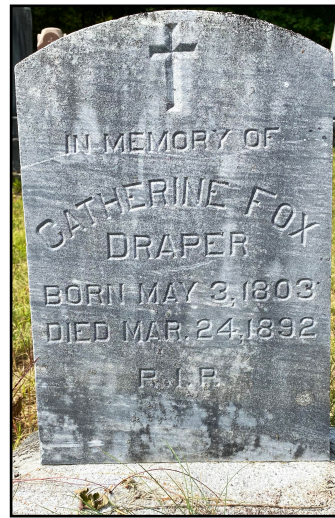


The oldest surviving gravestone in this cemetery:

Hannah Donnelly Mulligan (1790-1861), wife of Bernard Malachi Mulligan (1780-1849) who is buried in Castlebar, Co. Mayo, Ireland. He died during the Great Famine and Hannah emigrated to Canada in 1855 when her children and their families joined her son John, who came several years earlier. Hannah is the mother of Malachi, Michael, John, Bernard, Hugh, David, Philip, Patrick and Ellen Mulligan. She was one of the first to be buried in this cemetery and her gravestone still stands in good condition. The inscription reads:

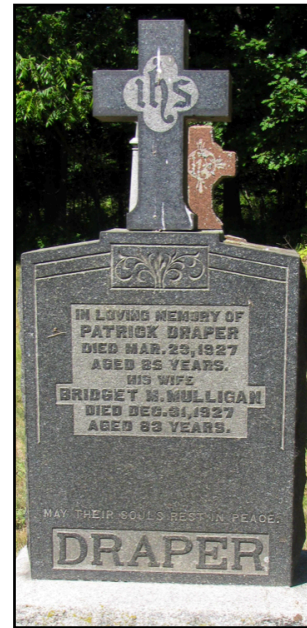
O Lord have mercy
on the soul of Hannah
Mulligan (alias) Donnelly
Native of Castlebar County
Mayo Ireland who departed
this life 19 June 1861
AE 70 Yrs

Thomas Draper (1798-1886) and **Catherine Fox** (1803-1892), emigrated from Co. Longford, Ireland and came to Bytown in 1827 and were one of the pioneer families of Bytown. Thomas was born in the Parish of Mohill, and Catherine was born in Ballymahar. Thomas worked as a labourer on the Rideau Canal (1827-1832). He was treated in the military hospital in Bytown, June 1827. He signed a petition for assisted emigration on February 5, 1829 addressed to Col. John By (*McCabe List*, no.102). Catherine gave birth to the second child born in Bytown, Margaret Draper. Thomas and Catherine were founding members of the first Catholic Church in Bytown and contributed to the building fund for the future Notre-Dame cathedral. They left their oldest child, Michael Draper, with his grandparents in Ireland. He rejoined his family in Canada in 1848. The Drapers moved to Pontiac Village probably in 1846. Three sons (Michael, Patrick and Thomas) and one daughter (Margaret) found work on the steamboats of the Union Forwarding Co. Thomas Draper, Sr. at the age of 73, was listed as a labourer on the 1871 census. Their first house was right at the river. They moved to a bigger and better built house, a little further back, in 1860. Thomas died in this house. Catherine Draper died at the home of her youngest son, Capt. Thomas Draper, in Pembroke. Their small tombstones were erected around 1914 by their granddaughter May Draper, who felt bad their graves weren't marked. (*Two small grey stone markers near Patrick Draper*).

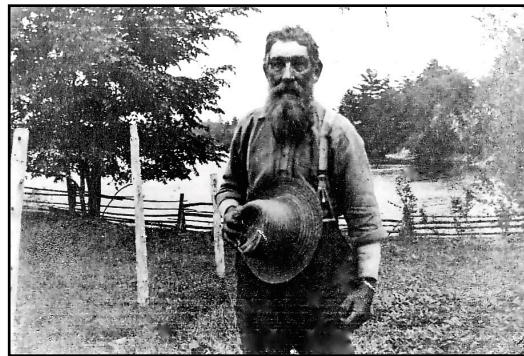


Thomas and Catherine's grandson, Patrick (Paddy) Draper (1866-1943), was a prominent labour leader. He started out as an apprentice printer from Aylmer. In 1900 he was elected secretary of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and became its president in 1935. He attended the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 with the Canadian delegation for the founding meeting of the ILO (International Labour Organization). His cousins in Quyon were very proud of him when he came to visit. Paddy Draper's great-grandson played for 20 years with the Detroit Red Wings - Chris Draper.

Patrick Draper (1841-1927) and Bridget Mulligan (1843-1927) lived in Pontiac Village until 1907 when they moved to Quyon. Patrick was born in Bytown and Bridget was born in Ireland. Bridget was a school teacher until she married at the age of 27. She was the mother of eleven children of whom six survived. Patrick worked on the steamers running between Pontiac and Aylmer in the summer months, and in the lumber shanties in the winter. Described in his obituary as *“one of the oldest and most respected residents... the last member of one of the longest established families in the township... His cheerful personality and Irish wit made him very popular.”* He died a week after celebrating his 85th birthday on St. Patrick’s Day. The Draper children (Ethel, May, Ernie, Arthur, Edwin & George) used to go back and forth to Pembroke to visit family. In most cases they had free transportation because the riverboat captains knew them. The ruins of their log house at Pontiac Village can still be seen on what is now the property of the Tim Horton’s Camp.



Draper house at Pontiac Village as it looked in 1923. Thomas Draper bought this house in 1860 from Neil McKinnon, carpenter. Sold by Patrick Draper to the Britains of Ottawa around 1907.



Patrick Draper at Pontiac Village, facing the family home, c.1900.

On the 17th of March in an Irish parish everybody went to Mass. Drapers had one of the front pews. And Patrick, who was born on St. Patrick’s Day, he’d come out of the pew after Mass. His wife wouldn’t join in. Mrs Cadieux, who was of Irish descent came out of the other pew. And the organist would strike up ‘The Irish Washerwoman’ and the two of them would do the Irish jig down the isle of St. Mary’s church.”

Fran Hughes, in 1994: *“I can remember when my uncle, Edwin Draper, died (in 1936). We went up to the old cemetery. And a lot of people came up to the cemetery, because they figured it was one of the Mulligans, or the Drapers who had died, when they saw Fr. Kiernan coming over from Arnprior. They said, ‘He only comes over for a Mulligan or a Draper’.”* (Fr. Kiernan was the Parish Priest in Quyon from 1890 to 1915 and then Arnprior until 1943.)



Stuart Derbyshire (1884-1955), was the grandson of Bytown's first M.P.P. of the same name. Stuart the younger married **Ethel Draper** (1886-1951) in 1919, granddaughter of Thomas and Catherine Draper of Pontiac Village. Ethel Draper had a twin sister, May. People called both of them Ethel May



because they couldn't tell one from the other. During his youth, Stuart used to go swimming in the old canal when visiting the Drapers. He would dive from the top edge of the cliff into the river. He was a veteran of W.W.I. and was wounded on December 25th, 1916 at Vimy Ridge and discharged to Canada after a year in hospital. His sister Freida got a message from him when he was wounded in his right arm and leg, like telepathy, to say that he was all right. "When Ethel Draper Derbyshire was buried at Old Pontiac Cemetery, in May of 1951, Stuart Derbyshire tried to pay someone from Quyon for the new plot and the opening of the grave. He was told that **no one had ever paid for a plot as the graveyard had been donated by John Mulligan, Ethel's grandfather.**" - Fran Hughes, 1994.

Edward O'Reilly (1821-1899) of Co. Cavan and **Mary McColgan** (1828-1898) of Co. Tyrone. The McColgans emigrated during the Great Famine. Edward and Mary were married in 1854 at Fitzroy Harbour. Another first generation Irish immigrant family. They farmed in the 4th Concession in South Onslow. Their son, John James (J.J.) O'Reilly (1867-1904) was trampled by his horse and killed. He left behind a young wife (Katie Rowan O'Reilly, a midwife and renowned butter-maker) and two small children. J.J.'s son was a well known Ottawa Valley horse farmer, and founder of the Quyon Farmers Co-Operative in 1945, Gervase O'Reilly, (1903-1998).



Charles McColgan (1839-1913) was an Irish Famine migrant who came to Canada in 1847 from Co. Tyrone with his parents, William and Mary Hagerty, and eight siblings. He was married to Elizabeth Thompson (1837-1912) in 1865. His name in the parish register was 'Colgan'. Elizabeth is buried in St. John's Anglican Cemetery in Quyon. Charles was a shoe-maker. He and Elizabeth ran a store in Quyon.



James Moyle (1807-1905) and **Mary Murray** (1811-1879). The Moyle family was prominent in Bristol and Quyon. Martin was the second son of James and Mary James Moyle. James was Irish-speaking and emigrated c. 1841 from Ballina, Co. Mayo. Their homestead was in the 3rd. Concession of Bristol (near Chemin Moyle). James Moyle Jr. was Quyon's mayor, furniture dealer and first undertaker; followed by his son Herbie Moyle. Their establishment was on St. John Street in Quyon, in what is now the Canadian Legion building.

**J a m e s
P u r c e l l
O ' D o n n e l l**

(1842-1917) and **Ester Ann Kelly** (1853-1925). James was born in Springfield, Mass. and emigrated to Canada with his Irish parents at an early age. He worked for J.R. Booth up the Coulonge River in the late 1870's and purchased what became known as the Gibsons farm in 1879 and built a saw mill on the west bank of the Quyon River downstream from Highway 148. In 1910 he built a new house on Clarendon Street, on the way out of Quyon and sold the mill. Their youngest son was Garrett O'Donnell. He was Secretary of the Municipal Council of Quyon as well as the Catholic School Board.





House built by James P. O'Donnell along the Quyon River in 1879-80.



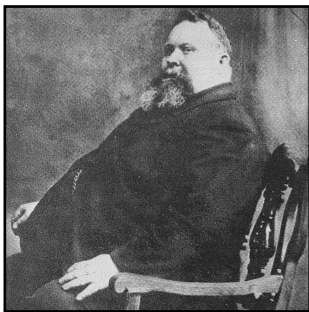
Martin Kilroy (1799-1879) and his wife **Mary** emigrated in 1845 from Killukin Parish, Co. Roscommon at the start of the Irish Famine. He settled in Bristol Township and farmed on the riverfront on Lot 25. In 1851, they had 12 of their 100 acres under cultivation.

Owen O'Connor (1815-1887) and **Jane Leonard** (1836-1900). Owen O'Connor operated a sawmill and a dam with his brother John at the first chute of the Chats Falls in Pontiac Bay, close to the canal opening. The mill was built in 1854 by John Egan & Co. O'Connor Island and O'Connors Chute were named after them.





Michael O'Meara (1856-1898), married to **Hannah**. Ran the dry goods store O'Meara & Hodgins of Quyon. Died suddenly at the age of 42 of pneumonia. Son of Edward O'Meara of Bryson. Left behind three young daughters, the youngest only a few days old. His funeral was one of the largest witnessed in Quyon. Fr. Kiernan, PP, celebrated the Mass of the Dead and the funeral arrangements were carried out by Undertaker James Moyle. Over 100 carriages followed the hearse to Old Pontiac Cemetery. "The deceased had a large circle of acquaintances in the country who thought highly of him, for his kindly, genial disposition, and his long and pleasant business associations..." - *The Equity*, March 3, 1898.



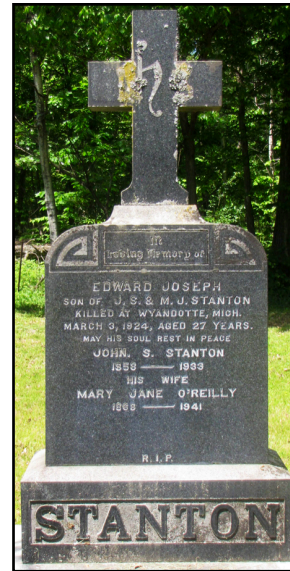
John James Muldoon (1855-1909). The heaviest man in Canada in his time (461 lbs.) and in spite of his weight he was exceedingly light on his feet, an exceptionally good step dancer and fiddle player. He was a descendant of a family that came from Ireland at the time of the potato famine. They settled in South March, Ontario, and Mr. Muldoon married **Mary Anne Kennedy**. He was one of six Muldoon brothers who married six Kennedy sisters. He served on South Onslow Council for several years.



James Kirwan (1846-1913) born in Ontario of Irish parents and **Mary Foran** (1858-1911) born in Quebec of Irish parents. They owned 'Kirwan's Hall' hotel on Clarendon Street in Quyon on what is now the site of Gavan's Hotel. Their daughter, Tessie Kirwan, played piano in a group called the 'Young Amateurs' who performed in Quyon in the 1890's. There was also an active choral society that performed there. The Municipal Council of Quyon met in Kirwan's Hall in the 1880's and 1890's. The village had three hotels in those years.



John Sylvester (J.S.) Stanton (1858-1933) and **Mary Jane O'Reilly** (1868-1941). John's grandparents came from the Tourmakeady area of Co. Mayo, Ireland and settled in Fitzroy in 1839. Mary Jane (May) is the daughter of Edward O'Reilly and Mary McColgan. The Stanton's farmed on the 6th Concession in South Onslow.



Peter Moran (1853-1895) born of Irish parents in Quebec. He is listed on the 1891 census as a hewer and may have died accidentally. His son, Peter Augustus Moran (1890-1918) was killed in W.W. I and buried in France.

Moses Chevrier (1880-1963) son of **Joseph Noel Chevrier** (1844-1918) and **Marie Jean-Marie** (1849-1933). He married Pearl Kilbride (1902-2000) in Quyon in 1933 and Nellie Manary. He was the second last person buried in Old Pontiac Cemetery.





Another grandson of Thomas Draper and Catherine Fox, **James McBane**, son of Ann Draper, his wife **Sarah Rowan** and their son, **John McBane** - all buried in Old Pontiac Cemetery. Sarah was a member of the Women's Institute and died at the age of 42 from the Spanish Flu in January, 1920. James served on the South Onslow Council and Separate School Board for a number of years. John McBane was former mayor of South Onslow (1952-1961). Gervase O'Reilly, his executor, said: "he was supposed to go with his mother and father." John was the last person buried in Old Pontiac

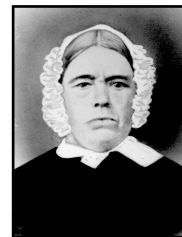
Cemetery in 1978. (*Black stone near far corner*). The McBane's farmed in the 5th Concession of South Onslow.



Unmarked graves

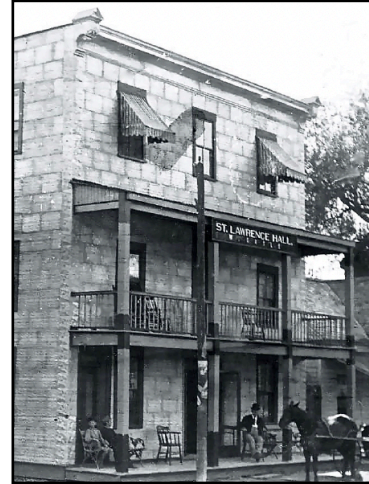
One of the unmarked graves belongs to a woman by the name of **Mary Moyle**. Her body was blessed by Fr. Kiernan and buried in Old Pontiac Cemetery on October 15, 1892. The witnesses were Patrick Barry and Luke Finnegan, friends and neighbours of her son, Walter McBane of South Onslow. Walter married Ann Draper from Pontiac Village in 1868. They are buried in St. Bridget's Cemetery in North Onslow. Like her brother James, Mary Moyle's grave has no marker, but is likely located close to the Moyle monuments. Born in 1819, Ballina, Co. Mayo, Ireland, Mary died in 1892, Bristol Twp., Quebec. She was an Irish speaker. Her name in Gaelic was: Máire Ó Maolmhuire; pronounced: "Moyra O' M'whale weir."

Mary married John Bain from Scotland in 1842 (the name changed to Bean and eventually to 'McBane'). Mary and John had four children and lived on a farm in McNab Township. He died when the children were young and Mary then married George Vallely in 1850. He lived across the river from McNab in Bristol Township on a farm next to Mary's brother James Moyle. Their blended families, according to the 1851 Census, consisted of eleven people living in a primitive log shanty. She lived a tough life and was loved by her oldest son, Walter McBane, who kept a large framed picture of her in his log house.





A second example of an unmarked grave is that belonging to **Catherine Murphy McLean**, 'Mrs. C.M.' (1824-1902). She owned a hotel in Quyon called the St. Lawrence Hall, located at 163 & 164 Clarendon Street. Staff of the P.P.J. Railroad stayed there during construction in the Quyon area in 1885-6. The hotel was later operated by her son, **Donald McLean** (1858-1897) who died at the age of 37. "In matters pertaining to the welfare of his own village, he was ever ready to lend a willing and generous hand; and to those in need, he has often proved a warm and sympathetic friend." - *The Equity*, October 1897. The hotel was destroyed by fire in 1916 and never rebuilt. Donald was the father of a



well-known Quyon business woman, Inez McLean (1894-1964).

There were many tragic deaths in these early years: mothers in child birth, young children from scarlet fever and other diseases, children and young people from drowning, etc. For example, Marie Amilia Jean-Marie, age 15 months and Milomie Jean-Marie, age 3 years 6 months, died within a week of each other just before Christmas, 1883. The daughters of Jean-Baptiste Jean-Marie and Philomine Boyer are both buried in Old Pontiac. Noël Chévrier and Jean-Baptiste Trudeau were the witnesses for both burials.

These notes are dedicated to the volunteers who lovingly maintained this cemetery over the generations, especially Eddie Desabrais who managed St. Mary's three cemeteries for 37 years (from 1982 to 2019).

If you have information to share, corrections or comments, please contact:

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