

Marcel Bellavance

*A Village
in Transition:
Compton, Quebec,
1880-1920*



Parks
Canada

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Compton, Quebec, 1880-1920**

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National Historic Parks and Sites Branch
Parks Canada
Environment Canada
1982

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Available in Canada through authorized bookstore agents and other bookstores, or by mail from the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, Hull, Quebec, Canada K1A 0S9.

L'original français s'intitule **Un village en mutation: Compton, Québec, de 1880 à 1920** (n° de catalogue R64-137-1982F).

En vente au Canada par l'entremise de nos agents libraires agréés et autres librairies, ou par la poste au Centre d'édition du gouvernement du Canada, Approvisionnement et Services Canada, Hull, Québec, Canada K1A 0S9.

Price Canada: \$4.95

Price other countries: \$5.95

Price subject to change without notice.

Catalogue No.: R64-137-1982E

ISBN: 0-660-11155-1

Published under the authority
of the Minister of the Environment,
Ottawa, 1982.

Translated by the Department of the Secretary of State.

Editor: Jean Brathwaite.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and not necessarily those of Environment Canada.

Front Cover: the Stimson-Savary general store; its first owner was Arba Stimson (1863) and its last owner, François Savary (circa 1910). (C.-E. Savary.)

Back Cover: **top**, view of Church Street from Main Street (Estelle Bureau); **centre**, the Saint-Laurent home and general store circa 1890 (Dale C. Thomson, *Louis Saint-Laurent: canadien* [Montreal: Le Cercle du Livre de France, 1968]); **bottom**, Church Street, looking toward Main Street and the bandstand (*La Société Histoire et du Musée du Comté de Compton*).

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ABSTRACT

After 1850 the Eastern Townships were swept by changes of many kinds: economic changes brought about by the building of a complex network of railways and the expansion of industry and commercial agriculture, profound demographic changes in the wake of a massive wave of migration by French-Canadian workers, changes in social structure, and cultural changes with adverse consequences for the original British settlers.

Compton Village and Township were as prosperous as the region's other villages and townships, and perhaps even more so since local livestock was highly reputed for its quality in England and the United States. Like some other villages in the southeastern townships, Compton resisted invasion from outside for a long time. As late as 1896, only 20 per cent of the townspeople were French-speaking, among them Louis Saint-Laurent's father, Jean-Baptiste-Moïse, who ran a general store in the village.

Suddenly, between 1900 and 1910, there was a massive exodus on the part of Compton's English-speaking population and an equally massive influx of French-speaking Canadians, which caused an unprecedented flurry of property transactions. This phenomenon took place in an amazingly short time; it was a dramatic moment in Compton's history. Yet its roots stretched far back into the past, as an analysis of the village's population structure makes clear.

It was against this background, heavily influenced by demographic trends, that the drama of Compton's social history was enacted, with its social and economic structures and its political and religious life playing major roles.

Submitted for publication in 1978 by Marcel Bellavance, Quebec Region, Parks Canada, Quebec City.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This monograph could not have been written without the warm hospitality and co-operation of a number of informants living in Compton; the unfailing availability of André Gagnon, Compton's secretary-treasurer; the co-operation of the priest of Saint-Thomas Parish; as well as patient and painstaking work by André Cloutier, Pierre Paradis and Michel Ville-neuve, cartographers at the CEGEP de Limoilou in Quebec City. Very special thanks also are due to Richard Desjardins for his research at the Sherbrooke *Bureau de l'enregistrement*; his contribution permitted the inclusion of greater detail in the chapter on land ownership.

INTRODUCTION

This study began as an effort to recreate Compton, the world in which Louis Saint-Laurent lived his early childhood years and grew to manhood. Once begun, the study went beyond mere biography and assumed the scope of a social history for its purpose was better served by a social history of Compton Village than it could have been by any collection of anecdotes that might have been unearthed about a figure who was unremarkable at that time. A knowledge of all the people of Compton, from the most humble farmers to the most influential notables, would help to put Saint-Laurent's background in context, as it would for any of his contemporaries. Perhaps these men and women have not always been given their due in this study; however, they have been endowed with a certain human dimension for better knowledge of them as individuals rests on more familiarity with their community.

The study covers a very brief timespan, only 40 years, but this was the most crucial period in the village's history. Between 1880 and 1920, Compton was so radically transformed that anyone who had seen it in 1880 would have had difficulty recognizing it in 1920. But when necessary, the historical roots of events and phenomena occurring in Compton have been traced to provide a better understanding of the years immediately preceding and following the turn of the century, which were formative years in Louis Saint-Laurent's life.

Within these narrow limits, which nevertheless offer a fertile field for historical research, Compton society has been studied in search of what the French historian Pierre Goubert would call the demographic, economic and social measurements, characteristics and dominant traits.¹

It is the change in Compton's population that makes it exceptional during this period; everything else proceeds from that phenomenon. To better understand it, the first part of this report is an overall view of the Eastern Townships, the scene of great migrations in the latter half of the 19th century.

The study covers not only a short period of time, but also a limited geographical area. Compton Village covered a surface area of 3210 acres; its population, which never exceeded 600 inhabitants, was divided into two linguistic communities and three religious denominations. Compton Parish and Township

covered some 50 000 acres and had a population of about 3000; fortunately, statistics for the parish and township compensate for occasional gaps in documentation concerning the village proper.

Throughout the second part of this report Compton Village will be seen in perspective against the background of the parish and township, as well as that of the county and the province as a whole. In 1900, more than at any other time in history, Compton was the reflection of Quebec itself. In it can easily be seen the effects of the economic, political and social conditions that prevailed in the Laurier era.

(Note: "bourgeois" has been translated as "middle class" and must be understood to have a broader meaning in the context of this paper than in present-day usage.)

PART ONE THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS

SETTLEMENT

Settlement in the Eastern Townships in 1850

Settlement of the Eastern Townships was extremely slow until the mid-1800s. In 1851, 60 years after Buckinghamshire (that is, the Eastern Townships) was divided into townships¹ and the era of settlement officially began, there were only 95 000 inhabitants in the region, two-thirds of whom (60 000) were English-speaking settlers of various origins, while one-third were French speaking. If the Eastern Townships are considered to be the area so defined by geographers and accordingly include the Beauce region, their total population in 1851 would have been approximately 116 000 inhabitants, 40 per cent of whom were French speaking.²

British immigration always lacked momentum and was aimed primarily at Upper Canada or the United States. In 1821 only 21 per cent of the British immigrants who landed at Quebec City or Montreal chose to settle in the

Eastern Townships. In 1856, 41 per cent went to the United States; in 1857 the figure rose to 50 per cent.³ In 1851, 63 per cent of the Eastern Townships' English-speaking inhabitants had been born in Canada. Of the 37 per cent who had come from outside the country, 40 per cent were Irish and 30 per cent were American-born.⁴

The Colonial Office's dream of countering French influence through the creation of Lower British Canada, to be populated by 500 000 British settlers, was in serious trouble. British settlement was turning out to be a complete failure. Since 1792 an average of only 1000 English-speaking settlers had come to the Eastern Townships each year; Americans accounted for at least half this number.⁵

English settlements were generally situated in the southern half of the Eastern Townships, in the counties of Missiquoi, Brome, Stanstead and Sherbrooke, along the Saint-François River and occasionally Craig Road. The Richelieu River and Missiquoi Bay provided convenient access routes and favoured the concentration of settlements in townships close to the American border. Craig Road was built in 1809, but was not properly maintained and could not be



Figure 1. The British in the Eastern Townships, 1851. Each dot represents 1000 persons.

used for traffic until 20 years later, when British settlers landing in Quebec City began to use it and to settle here and there along it.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the territory was sparsely populated in 1851 except for concentrated settlements in the south. This map alone would suffice to prove the failure of British settlement, which Maurice Séguin, in *La Nation canadienne et l'agriculture*, has analysed so well. Around 1840, according to Séguin, only 1.5 million acres of crown land were actually settled out of the six million acres surveyed in all the townships in Lower Canada. Whether through favoritism or other means, speculators had acquired 2.5 million acres.⁶ The British American Land Company alone had acquired more than a million acres in the Eastern Townships by 1832.⁷ The land company⁸ was more interested in making a profit from lumbering than in paving the way for settlement and, like any other speculator, therefore impeded or even prevented settlement.

As land was transferred into the hands of monopolists, and demographic tensions made themselves felt on the seigniories, those tenants who did not decide to leave for the United States inevitably began to practise squatting.⁹

The numerous squatters who lived on land belonging to speculators and on the Protestant clergy reserves usually found it necessary to improve roads, bridges and land before clearing the land and erecting houses and outbuildings. They often risked losing the fruits of their labour, for property owners sometimes stepped forward and demanded such high prices they could practically never pay them.¹⁰ For fear of losing the increased value they gave to the land, squatters often chose to live almost as nomads, surviving on the first good harvests from new land.¹¹ There was a fairly large number of squatters in 1850, the date historians consider to be the beginning of what Blanchard calls the French "tide" of settlement.¹² In some townships, squatters even constituted the majority; they seem to have been numerous enough for Jean-Baptiste-Eric Dorion, member of Parliament for Drummond and Arthabaska, to ask that they be protected under the law.¹³

Living in a society that frustrated their development, French Canadians had to choose between settling new territories beyond the seigniories or emigrating to the United States. Slowly, despite the difficulties inherent in the settlement of the Eastern Townships, they

occupied the area either as squatters or legally, paying speculators extremely high prices for their land.¹⁴ Thus, within 20 years (1831-51) the proportion of French Canadians living in the townships rose from 20 to 40 per cent.¹⁵ At approximately the same time (1844-49), 30 000 of their compatriots chose the alternative solution of emigrating to the United States to work in New England factories at low wages.¹⁶

Emigration to the United States, the Eastern Townships or elsewhere in Canada enabled the French Canadians to escape a wretched existence on the overcrowded, impoverished, subdivided seigniories. Long before any inquiries were held into the matter, they had seen that it was impossible to eke out a living on less than 50 acres of land, as 36.2 per cent of landowners in Lower Canada tried to do, and difficult to survive on less than a hundred acres,¹⁷ as did 75.7 per cent of tenants.

In the mid-1800s, some members of the clergy (including Father O'Reilly and several missionary priests) stirred up public opinion, anguished yet powerless in the face of the French-Canadian exodus to the United States. The clergymen raised not only the problem of emigration, but also that of the settlement of Lower Canada and particularly the Eastern Townships. The government heeded their appeals and, in the 1850s and 1860s, set up commissions of inquiry into emigration and settlement. The commissions paid special attention to the obstacles preventing settlement and their proposed solutions became the basis for the government's settlement policy in the years to follow.

Overcoming Obstacles to Settlement

The commissions of inquiry held regular hearings from 1850 to 1868. Most of those who testified at the hearings blamed the same basic causes for the delay in settlement: the transfer of land into the hands of the monopolists, forced squatting, the excessively high cost of land, and the scarcity and poor condition of roads. The analysis of the situation contained in *Le Canadien émigrant*¹⁸ in 1851 was repeated like a refrain throughout this period and elaborated upon by everyone who participated in the commission hearings until they were adjourned in 1868. Subsequently, the new provincial Legislative Assembly, created as a result of the constitutional reform of

1867, acted on some of the recommendations made by the various commissions. Indeed, the problem of emigration and settlement was the dominant theme of Quebec's first legislative session, which enacted legislation to protect settlers, created *sociétés de colonisation* to promote settlement, and voted in favour of building a network of roads.¹⁹ A few years earlier, in 1854, the Legislative Assembly of the united Canadas had abolished the Protestant clergy reserves in the Eastern Townships; in 1858 the assembly obtained the return to the crown of more than half of the British American Land Company's original concessions.²⁰

Such measures made it easier for French Canadians to gain access to good farmland; however, they do not in themselves suffice to explain the rapidity with which the French Canadians settled in the Eastern Townships after 1850.²¹ Legislation and the activities of *sociétés de colonisation* for the promotion of such settlement only gave added impetus to a migration which had already become irreversible owing to demographic pressures and a favourable economic situation.

The 1860 report on settlement had already deplored the delay in legislating assistance to settlers. Chairman J.-O. Bureau of the 1860 commission wrote that in many cases legislation had come to the settlers' aid only at the eleventh hour, *after they had already made a new country for themselves through their own industry* (italics added).²² The same comment can be made with respect to the clergy, which only rode on the coattails of an existing migratory trend and then tried to take command of it, as the legislators did. There is no indication in testimony before the commissions of inquiry that the clergy provided any leadership in the movement. On the contrary, the statements made deplore the lack of priests among the settlers. As late as 1860 and 1867, Father Marquis blamed a lack of assistance from the church²³ for the delay in the settlement of the Eastern Townships. Nevertheless, there was a massive influx of French Canadians into the territory and they attained majority status there in 1871, without relinquishing their understandable attachment to their native parish and their beliefs. In the eyes of historians Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, that attachment, which they assumed to be a basic trait of the French-Canadian mentality, would explain the, very relatively, slow pace of settlement and the clergy's role in the process. Yet the reports of the commissions

of inquiry make it difficult to see how Hamelin and Roby reached such a conclusion. Testimony before the commissions placed far greater emphasis on economic factors preventing settlement than on any psychological factors. Their interpretation is invalidated by the extraordinary migrations that took place in Quebec in the 19th century (about half the province's population either migrated or emigrated). Hamelin and Roby themselves note that in 1900, 1 200 000 French Canadians lived in the United States while 1 648 858 lived in Quebec.²⁴ To say, as these authors do, that the Church *launched* the trend toward settlement and that the clergy *channelled* the people's energies into settlement, *chose* the areas to be settled and *directed* these activities²⁵ seems excessive and contrary to the reality of the situation, at least in the Eastern Townships.²⁶ Several other authors have apparently similarly confused their chronology; whereas the participation of the clergy in *sociétés de colonisation* for the promotion of settlement only became common after 1870, these historians extend the clergy's influence to the entire 19th century. Even after 1870, some clarification is necessary. In 1873 only 40 *sociétés de colonisation* were actively promoting settlement out of a total of 72 then in existence, and not all of them were directed by clergymen. In 1900 there were only five such *sociétés* left,²⁷ which is rather few to organize the settlement of the vast regions of Témiscamingue, the Gatineau, Labelle, the Saint-Maurice River, Lake Saint-Jean and Chicoutimi, north of the Saint Lawrence, and Gaspé, the Lower Saint Lawrence, the Chaudière River and the Eastern Townships, to the south of the Saint Lawrence. It should be no surprise that Father Lavallée of Compton wrote that the massive influx of settlers from the Beauce region into Compton was due to word-of-mouth publicity spread by relatives and friends concerning the quality of land there.²⁸

Thus, French-Canadian settlement in the Bois-Francs region (on the south shore of the Saint Lawrence, just north of the Eastern Townships) and the southeastern townships was already well under way by 1850, the date cited by historians as the beginning of the French "tide." During the 1850s this wave had already begun to overflow into areas that had been settled exclusively by the British.²⁹ In a way, the French-Canadian invasion of the Eastern Townships took place independent of action by civil and religious authorities, no mat-

ter how sympathetic they may have been to the movement. Fundamental technological and economic changes, such as railroad construction after 1856 and the development of new economic and agricultural patterns, were more important than any legislation, although this latter factor must be borne in mind to a lesser degree.

It is important that the new economic conditions that arose in the Eastern Townships during the latter half of the 19th century be described. They were instrumental in bringing about a demographic revolution, the only name that can be given to the replacement of one ethnic group by another in only ten years' time. It was in this atmosphere of rapid change that Louis-Etienne Saint-Laurent, a general merchant, came to Sherbrooke in 1858, that his son Jean-Baptiste-Mofse settled in Compton in 1878 and that his grandson, Louis Saint-Laurent, was born in 1882.

THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE 19th CENTURY

The systematic invasion of the Eastern Townships after 1850 was brought about by the convergence of two forces: settlers were driven away from the seigniories by overcrowding and were drawn to the Eastern Townships by the many economic changes taking place there. The two forces seem to have been strong enough to explain the rapid settlement of the townships by the French Canadians, who scattered throughout the area spontaneously after 1850 in their search for a better life. These convergent forces, which attracted to the townships tens of thousands of settlers who might otherwise have gone to the United States, were at the same time sustained by legislative action that, although events were often in advance of the law, did help to rouse people from the inaction that had been preventing the development of the territory. The government played its part and acted on the principal recommendations of the commissions of inquiry that had held hearings since 1849, by introducing French civil law into the townships in 1849, by abolishing and selling the Anglican clergy reserves and portions of the great private estates in 1854, by establishing a system of parish municipalities in 1855 which brought government closer to the people, and enacting legislation after 1867 to protect settlers, to create *sociétés* for the promotion of settlement (1868), to provide for mandatory property registration and to create an appropriate network of roads.¹ The reforms had a beneficial effect on the Eastern Townships although it was not as great as the influence of changes in the economy, the broad outlines of which will now be examined.

Changes in the Economic Structure

Economic development in the Eastern Townships in the latter half of the 19th century was diversified and closely followed the pattern of the North American economy in general. In this respect it was completely different from the economy of other settled areas of Quebec, which often depended on a single industry, such as forestry in the Saguenay - Lake Saint-Jean region or fishing in Gaspé. The Eastern Townships had the advantage of being located close to major population centres and the

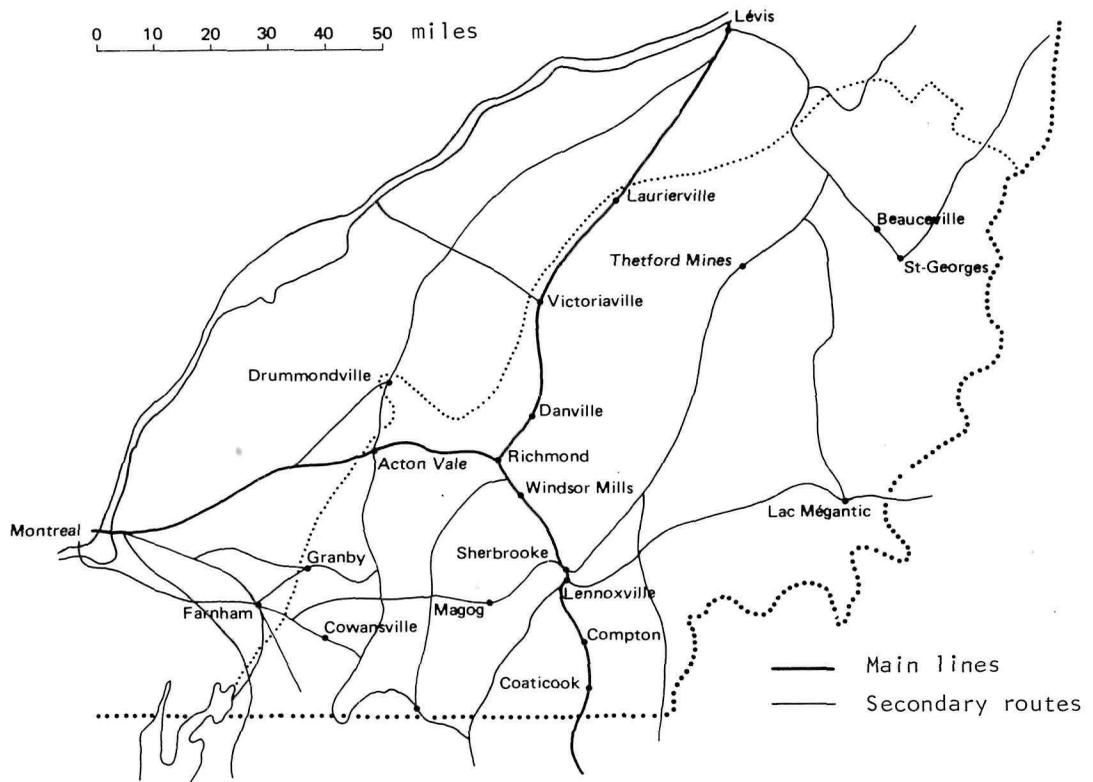


Figure 2. The railway network in the Eastern Townships.

United States, and also occupied a choice position along international trade routes.

A railway was built in the region early in the 1850s, not to service the townships but to create the shortest and quickest possible link between Montreal and an ice-free winter port on the Atlantic.² The benefits brought to the region by the 1852 opening of the Grand Trunk Railway (Montreal - Acton Vale - Richmond - Sherbrooke - Coaticook - Portland) in Sherbrooke, and the 1854 opening of the Lévis-Laurierville-Victoriaville line, which linked up with the Grand Trunk at Richmond (Fig. 2), were so great that every settled area in the Eastern Townships immediately demanded a railway line.³ The capitalists set themselves to the task with enthusiasm, aided by the fact that they were sometimes also politicians with access to the public purse.⁴ After ten years of railroad building (sometimes at a financial loss), the railway stretched its tentacles in every direction, notably toward the southwest (Fig. 2). In 1875 nine-tenths of Quebec's 1024 miles of track were located on the South

Shore, in the Montreal plain and the Eastern Townships.⁵ By 1900 the Eastern Townships enjoyed a reputation as one of the country's most prosperous regions.⁶

The Railroads and Settlement

The first result of the building of the railroad was a massive influx of French-Canadian workers who would otherwise have left for the United States as thousands of their compatriots had done. As soon as the railroads came into existence, the French Canadians followed their paths and stayed on to work at the factories that sprang up beside the tracks:⁷ textile mills in Sherbrooke, Coaticook and Magog, sawmills in Bromptonville, Granby and Lac-Mégantic, and mines at Thetford. The region's manufacturing industry, launched by the building of the railroad, could not have continued without this work force, which included farm labourers and workers from cities and villages, dispossessed persons who were

available for work but had no money to go into business for themselves, who were free of encumbrances and willing to hire themselves out to machinery and factory owners.⁸

The Railroads and Industrialization

A second effect of the building of the railroad was to open up lines of communication and give rise to two kinds of industry - sawmills and textile mills - along the rivers the railway followed.

Beginning in 1855, sawmill operations rapidly assumed major proportions and spread throughout the region. French Canadians enjoyed good reputations as lumberjacks and thus, being in their element, continued to spread in all directions. They could especially be found in Brompton, Weedon, Garthby, Cookshire, Lac-Mégantic and Granby.⁹

Conditions also favoured the development of the textile industry though it was secondary to lumbering in importance. During the early 1800s, wool had been processed in the Eastern Townships at small factories in Sherbrooke, Magog and Stanstead which never employed more than 20 people.¹⁰ After 1850, waterfalls were harnessed and a massive influx of workers enabled the textile industry to expand. Paton Woollen Mills, built in Sherbrooke in 1866 at a cost of \$400 000 and employing 500 workers, was the largest factory of its kind in Canada.¹¹ In 1875 the same company opened a factory in Coaticook, hiring 25 persons. In 1882, four years after the Montreal railway line began operating, Dominion Textile built a factory in Magog which initially employed 200 workers and gradually grew until 1015 people worked there in 1900.¹² Besides those who worked in textile mills, thousands of others, including women and children, did piecework at home.¹³ According to Mackenzie King, this sweating system was widely practised and would explain why only three per cent of all ready-to-wear clothes that were marketed came from textile mills.¹⁴

However odious it may have been, the sweating system provided recent arrivals to the Eastern Townships with an additional source of income for the whole family, and thus fostered their hopes of quickly acquiring land or setting up a small business. Capitalists took excellent advantage of the new work force created by the arrival of a large number of families.

The Transformation of Agriculture

As the population grew and industry expanded in the Eastern Townships, agriculture was transformed the better to meet the demands of urban and international markets. Montreal was an attractive and ideal market for farmers in the Eastern Townships, but there they faced competition from the outlying areas of Montreal and the Richelieu Valley. Towns such as Sherbrooke (with almost 12 000 inhabitants in 1901), Magog, Granby and Thetford Mines offered farmers in the townships an exclusive market. Moreover, agriculture in the region was stimulated by English and American markets; farmers had already become partially dependent on foreign demand.

Until around 1860, sheep and cattle were the major exports of farmers in the Eastern Townships;¹⁵ horses became equally important during the American Civil War. The growing demand for barley, oats and, above all, dairy products in England and the northeastern United States later brought about the expansion of the dairy industry in the townships, so much so that dairy products became their chief export by the end of the 19th century.¹⁶

In 1851, sheep and cattle raising were of equal importance; by the turn of the century, sheep herds had decreased in inverse proportion to cattle herds. A new hierarchy was thus established in which cattle were most important and sheep were least important. Pigs fed on dairy by-products occupied second place; pig raising was an innovation.¹⁷ The profound transformation in the structure of agriculture came about at the same time as railroad construction gave a major boost to the exploitation of certain "natural" resources such as maple products.

This is no more than a summary analysis of the economy of the Eastern Townships to describe its broad outlines and to emphasize the close link between the transformation of the economy and the settlement of the territory. An awareness of this economic situation is essential to an understanding of the conditions under which the Saint-Laurent family and, later, people from the Beauce area came to Compton.

Ethnic Groups in the Eastern Townships

The expansion of industry and agriculture that resulted from the building of the railway

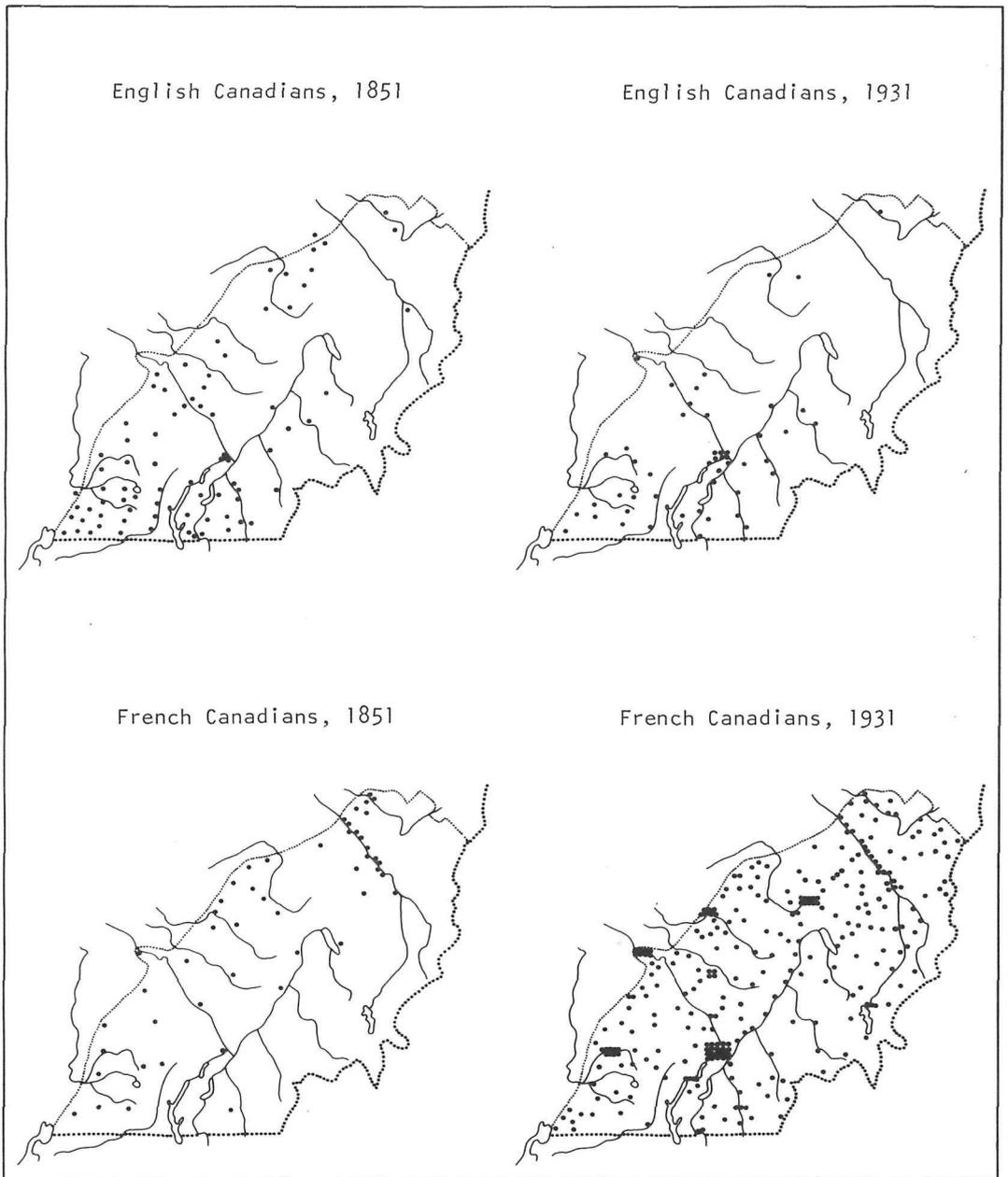


Figure 3. English and French Canadians in the Eastern Townships, 1851 and 1931. Each dot represents 1000 persons.

would clearly not have reached such proportions if French-Canadian workers had not provided the necessary manpower. It was no accident that the capitalist state made it easier for them to travel to the townships.

After 1850, British and American immigration to the Eastern Townships practically came to a halt and English Canadians began their exodus to the cities, the Canadian West and the United States.¹⁸ At the same time, the French Canadians poured into the territory, settling on virgin land and entering areas where the British were already established, finally attaining majority status in 1871. The "tide" of French settlement (106 400 persons) overwhelmed the English community, which numbered only 70 750 inhabitants at that time; 67 191 lived primarily in the old pioneer counties of the southwest and even there they were outnumbered by 71 590 French Canadians.¹⁹ In 1876 only two of these counties could elect a political candidate without the Catholic vote.²⁰ Such a reversal of the demographic structure in a mere 20 years is remarkable.

The reversal became more pronounced as the years went by. At the turn of the century there were 185 000 French-Canadian inhabitants and slightly under 67 000 English Canadians. In 1931 the latter accounted for only 16 per cent of the Eastern Townships' total population.²¹ Compton County resisted the French invasion until 1901; then only Brome County was still primarily Protestant and English-speaking within the townships.²²

Figure 3 illustrates the comparative proportion of English and French-Canadian inhabitants in 1851 and 1931. The maps clearly indicate that British and American settlement never really reached the more northerly townships, as is widely believed. According to Robert Sellar, editor and publisher of Huntingdon's *Canadian Gleaner* from circa 1864 to 1919, English-speaking inhabitants generally settled in Stanstead, Sherbrooke, Waterloo, Missisquoi, Brome and one other county outside the townships, Huntingdon.²³ The 1881 *Illustrated Atlas of the Eastern Townships and South Western Quebec* narrowed English territory down still further to Huntingdon, Missisquoi, Brome and Stanstead counties.

Far surpassing that of the English in extent, French-Canadian settlement covered the entire territory, from east to west and north to south. The counties of Frontenac, Mégantic, Richmond, Wolfe and Arthabaska were all occupied in the latter half of the 19th century.

By 1931 the Eastern Townships had become a primarily French-speaking area where 40 000 to 50 000 English-speaking inhabitants continued to survive near Sherbrooke and in Brome and Missisquoi counties.

The English community was not reduced to minority status without some difficulty. It was slow to react at first. In 1875, when the Protestant committee of the Board of Public Education practically abandoned its rural elementary schools, the townships' English-speaking inhabitants suddenly realized that they were too few in number to keep their institutions alive.²⁴ Attempts to correct the situation continued to hang fire. By the turn of the century, as Blanchard reports, some villages and townships went so far as to bar industry in order to prevent French-Canadian workers from coming to settle in their midst.²⁵ Other English-speaking inhabitants, such as Robert Sellar, even believed they were the victims of a Catholic plot to drive the Protestants out of the Eastern Townships.²⁶

Depending on the ethnic group to which one belonged, the transfer of regional control from one nationality to the other in so short a time was either a tragedy or a surge of pride:

Here is a concession on which, a few decades ago, in each home was heard the kindly speech of the Lowland Scot; here another where High-landers predominated; another where Irish Catholics and Protestants dwelt in neighborly helpfulness; another where neatness and taste told of its dwellers being of New England descent. To-day approach one of those homes, and with polite gesture madam gives you to understand she does not speak English.²⁷

O fields peopled by an other, haughty race,
Cantons de l'Est, given strange-sounding names,
 You which were meant as a barrier against us
 Belong to us, and are now being reclaimed! [Translation]²⁸

Ending the chapter on this triumphant note risks giving a false impression unless the relative economic strength of the English-Canadian minority and the French-Canadian majority is also considered.

**Conclusion: Effects of
Post-1850 Development
on Eastern Townships
Social Structure**

Given the present state of research on the social history of the Eastern Townships, it is difficult if not impossible to know exactly how the region's social structure was affected by the economic and demographic revolution; nevertheless, research by Raoul Blanchard and Jean Hunter permits some observations. A careful study of the reality of 19th-century life in the Eastern Townships will confirm a general rule applicable to most Quebec societies: there is absolutely no correlation between the size of the majority group's population and its political and economic power. In other words, the reversal of the demographic structure in the Eastern Townships did not pose even the slightest threat to the supremacy of the English-speaking capitalist middle class. On the contrary, the "peaceful conquest" of the region by a massive influx of French-Canadian workers consolidated the power of the middle class by providing it with increased opportunities for investment and sources of profit. Although it had always been the minority in Quebec and was outnumbered in the Eastern Townships after 1871, the English-speaking capitalist middle class nevertheless remained dominant. They felt no cause for alarm. Thus, whether consciously or not, by bringing in labourers from the rival ethnic group to work in their lumber yards and factories, the English capitalists were the principal agent of their community's own collapse into a minority position.

The migrations dealt the severest blow to the lower echelon of the Anglo-Saxon social hierarchy. As its clientele departed, the small-business/professional class lost all of its power to its French-Canadian counterpart. Blanchard records that business was conducted almost entirely in French.²⁹ "If the English dominate the industrial life of the town, the French dominate the commercial life,"³⁰ adds Jean Hunter, a conclusion based on a specific study of Coaticook.

The economic and demographic evolution of the Eastern Townships thus brought about a radical transformation within a social framework that remained unchanged. The replacement of the English-speaking farming class by its French-Canadian equivalent, as well as the creation of a French-Canadian working class, finally led to the emergence of a French-Canadian small-business class. The only class to profit from all these upheavals was the old entrepreneurial class. What resulted was a social pyramid with a new base but the same apex.

PART TWO COMPTON VILLAGE

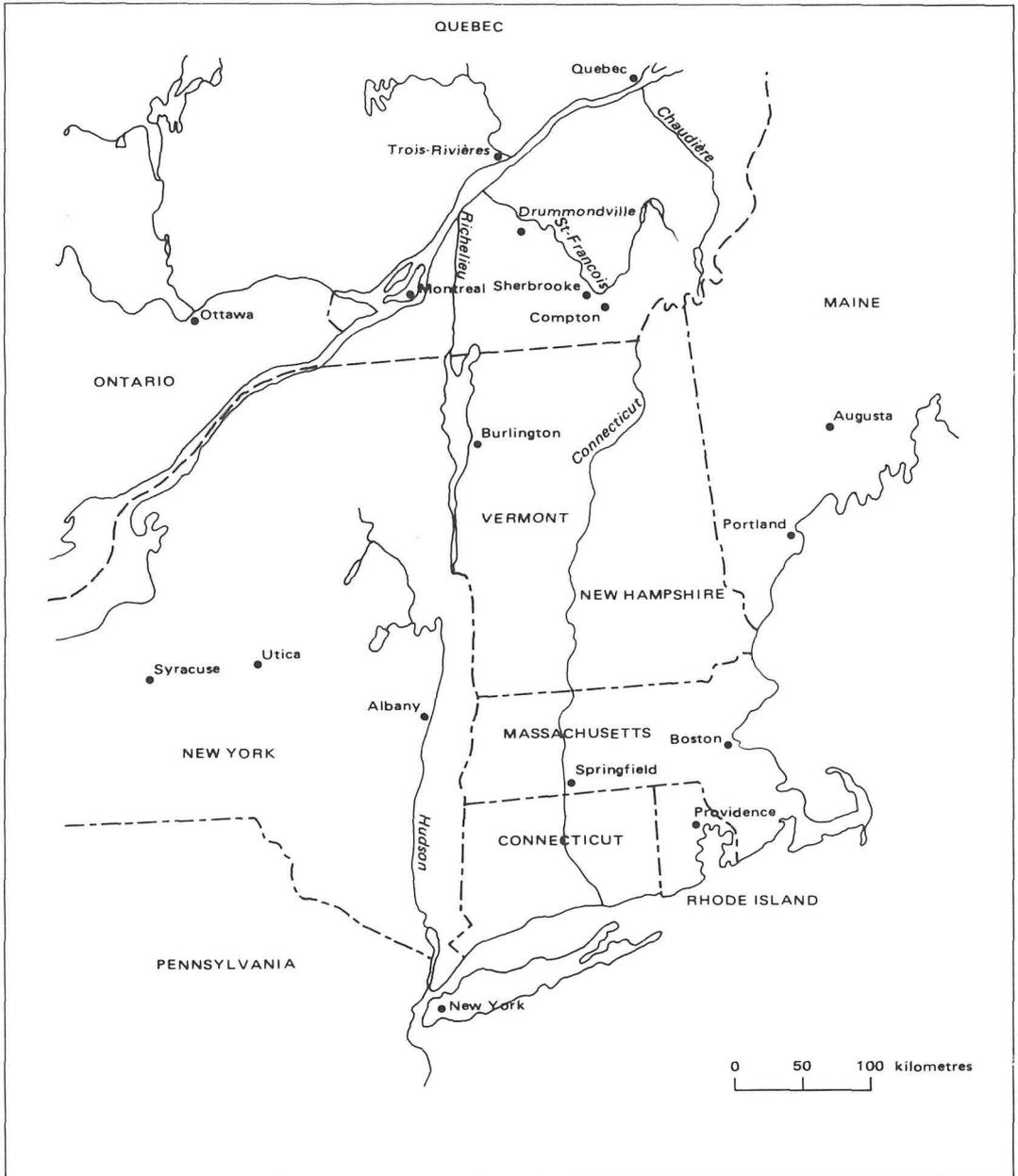


Figure 4. Location of Compton Village.

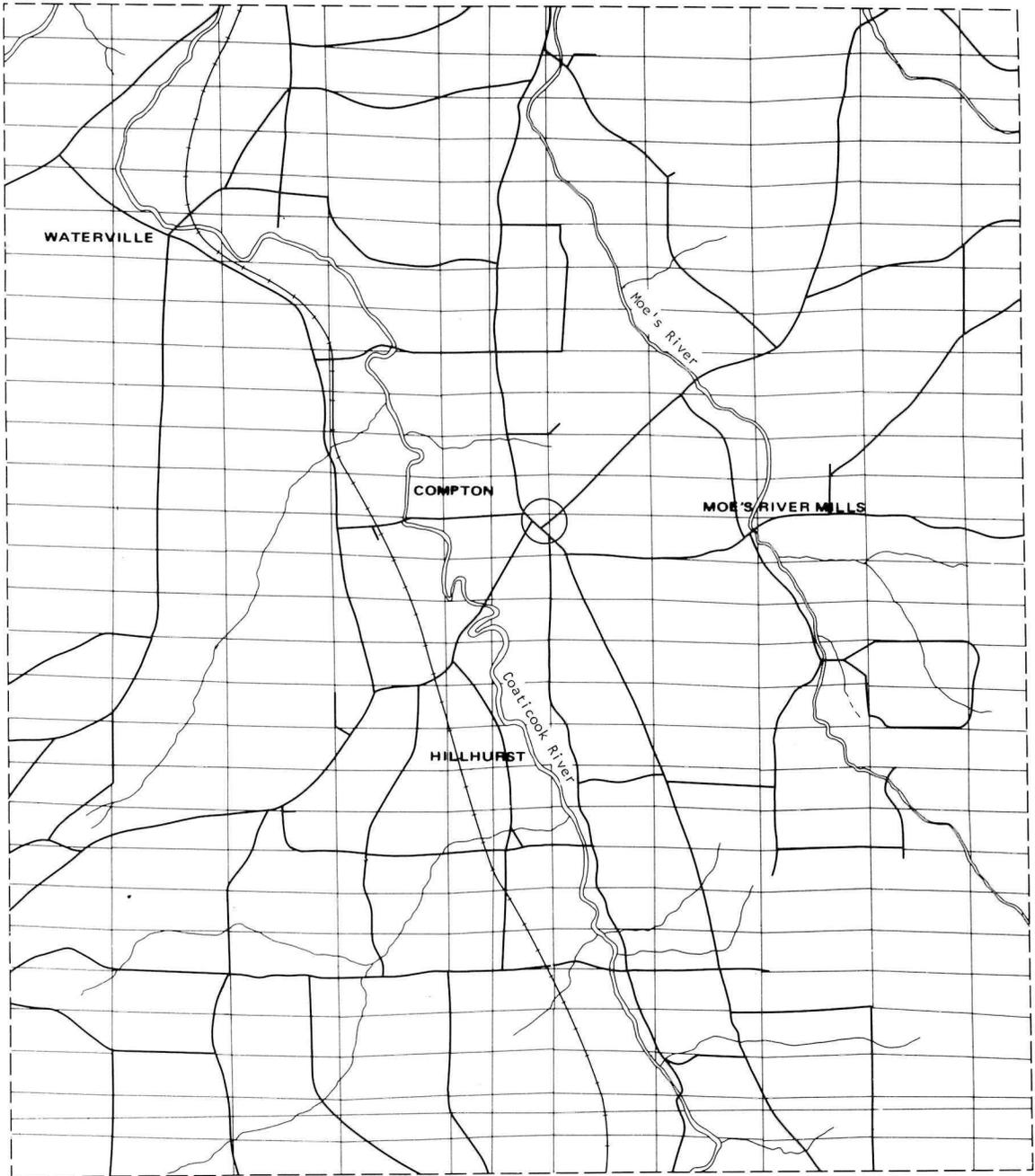


Figure 5. Compton Township.



Figure 6. Aerial view of Compton Village circa 1950-60.

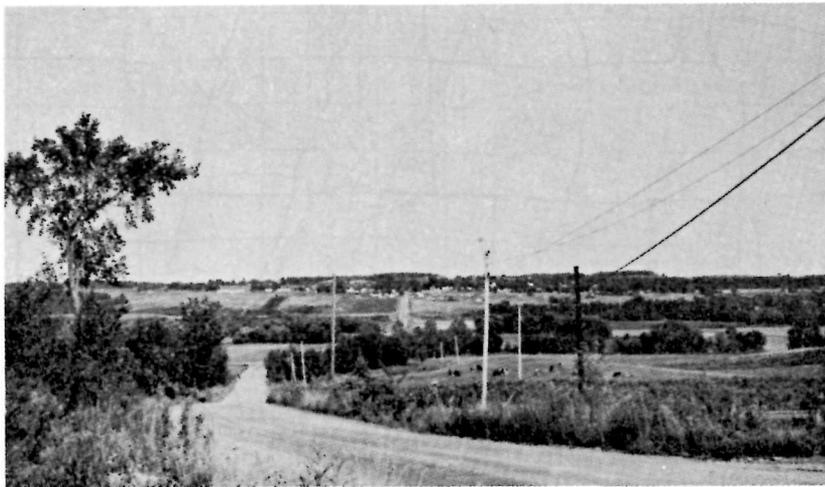


Figure 7. Compton Village as seen from Compton Station.

INTRODUCTION

While there were no mills or industries in Compton Village, stores, two hotels and many artisans served a prosperous countryside whose inhabitants had earned an excellent reputation in England and the United States for breeding cattle, horses and other livestock.¹ According to some sources, cattle there fattened before one's very eyes and grazing was excellent.² Others said that degenerate breeds of animals, once transplanted there, seemed to grow in size and acquire new qualities.³

Compton is situated in a region crisscrossed by valleys, where rivers flow this way and that, following the folds of the Appalachians. Compton Village stands on the western slope of one of these folds, almost halfway between Sherbrooke and the American border. The Coaticook River meanders through the valley; in springtime its floodwaters enrich the soil along its banks. Opposite the village and halfway up another slope stands Compton Station, through which the Montreal-Portland railway line passes. People in Compton today say that if the Grand Trunk had cut through the village, it would have become a major

population centre. Compton Station has remained a mere hamlet.

Between 1880 and World War I, approximately 100 families lived in the village. The religious diversity of the inhabitants was attested to by its churches, whose steeples could be seen whether one approached the village from the north through Sherbrooke, from the south along the Coaticook River or from the west through Hatley. To the south, toward the Cochrane lands stood the Ladies' College, later called King's Hall, where young girls from good, English-speaking, Anglican families, drawn from all over Canada and even beyond, were educated. A little further along stood Ingleside, the sumptuous residence of livestock breeder H.D. Smith, which the townspeople were quick to nickname "the Château." Everything seemed to radiate prosperity and yet this order of things, believed to be immutable, was suddenly disturbed. In less than ten years, the vast majority of the men and women who had built the town left, yielding before the French-Canadian invasion. Was their departure a direct result of the arrival of the French Canadians? Or did the latter simply come to take the places they left vacant? Both questions must be answered.



Figure 8. Intersection of Main and Church streets circa 1920.



Figure 9. Southern portion of Main Street. Beside the Saint-Laurent store, at the far left, is the former Rea store.



Figure 10. Church Street, looking toward Main Street and the bandstand.

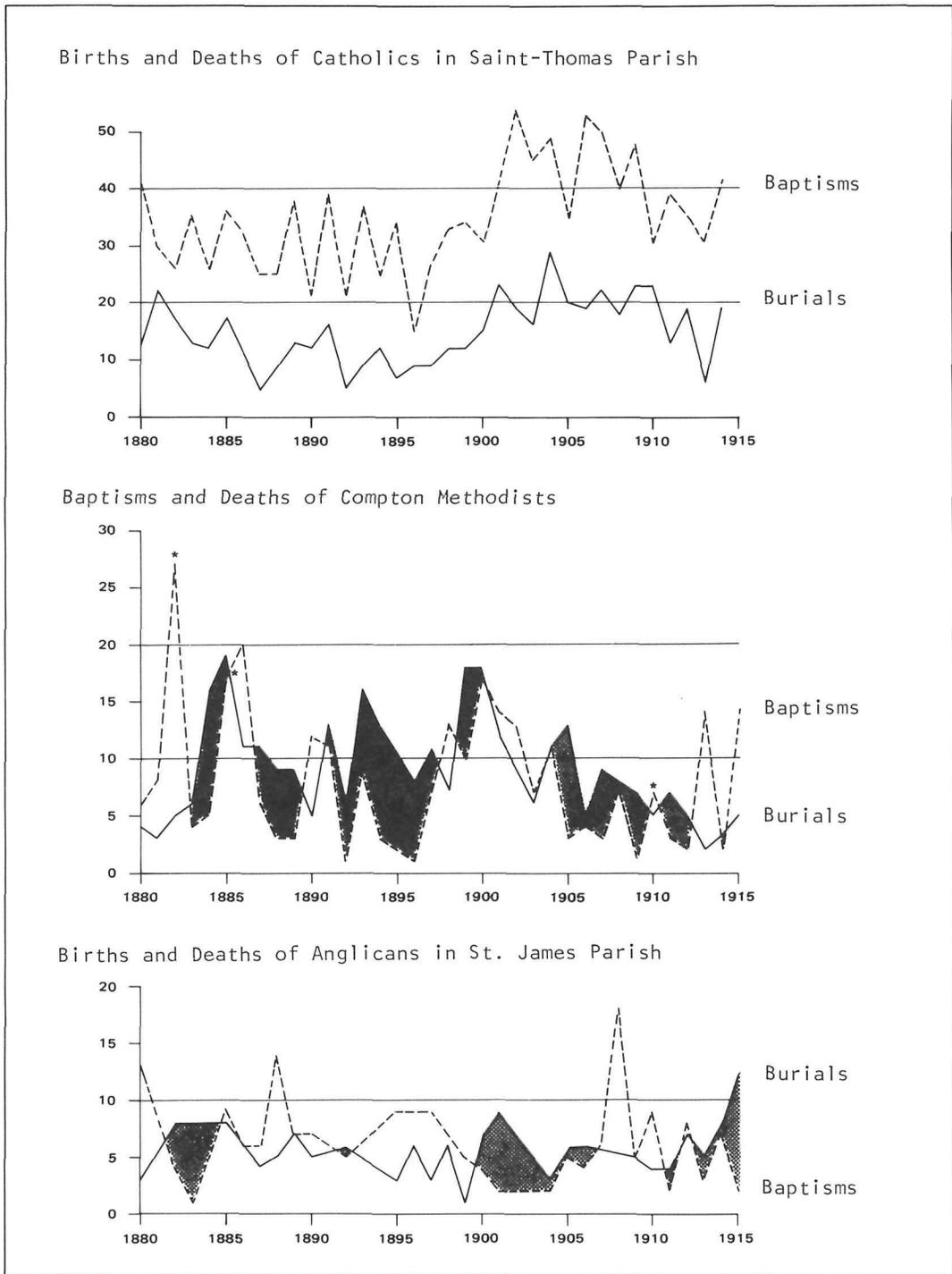


Figure 11. Births, baptisms and deaths among Catholics, Methodists and Anglicans of Compton. The asterisks in the Methodist graph indicate baptism of all members of a family.

POPULATION

It is difficult to give exact population figures for the village before 1901 when, for the first time, it constituted a unit of its own in the census. The pre-1901 figures available are only approximations based on indirect testimony, such as the pastoral reports of the three churches established in the village, and must be used with care because the parish and the village do not cover exactly the same territory. It is doubtful whether the three parishes - Catholic, Methodist and Anglican - had the same boundaries. Nevertheless, their registers have been used in the belief that the trends observed therein are proportionally valid for the village as for the parish which encompasses it.

Demographic Statistics

Over a period roughly equivalent to the era of British settlement (1830-60), the population of Compton Township doubled, reaching its 19th-century peak of 3013 inhabitants in 1861. For the next 40 years no population growth was recorded in the township. The 1901 census indicated 3016 inhabitants, only three more than in 1861. Subsequently, growth resumed again at a slow pace, so that in 1921 the census recorded 3441 inhabitants, 421 more than in 1861 and 425 more than in 1901 (Table 1). Thus, except for a slight decline, especially between 1861 and 1871, population figures remained the same over a long period of time.

Did the population figures for the village follow the same trend? Was the village subject to the same kind of chronic inertia that was the township's main characteristic during the last 40 years of the century?

Although reliable data are lacking before the 20th century, the village's population probably grew at much the same rate as the township's during this period, as the trends observed after 1894 would seem to indicate. The slow rate of population change observed in the township, confirmed by an analysis of yearly birth and death trends, was too deeply rooted a pattern for trends in the village, included in statistics for the township, to have been any different.

Yearly Trends

The birth, marriage and burial registers for the three denominations with churches in Compton concern three parishes whose territory extends beyond the village but does not completely cover the township. By comparing these registers with census figures for the township, patterns can be defined that also apply to the village.

Generally speaking, without drawing any distinction among the denominations with respect to birth and burial trends, the quantitatively unchanged population, the demographic stagnation of Compton society observed in the census figures, is confirmed. However, the difficult struggle for survival which characterizes the population as a whole masks two realities that are revealed by an examination of Figure 11: the aging and progressive dwindling of the Anglican and Methodist communities, and the corresponding marked growth of the Catholic community, whose birth rate was consistently higher than its death rate. This initial finding is especially important in understanding the reversal of the demographic structure of both the village and the township after 1900.

The fact that the birth rate was lower than the death rate - always the case among the

Table 1
Population Trends in Compton, 1861-1921

	1861	1871	1881	1894	1901	1911	1921
Township	3013	2852	2993		3016	3474	3441
Village				444	457	382	486

Table 2
Comparative French- and English-Canadian
Population Trends in Compton, 1871-1921

	English Canadians					
	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Township	2059	2014		1806	1753	1231
Village				307	125	60
	French Canadians					
	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921
Township	687	733		1054	1570	2076
Village				140	245	416

Methodists¹ during the period under study, and episodic among the Anglicans before 1900 and the general rule afterward - is an endemic phenomenon which illustrates the inability of the community to regenerate itself in the absence of any post-1850s British immigration. The Reverend C.H. Parker, minister of St. James Anglican Church, Compton, made the same observation:

By glancing at the statistics, it will be seen that we have had an unusual number of Burials and few Baptisms, the losses of death are quite serious, and in addition to this some seven or eight farms have quite recently passed out of the hands of our own people into those of the French....²

On the other hand, the Catholic community displays enormous vitality. Birth and death curves never cross each other as they do for the Protestants. A minority in the village before 1900 and in the township until 1910, the French Canadians multiplied more rapidly than all the English-speaking inhabitants combined.

Mobility

The Relative Numbers of the Ethnic Groups

The comparative analysis of demographic trends among Protestants and Catholics introduces a new factor, that of ethnic origin.

As the 19th century drew to a close, some isolated areas in the southwestern part of the Eastern Townships were still resisting the "French invasion" as best they could. The village and the township of Compton were among them. In 1881, the year Louis Saint-Laurent's father, Jean-Baptiste-Moïse, married Mary Ann Broderick at Saint-Thomas Church, there were only 733 French Canadians living in the township as opposed to 2014 English Canadians; the gap was even wider in the village. Suddenly, between 1901 and 1911 in the village and during the following decade in the township, the English-speaking inhabitants left; in 1921 and for some time thereafter only 60 remained in the village and 1231 in the township (Table 2).

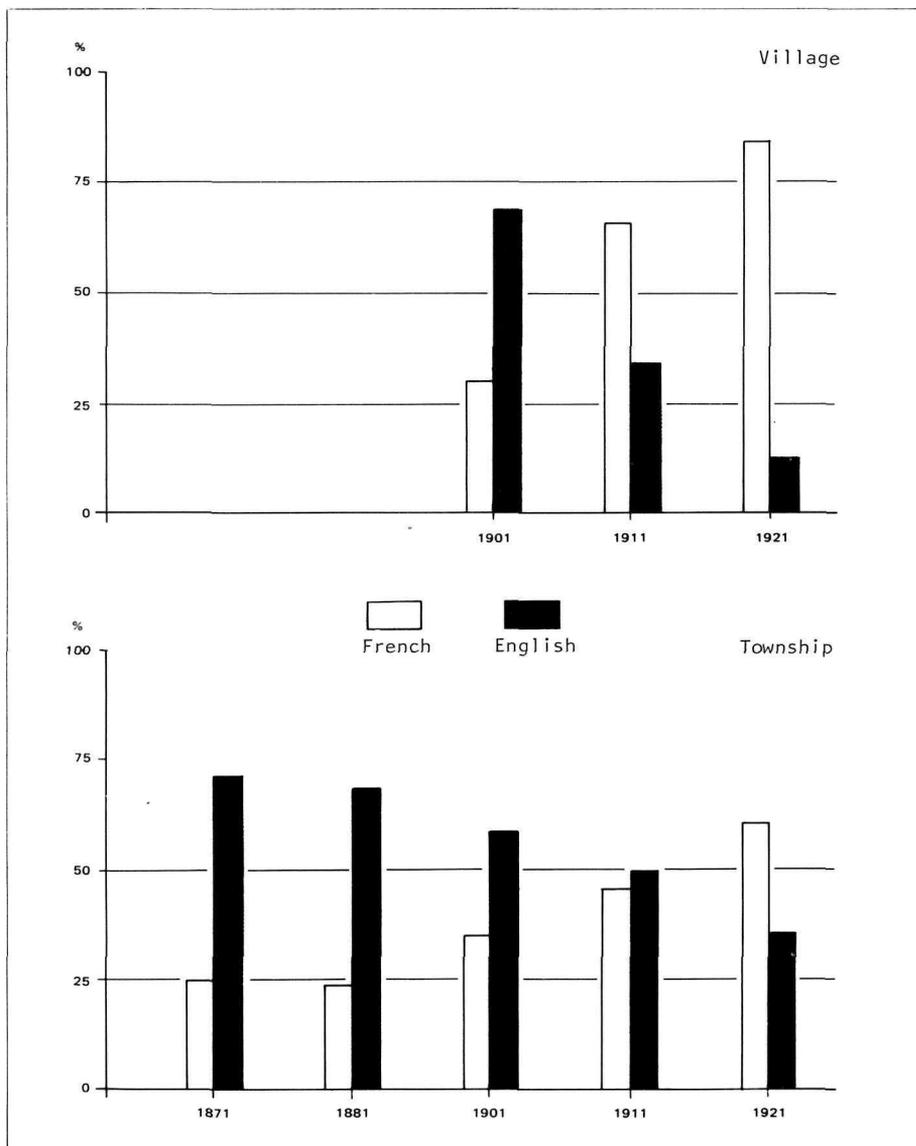


Figure 12. Development of the two ethnic groups in Compton Village and Township from 1871 to 1921.

The reversal of the demographic structure is well illustrated in Figure 12. It began in the township in 1881 and was completed by 1913. In the village it was so rapid and sweeping that it assumed the proportions of a genuine revolution. In 1901, 307, or 67.1 per cent, of the village's inhabitants were English-speaking whereas 140, or 33 per cent, were French-speaking. Ten years later, their respective

positions were proportionally reversed: 245 French-speaking inhabitants totalled 64.1 per cent of the village's population. In 1921 the proportion rose to 85.5 per cent.

What occurred was the replacement of one ethnic group by the other, not its submersion through the settlement of virgin land and vacant lots. Unlike the settlers, newcomers to Compton were generally quite well-to-do. Af-

ter all, the average price for good land was around \$5000. Some farmers paid between \$8000 and \$12 000 for a fully equipped farm, among them such men as Dominique Bolduc, Joseph Bureau, Joseph-Philibert Poulin, Jean Rodrigue and Léger Loubier. Everyone living in Compton today knows the legend of Léger Loubier, who bought part of Cochrane Farm in 1908 for \$17 000 in cash, carefully counted out in hundred-dollar bills kept in a pig's bladder.

Migrations

English-speaking inhabitants. Compton's English-speaking inhabitants left so quickly that one could almost say they fled; however, the suddenness of this phenomenon does not obscure the complexity of the exodus, signs of which could already be seen a few decades earlier. This is confirmed by reports submitted by the Reverends C.H. Parker and J.S. Brewer, who were successively the ministers of St. James Anglican Church between 1875 and World War I.³ Awareness of the insidious demise of the English community in the village and the township runs through their reports like a leitmotiv:

1885. Like every other parish and mission throughout the townships we are suffering from the diminution of members. During the year we have had several losses, and some of the oldest and warmest supporters of the Church have dropped out of our number.⁴

1896. We are reminded of the gradually diminishing numbers, and slowly dying ...

- for unhappily others of England's Church and nation are not taking these places. Newcomers, as well as many of our own people, are moving to the over-estimated North West.⁵

1903. The numbers of deaths in the Parish and the passing of many of our best farms into the hands of another nationality press the fact upon us that we are a *rapidly* decreasing congregation, making our future a matter of serious anxiety.... [Italics added.]⁶

The community's inability to perpetuate itself, which became a trend after 1860, finally reached a point of no return in 1900 owing to the disappearance of supporting institutions. In 1903 Parker feared for the very survival of the parish as an entity.⁷ The increasingly frequent departures of the members of his community had jeopardized the existence of these institutions; in turn, the weakness of the institutions hastened the departure of those who had remained and by the same token discouraged new families from moving into the parish. In 1916 only 20 Anglican families remained⁸ (Table 3). Finally, King's Hall, an educational institution known across Canada, saved the parish by making its minister a sort of chaplain to its staff and pupils. In his 1913 report, Brewer wrote that

the prospect for the future of this parish certainly looks more hopeful than it did a year or two ago. This is of course chiefly due to the enlarging of King's Hall and the decision that the school is to remain at Compton, which decision makes all the difference to the Church,

Table 3
Comparative Trends in the Number of Families and Unmarried Persons
among the Anglicans of St. James, Compton

Year	Families	Adults Without Families	Year	Families	Adults Without Families
1903	35	30	1910	25	72
1904	35	30	1911	20	70
1905	35	30	1912	18	59
1906	29	40	1913	20	71
1907	21	56	1914	21	80
1908	25	60	1915	17	88
1909	-	-	1916	20	79

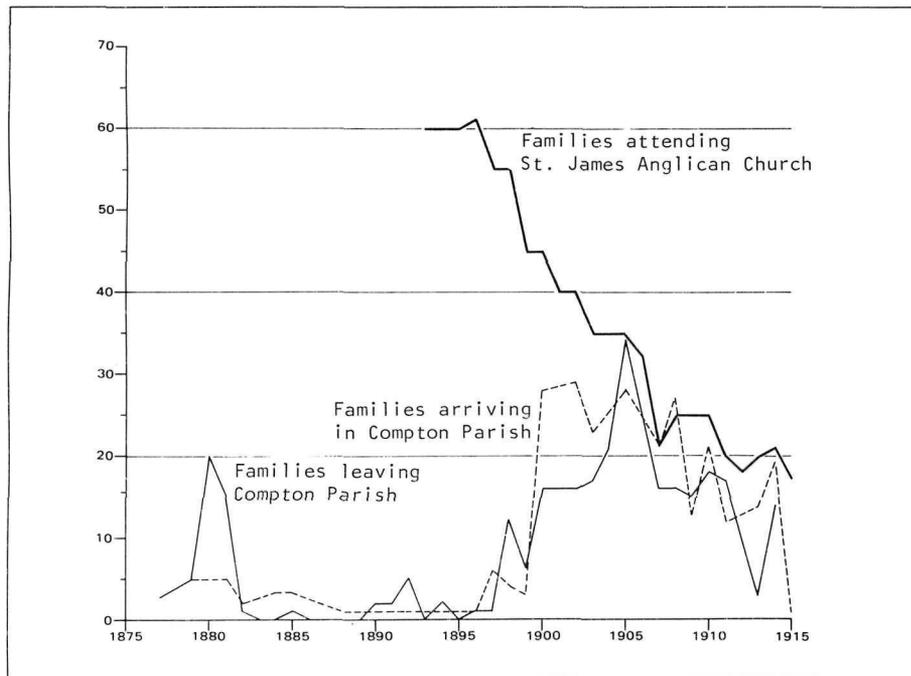


Figure 13. Migration of families in Compton.

for, with a dwindling English population, we have of late years come more and more to rely on the King's Hall Staff and pupils for their help which is always ungrudgingly given.⁹

The existence of a large, presumably unmarried teaching staff would explain the increase in the number of adult-age parishioners and the parallel decrease in the number of families (Table 3). The community could hardly expect to reproduce itself under such circumstances.

French-speaking inhabitants. The departure of English-speaking inhabitants for "the overestimated North West" (to use Parker's expression), and probably also for the neighbouring United States in some cases, was paralleled by an equally massive influx of French Canadians. The family migration figures in Figure 13 confirm this. Until the turn of the century, French-Canadian families arrived at a rate of only one or two per year. In 1900 and 1902, 28 and 29 families respectively settled in Compton Parish, bringing the number of French-speaking families to 162,¹⁰ while the number of Anglican families declined from 35 to 29. The some 20 new families who settled in Compton each year after that came most

often from the Beauce region, as indicated by such family names as Bolduc, Gilbert, Bureau, Veilleux, Doyon, Genest, Rodrigue, Poulin, Denis, Groleau, Carrier and Gagnon. This fact became apparent in interviews with Compton's older townspeople in the summer of 1976 and, above all, in the notes Father Lavallée made during his parish visit in 1916.¹¹ Some families even came from the United States, those of Lionel Savary and Georges Raboin being cases in point. Others, such as the families of Nelson Veilleux and Stanislas Carrier, had lived in the States for a short time before settling permanently in Compton.¹² The fact that Philias Denis and a few others emigrated to the United States should not be seen as evidence of a merely temporary stay in Compton. This hypothesis, suggested by the curve indicating the number of Catholic families leaving the parish (Fig. 13), applies primarily to the Irish, who are also included in the data for Saint-Thomas Parish. It would have been precisely the Irish who left Compton after 1879 for only seven Irish families remained in 1914.¹³

The departure of Irish Catholics from Compton emphasizes the ethnic character of Eastern Township migrations. The exodus af-

affected all English-speaking inhabitants regardless of their religion. Cultural allegiance therefore seems to have taken precedence over religious affiliation, contradicting the thesis of Robert Sellar and the "equal-rightists," who interpreted French Canada's inroads into the Eastern Townships as a Catholic onslaught against the Protestants.

The Succession of Generations

English-speaking inhabitants. Could Compton's English-speaking community have survived in spite of the departure of numerous families for the Canadian West and the United States, and in spite of the cessation of British immigration to the Eastern Townships? Only if a sufficient number of children had grown to adulthood in Compton and had married and lived there, but neither condition was present. First, the birth curve for Protestants was generally lower than the death curve (Fig. 11). Secondly, only 33 marriages took place among the Anglicans between 1879 and 1916, and 107 among the Methodists, for an annual average of 0.8 and 2.6 marriages respectively. Offspring of these marriages did not all survive their first year, as was also true among the Catholics. It is evident from the progressive decline in the number of Anglican families (Table 3) that many young couples preferred to raise their families elsewhere.

French-speaking inhabitants. Demographic trends among Compton's French-speaking inhabitants followed a different pattern. Prevailing conditions favoured their growth in numbers. Their birth rate was always higher than their death rate, and Catholics grew up and married in Compton. Between 1879 and 1914, 1254 Catholics were baptized, 533 died and 234 were married.¹⁴

Seasonal Trends

Owing to a lack of time and insufficient data, monthly birth, marriage and mortality trends among Anglicans and Methodists could not be studied although it would have been useful to compare these trends for the two linguistic and religious communities to, possibly, determine the influence of cultural imperatives and material constraints on their respective behaviour patterns.

With this limitation in mind, conception, marriage and mortality trends among Catholics in Compton were similar to those observed in the traditional rural societies of previous centuries, when material constraints and weather conditions had a strong determining influence on the lives of individuals.¹⁵ As in these traditional societies, a similarity exists between the birth-death cycle on one hand and the marriage-conception cycle on the other. The birth curve reaches its highest point in midsummer (June and July) and winter (January), and its lowest point in autumn (October and November); the death curve follows roughly the same pattern, its high points occurring in July and January, and its low point in the fall, in October (Fig. 14). Marriage figures are highest in the fall (September and October) and winter (January), and lowest in December and March. The conception curve is much the same, except that its lowest points occur in January and February (Fig. 14).

Marriage and Conception

The similarity between the marriage and conception curves may be explained to a large extent by the fact that the church did not permit weddings to take place during Advent (December) and Lent (March-April), and also exhorted married people to practise continence then. The prohibition against marriage seems to have been generally observed, which is easy to understand given the social nature of the ceremony; however, not everyone heeded the exhortation to practise continence since this was a private matter of conscience.

The marriage-conception cycle was also influenced by social conditions. Farmers were bound to till the soil from spring to fall, from seeding to harvest. They married in late September and October. In January and February they went to logging camps. Only a few months were left for any genuine married life.

The 168 weddings that took place at Saint-Thomas Church from 1875 to 1899 were generally between adults. Marriages between minors were rare (only 11). Those involving minor girls were more frequent, accounting for 34.5 per cent of all marriages during this period (Table 4).

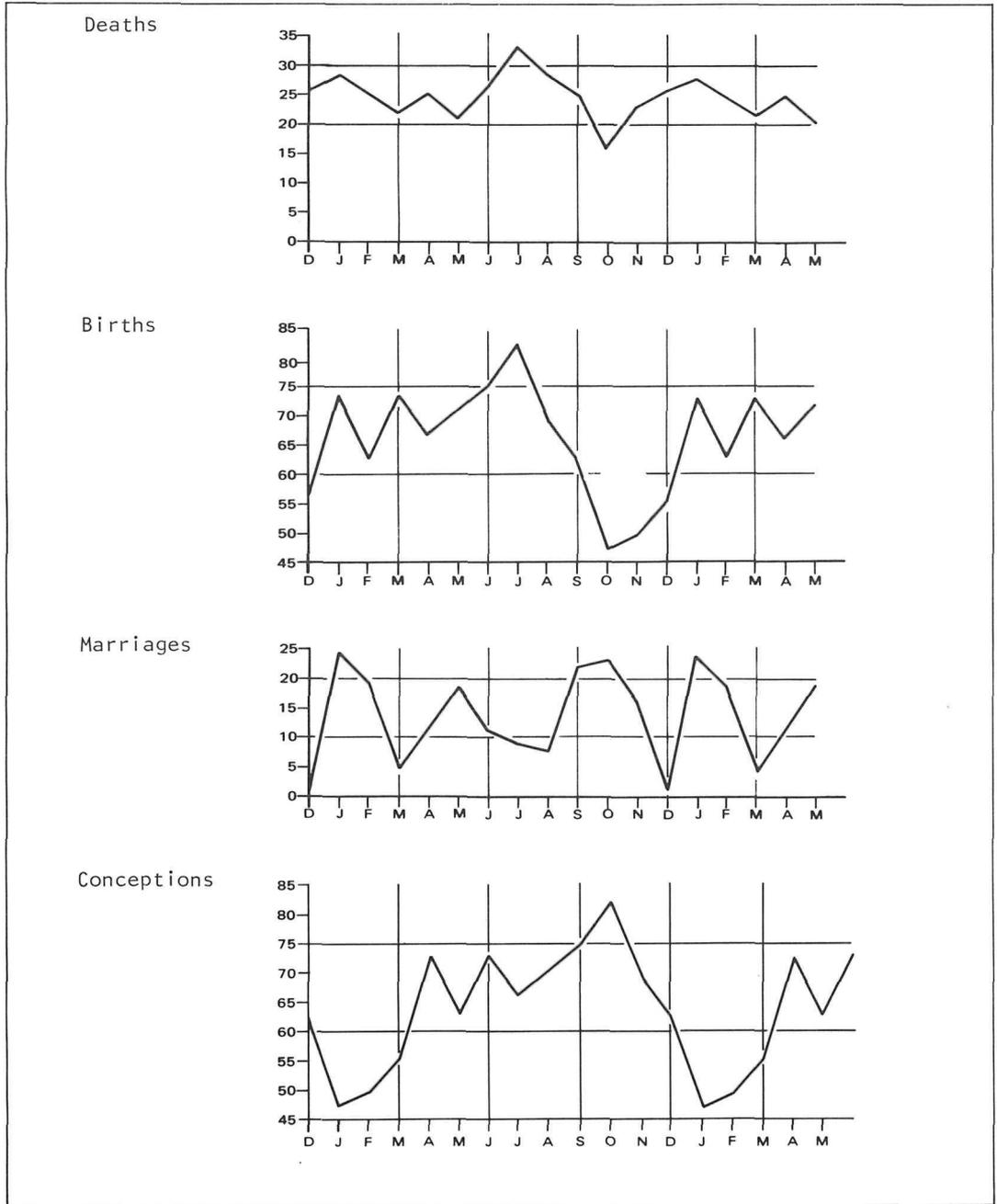


Figure 14. Seasonal trends: deaths, births, marriages and conceptions.

Table 4
Marriages, 1875-99

Marriages	Girls (Minors)	Boys (Minors)	Between (Minors)
168	58 34.5%	11 6.5%	11 6.5%

Births and Deaths

In Compton, life and death existed side by side. Every summer during the dog days of July and every winter during January's frosts the three churches rang their wedding and funeral bells daily. July and January were birth and death months (Fig. 14). Death came to infants, children, old people, and young women in childbirth, the very young (0-1) and the old (over 51) being most affected (Table 5).

Table 5
Mortality Rates by Age Group, 1875-99

Ages	Mortality	Women
0-1	29.5%	
1-10	12.6%	
11-20	7.6%	28%
21-30	8.3%	80%
31-40	5.6%	58%
41-50	5.3%	
51-+	30.8%	

Adults between 21 and 50 years of age accounted for nearly 20 per cent of all deaths. In this age bracket death came most often to women. Of those who died between 11 and 20 years of age, 28 per cent were female, as were 80 per cent of those who died in the 21-30 age group and 58 per cent of those who died in the 31-40 age group.

Conclusion

The most striking fact in this study of Compton's inhabitants is the persistence of traditional demographic behaviour patterns as the 19th century drew to a close. Like their ancestors before them, they were continually surrounded by the deaths of infants and young people; in the case of one group this was compensated for by fortunately large families, in the case of the other it was aggravated by emigration. They were also equally dependent on the rhythm of the seasons and the material constraints of life. The next most striking thing is the high mobility of Compton's population, so rapid and intense a mobility that in less than ten years one group replaced the other. This is without doubt a very rare phenomenon in the annals of demography.

However, the endemic nature of the English-speaking population's demographic decline does not explain their near disappearance in only a few years at the turn of the century. It was also a product of the times, like the boom in the West and the arrival of the settlers from the Beauce region who paid handsome prices for land. Thus, there was every reason for Compton's English-speaking inhabitants to leave for the West quickly, there to create a social structure they could control more easily and in which they bore their familiar roles.



Figure 15. Scale map of the village.



Figure 16. Scale plan of part of Main Street. M, house; m, store, E, church.

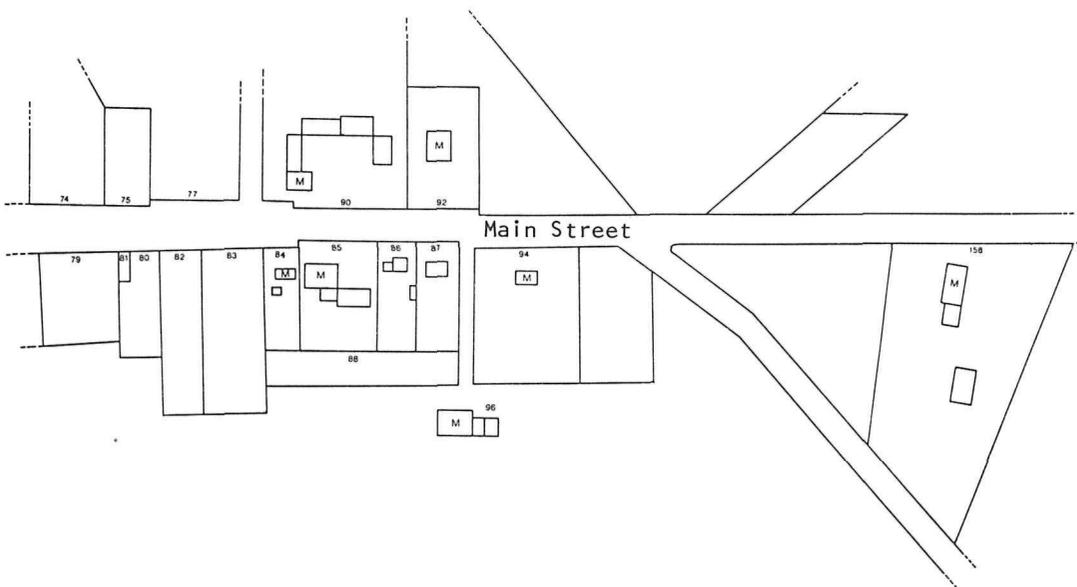


Figure 17. Scale plan of Main Street, continued. M, house, m, store.

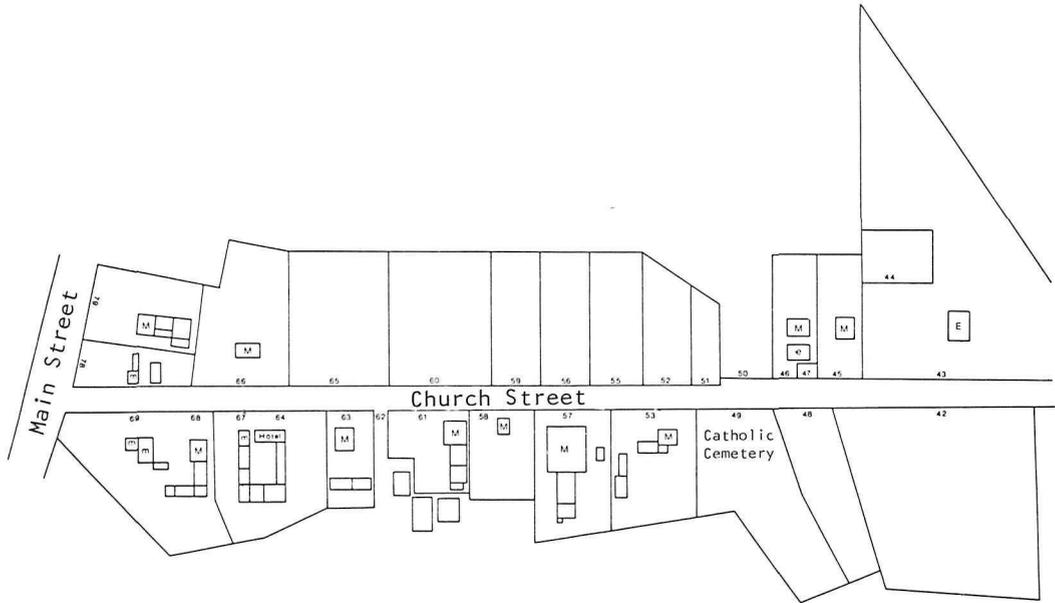


Figure 18. Church Street. M, house; m, store; e, school; E, church.

LIFE IN THE VILLAGE

It would have been interesting to follow a general study of population trends in Compton with a look at the daily lives of individual townspeople in an effort to see how they were able to adapt to the constraints of their physical environment. While analysis could not be pursued in that direction, it is not difficult to determine what this environment was like, thanks to information in insurance registers, to photographs and, of course, to observation of the village as it is today.

Homes in Compton

At the close of the 19th century, there were only two main arteries in the village, Main Street and Church Street, bordered by houses, artisans' shops, churches, stores, barns, stables and carriage houses built of wood in a style reminiscent of the British and American origins of Compton's early settlers.

Houses in the village covered an average area of approximately 900 square feet and had one, two and sometimes three storeys. As a general rule, an annex or summer kitchen was attached to each house, usually at the rear.



Figure 19. The residence of Dr. LaRue. Built in the 19th century, it was demolished in 1953.



Figure 20. The residence of Dr. A. King.



Figure 21. Pomeroy Place.



Figure 22. Ingleside, "The Château," the residence of H.D. Smith.

The woodshed, barn and carriage house were lined up in a row behind the annex. All of these buildings thus stood either in a semi-rectangle or a long line perpendicular to the street.

Middle-class Property

Middle-class properties were characterized by the relative spaciousness of the houses, landscaping, which often included tennis courts or croquet lawns, and outbuildings, among which stables and carriage houses were prominent. Seen from the outside, a middle-class house could be identified by its style, which was more that of a city dwelling than a country one; on the inside, by its large sitting and drawing rooms. The homes of the LaRue, King and Pomeroy families (Figs. 19-21) displayed these characteristics. Such luxuries as clocks, organs or pianos, paintings, silverware, faience ware, porcelain and sometimes books were as common in middle-class homes as cream separators, threshers, silos and live-stock were on farms.¹

The "Château"

Ingleside, H.D. Smith's luxurious and very *nouveau riche* home, stood out among all the others because of its spaciousness and the originality of its style. Townspeople called it the "Château," a name also applied by American architects to buildings of this type designed during the second half of the 19th century. Ingleside actually had no style; it was an eclectic though imposing combination of styles, at once reminiscent of a farm, a château and a New England home (Fig. 22).

Farmhouses

Farmhouses do not seem to have been very different from homes in the village. They stood in similar relation to their outbuildings. However, the outbuildings were more numerous and were more or less scattered around the house, sometimes close to it (Fig. 23). Silos, barns, stables, pigsties, henhouses, carriage houses, sheds and so on were apparently arranged in a rather functional manner.

The average farmhouse did not contain any luxury items (insurance registers, at least, do not provide any evidence that this was the case); however, pianos and organs were exceptions. In fact, a piano or an organ could be found in almost every second insured farmhouse.

The Layout of Compton Village

The village was the centre of a rural area which encompassed the entire township. Seat of the township council, and itself incorporated as a village in 1893, it was also the meeting-place for three religious denominations, a business centre, a stopping-place for travellers and a centre for skilled trades and other services. It was, so to speak, a small-scale economic, political and religious centre. The variety of functions it served was reflected in the layout of the village, which could (very improperly) be called its "town planning."

The Three Churches

Toward the mid-1800s, anyone wishing to enter the village via Hatley Road (Church Street) could see the three churches at a single glance. The Catholic church rose in the foreground like a sentinel, next to its cemetery (Fig. 24); only a few hundred feet away stood the Anglican church, which had recently been built in its new location, closer to where the faithful lived and, looking further along, the sober and elegant Methodist church stood on the tiny square formed by the intersection of Main and Church streets (Fig. 25). In 1887 the Anglican church returned to its original site at the extreme south end of the village, where it still stands (Fig. 27) next to its cemetery.

The faithful and their institutions tended to cluster around each church. The Anglican



Figure 25. The Methodist church, constructed toward the middle of the 19th century, later served as the United church after the union of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches. It was demolished in the 1960s.

church, its cemetery and King's Hall formed a well-defined enclave around which lived certain prominent families of the parish, such as the Smiths and Dr. King's family (lot 156). Prior to the turn-of-the-century migrations, French-Canadian Catholics occupied most of the lots on Church Street. Their cemetery, their school and, later, their convent were located there. No distinct institutions surrounded the Methodist church, but influential members of the parish, such as the Pomeroy, Saultry and Todd families, lived nearby.



Figure 26. King's Hall at the beginning of the century. It was enlarged and converted to a Tudor-style building circa 1905-10.

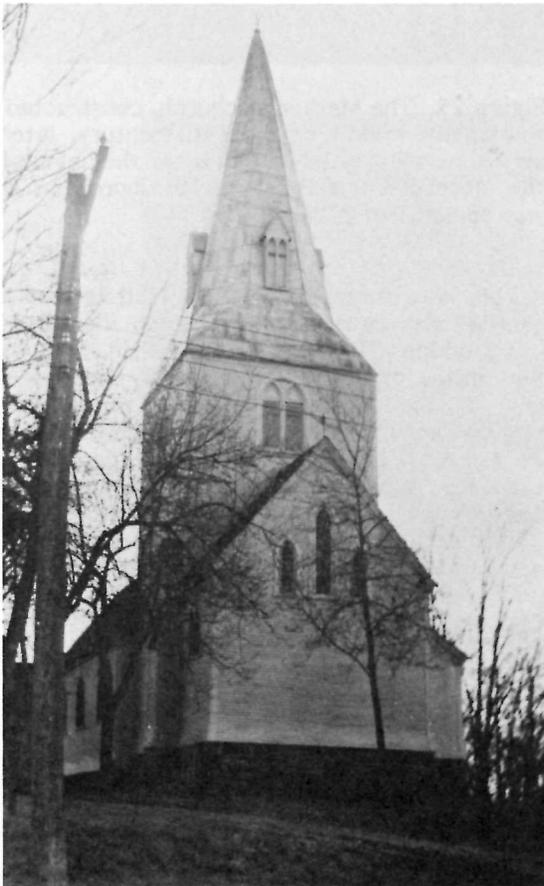


Figure 27. St. James Anglican Church, before the demolition of the bell tower.

Stores, Hotels and Shops

Compton Village was not only the focal point for the township's three religious communities, but also an economic centre and stopping-place for travellers. This fact was reflected in the concentration of a surprising number of stores, artisans' shops and hotels near the intersection of Church Street and Main Street (Fig. 28).

By the end of the 19th century, no less than four general stores were competing for business. In 1863 the village boasted eight such stores, five of which were located at the same corner. Near the stores stood the Oriental

Hotel, owned by Mr. Todd, and the Compton Hotel, owned by Mr. Paige, two very imposing buildings with carriage houses, stables and barns. Paige's hotel combined with Guilbert's store to form a quadrangle which must have looked rather elegant. Next to Guilbert's store, on the former site of the Anglican church, stood a livery stable and "nag shed." A few steps away on the same street the blacksmith and wheelwright had set up shop; a second blacksmith plied his trade behind the Oriental Hotel. This is ample evidence of the feverish activity which must have characterized the village and of the sound organization it had achieved by the turn of the century.

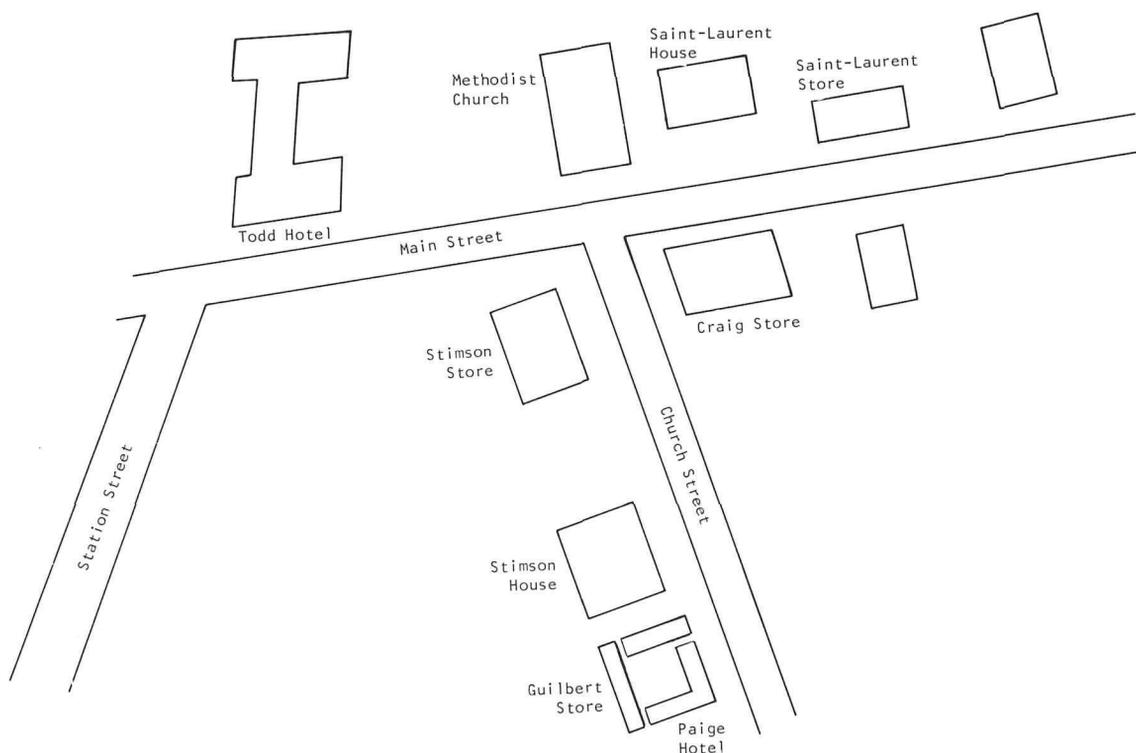


Figure 28. Sketch of the village centre.

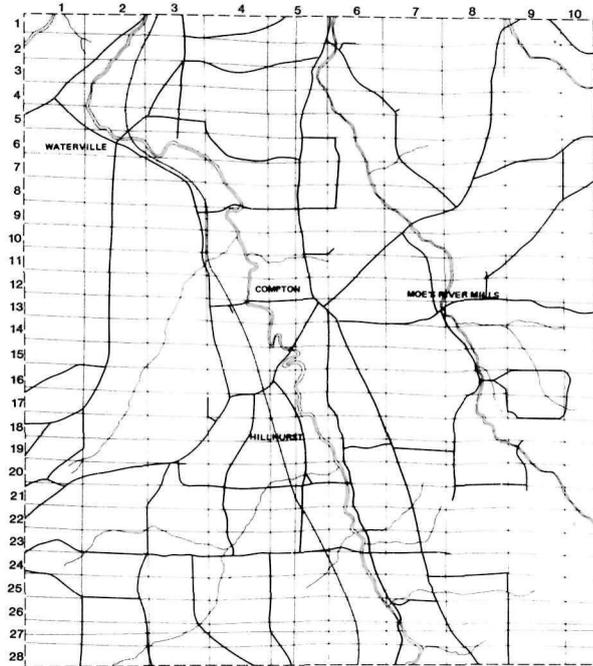


Figure 29. Compton Township.

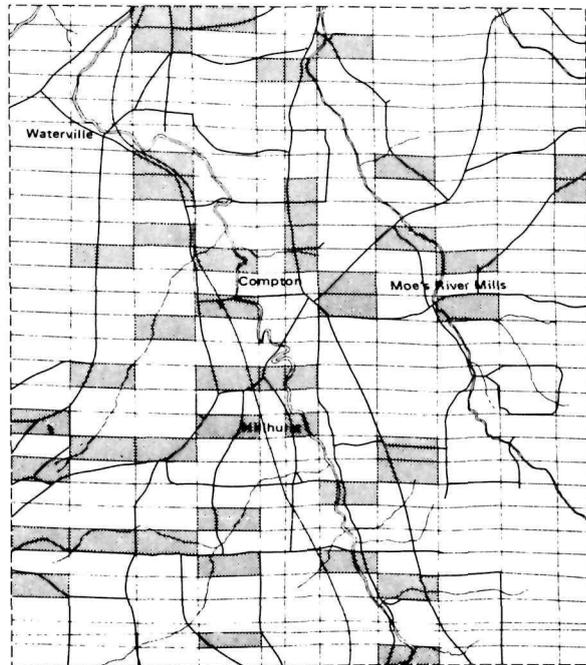


Figure 30. Tenants in Compton Township, 1863. Tenant lands are indicated by shaded areas.

PROPERTY

When the settlers from the Beauce region came to Compton Township toward the end of the 19th century, they found it well organized, with its own institutions and a specialized agricultural economy. They had nothing in common with the pioneers who settled other regions of Quebec during the same era. Unlike the pioneers, they settled in an area where the land was already laid out and in a society whose economy and social and political organization had been established 50 years earlier.

The French Canadians bought their farms, businesses, stores and homes at handsome prices. By the turn of the century almost all the property in the village and township had changed hands. The progress of this transfer can be followed by studying census figures, assessment rolls and the files of the *Bureau de l'enregistrement* in Sherbrooke. In the village alone, between 1867 and 1910 more than 300 property-related contracts were signed, an average of two contacts per lot.

Before pursuing this subject, the ownership and division of land among the various social and ethnic groups will be discussed.

Structure of Ownership in Compton

Theoretically, there are no great estates in a village; however, there are great landowners whose properties have been subdivided. Two of these are still remembered in Compton, one of them, Cochrane, no doubt because he was a senator, the other, Smith, because of the legendary pomp with which he liked to surround himself.

Both were breeders and merchants of purebred livestock and employed many labourers, some of whom are now among the oldest residents of the village. There were other landowners, some of whom owned as much land as Cochrane and Smith but were less ostentatious about it. For example, in 1908 Joseph Bureau bequeathed to his wife, Lucie Dulac, 620 acres in ranges 4, 6, 7 and 8. Information on these and other, less wealthy, individuals can be obtained in part by examining certain wills and assessment rolls, especially the assessment roll of 1906, the most carefully prepared and above all the most complete for that period.

The Landowners

Small, medium-sized and large properties.

Compton Township consists of ten ranges, each of which is subdivided into 28 200-acre lots inhabited by one or more farmers (Fig. 29).¹ In 1863, population density was very low and it is still so today. However, at certain crossroads and along various roads are a few villages such as Waterville, Compton, Moe's River and Hillhurst (Brookville). In 1871 very few farms - less than ten per cent (Table 6) - were under ten acres; 41 per cent covered over 100 acres. A striking point is that the proportion of lots of 50 to 100, 101 to 200, and over 200 acres remained about the same during the entire second half of the 19th century and the first ten years of the 20th, an indication of the continuity and stability of agriculture in Compton Township. The great mobility of the landowners does not seem to have disturbed the economy of the township or led to the concentration or division of landholdings. The only real change to take place was the increase in the number of small units of less than 50 acres following the development of the villages of Waterville and Compton.

The distribution of property in Compton Village was inversely proportionate to that in the township. In the village, more than 60 per cent of the proprietors owned less than ten acres (Table 6). In 1906 the 3200 acres of the village were distributed among 79 individuals and permanent village institutions such as the three churches, the two cemeteries, the schools, the college and the town hall. Together, the farmers L.Q. Bliss (lots 131, 134), John McClary (lots 135, 139), Robert Robertson (lots 13, 136), Jean Rodrigue (lots 5, 10, 130) and H.D. Smith (lots 141, 142, 143) owned more than a third of the land, or 1243 acres.² It is not difficult to imagine this dichotomy in a small village where pastures, cropland and gardens bordered one another and where large properties often extended outside the village boundaries. For example, of H.D. Smith's several thousand acres of land, only 295 were within the village limits.

That 60 per cent of the village properties were small was quite natural since the same percentage of the population was made up of artisans, farm labourers or merchants.

Land owned by farmers. Farmers never owned large amounts of property within the village boundaries. In 1906, 13 farmers (including the five already mentioned) owned farms of over

Table 6
Comparative Size of Farms in the Township and Village

Farms	Township*						Village**			
	1871		1891		1911		1906		1918	
	No. of Farms	%								
10 acres	34	8.7	128	26.0	103	19.8	51	64.5	54	62.0
11-50	64	16.5	57	11.5	78	15.0	8	10.1	15	17.2
51-100	130	33.5	122	24.8	138	26.5	7	8.8	7	8.0
101-200	109	28.1	133	27.0	148	28.4	8	10.1	7	8.0
over 200	50	12.9	52	10.5	54	10.4	5	6.3	4	4.6
Total occupants	387		492		521		79		87	
Owners	351		420							

* census

** Assessment roll. Property owned by institutions, such as churches, schools, cemeteries, etc., has not been included in the village statistics.

100 acres; in 1918 there were 11 such owners (Table 6). The others owned small farms of 50 to 100 acres or parcels of land of under 50 acres.

Property owned by artisans, businessmen and persons of private means. One of the main functions of a village has always necessarily been to provide services to the surrounding community. In Compton, artisans and businessmen owned a great deal of property of various types. This fact also explains the presence of a number of persons of private means. At first glance, it seems that such property was seldom larger than one acre or assessed at more than \$1000. However, this apparent uniformity cannot conceal the existence of a hierarchy of landowners with the following at the top: Pomeroy, Stimson, Paige, Bliss and Craig, almost all of whom were merchants, and a few affluent persons of private means such as Lucie Dulac-Bureau, Mérida Gagné-Vallée and Burton F. Harvey. All owned more than one property and speculated as buyers and sellers or as lenders.

William Warren Paige, merchant, hotel owner, bailiff and insurance agent among other roles, owned at least 18 properties between 1899 and 1915, including, at one point, both hotels. At one time or another, he owned a fifth of the houses in the village in addition to the mortgages he held on several other properties. When he died in 1915, he left four properties and two mortgages of \$1000, among other things, to his adopted sister Caroline Edith Lemoyne,³ daughter of Arba Stimson, a former merchant and landowner in Compton.

During the same period, the brothers Richard L., Samuel J., and Caudwell G. Craig, and the wives of the latter two, Mary Albie and Maria G. Drake, speculated in such real estate as a general store and, on several occasions, the Todd Hotel. Samuel Craig, by far the richest of the three, and his wife left Compton for Alberta about 1903 even before they sold all their property. In 1908 they were joined by Caudwell and his wife, Albie, leaving behind in Compton Richard L. Craig, who sold the remaining family property to Doctor Brodeur in 1913.

It seems that family ties were an important factor in the transfer and accumulation of property. It would therefore have been interesting to trace the genealogies of the main families of the village in order to support this hypothesis, which is based for the moment on a few cases. For example, W.W. Paige's

fortune was built by his family: first, his relatives, D.W. and Warren Paige, hotel owner and relay-station owner respectively; his aunt, the widow of Charles Reneau, a tanner, and perhaps his adoptive father, Arba Stimson, a merchant.

The prestige associated with property did not have the same basis in the country as it did in the village. In the country, the size and nature of a farm was the important factor, whereas in the village it was the value added to a lot by a house or a business.

Property owned by the church. Robert Sellar⁴ wrote at the end of the century that the ever-present church, the convent, the processional chapel and the great crucifix at the crossroads were characteristic of the traditional Quebec village and symbolized the undue power of the priests over the people. If one were to accept Sellar's arguments and apply them to Compton, one might at first conclude that the villagers were living in a veritable theocracy. There were three churches and their related buildings, two cemeteries, an Anglican college with up to 100 students and teachers, and two schools (one French Catholic, the other English Protestant), making it a very Christian community. This property as a whole made quite an impression, especially since the village centre was fairly small, but when divided among the three faiths, it seemed modest. Only the Anglican church, because of the imposing size and style of King's Hall, and the size of its holdings, conveyed an impression of affluence that was reinforced by several well-to-do parishioners. Senator Cochrane, for example, donated \$5000 each year.⁵ On occasion, generous followers would make bequests to the other two churches; however, they did not constitute significant pieces of real estate. Most of the few properties known to have been acquired in this manner were usually resold very quickly.

The Tenants

Ownership of property bestowed prestige and power. Cochrane was a senator; Smith, Pomeroy (senior and junior), Stimson, Paige and Saint-Laurent, among others, were all on the township and village councils. The tenant, on the other hand, had no social power and was excluded from the political scene: he was never given a say in municipal affairs and was allowed to become involved in provincial and

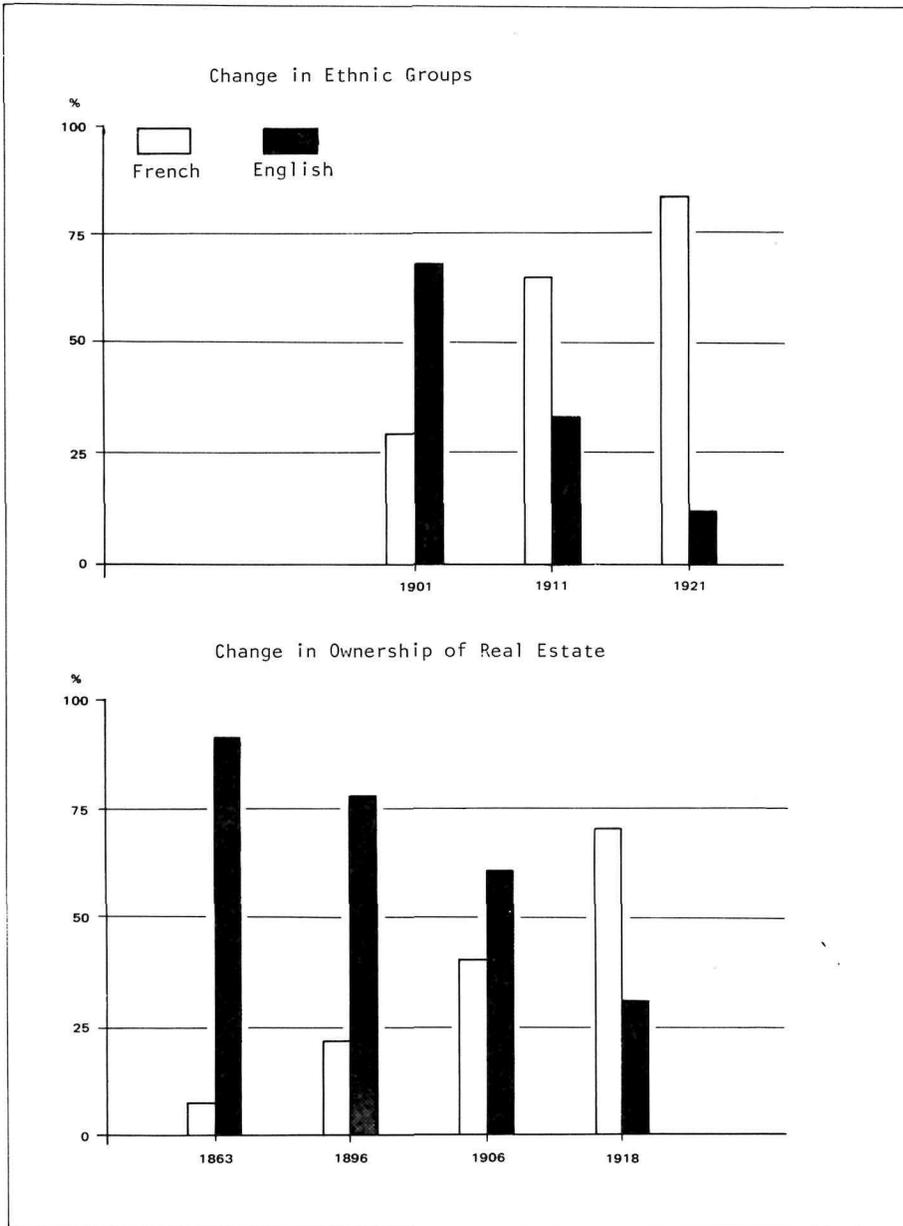


Figure 32. Changes in ethnic groups and ownership of real estate in Compton Village.

federal affairs only when the voters' lists for these two levels of government were based on the assessment rolls of the municipalities.

It is necessary to focus on the social aspect of property as it was an important aspect and closely related to the very structure of Comp-

ton's society. The study of the political culture in a later chapter could not be undertaken without reference to it.

Figure 30 reveals that approximately 50 houses on 50 lots were rented; some of them were owned by Colonel Benjamin Pomeroy.

The plan of the village (Fig. 31) shows no less than six rented houses on one street, four of which houses were owned by the merchant A. Stimson.

The plan indicates rented houses but not lots without houses. How many such lots were there, if any, and on what conditions were they rented? The large number of rented properties on often immense tracts of land coincides with the presence of numerous day-labourers and farm workers in the township.

The 1906 assessment roll elucidates this phenomenon more clearly. Table 7, based on that document, provides a classification of owners and tenants by socio-occupational group. First, the number of tenants is much greater than that reported in 1863 (Fig. 30). Excluding persons of private means, tenants represented 39 per cent of the work force and were mainly farm labourers. This was actually the only socio-occupational group in which tenants were in the majority.

Table 7
Tenants in 1906

Socio-occupational Groups	Land-owners	Tenants
Farmers	25	13
Farm Labourers	5	14
Artisans	15	6
Merchants	7	2
Professionals	2	
Service	5	4
Persons of private means	19	
Total	78	39

The tenant farmers' situation was a special one. They were temporary tenants and actually potential owners of the paternal farm on which they were working. This was the case for the sons of Philius Doyon and Jean Rodrigue. In the meantime, like the permanent tenants, they had no political rights. Thus did property confer citizenship.

Changes in Property Ownership

There was a fairly close relationship between the exchange of property in Compton and the migration rates. Figure 32 clearly indicates the concordance between the change in ownership and demography although the latter changed more rapidly. Take, for example, the relationship that can be established between the assessment roll of 1918 and the 1921 census: in 1918, 70.1 per cent of the property belonged to French Canadians, whereas three years later, in 1921, they represented 85.5 per cent of the village population. Tenants accounted for all of the difference. Starting with W.W. Paige, the Craig brothers, A. Stimson and others, a number of individuals left Compton without even selling their real estate although it was put up for rent. In the 1906 assessment roll were 38 such properties, of which 24, or 63.1 per cent, were rented by newly arrived French-Canadians. Thus, tenancy was often a transitional stage in the transfer of property. Was it part of a speculative strategy enabling certain sellers to obtain the best prices or was it attributable to an impatience to leave which cannot yet be fully explained?

Approximately 300 contracts involving sale, donation, loan or inheritance of village property were signed before various notaries and the justice of the peace between 1897 and 1910. This was an average of two contracts for each negotiable lot, certainly a remarkable phenomenon for a village of some 400 souls. It is all the more remarkable considering that half of the contracts were negotiated between 1906 and 1910.

This study has already theorized that prosperity after 1896, and especially the boom in the West, could explain migration in Compton. Was it significant enough to account for such a frenzy in the transfer of real estate? Was there a sort of collaboration on the part of the migrants? What is certain is that the sale of the properties of well-known figures such as the gentlemen farmers Smith, Cochrane and Robertson, and of merchants such as the Craigs, gave new impetus to the migratory movement which had already been well under way for some years. It also stoked the opposite movement of French Canadians who, with their savings in their pockets, were asking for nothing more than to take their places.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC LIFE

Nothing in the available documentation permits detailed analysis of the reality of economic life in the village; it can only be appreciated indirectly. Although Compton Village was incorporated in 1893, there are no census figures for it before 1901 and even these data are very sketchy as census takers concentrated their attention on townships, counties and large villages with a few thousand inhabitants. Assessment rolls and insurance registers are more revealing. While they do not contain economic data as such, they do fortunately provide relatively precise information on socio-occupational categories, as well as equally numerous details concerning agriculture, thus allowing conjectures about economic life in Compton. Here again, the 1906 assessment roll is the source document. Of the three rolls available from the period 1893 to 1920, it is the only one that provides the necessary information and supplies details of property classifications.

Socio-occupational Categories

While Compton was certainly an agricultural village - from the mid-1800s until the eve of World War II, farmers made up almost half its work force - it was also a resource centre for the township's farm community. Anyone whose services one might need could be found there, from the parish priest, the doctor and the stationmaster, to storekeepers, teachers and artisans.

Six occupational groups have been identified (Table 8). In 1906, farming occupations naturally predominated (56.4 per cent) and included 38 farmers and 19 farm labourers. Next came 21 artisans (20.1 per cent) followed by nine "service employees" (8.9 per cent), some of whom were salaried, such as government agents, the town clerk and the postmistress (Lora Saint-Laurent), and others who were self-employed, such as the bookseller, perhaps, and of course Charles Demers, keeper of the livery stable. Nine merchants totalled 8.9 per cent of the work force, there were five professionals (5.0 per cent), and, finally, 19 persons (six "gentlemen" and 13 widows) lived on independent incomes.¹

This occupational distribution changed very little in the decades preceding and following the 1906 roll. However, it should be noted that the number of farm labourers decreased following the sale and division of the Smith and Cochrane farms after 1906. The number

Table 8
Socio-occupational Groups

	1863		1906		1918*	
		%		%		%
Farmers	40	63.5	38	56.4	49	67.1
Farm labourers			19			
Artisans	4	6.3	21	20.1	12	16.4
Merchants	10	15.9	9	8.9	4	5.5
Professionals	4	6.3	5	5.0	5	6.8
Service	5	7.9	9	8.9	3	4.1
Total	63	100	101	100	73	100

*Approximation

of general storekeepers also dwindled to only two in 1918. François Savary took over Craig's store (lot 78) and the former Stimson store (lot 69). Maurice Saint-Laurent was thus the only general merchant competing with him.

The varied services offered in the village and the township's shared agricultural interests created vital and complementary links between the two entities. One receives the impression that the village was independent without ever being self-sufficient. As shall be pointed out later, agriculture in Compton received its greatest impetus from British and American markets rather than local ones.

Socio-occupational Groups versus Social Classes

The fact that people belonged to the same socio-occupational group did not mean they belonged to the same social class. For H.D. Smith, the Pomeroy, W. Paige, Robert Robertson and J.A. Dufort to refer to themselves as farmers, for example, may have been good form, but they would have done better to call themselves "gentlemen farmers." Their wealth, education and especially the scope of their economic activities far surpassed those of such large-scale farmers as Jean Rodrigue and Philias Doyon.

H.D. Smith's father had been a businessman and Senator Cochrane's partner in a Montreal footwear business, Smith & Cochrane, Boot and Shoe Manufacturers. H.D. Smith had a university education, having begun his studies in Lennoxville and pursued them in Edinburgh, Scotland, and Geneva, Switzerland. Before finally settling on his father's land in Compton, he travelled around the world, apparently to improve his knowledge of agriculture. In 1889 he returned to Compton, where he built the sumptuous Ingleside; he then channelled his energies into raising purebred animals. A number of farm labourers worked for him.² Smith's attitude was that of a lord of a manor. After all, did the townspeople not call Ingleside "the Château"? He liked to make an impression. Compton's oldest inhabitants still tell of his dramatic flair: he would enter the village dressed in a top hat and suit, preceded by a trumpet blast.

Albert and Aaron Pomeroy were the sons and grandsons of influential businessmen. Their grandfather, Colonel Benjamin Pomeroy, was the first president of the Eastern Town-

ships Bank, the vice-president being none other than Senator Cochrane, H.D. Smith's father's partner. Colonel Pomeroy was also a director of Paton Woollen Mills of Sherbrooke, one of the Eastern Townships' most important woollen mills, and a shareholder in the St. Maurice and Atlantic Railway (Grand Trunk),³ which crossed some of his land near Compton Village. With A.T. Galt, an influential businessman and politician from Sherbrooke,⁴ he was also one of the promoters of the Massawippi Valley Railway.⁵ Albert and Aaron's father, Selah I. Pomeroy, continued the colonel's work; at the time of his death in 1891, he was recognized as an innovator in the field of agricultural technology and an excellent horse breeder.⁶ The Pomeroy family residence in Compton (Pomeroy Place) was of manorial proportions and compared favourably with H.D. Smith's home (Figs. 21, 22).

Profiles of some of Compton's great landowners and businessmen would not be complete without a sketch of Senator M.H. Cochrane, who owned a 1000-acre farm, Hillhurst, near the village. The breeding and sale of purebred cattle and other livestock at Hillhurst gave a major boost to the village economy. A gentleman farmer like H.D. Smith and the Pomeroy brothers, Cochrane was above all a prosperous businessman and a nationally-known politician. Toward the close of the 19th century, the Cochrane, Cassils and Company shoe factory in Montreal, in which he was a major shareholder, employed some 300 workers.⁷ He was also vice-president of the Eastern Townships Bank.

Robert Robertson seems to have been less influential than the men just mentioned, but his status was nevertheless clearly above that of a simple farmer. In 1905 he owned 265 acres of land where four labourers were apparently employed.⁸ Originally from Châteauguay, he came to Compton in 1894 to take over the management of the model farm and teach agriculture.⁹ He was wealthy enough to buy the luxurious Pomeroy home.

William W. Paige probably rose from the small-business class. In 1906 he too was listed as a farmer, although among those with smaller holdings. He owned, jointly with his mother or wife, only 12 acres of land (lot 50). He was actually a shrewd speculator. An agent for the Stanstead and Sherbrooke Mutual Fire Insurance Company, he insured every piece of property in the village and was well acquainted with each one.

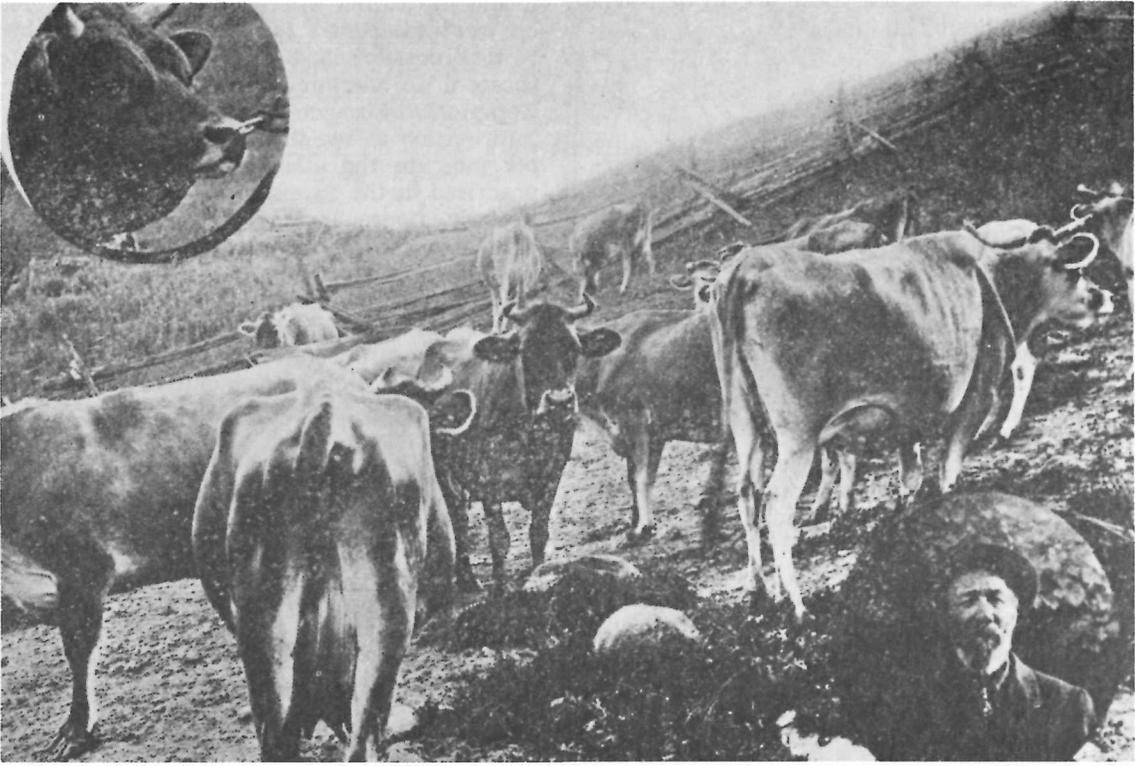


Figure 33. Part of Quartus Bliss's Jersey herd. Bliss is shown in the lower right.

In 1896 he owned the Compton Hotel on Church Street and lots 39, 40, 41, 50, 60, 62, 64 and 65 on the same street. He is continually cited as a seller, purchaser or lender in the numerous real estate contracts signed between 1896 and 1910. At one time or another Paige owned one of every four properties in the village. He was able to turn the arrival of the French Canadians during this period to good personal advantage.

These great landowners and big businessmen, together with Compton's merchants, were the village elite and held the reins of power. They sat on every board and council in the village, township and county.

Economic Life in Compton

On the eve of World War II, approximately 70 per cent of the work force in Compton Township earned a living through agriculture.¹⁰ At the turn of the century, the proportion had been roughly the same. This is

confirmed by data provided by the Catholic parish priest in his annual report to the bishop. Between 1901 and 1915, 66.3 per cent of the parish's Catholic families were engaged in farming and 33.7 per cent lived by non-agricultural means.¹¹

Compton Village was, so to speak, the capital of Compton Township and its economic life was directly related to that of the surrounding countryside. Of the 101 persons who made up the village's work force in 1906, 64 owed their livelihood directly to agriculture, being farmers or farm labourers, butchers or dairymen. Even the hotel industry profited from the frequent stays of livestock dealers.¹²

Although agriculture was important, the village also boasted a cluster of stores, artisans' workshops and services such as the hotel and the post office. This concentration of businesses was one of the village's chief characteristics. In 1896 L.S. Channell wrote: "Compton Village is the centre of one of the best farming sections of Canada. No manufac-

turing is done here, but there are to be found stores and shops of all kinds."¹³

Agriculture in Compton

At the turn of the century, the dairy industry and raising purebred livestock were the two mainstays of agriculture in Compton;¹⁴ the cultivation of fodder, though necessary, was of secondary importance. Agriculture in the village naturally followed the same trend and village farmers were responsible, to a large extent, for the reputation Compton had earned in England and the United States. A few farmers were outstanding for the number and quality of their livestock: H.D. Smith, M.H. Cochrane and the Pomeroy brothers.

England imported the finest animal stock from England for breeding in Canada. The Pomeroy brothers bred stallions; Cochrane bred Rosedale cows, Cotswold, Southdown, Leicester and Lincoln sheep, Suffolk horses and Berkshire pigs; Smith bred Hereford, Yorkshire and Farnworth cattle.¹⁵ Around 1900, according to Désiré Rodrigue,¹⁶ himself a sheep breeder, Cochrane and Smith each employed some 25 men at a daily wage of one dollar. Livestock from the Cochrane and Smith farms was exported primarily to England; horses bred at the Pomeroy farm were sold at the village market itself¹⁷ and some of them apparently also were sold on the American market. Livestock sold to England was transported by ship from Quebec City. A labourer usually accompanied the animals to take care of them during the voyage across the ocean. He, too, was paid a dollar a day.¹⁸

Quartus Bliss, F.S. Stimson and J.M. Le Moynes were among Compton's less influential livestock breeders and dealers. In 1881, according to H. Belden,¹⁹ they each owned a farm of approximately 500 acres. The Bliss and Stimson properties bordered on the Smith farm. By 1896 they had disposed of half their land. It was at this time that Le Moynes, whose land was situated in the southern part of the township, settled in the village. He directed the model farm from 1896 to 1904. In 1906 he insured a pigsty and sheepfold on lot 13.²⁰

The French Canadians seem to have followed the tradition already well established in Compton and adopted their predecessors' agricultural methods. Around 1920, Désiré Rodrigue formed what he called a "sheep company." He owned as many as 1000 sheep

belonging to four different breeds. Each year he went to animal fairs in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and even the United States (Boston) to market his sheep and lambs.²¹ Compton's insurance registers would add more information to the list; these few names simply indicate the kind of agriculture actually practised in the township. As a general rule, livestock were insured, as were the cream separator and of course the pigsty, sometime the sheepfold and, finally, grain and fodder. All these elements formed a coherent whole. The breeding and sale of cattle and dairy cows logically resulted in the breeding of pigs, fed on whey, as well as the cultivation of oats, clover, alfalfa and millet as cattle fodder.²² This production chain, with its roots in the breeding of cattle and cows, was common agricultural practice in all the townships (*see* Part One).

Among the farms that can be cited as examples of this type of agriculture and of which insurance registers provide a fairly good picture are those of Philias Doyon, Jean Rodrigue, Edouard Poulin, Xavier Bolduc and Joseph Bureau. Philias Doyon was originally from Saint-Victor-de-Tring and thus a native of the Beauce region, like most of the townspeople after 1900. In 1896, when he was 40 years old, he came to Compton and bought some 160 acres of land in the village (lots 77, 93, 163 and 166).²³ In November 1908 he took out an insurance policy on his house and four barns (one of which had been converted into a sugarhouse), his pigsty, wood shed, cream separator and thresher, livestock, ploughing implements, harnesses and carriages.²⁴ The other four farmers more or less followed the same pattern. The same basic farm equipment and other items are found in each case: livestock, grain, a thresher and a cream separator.

The cream separator leads to another aspect of agriculture practised in Compton: the very important dairy industry. Most farms produced milk. Where and how did they market it? For a number of small farmers, the sale of milk in the village was often a major source of cash income, as was the sale of maple sugar and maple syrup at the Sherbrooke market. In 1894, according to Father Choquette, then parish priest, there were a butter-dairy and cheese-dairy in the village; a second cheese-dairy opened in 1896.²⁵ The model farm was also inaugurated in 1894; it included a dairy training plant which received milk from the dairy herds of area farmers.²⁶ Butter was



Figure 34. Artisans according to the 1906 assessment roll. Smiths: Boudreau, lot 64; Bolduc, 51; O. Poulin, 64. Tinsmiths: W.H. Munroe and Son, 159. Shoemaker: J. Houle, 82. Wheelwright: M. Demers, 55. Tailor: N. Drolet, 56. Butchers: F. Audette, 39, 66; M. Ducharme, 52; H. Hall, 26; Warram Brothers, 83. Saddler: J.-P. Fortier, 80. Dairymen: F. Lalumière, 45; Max. Lazure, 14, 16. Carpenters: F. Lalumière, 45; H. Lougee, 42; Robertson, 67; L. Thivierge, 25.



Figure 35. Businesses and services according to the 1906 assessment roll. Anglican church, lot 155; Anglican cemetery, 153; 1887 Anglican church, 63; Methodist church, 73; Catholic church, Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, 43; Catholic cemetery, 49; town hall, 92; Ladies' College (King's Hall), 151; school, 46; Paige (Compton) Hotel, 64; Todd Hotel, 70; former Union store, later Pomeroy-Robertson home, 31; Guilbert store, 67; Stimson store run by Knowlton, 69; Saint-Laurent store, 74; Rea store, 75; Craig store, 78.

produced there three times a week or any time the incoming supply of milk exceeded actual needs, as occurred during the winter of 1896-97.²⁷ Some of the butter produced was exported to Australia.²⁸ In 1891 the township's dairies produced 131 132 pounds of butter.²⁹ It is not known what proportion of this output was accounted for by the village.

Needless to say, land use in Compton reflected the importance of livestock in the village's agricultural life. The growing of grains for fodder took up almost all the land under cultivation (17 000 out of an estimated 19 000 acres) and most non-producing land was natural prairie.³⁰ At haymaking time, additional labour was brought in from outside the village. It was in this way that many people from the Beauce region came to know Compton and decided to settle there.

Trades

It is not hard to imagine the activity that characterized the village each day as artisans plied their trades in the early 1900s. The butcher, dairyman, shoemaker, carpenter, blacksmith, tinsmith, wheelwright, saddler and tailor all laboured in their shops and workshops, most of which were scattered along Church and Main streets in the heart of the village (Fig. 34). They made a significant contribution to the village economy; in 1906 and 1918 at least 21 families (one of every four) earned their livelihood through skilled trades.³¹ Their work provided essential services to the inhabitants of Compton Township and was directly rewarded by them. The vicissitudes of foreign markets had an indirect effect on artisans, just as they did on farmers and businessmen. The artisans' dependence on their environment did not enable them to live lives of ease - they generally seem to have owned modest homes³² - however, their status was preferable to that of the farm labourers, who were usually tenants (Table 7).

In 1906 the following accounted for 57.1 per cent of Compton's artisans: F. Audette, M. Ducharme, H. Hall and the Warram brothers, all butchers; J. Boudreau, A. Bolduc and O. Poulin, smiths; W. Munroe and his son, tinsmiths, and F. Lalumière, H. Lougee, G. Robertson and L. Thivierge, carpenters. The distribution of the majority of artisans among these four trades tended to be the same in 1918. The large number of butchers is not at all surprising. The slaughterhouse, owned by

William and Burt Warram in 1906 and later by François Audette, rounded out the cattle breeding and trading cycle, which was the pride of Compton.

While none of Compton's butchers ever became wealthy, one of them, François Audette, was able to attain an enviable financial position and engage in property speculation to a limited degree, at various times owning lots 37, 38, 66, 78 (Craig's store) and 83. In 1905 he had a butcher's shop on Church Street next to Craig's store, which he also owned.³³

Smiths also served as farriers, thus meeting the needs of horse dealers and travellers who regularly stayed in Compton Village. Church Street, near the Paige Hotel (the Compton Hotel in 1863),³⁴ Charles Demers's livery stable (lot 63) and the wheelwright, Munroe Demers (lot 55), was a choice location for a smith's forge.

Commerce

Compton Village was especially kind to its businessmen during the 19th century. In 1863 there were eight stores: four on Church Street and four on the Sherbrooke-Coaticook road (Main Street), a liniment factory, a tannery and two inns: W. Paige's Union Hotel and the Compton Hotel, almost facing each other on Church Street.³⁵

Thirty years later, around 1896, business activity in Compton did not seem to have lost any of its vitality. Five general stores competed with each other: the Saint-Laurent and Rea stores on Main Street and the Craig, Stimson-Knowlton and Guilbert stores on Church Street. The Compton Hotel, since taken over by W. Paige, was still in business and the Todd (Oriental) Hotel had opened. However, the liniment factory and tannery had closed (Fig. 35).

After 1896 the number of stores and hotels began to dwindle. In 1906 the assessment roll listed only the Saint-Laurent, Craig and Stimson stores (the latter having been bought by Robert Lakerman) and the Oriental Hotel. In 1918 François Savary bought the Craig and Lakerman stores (lots 78 and 65 respectively); there were then only two general-store owners, the other being Maurice Saint-Laurent, son and heir of Jean-Baptiste-Mofse Saint-Laurent. The Oriental Hotel had been converted into the town hall so the village no longer had any hotel. Another hotel was built some years later on Main Street.

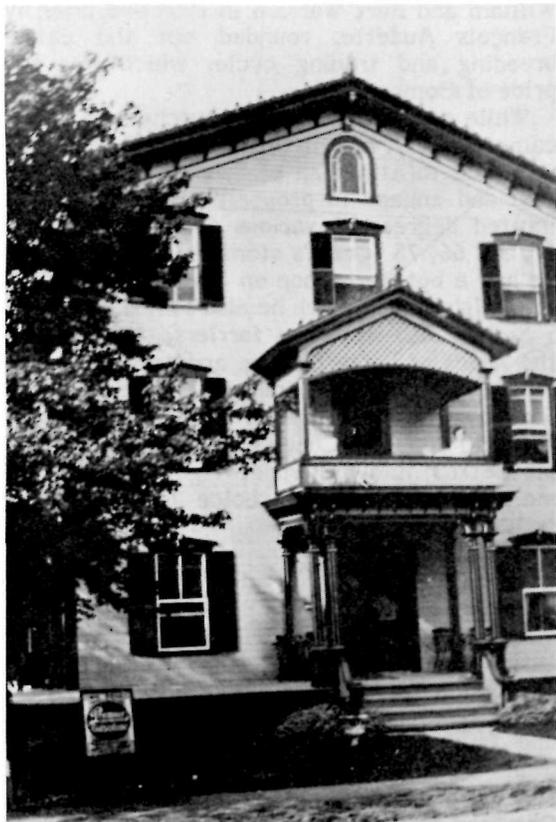


Figure 36. The New Compton House Hotel in 1919.

As they became more numerous, Compton's French-Canadian inhabitants also took control of the village's trades and businesses. Their solidarity made it possible for J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent to build up a loyal clientele in the village and the township from 1880 onwards. At that time, French Canadians made up just under 60 per cent of his clientele³⁶ although they totalled only 25 per cent of the population of Compton Township. Once the French Canadians attained majority status after 1900, they competed with and eliminated all the English-speaking business establishments. J. Hunter noticed the same phenomenon in Coaticook at approximately the same time.³⁷

General stores essentially combined the features of a dry goods and clothing store, a grocery store, a hardware store and a shoe store. Fabrics, buttons and shoes were sold there beside dishes and crockery, spices and oil, and even firewood.³⁸ Customers rarely

paid cash; quite often they bartered with eggs, wood and other such items. Almost everyone owed the general storekeeper money; indeed, one way to repay a debt was to settle the lender's account at the general store. (Sometimes the doctor was also paid in kind.)³⁹ The fact that townspeople and country folk alike were indebted to him often enabled a general-store owner to acquire property and engage in speculation, but the examination of land ownership in Compton did not reveal whether merchants there availed themselves of this opportunity.

Jean-Baptiste-Moïse Saint-Laurent, General Merchant

Jean-Baptiste-Moïse Saint-Laurent, who owned a general store in Compton from 1878 onwards, is noteworthy for his continual presence and intense participation in the life of the community. He does not seem to have made a fortune as the owner of a general store, but did enjoy a higher standard of living than most townspeople. According to Compton's oldest citizens who knew him, he was a "gentleman" and was considered to be of the "upper class."

When he died, J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent left behind his store inventory and a neighbouring piece of land.⁴⁰ His general store was the only one that was never an object of financial speculation during the period covered in this study. It was truly an institution, a sort of village meeting-place where men liked to chat and where town council meetings were often held (Saint-Laurent was permanent secretary-treasurer). There, too, in the upper-storey room, the brothers of the Independent Order of Foresters met regularly; Saint-Laurent served as secretary-treasurer for this organization as well.⁴¹ He was also secretary-treasurer for the model farm⁴² and the school board,⁴³ a justice of the peace,⁴⁴ a churchwarden⁴⁵ and even vice-chairman of the Protestant school board.⁴⁶ He was paid for carrying out all these duties and was thus able to round out the family budget. Above all, his various functions made him a powerful man; the only feather missing from his cap was a seat in the Quebec Legislative Assembly, for which he ran unsuccessfully on two occasions, in 1894 and 1904.

The townspeople confided in him as they had traditionally confided in the parish priest. Unilingual newcomers to Compton from the



Figure 37. The interior of the Saint-Laurent store circa 1905. Jean-Baptiste-Moïse is at the desk, his son Maurice is behind the counter.

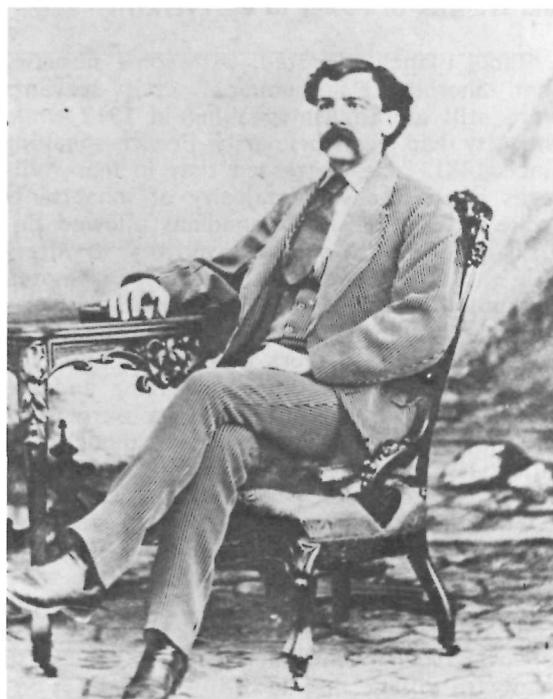


Figure 38. Jean-Baptiste-Moïse Saint-Laurent circa 1870.

Beauce region found in the general merchant a faithful interpreter of their desire to buy land. Later, Saint-Laurent often signed as the main witness in transactions between townspeople or country folk.⁴⁷

Whereas financial wealth had earned M.H. Cochrane a seat in the senate, J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent seems to have been the only true politician in the village, the one person above all others who looked after community affairs.

Relations between Social and Ethnic Groups

On one hand, Compton's economic and social structure reflects a rather static, well-ordered little community where inequality existed between social and economic groups; on the other hand, it was a society in a constant state of flux. The period under study was an era of transition between two interest groups. As the French replaced the English in the early 1900s, farmers, merchants, artisans and influential citizens wore different faces; a new society was built on the foundations of the old.

These changes raise questions as to the relationships between the two cultures.

Emergence of a Small English-speaking Elite and Transfer of Power to the French

Raoul Blanchard noted, with some surprise, that Sherbrooke's municipal civil servants were still all English-speaking in 1912 while the city had been primarily French-speaking since 1881. He suggested that in many villages where the vast majority of inhabitants spoke French, French Canadians allowed English- and French-speaking mayors to alternate as a matter of courtesy.⁴⁸ Compton resembled Sherbrooke in this respect, but was not one of the villages where French- and English-speaking mayors alternated. In 1914 the mayor was still English-speaking and the minutes of town council meetings were written in English until 1917 even though the village had been primarily French-speaking for more than a decade.

What Blanchard ironically called courtesy was more likely the townspeople's passive recognition of the economic power of the town councillors, who were often elected on the basis of property. In fact, Compton's great landowners and gentlemen farmers tended to dominate village and township councils. Be-

ginning in the 1850s, the Pomeroy, Cochrane, Smith and, to a lesser degree, Bliss families were each represented in turn in the mayor's office and on the township council. In an era of industrialization and railroad building, these families took control of towns and villages in order to determine taxation policy, channel revenue into their bank (the Eastern Townships Bank) and finance their projects. A.T. Galt wrote that the best way for the British American Land Company to avoid being mistreated either by the province's Legislative Assembly or by the town council was to gain influence within these representative bodies to oppose or back their actions.⁴⁹

In 1893 Compton Village was incorporated. The Pomeroy brothers and H.D. Smith took an interest in municipal politics for a few years. A.L. Pomeroy was a councillor in 1895. A year earlier he had been one of the promoters of the model farm. After 1900 this group tended to withdraw from any political activity. A new, more local elite arose from among Compton's merchants, businessmen and entrepreneurs. This elite included J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent, C.G. Craig (general merchant), W.W. Paige (hotelkeeper and landowner) and D. Saultry, farmer and building contractor. Gradually, a few French-Canadian large-scale farmers won seats on the council and finally gained control of it after 1917. J.A. Rivard, Philias Doyon, Esdras Mercier and Damase Bureau were among these. The transfer of power from the gentlemen farmers to the primarily English-speaking merchant class and thence to French-Canadian large-scale farmers coincided with the demise of a certain type of stock breeding and the division of large farms such as those belonging to the Smiths and the Cochranes. Land speculation, which arose as a result of migration, temporarily favoured the rise to power of medium-scale property owners such as W.W. Paige. When the minutes of town council meetings began to be written in French in April 1917, the French Canadians had finally assumed control over village affairs.

The Two Communities

It is useless to look for signs of unity in the village during this era of transition. Far from favouring cohesion within the community at large, village institutions created two parallel solidarities based on language and religion. On one hand were the English-speaking Protes-

tants with their two churches, a widely-known college, King's Hall, elementary schools, a model farm and, a few miles from the village, in Lennoxville, Bishop's University. The surface vitality of this community concealed its sickness unto death. Any hope of survival had vanished several decades earlier as its members advanced in age. No immigration swelled its numbers and its young people were leaving the village (*see* Part One). On the other hand, French Catholics, who had been in the minority until 1900, rallied around a single institution, the parish church, which they shared with their Irish coreligionists. One or at most two elementary schoolteachers provided them with instruction. Other educational institutions, the *Académie Saint-Thomas* and the convent of the *Soeurs de La Présentation*, were founded after 1900 to meet the growing needs of the community, which now constituted the majority in Compton Village. The *Séminaire Saint-Charles-Borromée* in Sherbrooke provided secondary education, as Bishop's University in Lennoxville did for the English.

Did the co-existence of the two groups in Compton favour the beginning of cultural exchanges between them or the emergence of an original style of day-to-day life? The rarity of mixed marriages and the exclusive nature of certain institutions, such as King's Hall and

the model farm, show that instead the groups were rigidly separated.

Mixed Marriages

If marriages between Catholics and Protestants, and, of course, between French- and English-speaking Catholics, are an index of the relative degree of cohesion of the two ethnic groups, the initial impression of separation has a solid basis in fact and is confirmed by the parish registers of Compton's three churches. In only four of the 128 marriages celebrated among the Methodists from 1875 to 1915 did one of the spouses have a French surname; among the Anglicans, the proportion was two out of 48.⁵⁰ Moreover, it is not certain to which cultural group two of the spouses belonged - namely, Joseph and Joshua Martin, who married Methodists in 1885 and 1889 respectively.

As the only minority groups in the village and the township, the French and the Irish initially drew together. Fifteen per cent of the marriages celebrated during the above-mentioned period, for a total of 44, or one marriage per year, joined partners from these two ethnic groups (Fig. 39). Themselves a minority among the Catholics, the Irish were

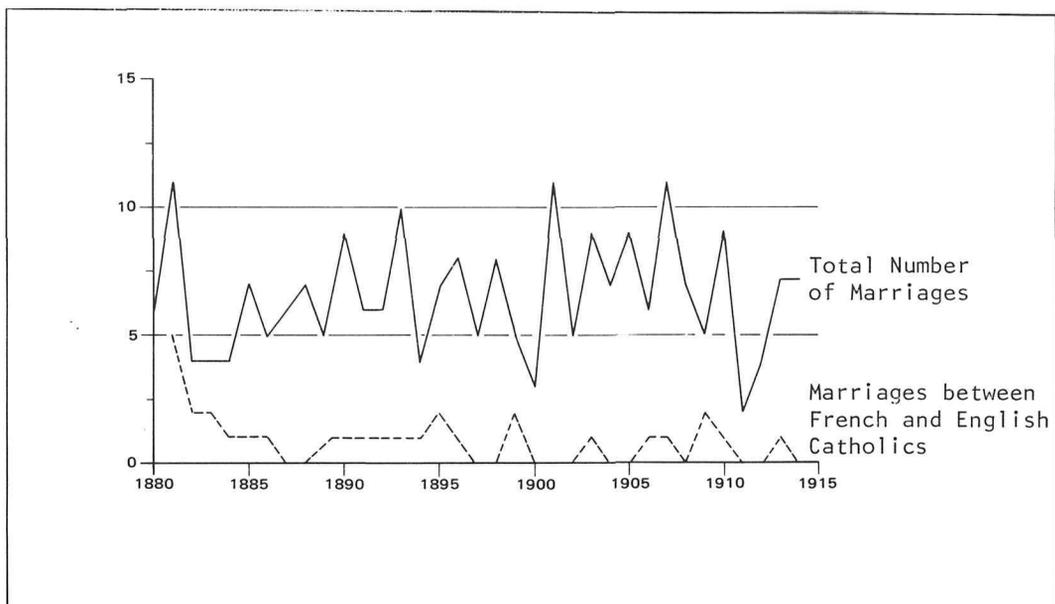


Figure 39. Catholic marriages.

finally assimilated by the French Canadians; the process was accelerated by the emigration of English-speaking townspeople to the Western provinces and the United States, which forestalled any attempt to form a linguistic grouping.

There were a certain number of marriages between the Irish and the French Canadians, but they were exceptional. This could have been otherwise only if the village's "British" institutions had been fully open to the new reality surrounding them. King's Hall remains now as an oasis of memory and the model farm, though subsidized by the Quebec government, closed once Compton's English-speaking population had left. Even acceptance of the new reality would not have prevented the disappearance of the English community. Curiously, this disappearance from the village and the township occurred at a time when some French Canadians had no objection to their

children's assimilation by the English. In 1905 and 1906 alone, as many as 20 families went to the trouble of obtaining permission from the bishop to have their children enrolled in the Protestant school.⁵¹

Conclusion: A Fleeting Co-existence

One could speak of the co-existence of the two societies if they had simultaneously experienced relative stability. Instead, the two communities were in completely different situations; one slowly disintegrating while the other, like a rising tide, progressively displaced it. This pendulum swing took place so slowly and calmly that one has the impression that the members of each community did business with each other and yet rarely if ever found common ground.

CULTURAL LIFE

The English- and French-speaking villagers led separate lives, with economic activity providing the only opportunities for contact between them. There was a dividing line in the realm of economics as well, drawn not so much on the basis of language as on that of the age-old rivalry between Protestants and Catholics. Language and religion were so closely linked that to be English-speaking was synonymous with being Protestant; the same equation held between Catholicism and the French language. These were two important factors creating opposition between the two communities and furthering an individual's integration into one or the other of the communities. The writings of Robert Sellar,¹ who hated both Catholics and French, continually fed this rivalry in the Eastern Townships, but it never really displayed itself openly in the village except on such occasions as the canonical erection of Saint-Thomas Parish in 1891 (when it was granted full canon rights as an autonomous body).² The rivalry may have induced Catholics to show some restraint in the outward manifestations of their form of worship.

The cultural life of Compton Village resulted from the combination of all the behaviour patterns to which this polarization gave rise. A partial glimpse at the cultural life is provided by examining religious observance and political activity.

Religious Observance

The original intention to compare religious observance among Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists could not be carried out. Unfortunately, only one of the three parishes has left the documentation necessary for such analysis. Thus, without access to the Protestant point of view, religious observance can be studied only partially although there is a wealth of information on the Catholics' ability to adapt to a pluralistic society where their attitudes seem to have changed in the face of a more easily challenged parish authority.

Aspects of Popular Religion

Absence of the outward signs of devotion. Votive shrines, wayside chapels and crosses,

and the Stations of the Cross are traditional sights throughout the Quebec countryside. Tiny, picturesque chapels stand on the outskirts of old villages, and naïve images of the Sacred Heart or crosses carved with the Instruments of Christ's Passion can be seen along roadsides or at crossroads.

No such images are to be found in Compton Village or in the surrounding township. The most one could hope to see would be the cement cross, inset with a small statue of Mary, on Arthur Groleau's son's farm outside the village, and a wooden cross in a field on the road to Waterville. No one had ever seen any others and could not even remember why these two had been erected. Yet almost everyone in Compton today originally came from the Beauce region, noted for the variety and abundance of its shrines.

The Protestant environment in which Compton's Catholics lived probably explains the abandonment of a religious tradition widely observed elsewhere in Quebec. There was no point in needlessly offending Protestant sensibilities by outward signs of devotion, which were sometimes interpreted as acts of formal possession of the land. It is also said that the Protestants could not tolerate the depiction of Christ in agony. Only in 1933 did Compton's Catholic community accept its priest's invitation to raise a statue on the church grounds, and even then it was not a crucifix but a grotto dedicated to Mary.

Low level of participation in pious organizations. The move away from certain popular religious traditions in Compton, a result of circumstances, also led to a certain decline in participation in various Catholic fraternities and pious works. In his annual reports to the bishop, Father Eugène-Edmond Choquette, parish priest from 1883 to 1896, constantly spoke of the religious indifference of his parishioners. His successor, Father Irénée-Alfred Lavallée (1896-1916), came to the same conclusion in his 1897 report. In 1911, when the bishop expressly asked him whether his parishioners displayed any interest in the various fraternities and charities, he drily replied "un peu."³

Avoidance of the use of Joseph and Mary as baptismal names. A careful examination of parish registers from 1875 to 1900 for the purposes of demographic analysis (*see* "Settlement") indicates that Compton churchgoers tended to avoid the names Joseph and Mary

when christening their children, although no precise statistics were gathered. In itself, this is not a highly significant phenomenon. Was it standard practice in the Eastern Townships? It would have given a good indication of the degree of religious sentiment in Compton if the practice could have been compared with that followed in the Beauce region during the same period, which, unfortunately, could not be done. One thing is certain: the practice dates back to the 19th century and has continued to the present day. Two years of research in compiling a biographical dictionary has provided ample evidence of it.

How can this drift away from tradition can be explained? It would be too simple to dismiss it as a quirk of history. Set in the general context of religious sentiment and practice in Compton, notable for lack of zeal, it assumes an unexpected importance.

Payment of Tithes

All practising Catholics have always been obliged, as a matter of conscience, to contribute to the material support of their parish priest, the main justification for tithing, and are expected to do so with good grace. Parishioners of Saint-Thomas Church were expected to pay 60 cents for every \$100 at which their property was assessed, but often refused or neglected to pay the tithes, whether through forgetfulness, ill-will, religious indifference or all three combined. Neither Father Maurice Beaudry (1877-83) nor Father Choquette (1883-96) ever succeeded in collecting all the tithes due him.⁴ On the contrary, half of the parishioners did not pay their tithes in 1877 and a third of them did not do so in 1886. According to Father Choquette, the problem was insoluble; he found it impossible to collect the monies for his upkeep. His financial situation was so unstable that after 1883 he had to obtain the bishop's permission to withdraw \$50 a year from church funds.⁵ The same reasons probably caused him to take on added duties as sexton and sacristan, which earned him an additional income of \$100 in 1902.

It was when the notice of the canonical erection of the parish was read publicly by J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent on two consecutive Sundays (21 and 28 September 1890) that opposition to tithing was expressed most openly.⁶ Following the erection of the parish and its subsequent recognition by civil authorities,

tithing became mandatory. This displeased English-speaking property owners, who filed a caveat,⁷ and many of the more influential French-Canadian property owners, who were quite satisfied with the status quo. Opposition to the erection of the parish was so great that on 27 December 1890, Father Choquette was obliged to write to the bishop requesting that it be delayed. In passages from his letter can be seen the spirit of insubordination that characterized his parishioners at that time:

At the present time, Your Excellency, I am making the rounds of my parish and tonight I have returned after receiving little encouragement.

I cannot conceal from you the sadness that I feel when I find nearly every household filled with opposition to the erection of the parish, at least at present. More clearly than ever before, I see that we will sacrifice the unity and harmony which now prevail among the various groups that make up our parish, and I am the unfortunate victim of a problem that is going to make my position quite difficult. That is why I must convince Your Excellency of the advisability of delaying the execution of this procedure, at least for the present, for the following reasons:

After eight years' experience in Compton, I am in a position to state that the livelihood of the parish priest and, as a result, the management and successful execution of parish work depend more on the people's good will than on any law expressly enacted by the authorities. My greatest resource here has always been to turn this good will to best account by using various tactics. It cannot exist in the present climate of bitterness and emotional agitation engendered by the immediate adoption of the new measure. The declared enmity of the opposing group, among which may be found the best educated and most influential of our parishioners, will inevitably result in a degree of disunity and most unpleasant division....

Finally, from now until Easter I shall have to wage quite a crusade to collect tithes and I shall be obliged to give up this effort in the face of the rising tide of discontent which, in some cases, expresses itself in an absolute refusal to give alms. [Translation]⁸

On 9 June 1891 the canonical erection of the parish was decreed, apparently without any of the expected undesirable effects. Until he left Compton in 1896, Father Choquette continued to have difficulty collecting tithes. In that year several parishioners paid only a part of their tithes, to ensure that the money would not be shared by the priest and the church.⁹ After 1886, when the new priest, Father Irénée-A. Lavallée, came to Compton, none of his predecessor's alarmist comments can be found in the reports. On the contrary, the new priest's first report in 1897 indicated that tithes had been collected with a fair amount of success.¹⁰ Could parishioners have changed their attitudes so suddenly without any pressure being brought to bear on them? Was Father Lavallée telling the truth? Perhaps, with the law on his side, he was able to do what Father Choquette had believed impossible: to collect even those tithes which were past due, although not without some difficulty, as shown by the many cases submitted to the bishop for arbitration.¹¹ Was the new priest's task made simpler by the arrival of a large number of less recalcitrant parishioners?

Refusal to pay tithes decreased as Compton's Catholic population increased. Half of the parishioners evaded their responsibility in 1877 and a third in 1886, but in 1897 the tithe was collected with considerable success. The same phenomenon occurred with respect to religious observance, which became more the rule as the Catholic community became more numerous. The disappearance of religious and linguistic pluralism seems to have given rise to a coercive conformity which in the final analysis seems to have been due to the influence of the settlers from the Beauce.

Religious Observance

Piety, participation in para-religious organizations such as fraternities, and contribution to the material support of the church and priest are all revealing clues to the degree of religious observance among Catholics. However, the degree of observance cannot be better measured than in terms of attendance at Sunday Mass, regularity with which the sacraments are taken and performance of the Easter duty, for these are the real barometers of religious observance.

Religious indifference. Father Beaudry, Father Choquette and Father Lavallée constantly

deplored the religious indifference of their parishioners. The priests' annual reports to the bishop generally contained accounts of such transgressions as neglect of the Easter duty, non-observance of Sundays and holy days of obligation, neglect of the sacraments, working on Sundays, and scandalous behaviour of drunkards, as well as occasional common-law relationships. They were perhaps rather pessimistic in their judgments, but their reports contained a great deal of truth: the same themes ran through the reports of all three.

These subjective judgments, even if they do agree, remain general in nature. An actual count of those who performed (or rather did not perform) their Easter duty gives us a more accurate idea of religious observance in Compton.

Churchgoers. The first explicit quantitative data on religious observance is provided by Father Choquette in his 1891 report. He estimated that more than one-fifth of all baptized Catholics were non-practising,¹² which would mean some 150 parishioners. An additional 50 parishioners, it seems, did not do their Easter duty.¹³ In 1899 Father Lavallée estimated that about ten of the parish's families did not go to church,¹⁴ while 20 parishioners did not do their Easter duty. These are the only two sets of actual figures on religious observance; other figures concern only the performance of the Easter duty.

Thus there were two groups of Catholics: regular and occasional churchgoers. The latter were the non-practising Catholics referred to in the two pastoral reports cited above. They attended church only to mark the major events of life: birth, marriage and death. And should the families who did not bring their children to the baptismal font until they were a year old or more be numbered among the non-practising Catholics? From 1875 to 1900, 34 children between three and six months old were baptized, 13 between seven months and one year old, and 23 over a year old.¹⁵ Munroe Demers, the wheelwright, was a case in point; three of his children were baptized when they were already a year old (in 1895, 1896 and 1899).¹⁶ Meanwhile, in 1898, he married a Miss Booth¹⁷ in the Anglican church, from which he was buried in the 1930s. Some of the members of the Lyonais family also belong to this category; in 1875, 1880, 1881 and 1892 they had children baptized at ages ranging from one to six years old.¹⁸ A



Figure 40. Percentage of parishioners in Saint-Thomas Parish who did not perform their Easter duties.

final example: in March 1902 Monsignor Larocque of Sherbrooke had to intervene before permission was granted to hold a burial service for J.B. Deschamps,¹⁹ who also apparently belonged to the non-practising group.

Churchgoers were divided into two sub-groups.²⁰ The first group regularly did its Easter duty and attended Sunday Mass and religious services on holy days of obligation. The second group did its Easter duty and no more. On the whole, parishioners performed their Easter duty. From 1877 to 1915 between 70 and 99 per cent of Compton's Catholic parishioners did so. In 1885 and 1895 as many as 100 to 130 parishioners went neither to confession nor to communion at Easter. When Father Lavallée assumed his duties as parish priest in 1895 and French-Canadian Catholics attained majority status in the township after 1900, the number of parishioners who did not do their Easter duty dropped to a mere one per cent (Fig. 40). It seems that this change in attitude can be accounted for by the arrival in Compton of parishioners who were, for the most part, devout churchgoers. Father Lavallée's personality should perhaps also be considered; he always hedged when answering the bishop's questions, possibly for fear of drawing his attention to the actual situation in his parish. Parishioners often criticized Father

Lavallée's lack of charity and the bishop appears to have agreed with them.²¹

There is a risk of drawing unwarranted conclusions by using as an index solely performance of the Easter duty. Religious observance did improve markedly; the number of parishioners who did their Easter duty is a reliable indicator of that. But it is very difficult to estimate even approximately the proportion of those who did their Easter duty as well as being regular Sunday churchgoers. Compton's parish priests did not count those attending Sunday Mass although they continually complained that attendance on Sundays and holy days of obligation left something to be desired.²²

Conclusions

A brief analysis of religious sentiment and observance in Compton provides, to a certain extent, a composite picture of the Catholic parishioner. Suddenly transplanted into the midst of an alien community, he had abandoned the traditional outward signs of religious devotion. A member of a minority group living in a Protestant setting, he also tended to stray from regular religious observance and, as a result, found it easier to defy the parish priest, whose authority was frequently chal-

lenged and never equalled that wielded by the priest in his former parish. Father Choquette's testimony is very revealing in this respect. However, after 1900, when French-Canadian Catholics attained majority status, the situation apparently returned to normal. Tithes were paid regularly and parishioners seemed to perform their religious duties obediently. Religious conformity arose in Compton; this was not just coincidence. As French-Canadian Catholics became the majority, dissent became next to impossible and the priest's authority was re-asserted.

Political Trends

Municipal Politics

Although, ideally, municipal politics in Compton should have been studied from a behavioural standpoint, there are apparently no detailed election reports on which to base any serious theories. Municipal politics are thus shrouded in mystery except for some available information on the composition of town councils.

The minutes of town council meetings²³ give the impression that Compton Village was dominated by a small group of about ten people who alternately held various positions as mayor, councillors and "civil servants."²⁴ The names encountered most frequently are: Daniel Saultry, W.W. Paige, B.F. Hitchcock, L.Q. Bliss, C.G. Craig, J.-A. Dufort, Philius Doyon and Damase Bureau. From its establishment in June 1893 until World War I, the town council was controlled by English-speaking citizens of Compton, chief among them being W.W. Paige, the great land speculator, B.F. Hitchcock and L.Q. Bliss. J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent was the council's permanent secretary. English domination of the council continued even after the French Canadians had become the majority in the village. When council minutes finally began to be written in French in 1917, it marked the end of English rule. The English did not surrender power willingly; any power elite resists threats to its hegemony. As Désiré Rodrigue pointed out, the English were initially opposed to admitting the French to the council, but when they became the majority, the English had to yield before them.²⁵

Provincial and Federal Politics

This study of Compton Village extends from the 1880s to World War I, when Louis Saint-Laurent and his father Jean-Baptiste-Moïse lived there. This period of some 40 years was truly unique in Compton's history because of the profound demographic changes that completely transformed the village. It was a time of great turmoil in provincial and federal politics as well. In the province, Honoré Mercier's *Parti national* took power in 1887 with the support of nationalists of every stripe, mobilized by the Riel crisis that symbolized the enmity between English and French Canadians. In Ottawa, Laurier ended the long years of Conservative rule in 1896 when Quebec transferred its loyalty to the Liberal party. The prospect of war and the controversial question of Canadian participation in the Imperial Army brought about the fall of the Laurier government. Finally, World War I and the conscription crisis resulted in a Canada-Quebec confrontation and the country became profoundly divided.

How did the inhabitants of a small agricultural village, peaceful and yet also divided by these changes, experience these often faraway political events?

Divergence between local and province-wide voting patterns. From the time Jean-Baptiste-Moïse Saint-Laurent came to Compton in December 1878 until World War I, Quebec voters generally supported the same political party's representatives in the Legislative Assembly in Quebec City and in the House of Commons in Ottawa. Their choice of a provincial party always conformed to their previous choice of a federal party. The election of Mercier's *Parti national* was a departure from this rule, but that of Marchand's Liberal government in May 1897, a year after Laurier's first victory, confirmed it. The choice of a federal party was of the utmost importance, but was always made in consideration of Quebec's interests and the province's special character. This fact was illustrated most clearly when Quebec remained loyal to Laurier after his chief lieutenants from the other provinces abandoned him during World War I and the conscription crisis.

The similarity of attitude in most Quebec electoral ridings toward the two levels of government puts Compton County, and particularly Compton Village, in an irregular position. It is difficult to see evidence of the

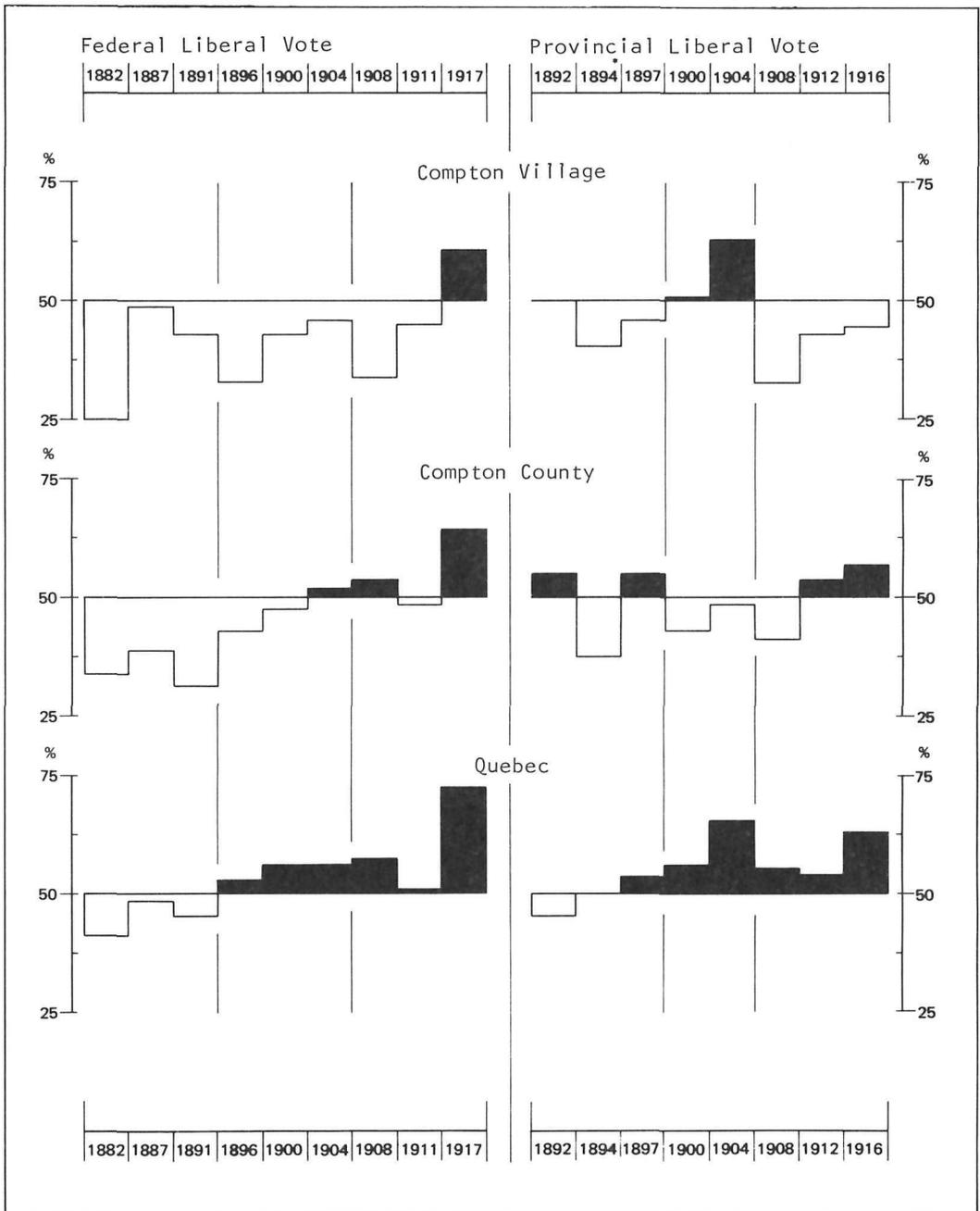


Figure 41. Federal and provincial liberal vote in the village, county and province. 1894 was the year of a provincial by-election in Compton.

political changes taking place in Quebec and Canada by studying voting patterns in Compton. The trend that began with Laurier's victory in 1896 was not followed by the county and the village until two and five elections later respectively (Fig. 41), and Compton's provincial voting patterns are also characterized by their divergence from the Quebec norm (Fig. 41). From the provincial by-election in 1894 to the 1916 province-wide election, the village continually supported the Conservatives except in the 1904 election when J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent obtained a Liberal majority with the support of his newly-arrived fellow French Canadians. The village did not vote for the federal Liberals until the election of 1917; however, the county supported the Liberals in 1904, 1908 and, like every other primarily French-speaking riding in Quebec, in 1917.

Politics in Compton Village thus marched to a different drummer than county politics and, to an even greater degree, provincial politics. In 1896, 49 of Quebec's 65 ridings elected Laurier's candidates; in Compton County, the Conservative majority declined from 36.2 per cent in 1891 to 13.4 per cent. Townspeople were either undecided or indifferent; 43.6 per cent of the voters in Compton Village abstained, thus favouring the election of a Conservative candidate.²⁶ The village found it difficult to free itself of the domination of the Pope family, as the township had done in 1904. In the federal election of 1908, R.H. Pope, the

Conservative candidate, a member of Parliament from 1891 to 1904 and son of the Honourable J.H. Pope, also a member of Parliament for Compton from 1871 to 1889, was again elected by a comfortable margin. The village finally joined the mainstream of Quebec politics in 1917 in an election whose central issue was conscription. Only Quebec's three English-speaking ridings remained faithful to the Conservatives. The reverse was true in Ontario. The Conservatives won 74 of that province's 82 seats, leaving the Liberals only those ridings where there was a high concentration or a majority of French-speaking voters.²⁷

The first Liberal victory in Compton Village came within six months of the first drafting of town council minutes in French. The election marked the final takeover of the village by the French Canadians.

Abstentions. Between the federal elections of 1882 and 1917, turnout at the polls - which had been low (50 to 60 per cent) during the 19th century in the village and county - rose slowly, reaching 85 per cent of registered voters in 1917. In the 1896 election, 45 per cent of registered voters in both the village and the county had failed to turn out at the polls (Fig. 43). An 85-per-cent turnout was, and still is, remarkable among the Western democracies.

Turnout for a provincial election never reached the same level. A maximum of 75 per cent was reached twice in the village (1904

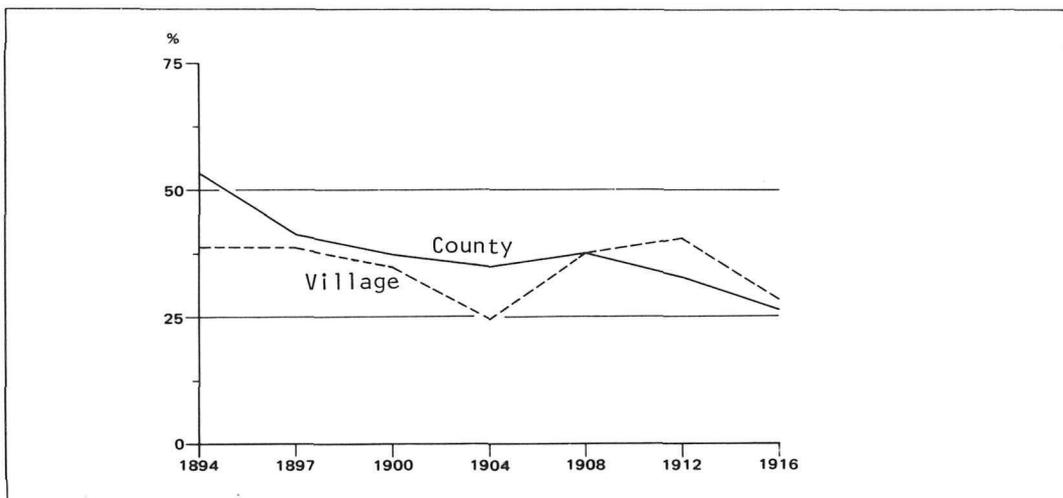


Figure 42. Abstentions, provincial elections.

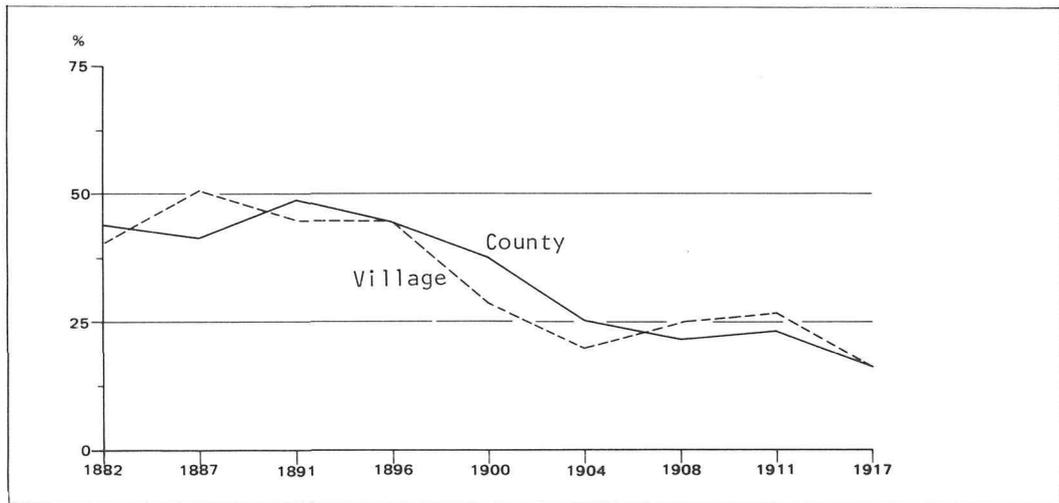


Figure 43. Abstentions, federal elections.

and 1916) and only once in the county (1916). The Liberal candidacy of J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent must be credited with getting out the vote in 1904, when 91 of the village's 122 registered voters turned out at the polls; unfortunately, his efforts in the county were in vain: 35 per cent of the voters chose to abstain (Fig. 42). In 1916 the Gouin government took full advantage of the indignation roused in Quebec by Ontario's adoption of Regulation XVII (which drastically limited the use of French as the language of instruction for French-Canadian students in Ontario) and the campaign in Quebec parishes to collect funds for the "wounded" French of Ontario.²⁸ Pro-imperial propaganda and the fear of conscription roused apathetic Quebec voters and thus also contributed to the provincial Liberal victory.

As a general rule, voters were less interested in provincial than in federal politics; political activity in Quebec then seemed of secondary importance. For this reason, abstentions in provincial elections were always higher (Fig. 42). However, a decline can be detected in the rate of abstentions in federal elections, though it is less marked (Fig. 43).

Heightened interest in politics and changing loyalties once again paralleled the reversal of the demographic structure of Compton Village and County. This is now a constant in Compton: any change was a concomitant of the migration.

Associations

The village's three churches and two language groups had a number of associations which were ideally suited to creating bonds of solidarity among their respective members and nurturing the members' feeling of belonging to an ethnic and religious community. Of Compton's many such institutions, those examined had rather exclusive characters. The Catholic parish council, the Independent Order of Foresters, the model farm and King's Hall were intended for a limited number of people. The model farm had only 104 pupils in its ten years of existence²⁹ and King's Hall recruited its teachers in England and its students from middle-class English-Canadian backgrounds.³⁰ Each church no doubt had its pious associations, of which next to nothing is known. Catholics showed little interest in such associations before 1900, but the situation seems to have improved somewhat under Father Lavallée; in 1906, 108 children belonged to the *Confraternité de la milice angélique* and about 20 children joined each year.³¹

The Parish Council

Churchwardens and their duties. Both the Anglican and Methodist boards of trustees and the Catholic parish council fulfilled more or less the same function of administering the churches' assets and incomes. Prominent cit-

izens dominated the boards and council: Pomeroy and Kendrick among the Methodists, Senator Cochrane and his son Joseph among the Anglicans, and Dr. Thomas LaRue and J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent among the Catholics.

A parish council was formed immediately after the canonical erection of Saint-Thomas Parish in June 1891. Three churchwardens were elected by both property owners and tenants and their meetings were chaired by Father Choquette.³² Each of the three churchwardens was, in turn, senior warden for a year,³³ at the end of which the senior warden left the council, his role went to the next-senior warden, and new warden was elected to fill the vacant junior position.³⁴ The election had to be held on the last Sunday of each year, after being announced from the pulpit the preceding Sunday.³⁵

The senior churchwarden was responsible for keeping the parish books and making all routine expenditures for the church and sacristy.³⁶ Churchwardens were also responsible for conducting ordinary business with the priest, such as granting pews, maintaining order in and around the church³⁷ together with the parishioners on whose behalf they acted, and the construction and repair of the church,

presbytery and outbuildings.³⁸ In Compton the priest seems to have appropriated the senior churchwarden's powers and made the title a purely honorary one; it was the priest who actually kept the books and managed the budget. In 1902 the churchwardens ratified Father Lavallée's exercise of these functions.³⁹ In 1915 he still held the purse-strings of the parish while the churchwardens rubber-stamped his decisions, such as when he used church funds to purchase \$97.50 worth of federal war bonds.⁴⁰

The parish council performed its duties quite well. In 1896 it undertook the construction of a new sacristy and the expansion of the church to accommodate more pews.⁴¹ In 1903 Father Lavallée wanted to have a new church built in the heart of the village and the bishop of Sherbrooke even acquired the late Dr. King's property for this purpose. However, opposition from the parish put an end to these plans.⁴² The priest and churchwardens had been the leaders of the French-Canadian majority for only a short while and already they wanted to make a show of their power by appropriating land in the village.

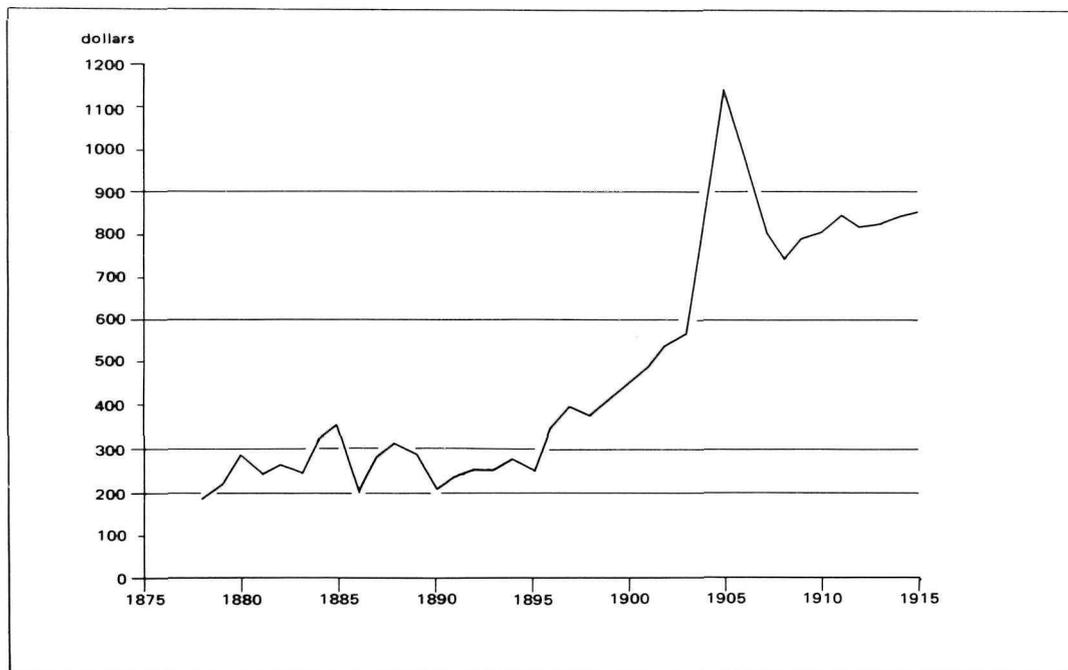


Figure 44. The sale of pews at Saint-Thomas Church.

Pews. Income from the sale of pews enabled the parish council to carry out its responsibilities. Unlike tithing, the cost of pews was not in direct proportion to the value of a parishioner's property, but depended on the subjective value parishioners placed on a given pew at the time its auction was held. Until 1895 the annual contributions of some 120 to 130 families rarely exceeded \$280. Since some parishioners paid five dollars or more for their pew (J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent's pew cost \$10.25),⁴³ it may be assumed that some people did not have pews in church. Income from the sale of pews rose as parishioners paid their tithes and attended church more regularly. Parishioners could hardly be expected to pay for pews at a time when many neglected or refused to be tithed and seldom went to Sunday Mass.

After 1895, annual income from the sale of pews increased steadily until it reached the extraordinary total of \$1131.05 in 1905 and then stabilized at around \$800 (Fig. 44). The influx of new families obviously favoured such an increase. It was another aspect of the religious conformity that characterized Compton after 1900.

The Independent Order of Foresters

As luck would have it, the only association for which any information could be gathered was the Independent Order of Foresters, a semi-secret society established in Compton in 1894 and whose members, about 20 in 1894,⁴⁴ came from Compton, Moe's River and Hillhurst. A mutual aid society, the order offered its "brothers" the benefits of a life insurance policy, and members pledged to tend sick lodge brothers and care for the children of deceased brothers.

The parent organization, the British Foresters, was founded in England in the 18th century and soon spread throughout North America. During the 19th century, the American association broke away from its English counterpart and became the Independent Order of Foresters. When Dr. J.P. Oronhyatekha, a Canadian Mohawk, assumed the leadership of the movement in 1881, it had only 369 members and was dying out. Thanks to Oronhyatekha's considerable impetus, the order's assets reached \$2.5 million in 1900 and its membership, recruited from across Canada and the United States, totalled 170 000.⁴⁵

The order had a rigid hierarchial structure. Its supreme court in Toronto, the highest level of the organization, was headed by a supreme chief ranger, Dr. Oronhyatekha himself. Quebec formed an independent high court in Quebec City in 1900. This court, presided over by a high chief ranger, governed all Quebec lodges, including the one in Compton. Compton's lodge council was composed of a chief ranger, a vice-chief ranger, a recorder secretary and a financial secretary. J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent was recorder secretary from 1894 to 1907 and perhaps longer.⁴⁶

By 1894 there were already 26 members in Compton, 21 of whom lived in the village, and who included the Pomeroy brothers, W. Paige, M. Demers and J.-B.-M. Saint Laurent.⁴⁷ The order held its regular meetings in the upper storey of the Saint-Laurent store, where one can still see three banners, yellowed with age, bearing mottoes that provided lodge brothers with such food for thought as "Union is Strength" and "No Man Liveth To Himself (Fig. 45)."

An air of mystery surrounded the Foresters' activities; they swore to maintain strict secrecy and recognized one another by means of a password that changed twice a year.⁴⁸ The order's very formal meetings were presided over by the chief ranger, who sat in a special chair. Each meeting began with hymns led by the chaplain. Any new members were then initiated, the reports of the various committees (insurance and recruitment)⁴⁹ were read, and resolutions were passed. Members who failed to attend were fined 25 cents; those who refused to take part in a lodge activity had to pay ten cents.⁵⁰

The Independent Order of Foresters was basically a co-operative life insurance society with its head office in the Temple Building, at the corner of Richmond and Bay Streets in Toronto (Fig. 46). A large part of its activities were kept secret. The Compton lodge does not seem to have lasted longer than 13 years. In December 1907, when the last contribution was posted to its accounting ledger, only five members remained, when there had been 26 in 1894.⁵¹

Conclusions

The transplanting of French Canadians from the Beauce region to Compton at the turn of the century had little in common with the wave of settlement that swept other areas of



Figure 45. One of the gold-on-white banners of the Independent Order of Foresters.

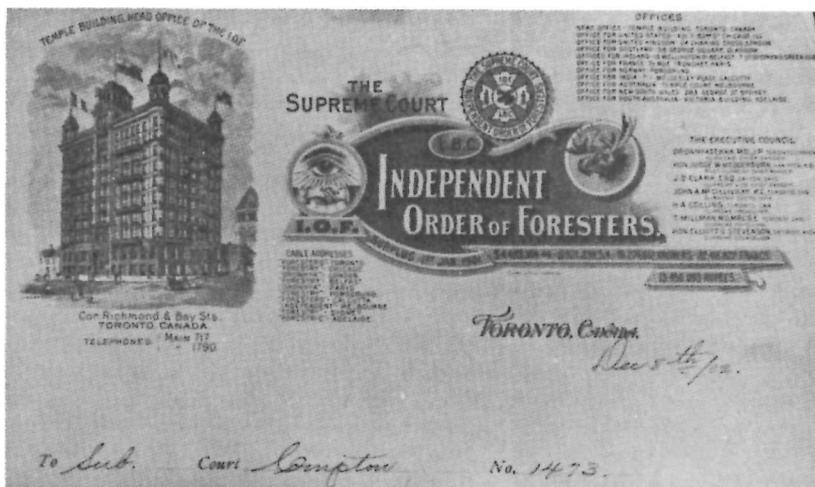


Figure 46. Official letterhead of the Independent Order of Foresters.

the Eastern Townships and of Quebec. The newcomers from the Beauce region, unlike most settlers, arrived in the midst of an already well-established society in an already settled area. They were thus required to adapt themselves in two ways: first, to the physical environment, which was easy, then to the English Protestant culture, the difficulty of which is hard to estimate. Settling on productive land where houses and other buildings already existed was easy. But life in their new setting caused the Beauce settlers to abandon their own culture to a certain extent. They erected no wayside chapels or crosses, thus avoiding time-honoured manifestations of popular devotion; they became lax in their attendance at Mass and refused to pay the tithe, drifting still further from their faith and traditional culture to the point of completely

breaking with it in some cases. The break-away often began when children were enrolled in the Protestant school. This was the situation that prevailed in Compton in 1900. The dominant, assimilating culture was in the process of disintegrating completely. After 1900 the English community withered away and found itself relegated to minority status. The French became the majority group and reconstructed their own means of social cohesion and integration. From a religious point of view, conformity set in after 1900; from a political point of view, the 1917 election marked the village's final entry into the mainstream of Quebec society and its recognition of belonging to that society.

LOUIS SAINT-LAURENT

In the preceding monograph, we have tried to portray life in Compton Village during a specific period, the most important in its history. At the turn of the century, Compton Village underwent a profound transformation that changed its character completely. By a happy coincidence, this period exactly overlaps Jean-Baptiste-Mofse Saint-Laurent's life in Compton and also the early years of his son's.

In 1878 J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent left Sherbrooke and went to live in Compton where he ran a general store until his death in 1915. It was roughly between these two dates that the metamorphosis of Compton Village occurred.

In 1882 Louis Saint-Laurent was born, the first of his family to be born in the Eastern Townships. Until 1896 he enjoyed a quiet home life, speaking English to his unilingual Irish mother, French to his father and, more often than not, English in Compton itself, where 70 per cent of the townspeople were still English-speaking.

From 1896 to 1902 he pursued a classical course of studies at the *Séminaire Saint-Charles-Borromée* in Sherbrooke. In 1902 he left to study law at Laval University in Quebec City. This was the beginning of a legal and political career that was to keep him away from his native village except for occasional visits.

It is necessary to take into account that Louis Saint-Laurent lived only very briefly in Compton. The villagers over 80 years old, who



Figure 47. The Jean-Baptiste-Mofse Saint-Laurent family circa 1900.

might normally have been expected to know him, do not remember him at all, nor did he leave any imprint on the collective memory of the village's present-day residents. This is quite understandable, since he had already left the village when the great migrations radically transformed Compton society.

How can perceptions of Louis Saint-Laurent and of the village where he was born be combined? Restricting this study to the very brief period during which the future prime minister of Canada actually lived in Compton would have failed to present the village as it really was for its social transformation had then only just begun. Hence the use of the other alternative, of following the village's development until just after the First World War when its transformation was complete. Besides, Saint-Laurent was not unaware of these changes. He regularly had opportunities to observe their progress when he came to Compton to visit his parents, introduce his fiancée, Jeanne Renault, or take part in his father's political activities. He even campaigned there in the 1904 provincial election when his father ran as a Liberal candidate in Compton County.

In order to understand the man Louis Saint-Laurent eventually became, it is essential to understand the social history of Compton Village from the time his father bought the general store until J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent died in 1915.

With this in mind, special attention should be paid to several historic events. The history of Louis Saint-Laurent's family - from his grandfather Louis-Etienne's arrival in Sherbrooke in 1858, to Jean-Baptiste-Moïse's marriage to Mary Ann Broderick in Compton in 1881, to Louis's departure for Quebec City in 1902 - was directly related to the history of the French penetration of the Eastern Townships.

It was in 1850 that British immigration ended and the "tide" of French-Canadian settlers (as Raoul Blanchard called it) began to flow into the area. Industrialization and the construction of a complex network of railways drew French-Canadian workers to the Eastern Townships in search of employment, whereas they might otherwise have left for the United States. Louis-Etienne Saint-Laurent belonged to the first wave of immigration. After his business in Trois-Rivières went bankrupt, he left for Sherbrooke and opened a general store there, in partnership with his son Jean-Baptiste-Moïse. Sherbrooke was still primarily

English-speaking at that time; only one-quarter of its inhabitants spoke French. The Saint-Laurent store drew most of its clientele from the French-Canadian community.¹ In 1872 J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent and a friend opened their own dry goods store. The business stayed afloat for only a short while; five years later, in the midst of an economic depression, Jean-Baptiste-Moïse declared bankruptcy.² In 1878 he went to live in Compton and bought the Authier store there in his wife's name.³ At the time Louis Saint-Laurent was born 1 February 1882,⁴ French Canadians had already attained majority status in the Eastern Townships; however several townships in the southeast had resisted the French invasion and Compton, whose population was still almost 80 per cent English-speaking, was one of them.

In this environment, the French-speaking community lacked organization. In 1893 there were still only two Catholic schools in Compton Parish, one of them in the village near the church. Only 40 children attended these schools,⁵ the others chose to attend the mixed or Protestant school. Dorilla Têtu, Louis Saint-Laurent's intelligent and competent schoolmistress, taught him well enough to enable him to pass the entrance examination for the Sherbrooke seminary in 1896 without any difficulty.⁶ In those days, children rarely went on to high school and college education. Only prosperous farmers and prominent citizens could afford such a luxury.

When the young Louis Saint-Laurent left Compton to go to Sherbrooke in 1893, the village had just been incorporated. There was as yet no noticeable sign of the radical changes to come. In 1894 the municipality was granted government authorization to open a model farm in Compton for the children of English-speaking families, as though the village were forever fated to be primarily English. Saint-Laurent thus grew up in an English-speaking town, but from Sherbrooke and later from Quebec City he was able to watch Compton evolve into a French-speaking village in the early 1900s.

The co-existence of two cultures in Compton was never really more than a legend. The Eastern Townships had already been taken over by the French Canadians several decades before 1900. In Compton the takeover was completed in a matter of years. The two cultures never lived side by side long enough to influence each other in any fundamental way. They were merely ships passing in the night on the high seas of history. As Marc

Bloch once wrote, two conditions are required for the spread of a communicable disease: the existence of several generations of microbes and a favourable environment.⁷ When Louis Saint-Laurent returned to Compton after 1910, he no longer found the village he had known. Having witnessed the expansion of French Canadians in the Eastern Townships and finally in Compton itself, Louis Saint-Laurent grew to manhood with the firm conviction that no serious threat could ever endanger the vitality of French Canadians in Canada.

CONCLUSION

When I set out to examine the environment in which Louis Saint-Laurent spent his early years, it was rightly expected that I would have much to say about Compton and little about the late prime minister himself. Louis Saint-Laurent has long been an unknown figure to the people of Compton, never having left an indelible impression on them as his father, Jean-Baptiste-Mofse, had done. If he has been remembered at all, he owes it to the Compton branch of his family. On the other hand, Compton Village may well have influenced him as he witnessed its profound transformation from 1896 to World War I, whether through his own eyes or those of his family.

To study Compton is to follow its rapid transformation in its every aspect, from its social organization and demographic structure to its political, economic and religious life. I have conducted this specialized survey using the techniques of the social sciences, always bearing in mind the need to integrate the various elements into a composite picture. Thus, for example, the demographic change in the village would be impossible to understand unless it was examined within the context of migrations in the Eastern Townships in the latter half of the 19th century.

If one had to describe the village in 1900, the words "change," "transformation" and "upheaval" would immediately come to mind. Compton experienced all these things and more. It was an elusive and even impressionistic reality which almost instantaneously changes before one's eyes, like the sky at daybreak or nightfall. When the sun rose one fine morning in 1896, the sounds to be heard from the village, the fields, the railway station and the artisans' shops were dominated by English; at sunset of an evening in 1911, a hush fell over voices that spoke French. Between these two moments in time, everything changed: English-speaking families, whether Anglican or Catholic, left Compton for the West or the United States, while French-Canadian Catholic families came from the Beauce region and bought up their land. A new solidarity was forged, expressing itself on the religious level through a quiet faith practised in a spirit of conformity, and on the political level through the village's entry into the mainstream of Quebec life after having remained aloof from it for so long.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	Sherbrooke. Archives de l'Archevêché.
AMC	Compton. Archives de la municipalité.
AMS	Compton. Archives de la maison Saint-Laurent.
AST	Compton. Archives de la paroisse Saint-Thomas.
DS	<i>Documents de la Session.</i>
IOF	Independent Order of Foresters, Compton Court.
JAL	Journaux de l'Assemblée législative.
SABE	Sherbrooke. Archives du Bureau de l'enregistrement.
SAJQ	Sherbrooke. Archives judiciaires.

ENDNOTES

Introduction

- 1 Pierre Goubert, Cent mille provinciaux au XVII^e siècle: Beauvais et le Beauvaisis de 1600 à 1730 (Paris: Flammarion, 1968), p. 13.

Part One The Eastern Townships

Settlement

- 1 Jean Mercier, L'Estrie (Sherbrooke: Apostolat de la Presse, 1964), p. 59.
- 2 Various authors give slightly different population estimates for the Eastern Townships. Raoul Blanchard (Le centre du Canada français, province de Québec, [Montreal: Beauchemin, 1947]) has been followed here because he is the only one to describe the boundaries of his territory and make a distinction between the geographers' definition of the townships and the historians'.
- 3 Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, Histoire économique du Québec, 1851-1896 (Montreal: Fides, 1971), p. 63.
- 4 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit., p. 338.
- 5 The settlement of the Eastern Townships from 1792 to 1850 is divided into three major phases. During and after the American War of Independence, 4000 to 5000 Loyalists came to live as squatters along the Canada-U.S. border. From 1780 to 1831 a second wave of non-Loyalist Americans arrived, drawn by the publicity of the Compagnies d'associés. In 1830, cited by historians as the date when the third phase of British immigration began, there were 40 000 inhabitants in the Eastern Townships, 20 per cent of whom were French Canadian.
- 6 Maurice Séguin, La nation canadienne et l'agriculture, 1760-1850: essai d'histoire économique (Trois-Rivières: Les Éditions Boréal Express, 1970), p. 202.
- 7 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit., p. 337; Jean I. Hunter, "The French Invasion of the Eastern Townships: A Regional Study" (MA thesis, Dept. of Sociology, McGill University, Montreal, 1939), p. 33.
- 8 The common, popular name of the British American Land Company was "Compagnie des Terres."

- 9 M. Carrier, J. Martel and R. Pelletier, "Les squatters dans le canton d'Arthabaska, 1835-1866," Revue d'ethnologie du Québec, Vol. 1 (1975), pp. 83, 87, 96.
- 10 Canada (Province). Assemblée législative, JAL (1851), App. 5, Sect. 1, "Appendice du second rapport sur la colonisation des townships," Q. 14, evidence of Th.-A. Lambert and L. Landry; *ibid.*, JAL (1860), App. 5, "Rapport du comité spécial sur la colonisation" (Quebec: Thompson et cie., 1860), Q. 9, Father Marquis.
- 11 Maurice Séguin, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-18.
- 12 Raoul Blanchard, *op. cit.*, p. 337.
- 13 M. Carrier, J. Martel and R. Pelletier, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
- 14 Evidence given before the committee provides ample information on this matter.
- 15 Fernand Ouellet, Histoire économique et sociale du Québec, 1760-1850; structures et conjonctures (Montreal: Fides 1966), p. 358.
- 16 Yolande Lavoie, L'émigration des Canadiens aux Etats-Unis avant 1930: mesure du phénomène (Montreal: Presses de l'université de Montreal, 1972), p. 49.
- 17 Fernand Ouellet, *op. cit.*, p. 471.
- 18 Antoine Racine et al., "Le Canadien émigrant, ou Pourquoi le Canadien-français quitte-t-il le Bas-Canada?" In Charles-Edouard Mailhot, Les Bois-Francs (Arthabaska: L' imprimerie d'Arthabaska, 1921), Vol. 3.
- 19 Marcel Hamelin, Les premières années du parlementarisme québécois, 1867-1878 (Quebec: Presses de l'université Laval, 1974), pp. 96, 114f.
- 20 Quebec (Province). Assemblée législative, DS, Vol. 6 (1890), "Troisième rapport du secrétaire de la province de Québec," p. 4. The company retained 251 507 of its 544 236 acres of land. This transfer of land back to the crown did not end the machinations of the company's commissioners, including Galt. As late as 1889, Pelletier, a member of the Legislative Assembly, was still accusing the company of exploiting settlers and speculating on land intended for settlement.
- 21 In 1871 the townships had 106 400 French-speaking and 70 750 English-speaking inhabitants altogether. French Canadians were also in the majority in townships settled by the British, where they numbered 71 590 as opposed to 67 191 British settlers. See Raoul Blanchard, *op. cit.*, p. 348.
- 22 Canada (Province). Assemblée législative, JAL (1860), App. 5, "Rapport du comité special sur la colonisation," p. 6.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 27, evidence from Father Marquis; Quebec (Province). Assemblée législative, JAL (1868), "Rapport du comité permanent de l'agriculture, de l'immigration et de la colonisation, 1868."
- 24 Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, *op. cit.*, pp. 53, 167.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 172.
- 26 In La conquête du sol au 19^e siècle (Quebec: Les Éditions Boréal Express, 1977), Normand Séguin reached the same conclusion with respect to the Saguenay region, where settlement was the result of individual efforts. Action taken by Father Hébert and the société de colonisation seems to have been a complete failure.
- 27 J.-E. Garon, Historique de la colonisation dans la province de Québec de 1855 à 1940 (Quebec: n.p., 1940), p. 74; Quebec (Province). Ministère des Terres de la Couronne, Guide du colon, province de Québec (Quebec: 1892), pp. 20-5.
- 28 AST, Notes du curé Lavallée ... d'octobre à decembre 1916.
- 29 Jean I. Hunter, *op. cit.*

The Eastern Townships in the Latter Half of the 19th Century

- 1 In the townships, Craig, Gosford and Mégantic Roads and the Grand chemin central (main road). See Marcel Hamelin, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
- 2 Raoul Blanchard, *op. cit.*, p. 280.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 280.
- 4 Stanley-Bréhaut Ryerson, Le capitalisme et la Confédération: aux sources du conflit Canada-Québec, 1760-1873 (Montreal: Éditions Parti Pris, 1972), p. 334.
- 5 Marcel Hamelin, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
- 6 Quebec (Province). Ministère des Terres, Forêts et Pêcheries, Guide du colon, province de Québec (Quebec: 1900), p. 305.
- 7 Raoul Blanchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-5.
- 8 Stanley-Bréhaut Ryerson, *op. cit.*, pp. 359-60.
- 9 Raoul Blanchard, *op. cit.*, pp. 292, 344-5.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 304.

- 11 Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, op. cit., p. 338.
- 12 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit., p. 305.
- 13 On 27 July 1889 Le Canadien (Quebec) reported that hiring policy at the Coaticook textile mills was aimed at the whole family, including 12-year-old boys and girls over 14. Cited in Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, op. cit., p. 387.
- 14 W.L. MacKenzie King, Montreal Herald, 1 April 1898, quoted by Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, op. cit., p. 338.
- 15 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit., p. 249.
- 16 Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, op. cit., p. 97.
- 17 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit., pp. 249-250.
- 18 Jean I. Hunter, op. cit., p. 39.
- 19 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit., p. 348; Jean I. Hunter, op. cit., p. 39.
- 20 Robert Sellar, The Tragedy of Quebec: The Expulsion of its Protestant Farmers, reprint of 1916 ed. (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1974), p. 199.
- 21 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit., p. 348.
- 22 Robert Sellar, op. cit., p. xxiii.
- 23 Ibid., p. 197.
- 24 Ibid., p. xxiii; Jean I. Hunter, op. cit., p. 41.
- 25 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit.
- 26 Robert Sellar, op. cit.
- 27 Ibid., p. 217.
- 28 J.-A. Poisson, "Mouvement de la population française dans les Cantons de l'Est," Le Canada français, Vol. 1 (1888), p. 201.
- 29 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit., p. 354.
- 30 Jean I. Hunter, op. cit., p. 151ff.

Part Two Compton Village

Introduction

- 1 Leonard Stewart Channell, History of Compton County and Sketches of the Eastern Townships... (Cookshire: n.p., 1896), pp. 166, 170.
- 2 Les Cantons de l'Est, conseils et renseignements à l'adresse de ceux qui veulent s'y établir (Sherbrooke: Le Pionnier, 1891), p. 11.
- 3 J.-B. Chartier, La colonisation dans les Cantons de l'Est (Saint-Hyacinthe: Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe, 1871), p. 7.

Population

- 1 Occasionally the annual birth curve for Methodists seems to have been higher than the death curve. In some cases whole families were baptized; this occurred in 1882, 1885 and 1910.
- 2 Quebec (Diocese). Church of England in Canada, Report of the Incorporated Church Society of the Diocese of Quebec for the Year ending 31st December... (Quebec: 1901), p. 50.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid., (1885), C.H. Parker, pp. 76f.
- 5 Ibid., (1896), pp. 49f.
- 6 Ibid., (1903), p. 51.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid., (1916), J.S. Brewer. No statistics can be found for the Methodist parish. This group seems to have become extinct fairly quickly, considering the rapid aging of the community.
- 9 Ibid., (1913), p. 46.
- 10 AAS, Rapports annuel de la paroisse Saint-Thomas de Compton.
- 11 AST, Notes du curé Lavallée ... d'octobre à décembre 1916.
- 12 Interviews, Stanislas Carrier, Désiré Rodrigue and Nelson Veilleux.
- 13 AAS, Rapports annuel de la paroisse Saint-Thomas de Compton, 1914.
- 14 AST, Registre des baptêmes, mariages et sépultures.
- 15 Gérard Bouchard, Le village immobile: Sennely-en-Sologne au XVIII^e siècle (Paris: Plon, 1972), pp. 66-7; Nicolas Sanchez-Albornoz, "La modernisation démographique de l'Espagne: Le cycle vital annuel, 1863-1900," Les Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations, Vol. 24 (Nov.-Dec. 1969), pp. 1407-21.

Life in the Village

- 1 AMS, Stanstead and Sherbrooke Mutual Fire Insurance Company registers.

Property

- 1 Canada. Public Archives. National Map Collection, H2/307-1863, O.H. Gray, "Map of the District of St. Francis, Canada East ... 1863."
- 2 AMC, Valuation Roll, 1906.
- 3 SABE, B82-536, No. 21615.
- 4 Robert Sellar, op. cit.
- 5 Quebec (Diocese), Church of England in

Canada, Report of the Incorporated Church Society of the Diocese of Quebec for the Year ending 31st December.... (Quebec: 1903), C.H. Parker, p. 52.

Social Structure and Economic Life

- 1 If we exclude the 19 persons with independent incomes from the work force, there is an absolute and proportional relation between each social and occupational group and the actual work force: 21 artisans represent 21 per cent of the work force.
- 2 Leonard Stewart Channell, op. cit., pp. 175-7.
- 3 Ibid., pp. 172f.
- 4 A.T. Galt, member of the House of Commons for Sherbrooke, Father of Confederation, commissioner of the British American Land Company, director of the Grand Trunk Railway, and so forth.
- 5 Marcel Hamelin, op. cit., pp. 99f.
- 6 Leonard Stewart Channell, op. cit., pp. 173f.
- 7 Ibid., p. 48.
- 8 AMC, Valuation Roll, 1906.
- 9 Leonard Stewart Channell, op. cit., p. 183; J.-C. Chapais, "Notes historiques sur les écoles d'agriculture dans Québec," Revue Canadienne, New Series, Vol. 17 (1916), p. 529.
- 10 Jean I. Hunter, op. cit., Fig. 48, p. 126.
- 11 AAS, Rapports annuels du curé de Compton, 1901-15.
- 12 Interview with Lee Pomeroy, Compton, Aug. 1976.
- 13 Leonard Stewart Channell, op. cit., p. 170.
- 14 Ibid., p. 166.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 48, 173, 175f.
- 16 Interview with Désiré Rodrigue, Drummondville, Sept. 1976.
- 17 Interview with Lee Pomeroy, Compton, Aug. 1976.
- 18 Interview with Désiré Rodrigue.
- 19 Illustrated Atlas of the Eastern Townships and South Western Quebec (Toronto: H. Belden and Co., 1881).
- 20 AMS, Stanstead and Sherbrooke Mutual Life Insurance Company register, Policy No. 68723.
- 21 Interview with Désiré Rodrigue.
- 22 Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Recensement.... (1893, 1913, 1925).
- 23 AST, Notes du curé Lavallée....; AMC, Valuation Roll, 1896.
- 24 AMS, Stanstead and Sherbrooke Mutual Life Insurance Company register, Policy No. 83296.
- 25 AAS, Rapport annuel du curé Choquette, 1896.
- 26 J.-C. Chapais, op. cit., p. 528.
- 27 Quebec (Province). Assemblée législative, DS, Report by John M. Le Moyne, director of Compton's model farm, 28 July 1896.
- 28 Sherbrooke Daily Record, 16 Nov. 1901.
- 29 Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Recensement du Canada, (1893).
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 The 1918 assessment roll does not list occupations. Twelve names of artisans were listed in 1906. New artisans must have set up shop between these two dates.
- 32 AMS, insurance register, floor plan.
- 33 Ibid., Policy No. 75591.
- 34 Canada. Public Archives. National Map Collection, H2/307-1863, O.H. Gray, "Map of the District of St. Francis, Canada East ... 1863."
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 AMS, Inventaire du magasin de J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent, Compton, Feb. 1880. Estimate based on the origin of customers owing money to the store.
- 37 Jean I. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 151f.
- 38 AMS, Inventaire du magasin de J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent, Compton, Feb. 1880; *ibid.*, Application Register, Stanstead and Sherbrooke Mutual Fire Insurance Company, policies nos. 81381, 82259, 56065.
- 39 *Ibid.*, Inventaire du magasin de J.-B.-M. Saint-Laurent, Compton, Feb. 1880, Livres de comptes.
- 40 The house and store belonged to Madame Saint-Laurent.
- 41 AMS, IOF, Minute Book.
- 42 Quebec (Province). Assemblée législative, DS, Dépenses 1888-1910, Vol. 2, p. 181.
- 43 Interview with Sister Kathleen Saint-Laurent, Sherbrooke, Aug. 1976.
- 44 AMC, Minutes du conseil de la municipalité de village de Compton, Vol. 2, 3 Feb. 1902.
- 45 AST, Délibérations du conseil de la fabrique, 1907-09.
- 46 SABE, B59-143, No. 241.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 Raoul Blanchard, op. cit., p. 354.

- 49 Stanley-Bréhaut Ryerson, op. cit., p. 336.
- 50 SAJQ, Registres d'état civil de la paroisse anglicane ... [and] méthodiste de Compton, 1875-1915.
Among the Methodists:
1883 - Frank Allen and Sophrina Maria Marcotte
1885 - Joseph Martin and Isabelle Plumley
1886 - Mrs. Mayhem and Mr. L'Espérance
1899 - Joshua Martin and Florne McLean
Among the Anglicans:
1877 - Georges-Henry Renault and Charlie W. Rea.
1888 - Mr. Demers and Miss Booth.
- 51 AAS, XVIII, 3, Correspondance.
- ### Cultural Life
- 1 Robert Sellar, op. cit. The book's subtitle, The Expulsion of [Quebec's] Protestant Farmers, itself emphasizes the role of religion as a determining factor.
- 2 AAS, XVIII, 3, Correspondance, J.-E. Choquette to Mgr. Antoine Racine, 27 Dec. 1890.
- 3 Ibid., Rapport annuel du curé de la paroisse Saint-Thomas de Compton, 1875-1915.
- 4 Ibid., M. Beaudry, 1877-90; J.-E. Choquette, 1886, 1888, 1889, 1893, 1894.
- 5 AST, Délibérations du conseil de la fabrique, 2^e assemblée, 1 Dec. 1902, p. 7.
- 6 AAS, XVIII, 7, History.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid., 3, Correspondance, J.-E. Choquette to Mgr. Antoine Racine, 27 Dec. 1890.
- 9 Ibid., Rapport annuel, 1896.
- 10 Ibid., 1897.
- 11 Ibid., D, Dîme.
- 12 Ibid., Rapport annuel du curé Choquette, 1891. Father Choquette's comment is: "The population figure given above includes all baptized Catholics [744], as noted in the annual census (both this year and last year). More than one-fifth of these are non-practising Catholics [Translation]."
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid., Rapport annuel du curé Lavallée, 1899.
- 15 AST, Registres paroissiaux, 1875-1900.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 SAJQ, Registre d'état civile de la paroisse anglicane de Compton, 1898.
- 18 AST, Registres paroissiaux.
- 19 AAS, XVIII, 3, Correspondance, Mgr. Larocque to Father Lavallée, 25 March 1902.
- 20 Gabriel LeBras; see his major works on the sociology of religion, especially his final, summary work entitled L'église et le village (Paris: Flammarion, 1976).
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- 22 AAS, Rapport annuel du curé Lavallée, 1900-1901.
- 23 AMC, Minutes du conseil de la municipalité de village de Compton, Vol. 2 (1900-15). Vol. 1 (1893-1900) has been lost.
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- 25 Interview with Désiré Rodrigue, Drummondville, Sept. 1976.
- 26 Quebec (Province). Assemblée législative, Rapport sur la ... élection générale ... (Quebec: 1892-1916); Canada, Parliament. House of Commons, Rapport sur la ... élection générale.... (Ottawa: Imprimeur de la reine/du roi, 1883 1917).
- 27 John C. Courtney, ed., Voting in Canada (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 26.
- 28 Jean Hamelin, Marcel Hamelin and Jacques Letarte, "Les élections provinciales dans le Québec," Cahiers de géographie de Québec, Vol. 7 (Oct. 1959-March 1960), p. 35.
- 29 J.-C. Chapais, op. cit., p. 529.
- 30 Sherbrooke Daily Record, 16 Nov. 1901.
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- 33 Ibid., p. 2.
- 34 Mgr. Désautels, Manuel des curés pour le bon gouvernement temporel des paroisses et des fabriques dans le Bas-Canada, etc., avec un chapitre sur la dîme (Montreal: John Lovell, 1864), p. 37.
- 35 AST, Délibérations du conseil de la fabrique, p. 1.
- 36 Mgr. Désautels, op. cit., p. 42.
- 37 Ibid., p. 46.
- 38 Ibid., p. 48.
- 39 AST, Délibérations du conseil de la fabrique, p. 5.
- 40 Ibid., 36^e assemblée, 28 Nov. 1915.
- 41 Ibid.
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Compton, property of Miss Estelle Bureau, Compton, p. 30.

- 43 AST, Livre des bancs.
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