Landscape and Hinterland : a Recipe for pre-industrial space on the Montréal Plain in the early 19th Century

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The historiography of Lower Canada and Québec in terms of its approach to space, at times, seems to possess the pathological characteristics of a person suffering from a split personality. In their work researchers are given to separating into distinct categories Man and environment; town and country. This sort of methodological parting of the waters, of matter that in fact belongs to a common context, is a source of considerable irritation to geographers. For generations geographers have established that the interaction of town and country produces regional entities with linked urban and rural components; while the exponents of French classical geography remind us the landscape is the fruit of the dialectic between Man and environment[1].The following article will try to stitch together matters that historians have prematurely, in our view, split in two.

Consider first the articulation between Man and environment. Many historians have sadly left the environment out of their story. More scholarly energy is expended in the counting of ploughs, horse-teams, and bushels than in examining the actual surface of the land being ploughed. This was hardly an unchanging surface for it suffered annually the vagaries of a four-speed climate; in space

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1. See Courville (1995 : chap. 1) and Norton (1984) for some useful works on the history of geographic thinking.

successions of wetlands were followed by uplands, sandy soil by a thick alluvial clay, wood complemented arable, and topography moved up in steps or ridges and sometimes simply banished the plow as it did for the better part of vast Precambrian Laurentian plateau. The view presented here is that the surface formed one part of a larger ecological context to which Man could help himself if he was willing to seize upon the possibility[2].

The second false dichotomy is the separation of town and country. To follow Bouchard's lead, the *cultivateur*, taken in the aggregate produces his own destiny. He reproduces, settles his children in space. The dynamic of reproduction is his own doing. The limits of this dynamic lie somewhere at the end of the family farm or the next concession; the town is at best a distant horizon (Bouchard, 1996; 1981)[3]. Meanwhile for others, the city is an entirely different cauldron of living. Urban technology, forms of industry, an entire way of life and markets take root according to a process that is purportedly predicated either on the denial, indifference, or lack of interaction with the surrounding countryside. Montréal and Québec City, are projections of a staple economy oriented to extra-regional markets in Upper Canada, the United States or Britain (see Ruddel, 1987 : chap 2-3 ; McCallum, 1980 : 6 ff ; Harris et Warkentin, 1974 : 100, 66). Absent from this interpretation is the notion of complimentarity, of exchange between town and country within regional space. Allan Stewart argued forcefully years ago, you can't have one without the other, town and country are like bread and butter (Stewart, 1988 : 9-10).

The picture is not entirely bleak. That a historian of Gérard Bouchard's stature and erudition can get away with town-country separation, does not obscure the fact that in recent years scholars have begun to develop the town-country theme. This was first

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2. This concept was developed by Lucien Febvre (1970).

3. This is an incredibly rich study, however Bouchard's use of the concept of co-integration tends to remove the peasant family farm from the system of larger relations – i.e. the market, the local regional centers – into which it is embedded (see p. 128 ff).

evident in the work of Normand Séguin (1977) on Hébertville but it comes out more strongly in his later work on the Mauricie economy published with René Hardy (Hardy et Séguin, 1984)[4]. Jean-Claude Robert explored town-country relations in his study of early and mid 19th Century urbanisation in Montréal and in ensuing studies has kept an eye open for the rural dynamic as it affected Montréal (Robert, 1977 : chap. 4 ; 1993 ; 1987). Robert Sweeny looked squarely at the subject matter in 1985 focusing especially on the trade in construction and heating wood (Sweeny *et al.*, 1988 : chap. 1). Serge Courville in his 1980 article adapted a Von-Thunen like scenario of trade-agrarian patterns arrayed like concentric rings about the city. His subsequent book on the growth of villages in Lower Canada makes an explicit case for a better understanding of the early 19th century village as a veritable conduit between town and country. Finally the geographer Sherry Olson, in her study of the Beauchamp's, has elaborated a very finely textured approach to the peopling of Montréal in part by migrants originating somewhere in the surrounding rural countryside (Olson, 1996 : 81) ; while our own brief look at the transport perspective offers an initial framework for understanding the trade in goods and people on and off the Island of Montréal (Willis, 1995).

In light of these studies and based on a corpus of research underlying our own doctoral thesis (Willis, 1999), a work focusing upon the rural plain of Montréal and the seigneury of Argenteuil during the first half of the 19th Century, this article will strive to offer a more complete examination of a particular fragment of Lower Canadian space. The challenge of re-interpreting the Montréal area space has led us to dip into the methodological toolbox of the geographer. Peter Hagget's work on *Locational Analysis* (1965), and Paul Claval's *opus Régions* (1968), were found to contain useful explorations of certain basic constructs of geography. Each takes liberties with and adds historical depth to such basic concepts as region, polarity, the Von Thunen system and central place theory. More significant to our project has been the work of James Vance

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4. See especially their conclusion, page 203 ff, which discusses the forces behind the structuring of space in this region.

(1970) and Donald Meinig (1986). Both have addressed the making of geography, rural and urban, in the New World. Each recognizes that the Old World models were somewhat altered in their reproduction on this the western side of the Atlantic. Both track the history of space in America in terms of the expansion from or evolving relationship with, a select number of core areas. Canadian scholars could do worse then to develop this notion of core areas on their home terrain.

The following will consist first of an exercise by which the environment is brought more fully into the rural picture. Second the contours of the interlocking exchange web, punctuated by the belly of Montréal, systems of transport and the staging areas on the city's perimeter will be sketched. In our view both environmental and exchange aspects are part and parcel of the same spatial whole (Cronon, 1991)[5]. Not only should the false dichotomies of town-country and man-environment be dispelled but in our view both sets of relationships should be considered together. The praxis of exchange will also be examined at the local scale of analysis. Here it is hoped the reader will be able to pick up on the central role of a village, St. Andrew's, not only in fostering exchange relations in the Argenteuil countryside but in providing those circumstances through which the country could reproduce itself in social terms. The landscape of man and environment, and the hinterland of town-country and village-concession interactions, here are three vital elements to a recipe for understanding space in this pre-industrial context.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment forms an integral part of rural history both in European and American historiography. Fernand Braudel's work (1988) on the rural *pays* of France owes not a little to the notion of landscape, a concept first developed by geographers. The geo-

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5. This work is attuned to the environmental and exchange aspects in the spectacular expansion of Chicago's spatial domain in the 19th Century. It constitutes a good comparative case.

historical synthesis is the work of generations of give and take between man and nature ; the former seeks out the optimum performance within certain general thresholds set down by the latter. More recently William Cronon has coined the phrase "second nature" which signifies pretty much the same thing : the rearrangement of the natural landscape and the substitution in its stead of a transformed human landscape (Cronon, 1991 : 263-264). There is a reciprocity of relationship between the two elements of man and nature implicit to this approach.

If human societies produce landscapes, then it follows that these same bio-cultural complexes can have a feedback effect, positive or negative according to the context. Earl Carlville ingeniously formalized this reciprocity in his work on the southern soil miner : in this case, southern planters innovated with certain agricultural practices – tobacco in the 17th Century, cotton in the 19th – that in the short term produced new landscapes and good harvest revenue ; over time, these practices were found to have a detrimental impact upon the environment, "destructive occupance" (Carlville, 1988). They engendered a downward spiral or depression in the particular agricultural sector.

Donald Worster (1992) is similarly sensitive to the exploitative dimension of man-nature relationships. Worster in particular takes exception to Frederick J. Turner's agrarian myth, in which men moving out west removed themselves from the sins of civilization and became one and democratic with the land, with nature. The west, on the contrary, he argues, was the stage of a ruthless exploitation of raw materials carved out of the western ecology and served up to the industrial economy of east and west : "Far from being a child of nature, the West was actually given birth by modern technology and bears all the scars of that fierce gestation, like a baby born of an addict" (Worster, 1992 : 14).

In his pursuit of a way of life, Man can be without pity for the environment. Yet in this pursuit Man is never really alone. He does his work within a social context[6]. The social instance thus interposes

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6. The context is cultural as well as social. Some examples of the cultural resonance in Lower Canada of environmental themes can be found in Willis (1999 : 86 ff).

itself between Man and environment. By means of a comparison this point is underscored in Rhys Isaac's study of late 18th Century Virginia:

> A society necessarily leaves marks of use upon the terrain it occupies. These marks are meaningful signs not only of the particular relations of a people to environment but also of the distribution and control of access to essential resources (Isaacs, 1982 : 19).

The distribution of land and landscape bear the mark of a characteristic social bias. Courville takes a similar tack in his study of Lower Canada. The social framework must be grasped first before one can come to terms with man-land interaction in this seigneurial corner of the universe:

> les rapports entre l'homme et le sol ne résultent pas d'une adaptation aux conditions naturelles du milieu mais plutôt d'une adaptation aux conditions imposées par un régime de colonisation fondé sur la droite et sur les perceptions différentes que pouvaient avoir les seigneurs du milieu à conquérir (Courville, 1975 : 41).

The interaction of the Lower Canadian peasant with the land he farms and exploits is a contingent one. Within the confines of the seigneurial *matrice de base*, he articulates his spatial vision of things, his territoriality. This territoriality can come into conflict with other territorial divisions; those of his fellow peasants and those of his seigneur as each scrambled to appropriate his share or more of nature's bounties.

HARVEST OF NATURE

Nature in the Montréal plain during the early 19th Century was plentiful. Nuts for desert were plucked from trees[7]. Out in the country a species of wild mustard plant was gathered in bunches and brought to market in Montréal as was the ginseng plant. The ginseng arrived on the person on Amerindians who, by the 1740s, had to travel as far away as the English border in order to get it (Kalm,

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7. The butternut, Kalm reports, was usually served for desert. The bitternut, which had a sour taste, was not much liked, it was eaten only by poor people.

1977 : 199-200, 479, 491)[8] The natives probably taught the French how to spear for fish by torch light in summer and hook them through a hole in the ice in winter, although more elaborate techniques were eventually devised.

Nets, or sometimes fishing platforms called stages, were set out on the water to catch the shad which generally appeared late in May or early in June. Shad was, "*d'une grande ressource pour le pauvre et d'une grande jouissance pour le riche*", according to Séguin, the notary of Terrebonne[9]. In some instances fishermen helped one another make their task easier. The breakwater of the navigation locks at Rocher Fendu on the Upper St. Lawrence, had been damaged, "by the fishermen taking stones from it to form a dam in the vicinity"[10]. There was also a good deal of competition and assertion near the best sites. One petition from the parishes of Champlain and Batiscan pointed out that strangers to the parish had strung their nets out in front of the shore in the best places, thus keeping the lion's share of the catch for themselves[11]. The Gros Sault rapids in the rivière des Prairies was a favourite fishing spot. Access was usually controlled in the form of the granting of a seigneurial license to fish. However the license holder in 1815 was not able to protect his monopoly :

> [...] beaucoup de monde désire pêcher la loze soit en bateau, ou sur le quai et depuis qu'on leur défend ils sont plus animer maintenant qu'ils ne l'ont été et si vous voulez vous en réserver le droit, il faudra nécessairement procéder en loi (in Dépatie, 1987 : 47).

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8. Marie-Victorin (1935 : 267) mentions a type of wild mustard, or Black Mustard, *brassica nigra*, that grew in abundance in the Montréal region : the seed of which was crushed and used as table mustard ; perhaps this is the species Kalm was talking about.

9. ANC MG-24 I 109. : Journal of H. Séguin : entry for June 3, 1832. The arrival dates for the shad indicated in the diary are as follows : May 15 (1831), June 3 (1832), May 31 (1833).

10. ANC RG-8 British Military Records, C-Series Microfilm reel C-3621 : vol. 57 : Captain Wright to Commanding Engineer : Dec. 19, 1833 : p. 145 ff.

11. *JALBC for 1831* : February 1, 1831 : p. 51.

In the early 19th Century economy of Lower Canada it was difficult to keep a resource entirely for oneself. Such was the case in the Lower Saint Lawrence in the south shore county of Devon. The citizens of Devon petitioned the legislature to confirm their exclusive right to the tidal grasses in front of their lands. By the 1830s they were overrun with intruders and "vagabonds" likely from the interior concessions. Marsh hay was being cut down in broad daylight or at night, the intruders carried away bunches of rushes in clandestine fashion[12]. The petitioners were concerned for the future of their resource which could not survive such intensive exploitation.

In the Montréal region the common elsewhere was the scene of exceedingly exploitive practices. Much more could be taken out from the fresh-water prairies than bunches of rushes (*Scirpus Americanus*) and marsh hay (*Spartina Pectinata*). Earth was pilfered from the Laprairie common in order to prop up houses situated on low-lying terrain perhaps in the village nearby. Sand was borrowed to help make cement and mortar. Stone was quarried from time to time. There was something of a tradition of borrowing from the common. The Intendant of New France passed an *Ordonnance* in 1741 to prevent inhabitants from cutting down fences in the common for use as firewood (quoted in Lavallée, 1992: 175).

Although a close watch was kept on the wooded stretches of the Laprairie common this didn't prevent the locals, during the late 18th early 19th Century period, from chopping down alders to put wood in their stoves. The branches of the felled trees were turned into wicker baskets, barrels, ladders and tool shafts. Villagers and farmers may have adorned their tables with the remaining twigs, for in spring, Marie-Victorin reminds us, the hoary alder gives us the pussy willow (1935: 151). So much value – use and exchange value – was available in a felled tree: the home was heated, decorated, even outfitted. Some income could even be derived. The forest was the most important wild resource in the habitant's landscape.

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12. *JALBC for 1830*: February 1, 1830: p. 64-65.

FORESTRY

A ready supply of heating wood is an elementary consideration for any citizen of Lower Canada forced to endure the long, cold winter. Alone or in partnership the *cultivateur* will seek out a forested lot to supply his stove. In Varennes the wooded reserve was located along the terrace at the back of the parish. The slope angles up about 15 meters before it gives onto a sandy soiled plateau. A cadastral plan drawn up in 1878 shows a very intense subdivision of lots the length of this slope and terrace (Langelier, 1978). (See Figure 1.) As many as four lots were crammed into an frontage that normally would be occupied by a single lot. Here and there, particularly in the 10th Concession of the *Concession des trentes*, the lots have been divided in two, lengthwise. Given the non-agrarian potential of the soil it is most likely that these little lots served as reservoirs of heating wood for the farmers of Varennes.

In his pursuit of standing timber for whatever purpose the habitant invariably ran up against some form of competition : a jealous neighbour, unwilling to respect a right of way, or a rapacious entrepreneur. However his most formidable competitor throughout the seigneurial districts of Lower Canada was a person with whom he was well-acquainted, the seigneur. It was he who had the last word with respect to the development of the forests in his jurisdiction.

The legal pretext upon which the seigneurs of Lower Canada based their preeminent position in the forestry industry was the *banalité*. The *banalité,* in terms of its original definition was supposed to apply to the milling of grains consumed within the seigneury. The seigneur alone was to have the right to build a flour mill for this purpose. Yet during the early 19th Century the seigneurs transformed the *banalité* into a more wide-ranging industrial monopoly one that encompassed *inter alia* the forestry industry. The position of the seigneur as pre-eminent forestry entrepreneur within his seigneurial domain was predicated by the seigneur's control of the timber reserves of his seigneury, his mastery over mill premises and mill seats, i.e. the water power ; and his successful management

of the censitaires, his tenants, who were utilized as labour rather than entrepreneurial factors of production[13].

The seigneurs of Argenteuil, on the lower Ottawa River, were much involed in their forestry assets. With the help of experienced millers they invested in the forestry industry at an early date. In 1795, while settlement was barely underway, the seigneur of Argenteuil opened a sawmill with another partner on the River Rouge. The waterpower along the North River was further developed by the seigneurs of Argenteuil. A sawmill and adjacent gristmill were built at the Chûte (Lachute) in 1810. The new seigneur, Sir John Johnson and son Christopher, would be responsible for the emergence of an entire complex of mills, including several sawmills in the future town of Lachute.

One interesting aspect of seigneurial dominion over forestry activity in Argenteuil involved the carving up of the seigneury into apparently discrete production zones. In 1834 a sawmill privilege was leased along the North River above the Grosse Chûte. The privilege was narrowly defined: under no circumstances was the tenant to saw logs for individuals residing on the south side of the North River as these were already accommodated by another sawmill. In 1841 the agent for the seigneur filed a protest alleging that the tenant had been sawing logs, planks and other timber for the settlers south of the river. The tenant was left with two choices; renew the lease within three days and pay damages to the seigneur; or move out, lock stock and barrel, within 14 days[14].

Nominally founded in French civil law, the concept of the seigneur's industrial monopoly was anything but foreign to the business philosophy of colonial entrepreneurs throughout British

13. Some examples of seigneur-entrepreneurs: Barthélemy Joliette in Lavaltrie, the Papineau family in Petite Nation Seigneury as well as the Caldwell's in Lauzon seigneury and Gustave Joly de Lotbinière in Lotbinière. On the latter two see Samson et al., 1996 : 157-158; Robert, 1972.

14. ANQ, Montréal, Greffe de la Ronde, Act no. 3926, May 3, 1841 : Protest Charles MacDonnell (agent of the seigneur), v. John McCouat, see same notary, Act no. 2197, April 16, 1834 : Lease George William Hoyle (agent of the seigneur) to John McCouat.

North America. Danny Samson recently published a study of the General Mining Association which, by a series of maneuvers, managed to secure control of the entire coal-production sector of the colony of Nova Scotia (Samson, 1999). Yet, given the geographically diffuse circumstances of the forestry industry and the appetite of petty producers, to what extent was it possible for the seigneurs to maintain their monopoly? The evidence would seem to be that the seigneurial *main mise* was contested.

A pattern of recurrent timber depredations emerges from the early 19th century sources. A proclamation issued by the Governor of Lower Canada in 1823 expresses concern over the illegal entering upon tracts of ungranted land slated for the benefit of the Protestant clergy[15]. With reference to these same lands, Joseph Bouchette mentions depredations resulting from squatting and the carrying away of the best timber, "especially on those (lots) situated along the borders of the rivers" in 1815 (Bouchette, [1815] 1973 : 14-15). An advertisement in the *Québec Gazette*, November 5, 1787, com-plains of the "*quelques méchantes et mal-intentionnées personnes*" who have been cutting and removing wood from Île au Castor, an island situated between Sorel and Berthier.

In addition to hit and run tactics, squatting was another means of appropriating the forestry resource. One occupied a lot, cut down the lumber which could be merchandised, and moved on to the next stand. Squatters in the Eastern Townships, J.I. Little writes, were a social force to be reckoned with. They successfully managed to defend themselves legally and appeal, perhaps by force of numbers as much as by force of argument, to the moral conscience of the agents and executors of the absentee landowners (Little, 1999). The Bishop Mountain of Montréal instituted no fewer than 60 court actions against squatters in his landholdings of Sherrington Township during the 1820s. An entire section of Lanaudière Fief, near Maskinongé (Berthier County) consisted of occupiers without title to the land. A protracted game of cat and mouse opposing squatters

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15. ANC RG-4 B-3 *Fair Proclamations and Correspondence* vol. 5 : Proclamation dated January 17, 1823.

and the owners of the Forges du Saint-Maurice lease, north of Trois-Rivières, was played out from the 1820s to the 1840s. As of the early 1850s as many as 500 squatters lived on land that was formerly inside the forestry reserve of the iron company[16]. In the Argenteuil the forestry business was a moveable feast for farmers and small-time entrepreneurs notwithstanding seigneurial privilege. Timber was a medium of exchange throughout the ground floor of the economy. The Stephen's of Lachute owed a Monsieur Major of Sainte-Scholastique seven pounds; they agreed to pay him back in planks or boards[17]. One resident undertook to supply heating wood to a blacksmith in Lachine. Another agreed to cut wood in the neighboring seigneury of Deux Montagnes for someone in Saint-Benoit. Evidently small-time trade linkages extended hither and thither throughout the lower Ottawa valley. Entrepreneurs tried to fit their own agendas into this exchange activity or resource availability. Michel Lainse cut and sold wood where and when he could. In 1843 he obtained 106 boxes or bundles (caisses) of pine shingles from Isidore Depcoat dit Joanisse, a farmer in Saint-Hermas, Deux Montagnes seigneury[18]. Two years later a boat or barque lay half submerged at the bottom of the North River, near St. Andrew's; he bought it[19]. In 1841 he sold a stock of white spruce, cedar and squared pine logs to be used in the construction of the parish church in Saint-Eustache[20]. He hired people to cut wood upon various concessions of Argenteuil seigneury as well as in the neighboring township of Chatham. He was very avid in his pursuit of timber.

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16. See ANC RG-4 B-3 vol. 5 : "Proclamation Relative to Trespasses Committed on the Lands Annexed to the Forges of St. Maurice", December 15, 1825. See also the discussion in Hardy, 1995.

17. ANQ, Montréal, *Circuit Court of Deux Montagnes*, Case no. 98, Joseph B. dit Major vs. William and Martin Stephens : September 24, 1845.

18. ANQ, Montréal, *Greffe de la Ronde*, Act no. 4256, July 8, 1843 : Agreement Isidore Depocat dit Joanisse and Michel Lainse.

19. *Id.*, Act no. 4550, Sale from Z. Whitzel to Michel Lainse : September 6, 1845.

20. *Id.*, Act no. 3887 B, March 3, 1841 : Agreement Michel Lainse and Moyse Ollier.

In the month of February, 1843, Michel Lainse was forced to submit to an arbitration proceeding[21]. He was accused of taking 100 pieces of timber on a lot belonging to someone else in Argenteuil Seigneury. Next door in Chatham, Robert LeRoy allegedly cut and took away in a like and illicit manner 74 pieces of maple, 36 yellow birch, 2 elm and 2 ash[22]. Further inland, on the 5th range of Chatham Township, again during the 1840s, George Bradford was deprived of firewood and timber upon his Chatham premises. The deed was done " in direct opposition of natural justice and in opposition to the law of Society". The culprit was a local merchant[23].

Michel Lainse and his ilk were every inch the opportunist and penny capitalist. The forestry economy of Lower Canada in the 19th Century, Jean Martin has told us, was awash in penny capitalists ; the kind of small-time investors that come and go with the tide (Martin, 1995 : 175-178). They cruise the settlement frontier looking for wood to buy and sell. The *cultivateurs* were also anxious to do business, as were the seigneurs. In short, wood, its exploitation, transport and commercialization was an integral part of the rural socio-economy in Lower Canada. Strategies of settlement, timber felling, and mill-development, were elaborated with this exploitative end in view. Forestry engendered an especially exploitive relationship to the environment. The forest was the Lower Canadian equivalent of the California gold rush, or more properly the tobacco culture of the Cheseapeake (Breen, 1985) and the cotton economy of the Southern United States. It was the prism through which a whole society envisaged and structured its relationship to its immediate environ-ment. One could say as much about water.

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21. *Id.*, Act no. 4189, February 1, 1843 : Arbitration C.H. Castle (David Beattie representing) and Michel Lainse.

22. ANQ, Montréal,*Circuit Court of Deux Montagnes*, Case no. 151, Thomas Silverson vs. Robert LeRoy : June 6, 1846.

23. ANQ, Montréal, *Greffe de la Ronde*, Act no. 5037, December 27, 1848 : Protest, George Bradford vs. Lemuel Cushing. In this document Cushing identifies himself as the agent for Thomas Allen Stayner. In other words outside interests were involved.

WATER WATER EVERYWHERE?

Water is first and foremost an agrarian challenge. It is not easily disposed of in a heavy clay soil, such as that which predominated throughout the Montréal plain. Water had to be artificially drained out of the field. In the era of Gédéon de Catalogne, circa 1712 this was being done for example in the concessions to the south of the St. Lawrence opposite Montréal. The habitants were also diligently digging ditches through the natural prairies of Laprairie and Saint Lambert, " ce qui les a rendues fertiles en toutes sortes de grains et légumes" (de Catalogne, [1712] 1915 : 293). A century later one encounters various land-reclamation and water-engineering projects. Circa 1830, work was progressing on the Boucherville swamp where a common drainage canal had been dug, fed by the smaller ditches of the various landowners. Someone accidentally opened the sluice from the main canal, the resulting discharge of water flooded and destroyed the hay that was to be cut on one of the lower-lying meadows[24]. One expects the damage was repaired directly. But while one could point to a series of water-engineering achievements – the draining of the Lakefield swamp in the seigneury of De Léry, the digging of various navigation channels and canals – the Boucherville accident does set the tone. As man tampered with the water table, he might in the short term achieve what he set out to do. But he might also create a further set of problems in the long run.

Ordinary rural people were most attentive to the detrimental effects of imperfect hydraulic engineering as experts or victims. A petition submitted by the villagers of Saint-Eustache and the inhabitants of the nearby concession of Grande Côte, pointed out that the seigneur's complex of bridge and dams on the Mille-Îles River raised the water level in the Lake of Deux Montagnes. The result :

> a reflux of the confined and raised waters over the low grounds along the lake which in the spring are overflowed much longer than they would be

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24. JALBC for 1830 : Appendice P Minutes of Evidence before Special Committee on Internal Communications, Testimony of F.A. Quesnel, M.P.P. February 27, 1830.

if those Obstructions did not exist, to the great damage of the proprietors of those lands[25].

The mere act of building a navigation canal could have unanticipated consequences upon the local environment. So argued the residents of Chatham and Grenville Townships whose properties abutted the Grenville canal. One petition referred to the negative impact upon the cultivated vegetation : the " seeds of a pernicious and poisonous growth of thistles " originating on canal property made their way into their fields. Another petition complained of the leaky canal : what had once been good farmland had been turned into fields of bull-rushes and other aquatic plants. The canal-side land had become, " a marsh for the propagation of malignant disease "[26]. The canal engineer had previously reported to the government that the land being expropriated near Grenville was in any case a swamp. This, the locals contested with vehemence. The water rose and fell in the fields according to its level in the canal. Moreover, the riparian owners argued with strong botanical sense, " the stumps yet remaining (in the marsh) will show the nature of the timber that formerly grew there : only timber of certain sorts grow in swamps "[27].

The Ottawa River Navigation canals produced unexpected results and not just upon the local water table. Completed in 1834 and fed by a diversion trench from the North River, the Carillon Canal, with is ravenous appetite for water, may have been responsible for the closing down of a paper mill in Saint Andrew's, a village also located on the North stream some distance

25. *JALBC for 1827* : Petition reported February 2, 1827 : p. 37.

26. ANC RG 8 C Series vol. 55 (Microfilm reel C-2621), p. 43 ff. Petition of inhabitants of Chatham Township to Governor Aylmer, Grenville Post Office, August 30, 1831. The view that wetlands and marsh were repositories of disease detrimental to man's health was a widespread one in 18th Century Europe and America : " *Le marécage apparaît comme une véritable fosse d'aisances où pourrissent et se putréfient les végétaux et les animaux aquatiques, où se génèrent les pires maladies.* " (Guillerme, 1983 : 197).

27. ANC RG 8 C Series vol. 55 (Microfilm reel C-2621), p. 43 ff. Petition of inhabitants of Chatham Township to Governor Aylmer, Grenville Post Office, August 30, 1831.

downstream from the diversion. In this instance the navigation and hydraulic uses of the water resource conflicted with one another. However in the case of the Beauharnois canal, these same two navigation and hydraulic functions conspired to make life miserable for a third party. Some background first : the Beauharnois canal was completed during the 1840s. Shortly after it was decided to build a dam at the head of the canal in order to ensure an adequate supply of water for lockage. Waterpower was leased out at Beauharnois thus giving birth to the agglomeration of Saint-Timothé, and eventually its successor the industrial town of Valleyfield. Notwithstanding the industrial progress, the building of the Beauharnois dam introduced the government to a can of worms it had probably not anticipated.

The Beauharnois dam raised the water in the lake, Lac Saint-François, anywhere from 25 to 60 centimeters. A government engineer dispatched to the scene reported stretches of road lying under 1 or 2 feet (30 to 60 cm) of water. The flood effect was felt as far upstream as the environs of Lancaster, Upper Canada. On one particular stretch, within Lower Canada, " many of the inhabitants are obliged to go to and from their houses in canoes "[28]. The people of Saint-Régis experienced a serious flood in January of 1854 which they blamed on the Beauharnois dam[29]. The steamboat wharf was swept away, as were a total of 15 houses and a large number of livestock. Flood damage interfered with the habits of the rural population and not only at Saint-Régis. The *curé* of Saint-Timothé, a parish directly affected by the dam, was convinced that the canal meant the ruin of many of the farmers located alongside the river : the canal took from them the best land[30]. The census enumerator for Saint-Anicet, the next parish upstream from Saint-Timothé was more specific : the canal had ruined the ecological balance behind the livestock business :

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28. ANC RG-11, vol. 54, Reel. T-1315, ARC-11-54-2, " Report by John G. Sippell [Lands] Supposed to be damaged by the construction of the Beauharnois Dam ", July 1858.

29. The report from *La Minerve* was reproduced in *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe,* February 10, 1854.

30. *Archives de l'Évêché de Valleyfield,* Curé of Saint-Timothé to M^Br Archambault, 1860.

Depuis l'érection d'une jetté [...] les terrains bas de cette paroisse sur le bord du lac sont entièrement submergés et les habitants souffrent beaucoup de ses dommages. Ces terrains bas [donnaient] une quantité immense de foin [...] beaucoup de terrains étaient très bien cultivés sont devenus aujourd'hui des marécages [...] et il est même impossible d'y pacager les animaux[31].

One aspect of the Beauharnois dam project involved the development of its hydraulic potential. Waterpower had thus previously been developed in British North Amercia along such other navigation works as the Lachine Canal and the Welland Canal. Examples of huge waterpower developments existed in the north-east of the United States, specifically at Holyoke and Lowell, Massachusetts. But for Lower Canada, the Beauharnois case does signify that the province was reaching a new plateau as far as its hydraulic capacity was concerned. During the first half of the 19th Century the province witnessed the advent of the hydraulic complex as a significant form of industrial development both in town and country. In fact hydraulic industrialization may have been as important a factor of village growth throughout the province as it was a factor of industrialization and urbanization along the Lachine Canal (Willis, 1987).

The geography of waterpower beginning in the 18th Century was at first centrifugal. Flour and sawmills emerged at a particular fall line or down in the valley of a small river. Smaller bodies of water were preferred because they were more amenable to the economies of scale at which the entrepreneurs were working. For the most part, there were exceptions, defeating the vagaries of a fluctuating water supply that oscillated between dangerous highs in spring and bull-lows in summer lay beyond the capacities of the investors involved whether seigneurs or a small-time millers. By the mid 19th century it is not so much the size of the mill-units that is changing as their multiplication.

Multiplication produced a new rural industrial geography. As many as two or three or half a dozen mills might cluster in the

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31. Remarks of the Census Enumerator. Manuscripts Census for 1851. Microfilm reel no. C-1111, Parish of Saint-Anicet, Folio 2.

vicinity of a single power resource; for example near a rapid as in Chambly or Lachine, or at the intersection of two rivers (New Glasgow) (See Figure 2); or perhaps down a mountain slope as in the case of Mont Saint-Hilaire. In Saint-Hilaire, circa 1864, an ax manufactory, gristmill, clothing and flax mill and carding mill all arranged themselves in sequence along the stream over a distance of just under 600 meters. The train or complex of mills intersected with a road along which a village was noticeably developing. The co-integration of village and industrial development could not be more poignantly expressed.

A hydraulic complex involved a certain amount of cooperation among the participants. One party's appetite for water could become another's undoing. The industrial users of the power resource were interdependent, but they were not entirely dependent upon the ressource. Steps could be taken to either increase the power supply or equalize its distribution through the four seasons. In the 1840s Joseph Masson, the seigneur of Terrebonne, decided to make improvements to his water supply, in accordance with the planned construction of a larger flour milll[32]. The supply of water was to be improved by excavations along the course of the Mille-Îles River. Twenty five men were hired to do the work at Saint-Eustache and near the Taillon Rapid during the winter of 1846-1847. Soundings were taken, dams were built, along the Mille-Îles or near the head pond. The dams were effective. This is known, because in 1857 the proprietor of a mill on Île Jésus, across the river, complained that these rock dams were depriving her of water to power her own establishment (Jean, 1986 : 6).

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32. The mill itself was outfitted with the latest technology by the Keesville, New York firm of Goulding and Peabody. Masson's architect was pleased with the result : "I consider it the best piece of (mill)work in Canada far superior to the mills at Chambly." ANQ, Montréal, *Fonds Masson*, P 313, Box no. 35 : John Atkinson to Joseph Masson : February 23, 1847 ; see also *id.* : same to same : January 28, 1847. The mill was part of a complex of 3-4 water-powered establishments arranged at right angles to the stream bed. The complex was originally developed during the early 18th Century (see Jean, 1986 ; de Blois, 1997).

By the year 1851, Masson was dead and gone, the Terrebonne property had passed to his widow. According to the census enumerator the widow Masson undeniably owned, " *les plus beaux moulins de la province* "[33]. The village of Terrebonne had a population of 1 100. A variety of professional occupations – there were 9 doctors, notaries and lawyers alone – lived in this village which numbered no fewer than 20 carpenters, 11 stonecutters, and 15 shoemakers. There were seven merchants, three butchers and three bakers : the shopkeeping caste was thus well represented. The 60 labourers were probably prepared to do any sort of work ; there were dozens more inhabiting the surrounding rural concessions. There was a relatively strong percentage of females in the village, 55 %, whereas, by comparison in the nearby rural concession of Mascouche-du-Portage males predominated to the same degree, that is 56 %. The village seems to have acted as a magnet for females of the surrounding countryside. It certainly provided a livelihood to the widow Jacques Gibon. In the summer she sold brooms and baskets of fruit. In the winter she was a regular when time came to sing the *guignolé* on New Year's Eve. The receipts from her begging were, according to Séguin, " *assez abondante* "[34].

The village of Terrebonne was a good market, a good stage for Mme Gibon to ply her trade. For this widow and others like her – for example the Widow Gougeon in Sault-au-Récollet, another hydraulic village, who was allowed to plant her barn and butchery upon the common, circa 1872, " *durant le bon plaisir du proprié- taire* " – a village represented a kind of niche, a novel morphological interstice in the body social of Lower Canada[35]. Industry, commerce, craft, and a little bit of anything and everything for the casual

33. *ANC Manuscript Census 1851*, Microfilm reel C-1145, Village of Terrebonne, folio 22.

34. ANC MG-24 I 109. " Journal of F.-H. Séguin ", 1831-32 : entry for April 14, 1831.

35. Montréal Courthouse (Palais de Justice), *Bureau d'enregistrement*, M.) 2e série, B-147-69118 : Deed of Sale B. Picher to H. Moreau (notary : L.O. Hétu) : September 2, 1872. The butchery was there as early as 1867 : See, Bureau d'enregistrement B-99-48255, same notary, Deed of Sale Estate Paschal Persillier dit Lachapelle fils, to B. Piché : October 8, 1867.

labourer intersected in this new village environment. The very emergence of the village upon the rural landscape testifies to the ability of the new industrial system, part rural, part urban to territorialize space in Lower Canada. The village is the ultimate by-product of a series of human encroachments upon nature and exploitative relationships with the forests and waterways of Lower Canada conducted within a rising industrial framework. The village is a consequence of the transformation of rural society. At the same time it is in and of itself an organizer of rural space.
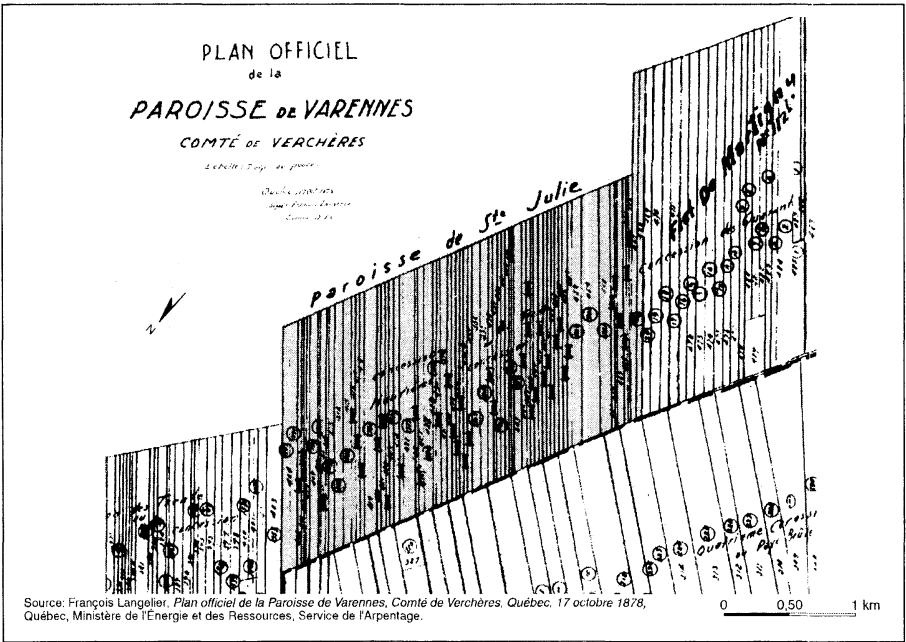

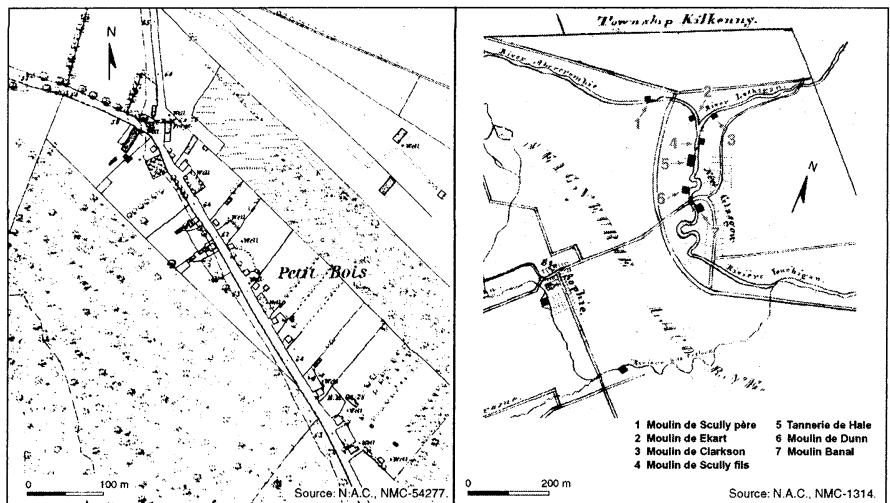Figure 1. Narrow Wooded Lots Along the Ninth Concession in the Rear of Varennes Parish, 1878

1 Moulin de Scully père	5 Tannerie de Hale
2 Moulin de Ekart	6 Moulin de Dunn
3 Moulin de Clarkson	7 Moulin Banal
4 Moulin de Scully fils	

Source: N.A.C., NMC-54277.

Source: N.A.C., NMC-1314.

Figure 2. Hamlets of Petit Bois (Longueuil Seigneury) and New Glasgow (Terrebonne Seigneury) in the 1860s : Two Village or Industrial Landscapes Carved out of the Rural Payage

EXCHANGE RELATIONS AND HINTERLANDS

Thusfar the various articulations between Man and land in the Montréal quadrant of Lower Canada have been studied as landscapes. Landscapes are geo-historical constructs that can easily show up in space. Less apparent are those relations that, like an invisible web, are spun out across a particular territory. They follow the waterways and road system. They have a destination : all roads and rivers lead somehow to a big city. But sometimes some of these roads and the social relations predicated upon them lead to a village.

They have a peculiar, human texture these more or less invisible relations in space. They are the fruit of the accumulation of innumerable individual decisions to go somewhere, buy something, and sell still more. Polarities emerge within this field of relations. There are intersections and hierarchies, the market place of a big city

in Montréal, the general store, the pews of a village church in St. Andrew's. The polarities cast a shadow upon the land; inasmuch at they converge upon or emanate from a common core area or central place. These polarities – light and shadow – constitute a hinterland.

A hinterland is not quite the same thing as a landscape. Their respective historical trajectories can vary. William Cronon wrote of his birthplace in Northern Wisconsin: "My mother and I grew up in similar landscapes, but different hinterlands." The landscape, in Cronon's view is an experience tied to the local environment. The hinterland refers to the force-field of relations economic and social that were more susceptible to the whim of change (Cronon, 1991: 376). Landscape and hinterland are not unrelated. The hinterland provides the context in which individual geo-historical articulations of landscape are allowed to obtain and interact with one another. Both types of territorial experience contribute to the history of individuals and groups, this at various levels of analysis. The countryman, immersed in his landscape, will emerge from the bush, dust the pine needles off his jacket as it were, and head smartly towards a central trading place, a town or village, to peddle the sack of ashes on his back, or the load of wood stacked on his sleigh. The hinterland is a human experience and not merely a matter of geographical abstraction. It can be looked at in terms of town-country relations on the large scale; this is very much how J.M.S. Careless (1967) envisaged the metropolitanism of Canada's largest urban centres. It can also be examined at the smaller scale or level of a village, which is what we propose to do here using St. Andrew's East in Argenteuil Seigneury as a test case. First off however, it will be necessary to briefly sketch the larger framework of town-country relations in which the experience of St. Andrews must fit.

THE NEARNESS OF MONTRÉAL

Nothing in history or geography is inevitable, but the closeness of Montréal as chief trading center to an entire region of smaller agglomerations and rural countryside may have seemed inescapable to residents of the Montréal plain during the early 19th Century. For

the citizens of St. Andrew's and the surrounding Argenteuil countryside, Montréal would not have been an unfamiliar place. There were the market places where the farmer could sell pork and butter. On the way there to complete a transaction, or pick up a dress, one had to travel via a transport network which included roads and road-vehicles (depending on the season) water routes and vessels and, in the immediate environs of the city, a host a cross-over points with served by various bridges and ferryboats, with convenient tavern, docking and warehousing or holding facilities. (See Figure 3.) Upon reaching Montréal the traveler intentionally or not came in contact with commodities and ideas, not to mention microbes that may have originated in some distant shore. These things, or diseases, were then taken home to the village where they could be spread around. Market place, cross-over nodality and the fluid movement of microbes, men, and produce, these were the mainstays of town-country relations on the Montréal plain.

The market place lay at the core of town-country relations on the Montréal plain. Exchange prevailed both within and without prescribed limits. Beginning within the assigned spaces and limits of trade ; such bulk goods as heating wood and hay were set on display at the Hay market although loads of hay not infrequently changed hands before they crossed over from the south shore. The focus of the trade in meat and vegetables, as well as maple sugar, tobacco, and homespun, was the Marché Neuf, or New Market opened in 1808. The New Market was surrounded by active satellite markets to the south, heading toward the *place de débarquement*, the fish market and the cattle market. Out on the débarquement per se or beach, lay the vast woodyard of the city : piles of heating wood construction wood and squared timber were hauled off the incoming rafts and temporarily laid to rest upon the beach under the watchful eye of a *connétable de grève* (see Cardinal and Willis,1992 ; Sweeny *et al.*, 1988 : Introduction ; Archives de la ville de Montréal, 1821). Here and there beyond the old limits of the fortified city one could encounter nodes of trade between town and country for example along the main road in the Faubourg of Saint-Laurent where the custom of selling produce to city-dwellers eventually gave rise to the

construction of a privately-owned market place; here custom preceded the institution of the market place[36].

The private and public markets of Montréal resembled nothing so much as a vast open-air entrepot. Surrounded by a host of taverns, watering holes and impromptu forms of popular entertainment, the markets, much like the Turkish bazaars of today, were a bee-hive of activity. All sorts of trouble and amusement started here. Crowds gathered and withered away. Small wonder that shoemakers and leather craftsmen desirous of selling their wares rented basements and stoops in the immediate vicinity of the market (Burgess, 1986: 213-214). They were more than likely to find someone to buy their products. Meanwhile armies of hucksters frequented the steamboats coming to Montréal in an effort to corner produce before it reached the market. The homes, streets and market places of the city were infested with a peddling *canaille*, a "multitudinous and vagrant set of men, women, boys and girls, and children", for the most part Irish, that carried whatever they had to sell on their backs, in bundles and in baskets[37]. All sorts of private trading took place beyond the public market places whether in plain view on the city streets, or more discreetly in the interior courtyards of city hotels (see Brouillette, 1991).

The streetscape of Montréal was littered with little reminders of town-country exchange. The roads through the island countryside and into the major trading areas of the city were heavily used as farmers, village craftsmen, and carters brought their wares from points north, east, and west. Beyond the island, like so many artifacts of town-country exchange, there emerged a ring of cross-over points. A select number of villages lived off their function as staging areas for the movement of people, goods, and service on and off the island. On the south shore fleets of ferry boats and steam vessels plied the waters of the St. Lawrence between Longueuil, Laprairie,

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36. *JALBC for 1828-29*: December 24, 1828: p. 209-210. Petition re St. Lawrence Market.

37. *JALBC for 1827-28*: December 5, 1827: p. 94-95. Petition of wholesalers and retailers re hawkers and peddlars streets of Montréal.

Saint-Lambert, and Montréal (see Willis, 1995 ; 1999 : 141 ff). The traffic was not without consequence, making the nearness of Montréal strongly felt. Prices in Boucherville were modeled on those in Montréal :

> La proximité où est Boucherville de Montréal et la facilité de communication entre les deux places sont cause que nos habitants, journellement instruits des prix de la ville, nous vendent ici leurs denrées aussi chèrement, quelques fois même à un plus haut prix, que vous ne les payez à Montréal (quoted in Provencher, 1988 : 20).

The physical shape of the south shore villages was fashioned to no small extent by this cross-over function, witness in winter the intensity of traffic moving to and from Montréal across the various ice bridges ; on one March day, in 1849, Jacques Viger, on a short trip to Laprairie, encountered no fewer than 270 sleighs (voitures) many of which were laden with wood, grain, and hay[38]. In summer, the south shore village ports were equipped with numerous wharves, jetties, and boats and not a few taverns. Bouchette counted nine taverns in the parish of Laprarie and ten in Longueuil, in 1832. The impact of the transport function, which made possible the nearness of Montréal up and down the St. Lawrence River during the navigation season, can be illustrated in dramatic fashion by the great Boucherville fire of 1843. The fire which destroyed the village was ignited by sparks originating in the smokestack of a steamboat as it left the village pier late in the afternoon (Lalande, 1890 : 146-148). Five or six hundred residents in Boucherville were left homeless and penniless. Fire pumps and police men were shortly brought in from Montréal : the former to put out the fire, the latter to put a stop to the looting which apparently had already begun. Bad news traveled swiftly along the south shore of Montréal.

An infrastructure of transport similar to the south shore one emerged at certain points to the north of Montréal. L'abord-à-Plouffe and Saint-Vincent, along the rivière des Prairies ; Saint-Eustache and Terrebonne, along the Mille Îles River and finally the village beyond the Bout-de-l'île, Repentigny ; all developed economies of transport

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38. Archives du Séminaire de Québec, Fonds Viger-Verreau ; carnet de notes de Jacques Viger, March 11, 1849.

and exchange to and from Montréal. Especially striking was the emphasis upon bridges as a means of handling the traffic and making money.

How effective was the transport infrastructure to the north of Montréal ? Reasonably effective would be the short answer as various means were found to move people and goods. Three men – one from Repentigny, one from Berthier and a third from Sainte-Anne – banded together in 1811 for the purpose of establishing a stage line between the Bout-de-l'île, the eastern tip of the island of Montréal, and Maskinongé further down the north shore of the St. Lawrence[39]. Two of the men were licensed postmasters, the association was evidently set up at their own initiative. The same mixture of mail and passengers obtained on a private route introduced in 1808. The contract was awarded by a business firm in Terrebonne, anxious to maintain good links with Montréal. The contractor was authorized to keep " *de bonnes voitures de bons chevaux pour faire concourrir la diligence*[40]. " He was expected to carry passengers and freight over and above the mail of his clients although he was not to carry " *messages de vive voix*" that could be prejudicial to the interests of his clients. The implication is that talk, *la parole* as Arlette Farge would call it, traveled the same circuits as the mail, human nature being what it is (Farge, 1993).

The measure of the effectiveness of the fluidity of the transport system on the Montréal plain can be taken if one considers, briefly, the spread of the cholera epidemic therein in 1832. The disease reached Montréal, via Québec, first, then it made its way into various rural parishes. Using Terrebonne as an example, out of a total of 17 or 20 fatal cases traced between June 26 and late summer, three involved victims who had just gone to or come from Montréal[41]. The circumstances of social and economic promiscuity

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39. ANQ, Montréal, *Notarial Greffe F.-X. Denery*, act no. 1171 : Contract of Association Joseph Deschamps et al : March 18, 1811.

40. ANQ, Montréal, *Greffe F.-H. Séguin*, December 23, 1808. See also Pronovost, 1988 : 80.

41. Information from the following sources was collated : the parish register of Terrebonne, the Ms. Census for 1831 as well as the diary of F.-H. Séguin.

further propelled the spread of the disease on the local scene. Four instances involved two victims from the same family. The village was a veritable vector of infection, eight deaths were recorded here. Far from reposing in a safe state of isolation, a state its inhabitants may have much preferred in 1832, Terrebonne participated fully in the emerging regional economy of death and disease. The village served as a conduit of bacterial relations between the rural society and the outside world.

EXCHANGE RELATIONS AND THE VILLAGE OF ST. ANDREW'S

The cholera spread throughout the rural countryside beyond Montréal on the wings of an elaborate transport system. As in Terrebonne, the disease struck a number of victims in St. Andrew's, among them Thomas Cook, a respectable farmer in the Beech Ridge concession outside of St. Andrew's (180 arpents of land, 80 head of livestock). He went to Montréal, presumably to peddle his produce where he contracted the cholera and died. The good news was that he didn't get a chance to bring the cholera back home upon his person.

Montréal was never far from the Argenteuil, sometimes fatally-so. How could it be otherwise? The banks of the seigneury were perched along a transport-trade axis that linked the upper Ottawa Valley forestry sector and Montréal. St. Andrew's was peopled as early as 1805 when a papermill was built here. However it truly came to life roughly between 1820 and 1834 in the wake of the construction of the Grenville and Carillon canals. The nearby village of Carillon, less than three miles from St. Andrew's was a port of call for vessels going up and down the Ottawa. Two large forwarding companies, The Ottawa and Rideau Forwarding Company and Hooker and Henderson, maintained premises in Carillon. The old wharf on the Ottawa river, prior to the completion of the Carillon canal featured a pier-end post office, perhaps some of the raftsmen and boatmen took advantage of this amenity. Sailors in search of nourishment could frequent one of seven or eight inns in Carillon and St. Andrew's. These premises helped move people up and down the Ottawa valley and to and from Montréal.
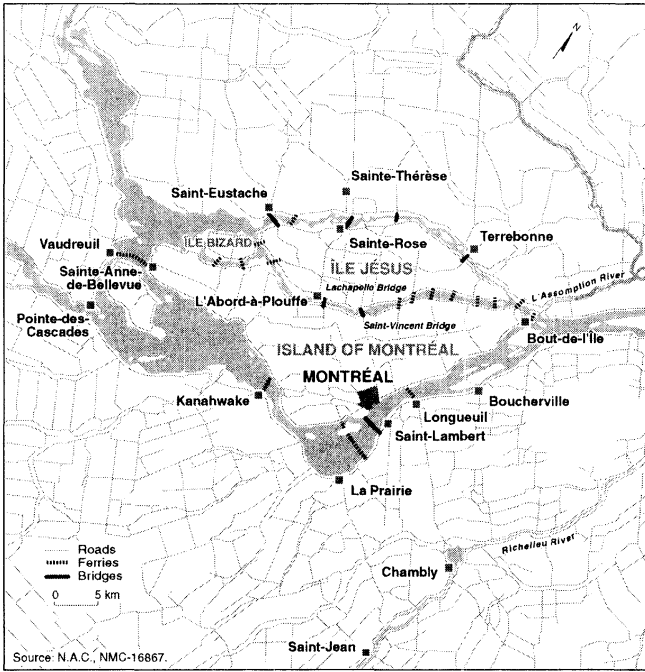
Figure 3. Convergence of Roads, Bridges and Ferry-boats toward the Island of Montréal, 1860
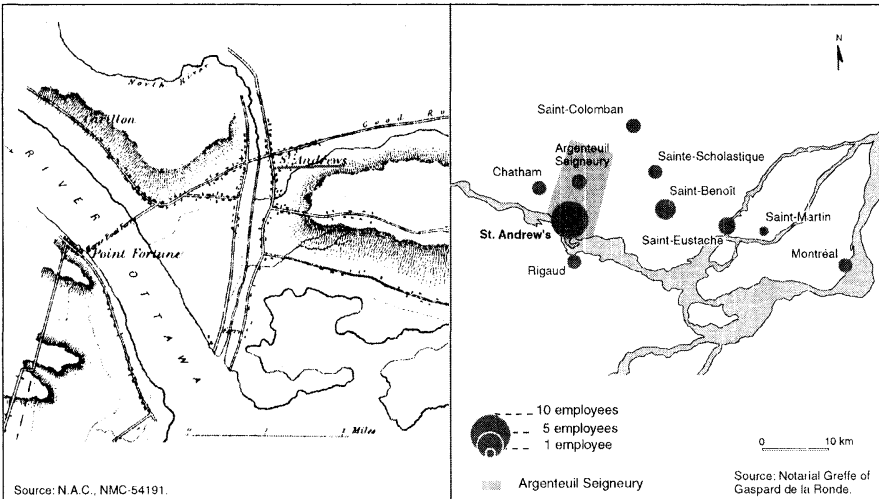

Figure 4. St. Andrew's and Immediate Environs ; Geographic Origins of Labour Recruits, 1820s to 1840s

Traffic along the Ottawa breathed life into at least three communities : Pointe Fortune, Carillon, and St. Andrew's. From Pointe Fortune, on the right bank of the Ottawa, to St. Andrew's the total distance was barely four kilometers. This was a relatively tight fit. (See Figure 4.) With a population of approximately 400 in 1831 – versus 91 for Pointe Fortune and 160 for Carillon – St. Andrew's was the only real village among the three[42]. It had more shops, mills and services than the others. Here a distinctive village way of life would set down strong roots, at least during the first half of the 19th Century.

Life in a village such as St. Andrew's was rather different from the daily grind in the surrounding rural districts. Where else but in the promiscuous setting of a village could one encounter one neighbour protesting another because the sparks from a smithy chimney had burned down one of his buildings[43]. The village was a small place but, in the early part of its growth cycle it was not without business opportunities. Some of these were directly tied to canal construction, but others can only be understood in terms of the multiplier effect of the village-urbanization process. James Barclay the Carillon shoemaker thus branched out into the tavern business. The rector of the Anglican parish entered into an association with a cooper of Cumberland, England, for the purpose of building a brewery and distillery[44]. The Carillon merchant and timber-outfitter, Alexis Édouard Montmarquette, built a village bakery in 1842. The same year, Edouard Dorion of St. Andrew's leased a bakehouse to one John Tomkins[45]. Access to the bakery via a yard that gave onto the street, had to be arranged with Dorion's brother-in-law ; family is always a consideration of doing business in a village setting.

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42. The data on the two Argenteuil seigneury villages is ours ; the figure for Pointe Fortune is from Annex C in Courville, 1990.

43. ANQ, Montréal, *Greffe de la Ronde* : Act no. 1099, October 31, 1833 : Protest James Brown vs. Robert Turnbull.

44. *Id.*, Act no. 3125, March 17, 1836 : Lease William Abbott to John Dennison.

45. *Id.*, Act no. 4082, May 26, 1842 : Lease Edouard Dorion to John Tompkins. See same greffe : Act no. 4127, September 26, 1842 : Protest Alexis Edouard Montmarquette vs. Rinaldo Fuller.

All of these opportunities involved the hiring of people. Where to get them? Family could be a useful asset in staffing an enterprise. John Stackhouse was a chairmaker in St. Andrew's. Married to Esther Dorion, he took on as apprentices in 1840 two brothers, Napoléon and Emmanuel Dorion, both from Saint-Eustache[46]. Perhaps they were part of Esther's family? Two St. Andrew's blacksmiths, Paul Labelle and Moyse Clément, chose as their apprentice Louis Labelle Jr.; Louis and Paul may have been related to one another. If the hired help were not themselves relatives, perhaps they could be made a part of the family? Of the 33 different indenture contracts examined during the course of our research, 24 specify that the employer was to provide room and board for his staff. Some connection other than the wage nexus, may have obtained as employer and employee dipped into the same stew pot. The young apprentices may have seen in their master something of a father figure, albeit a very strict one.

The challenge of boarding the hired help led employers to develop ties with farmers in surrounding rural districts. Édouard Dorion, the village tinsmith, much like John Stackhouse, had precious little agrarian resources with which to feed his household. In the 1842 census he reported a grand total of two cows and two horses, hardly enough for a household of 12. Between the years 1838 and 1845 he signed six livestock leases mainly with parties from Rigaud, 10-15 kilometers south-east of St. Andrew's[47]. Dorion would get a portion of the natural increase, each year and, in the case of sheep, a certain amount of wool as well as a regular supply of milk and meat for his table.

The feeding and housing of labour in the employer's household involved some give and take between village and country. But one should not forget that such give and take was really part of a larger two-way relationship. The village needed the labour of the countryside. Why else would Protestant employers regularly accept not to instruct their Catholic employees in the ways of their own religion? Similarly, the country needed the work, because families

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46. *Id.,* Act no. 3745, March 17, 1840 : Indenture Napoléon Dorion to John Stackhouse.

47. Agreements are all from the *Greffe de la Ronde.*

may have determined that they did not have the means to feed all of their children. On October 28, 1848, the Murphy family of Saint-Colomban successfully placed two of their son's as apprentices. Patrick was to work for Michael O'Mara the Carillon blacksmith. His brother, Thomas, was placed with Michael Quirk the tailor also in Carillon[48]. Perhaps this was intended as a long-term career placement strategy? An apprenticeship with a village craftsman and not just an available farm lot constituted a credible way of giving a child a start in life.

The village job market of Carillon and St. Andrew's burrowed its way into the family farm economy of the neighboring communities. The information from 33 different indenture contracts ranging in date from 1826 to 1848 was tabulated and mapped. (See Figure 4.) The village and the seigneury account for 46% of the geographic provenance of the recruits. If one adds Chatham the resulting total represents more than half the labour recruited "locally". The second major geographic reservoir is the seigneury of Deux Montagnes: a total of 24% including Sainte-Scholastique, Saint-Benoît and Saint-Colomban. Clearly a stream of labour originating along the north shore of the Ottawa River and the Lake of Two Mountains fed into the job market of St. Andrew's.

The village exposed labourers and apprentices born in the country to a quasi-urban lifestyle. Yet the village did not lose touch with the country. The country was such an integral part of village life. Labour and produce originating here helped sustain the collective village larder. Meanwhile rural consumers did a good deal of business of their own at the various stores of St. Andrew's. The what of their purchases was just as interesting as the where and the means by which they paid. There were so many little things that the farmer-clients of Dewar and Hopkins had to purchase[49]. The daybook

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48. *Id.*, Act nos. 5013 and 5014, October 28, 1848 : Indenture of Patrick Murphy to Michael O'Mara, and Indenture of Thomas Murphy to Michael Quirk.

49. Argenteuil Museum, *Commercial Daybook of Dewar and Hopkins* ; we recorded most of the entries for the year 1835. Dewar and Hopkins were one of several general stores in St. Andrew's. B. Craig and Liz Turcotte kindly introduced us to this source.

mentions such unavoidable necessaries as rat traps and fishing line. A fur cap purchased early in December was a sign that winter was approaching. All sorts of secular and sacred (Protestant) reading material was available : a *History of Canada*, almanacs, agrarian calendars, hymn books, a French bible, a temperance almanac and finally a bible dictionary for the Beech Ridge Sunday School.

What did the farmers offer in exchange for the merchant's goods ? The daybook for the firm of Dewar and Hopkins mentions a number of transactions for which wheat, oats, and, above all, ashes were the primary medium of payment in lieu. On occasion the merchant was willing to advance the farmer his goods and wait until he could come up with the promised produce. In one case Dewar notes in the margin, " Mr. Freeman has left a gun as a security for the payment of this amount "[50]. The willingness of country merchants to accept produce as payment for goods, is recognized as standard procedure in the historical literature (see, for example, Greer, 1985 : chap. 6 ; Michel, 1979 ; Craig, 1998 ; Gervais, 1980). What surprised me, as an historian, was the relatively important number of transactions in which the merchant advanced produce seed to his customers. All-told 80 such transactions occurred in 1835 at the Dewar and Hopkins store. The main crop varieties were timothy, onion, and clover. It is not known where the merchants got the seeds. It is possible that the seeds were obtained locally in trading with other farmers. Perhaps the store functioned as a roundhouse in the local exchange economy ?

Purchases at the Dewar general store were frequently on behalf of someone else. A wife, a brother or a mother of the customer to whom the purchases were charged might be sent to do the shopping. Employers sent employees. The church in Carillon sent the parish sexton. The delegating of consumer spending was a matter of no small convenience. The clientele might have to come from miles around from, for example Wentworth Township, Chatham Gore, even Buckingham. The trading net of Dewar and Hopkins essentially extended for a radius of 15 kilometers encompassing Argenteuil seigneury, Chatham township, East Hawkesbury, the Upper

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50. *Id.,* January 8, 1835.

Canadian township just across the border from Pointe Fortune, Rigaud, and a portion of the neighboring seigneury of Deux Montagnes.

Another measure of the centrality of St. Andrew's pertains to divine worship. 478 children were baptized at the Catholic church of Saint-André (St. Andrew's) between the years 1833 and 1841[51]. Of this total, 77 % belonged to parents that lived within the parish, the remaining 23 % were from somewhere else. Chatham, Hawkesbury (the township and the village), and Pointe Fortune were the three places outside the parish whence the parents baptizing their children usually came from. Saint-Hermas and Rigaud were also well represented. The geography of these little Catholic migrations was reminiscent of the pattern of commercial centrality of St. Andrew's discussed above.

There was more than one Christian way to praise the Lord in St. Andrew's. If one includes the Protestant denominations there were five ways of doing so. As of the 1830s, the Catholics had a church and college midway between Carillon and St. Andrew's. The Anglicans attended divine service at Christ Church. The Presbyterians had their own building and the Baptists and Congregationalists shared a temple between them that was built circa 1840. This means that each and every Sunday morning there were four or five different streams of worshippers heading into St. Andrew's. The village, in the minds of some, may have become associated with a body of shared sacred practices, ritual customs and parochial concerns.

A brief look at the administration of parish affairs within the Anglican Church suggests the extent to which the vestry could tie together a heterogeneous community of 1 200 or so farmers and villagers[52]. Leadership on the committee was drawn both from the

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51. ANQ, Hull, Parish Registers, Births, Marriages, Burials, Roman Catholic Parish of Saint-André (1833-1840).

52. *Anglican Diocese Archives Montréal, St. Andrew's East (Québec)* Christ Church, fonds : Vestry Minute Books. We focused upon the period from 1826 to the 1850s. The estimate of 1 200 parishioners is from the same Diocesan archives : *Correspondence of Joseph Abbott* : William Abbott, Report of the Mission of St. Andrew's : June 30, 1845.

ranks of village notables and yeoman farmers residing in the outlying rural concessions of River Rouge, Carillon Bay, Chatham township. The vestry committee visited its authority upon the rest of the parish when in 1826 it proposed to visit the various parts of the parish as a body at the beginning of sleighing season in order to gather contributions for the steeple fund[53].

The parish community was a forum for the articulation of strong likes and dislikes. A whiff of bad sentiment is sensed in the following resolution passed in 1828, "that it is the voice of this meeting that Mr. Thomas Cooke be politely requested not to meddle himself in future with temporal affairs of this church"[54]. The minutes of the vestry are awash in congratulatory formalities and thank-you's. The kinds of things one doesn't dare forget to say, because in a small community a lack of gratitude will invariably have a ripple effect. At the annual public vestry meeting of 1840 the seigneur was thanked for his liberal contribution to the gallery and towards repairs then underway to the church, as were Mr. and Mrs. King for all their exertions in support of singing in the church[55]. Nor could or did the vestry forget Mrs. French and the ladies of the congregation for their exertions in trimming and ornamenting the church. The ambiance of the Anglican parish community, much like its French-Canadian Catholic variant is a close-knit one. There were fewer surprises.

The society that went to church each Sunday, at Christ Church in St. Andrew's, did not seat itself for communion in any half-hazard fashion. There was a structure an antecedent architecture behind the seating arrangement. The pulpit was a space reserved for the sermons of the priest, William Abbott, himself a large and wealthy landowner well suited to lord it over his parishioners. As in the Catholic church the pews belonged to specific families, they were bought on an annual basis. By virtue of their position and size these pews were status symbols par excellence. One can presume that in St. Andrew's, as with the garrison church at Montréal the rabble, the

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53. *Vestry Minute Books for St. Andrews East,* Meeting of 20 Nov. 1826.

54. *Id.,* Meeting of January 19, 1828.

55. *Ibid.,* Meeting of Easter Monday, 1840.

canaille was expected to sit itself upstairs in the gallery[56]. But was this seating arrangement rigidly adhered to and if so did the people of a particular pew have a habit, a custom of exchanging greetings of a Sunday or at Christmas time with their neighbours occupying the pew in front of or behind them ? What sort of social ritual was going on ?

The congregation, as it awaits the opening words of the service, is a microcosm of the local society to which it belongs. There are good people and bad, haves and have-nots. There are the parish stalwarts, the one's always looking after the trimmings in the church. They are always the first to know the going's on at church. There are the *fous du village.* For example Mrs. Spats who was always going on about her husband's financial legacy from England. It appears the only thing the husband had coming to him from England was another wife. The woman had been two-timed ; the consensus was that she was not all there[57].

Also sitting at church are the people from the distant rural corners of the parish. As a rule they are seen less often in the village than the villagers themselves, although they do frequent the stores and they do not miss divine service on Sundays. They have an aura about them. They smell of the horses they ride and the manure that they shovel. They are from the country, perhaps from the bush. They acknowledge themselves in the presence of this community. The church is as much their's as the village's. It is as essential to their concepts of birth, marriage and death as it is to their overall code of religious beliefs. The church is at once a monument and a commitment to the perpetuation of their personality, collective and individual. The little parish church is an engine of social

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56. The officers of the British military garrison in Montréal were incensed at the fact that, deprived of the pews originally reserved for themselves, they were forced to sit near the common soldiers and the civilian riffraff : " this part of the gallery, being frequented by the lowest order of the Congregation [...] it cannot be doubted that officers are entitled to rank. " See : *Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Montréal RG 1.5 Mountain Papers* : Lt. Col. Wetherall to Military Secretary : July 17, 1837

57. *Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Montréal, Correspondence of Joseph Abbott* : Letter dated October 20, 1836.

reproduction for country people and villagers alike. It testifies to the interpenetration the two nominally separate worlds of village and country. For Lower Canada in the early 19th Century, is there a better metaphor of centrality, that invisible arrangement of relations which spins its web outward from a core, a village core in this case, throughout a polarized space irrespective of landscape and environment?

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Environment and exchange relations: here two vital elements in any satisfactory recipe or depiction of Lower Canadian space early in the 19th Century. The two combined at various scales of analysis, can provide significant illumination as to how some residents on the Montréal plain went about the business of making a living and expressing their territorial *élan* thereby. This reseacher is acutely aware of the imperfections of the proposed methodological recipe. The discussion has not touched specifically upon the circumstances of husbandry on the Montréal plain. Such a study informed by a broader environmental perspective developed here might allow us to confront some of the bald and unsubstantiated assertions in our historiography with respect to productivity declines, lack of profit motive, etc. Analysis of environmental beliefs and the related pattern of Christian animism – the saviour as hung up on the house walls, or by the side of the road to help keep the devil at bay – might offer an interesting supplement to our understanding of the habitant's culture.

The village view of things gives short shift to the reality of exchange relations and landscape production and transformation outside St. Andrew's. Our research tells us that an ethic of trade on the ground level of the economy had been obtained in the outlying rural districts of Argenteuil. Some people raised sheep, their neighbours manufactured homespun. Families with perilously few agrarian resources, in terms of arpents and head of livestock, were raised on certain concessions alongside others whose assets were relatively more plentiful. Did the have-nots work the farms of the haves? One suspects there was a good deal of barter and complimentary exchange at this level. At the same time the impetus

to trade between neighbours was tempered by a strong sense of personal dignity. One farmer castrates another's ram, presumably this was not intended as a friendly gesture. A landlord who is owed rent by her tenant mows the latter's field of timothy and clover rather than wait patiently for payment. All of this should remind us that the ground floor of the habitant economy in Lower Canada trade was a functioning organism, but it was also suffused with concurrent social and cultural personal values.

The preceeding article tries to show that environment and exchange relations – or landscape and hinterland – are phenomena that should and can be looked at simultaneously by scholars of past rural societies. The potential of such an approach has been ably demonstrated by William Cronon's fine study of Chicago, *Nature's Metropolis* (1991). One modest criticical remark vis-à-vis this work is in order. Cronon views landscape as a product of nature, first nature, and defines hinterland or second nature as those manifold ways man interacts with his " natural " space. Our somewhat anthropomorphic view of the landscape, informed by Sauer and other geographers since him, is that it is a cultural product. One looks for habitat value in a landscape, or perhaps the social instrument of human design in its confection (see Sauer, 1963 ; Cronon, 1991 : 263 ff). In the final analysis this is all a matter of nuance. Our historiography desperately needs a new history of Montréal along the lines Cronon set out : bringing together man and nature, town and country. In deference to Yves Roby, an old friend and teacher, perhaps we could call this study : *Histoire économique de quelque chose...*

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