BICULTURAL COHABITATION IN WATERLOO, QUEBEC, 1850–1925

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Presenting the outlines of a research project and some scattered, skimpy and tentative findings rather than comprehensive, definitive results would seem to require some justification. My purposes in publishing the following pages not in my own country, Germany, but in Canada, and more specifically in this journal, are twofold. I hope to attract scholarly comment and criticism to assist me in a field that, despite all research efforts, is still in many respects unfamiliar to me, and where I am certain many important angles have escaped me so far. And I hope for suggestions and offers of source material—especially with regard to personal letters, diaries, reminiscences, etc.—from an interested public that has the advantage over me of having "roots" in the Eastern Townships, Shefford County, and especially the Waterloo area.

Perhaps it would also be useful to say what I am not after. I am not trying to start getting even with those many North American scholars who did studies of our European villages, with a respectable contribution of Quebeckers: Gérard Bouchard of UQ Chicoutimi being one of the first, and Karl Wegert of Bishop's one of the freshest off the press (though not on the micro-history level).[1] Though it might be a good idea to reciprocate, for various reasons, that thought occurred to me only after I had long decided to focus on Waterloo.

That decision also had nothing to do with any filiopietistic, kinship, or other personal ties to the village and later town in Shefford County, which I had never even heard about, let alone visited, before selecting it as the object of my study. Rather, I started out with the idea of analysing the everyday relationship between anglophones and francophones in a mixed small community, a face-to-face society, and I began with a list of some twenty villages in Quebec, from Gaspé to Beebe Plain. Guided by the criteria of "if not typical, at least not untypical," "the minority must be sizeable for at least two generations," and primarily the quality

and quantity of solid documentation, I finally chose Waterloo.

I

The project has two main parts, which are clearly different from one another, but not quite as distinct and separate as it would seem at first sight; in fact, they not only complement one another, but converge at several essential points. The first one is quantitative or demographic, in a very extended sense, and aims at comparison; the second one is qualitative and consists of an analysis of the actual relations between the two language and cultural groups.

The quantitative part tries to produce group profiles for a number of areas. One will be demography proper: population, migration, reproduction (e.g. number of children, spacing of children, age of mothers at first birth, births out of marriage, infant mortality, marriage patterns and exogamy, etc.). Another one is education: level attained, school attendance, illiteracy, knowledge of the other language, "crossing," i.e. choosing "the other" school system, etc. A third category will be economic standing: property and income; a fourth, social rank: occupation; self-employed or salaried; owner, tenant, occupant; political, school-board, church, militia, and associational office-holding, membership in occupational and social associations. And, drawing on all four of the preceding, the role of women, with an emphasis on their role as head of household or single parent, gainful employment before and during marriage and in widowhood.

It is obvious that the major sources for these analyses are the federal census and the church registers. It is equally clear that they are not sufficient and must be supplemented by school records, tax evaluations and assessments, church and militia records, and local newspapers.

What looks rather simple at first glance, what with the capacity of data banks and modern computers, is in fact quite complicated. Just about every step is beset by the vicissitudes of linkage: changed spelling of names, different preferences of first names, random shifts of age, and most of all, simple illegibility are the most frequent obstacles. But there are others as well, like the occupation of Waterloo inhabitants. If—in the 1881 Federal census and in the 1881 Waterloo Collection roll—the undoubtedly identical individual appears as "carpenter" and as "joiner," as "tanner" and as "laborer," as "farmer" and as "gentleman," there is no problem. The "carpenter" who is also a "farmer" (and property-owner) or

the "farmer" appearing as "laborer" (and tenant) can also be sorted out. But what of the "farmer" and "engineer", the "mechanic" and "joiner," the "sawyer" and "advocate," the "jeweler" and "professor," the "laborer" and "gentleman," the "schoolteacher" and "trader"—all in the very same year? One can certainly philosophise on the fluidity of occupations in the 19th century—but a quantitative survey requires decisions one way or the other.

Yet, once one has gotten all those complaints off one's chest, one can live with them. A far more serious impediment to the sort of quantitative work envisaged is the constant in- and out-migration. I am not referring to the basic shift from 100% anglophone in 1850 to 65% francophone in 1931; that is central to my project and will be properly accounted for. It is rather the high migration rate as such. Let us take, for example, the decade from 1871 to 1881. The overall picture is deceivingly simple. Population rose from 1241 to 1618, the proportion of francophones from 39% to 44% But of the original population, only 441, or 35%, were still to be found in Waterloo in 1881 which, with the boost of 199 children they had during the decade, gave them 39% of the population in 1881 (27% without their children). Far more, 710 persons (or 58% of the 1871 population) had left; and even more than that, 972 (60% of the figure for 1881), were newcomers to Waterloo.[2]

The population growth of Waterloo slowed down in the next decade—from 1618 in 1881 to 1733 in 1891, but the migration continued at a level quite similar to that of the previous decade: 1057 persons left (a small portion of them died), 1032 moved in, and only 561[3] of the inhabitants of 1881 were still present in 1891 (32%), who with their children born during the decade made up 39% of the 1891 population.

If one takes the two decades together, the impact of migration appears even more drastic: only 185 persons listed in 1871 were still present in 1891 (with a handful who had left and came back in the intervening period), who made up not quite 11% of the 1891 group or—including the 76 children born to them in the first and the 81 of the second decade—barely 20%.

Trying to establish group profiles, one cannot simply ignore the fact that a large majority of the population had disappeared in ten years and an even larger one after twenty, and even more had come in from elsewhere. One is on safe ground if one sticks to the "sedentary" inhabitants. Dealing with the rest is much more complicated, if only because there is scanty information on when they

left, let alone why and where to. Concentrating on those who stayed would be a more solid endeavor, but it would obviously be slanted toward the property-owning, successful, older, and maybe the less enterprising or generally immobile portion of the inhabitants. There must be ways of dealing with this dilemma, but so far we have not found a convincing one—except, of course, taking the static picture of 1871 and then 1881, etc.

The comparison of the group profiles will be important, of course, for the momentary result of the census years, particularly if correlated with what we find out about the actual relations between them in daily life. But I am even more interested in the development of these comparisons over time. Is there sufficient proof for my hypothesis that at least between 1871 and 1901 there is a considerable convergence in the quantitative performance of the two groups, i.e. do they become more alike, or particularly do the francophones show a demographic behavior more like local anglophones? And if so, does the convergence—as I expect—exceed the corresponding development between the dominantly francophone regions of Quebec and, say, rural anglophone Ontario? In a nutshell: does cohabitation in a face-to-face society tend to make people behave more alike? Are standards and values, as far as they become quantitatively accessible, transmitted from one group to the other in a small community? Or does daily contact leave basic attitudes unaffected?

II

I have already alluded to at least two points of contact between the quantitative part and the qualitative one—sources, and the question whether and how statistical data affect concrete intergroup behavior. There are more, and I will point them out, but first I would like to describe my qualitative approach. Here again, the starting point must be momentary pictures—like the political situation in 1867 (when, almost certainly unrelated to what happened on the Federal level, the village of Waterloo was incorporated); or the economic make-up of the village when the railway arrived, or the spectrum of clubs and associations in, say, 1901. But then they have to be put together, and the development of these and other aspects, taken alone and especially taken together, will yield the more worthwhile results. My basic question will always be the same. Where are the areas of full cooperation and maybe even amalgamation? Where, on the contrary, was strict segregation—or the solitudes—observed? And where can one find

in-between stages, from token integration to grudging coexistence, or compromise solutions?

In the area of work and the local economy, such questions as the occupational repartition and for example the proportion of "laborers" in each group[4] (and the development of those proportions) belong to the quantitative part. Here we are interested in such phenomena as the considerable number of partnerships (albeit frequently short-lived) across the language barrier in the crafts and retail stores; the degree of "mixing" in the clientele of physicians and notaries as well as of customers of local stores, craft shops, and banks. Apprenticeship and tenancy can also be viewed from the "relations" angle, and more and more importantly over the years, entrepreneurship and the hiring of labor. Are there employment "reserves" other than the quasi-monopoly of the English-speaking on the railways? Where is there competition, where is one group particularly strong or weak, how does ethnicity affect the purchasing or patronage of institutions (e.g. school boards), businesses or individuals? Who consciously solicits business from the other group, e.g. by advertising in the latter's newspaper? Membership and office-holding in the two trade organisations—Shefford Agricultural Society and Cercle Agricole—both of them quite integrated, will permit quantifying cooperation in the important farming sector. What is already quite clear is that at least in Waterloo, there was no one group exploiting or exploited by the other across the board.

Politics form another important part of the "relations" analysis. World, federal, provincial, county, and municipal politics are the distinct levels at which this area should be studied. Apart from the Boer War and World War I, there were no deep internationally political cleavages between the two groups induced in Waterloo, but the general outlook on world affairs contributes to the clarification of what relations were. The federal and provincial levels are not only the stage for rather early gentleman's agreements as to alternating or allotting candidates for the legislature in Ottawa and Quebec, but also can show dividing lines in, and the intensity of commitment to, specific issues. In all three areas, my impression is that differences are not so acute, emotions held more in check, radicalism more eschewed, and compromise or understanding more eagerly sought then in other parts of Quebec or Ontario. At the local level, not only the agreements made, but especially the time sequence and the mechanics of the transfer of power, with its time lag vis-à-vis the demographic shift and greater

responsiveness to the shift of economic power, will be looked at in detail. Discrimination and obvious catering to one group on the part of municipal government will also have to be examined carefully, as has to be the frequent complaint that one group is being discriminated against in setting up street lighting or constructing side-walks.

The social area is a large field, comprising churches and schools as well as their social activities, clubs and associations, residential patterns, lodgers and servants, casual encounters in the street, the store and the waiting room, friendships and mixed marriages, and as a most important prerequisite for all intensive contacts, a working knowledge of each other's language. I suppose the administration of justice belongs partly to the political sphere, but it certainly has a social aspect as well.

Church and school are traditionally the bulwarks of separation, but crossing of the line, mostly with regard to schools, occurs frequently enough to encourage pursuing the relevant research further. Establishing the residential patterns at any given time, and observing their development, require highly complex chores in a village, since neither the census nor parish registers nor municipal files give street addresses. The latter are contained in directories (for at best a third of the population); the cadastre indicates the lot numbers of proprietors but not which one they live on. But adding to that the itinerary of the census taker as shown by the order of families listed, the jigsaw puzzle can be solved to a large degree. We have not reached that point yet, but progressed far enough to state that there was no strict segregation. Rather, apart from professionals and storekeepers on Main, Foster and Court Streets who intermingle freely (67 anglophone and 47 francophone households in 1881), there are some ethnic clusters of varying density, but in most cases there was some admixture of the other group.[5]

The sample analysis of clubs and associations in 1901 prepared by a student assistant[6] on the basis of that year's *Waterloo Advertiser* and *Journal de Waterloo* registers 25 organizations (apart from the two farmers' associations already mentioned). Eighteen of them observed the language line consistently: the nine Protestant church affiliates, the two Temperance clubs, the Literary Society for Young Ladies, the Dancing Club and the Rifle Association on the anglophone side, the Société St-Jean Baptiste, the Société St-Vincent de Paul, the Association Catholique de Bienfaisance Mutuelle and Les Forestiers Catholiques with the

francophones; no more than a token participation of the other group could be found in the English and the French Dramatic Clubs, the Waterloo Lodge (Oddfellows) and Court Shefford (Foresters). But there were three (besides the two farmers' organisations) that were truly integrated as far as membership and officers were concerned: the Library Association, the Literary Society, and the Waterloo Amateur Athletic Association in the case of each perhaps surprising one way or the other. Clearly, this study calls for continuation forward and backward in time. But it already strongly suggests that, just as club membership and especially functions show a strong slant toward the "better sort," it is particularly the professional and business elite that feels free to cross the line or integrate.

While clearly Catholic or Protestant institutions like the school boards have a marked tendency to place their orders or have work done by their own group, there is considerable "promiscuity" as far as patronizing stores or consulting professionals - physicians, lawyers, notaries public—are concerned. The details will have to be worked out, but it is already clear that some lawyers and some physicians had a clientele mainly of their own group, but others were frequented by a what looks like even a majority of "the other" group.

Examining the administration of justice for cultural differences and bias is a very intricate matter, and that not only because so many essential facts are lacking in the files. But if one Fred Savage is tried before the Queen's Bench at Bedford on an indictment of rape on 11 September 1879;[7] if the alleged victim is French-Canadian; if her deposition and those of her brothers and mother sound quite convincing to the reader 115 years later; if the statements of an English-speaking physician are skeptical, but sound biased against the plaintiff; if the jury is composed of 12 English-speaking men; and if, finally, the defendant is acquitted, one may entertain legitimate doubts whether only the principle of *in dubio pro reo* came into play here. No more than doubts, of course; many more similar cases must be examined before a general statement, and probably still tentative at that, can finally be made.

The two weekly newspapers probably provide most of the material for the mutual images of the two groups. Clichés as well as more sophisticated views of "the French" and "les Anglais" can be drawn from their news items and editorials—but in some subtle ways even from the advertisements. Comparing the ads of local enterprises in the *Advertiser* and the *Journal* one may differentiate

between four clear-cut categories:

- Those that appeared only in the English-language weekly;
- those that appeared only in the French-language one;
- those that appeared in both, but were precise translations. (I hope to find out why some professionals and merchants confined their ads to the paper of their own language, or were so unimaginative as to simply translate.)
- But the really interesting category is that of such ads from the same advertiser as appeared quite differently in the two papers.

Here is a mild case, though one might find at least five points of difference—in style, but also in content:

FRESH **COD LIVER OIL!** The Best of This Year's Norway Crop TO BE HAD **AT DuBERGER'S!** —AT— $2 a Gallon, or 25¢ a Pound **Fetch a Bottle!**	HUILE DE **FOIE de MORUE** FRAICHE LA MEILLEURE DE NORVEGE CHEZ **A. E. DuBERGER** —Pharmacien— VIS-A-VIS le MARCHE **Waterloo, P.Q.** APPORTEZ VOS BOUTEILLES

Or take the ads of A.F. Savaria's general store. In the French version, more than half the space, and two thirds of the eye-catching lines in large print, are devoted to clothing, shoes, hardware, and groceries, while grain and flour is mentioned just in passing, except for a special recommendation of "Célèbre Fleur o.k." The ad in the *Advertiser*[8] is only half as large, but the different size does not explain the difference in emphasis. "Hats, Ready-made clothing, Groceries, Hardware, Boots and Shoes, etc." take up just two lines in small print. The rest of the text is dominated by "SEED GRAIN" (five different sorts are listed) and "Flour! Flour!" (with six specifications). The last line reads "Citizens' Telephone No. 33"—an item withheld from the French readers.[9]

Parallel advertising in the two weeklies during the 1880s and 1890s tends to show several differences. The tone of the French ads is comparatively calm if not dignified, that of the English ones

more agitated, more aggressive, full of exclamations and exclamation marks. "Traditional" and "conservative" would characterize the one, "trendy" and "progressive" the other. The print tends to be more elaborate, or Gothic, in *Journal* ads, simpler or leaner in the *Advertiser*. And illustrations in French ads are frequently quaint and reminiscent of things past, their counterparts rather emphasize modernity or future-orientation.

III

These impressionistic remarks would seem to support well-established clichés reaching back at least to Lord Durham's excursion into the study of mentalities. But I believe that there is more to advertising and especially cross-cultural advertising. Self-image and expectation of a positive response from one's own group, the estimate of the mentality and expectations of the other group and thus its presumed reaction, and that in both directions - this material, made more tangible and less erratic by the commercial interest behind it, should yield more than just support for clichés if pursued systematically.

The large and essential area of self-images and images of the other group—of which cross-cultural advertising is but a small though perhaps particularly revealing segment—is one that does not fit into the pattern of either quantitative comparison or qualitative relations. As a "Qualitative comparison" it figures as either a third category or as a bridge between the other two—along with values, beliefs, basic attitudes and behaviour, tastes, habits—and their possible changes over time.

The major sources for this kind of non-qualitative analysis and comparison are the newspapers and the wide gamut of notarized contracts preserved in Quebec's greffes de notaires. While the "mutual image etc." field prevents the study from developing into two neatly divided segments, at least by adding a third one interrelated with both, there is also a strong tie holding the quantitative and the qualitative parts (as far as this differentiation makes sense in the age of "hypertext") together: their mutual dependence. While the personal data bank is initially established on the basis of the census and the parish registers, it is constantly being added to and enriched from the qualitative sources, e.g. references to individuals in the two weekly papers, in militia and tax rolls, in school board and judicial files, and certainly not least in the notarized contracts. Inversely, the data bank serves as a kind of biographical dictionary whenever a name appears in all those and

other sources in a context that asks for identification of an individual.

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I have been working on this project since 1990. If this report contains far more plans than results, two reasons may be presented for that. For one thing, the work over four years had to be spread rather thin: very limited means were available, and the time I could spend on the project was confined to about four weeks in Canada and another month of work at home per year. Even that limited or backburner effort could have yielded more if concentrated on one or two aspects. But instead I tried to locate and then to get a good look at, or "sample-research" every part of the wide spectrum of available sources, so as to assess or evaluate not only their nature and worth, but also the time and money needed to go through (and partly copy) them all. Thus, I now have a fairly clear idea of the work ahead of me, and I believe I can see most of the problems ahead realistically, without fear of major unpleasant surprises. But, having no more than nibbled at a dozen source categories and research questions, what I have to show so far by way of results is not particularly impressive, which is why I hid them away in the course of the project description rather than presenting a "Part Two: Results."

When all I have planned will have been done and written down—by the spring of the 2000—I hope and believe that something significant will have been said about the bilingual and bicultural experience of Waterloo, Que. Of course, the findings of a micro-historical study cannot be "generalized" in a comprehensive sense—for Quebec, for Canada, or even the world. Some generalization will be possible for similar places with similar population and migration at similar times as long as one is extremely cautious, especially with regard to features that are unique to otherwise comparable configuration.

But most practicians of micro-history would agree that they do not do their research in order to reveal macro-historical developments but rather to find out about details, particulars and nuances that are left out in general studies—and particularly in order to *test* accepted generalizations or the conventional wisdom by a close look—so close as general historians cannot possibly indulge in. Closeness and narrowness of the perspective will—unless one falls into the trap of "local history" in the sense of positivistic, anecdo-

tal, with a shaky methodology and unfounded on theory—also yield more accuracy, quite apart from the significant detail that is inaccessible for studies that do not descend to the level of the individual.

Ever since I had made my choice of Waterloo, the name of the place struck me as highly ironical. The town was given the Flemish name to commemorate one of the most important British victories over the French—but it became the place of a decisive demographic defeat of the British element. Should I add what Wellington is supposed to have said at a very critical point in the battle? “I wish it were night, or the Prussians were coming.” Puns may be intended, but I should make clear that I may be Prussian by birth, but the Napoleonic wars are over, and one of the major qualifications I may have for this project is that in every formal and measurable way I can consider myself neutral between the Waterloo anglophones and francophones then and now.

NOTES

1 *Le village immobile. Sennely-en-Sologne au 18e siècle* (Paris 1972); Karl Wegert, *Popular Culture, Crime, and Social Control in 18th-Century Württemberg* (Stuttgart, 1994).

2 Of the “sedentary” group (without post-1871 children) 289 were anglophones, 150 francophones; but although the proportion of women was even more lopsided—145 to 67—the latter gave birth to 115 children, the former to only 84. Thus, regardless of migration, the proportion of francophones increased by reproduction from 34% (1871) to 42% (1881) of the “sedentary” population.

3 This figure may be still increased somewhat: the search for women who are “hiding” behind the name of a husband they married during the decade has not been completed.

4 By way of illustration, in the census of 1871, 29% of the male working population was listed as “laborers” or “journaliers.” Of the latter, 56% were francophone, 44% anglophone. Ten years later, that category had shrunk to 17% But now, the proportion of francophones had increased to 74%, that of anglophones diminished to 26% (Calculations by student assistants Karola Gaede and Stefanie Schulenberg.)

5 I have drawn these figures from the painstaking compilation and calculation of Petra Dolata, a student assistant, who continues filling the gaps and removing uncertainties.

6 Barbara Lorenzkowski, “Clubs und Vereine im Spiegel der Lokalpresse 1901”.

7 Court of the Queen's Bench, Bedford, Rôles: Plumitif et Judgements, V.I, p. 456, and depositions, Archives nationales du Quebec, Sherbrooke.

8 *Waterloo Advertiser* 4 Feb. 1892; *Journal de Waterloo* 5 Feb. 1892.

9 *Journal de Waterloo* 7 Jan. 1892, *Waterloo Advertiser* 8 Jan. 1892.