

RECEIVED CORRESPONDENCE OF THE
STONE AND HUNTING FAMILIES
HUNTING FAMILY FONDS (P160),
EASTERN TOWNSHIPS RESEARCH CENTRE
ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT

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In the spirit of representing daily life in mid-nineteenth century Eastern Townships, complementing the anecdotal memoir written by James Ramage Junior, the ETRC Archivist has chosen to publish certain portions of the correspondence of the Hunting and Stone families of Huntingville. These amusing letters provide some insight on the values and lifestyles of two prominent Eastern Townships families, and their transcription in *JETS* offers its readers a delightful peek at the past.

Most of the letters presented were written by members of the Stone family to other members of the Hunting and Stone families. Four letters were written in the 1840s after Lyman E. Hunting's trip to the United States: two are from his cousin Leonard Stone Jr. in Templeton, Massachusetts, and two are from his friend John B. Ormsby. There are also two letters, written in the 1850s, from Emeline Gates in Shullsburg, Wisconsin, to her cousin Clarissa Henrietta Wright.

This correspondence highlights a complex family tree. Clarissa Henrietta Wright was Lyman's cousin, her father Phineas Stone (1779–1846) was Mary [Polly] Stone Hunting's brother. Emeline Stone Gates was also Lyman's and Clarissa's cousin. She was the daughter of Prudence Stone Wright – sister of Phineas and Mary [Polly] Stone.

The Hunting family settled in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada in early 1800s. William Hunting (1784–1832) and his wife Mary [Polly] Stone (1782–1853) came to the Ascot township in the Spring of 1812 with Nathaniel and Betsey Kendall and Ezekiel and Eunice Elliott. "They traveled (sic) from Templeton, Massachusetts,

to join Mary's brother and two sisters of the Kendall family, with their two older daughters, Betsey and Catharine, along with Ezekiel & Eunice Elliot." (Phyllis Emery Skeats, p. 1)

William Hunting first settled in Upper Forks, but in 1815 joined his brother Seth at the present site of Huntingville on a piece of land by the Salmon River in order to build a mill. "This purchase of 200 acres on the Salmon River in 1815 was the beginning of a new settlement in Ascot, a settlement that in time would be named Huntingville." (Milner, p. 15) At first, William built a dam, then a grist mill on the south side of the river and a saw mill on the north side of the river. Many years later he built another mill on the Eaton River. William and Mary had six children: Betsey and Catherine, born in United States; William, Leonard, Lyman E. and Ephraim, born in Ascot township. After William's death in 1832, his eldest son, William Jr, took over the mills.



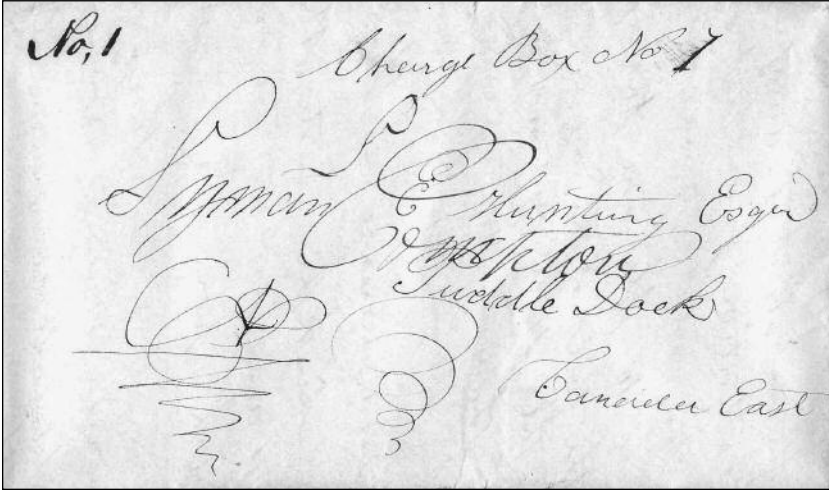
Old flour and grist mill built c. 1850s.

*(Source: Eastern Townships Research Centre, P020
Eastern Townships Heritage Foundation fonds,
Landscapes of the Past)*

Lyman E. Hunting was born on November 7, 1821 in Ascot Township. He worked at the family mills until his 1839 trip to Templeton, Massachusetts, and Lamoille County, Vermont, to visit his family. Upon his return he continued to work at the mills for a few months and in 1840 he obtained a position at the Fuller General Store in Lennoxville. Because of his poor health he went to St. Louis,

Missouri, in 1846 in the hopes of getting better. Probably due to his sickness, he returned to Huntingville in January 1850 and died few days later, on January 20, 1850. He never married. He died at the age of 28 and is buried at the Huntingville Cemetery with other members of his family.

LETTERS FROM J.B. ORMSBY TO LYMAN E. HUNTING



Source: Hunting Family Fonds (P160), Eastern Townships Research Centre Archives Department

Mr. Hunting,
[ca. 1845]

Which is productive of the most happiness,
the married or unmarried state?

This is the question proposed to the discussion, it seames (sic), by mutual consent between us. I need not go into any lengthy introduction, but shall mearly (sic) [?] state my ground of belief, that the married life is the most congenial to the happiness of man; and that the married life is the better calculated to produce those comforts and hours of peace that are sought for by the great mass [?] of people. Not being well versed in Scripture quotations I shall be under the necessity of confineing (sic) myself principally to the ideas that are conveyed to my mind by past observation and to reason as far as it will agree with the same. In the first place marridge (sic) [?] is an institution founded by the Almighty and by him it was declaired (sic) that it was not good that man should be alone but woman was made that she might be a help-meet for him. Consider the gloomy and dejected situation of our father Adam had the Almighty left him to groop (sic) his way through the walks and arbours of the garden of eden (sic) without one to share the fragrance there yielded by the rich blossoms of the thousand gems that surrounded him.

What pleasure could he have drawn from the sunny climate and effulgent beauties planted within the walks of this Dominion had he been left in solitude (sic) without one to share with him its Beauties and to heighten (sic) his joy and to accompany him in his daily labors. Inasmuch (sic) as God (sic) saw that it was not good that man should be alone in prosperity he likewise foresaw that in adversity he would need one to soothe his aching heart and with her witching smile and cheerful (sic) countenance to drive those cares and perplexities from his mind which otherwise would weigh down his spirits and bring his faltering steps to an early grave. Woman was not made of the coarse material; just as were man but she was formed from a more refined substance. A Bone taken from the side of Adam made the woman thus she is not of that [groos?] nature as is man. But more refined and her peculiar structure qualifies her to administer to the necessities of man and to adorn his life and make him happy. In the next place God has planted in the mind of man certain desires which if rightly used would tend to increase his happiness. A man that treads the path of life alone does not enjoy the gratification of those desires in his heart that chasm that seeks to be satisfied is left to [yawn?] after the inclination of the mind in vain and fruitless imaginations and oft lulls him to sleep to dream of the realities of a companion and he wakes but to drive these hauntings from his mind by solitude and secluded places. He [shuns?] the joyful (sic) hour of social life and the melody of the happy circles of bliss fall upon his ear but to awaken sensations of his heart that at once disturb this quiet and drives him to his retreat from the world in despair (sic) [views?] him in the [?] [secluded (sic)?] from the Busy walks of life he frays out an existence in vain imaginations which yield naught but despair (sic) and the tears which he sheds from the sorrows of his heart are not wiped away by any soothing spirit (sic). No friend sits by him to assuage his grief and drive of the clouds of adversity which hangs like a mountain upon his breast.

Or if; (as is usually the case with old Bachelors) he be of an Avaricious (sic) disposition; who could envy him this lot? His whole sole is engaged in the pursuit of riches. In the morn his mind is absorbed in the one object of amassing wealth; no object could attract his attention from that one principle. He takes no part in the great drama of social life but he is bound like a slave to that one principle. At eve he sinks down under the toils of the day and upon his [rude?] [pallate?] he counts over his shillings and pence and enjoys the satisfaction of that having some few Dollars more added to his treasures which stay by him but to cause him pain and

uneasiness and increase in their weight upon his soul until they sink him in to the tombs there he [?] off the stay and lost to the memory of all save those that lavish upon his treasure.

How different is the condition of the married man. Soothed by the kind administering of a cheerfull (sic) companion his path of life is illuminated by a thousand beauties which other wise (sic) would not be enjoyed; every day unfold to him new pleasures till he is almost led to the threshold of felicity. When he is perplexed by the rough handlings of the world she is ever ready to wipe from his brow the fevered sweat and to share with him his suffering and by mingling her tears with his causes it to be almost sweet to weep.

L.E. Hunting

Yours Respectfully, J.B. Ormsby

April 14th/45 Ascott (sic)

Friend Lyman

Though long it has slumbered yet, once more let us search the pleasure and pain of a celibic (sic) and wedded life.

In your last letter you have advanced a theory somewhat peculiar that is in reference to the "Holy covenant". What was that holy covenant? Was it not the same that Christ spoke of as I refered (sic) in my last? Surely it was, and that is all marriage that I contend for. Show me where God ever instituted any other marriages in the bible (sic) either after or before the fall. Yet Christ refers to this same covenant and call them husband and wife whom God hath joined. This you admit and this is what I contended for Is this "false ground"?

Man could not be [?] in a holy state, by sensual pressions (sic) consequent upon fulfilling the [?] Answer – If God gave a command it was one that could be fulfilled without sin else he would not have given it. Whatever mans (sic) constitutions might have been before the fall; it was not one that was made up of unholy passions or appetites. Whether conceptions could have been without sensual passions or not, matters not as long as you have not proved that gratification of them after the counsel of the Almighty is an unholy act.

Another item of your argument is that "marriage is a part of the command and curse".

Now Sir in answer to this let me say that you have admitted that marriage was instituted by God in an (sic) holy state but deny that it has any relation to marriage of the present day and call upon me to prove to the contrary. I shall not adduce any more proof than I already have till you bring some proof to sustain your argument is not you [proceeding?] like entering "affirmative after affirmative". I have referred you in a former letter to where Christ refers to this marriage in the time of the Jews. If they were alike then they must be now. Theref (sic) if you contend that the marriage was a part of the command I have nothing to say but I do deny that it was a part of the curse which remains for you to prove.

You say "who does not know that all benevolent and intelligent projects emanate (sic) from humble thinking and reflecting minds." This is no advantage to you till you prove that the celibics (sic) are more of this cast (sic) than the opposite class. Your argument applies equally well to one side as the other. Further you call upon me to prove positions and not enter affirmative after affirmative. Be just, review and see where this is most applicable. You say "you seem to have forgotten any argument upon social principles" Surely I was not aware of your having any argument there, you merely affirmed several positions without one [jot?] or [?] of [?]. This is logic surely; must I disprove all your assertion.

Now Friend. [?] you must admit that all man kind (sic) are (sic) subject to those sensual passions which you speak of. You admit that God has given a command and instituted a ceremony whereby those passions may be gratified and the human race extended all this is no [less?] than the work of omnipotence. Again in consequence of our forefather's disobedience we find certain curses entailed upon the human family which are universal. They have no connexion (sic) with the married more than the unmarried. A physiologist tell (sic) us that what the woman suffers in childbearing she escapes in other intermitting pains.

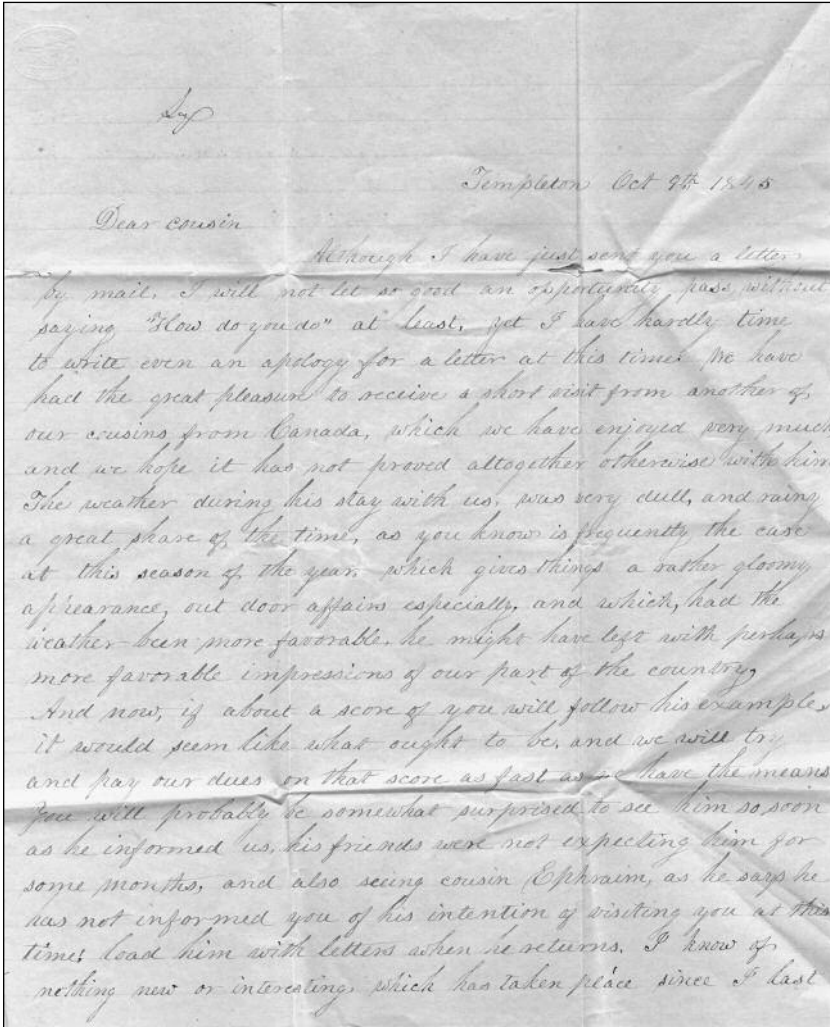
Now the question arises shall man by abstaining from marriage escape those curses? No they are not curses that are consequent upon the married state.

But my sheet is out so I subscribe myself

L. E. Hunting

Yours for the truth,
J. B. Ormsby

LETTERS FROM LEONARD STONE JR. TO LYMAN E. HUNTING



Source: Hunting Family Fonds (P160), Eastern Townships Research Centre Archives Department

Templeton Sept^r 21st 1845

Dear Cousin,

I received your letter two or three days and have set my foot down that it shall not remain long unanswered. We have hoped to receive a nice visit from some of our Canada friends sometime this season, but you don't seem to speak that there is any great probability of such a thing taking place, now if you would just come you don't know but you would like it for

once at least, but this let me tell you, and you have been assured of that times enough before, that we shall be rejoiced to see you, any, and all of our friends whenever the convenient time shall arrive for them to visit us. The season has been excessively dry in this part of the country till within a few weeks past, the grass crop was considerably less than an average of grass crops for years past though of superior quality. The grain crops also suffered some from want of more water to quench their thirst, and potatos (sic) seem again destined to premature decay, which is a severe stroke upon farming business, whether that is caused by dry weather or wet, hot weather or cold, by the state of the soil, manure, or mode of cultivation by flies, bugs or worms, or all combined together is a great mystery to me, so many reasons are given, and all so different too, that I don't believe any of them. We have had all kinds of weather years before, and if any particular kind of weather causes it why have they not been diseased in the same manner, and if the soil have (sic) changed to such a degree within a year or two, why should it not effect (sic) some other things in some similar manners but these are freaks in nature which I cannot account for. Our family have (sic) enjoyed very good health the past summer although we had extreme warm weather for a great length of time – have had two hired men most of the time one of them, Smith by name, attended school at Derby Vt. last fall and winter and was acquainted with scholars from Compton who were acquainted with your people, so we hear of you in that way, to some extent. We have been rather short of “femenine vimen” (sic) here at home this summer as both my sisters have been absent, Abby has been teaching school, in town however, and Lydia has been attending what is called a Normal school at West Newton fifty miles from us. She has just spent a vacation at home and has now gone back. She has grown to be a great girl, and we think what first started her growth, was that journey to Canada, so we shall recommend to small folks to take a journey there forthwith. I think I shall not need to go on that score as I am already taller than my father, and he is not a very short man, but I do want to go to Canada again very much indeed, more even, than before I had been at all, but cannot tell when I shall have that pleasure again. Ephraim lives where he has done for a year or two past, five or six miles from us. I saw him last week. He seems in fine health and spirits, William is attending school at Leicester, in this state, this fall, enjoys it very much now, though he was a poor homesick boy for a few days, if one might judge by his letters, a pleasant feeling that, - did you ever experience anything of

that kind? I have had only slight symptoms of it nothing dangerous or alarming. Speaking of letters, what do you think of our new Post office laws where we can send double letters if the paper is not too heavy three hundred miles for five cents, all very convenient isn't it, saving quite a bill of expense with those who carry on an extensive correspondence either in business or for pleasure. We now receive letters from Canada for five cents whereas by the old law we were charged 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ cents. It must make a vast difference with the income of the post offices and Post masters are deprived of the privilege of franking letters, which must make that office much less desirable than formerly. It will not of course, make so much difference with me as with many people who write more, though it will come with every one, but I always found myself very willing, and jumped at the chance of paying postage under the old law when I could by that means receive a letter from any friends. What could friends do situated hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles apart without the advantages of regular mails? They must remain content for aught I see, to hear from them once in a few years as the case might be, which would be rather hard for me I'm sure. We have built a shop this summer (a man by the name of Sears worked upon it, and said he worked for your folks repairing or building down near the sawmill the sawmill shop or something of the kind so we heard from you that way) forty-five feet by thirty, two stories, and to put in circular saws for the purpose of cutting out chair stuff, and cutting up pine timber of (sic) my father has a considerable quantity not quite sound enough to make good saleable boards, and he thinks it would [?] worth [?] work into something finer, and dress out into box [?][?] pail [?] & &. Our village seems to be in a very prosperous condition at present. The [?] factory company have made additions to their buildings quite extensive, and seem to "slick things up" at a great rate, and do more business in their line than was ever done in this place before. They are now engaged building a new stone dam which we think will be a fine affair when it is completed. The iron foundry & machine shops carry on a more extensive business than they have done before, and houses which a year ago stood empty and desolate in consequence of the failure of the other company are now overflowing with inmates, never has there been such a call for houses, and even rooms where they could stow themselves away for the present, as has been for the past season, and business moves brisk again. So to Rail roads that all absorbing subject, it has had its dark & bright sides as respects its being built this way, and there is a long story about it which I will not

attempt to tell at this late hour but will only say that it will be built here after all most likely. Mother desires her particular love to your mother as do we all, and also to all our friends.

Good bye from Leonard your cousin

Templeton Oct 9th 1845

Dear Cousin

Although I have just sent you a letter by mail I will not let so good an opportunity pass without saying "How do you do" at least, yet I have hardly time to write even an apology for a letter at this time. We have had the great pleasure to receive a short visit from another of our cousins from Canada, which we have enjoyed very much, and we hope it has not proved altogether otherwise with him. The weather during his stay with us, was very dull, and rainy a great share of the time, as you know is frequently the case at this season of the year which gives things a rather gloomy appearance, out door (sic) affairs especially, and which, had the weather been more favorable, he might have left with perhaps more favorable impressions of our part of the country. And now, if about a score of you will follow his example, it would seem like what ought to be, and we will try and pay our dues on that score as fast as we have the means. You will probably be somewhat surprised to see him so soon as he informed us, his friends were not expecting him for some months, and also seeing cousin Ephraim, as he says he has not informed you his intention of visiting you at this time; load him with letters when he returns. I know of nothing new or interesting, which has taken place since I last wrote to you; we are very busily engaged at this time in harvesting corn, potatos (sic), &c, together with other things of various kinds which must be attended to at this season, and expect to remain perhaps equally engaged through the winter sledding logs, wood, &c which makes the winter, with us, about as busy a season as the summer. Cousin Kendall informs us that you continue to do a fine prosperous business, and we rejoice with you that that is the case, and hope it may long continue so.

All desire much love our friends.

From your aff'e cousin L. Stone Jr.

LETTERS FROM EMELINE GATES TO CLARISSA

Shullsburg July 27th [between 1856-1858]

Shullsburg July 27th
Dear aunt and cousin I received
your kind and sympathetic letter
and should have answered it sooner
but was waiting to hear from Phineas
we had a letter a few days since he
writes that he shall start for home
next month he did not say whether
Philip was coming or not. I feel very
lonely since mother died I can hardly
relish myself to her loss altho it is her
gain if Cynthia had been spared I
think I could bear up a great deal
better it is very hard to give them both
up, you will find Harissa if you
oultive your mother that you will
feel Hariss loss a great deal more than
you do now. We are all well here. Frank's
family were well a few days ago I was
there to a quilting, their baby is nearly
two years old and no prospects of any more

Dear aunt and cousin. I received your kind and sympathetic letter and should have answered it sooner but was waiting to hear from [Phineas]. We had a letter a few days since he writes that he shall start for home next month. He did not say whether Philip was coming or not. I feel very lonely since mother died. I can hardly resign myself to her loss altho (sic) it is her gain if Cynthia had been spared I think I could bear up a great deal better it is very hard to give them both up. You will find Clarissa if you outlive your mother that you will feel Mary's loss a great deal more than you do now. We are all well here. Frank's family were (sic) well a few days ago. I was there to a quilting, their baby is nearly two years old and no prospects of any more of any more that I can see. I think Jane is having a good resting spell. We are harvesting now our crops are very good. We have tomatoes in our garden as big as your two fists and not half grown at that, watermelons as big as your head and all other kinds of vegetables in abundance. I have got six varieties of the garden strawberry I set them out this spring. Two kinds of gooseberry, and a very choice variety of raspberry it bears until frost comes in the fall, and curants (sic) both red and white. I have some flowers, several kinds of roses and some of the handsomest carnations that you ever saw four or five kinds of them. We have not had any apples yet from our own trees. Our orchard is young yet but looks very thrifty and promising. We have nearly two hundred apple trees and about fifty pear trees: give my love to old Mrs. Aldrich and tell her I have got my carpet wove and it is very pretty indeed. I wish she was here I shall always remember with pleasure the visit we had from her last summer. It seemed to do mother so much good it made me feel quite happy. You don't know Clarissa how I want to see you and aunt. I am almost tempted to go back to Canada this fall, I suppose I should see a great change in the place. What is the reason of Harriet Hancock staying away from home so much I am afraid she don't find it as pleasant as it might be. I want you to write all about Mr. Ball's folks whether they spin and weave and make butter and cheese and raise geese as they used to and when Kate is going to be married and what kind of a young Lady Harriet makes and whether Mrs. Ball is rational as she used to be. Tell Mary she had better come west and teach school. Teaching is good business here ten or twelve dollars per month is the lowest wages a female gets here and from that to 25 they are paid according to their abilities. There is a girl of my acquaintance teaching not far from here that gets 25\$ and I don't know that her education is

any better than Mary's. Give my love to all their family and tell the girls to write me a letter and I will answer it.

Mr. Gates sends his love to his aunt and cousin and says if Clarissa will come here he will introduce her to an old bachelor and a widower they [?] [?] both good leads and are first rate men. Now I want you should write me a long letter I want to know how our old home looks, whether they have made any alterations on the place or not and who lives there. Write about every body (sic) and every thing (sic) it will all be interesting to me, but particularly about yourselves tell me about your garden as I have you and your crops and stock & & .

Clarissa I have got the purse that you gave mother made of pieces of your silk dresses and the shell pin cushion you gave Cynthia. The old covering had worn off and she had put on a new one a few days before she died. I prize those two things very much and shall keep them as long as I live. Give my love to all old friends,

Yours affectionately, Emeline Gates

Shullsburg March 29th
Dear cousin I received your letter
announcing the death of dear aunt
you have met with a great loss
one that you will always feel
I know how to sympathise with
you, you must be very lonely now
I don't see any other way for you
than to come out here. My brother
Frank was here yesterday and I
gave him your letter to read he
said he was very sorry for you
and he thought you had better rent
your place to some good man and
appoint an agent to see to your
property and come to this country
and see how like you have no ties
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Shullsburg March 29th [ca. 1858]

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I know how to sympathise (sic) with you, you must be very lonely now.

I don't see any other way for you than to come out here. My brother Frank was here yesterday and I gave him your letter to read. He said he was very sorry for you and he thought you had better rent your place to some good man and appoint an agent to see to your property and come to this country and see how like you have no ties to keep you there except your kind friends. I suppose it would hard (sic) to part with them. I think between us three families, that is your brother and Frank and myself, you could manage to spend a year or two very pleasantly; for myself, I cannot think of a greater pleasure than to have you come and stay with me as long as you can feel contented. My husband would like to have you come too he is fond of company. You did not write what disease aunt died of, do you expect Lucian to come and see you this summer. I think Harriet was very kind to come and stay with you in your hour of trouble. Have you ever thought Clarissa how much our situations are alike? We have neither father, mother or sister (sic). It seems as though I should be happy if Cynthia were living, to be sure I have brothers that are kind and good as can be, but after all a brother is not like a sister their sympathies are not as warm and one don't (sic) feel like confiding all their little troubles to them as they do to their sister. Give my love to Harriet and tell her I am much obliged for her letter and shall answer it soon. I wrote to Sarah Ball not long since probably she has it before now. We are all well the weather is very pleasant and the farmers are busy putting in their crops. I have not done much in the garden yet things look well in it. My strawberry vines look very promising. I think I shall have an abundance of berries this year, you must try and get here by the time they are ripe. I have no news to write hoping that I may see you before long. I must bid you good by.

Emeline Gates

BIOBIBLIOGRAPHIES / NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Né à Asbestos, JACQUES GAGNON est titulaire d'un baccalauréat et d'une maîtrise en sciences sociales de l'Université Laval et ancien élève de la London School of Economics and Political Science. Il a publié aux Éditions de l'Université de Sherbrooke, aux Presses de l'Université du Québec et aux Presses de l'Université Laval. Il enseigne les sciences sociales au Cégep de Sherbrooke.

JACK LITTLE is the Chair of the History Department at Simon Fraser University, and a recently elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. His most recent work, *The Other Quebec: Microhistorical Essays on Nineteenth Century Religion and Society*, will be published this Spring by the University of Toronto Press.

Après des études en littératures à l'Université Concordia, ANNIE BINETTE a complété un baccalauréat en histoire de l'art et une maîtrise en études des arts à l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Dans le cadre du projet de recherche universitaire *Stanstead : granit, frontière et identité*, elle a cumulé différentes fonctions telles que la recherche, la compilation de données et elle a assuré le commissariat de deux expositions, *Patrimoine frontalier : les 75 ans de la SHS à travers sa collection* et *Frontière hospitalière et Granit insolite*, présentées au Musée Colby-Curtis de Stanstead en 2003 et 2004.

NORMAN JONES is a Professor and the Chair of the Department of Environmental Studies and Geography at Bishop's University. His research interests include flood hazards in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, and the history of glaciations in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta. Recent publications focused on the recessional history and glaciology of a valley glacier in Banff National Park, and the recent history of flooding in southern Quebec.

CLAUDE LACROIX est professeur agrégé d'histoire de l'art à l'Université Bishop's et chargé de cours à l'Université de Montréal. Il se spécialise dans l'art moderne et contemporain. Après avoir collaboré au site Web du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, il s'est intéressé à l'impact des nouvelles technologies sur l'art et les pratiques muséales. Son intérêt porte aussi sur des questions d'identité et de multiculturalisme à l'ère de la mondialisation

et de la grande mobilité des artistes. Il a notamment publié « Identité nomade. De mémoire et de fictions / Nomadic Identity. Of Memory and Fiction », dans le catalogue d'artiste *Chantal Dahan. The Dahan Bunch. Perdue dans l'espace* (2001). Cette année, il a obtenu une subvention du Centre de recherche des Cantons l'Est pour mener une étude sur l'intégration des arts à l'architecture et à l'environnement dans les Cantons-de-l'Est.