

AGRICULTURE

Dear Diary,...

Documentary Record
For Highschool



Archives: A Window into the Past



Located at Bishop's University, the Eastern Townships Resource Centre houses thousands of archives that illustrate the development of the Anglophone community of the Eastern Townships. Its various archival fonds contain newspapers, cards, letters, minutes, photographs, postcards, etc. These are called primary sources.

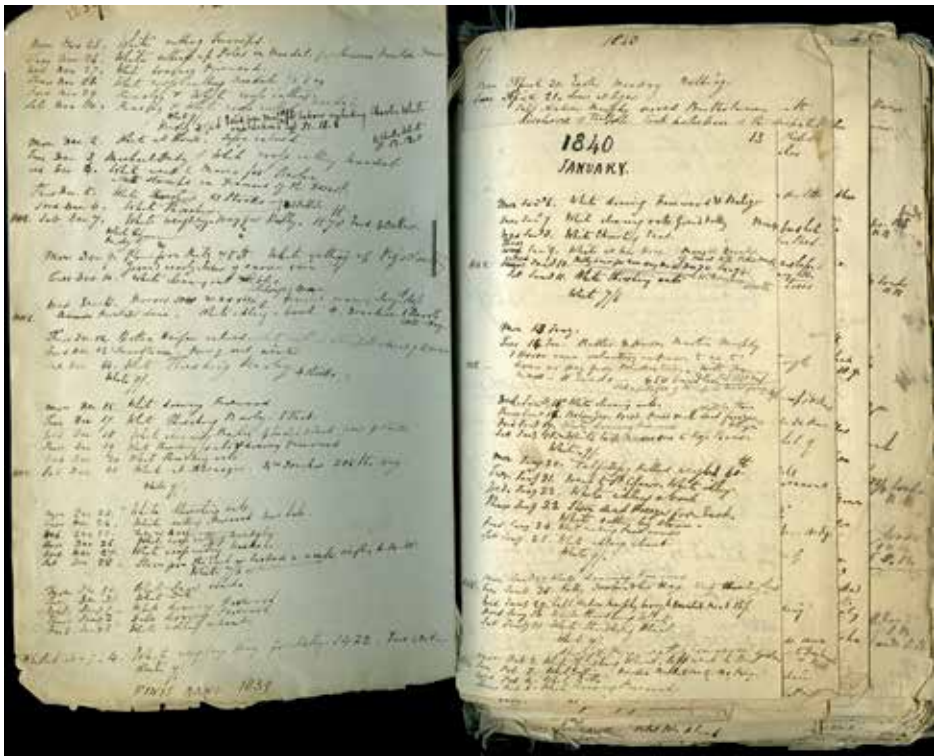


Two young boys ploughing the field / Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Newton Brookhouse fonds P042-165

Postcard showing men, women, and children in a hay field around 1910, in Frelighsburg.



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Herbert Derick collection P058-010-05-002_026



Diary belonging to Dudley Baxter, Frampton farmer, 1840.

Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Dudley Baxter fonds P002_001

Milk skimming station belonging to Nelson Fish, built in 1893 in Minton.



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Reginald Conner fonds P046_004

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF A LACOLLE FARMER

1836 JANUARY
 15th
 Brought forward from the last
 Years Memorandum.
 Quantity of Oats threshed 23 1/2
 Peas "..... 5 "
 Wheat "..... 2 1/4 "
 15th
 The weather since the 17th of
 December has continued
 uncommonly moderate to
 day is ~~is~~ very cold but
 clear and pleasant.
 Threshed out the remainder
 of my Oats
 formerly..... 23 1/2
 now..... 10 "
 total..... 33 "
 19th
 M^o. One half day Drawing the
 Old fence.
 Weather continues moderate tho'
 some days has been blustering

Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Textual Records collection
 P997-004-01-001

« The weather since the 17th of
 December has continued uncomingly
 moderate to day is very cold but clear
 and pleasant »

« Threshed out the remainder of
 my oats »

« One half day drawing the old fence »

1836 February
 6th
 Threshed out the remainder of
 my wheat..... 6 1/2
 formerly..... 2 1/4
 Total..... 8 3/4
 15th
 Pig, piged 5 living she had
 nine
 28th
 The weather, since the beginning
 of the month, has been un-
 commonly cold: but now is
 moderate, and fine.
 28th
 It rained all day - About
 midnight the wind came & the
 froze hard - had water in
 my cellar, a little over the
 floor, for a day or two; when
 it fell
 29th
 continues cold but fine - got water
 out of the discharge untill.

Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Textual Records collection
 P997-004-01-001a_Feb

« Threshed out the remainder of
 my reheat »

« Pig, piged 5 living, she had nine »

« The weather, since the beginning
 of the month, has been uncommonly
 cold: but now is moderate and fine »

1836 | April

25th
The weather continues cold & freezing.

26th
The weather fine & milder.
Planted potatoes, may 2th up
in the Gardens.

Sowed Melons, did not succeed
in Boxes. 4 B.

Sowed Cucumbers, may 7th up
in Boxes. 2 B. did not succeed.
too night about 8 or 9th the rain & violent Thunder storm

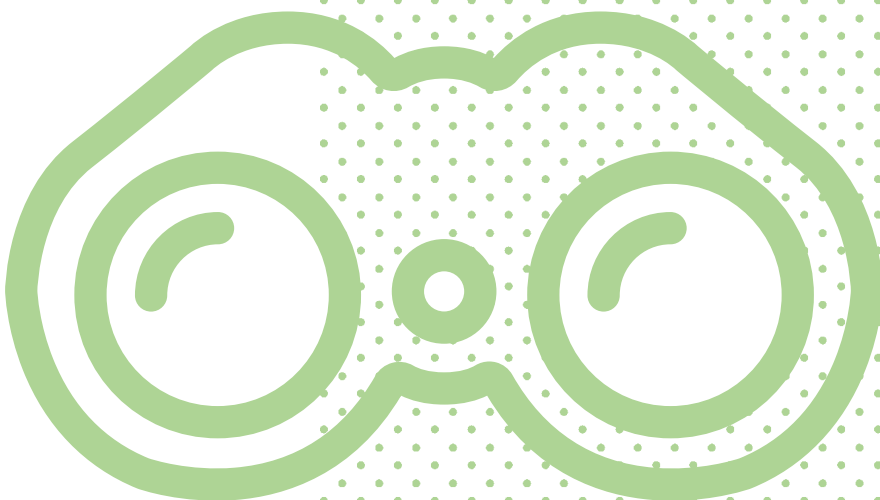
Sowed Lettice may 5th up.

28th
Sowed Cabbage may 5th cabbages up
& Lettice

30th
Since the Thunder Storm, we have
had something like spring weather.
this a fine, clear & warm day.
The ground too wet to admit sowing.
The Steam-boat made her first trip down

« The weather fine milder. [...] Planted potatoes in the garden. »

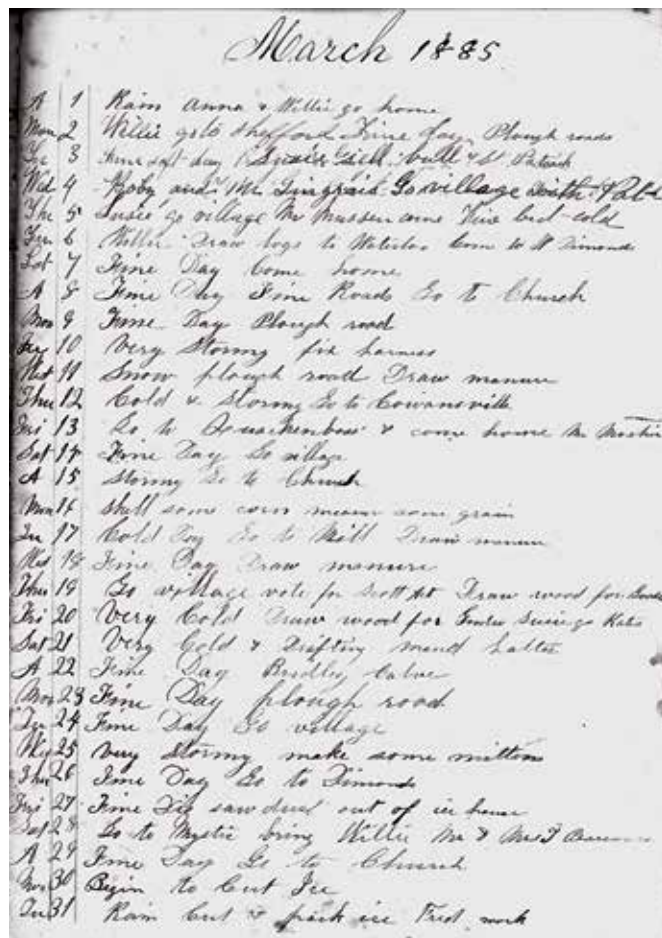
« Since the thunder storm, we have had something like spring weather; this a fine Warm day; the ground too wet to admit sowing. »



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF A LACOLLE FARMER

MARCH 1885

- A 1 Rain Anna & Willie go home
 Mon 2 Willie go to Shefford Fine day Plough roads
 Tu 3 Fine [soft] day Susie sell bull [and] St. Patrick
 Wed 4 Boby and Mr. [Gingrais] Go village with Pat
 Thu 5 Susie go village Mr [Mussen] come Fine but cold
 Fri 6 Willie [draw] logs to Waterloo Come to W Dimonds
 Sat 4 Fine Day Come home
 A 8 Fine Day Fine Roads Go to Church
 Mon 9 Fine Day Plough road
 Tu 10 Very Stormy fix harness
 Wed 11 Snow plough road Draw manure
 Thu 12 Cold [and] Stormy Go to Cowansville
 Fri 13 Go to Quackenboss' & come home Mr Moshir [come]
 Sat 14 Fine Day Go village
 A 15 Stormy Go to Church
 Mon 16 Shell some corn [measur] some grain
 Tu 17 Cold Day Go to Mill Draw manure
 Wed 18 Fine Day Draw manure
 Thu 19 Go village vote for Scott Act Draw wood for [Goodro]
 Fri 20 Very Cold Draw wood for [Goodro] Susie go Kates
 Sat 21 Very Cold & drifting mend [latter]
 A 22 Fine Day Bridley Calve
 Mon 23 Fine Day plough road
 Tu 24 Fine Day Go village
 Wed 25 Very Stormy make some mittens
 Thu 26 Fine Day Go to [Dimonds]
 Fri 27 Fine Day saw dust out of in house
 Sat 28 Go to Mystic bring Willie Mr & Mrs [T Pearson]
 A 29 Fine Day Go to Church
 Mon 30 Begin to Cut Ice
 Tu 31 Rain Cut & pack ice Fred work

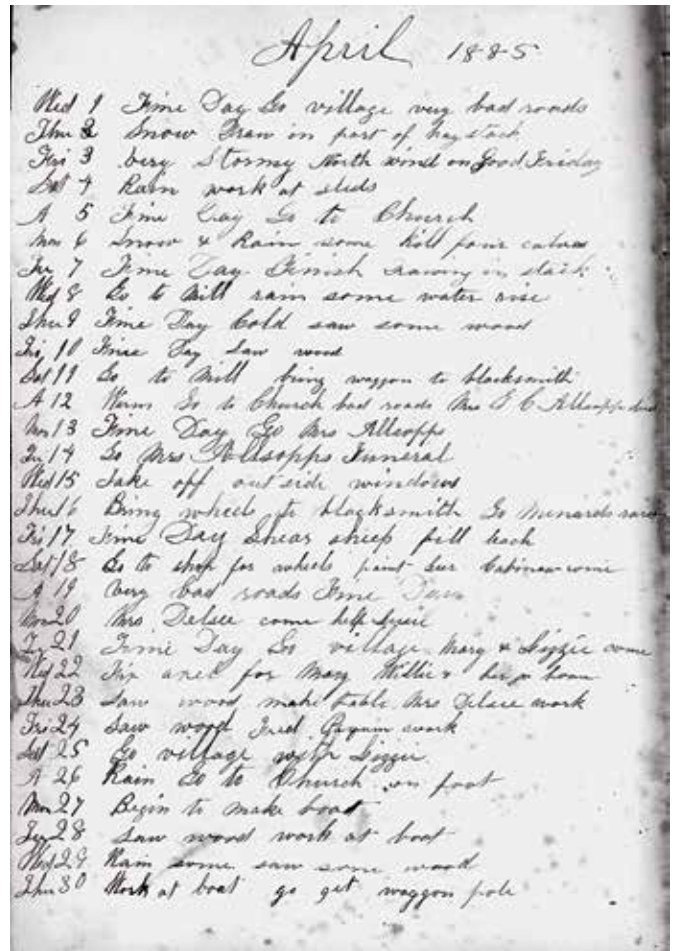


Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Douglas-Bridgette family fonds P185-001-08-002a_March



APRIL 1885

- Wed 1 Fine Day Go village very bad roads
- Thu 3 Snow Draw in part of hay stack
- Fri 3 Very Stormy North wind on Good Friday
- Sat 4 Rain work at sleds
- A 5 Fine Day Go To Church
- Mon 6 Snow [and] Rain some kill four calves
- Tu 7 Fine Day Finish drawing in stack
- Wed 8 Go to Mill rain some water rise
- Thu 9 Fine Day Cold saw some wood
- Fri 10 Fine Day Saw wood
- Sat 11 Go to Mill bring [waggon] to blacksmith
- A 12 Warm Go to Church bad roads Mrs. G C Allsopp died
- Mon 13 Fine Day Go Mrs. Allsopps
- Tu 14 Go Mrs Allsopps Funeral
- Wed 15 Take off outside windows
- Thu 16 Bring wheels to blacksmith Go Menards [raising]
- Fri 17 Fine Day Sheas sheep [fill back]
- Sat 18 Go to shop for wheels paint [Gus Cabinaw] come
- A 19 Very bad roads Fine Day
- Mon 20 Mrs Delsee come help Susie
- Tu 21 Fine Day Go village Mary & Lizzie come
- Wed 22 Fix axel for Mary Willie & her go home
- Thu 23 Saw wood make table Mrs [Delace] work
- Fri 24 Saw wood Fred [Paquin] work
- Sat 25 Go village with Lizzie
- A 26 Rain Go to Church on foot
- Mon 27 Begin to make boat
- Tu 28 Saw wood work at boat
- Wed 29 Rain some saw some wood
- Thu 30 Work at boat go get [waggon] pole



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Douglas-Bridgette family fonds P185-001-08-002a_April



MAY 1888

- Sat 1 Sow some oats Susie Go [St B J Reid] come
- A 2 Go to Church
- Mon 3 Fine Day Plough some Mr [and] Mrs R. Pearson [come]
- Tu 4 Fine Day Mr Mosher come get hay
- Wed 5 Rain some make some fence
- Thu 6 Make fence plough on [bow]
- Fri 7 Make fence plough again
- Sat 8 Sow peas Susie go Anna's with Mrtyle
- A 9 Go to Church Susie come home
- Mon 10 Go to Montreal with Robert Bowen
- Tu 11 Rains some Go get Charley shod
- Wed 12 sow some barley on [bow]
- Thu 13 Draw manure Mr & Mrs Dixon call sow some oats
- Fri 14 Sow some oats roll [peas] and roll oats plough [some]
- Sat 15 Go village. Draw manure & Reid go home
- A 16 Rain. Go village in afternoon
- Mon 17 Draw manure for potatoes
- Tu 18 Plough on bow for corn Draw manure
- Wed 19 Plant potatoes Dinah foal [mend]
- Thu 20 Sow some barley begin to plant corn
- Fri 21 Plant corn Alfred Paquette help
- Sat 22 Sow some oat Go village
- A 23 Go to Church Robert & [Louie] come
- Mon 24 Go village all [hands]
- Tu 25 Rain split some wood make some fence
- Wed 26 Rain all day. Split wood
- Thu 27 Make fence in woods
- Fri 28 Make some fence Henry Rockwell & Ellen [come]
- Sat 29 Go village with some butter Henry [go home]
- A 30 Go to Church hear Bishop W. Reid & Jim Gaw [come]
- Mon 31 Draw [rails] plant corn again



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Douglas-Bridgette family fonds P185-001-08-002a_May



Dear Diary,

Document 1: Agriculture in the Eastern Townships in the 19th century

The 19th century is a pivotal moment in Lower Canada. In 1792, new regions began to be made available for settlement. However, agriculture evolved differently in the new township than it did in the old seigneuries. Encouraged by favourable tariffs on wheat (the Corn Laws), colonies of the British Empire attempted to produce a surplus of wheat destined for exportation. In the 1830s, Lower Canada suffered an agricultural crisis. Harvests in the seigneuries were disappointing, their farming methods were dated, and the environmental conditions were poor. For these reasons, Lower Canada was obliged to import wheat from Upper Canada to meet the needs of its population. This crisis did not affect the Eastern Townships, where the harvests remained very good. However, its inhabitants were unable to ship wheat to the markets in Lower Canada due to the poor states of the roads. Agricultural difficulties in Lower Canada therefore had several consequences: a rural exodus, a dip in British immigration, and a reorientation of farming practices. Over the course of the 19th century, the Eastern Townships region would come to distinguish itself from the rest of the colony by its agricultural production.



Document 2: Agricultural Output in the Eastern Townships

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Townships were not a significant economic hub. Urban markets in Lower Canada (Quebec, Montreal, Trois-Rivières) were difficult to access and the cost of transportation was very high. For most inhabitants, it was difficult to have access to credit, which slowed down development. The region would only become a significant player in the economy of the province with the development of transportation routes and industrialization. However, agricultural output was twice as high in this region than elsewhere in Lower Canada.

Starting in 1820, farmers would gather in agricultural societies and organize fairs. They quickly began to raise sheep and cattle. Various species of sheep and cattle were imported from New England and from England. Land was used for pasture, to produce grains (ex. wheat, buckwheat, oat), and for subsistence farming (ex. fruits and vegetables). Part of the land was sometimes also used to set up a sugar bush or an orchard. In 1830, 5000 of the 5800 families living in the region were farming families. Some of these only managed to eke out a living through subsistence farming, but others produced a surplus. Women and girls tended the gardens, milked the cows and churned the butter, while men cleared the land and worked in the fields.

Document 3: Dairy Farming

Very early on, the Eastern Townships became known for its dairy production. The rest of Quebec didn't turn to this sector of agriculture until the 1870s. Raising dairy cattle required less land, so variations in the climate had a lesser impact on productivity, in comparison to wheat production. In the 1830s, several local farms begin producing their own milk and dairy by-products (ex. cheese, butter, cream). As of the 1850s, dairy products were sold in urban markets. The development of the railway and the circulation of wagons that enabled produce to be stored in a cool area paved the way for the distribution to various markets in Quebec and in the United States. In 1865, the first industrial cheese factory was established in Dunham. The Eastern Townships were one of the pioneer regions of dairy-based agriculture in Quebec.



Document 4: Map of the Eastern Townships

In general, the townships located in the south (Eaton, Stanstead, Philipsburg, Hereford) have many large and very large properties, whereas townships located in the north (Wotton, Ham, Windsor, Milton, Saint-Georges-de Windsor) have the most small-sized properties. Very early on, capitalist agriculture made its appearance in Stanstead. The townships that had been inhabited since early settlement, such as Shipton and Compton, had more cleared lands than hillier townships such as Sutton, Bolton or Windsor.

Kesteman (2008) Aborder l'histoire des Cantons-de-l'Est p.11



Document 5: Characteristics of the Different Types of Agricultural Output in the 19th Century

| Output | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| Settler-type exploitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> / Small property with little access to roads / Not very many cleared lands / Potato and grain farming (subsistence) / A few animals, but not for raising |
| Family exploitations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> / Medium-sized property / A few families together / Sells surplus in local markets / Exploitation of the land focuses more on farming than on raising animals / Slowly starts to see improvements |
| Family exploitations with employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> / Large property / A few employees work alongside the families / Several plant species / Farming and raising / Owns industries (ex. butcher, cheese maker, mill) / Independently wealthy |
| Capitalist exploitation (starting in 1815) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> / Vary large property / Paid labourers / Mechanization and specialization / Specialization / Significant output |





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and



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