

# AGRICULTURE

Dear Diary,...

**Documentary Record**  
For elementary school



## 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.

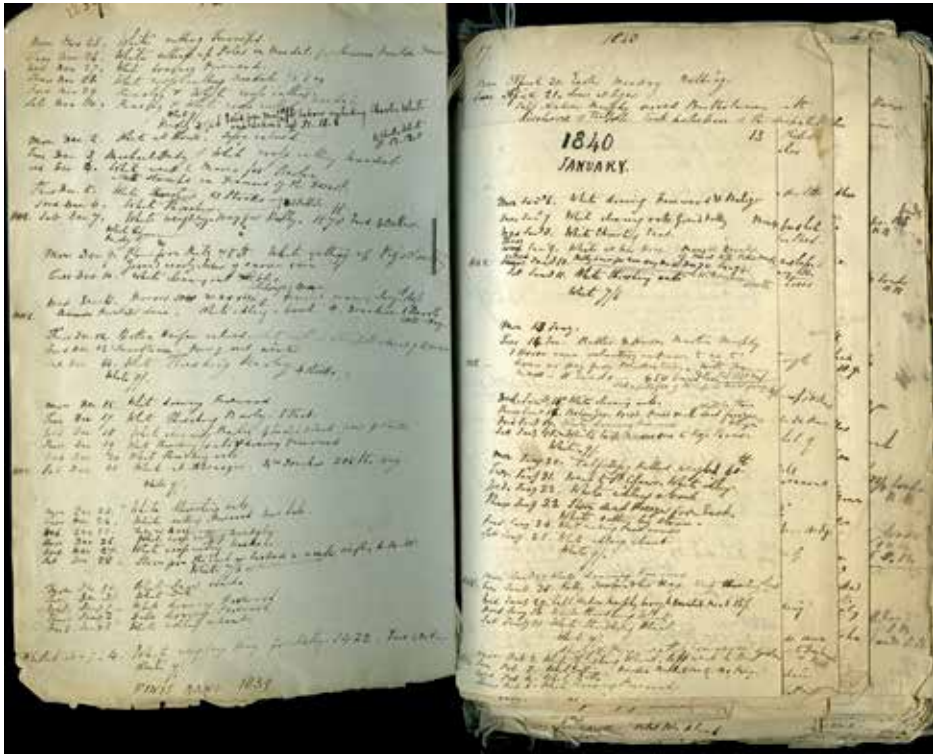


*Two young boys ploughing the field / Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Newton Brookhouse fonds P042-165*

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  
 15<sup>th</sup>  
 Brought forward from the last  
 Years Memorandum.  
 Quantity of Oats threshed 23 1/2  
 Peas "..... 5 "  
 Wheat "..... 2 1/4 "  
 15<sup>th</sup>  
 The weather since the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 "  
 19<sup>th</sup>  
 M<sup>o</sup>. One half day Drawing the  
 Old fence.  
 Weather continues moderate tho'  
 some days has been blustering

« 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 »

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

1836 February  
 6<sup>th</sup>  
 Threshed out the remainder of  
 my wheat..... 6 1/2  
 formerly..... 2 1/4  
 Total..... 8 3/4  
 15<sup>th</sup>  
 Pig, piged 5 living she had  
 nine  
 28<sup>th</sup>  
 The weather, since the beginning  
 of the month, has been un-  
 commonly cold: but now is  
 moderate, and fine.  
 28<sup>th</sup>  
 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  
 29<sup>th</sup>  
 continues cold but fine - got water  
 out of the discharge untill.

« Threshed out the remainder of  
 my wheat »

« 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 »

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

1836 | April

25<sup>th</sup>  
The weather continues cold & freezing.

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

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

Sowed Cucumbers, may 7<sup>th</sup> up  
in Boxes. 2 B. did not succeed.  
too night about 8 or 9<sup>th</sup> the rain about Thunder Storm

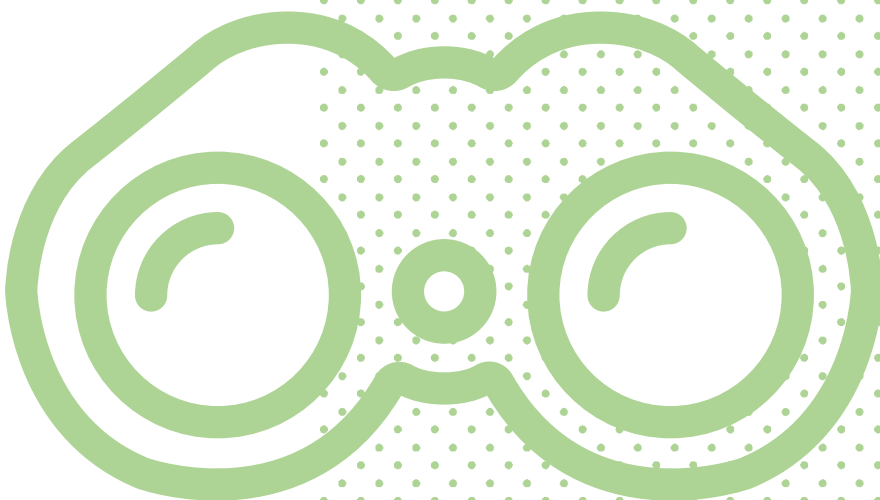
Sowed Lattic may 5<sup>th</sup> up.

28<sup>th</sup>  
Sowed Cabbage may 5<sup>th</sup> cabbages up  
& Lettuce

30<sup>th</sup>  
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. »

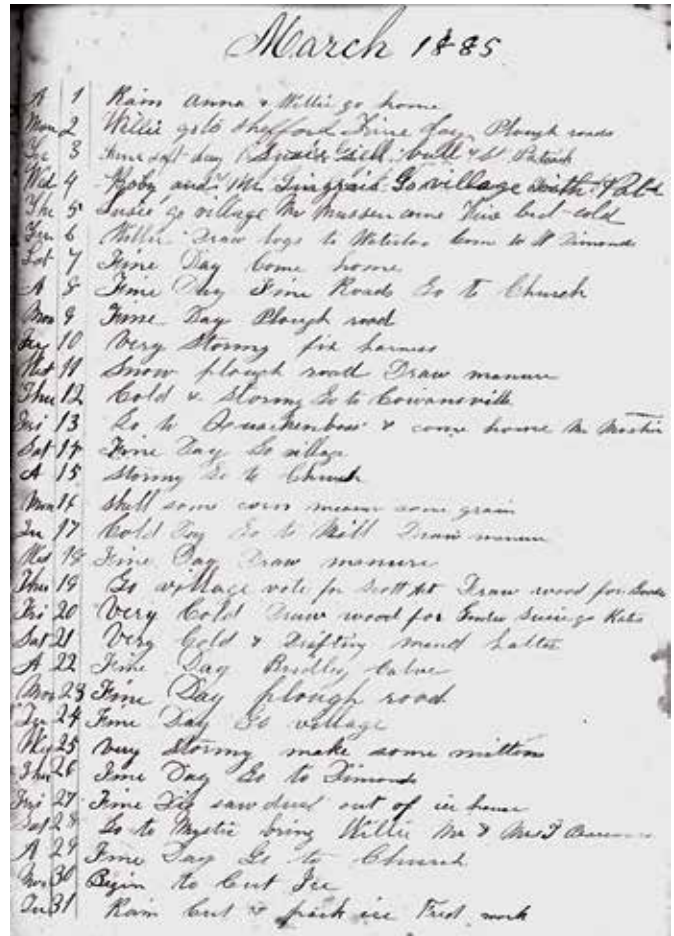
« Since the thunder storm, we have had something like spring weather; this a fine Warm day; the ground too wet to admit sowing. »



# 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



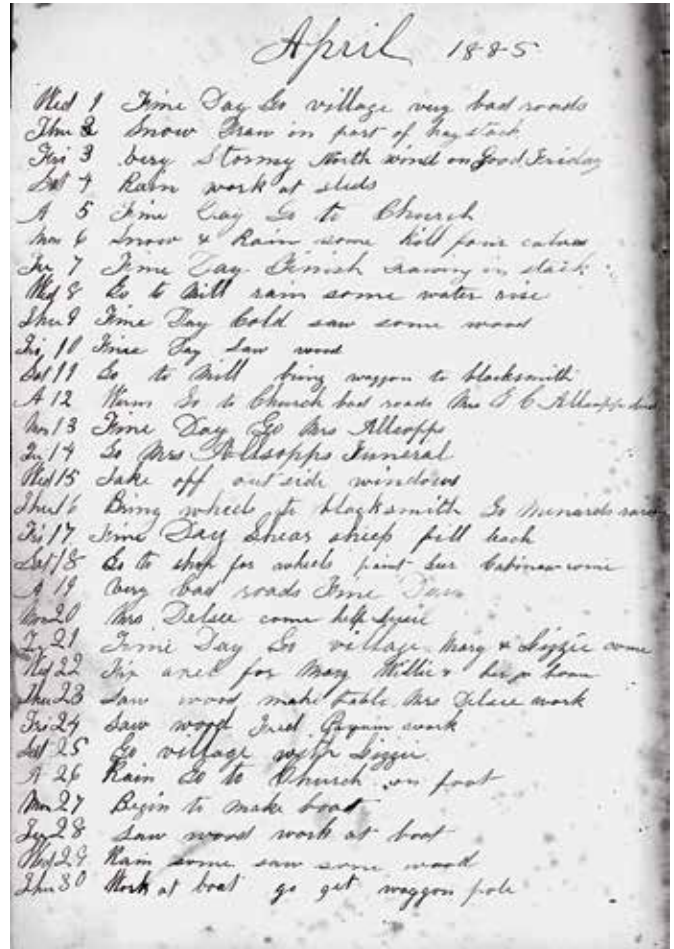
Eastern Townships Resource Centre / Douglas-Bridgette family fonds P185-001-08-002a\_March





**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 19<sup>th</sup> century

The 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 5: Characteristics of the Different Types of Agricultural Output in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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





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and



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