



# ***Historic Gloucester***

Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

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**Enjoying the Greenbelt**

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**Cover Photo:**

*The National Capital Commission began acquiring lands for a Greenbelt which would surround the City of Ottawa on this side of the Ottawa River, from Shirleys Bay on the west to Green Creek on the east. Since then the NCC has continued to maintain and improve these lands for a variety of uses, including recreation and conservation. Some of the most interesting parts of the Greenbelt lie within the former Township of Gloucester and are an important part of our heritage. Read more about the Greenbelt and the mandate of the NCC with regard to these lands on pages 5 and 6 of this issue.*

**Historic Gloucester** is published by The Gloucester Historical Society. It is intended as a Newsletter to members of the Society to provide interesting articles on Gloucester's past and to keep them informed of new acquisitions by the Museum, publications available, upcoming events and other items of general interest. Comments and suggestions regarding the Newsletter are always welcome.



*Gloucester Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa.*

## Editor's Comments

As we look forward to a new year we must also remember our past and treasure our heritage. As 2009 dawns, the country, indeed the world, is suffering from economic woes which affect everyone. It is not the first time this has happened and some of you may remember the depression of the 1930s. Hopefully, we have learned from the past and are now better able to cope with the future. But how can we learn from a past if we fail to keep it alive? Recently the City of Ottawa threatened to cut funding for such things as culture and the arts, including support for historical societies. For the time being this has been put on hold, but we must be aware that it can resurface at any time. As members of the Gloucester Historical Society we are dedicated to preserving the history of the old Township of Gloucester. If we do not do this it will be lost forever. If we do not want to see that happen, we must make sure that City Counsellors in particular, and the public in general, are fully aware of the importance of preserving our history.

The GHS *Historic Gloucester* is your newsletter. It is designed to help keep alive the stories of old Gloucester. Articles include both new essays and excerpts from old publications. There is always a need for more stories and photos and if you have something which you feel would be of interest to others, please feel free to share your tales with us, we would be very happy to receive them.

If you would like more information on any of the GHS activities, research activities or genealogical studies, please contact Mary Boyd or phone the Gloucester Historical Society Office at 613-822-2076 and your call will be returned. As well, if you are interested in volunteering with the Society or making a donation, we would like to hear from you!

I wish every one of you happiness, health and prosperity in 2009!

*Joan Scott*

### Gloucester Historical Society - Phone/Fax 613 822-2076

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## The Early History of Cyrville in Gloucester Township

by Robert Serré

It could be said that Cyrville was founded when Michel Cyr bought lot 27, in the second concession of the Ottawa Front in Gloucester Township, in September of 1853. Michel transferred the western half of lot 27 to his son Joseph in August of the following year, and the other half of lot 27 went to his son Michel [Leury 1948]. The land "was cut into small parcels and leased at nominal rentals and for long terms" [Bond 1968], which explains why so many Cyrville pioneers lived on lot 27 of concession 2.

Immediately to the east was the community of Glen Ogilvie, which had been established in the early 1840s. However, Glen Ogilvie never had its own post office, unlike its neighbour to the west, and as the settlers of lot 27 and their compatriots developed their skills as market gardeners, Cyrville grew in size and importance, acquiring a large back country that included Glen Ogilvie as well as lands extending towards the Mer Bleue bog south of Blackburn. The community eventually included lots 15 to 27 in the second, third and fourth concessions of the Ottawa Front. For several decades beginning in the late 1860s, gardeners from Cyrville and its back country brought their vegetables and other produce to Ottawa, selling them in Lower Town's bustling market.

It would seem that a post office was opened in 1850 under the name of Delorme. The name of the post office was changed to Cyrville in 1892, and the office closed in November 1965 [Carter 1984]. J.N. Beaudoin was postmaster from 1892 to 1895 and again in 1897, from February to November. Alfred Cyr was postmaster from 1907 until his death in 1950, and his son Wilfrid was postmaster from 1950 to 1965 [ArchiviaNet].

The early settlers of lot 27 were largely of French Canadian origin. At first, the closest Catholic church was Notre Dame in Bytown. As of 1856, people could attend St. Joseph's church in Ottawa's Sandy Hill neighbourhood. Cyrville later had its own

church, named Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. Construction began towards the end of 1871 [Legros 1949]. Blessed by Bishop Guigues in 1872, the church was located at the northern end of lot 27.

In 1871, Cyprien Triolle thought of establishing a shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. He won the support of brothers Joseph and Michel Cyr, and the latter donated two acres of land near the church. In 1887, the Bishop decided to transfer the parish from secular clergymen to priests of the Company of Mary ("Monfortains"), who were also in charge of the parish of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes in Janeville (later Eastview). The shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes was also transferred to Janeville. Many residents of Cyrville were deeply saddened by these changes, and there were "three years of silence" before parish activities were resumed in 1890 [Leury 1948]. Some 35 years later, in 1925, the parish of Cyrville was returned to secular priests. A second church was built of brick in 1928, and blessed by Bishop Forbes in May of 1929 [Leury 1948; Legros 1949].

Early on, a common school was built in the village, of logs presumably. It became a separate school in 1875, and a more modern frame building was provided where the first had stood. It was destroyed by fire in 1894 [Legros 1949], and a third school was built, which also served as a parish hall. The fourth village school was opened in January 1931, and expanded in 1946 [Leury 1948].

The Canadian Northern Railway finished building its Hawkesbury-Ottawa line in 1909, passing through the village of Cyrville, where a station was built, and continuing through the Junction Gore into Ottawa by way of Hurdman's Bridge. The Canadian Northern was taken over by the Government of Canada in 1917, and the Canadian Government Railways was established in 1918. Soon afterwards, the name was changed to Canadian National Railways [Bond 1965]. The line was abandoned in the early 1930s, and the tracks lifted in the early 1950s, with some of the right-of-way being used for the Trans-Canada Highway.

Over the years, Gloucester Township periodically lost parts of its territory to the City of Ottawa.

In 1950, the City of Ottawa expropriated a large section of the township, including Cyrville. This marked the decline of several decades of successful market gardening in the Cyrville area, and its bountiful fields disappeared as rezoning led to residential, commercial and industrial development. In 2001, what remained of the township was amalgamated into Canada's greatly expanded capital, along with several other townships.

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Carter, Floreen Ellen. *Place names of Ontario.* London, Ont., Phelps Publishing Company, 1984, 2 volumes.

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Leury, Jean. *Historique de la paroisse Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes de Cyrville, Ontario.* Cyrville, Paroisse Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, 1948, 55 pages.

Library and Archives Canada. ArchiviaNet database: Post Offices and Postmasters.

Serré, Robert. *Pioneer families of Cyrville (Gloucester Township).* Ottawa, Gloucester Historical Society, 2006, 44 p.

Ever wonder about those people who spend \$2.00 apiece on those little bottles of Evian water? Try spelling Evian backwards: NAÏVE!

If people from Poland are called Poles, then why aren't people from Holland called Holes?



Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes Catholic Church in Cyrville

Photo taken in 2004 - (Author's collection)

If Fed Ex and UPS were to merge, would they call it Fed UP?

If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, then doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?

If a pig loses its voice is it disgruntled?

I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a whole lot more as they get older; then it dawned on me...they're cramming for their final exam.

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## Ottawa's Greenbelt

The Greenbelt is a band of open lands and forests surrounding the nation's capital on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River. Much of its most interesting areas lie within the boundaries of the old Township of Gloucester. In 1950 French Planner Jacques Gréber proposed the Greenbelt as a way of creating a beautiful and distinctive setting for the National Capital. It was suggested as the only way of protecting the rural land bordering the Capital from the haphazard urban sprawl typical of so many other cities.

In 1956 the federal government began acquiring land and today the Greenbelt encircles the capital from Shirleys Bay on the west to Green Creek on the east. Most of this area is owned and managed by the National Capital Commission although some is held by other federal departments and private interests.

This area is rich in natural and historic resources. It offers a mix of sights and sounds, from rolling farmlands to peaceful forests and wetlands and contains a wide variety of plant and animal life. In order to protect the natural and historic resources for future generations, and to provide cultural and recreational areas for the people of the area, the NCC has devised a management plan. This plan divides the Greenbelt into seven land management categories so that the best use may be achieved for each area. The Management Plan is available for viewing by the public at the NCC. It is based on a detailed resource analysis and its main aim is to protect the natural resources within the Greenbelt. The seven categories are as follows.

### Agriculture

Agriculture is one of the largest uses of Greenbelt lands, taking up roughly one-third of its area. Tenants operate the farms which occupy large blocks of good quality land well suited to agricultural needs. These are designated for long-term agriculture and are not intended for

recreational activity. Efforts are made to give farming in the Greenbelt a higher profile as an interesting and productive activity. This is done by improving the productivity of the soil through effective farming practices; developing farmlands to their fullest economic potential; and providing viable opportunities for private, progressive farming activity.

### Conservation Areas

Conservation areas make up about one-third of Greenbelt land. These are ecological reserves and provide excellent opportunities for wildlife observation, outdoor nature studies, research, interpretation programs and low-intensity recreation.

The three major conservation areas in the Greenbelt are The Stony Swamp wetlands and woodlands which are home to a wide variety of typical Canadian wildlife such as white-tailed deer, beaver and waterfowl; the Mer Bleue sphagnum peat bog which harbours unusual plant and animal life that is typically found in Canada's north, and the Green Creek Valley, which is widely known for its fossil-bearing clays. The latter two areas lie within the boundaries of Gloucester.

### Forest Reserves

This category includes large tracts of forest land, smaller woodlands as well as abandoned lands with potential for long term forest management. They cover about one quarter of the Greenbelt and include the Pine Grove, Pinhey and Carlsbad Springs Forest Reserves. Most of these are leased for forest management purposes to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Forest Management involves planting, thinning and harvesting as well as protection from fire, disease and vandalism. A side benefit has been the development of trails, picnic areas, and forest access roads. This management plan also promotes the value of forested areas by providing interpretive and recreational opportunities.

## Open Space Reserves

This category includes a mix of open lands, such as woodlots, wetlands and creek valleys, which act as important open space links between conservation areas, forest reserves and river corridors. They also serve as buffer zones when next to residential developments and are used for many open space purposes, such as trails and picnic areas. Open space areas are managed with a minimum of intervention to allow for natural growth of vegetation which improves the quality of the landscape for both wildlife and people.

The management aim of the open space reserves is to protect natural habitat and open space corridors; to restore degraded land and prevent erosion; and to provide for interpretive and low-intensity recreational uses.

## Recreation Areas

These lands consist of already developed recreation sites and other areas held in reserve for possible future recreational use. These lands include some corridors, sand and gravel pits and lands near residential areas which may not necessarily all be developed.

Management of these areas is to ensure the systematic development of recreation in the Greenbelt; to ensure that public recreation lands are useful, accessible and interesting to as many people as possible, and to contribute to the continuity of a regional public open space system.

## Institutional and Commercial

This category combines all National Capital Commission Greenbelt lands used for governmental, institutional and commercial activities. They include research and educational buildings, public utilities, sewage and water treatment plants and hospitals. The management guidelines for these areas are imposed by the Commission to ensure that they are compatible with surrounding land uses.

## Non-Farm Residential

When the Greenbelt lands were acquired, approximately 350 family homes were situated in the Greenbelt. Most of these have been maintained on a lease basis to provide a stock of good residential housing for the National Capital and to maintain the sense of an active rural community. They also provide a source of revenue and will be retained as long as they are economically viable



## Interpretation Programs and Recreation

The NCC Interpretation Program began in 1974 with nature trails and an interpretive centre in the Stony Swamp Conservation Area. Since then thousands of school children and hundreds of other visitors have been to Stony Swamp to learn about typical Canadian plants and animals in their natural habitat. There is also an interpretive centre at the Mer Bleue peat bog, with a boardwalk and self-guiding nature trails through this ecologically fascinating area.

Recreation facilities include an equestrian centre, a tent and trailer park, a community centre, toboggan slides, cross country ski trails, playing fields, a golf course, garden plots, tennis courts, and bicycle paths. The NCC has an ongoing mandate to continually improve Greenbelt facilities.

Source: *The Greenbelt*, a National Capital Commission Brochure.



**Publications Available From the Gloucester Historical Society:**For further details regarding publications visit our website: [www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)

(Postage, if mailed, in brackets)

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| <b><i>Blackburn—Glen Ogilvie—Centennial History 1887-1967</i></b><br>Compiled and Edited by Mrs. Anna Elliott    | <b>5.00</b> (3.00)   |
| <b><i>Bowesville: A Place to Remember</i></b><br>By Grace Johnston   | <b>20.00</b> (12.00) |
| <b><i>Famillies pionnieres des Carrieres de Gloucester dans l'Est de l'Ontario</i></b><br>By Robert Serré        | <b>10.00</b> (3.00)  |
| <b><i>Famillies pionnieres de Cyrville (Canton de Gloucester)</i></b><br>By Robert Serré                         | <b>10.00</b> (3.00)  |
| <b><i>Gloucester Memories</i></b><br>By Mel Rowat  | <b>5.00</b> (3.00)   |
| <b><i>Gloucester Roots</i></b><br>Compiled and edited by Lois Kemp   | <b>20.00</b> (5.00)  |
| <b><i>Memories of the Lock Stations</i></b><br>Compiled and Edited by Grace Johnston                             | <b>5.00</b> (3.00)   |
| <b><i>Milk/Cream Producers—Distributors in Gloucester 1892-1975</i></b><br>Compiled and edited by Grace Johnston | <b>15.00</b> (5.00)  |
| <b><i>Pioneer Families of Cyrville (Gloucester Township)</i></b><br>By Robert Serré                              | <b>10.00</b> (3.00)  |
| <b><i>Pioneer Families of Glen Ogilvie (Gloucester Township)</i></b><br>By Robert Serré                          | <b>10.00</b> (3.00)  |
| <b><i>Pioneer Families of the Gloucester Quarries</i></b><br>By Robert Serré                                     | <b>10.00</b> (3.00)  |
| <b><i>Pioneer Families of Hurdman's Bridge (Gloucester Township)</i></b><br>By Robert Serré                      | <b>10.00</b> (3.00)  |
| <b><i>Pioneer Families of Janeville (Gloucester Township)</i></b><br>By Robert Serré                             | <b>10.00</b> (3.00)  |

**Publications (continued)**

***Pioneer Families of New Edinburgh, Volume One: 1830-1870*** **10.00** (3.00)  
By Robert Serré

***Pioneer Families of Rockcliffe Annex and Manor Park in Gloucester Township*** **10.00** (3.00)  
By Robert Serré

***The Story of the First English Church of Gloucester Township*** **50.00** (20.00)  
The history of St. James Anglican Church, Leitrim, 1853-2003  
By Glenn Clark

***1879 Belden Map of Gloucester Township*** **10.00** (5.00)  
The map shows who owned each lot in 1879 as well as the location of roads, churches, schools and interesting features of the township during that early time.

**Note:** Copies of publications may be ordered through: Robert Serré, Secretary of the GHS, 1057 Riviera Drive, Ottawa K1K 0N7, e-mail: bob.rosealine@gmail.com. A shipping charge as shown for each publication will be added to mail orders.

**IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, OR IF YOU WISH TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IT IN WITH YOUR CHEQUE. THE COST IS ONLY \$15.00 PER YEAR OR \$100.00 FOR A LIFE MEMBERSHIP!**

**Membership Form—Gloucester Historical Society/Société historique de Gloucester**

Membership/Adhésion 2008 - \$15.00 for one year..... \$100.00 for life membership.....

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PROV \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

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