

CHAPTER III  
LACHUTE 1835 - 1876  
The FORMATIVE PERIOD

***Boundaries***

**In** 1852, the parish of St. Jerusalem, which included all the Lachute settlement, was carved out of St. Andrews parish. This occupied most of the northern part of the Seigniorie, shrinking the northern boundaries of St. Andrews from 12 miles north of the Ottawa to only 5 miles (Fig. 1). It is said that Sir Charles Metcalfe, the Governor General in 1843-46, coined the name, St. Jerusalem, but gave no explanation for his choice. As the guest **of C. J. Forbes** at Bellevue, Carillon, he would, no doubt, have been told the history of the area including the fact that the original settlers in the parish came from Jericho in Vermont. Possibly he heard in church how our Lord went from Jericho to Jerusalem (St. Mark 10.46) and maybe the conceit that those early settlers, Jedediah Lane, Hezekiah Clark and John S. Hutchins should also have travelled from Jericho to Jerusalem appealed to him. In order to distinguish it from the real Jerusalem, he modified the name to St. Jerusalem in conformity with neighbouring towns bearing saints' names, like St. Eustache and St. Andrews. Lachute grew up as a town in St. Jerusalem parish and only received its charter in 1885, though Chatham had been proclaimed a town in 1799 and Grenville in 1808.

***Population***

During the period 1835-1876, Lachute had a comparatively small population, only about 400 in 1850, whereas at that time Grenville had 250, St. Andrews 1100, and more than 3000 people lived in the large township of Chatham. Lovell's directory gives the population of Lachute in 1858 as 500.

In 1871, it was estimated that in the whole County of Argenteuil there were only 2,135 families, about 12,800 people with 600 living in Lachute.

## *The Riots*

The year 1837 was one of the most momentous in the history of the area as it marked the culmination of the dissent that had been accumulating between different factions of the Legislative Assembly which at this time governed Lower Canada under the Governor General, and to which the County of York elected two representatives until 1827 when it was divided into the Counties of Terrebonne and Two Mountains. The latter County also elected two representatives until 1855 when the County of Argenteuil was carved out of the County of Two Mountains and each had one representation. General dissatisfaction mainly between the French and British methods of governing caused a split in the Legislative body, members like W. H. Scott and Louis Papineau opposing the Legislation whilst S. R. Bellingham, after whom Bellingham St., Lachute, is named, was on the Government's side. Bitter fighting broke out in Lower Canada between what the British refer to as the Government troops and the "rebels", though the French histories refer to them as patriots. This civil strife lasted through 1837 and flared up again in 1838, but as regards the Lachute area, it reached its peak in the last months of 1837, culminating in the fighting that occurred at St. Eustache on 14th of December, 1837. In this fighting; the local rebel leader, Dr. Chenier, was killed and his followers took refuge in the church which was burnt with the men inside, the glow in the sky being clearly seen at Carillon. During this period, all the volunteer companies and regular militia had been called out and several new companies were raised in the St. Andrews area. The women folk left behind on their farms were in a state of terror. One day in the fall of 1837, it was rumoured that a party of "rebels" intended to invade Lachute and guards were sent to intercept them. Samuel Orr, whose house was full of weapons belonging to volunteer companies, took his family with their bedding into the woods for the night. Other families congregated in the larger houses that had strong cellars,

as Bellevue at Carillon, or farms away from the roads preferably where there was a particularly savage dog. However, the alarm proved groundless and the people soon returned to their homes. Later the fighting moved to Grand Brule (St. Benoit) which was burnt and the Registry and other buildings pillaged. Eight companies of volunteers from the St. Andrews area were drafted to St. Benoit. Early in November, **1837**, St. Andrews had a scare that the "rebels" were almost on them and every man who was able to march, armed himself with a pitchfork or scythe and converged onto the village. When the fighting receded, some of the companies were sent home though retained for local defence should they be required. In the 1830's, Lt. Colonel Barron commanded the 4th Battalion Two Mountains Militia. Their parade ground was Flanders Stephens' field in Hill Head and in the 1837 rebellion, they were known as the "Men of Gore."

No one locally seems to have lost his life in these stirring days though the abandoned homes and stores encouraged looting; hen roosts and pig sties were rifled and homes were robbed. There is no account of "rebels" reaching Lachute. Any stragglers who managed to reach the Lachute area were probably on the run and had no desire but to give themselves up. However, this was the nearest that the Lachute area ever came to being in the front line of battle.

The 1837-1838 riots gave impetus to the formation of a voluntary battalion of troops. The Argenteuil Rangers were organized in 1862 as a battalion consisting of eight companies each under a captain and the Hon. J. J. C. Abbott became their Lieut. Colonel. The first camp was held in St. Andrews in 1868, all companies being present, but in 1870 there was local excitement caused by the threat of other riots that prevented the Rangers camping as a battalion. These originated from the Irish Fenians in the U.S.A. attempting to invade Canada to support the Fenian struggle for Home Rule in Ireland.

These Fenians consisted largely of Irish vagabonds who had served in the American Civil War and after the war

were without jobs. They made looting expeditions over the Canadian border at various places and the Argenteuil Rangers were mobilized several times and sent to vulnerable areas mainly in the years 1866 and 1870.

These riots, though never serious, confirmed the resolution of the Government to encourage the maintenance of Volunteer companies and to train them thoroughly for any future emergency.

### Settlers

During the period 1835-75, more Scottish settlers came into the area and the early pioneers were beginning to enjoy more comforts. The roads, although rutted and often deep in mud, were sufficiently advanced to allow the farmers to take their produce by horse and cart to Montreal. In 1835, pork sold at \$4.50 per 100 lb. and butter at 12% cents per pound.

Notable families who settled in Lachute in this period were David Raitt who came from Scotland in 1842 and farmed 100 acres before moving into Main Street as a tailor, then jeweller, finally occupying the office of bailiff. Another figure, born in 1821 to become familiar in Lachute was James Fish, the miller, who had worked in mills at Hawkesbury following the trade of his father who was a miller in the Seigniorial mills at St. Andrews. James returned to Lachute in 1848 to tend the grist mill for Col. Macdonald who was then the Seignior's agent.

F. C. Ireland, Fish's son-in-law, gives us this picture of the man — "His boots were always polished, hair slightly curled at the ends, face shaved cleanly, always looking like a boy but never afraid to soil his hands when the necessity arose."

Another well-known Lachute family came from Morayshire in 1851 — Simon MacKimmie, who settled on a farm on the west side of the North River near the Lachute mills.

In 1874, James Smith, whose father, Samuel, was the first postmaster in Dunany and whose grandfather, William,

had blazed the first trail from Sir John's Lake to Clear Lake, bought 210 acres along the Upper Lachute Road

Other immigrants were settling in an ever-widening area. Thomas Fitzgerald came to farm in Beech Ridge from Ireland in 1836; William, the second son of Alexander Smith, who sold the centre of Lachute to Col. Barron, farmed a wild lot in the Vide Sac, a name given to the locality by the French in St. Hermas since they brought their provisions in a bag which they emptied in the course of the day.

In 1857, William Thomson became the first settler in a wild forest area that was to become Arundel as a result of persuasion from the Member of Parliament for Argenteuil, Sidney Bellingham. The only access north in those days was through Chatham to Grenville then up the Rouge River. Thomson's nearest neighbour was then L. McArthur who lived 6 miles away in Harrington Glen.

For the old established settlers, the pattern of life had set in; their families grew up usually in kinder circumstances than those of their parents. In January, 1864, Lt. Col. Barron died, and Thomas Barron, his nephew, inherited his mantle, taking much interest in all local affairs. Barron's Lake was named after Lt. Col. Barron.

In August, 1858, Thomas, the nephew, married into one of the richest local families by his wedding with Harriet Cushing, daughter of Lemuel Cushing, a merchant who made much money on the Front of Chatham and whose name is perpetuated in the Village of Cushing. Harriet's mother was Catherine, daughter of John S. Hutchins, the early Lachute pioneer. By this marriage, Thomas Barron had two sons, Thomas and Robert, and a daughter. Mrs. Harriet Barton died in February, 1864, and Harriet Street, Lachute, was named after her. In 1866, Thomas Barron married again — Grace Jane, the eldest daughter of the Rev. Thomas Henry, and they had ten children.

Many of the streets of Lachute have been given the names of the Barron family; Grace Street was named after the second wife; Thomas, Robert, Mary, Barron, Henry, Sydney

are also names of Lachute streets commemorating the Barron family.

In 1865, J. S. Hutchins died, one of the first three families from Vermont. He had started a carding mill where the creek crosses the Lachute-Brownsburg Road just east of Brownsburg, but in 1846 he gave this up and built a saw mill which was carried on by his son until 1884, (Fig. 3 ).

The early pioneers on the farms were now receiving some return for their hard work and could afford to rebuild their old log cabins and live in a more luxurious style. In 1846, Major Paul Doig who belonged to the Two Mountains Militia built his stone house on the Front Road which still stands (Mr. Younkie's property, **1963** ). In the 1860's, William Rodger, the second son of David Rodger, who came to East Settlement in 1873, was able to build a brick house on his property, indications that the farming community there was a going concern.

At this time, too, the Lake Louisa area was being developed. George Seale bought 100 acres of the Lake Louisa area in the 1850's and later purchased the first residence on this lake that had been built by the Hon. J. J. C. Abbott as a summer home.

### *French Settlers*

Previous to the Civil War of 1837, the French and British were mainly settled in separate colonies but the riots acted as a safety valve which healed some of their differences and caused the French to begin to mingle more readily with the British settlers. There was not one Frenchman in the Township of Chatham until Pierre Robert took a lot in 1829.

One of the first Frenchmen to come to Lachute was Antoine Brunet who came in 1853 from Belle Riviere. He was an assistant to R. J. Meikle for 18 years after which he opened a shop in Lachute which only lasted 2 years. J. A. Bedard was another early French-Canadian settler who came from St. Andrews to start his shoe-making business on Main Street. His son, J. F. Aquila Bedard, was born in Lachute

in 1872 and claimed to be the first French-Canadian to be born here. In the 1851 census, John Blais was recorded as being a kilnman at the mills. He may also have been French-Canadian, a descendant of Johnny Blais who farmed on the Lachute Road.

### *Communications*

In 1835, the roads were still mere cart tracks and foundrous; even the road to Montreal via St. Eustache was so muddy in wet weather that the carts would sink up to their axles.

Between 1835-1875, the land was opening up north of Lachute and a road system was developed to link up the areas that were growing around the mills at Dalesville, Brownsburg and Harrington. Around 1860, William Staniforth drove a cart drawn by a yoke of oxen from Dalesville to Arundel but the journey took him 3 days, (Fig. 4).

In 1858, there was a daily stage coach plying between Lachute and Carillon at a cost of 50 cents a trip, but Lachute found it necessary to improve the communications also to the north and west. In 1836, Lt. Col. Barron at his own expense replaced the primitive float bridge by a more substantial structure, the first of a series of permanent bridges to cross the river at the Barron property.

Need was also felt for a bridge at the Lachute mills and the first bridge to span the river at this point was built by G. Hoyle described as "an eccentric Englishman". This bridge had to be rebuilt in 1877 by James Fish at his own expense. Before 1861, the Lachute Road was opened from Lachute to St. Andrews following the east side of the river, though it was very poor. Another road over Barton's Bridge followed the west side of the river as far as the Chatham boundary, but even in 1875 this was only a bush road. These two roads necessitated crude wooden bridges being built to span Cruise's Gully on the St. Andrews Road and the West River on the road to the Chatham boundary.

During the period 1835-1876, Lachute was to grow to be the most important town in the county. Why was it then in 1835, the ebb and flow of humanity was along the Ottawa and Lachute was a backwater leading to nowhere, yet before the turn of the century, it was to become a growing industrial town and St. Andrews was beginning its decline ? The answer can be given in one word — “railroads” — but of that later.

In 1835, the flow east and west between Montreal and Hull with Bytown on the south side of the river was by boat, the first steamer on the route from Lachine to Carillon being the William King which began to run in 1826. A year later the “St. Andrews” was built, plying between Lachine and Carillon but going as far up the North River as St. Andrews when the water was high. Other steamers were added later and The Ottawa and Rideau Forwarding Company built the “Shannon” to ply between Grenville and Bytown. The way west from Montreal was to Lachine by stage coach, Lachine to Carillon by steamer, Carillon to Grenville by stage coach and Grenville’ to Bytown (Ottawa after 1854) by steamer, the stages being necessary to circumvent the rapids at Lachine and the Long Sault rapids between Carillon and Grenville. The whole trip could be done in 2 days. In April, 1834, the series of canals to circumvent the Long Sault was opened for traffic, the steamer “St. Andrews” making the first trip. Although this canal system was a military venture built by the Royal Staff Corps it meant that small steamers could tow barges all the way from Lachine to Ottawa and the first steamer pulling barges passed through the Grenville Canal in July, 1841. Previous to that the canal traffic had usually been by flat-bottomed bateaux since the navigable depth was only six feet. In the spring of 1842, there was a daily service between Montreal and Bytown with steamers plying between Lachine and Carillon and Grenville-Bytown. In those days, it was a busy river.

In the summer of 1840, the Governor General, Lord Sydenham, made the journey from Kingston to Montreal by



steamer to Grenville. Normally he would have then taken the stage to Carillon but because he was in delicate health and the road was so rough, he embarked on the St. Andrews steam-tug at Greece's Point and was taken through the Carillon Canal at the rate of 3 miles an hour. Travel along the canals was a slow process because of the locks.

### ***The Advent of the Railroads***

The first railroad to be built in Argenteuil County was from Carillon to Grenville. This, of course, was to link the two steamer services terminating at Carillon and Grenville and it carried both passengers and freight. The line ran for the most part nearer the river than the present railroad and the Carillon station was on the river front. No longer had the traveller between Montreal and Bytown (Ottawa) to endure being tossed about in a stage coach between Carillon and Grenville; he could travel in comfort being exposed to only minor nuisances like the smoke and sparks from the engine which used wood as its fuel. This line had a 5'6" gauge and the engine, "The Ottawa," travelled at a steady 26 miles an hour.

The Carillon-Grenville railway was only the first section of a railroad which was planned to link Montreal with Hull-Bytown (Ottawa). It was constructed partly because the canals had been neglected and were almost useless. It was built in October 1854, by two English brothers, William and Samuel Sikes or Sykes, mechanical engineers who entered into an agreement with the Montreal and Bytown Company. The money for the enterprise was put up by the British banking firm, Sikes, DeBerg Company, in which Alexander Sikes, another brother, was a shareholder. Later various sections of the railroad were begun at Montreal and St. Eustache.

After about two years, Alexander Sikes came, out to America to see the project, travelling on one of his own boats which contained gold for further payment, but the vessel was lost and all on board drowned. This major catastrophe for the railway was to prove the salvation of

Lachute, for the British banking company then withdrew its support and the Sikes brothers had no money to bring the venture to a conclusion and a number of people including the Sikes brothers and the member for the County of Argenteuil in the Provincial Government, Sydney Bellingham, lost a considerable fortune.

The railway as completed between Carillon and Grenville then came into the possession of the Hon. J. J. C. Abbott who bought it for *L*5,300 though it originally cost *L*25,000 and he formed the Carillon-Grenville Company in 1859 but sold it to the Ottawa River Navigation Company in 1863. This latter company owned the steamships plying between Lachine and Carillon also Grenville and Ottawa, so they then had complete control of the communication between Ottawa and Montreal. Had this project of building a railway between Ottawa and Montreal triumphed, there is little doubt that industry would have been attracted to the Front of Chatham and Lachute would have remained a village. In 1860, the Prince of Wales made the journey from Ottawa to Montreal by way of river steamer taking the train between Grenville and Carillon.

As it was, P. S. Dunbar who had worked on the Carillon-Grenville railway and was a municipal councillor in St. Jerusalem, along with the land surveyor, T. C. Quinn, convinced Charles Legge, Chief Engineer in 1872, of the Montreal Northern Colonization. Railway that the shortest route to Ottawa and Montreal would lie through the Parish of St. Jerusalem, linking Grenville, Lachute and Ste. Therese and would not be via St. Andrews. They were first instrumental in running a trial line from Grenville Bay to Ste. Therese To induce further the railway to come through Lachute instead of St. Andrews, the parish of St. Jerusalem promised a bonus of \$25,000 to the Montreal Northern Colonization Railroad Company. This railroad was graded as far as Lachute and the stone abutments for the railway bridges over the North River and West River were built in 1873-74. For some of the grading, a good quality of gravel was hauled from a large quarry in the East Settlement.

However, after laying the foundation for the rails, the project was held up for two years because the Montreal and Northern Colonization Railway went *into* receivership in 1874. The rails themselves were not laid to Lachute until 1876 after the company had been taken over by the Quebec Government and the railroad given the grandiose title of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railroad. The parish of St. Jerusalem argued that since the original company had failed to carry out its obligation, they were exempt from paying the \$25,000 but this remained indefinite until Sir J. J. C. Abbott managed to pass legislation at the Dominion Parliament exempting the parish from this payment.

P. S. Dunbar by his foresight was to ensure the continuous growth of Lachute as a town on the railroad linking the new capital, Ottawa, with Canada's largest port, Montreal. The busy river traffic between these towns was slowly to decline until such stores as that of Gwen Owens at Stonefield which kept five assistants busy in 1884 was to close its doors in the 1930's through lack of business. No more fortunes were to be made by people like Lemuel Cushing and John Kelly of Carillon, who in the heyday of commerce on the Ottawa River were taking in \$150 a day, for the trade was to decline by degrees so that at last only pleasure craft were to use the canals; but the decline was a slow one, lasting over 50 years, the canals receiving a new lease of life when they were enlarged to a navigable depth of 9 feet between 1871 and 1882.

In the early days travel was expensive. The Canadian Directory of 1851 lists the fare by steamer from Lachine to Carillon as 6s.3d., then equivalent to about \$1.25. Earlier, the stage fare from Montreal to Carillon was 12/6 (\$2.50) and from Carillon to Grenville it was 2s6d. (\$0.50). At this time, \$1.25 was regarded as a good wage for a day's work of 12 hours duration.

However, by 1879, the first-class fare on the steamer, Manitoba, from Montreal to Carillon was only 25 cents and the second-class fare was 10 cents.

## *Industries*

The mills before 1876 were clustered along the banks of the river just below the Upper Falls. James Fish, after finding a wife in the person of Ellen Wanless of St. Andrews, returned to Lachute in 1848 and succeeded R. Kneeshaw as manager of the Seigniorial mills. He played the clarinet, led the choir in church and saved his money so he was soon able to purchase the mills. In 1851, he was proprietor of three mills extending from below the falls to a position on the river bank where Bedard Boulevard now meets Main Street. The mills from north to south were a saw mill, grist mill and a carding and fulling mill, employing in 1851, 4, 2 and 2 men respectively.

In 1867, F. C. Ireland, a minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in St. Andrews, married Fish's only daughter and entered into partnership with his father-in-law. Ireland was Lachute's first historian and wrote his 'Sketches of Lachute' in the Watchman of 1886. Even then he confessed that "It is a difficult matter to furnish interesting particulars of a reliable character concerning the first settlers."

Another person who joined Fish in operating the mills was Peter Campbell, a son of a Joseph Campbell and great grandson of James Campbell who came to Canada with his married son, Samuel, in 1823.

Around 1870, Fish leased his mills, the saw mill to Peter Campbell and the carding mill to F. Poitras. In 1870 another mill was started just north of the saw mill to begin the manufacture of bobbins.

Another grist mill was built by George Hoyle, the builder of the original Seigniorial mills at St. Andrews and Lachute. After a disagreement with the Seignior, Hoyle decided to build a grist mill outside the Seignior so he chose a site on the east bank of the North River about a mile downstream from the Lachute Mills in the Township of Chatham. After running the mill for several years, he sold it around 1860 to John Earle and it was managed for many years by his

brother, James, who had been a resident of St. Eustache and had to move after the fighting there in 1837. James Earle died in 1886 and the business was then carried on by three of his sons, John, Edward and Harland. These mills were later connected with the Lachute Road, the river road leading from Lachute Mills through Geneva to St. Andrews, by a half-mile road leading down into the gully in which the mills, a group of wooden buildings, were located. Earle's mills were noted for their oatmeal, the farmers carrying their produce to the mills on their backs.

The saw mills at Hill Foot run by John McOuat only employed one man, about 1000 logs being sawn each year. In 1862, the mills were burnt but were rebuilt.

Lachute farmers were now becoming sufficiently numerous and prosperous to support some small ancillary industries to make the community more self-supporting. Around 1876, John Raitt and James Raitt, sons of David Raitt, the tailor and later the bailiff, set up as tinsmiths and plumbers in the West End and on Main Street respectively.

The famous carriage-making shop of Dudderidge Bros. began on Main Street in the early 1850's. It occupied a long low white building on Main Street, east of Bellingham Street. In 1856, Archibald Mitchell entered into partnership with them, the firm then becoming Dudderidge and Mitchell. They made sleighs as well as carriages.

Some time around 1850, a brewery was opened in Lachute on the other side of the street from the carriage shop. The owner of this enterprise was George Joss, a cooper by trade, but apparently it was not of long duration. Joss was the son of an earlier pioneer, Andrew Joss, who came from Aberdeen and after working a few years at Lachute Mills went to farm at Brownsburg. Two of George Joss' sons, Duncan and George (Junior) founded around 1876 the firm of Joss Brothers, contractors and builders, and they were to share with O. B. Lafleur the honour of keeping the bridges in repair. The 1851 Directory also mentions a distillery on Main Street though even at that date it had ceased operations.

Around 1860, David Christie set up business as a shoemaker and occupied premises on the north side of Main Street above the Bethany Road turn. His house was later destroyed by fire, the site being just west of the Marble Works ( 1963). Christie's father came from Ireland and the family was not related in any way to the well-known medical family who originated from Stirling in Scotland. Also, by 1875, two more businesses had been set up on Main Street — Alexander McGibbon's tannery was on the south side of Main Street opposite Bellingham Street. It was a low clapboard building painted dark red. Another business was the carriage factory of Thomas Bedard on the north side of Main Street above Bethany Road, which later moved to the west end of Foundry street.

Farm implements now being increasingly used, horses required to pull the ploughs, carts and carriages necessitated blacksmiths who thus became key members of the community.

The Canadian Directory shows that there were three blacksmiths operating in 1852, Thomas Palliser and J. Robinson on Main Street, the first on the south side, just east of the Bethany Road and the other on the north side between Clyde Street and Water Street. The third name given is that of William Wilson.

Another early blacksmith to set up in Lachute was Andrew Todd, son of William Todd. William came to Canada in 1830 and arrived in Lachute in 1835 finally moving to the East Settlement in 1841. Andrew learned his trade from John McAllister of East Settlement, then set up about 1864 as blacksmith on the Lachute Road, south of the Mills before moving to Beech Ridge in 1869.

Another blacksmith to come to Lachute in the early 1870's was Alexander Riddle who had a blacksmith's business for many years in the Lachute Mills area. He shared the business around the Mills with William Armstrong.

Alexander McGibbon, a son of the early settler in Dalesville of the same name, on his marriage to the daughter of George Brown in 1845 came into the possession of the

Brown mills and estates. On his death in 1883, his son, Alexander (third generation) carried on the business. These mills were to the south of the village where the river crosses the Staynerville Road (Fig. 3).

Another series of mills were built about three-quarters of a mile east of Brownsburg on the Lachute Road, where a creek crossed the road. It was here that Peter McOuat, one of the original six McOuat brothers, built a saw mill in 1838 on the south side of the road. In about 1848, this was purchased by James McGregor, a son of John McGregor, one of the earliest settlers of Lachute, who started a carding mill on the site of the saw mill. In 1860, the mill was sold to William Foreman who added a tannery, and he in turn sold the business to Robert Morrison in 1864, with a house and a few acres of land. The woollen mill continued in operation and in 1889 was operated by Morrison's two sons, William and Albert. These mills burned in 1890. but were rebuilt and improved machinery added for the manufacture of flannels, tweeds, blankets and other cloth. This became a busy little spot for around 1840 John Hutchins had built his carding mill on the other side of the road, but this did not continue long in operation so he built a saw mill about 1846 which ran until 1884 when it was bought by Lane and Owens. In 1875, Daniel Smith purchased a mill from Alex McGibbon to make gunpowder from the bark of trees, sulphur and saltpetre. In this way, the main industry of Brownsburg was started.

In Dalesville, Dan Dale added a grist mill to his saw mill in 1838; later the saw mill was destroyed by fire but a new one was built and the grist mill remodelled. These mills were purchased by John Campbell in 1865 who also had erected mills at Harrington. This John Campbell was another son of Joseph Campbell; his brother, Peter Campbell, was at the Lachute mills working with James Fish.

### *Stores*

We have already seen that Milo Lane, the second son of Jedediah, the, founder of Lachute, opened the first hotel at

the Lachute Mills in the 1830's, to which he later added a grocery store. His son was the famous Phineas Hutchins Lane, so-called because his mother was a daughter of another founder member of Lachute, John S. Hutchins. P. H. Lane is described as a gentleman of ability, possessing rare business tact, which was only to be expected as he learned his business acumen by being clerk for 6 years to the most successful businessman in the county — Lemuel Cushing, his uncle, on the Front of Chatham. P. H. Lane is still remembered in Lachute as tall and extremely handsome, creating much flutterings in the hearts of susceptible females.

One of Phineas' sisters had also tried her hand at business in a store in Upper Lachute exactly opposite the fork leading to Power's Bridge, a spot even today called Lane's Corner. In 1857, Phineas took this store over from his lessee, J. Brunton, and traded there until he sold it in 1887 to W. Bradford who was also to become a well-known Lachute businessman.

One method by which businessmen sometimes operated was to give very long credit until it was impossible for the client to meet his debts when his house and property would be distrained upon. John Taylor, an energetic Scotsman who had married Phineas' sister Catherine, opened a store at the Lachute Mills around 1860 and insisted on payment in cash for which he was content with a moderate profit. In this way, he quickly became well-known and built up a thriving business.

By 1876, two more stores had appeared on Main Street in addition to Meikle's, the largest store in town. These were the grocery store of A. Cleland on the north side of Main Street at the east corner of Clyde Street and the grocery store of A. Burch on the north side between Water and Clyde Streets just east of the Mitchell and Dudderidge carriage shop.

Naturally horses and carriages required not only blacksmiths but harnesses. The Canadian Directory lists a saddler by name of John Hamilton as being in Lachute in 1852. By 1876 there were two harness makers on Main



Street, Henry Giles who occupied the site of the Joss Brewery opposite a point midway between Water and Bellingham Streets, and another on the north side of Main Street midway between Clyde and Water Streets operated by Robert Creswell. William Creswell and family came from Donegal to Lachute in 1852 after spending 13 weeks crossing the Atlantic. About 1864, he built a house on Main Street but never lived there. His second son, Robert, was the harness maker who, after some years of farming, started his business on Main Street just east of Robinson's blacksmith shop.

We can now see how industry is linking up in Lachute; first the farmers in the area supplied the hides to the tanneries — Hills, McGibbons or Morrisons, and these, in turn, supplied the leather to the harness makers and shoemakers. The area was now large enough to support a bakery and the first baker was L Carriere just west of Bethany on the north side of Main Street. In 1858, there were two tailors in the town, William Greenshields and David Raitt; three shoemakers, Robert Barron, T. Shaw and J. Simpson, with D. Christie making a fourth in 1860; and two wheelwrights, M. Miller and J. Mayea.

The Lachute Mills area was also growing and another general store, A. Ben's store, opened up on the east side of lower Main Street, a little north of Fish's Bridge. This was later to become W. J. Todd's store, then Dawson Kerr's book and printing shop. A store was also opened in Dalesville by Peter McArthur in 1849. He was the son of Archibald McArthur, an early pioneer in the area.

## *H o t e l s*

By 1874, the number of hotels in Lachute had increased to three; a few years later it was to rise to five. The oldest hotel in town, begun by Milo Lane, the log building on the south corner of Grace Street and Main became Allan's Hotel in the '70s.

The next hotel was founded by Alvah Butch (or Birch) on Main Street. Alvah was a son of one of the original

Vermont settlers, Benjamin Burch. His brother, Alfred, built a stone house at the East End on the south side of Main Street (Earl Rogers, 1963 ). Alvah sold his farm, bought a lot on Main Street and operated a tavern there around 1846 called the "Bee Hive." In 1871, the "Bee Hive" was bought by one of the several distinguished French-Canadians who were now coming to live in the town, Pierre Rodrigue, a classical scholar, school teacher and a native of Ste. Scholastique. He conducted the Bee Hive as a hotel and remodelled it from a low wooden building to a two storey building with a gable roof, but it burnt down in January 1892, and was later rebuilt. This hotel was the ancestor of the present Laurentien Hotel and was situated on the south side of Main Street at the corner with Station Street. Rodrigue gave land behind his hotel to the railroad company on the understanding that the station would be established there, and the street east of the hotel has always been a private thoroughfare to the station and owned by the hotel.

In 1875, there was a second hotel on Main Street, a little to the west of Rodrigue's Hotel owned by T. E. Evans who lived in the house adjoining.

#### CHURCHES

##### *Presbyterians*

In 1836, there was only one church in Lachute, the Presbyterian Church built in the centre of what is now the Protestant cemetery. Their beloved pastor, William Brunton, died in 1839. In October, 1840, the Rev. Blood was inducted by the Presbytery of Montreal. In 1842, he was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Henry who had spent a year in, Montreal, being sent to Canada by the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland. Then a sad thing happened; the Presbyterian Church in Scotland became divided on the issue as to whether the church was to be free or an established church with state support. This schism affected Lachute since the Montreal Presbytery became affiliated with the Established Church of Scotland or as it was called, the United Secession

Church of Scotland, whilst Thomas Henry and the major section of the Lachute congregation elected to remain faithful to the "Auld Kirk" or the Free Church of Scotland, where the ministers would be chosen and paid by the congregation. There was, however, a small but powerful minority who wished to remain with the Montreal Presbytery and accordingly, the Secession Church through the Presbytery of Montreal promised a grant of 50 pounds to a minister's salary, if Lachute congregation would affiliate with them. At a meeting of the congregation held in Lachute, most of the Free Church sympathizers walked out before the vote was taken, but the few Secession members left, voted that they should retain the building. The two powerful Secession members, John and James McOuat, promised a grant of 40 pounds to the Henry faction as equivalent to their stake in the building, provided they built a new church for themselves. For several years the two factions held their services at different times in the same church, the Secession members trying to obtain a minister for themselves. First the Rev. Andrew Kennedy, then the Rev. Walker Scott came, most of their salary being paid by the church in Scotland, but neither stayed long. One of these ministers deliberately locked the Free Church congregation out of the church, but it is to the credit of his congregation that they heartily disapproved of this action. Finally in 1859, John Mackie who was principal of the Lachute Academy accepted the ministry of the United Secession Church beginning on the pitiful stipend of 40 pounds a year. Mackie worked so hard and earnestly with his congregation that he increased their number from 25 to over 200, his own stipend increasing to 750 dollars. Mackie, who was to remain long in Lachute, lived in a house just to the west of the cemetery (standing in 1963) and the stone church in the cemetery was now called the Mackie Church. He was educated at Glasgow University and received his theological training at the United Presbyterian Hall, Edinburgh. He was only 36 when he came to Lachute and by his earnestness endeared himself greatly to the community.

The Rev. Thomas Henry was educated at Edinburgh University and like Mackie he married a Scottish girl. He too was to make his mark on Lachute, particularly in the sphere of education. The Free Church congregation in 1851 made the complete break with the Seceders and built their own church somewhat west of the Mackie Church on the other side of Main Street, the site being almost on the east corner of Francis and Main Streets. This church had more of a conventional church appearance than did the "Mackie" edifice. It was built of brick with a tower and spire and was always referred to as "Henry's Church" or the brick church, in contrast to Mackie's Church or the stone church. On the north wall behind the pulpit, an arch was painted studded with gold stars and framing the text, "Praise Ye The Lord," and there was a gallery built on the south wall over the entrance door. Henry died in 1868 and was succeeded by the Rev. John Eadie, then by the Rev. William Forlong who came in 1872.

In the end, the Free Church and the Seceders became reconciled and joined forces to form the United Presbyterian Church in 1861, though there were still two congregations and two ministers in Lachute. Finally in June, 1875, all the Presbyterian bodies in Canada were affiliated into "The Presbyterian Church in Canada."

### ***Methodists***

The Methodists were not as numerous as the Presbyterians though there were some staunch supporters, notably Thomas Jackson in Lachute and the Hyatts in the Fast Settlement. They first held services in the East End school house and in 1829 there was a special service led by Lachlan Taylor to commemorate the centenary of Methodism. In 1852, however, the first Methodist Church was built at Lachute between the Mackie Church and P. H. Lane's store, and it was to serve until 1882. It was a modest church built of brick and dedicated by the Rev. W. M. Scott, but nevertheless it saddled the little congregation with a large debt.

In 1854, a Methodist Church was built in Grenville and in 1861 a wooden church was built at the East Settlement, but this was later used for Presbyterian services. In 1865, Lachute became the head of the Methodist Circuit instead of St. Andrews. Ever since Rev. T. Osgoode founded the first Sunday School in 1811, the Methodist Sunday School continued to flourish and eventually met in the Olivet Hall at the Lachute Mills, which had been built by James Fish.

### ***Roman Catholics***

Most of the earlier Roman Catholics were Irish families. In 1828, a letter from Archie McMILLAN to Papineau said there were 28 Catholic families in Grenville and about 14 in Chatham and Lachute. A chapel was constructed to serve these families in 1830 near to the Ottawa River at Grenville. The first regular services in Lachute were conducted by the Rev. Calixte Ouimet, vicar of St. Andrews. The congregation used to meet in the East End school until they built a small wooden church and Presbytery which after three services had been held was destroyed by fire in 1876 and a brick church was then built on Bethany Street, 80 feet by 28 feet, to seat 400 people. There was no regular incumbent until 1879, the church being served by St. Andrews which had built its first Catholic Church in 1835.

### ***Other Denominations***

Before 1876, there were no Baptist or Anglican Churches in Lachute, though in 1836 the Baptists were holding baptisms in the Ottawa River and shared the Congregational Church in St. Andrews in 1843. The Anglicans built a church in St. Andrews in 1821, in Grenville in 1832 and in Lakefield in 1838, but in Lachute they held services in the Lachute College building and also in the old court house until they built their church in 1881.

## **SCHOOLS**

Schools were established by the Board of the Royal Institution in 1829 but by 1841, schools received direct

government grants and all teachers had to be examined and obtain a certificate. There was, however, some opposition to the maintenance of government-aided schools supporting a free education because of the tax burden imposed on the community. The 1841 Act enabled both Protestants and Roman Catholics to provide separate education for their children and the dual system of education was begun. In 1841, a log schoolhouse was built in the East Settlement. In 1857, there was some kind of school at Hill Head and another log schoolhouse was built at Mount Maple around 1865 called the “Warwick School” where the registrar, G. F. Calder, received his first schooling.

The Rev. Thomas Henry, being interested in education, started classes for higher education in his own house, but these became so popular that he moved them to the basement of the brick church of which he was pastor. At a public meeting in 1853, parents were so appreciative of Henry’s attempts in the realm of higher education that they established a “superior” school governed by five directors. The directors drew up a course of study, appointed a staff of teachers and thus a new school, “The Lachute Academy” came into being. Until accommodation could be built, the Academy still continued in the basement of the church with the Rev. T. Henry as the first principal, assisted by Dr. T. Christie and J. Gibson. John Meikle was the president of the Board of Directors and Gibson was secretary. After 18 months, a grant of £75 was obtained from the government and an Act of Incorporation for a Lachute College was obtained in July, 1856. In 1855-56, the student roll was 210 of which 116 were over 16 years old.

The course of study was an ambitious one consisting of History, Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, Mathematics, English Grammar and Composition, Geography, Drawing, Design, French and Elementary Astronomy. In 1856, chemical apparatus was bought and in 1859, maps and an “orrery” were obtained, the latter being a clockwork mechanism depicting the motions of the planets around the sun. Some teachers gave their time voluntarily so that the total cost of running the

school was only **£120** in 1856. In 1858, new buildings were built on the south side of Main Street, east of Bethany Street and a section of this building is still standing in 1963. The street parallel to Main Street, behind the Academy site continues to be called "College Street." The new College building was midway between the East End schoolhouse and the log schoolhouse in the west. John Mackie was made the principal of the new college at a salary of \$3 50 per year paid in silver, together with all fees accruing from his classes. Dr. T. Christie demonstrated chemistry and the staff also included James Emslie and Adam Orr, a teacher of great brilliance and ambition who taught French and literature before going to Chicago.

After two years as principal, Mackie resigned to become pastor at the stone Presbyterian Church in the Cemetery and he was followed in 1860 by John Reade. In 1862, the government grant was halved and the College ran into debt. The directors of the Academy, as the college was called, then amalgamated with the public schools and the total government grant from both sources, **£44**, was handed to the school commissioners on the understanding that a headmaster should be engaged who was competent to teach classics. Thus the building then became both a primary school as well as a building for higher education. This caused the East End school to close and the building was bought by G. J. Walker in 1876 for **£75**. The next principal was Alex Stewart, followed by G. Thompson, then G. H. Drewe, after which Stewart returned and stayed until 1870 when he was followed by C. S. Holiday and then Murdock Munroe came for one year. Holiday returned in 1875 and remained until 1884 before going to Huntingdon Academy.

In 1855, a Mechanics' Institute was formed in Lachute with Dr. T. Christie, John Meikle and S. Hills as trustees. It had a membership of 21 in 1855 which grew to 140 in 1856. The Mechanics' Institute was an organization for establishing libraries and the Lachute branch received an addition from the District Library Association which united with it. The Library,

which eventually exceeded 1700 volumes was housed in the house of Donald McPhail at the east corner of Main Street and Barron. Later the Institute was disbanded, the books coming into the possession of D. Raitt, though it was still alive in 1896.

## SERVICES

### ***(1) Government and Municipal:***

With the birth of St. Jerusalem Parish in 1852 and Argenteuil County in 1855, a Parish and County council came into existence. The new county elected one representative to the Legislative Assembly at Quebec, and after 1867 when the Dominion of Canada was formed, along with the County of Two Mountains, it was represented by one member in the Federal Government at Ottawa. These elections were stormy occasions mainly because zealous protagonists of each party tried to win votes by the distribution of much free liquor which ended with brawls between the various parties. For this reason, S. Bellingham's election to the Quebec Legislature was declared null and void and there seems some doubt as to whether he or J. J. C. Abbott represented the County between 1854-1861. Between 1861-1866, the Hon. J. J. C. Abbott was the county's representative, but in 1867 he became the first Federal M.P., Sidney Bellingham being elected to the Legislative Assembly. Bellingham was a Montreal barrister and political correspondent who was much interested in the development of the northern parts of the county.

The first County Council of Argenteuil met on the 23rd of August, 1855, and comprised the mayors of the various towns and parishes within the county — Dr. T. Christie representing St. Jerusalem Parish; but after 1858, Lt. Col. Thomas Barron served as mayor of St. Jerusalem until his death in 1864, after which he was succeeded by Thos. Barton, his nephew, until 1881. The Secretary of the County Council was Gavin J. Walker, a son of James Walker, the farmer and miller who came to Lachute in 1832.



Thomas Barron, the nephew, was appointed Clerk to the Circuit Court in 1858, and in this same year he was also Deputy Registrar of Argenteuil under Col. D. de Hertil; he succeeded as Registrar on de Hertil's death in 1866.

Before the present Court House was built in 1887, the registry and meetings of the Circuit Court were housed in the old Court House located opposite the Barron house, well back from the road just to the west of the present Auditorium in what is now the Memorial Park. This was a large square stone building of three stories, with a chimney flanking each side wall, a wooden shingle roof and a wooden platform with steps built out against the front wall. Lt. Col. Barron built this probably around 1845, his original intentions were not clear but it was listed as a house in the 1851 census. The shingle roof was renewed in 1883 and the wooden platform from where Abbott and Bellingham delivered political speeches to woo the votes of their constituents was taken down in 1896. The building was up for sale in 1888, but was later gutted by fire though the foundations persisted until the Memorial Park was made in 1920.

It is probable that it became a public building shortly after 1858, T. Barron, the nephew, on his appointment as Clerk to the Circuit Court and Deputy Registrar in 1858, then selling it to the County Council. The first registry, however, must have been located elsewhere until this building became the accepted Court House since the registry was moved from St. Andrews to Lachute in 1855.

Its first home was a small single-storey stone building located in a position corresponding to the more westerly door of the present Lachute High School on Court Street.

This building, consisting of one main room, had served as a magistrate's Court House when the elder Barron was magistrate. It was set on fire around 1895 but is still commemorated in the name of the street which was known as Court Street even before 1880.

## POSTAL SERVICES

P. C. Hutchins was the first postmaster in 1835 but J. Meikle became postmaster of Lachute in 1836. County post offices were quickly established at Dunany in 1853; Brownsburg in 1855; Harrington in 1856; Geneva near Beech Ridge in 1860; and a post office in the East Settlement with the name, Genoa, in 1871.

## PROFESSIONAL

Lachute acquired its first notary, Mr. Chenier, in the 1860's but he left for Manitoba in 1870, and was succeeded by A. Berthelot.

In 1850, Lachute was fortunate in obtaining a medical practitioner who was to stay with the community until his death and to take an active part in furthering the political and educational aspirations of the community. Dr. Thomas Christie was born in Glasgow in 1824, came to Canada in 1827 and was educated at McGill University. In 1847-48, he was a surgeon combatting the ship fever epidemic that was said to have killed 6,000 immigrants.

Christie was mayor of St. Jerusalem in 1855, chemistry teacher in the Lachute Academy, and was later to become Liberal M.P. for Argenteuil as well as Chairman of the Board of School Commissioners.

Dr. Christie erected the first creditable dwelling on Main Street with one side flanking the west side of Harriet Street. It was built in brick with lawns and flower beds in front. The house, shorn of its verandahs, still stands in 1963, the present occupier being Dr. E. Christie, a grandson of Dr. T. Christie.

Another doctor came to Lachute immediately after his graduation at McGill in 1876 — Dr. William Smith.

## SOCIETIES

Before 1876, the only Society of note was the County Agricultural Society. In 1869, the President was E. Jones and

the Vice-President, John Hay. The object of the Society was to assist the farmers by promoting agriculture and to hold an annual exhibition and ploughing match. This Society was to have an unbroken record of achievement and today still carries out its original functions.

Another society which was to become powerful and vociferous was the "Sons of Temperance." There were a number of influential people in the parish who were opposed to liquor; in fact the town seemed to be sharply divided into total abstainers and habitual drunkards who made themselves a nuisance to everyone. This society and its successor, the Good Templars, were later to have much influence in the town. In 1855, it was able to form a local band, the first organized musical effort of Lachute.

#### **RESUME Of Lachute - 1836-1876**

In 1843, Lachute was a community without a centre, but developing at each end of Main Street at points some two miles apart. At the West End near the falls were grist mills, saw mills, a carding mill, two stores, a hotel, a few wooden houses and a log school. At the East End near Lane's Corner was a Presbyterian Church in a graveyard, a store and a school. In the next 10 years, two more churches -and another store were added. Today, all these buildings have disappeared except one store, now a private house, and the disused school house.

By 1874, much development had taken place between and beyond these two localities.

By 1874, about half a mile east of Lane's Corner was Hills' tannery fitted with steam power, the two Hills brothers living in stone houses on each side of the road, the one on the north side still surviving in 1963. The workers' cottages were built along the brook between the road and the river which was handy since there was a six-day week operating from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. On the south side of the road between the brook and Lane's Corner (Dunany Road) were the farm house of Staniforth (G. Morrison 1963), the

Methodist Manse, the Houston home, John Jackson's home (A. Hanly, 1963), Thos. Jackson's home (G. Arundel-Evans, 1963), Patterson home (G. Davidson, 1963), the Van home demolished 1961, the Walker home and the East End school, the stone Mackie Church and neglected graveyard choked with trees and brush, the site of the church being well back and just west of the main cemetery driveway, an old house, the Methodist Church also surrounded on the east by the graves, the Mackie home (standing 1963) and Phineas Lane's home and store. On the north side opposite the Houston home was the brick store of Sam Orr (Miss H. Smith, 1963).

Between Lane's Corner (Dunany Road) and Bethany Road on the south side were three farms owned by Burch (Earl Rogers, 1963), W. Henry, the son of Rev. T. Henry (Lowe's, 1963) and Burroughs, Simon MacKimmie's home and carpenter shop, Fraser home (standing, 1963), Lachute Academy (a fragment stands, 1963), G. Thompson's home, T. Palliser's home and blacksmith shop, the Lavigne home (destroyed 1962) and Meikle residence (standing 1963). Along the north side of the road from Lane's Corner up to Clyde Street, were Henry's Church, the Henry house, the homes of P. Aubin, Joss, David Christie with shoemaking shop, Thomas Bedard's home and carriage factory (R. Macadam, 1963), Brunnet home, I. Carriere bakery and the office of the Argenteuil Advertiser, a newspaper started by Hickson in 1872.

Over Barron's Bridge was the stone house built for the agent to the Seigniorie now called the Clunie House, then a wooden bridge over the West River leading to a bush road which followed the west side of the river to the Chatham boundary. Opposite the river bank going west from Barron's Bridge were the Mirreau home, old log schoolhouse, the Notary Bartelot's home and office, the Leggo and Giroux homes, A. Ben's store, Maillet home, Barley home, Allan's Hotel on the south side of Grace Street, Millar home, James Fish's home and F. Poitras' home.

Opposite Ben's store on the river side were the Olivet Hall built by J. Fish and extended by him in 1876, more houses

and tenements, the home and blacksmith's shop of Wm. Armstrong, Fish's saw and grist mills, the carding mill, some cottages and the Cruise farms.

In addition, there were a number of shacks between the centre of Main Street and the river occupied by French families among which were the Larimies, Beausejours, Augers and Gagnons.

Between 1874 and 1876, two factors of the greatest significance occurred to Lachute, firstly the railroad from Montreal was being laid, and secondly two gentlemen named Felix Hamelin and Thomas Ayers were surveying the district with a view to starting a woollen mill.