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A BIT OF HISTORY....



The year 2021 marks the 200th anniversary of the Irish immigration to this area.

Shannon, currently a city of over 6 300 residents, is situated 25 kms northwest of Québec City between the Canadian Forces Base Valcartier and the city of Sainte-Catherine-de-la-Jacques-Cartier. Shannon's share of the Laurentian Mountain Range and the beautiful but sometimes turbulent Jacques-Cartier River make up part of the spice of life for its residents.

Until its founding in 1947, the territory of the Municipality of Shannon was part of the Parish of Sainte-Catherine-de-Fossambault, and was called St. Patrick Settlement.

The origin and development of Shannon

On February 20th, 1693, the Governor of New France, Louis de Buade from the County of Frontenac, awarded Alexandre Peuvret de Mesnu, squire and master of Gaudarville, the area called the Seigneurie de Fossambault. This region was named in honour of Peuvret's mother, Catherine Nau de Fossambault. By 1821, Michel-Louis Juchereau Duchesnay, Peuvret's great-grandson, had inherited the Seigneurie de Fossambault.

During the first half of the 1800's, a very difficult political and economic situation existed in Ireland. Many Irish people were forced to seek a new life and a new livelihood outside Ireland. Prospective emigrants often looked towards Canada to start anew. Many ended up in Quebec City and its surrounding area.

At that time, the principal economic activity surrounding the Quebec City area was the exploitation of Quebec's virgin forests. Most of the wood harvested from these forests ended up either in the shipyards of Quebec or was transported to the British Isles. Many of the ships that left Quebec with a cargo of lumber, returned with their holds severely overcrowded with Irish immigrants. They endured horrible sanitary conditions with records showing that some of these Trans-Atlantic crossings took some 45 days. Some died enroute and many arrived very sick and emaciated



One of the ships that carried our Irish ancestors to Canada was called The Town of Ross and reportedly carried members of the Guilfoyle and Griffin families. Most of the Irish who came to settle in this area, did so approximately 25 years before the Great Famine.

Records show that numerous ships left the Cove of Cork, Ireland, bound for Quebec. Amongst them were:

- “Stakesby Transport” left on July 8th, 1823 and arrived at the Port of Quebec on September 2nd with 278 passengers aboard. They included some of the following Irish families: Barry, Leahy, Madden, McCarthy, Murphy, Shea, Sheehan, Sullivan & Thompson.
- “Hebe Transport” left on July 8th, 1823 and arrived in Quebec on August 31st with 198 passengers over 14 years of age, and 91 under 14 years of age, for a total of 289 passengers. They included families such as: Barry, Donovan, Kelley, Maher, McCarty, Murphy, Sheehan, Sullivan & White.
- “John Barry Transport” left on May 2nd, 1825 with Thomas & Bridget Shea & their 7 children from Limerick, Richard & Ellen Sullivan & their 5 children from Cork, John & Ellen Sullivan & their 4 children also from Cork.
- “Albion Transport” left Cork with 190 passengers, 2 were born on board and 5 children died during the trip. John & Bridget Sheehan and their 6 children from

Churchtown, Cork came to Quebec on this ship. Also Daniel & Ellen Sheehan & their 6 children; James & Bridget Barry & their 5 children.

- “Amity Transport” left on May 13th, 1825 with 147 passengers aboard. Owen & Margaret McCarthy, a labourer from Cork were aboard this ship with their 7 children, ages 2 to 16 years old.
- “Elizabeth Transport” left on May 16th, 1825 with Patrick & Anne Leahy & their 5 children as well as Egans, Hamiltons, Murphys & McCarthys.

The following account of the new settlements in Gaudarville and Fossambault was given before a committee of the House of Assembly in 1823, by Lieutenant-Colonel Duchesnay, the proprietor. *“These settlements, mostly of Irish emigrants, were commenced in October 1820. The number of grants amount to 232; there are about 225 resident proprietors, about 80 children or more and about 70 or 80 labourers employed. Very few of the settlers had any capital to begin with, most of them had hardly anything; they were, therefore obliged to overcome the difficulties incident to new settlements and want of capital by great privation, extreme economy, occasionally labouring for money to provide provisions, working industriously while provided and when unprovided repeating the same means. During the summer many of the settlers obtained employment as tradesmen or labourers in the king’s works in Quebec; others could not, from the number wanted being supplied. The wages to tradesmen were from 4s. to 5s. a day and to labourers from 2s. to 2s. 6d. a day. To these settlers the Quebec Society of Emigrants gave five pounds currency in provisions for the use of those in urgent necessity, and lent to others 10l. currency for the purchase of seed. Provisions were besides given to 4 or 5 families and some of the women were assisted by the Quebec Benevolent Society. Some clothing was also charitably given by Mr. LeFrançois, curé of St. Augustin, to some of the men, women and children. In order to assist the settlers, the proprietor (Colonel Duchesnay) liberally advanced to them provisions and seed, opened roads and procured work for some and employed others; and the sum of 25l. currency was expended by the commissioners for the internal communications to assist in making a road to the settlement. The rents are 30s. currency per lot of 90 arpents, deducting the usual charges for the difference of money (argent tournois), wheat, capons, corvées, & etc. For nearly 4 years no rent was required. Above 670 arpents of land have been cleared in 1823 in St. Patrick Settlement. For clearing out the stumps, 50s. per square arpent are generally paid. As no capital is required to obtain lands, and as no rent is paid for the first 3 or 4 years, the settlers are highly pleased with their lands and the tenure; and if there were more lands in the seigniories similarly situated there would be no difficulty in obtaining more settlers; the only obstacle now is the lands to be conceded are at a greater distance, which however would cease to be an impediment if roads were made, etc.”*

Considering the established timber industry and the shipyards of Quebec, settlers were attracted to this parish by the abundance of virgin forests and potential farmland. However, colonization of this area was very difficult because the pioneers were isolated due to the lack of adequate road network.



As no capital was required to obtain lands, and as no rent was paid for the first three or four years, the settlers were highly attracted to settle in a seigneurie. Still there was competition amongst the seigneurs to attract settlers to their seigneurie. Agents of some Seigneurs would meet the ships at the port, promising to include a cow in the offer, in order to entice settlers to their regions. The Seigneur for the St. Patrick Settlement was Michel-Louis Juchereau Duchesnay. He provided his settlers with a hoe, an axe, a shovel and a pitchfork to cultivate the land he allotted them. He also provided his tenants with the service of grinding their grain in his mill.

By 1823, more than 670 arpents (566 acres) of land had been cleared in the St. Patrick Settlement.

Statistics of this Settlement that year showed the following:

Population: 283

Arpents under cultivation: 310

Annual Agricultural Produce:

- Wheat: 90 bushels
- Oats: 1,172 bushels
- Barley: 54 bushels
- Rye: 27 bushels
- Peas: 76 bushels
- Hay, etc.: 250 bushels
- Potatoes: 19,340 bushels
- Butter: 18 cwts. (1,800 lbs.)

Livestock:

- Horses: 10
- Horned cattle: 64
- Swine: 4

Listed on the census of 1825 in this new settlement were many Irish families; among them: 6 McCarthys, 14 Doyles, 5 Powers, 13 Walshs, 9 Mahers, 10 Murphys, 8 Donovans, 9 Dunns and 9 Landers.

A summary of the 1831 census of Sainte-Catherine shows that there were 1,110 Irish, 346 French Canadians, 10 English, 8 Scottish, 1 Dane and 1 Swede. Some of the families listed were: Barry, Bowles, Buggy, Cahill, Conway, Corcoran, Donovan, Doyle, Driscoll, Dunn, Farrell, Fogerty, Griffin, Grogan, Gurry, Hamilton, Henchey, Irish, Kelly, Kennedy, Kiley, Lahey, Landers, Landrigan, Lannin, Maher, McClusky, McGrath, Meehan, Mooney, Murphy, Neville, Power, Shanahan, Shannon, Thompson, Walsh and White.

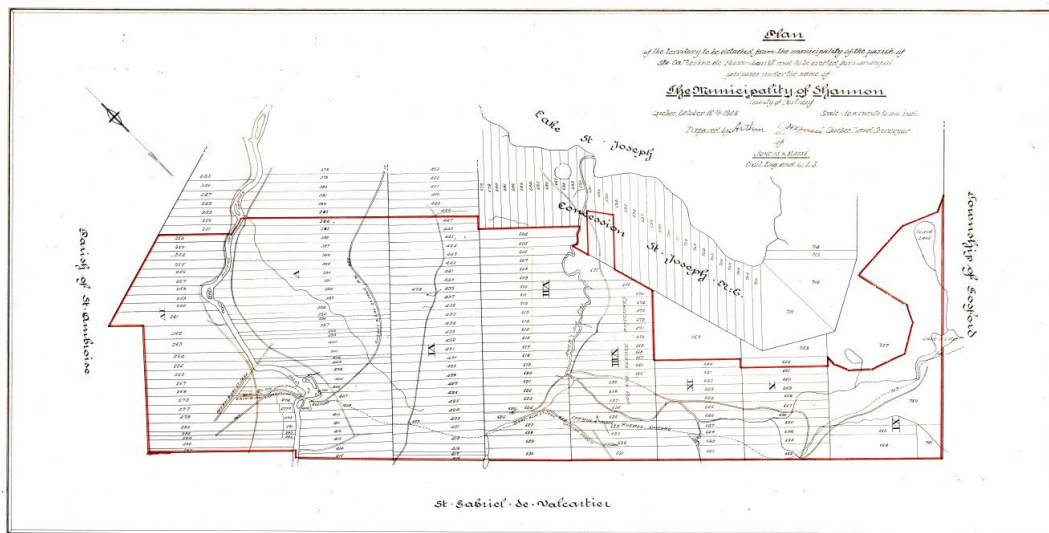
Creation of the Parish

The Seigneurie de Fossambault grouped together the current territories of Sainte-Catherine-de-la-Jacques-Cartier, Fossambault-sur-le-Lac, Lake St-Joseph and the City of Shannon.

The wish to be recognized as a parish dated back to the 19th century. Many petitions and requests under the direction of the Seigneur of Fossambault, Michel-Louis Juchereau Duchesnay, were made and in 1824 the parish of Sainte-Catherine de Fossambault was established.

Shannon

Prior to 1946, what was to become Shannon belonged to Sainte-Catherine. The settlers of Irish descent were mostly concentrated in the easternmost area of the parish. As such they were separated by both land and language from the French-speaking centre in Sainte-Catherine. In time they came to realize that they were not receiving adequate services for the amount of taxes paid. For example, though taxes were high, the roads in the parish were less than satisfactory. Led by Thomas Guilfoyle, a movement was started to separate from Sainte-Catherine. Eventually, on December 14th, 1946, Shannon separated from the parish of Sainte-Catherine to become a municipal corporation, and therefore an independent municipality.

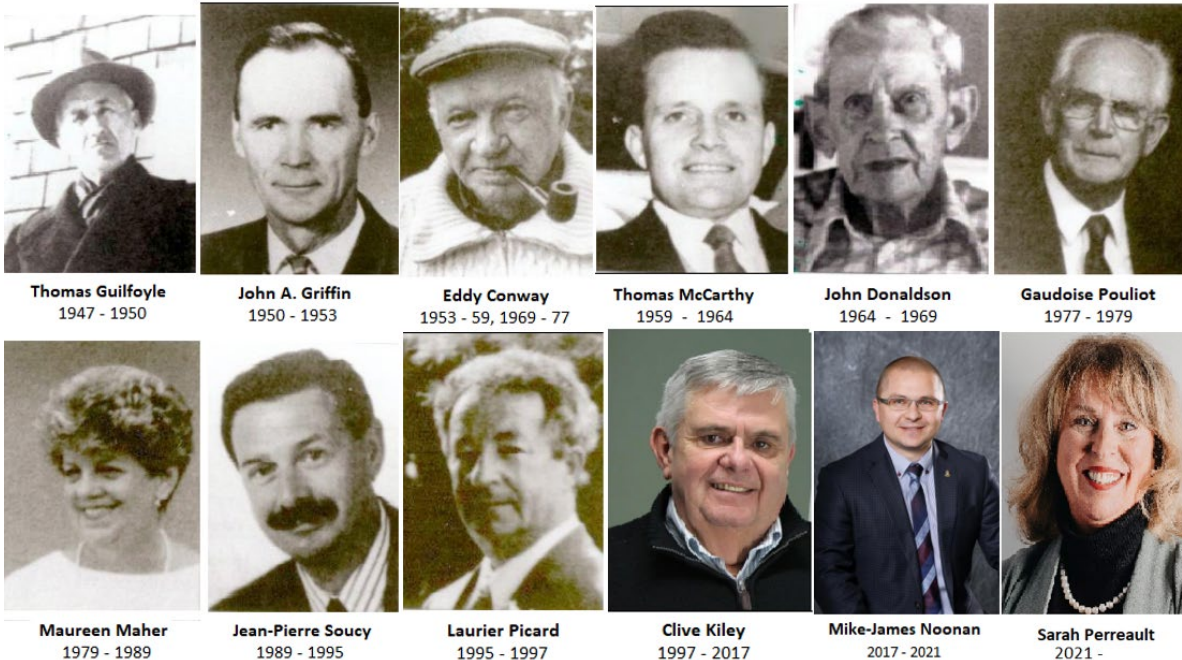


The first council meeting of the Municipal Corporation of Shannon was held in January 1947. The Mayor was Mr. Thomas Guilfoyle. The six councillors were: Messrs. John Donaldson, Herbert Lemelin, John Campbell, Frank King, Joseph B. Conway and John McClintock. Initial meetings were held at Mr. John Donaldson's house, pictured below, on 6th range (now Wexford Road), until April of that year, after which they were held at Mr. Frank King's on Gosford Road.



It wasn't until 1959 that the councillors decided to hold their meetings in the old Shannon Hall located at 75 Gosford Road. The new Shannon Hall was built in 1974 and that is where the monthly council meetings were held until 2015. Meetings are now held at the municipal offices on St. Patrick Street.

Following are the Mayors of Shannon and their terms of office:



Mr. George Henderson was the first Secretary-Treasurer of Shannon. He served from 1947-1952. Jack A. Griffin replaced him in 1953 until 1978. In 1979, Mrs. Dale Feeney was appointed to this position, which she held until her retirement in December 2010. In 2011, Me Hugo Lépine was appointed Secretary-Treasurer and Director General, followed by Gaétan Bussièrès in 2016.

From the beginning, Shannon was part of the County Council of Portneuf with 28 other municipalities. In 1979, Bill 125 abolished the County Councils and created Municipal Regional Counties or MRCs. As a bordering municipality, Shannon had the choice of either remaining with Portneuf or joining the municipalities that were part of the County Council of Quebec. After many meetings, it was felt that Shannon had more in common with the municipalities of the County Council of Quebec. Shannon joined the following nine other municipalities to form the new MRC de La Jacques-Cartier: Saint-Gabriel-de-Valcartier, Saint-Gabriel West, Sainte-Catherine, Lac St-Joseph, Fossambault-sur-le-Lac, Lac Delage, St Dunstan du Lac Beauport, Stoneham-Tewkesbury, Sainte-Brigitte de Laval. In 2017, Shannon officially became a city.

According to Statistics Canada, the population of Shannon in 1951 was 281 and had 42 farms. In 2012, the population had risen to 5,086 and only one farm remained. In 2019, the population was 6,233, but there were no longer any farms in operation.