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OLD-TIME STUFF

REMINISCENCES OF THE OTTAWA OF EARLIER DAYS.
Personages, Scenes and Incidents Recalled for Evening Citizen Readers

STIRRING LIFE STORY TOLD BY A NONOGENARIAN; AS BOY OF SEVEN WITNESSED BURNING ST. EUSTACHE, ONE OF DRAMATIC EVENTS PAPINEAU REBELLION

In Following Year, 1838, Came to Bytown With Parents. Lived Here Four Years. Maxime St. Jean Tells of Very Early Days in the Old Town. Exciting Stories of Later Life as Riverman. Saw First Train Out of Levis.

Today is presented one of the most striking stories yet offered by the Old Time Stuff.

The story has features which put it somewhat in a class by itself.

In the first place it is told by a man who in 1837 was a boy of seven years of age, and was an eye-witness of the most stirring events of the Papineau rebellion—the fight at St. Eustache.

In the second place the man who tells the tale, though almost 95 years of age, has all his faculties fully preserved, unusually preserved, and is one of the most remarkable nonogenarians the Old Time Stuff has ever met.

In the third place he lived in Bytown from 1838 to 1842, and later as a riverman frequently visited the town, and now gives first hand evidence as to many things of interest which occurred here in the thirties, forties and fifties.

Knew Joe Montferrand.

He knew the great Joe Montferrand, rafted with him, while still a youth, and witnessed two of his celebrated fights.

Woven into this story is a nice bit of romance in which Mrs. St. Jean is one of the principal figures.

* * *

Introducing Maxime St. Jean.

And now let us introduce Maxime St. Jean, of Arnprior, formerly of Ottawa, who has been here for several weeks going over the ground where he spent four years of his boyhood. Mr. St. Jean while in Ottawa stayed with his son, Mr. Joseph St. Jean, who lives at 288 Bay street.

Long Lived Family.

Maxime St. Jean is not only a nonogenarian, but is a nonogenarian among nonogenarians. An older brother died a few years ago in Montreal at the remarkable age of one hundred and twelve years, and he has a sister living at Campbell's Bay who is ninety-seven and still going strong. His paternal grandfather lived to be very old, and his father probably would have also lived to be very old. But while still a young man, he was drowned near the Calumet. That was in 1842.

Erect, with clear eye, and clear mind, Maxime St. Jean told the Old Time Stuff his story.

"I have followed your Old Time Stuff since it started," he said, "and I am greatly interested in it. I spent four years of my boyhood here and frequently visited the place while I was on the river, and I like to hear about the old things and the old people.

An Exciting Day.

"I remember clearly back to 1837," he said. "I was then seven years old."

"That was the year of the rebellion," the O.T.S. remarked.

"That is why I remember that year so well," he replied. "Our family in that year lived in St. Eustache. I was then seven years of age, having been born in 1830.

"One day in December, 1837, there was great excitement in the village. All the people left their houses and hurried into the big stone church. Of course I did not know what it was all about, but all the women and children were very frightened. After a while the men who were in the church fired guns at soldiers outside and the soldiers fired back. The church got on fire and the people had to run out on the streets. A lot of people were killed by the soldiers as they came out.

People Were Drowned.

"There was ice on the river, and I remember seeing a lot of people run out on the ice to escape from the soldiers. But the ice broke with the weight of the people and a lot of them were drowned.

"There was a terrible time. Men shouted and the women and children cried and screamed. After a while the soldiers went away taking a lot of the men with them, and the people went back to their houses. I was seven years of age and old enough to realize the terrible nature of the things that went on, though of course it was not for years later that I found out what it was all about."

THE STORY AS RECORDED IN HISTORY.

In order to show the accuracy of Mr. St. Jean's recollections of the events of that winter day at St. Eustache, when he was only seven years old, the Old Time Stuff quotes from Dr. Alfred De Celles' story of the event as told in the "Makers of Canada." The similarity of the accounts are striking.

Dr. De Celles wrote: "The disastrous occurrence on the Richelieu river should have opened the eyes of the infatuated patriots in the other sections of the country, but unfortunately reason had no hold on certain firebrands of St. Eustache, where Amury Girod, a self-appointed general, headed a band of excited and misguided peasants. This Girod was a Swiss * * * and a stranger to the people under his command.

"Colborne, with artillery, horse and foot, marched on St. Eustache and met Dr. Chenier, who had replaced Girod. The latter, on hearing of the approach of the English troops, had fled, and, fearing vengeance at the hands of the people had committed suicide. Colborne reached St. Eustache on Dec. 14. What then occurred will be better told by one who took part in the action, Lt. Lysons.

Villagers Opened Fire.

"'When approaching the village one brigade of the field battery continued to advance on the road running parallel to the river; the other brigade turned off to the right and went across to the end of the street leading down the center of the village, at right angles to the river. Lines of skirmishers from the village met the riverside brigade and opened fire on them, but soon retired.

"'The field battery then opened fire on the church and stone buildings around it; but there was no reply. So Sir John Colborne, seeing the houses were empty and that everything was quiet, thought the rebels had retired and abandoned the place. He therefore sent Brigade Major Dickson and his aide-de-camp down the main street facing the great stone church. As soon as they got down near the church a rattling fire was opened on them and they narrowly escaped with their lives.

Fired on Church.

"'One of the howitzers was brought round into the main street and an effort was made to batter in the big doors of the church, but this failed. Ned Wetherall of the Royals then managed to creep round behind the houses and get into a large stone house that was at right angles to the church and to windward of it; he then upset the burning stove on the floor and pulled every inflammable thing he could find over it. In a few minutes the whole house was on fire, and volumes of smoke mantled the church.

"'Col. Wetherall took advantage of this and advanced his regiment under cover of the smoke, at the double down the street. * * * We got round to the back of the church and found a small door leading into the sacristy, which we battered in, and Ormsby and I rushed in followed by some of our men.

At Close Quarters.

"'We then went into the main body of the church, which appeared quite dark, the windows being barricaded. Here the rebels began firing down on our heads. We could not get up to them for the staircases were broken down. So Ormsby lighted a fire behind the altar and ...

ZEN OF THE Y.D. A Novel of the Foothills

BY ROBERT STEAD

Author of "The Cow Puncher," "The Homesteaders," "Neighbors" etc

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