



# De Laporte à St-Georges



## 1880's Laporte, Martin & Cie



Hormidas Laporte started his retail business in Montreal in the 1870's. In 1881 he partnered with a friend, J.-B. Martin, to establish a fruit and vegetable market. In 1883 they transformed their business into the wholesale distribution of "a line of goods of the most complete and comprehensive character, embracing foreign and domestic groceries of every description, a splendid array of table luxuries (imported direct by the firm), and a large supply of wines and

liquors, representing the product of the most noted vineyards and distilleries in the world" (Le Monde Illustré 1894).

### Quebec Stoneware

The Farrar family, potters of Vermont, settled at St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec in the early 1800's and established a stoneware industry in the Richelieu Valley which thrives today. Their earliest products were made with a salt-glazing process involving throwing shovels-full of rock salt into a stoneware kiln fired to the highest temperature possible. The salt would explode and cover the kiln-dried stoneware with a thin covering of glass like residue. This produced a very uneven product and even damaged some of the stoneware in the kiln so it was quite an expensive process. By the late 1880's they had developed a white-ware process which involved dipping the stoneware in a glaze before it was fired in the kiln. This greatly reduced the manufacturing cost and so the salt-glazed ware rapidly disappeared from the market.

The Farrar's held the largest share of the market in those earliest days by aggressively marketing their product through traveling salesmen who visited the merchants of Montreal and Quebec City. This stoneware jug is quite similar in feature to other Farrar jugs made in the 1870's to 1880's.

*The ½ gallon Laporte, Martin & Cie crock bought on eBay and returned to "the family" by Michael St.George in August 2004.*





# Birthdays

From January to March

Our best wishes to those who have celebrated a birthday or  
will celebrate one soon.

## January

- 13- Rita-Anne Laframboise  
William St-George
- 23- Albert St-Georges
- 31- Jean-Paul Bordeleau

## February

- 24- Madeleine St-Georges

## March

- 28- Louis St-Georges

### **World Association of Laporte's & St-Georges**

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### Collaborators

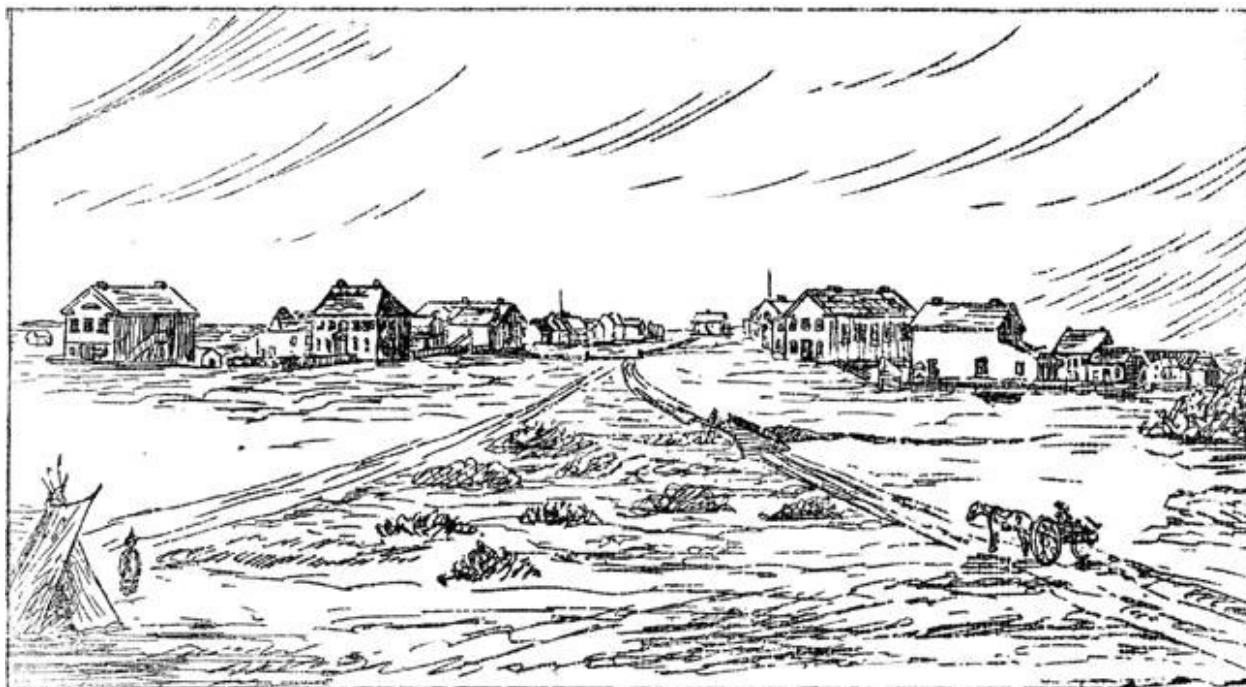
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## The Commercial and Canada Hotels



*Winnipeg in 1871*

This is the story of Zepherin Laporte and the two hotels he operated on Post Office Street in 1870's and 80's Winnipeg.

In the late 1860's, Mr. Onesime Monchamp established a saloon on a dirt lane off Main Street. At that time, Winnipeg's first post office had been run from William Ross's house since he was appointed postmaster of Ft. Garry in 1859. In 1871 the post office was moved from there to a 12' by 14' room in a corner of the new Commercial Building across the street from Monchamp's saloon. The building was of log construction covered with clapboard. After that the lane became known as Post Office St. and is now Lombard Avenue.

In 1873, Mr. Monchamp added a billiard room with 6 Brunswick tables to the rear of the saloon and a second floor over that with several rooms for gentlemen to relax in. The initial tax roll recorded in 1874 after Winnipeg was incorporated as a city lists Monchamp's Inn with a value of \$7000 and with an occupancy of seven including Monchamp and his wife. That year he built another addition and placed an advertisement in The Manitoba and le Manitoban newspapers for his "Hotel du Canada".

When the volume of mail at the Post office across the street exceeded the small room's capacity, a new Post Office building was built on Main Street in 1876.

The Manitoba Directory of 1877-78 includes an advertisement announcing the opening of the new Commercial Hotel in the old Post Office building on Post Office Street with Louis Payment as the proprietor. The same directory lists the residents of Monchamp's Hotel du Canada "this old popular hotel" across the street. These residents included Mr. C. (Casimir) Prud'homme of Bertrand and Prud'homme's Hardware Store and also Joseph Laporte a clerk at that store. (note: Mrs. Prud'homme is Eulalie Laporte, Joseph's sister)

The Manitoba Directory of 1878/79 lists Eusebe Monchamp (Onesime's brother) as proprietor of the Commercial Hotel and the Hotel du Canada is now being run by Mr. Prud'homme. Onesime Monchamp is still the owner and is staying in a room of the hotel. Joseph Laporte is now listed as a clerk at the Bertrand Hardware Store.

The 1879 tax roll for Winnipeg lists another sibling of Joseph and Eulalie's, Zepherin Laporte, who has recently arrived from Ottawa and is now another resident at the Hotel du Canada.

Cont... The Commercial and Canada Hotels...

The first issue of the Henderson's Guide for the City of Winnipeg came out in January 1880 and listed Zepherin Laporte as the new proprietor of the Commercial Hotel and his brother-in-law, C. Prud'homme still running the Hotel du Canada right across the street with Joseph employed as his clerk but living at the Commercial. The May 21 addendum in the same directory, however, shows that the Prud'hommes had sold out to Mr. J. A. Richard and had moved down to Emerson on the U. S. border to operate the Emerson House hotel.

Zepherin continued to run the Commercial Hotel from 1880 to 1885. In 1881, George Kerr, the city health inspector made a tour of the hotels in Winnipeg to find the one with the "cleanest yard". The Winnipeg Daily Times announced the winner of the award on June 27<sup>th</sup>:

*"The Health Inspector has decided to award the promised Gold Medal for the cleanest kept hotel yard in the city to Z. Laporte of the Commercial Hotel. It will be remembered that the first contest was between the American and the Commercial, but the latter has carried off the palm. Mr. Laporte's yard is a model of cleanliness and is well worthy of emulation by more pretentious hotels."*

In 1883 another brother, George Laporte, arrived from Ottawa to work as a federal Customs Officer in Winnipeg and boarded at the Commercial.

In July of that year, Zepherin issued a public challenge in The Manitoban newspaper, offering to match his "London Boy" against any challenger in a 10 mile trotting race for \$300 a side. That would have been a huge sum at the time. A race was scheduled but was later cancelled and Zepherin had to forfeit his \$100 deposit. But in 1884, his "London Boy" won a race against Mr. Kerr's "Inspector". However, they had chosen to run their race down Portage Avenue and were brought before the city court on charges of "immoderate driving within the city limits". Zepherin was fined \$10 plus costs for the offence but won \$500 in prize money from the race.

Zepherin played a role in a significant historical event in 1885. While Louis Riel was awaiting his execution in Regina, a crowd gathered on Main Street in Winnipeg to burn him in effigy. As the crowd raised his effigy on a rope over a black coffin, Zepherin came upon the scene and drove his wagon into the middle of the crowd and tore the effigy down. He was quickly surrounded and threatened by the mob but he succeeded in driving his wagon out through them. The effigy was then repaired, rose again and burned anyway marking one of the major events in the city's history to that date.



*The Commercial Building as it looked in 1909 well past its best days.*

Cont... The Commercial and Canada Hotels...

In the spring of 1885, Zepherin sold the Commercial Hotel and took over the Hotel du Canada returning it to the Laporte family. The Commercial Building is listed as being vacant in the 1885 Henderson's Directory. Later it housed a harness maker and the Moses Dufresne Grocery Store in the 1890's.



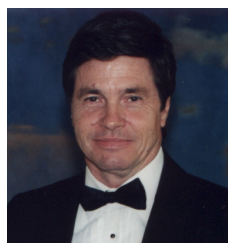
On July 30, 1885, Le Manitoba reported that "the Canada Hotel of which Mr. Zephyr Laporte has been the proprietor for some time has been renovated and is now one of the most fashionable in Winnipeg".

When Louis Riel's funeral was held in St. Boniface in December 1885, Zepherin was invited to walk at the head of the procession along with several of Manitoba's Members of Parliament, Judge L. Prud'homme, church officials and other community leaders.

On Sept. 2, 1886, Le Manitoba reported that "Mr. Z. Laporte who has been sick with an inflammation of the intestines is now well enough to walk around".

Zepherin continued to operate the Hotel du Canada until his sudden death at the age of 44 on February 20, 1891 after which the hotel passed into the hands of H. Benard.

#### MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT



Since I am out of the country, this message will probably get to you a little late. However, I want to wish a ~~happy-New- great~~ ~~Year~~ for 2005 and especially good health ~~to allow you in-order~~ to continue to participate ~~into~~ our annual family reunions.

2004 was a very good year for us with our successful reunion and a great number of new members. I want to thank ~~all-of~~ the volunteers who ~~so generously~~ gave their time to the Association and its members. We ~~can~~ only hope that this tradition continues in the future ~~years~~. It is the only way to keep our Association moving forward.

The new board of directors has already started planning the 2005 Reunion. ~~St-Donat has been~~ ~~It was suggested as possible location that St. Donat be the place this year~~. If you have other suggestions, they are welcomed. You can either call our secretary Marcel Laporte at 450-833-3107 or e-mail him at m.laporte@sympatico.ca.

Please, continue to send ~~any documentation of interest to the Association and especially for theyour texts for the bulletin-of-the-Association~~. We were not very successful in the past to get your e-mail addresses but we ask again that you ~~send them to us~~. We also encourage you to check our web site.

To reach me personally, you can use the e-mail address below or leave a message at my ~~telephone~~ number in Montreal. We are always happy to hear from you and receptive to your ideas.

Hoping to see you again or meet you for the first time,

Baxter D. Laporte  
President

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# Menton will soon honor the souvenir of its Canadian liberator, Laporte

**A commemorative tablet will be unveiled to the memory of the lieutenant born in St-Michel des Saints – 800 of our pilgrims from Rome will assist the ceremony.**

Menton, France, 9 (C.P.) – Far away from the battle fields of the South and Center of Italy and of the North-East of France, where Canadian armies confirmed their value during the last world war, the little town of Menton is preparing to celebrate the Canadians who helped liberate them from the Germans.

This town located to the extreme South-eastern corner of our country, close to the Italian border, owes the return to liberty to a Canadian detachment lead by Lieutenant Paul-Gatien Laporte, from St-Michel des Saints.

Twenty-four hours after the liberation of this town, in September of 1944, Lt Laporte was killed on the battle field. His body is now resting in a cemetery in Marseille.

We know that on August 15, 1944, the seventh American Army, including the mixed units of the first detachment of special services in which Laporte took part, came here and forced the Germans to give-up and chased them. Some went to Italy, others went towards Northern France.

For its conduct under the occupation italo-german, the town of Menton had already been given the cross of the Honor Legion. This fact is on a commemorative marble plate on the West entry of the City Hall. Next month, another similar plate, near the entry, will let us remember Lieutenant Laporte and his team.

The secretary of the municipality, Mr. Marcel Barneaud, is currently writing to the parents of the Canadian officer to give them the details of the ceremony. Barneaud was the first to welcome the Canadians in Menton, right after the Germans had left.

He was sleeping in an office of the deserted City Hall when the lieutenant came in and touched his shoulder and asked: "Where are the Germans?" Barneaud didn't waste any time opening a champagne bottle to drink with his new found friends and to give them the information of the route the enemies took.

We chose the same date of the passage of a group of 800 Canadian pilgrims of the Saint Army going to Rome to do the ceremony. The military honors will be done by the French local units and by an American detachment based in Europe.

Menton's mayor, Mr. Parthenou-Dormoy, already received confirmation from the Canadian pilgrims and told them last April about his intention of celebrating the memory of Lieutenant Laporte. He says he is happy to learn that near six thousand of our pilgrims of the Saint Army will have the occasion of passing through Menton on their trip to Rome.

The local newspaper, *Le Mentonnais*, revealed a coincidence between the destiny of the town and the one of Lieutenant Laporte. Like mentioned before, he was born in Saint-Michel des Saints. Well, the city of Menton also has its Saint Michel Archangel as leader.

*Source: Unknown. Date: June 9, 1950*



