

Early and Recent Years

remembered by Mr. Lang is that when the  
the article was written in 1871  
four score years ago on the road  
last July - in the year 1821 - among the  
soil from the Buckingham, a staunch sailing  
himself and his wife there were two sons

and was quickly surrounded by a band of  
as a revenue cutter hove in sight no violence  
every country

the township of Backwith, and the late  
Hamilton, of Almonte. The daughters of the  
first family were Mrs. Alex. Smart, of  
Clarendon, and Mrs. Francis Thomson, of  
Alexandria Bay, who has been dead for  
Manitoba, and Mrs. John Neilson, who is

headed in batteau, and the slow tedious  
Thomas Lang, father of Mrs. Duncan  
hegan, Mr. Lang and Mr. Neilson, were then  
sturdy boys, and were sent on ahead of the  
miles. They started out bravely, but soon lost  
Frenchmen whom they met understand their

Mr. Lang was born in the town of  
22<sup>nd</sup>, 1811, so that he has now entered upon  
age when he turned his back upon his native  
things that saddened them, and can relate  
reached the age when faculties usually  
Of the years since the voyage has been  
forgotten by him, but a diary kept of the trip  
and from this extracts that will be of interest  
will be given to the public in a later issue.  
One of the incidents of the voyage

road along the St. Lawrence was even at that  
journey was made on foot by the stronger  
walking to the commencement of the small  
boats. These boats were rowed by  
Frenchmen, and came up the river in  
were fitted with sails to be used when the  
wind was favorable, and at other times were  
Long Sault Rapids they were towed by oxen  
here an accident was narrowly averted.  
Some of the boats got caught in the ropes  
that were used for towing, and it was only by

the prompt cutting of the rope that at least an unpleasant experience was avoided.

The party left the battery at Brantford and travelled from that town to Lanark village in wagons. We, who now complain of the few ruts in our public highways while

accommodating springs, can form but a very faint idea of the torture to which these passengers must have been subjected while

travelling over a rough bush road, and through swamps. Our present generation may well exclaim, "Truly we

have a goodly heritage, and our lives have fallen to us in pleasant places." The

pleasure (?) of travelling in the wagons was reserved for the women and the children, the others having to do the journey on foot.

This was a difficult time a government depot at Lanark from rations and farming implements were supplied to new settlers according to fixed regulations. This depot was in charge of a Colonel Marshall, and each settler was given an axe, two hoes and other necessary

work of clearing and cultivating the land from which they were to obtain their subsistence. Immediately after reaching

experiences in providing homes for themselves. There were no comfortable

houses awaiting them there, and from the woods around them they had to procure the

for themselves. These were rude bush huts, made by setting up poles in the form of a wigwam and covering them with a thick

layer of balsam and pine branches, and when completed they served the purpose fairly well. In these our sisters, the women and children of the party were left while the

heads of the rammies went out into the almost pathless forest in search of land upon

which to locate. From Lanark they proceeded down along the Clyde and the Mississipi rivers, desiring to procure land

near a good stream of water. People of today can form very little idea of what that journey was like, through woods and

beset by myriads of good healthy mosquitoes, and loaded with provisions and accoutrements necessary for the trip. They

journeyed on till Peasebay township was reached before Mr. Leclair's

land which pleased his fancy. Here he selected lot 14 on the tenth line—the farm

upon which Mr. John Lang lived for many years, and upon which his son Henry is now

living. A little clearing was made and a log shanty with a roof of scooped out logs was

built and ready by Mr. Lang for the coming of his family. It was a rude shelter to bring them to, but it was to be home to them, and "home" to those people under

such circumstances meant a great deal more than it does to many today who live in

returned to Lanark for his family. But misfortune was on the trail, and ere he got the laborious task of rebuilding had to be

undertaken, and the work was not completed when the people arrived. From Lanark the

journey was made down the Clyde and men. A good many portages had to be made,

and it took some days to complete the trip. When coming down Mississipi Lake they stopped at an island, and while preparing a meal a big Indian hove in sight coming

Instantly stories of blood thirsty doings of these wily savages flashed across the minds of the company and fear filled every heart.

Equal to the occasion, however, was the late

Tom Stevie who was one of the party and

it is said that he was the first to

it to the Indian as an evidence of their

friendly intentions. The peace offering was

not accepted, and the Indian passed by on his

way to his camp on another part of the island

and paid no attention to them but they

by the time that the night of the 1st of

night was spent on the north shore of the

river above the falls at Carleton Place, beds

being spread on the ground and the only

covering over the travelers their blankets and

the empyrean blue overhead. When Mr.

Lang's family reached their destination the

second shanty was not completed, only a

part of the roof being on, and when they

awoke on the first morning in their cabin

home, the floor on the uncovered portion of

the building was warm with snow.

Then began the real work of making

a home for themselves. Trees had to be

felled, cut into logs and rolled together for

burning, and stumps removed, and the soil

prepared for seeding. About the only staple

article for market and the one upon which

the early settlers had largely to depend for

procuring what money was required by them

was potash. To make this the ashes from the

burned logs were gathered and made into

potash and taken to Brockville where it was

sold. In connection with this industry, Mr.

Lang tells of cutting logs on the ridge east

Almonte where Dr. P. C. McGregor lives

and dragging them down to the riverbank

where Mr. J. B. Wylie's house stands and

converting them into potash. As Mr. Lang

was the brother of the boys he had a large

share in the hard work that had to be done,

but the fact that he is still hale and hearty at

twenty years of age is proof that it is not

always hard work that shortens our days.

When about fifteen or sixteen years of age

he helped his father, who was a carpenter,

erect the barn which stood on the island

the fire caused so much destruction to

property in Almonte and along the river

bank at Mr. Henry Lang's, and Mrs. D.

Miller's. In 1838 Mr. Lang married Miss

Agnes Neilson, daughter of the late John

Neilson and sister of Mrs. Gavin Hamilton

and Mrs. William Smith, of Ramsay, and a

few years afterward they moved to the

township of Huntley, where Mr. Lang had

procured a farm, lot 5 in the eleventh

concession and here they proceeded to do

what he had helped his father to

successfully make a home for themselves in

the forest. The road at that time was little

more than a path through the woods, and

difficult to travel, but many trips were made

over it by Mr. Lang carrying a pack of

eggs and butter on one arm and a child on

the other. Wild animals were very

numerous, and tin horns had often to be

blown to frighten bears and other

depredators out of the grain fields. Mr.

Lang's sterling character was early

recognized by his pioneer neighbors, and his

advice and counsel were sought for by many,

and when so disposed he can relate some

humourous tales in connection with the

matters in which his assistance was called

for, not even matrimonial confidences being

considered too sacred for him. In those

early days religious and educational

advantages were not very great. The first

school in the section in which Mr. Lang

lived, now school section No. 7, Huntley

was built in 1836 and there was no church

nearer than Beckwith, to which even people

from Almonte went in those days until the

stone church was built at the eighth line

at Ramsay, when they attended service there.

Mr. Lang was one of the very few settlers

who were present at the laying of the

corner stone of the church at Ramsay.

He was also one of the first to

bring a plow to the settlement.

He was also one of the first to

bring a horse to the settlement.

He was also one of the first to

bring a cow to the settlement.

He was also one of the first to

bring a pig to the settlement.

He was also one of the first to

bring a sheep to the settlement.

He was also one of the first to

fortunate enough to possess a span of horses and a wagon and as he drove regularly to church his conveyance seemed to be possessed of the proverbial elasticity of the modern street car, as no matter how many were in it he always seemed to be able to make room for one or two more, should he overtake them walking to church. After the establishment of St. Andrew's church in Almonte, Mr. Lang attended services there, and was for many years a much respected elder. Trained in the old school his convictions of right and wrong were deep-rooted, and with him there could be no compromise between those two. No heart could be kinder to a penitent wrong doer.

Mr. Lang has been married since 1860, he and the partner of his troubles and his triumphs had the pleasure of celebrating their golden wedding, but Mrs. Lang has since passed away. A family of nine children were born to them, six of whom are still living.

When Mr. Lang's father settled on the banks of the Mississippi there was not much indication that there would ever be a town of the importance of Almonte grow up at this point. A government depot occupied the site of the town now, and here the settlers obtained certain of their supplies. Mr. Daniel Shipman came later on and had a sawmill further down the river. A Mr. Shepherd also put up a sawmill but it was burnt down. Another was built by him, but he became involved financially and sold out and went to Brockville. Mr. John A. Gemmill, father of Lieutenant Colonel Gemmill, kept the only store in Almonte at that time in a building near the

junction of Country and Bridge street. Almonte's first school was also located there and taught by Mr. Lang's father the late Arthur Lang, who was the first school teacher in Ramsay township. The first Roman Catholic church was a frame building which was erected by the late Thomas Lang, a brother of Mr. William Lang. His father died in 1849.

Mr. Lang though now in his 91<sup>st</sup> year is still hale and hearty and is able to move about with considerable activity. Unlike many who reach such patriarchal years his interest in present events is still as keen as ever, and he can converse freely on the things which are happening about him, and

and times and waste time in worry in such a frame of mind he enjoys to the full the blessings of life and should the hopes of his many friends be realized, he will be enabled to enjoy the brightness of many years to come.