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Les Forges du Saint-Maurice national historic park series, booklet n° 1

Les Forges du Saint-Maurice 1729-1883

Réal Boissonnault

*150 years of occupation
and operation*



ERRATA

Page 45, line 17.

The enumeration of various products in the inventory joined to Conrad Gagy's donation should read as follows:

« :31 double stoves, 612 single stoves, 534 big cauldrons and 361 small ones, 425 cooking pots, 350 axleboxes, 117 cast iron ploughshares, 36 anvils, 5 frying pans, 80 pairs of andirons, 13 firebacks, 16 plates of brick stoves, 58 tart plates, 22 cast iron hammers, 39 basins with lids, plus 2244³/₄ quintals of iron and other miscellaneous articles. »



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*Parks Canada is mandated to protect,
develop and administer all natural and
historical sites throughout the country.*

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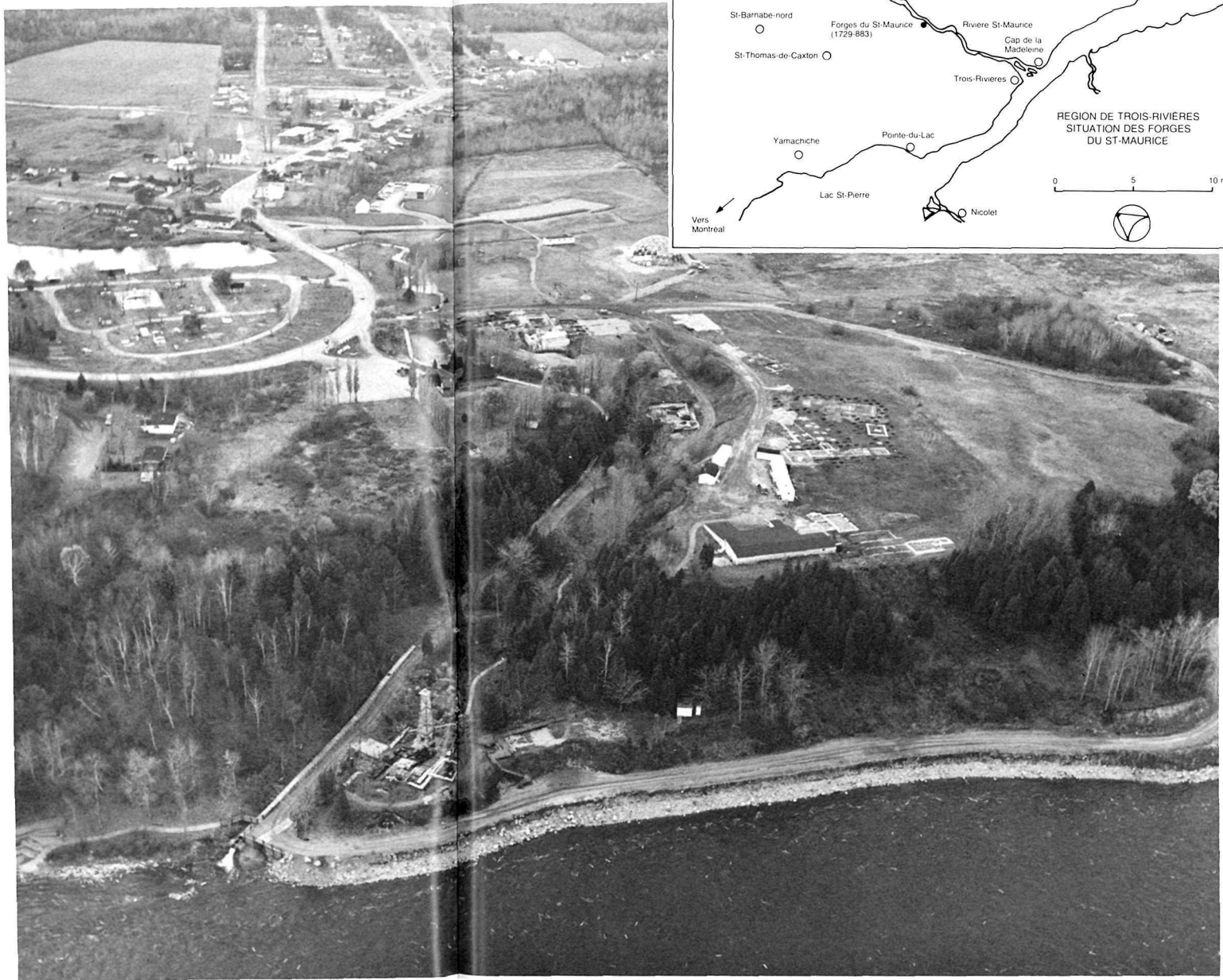
AUTHOR'S NOTE

The following text is the result of several studies carried out by Réal Boissonnault and Michel Bédard. We would therefore suggest that readers wishing to learn more about the subject consult these studies. Some are currently being published in the Parks Canada series HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY, others, in manuscript form, may be consulted at Parks Canada's regional office's library or at the administration building of the park in Trois-Rivières.

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Aerial view of the site of the Saint-Maurice Forges showing some traces of the industrial village (1729-1883) and current archaeological and preservation work. (PHOTO: PARKS CANADA, 1978).



FOREWORD

Located some fifteen kilometers north of the city of Trois-Rivières, on the west shore of the Saint-Maurice River, the *Saint-Maurice Forges National Historic Park** evokes the past of the first iron industry in Canada. The history of this venture and the community which grew up around it extends over a period of more than 150 years, from 1729 to 1883.

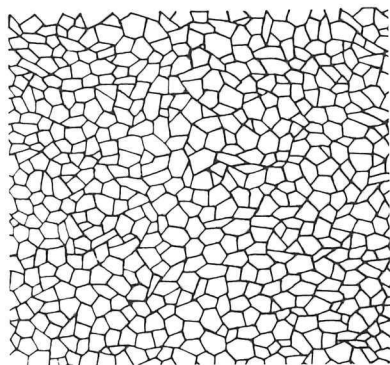
Following a prologue dealing with the period prior to the establishment of the industry, these phases, four in number, are presented as follows: first, from 1729 to 1741, owners supported by government funding, including Francheville, alone and as part of a company, and Cugnet and his associates, established and organized a major operation; next, from 1741 to 1767, the French and British Governments in turn operated the venture. During the third phase, from 1767 to 1846, the administration of the establishment was entrusted to leaseholders, including Pelissier and associates (1767-1778), Dumas (1778-1783), Gury (1783-1787), Davison and Lees (1787-1793) and Bell, in partnership and alone (1793-1846); finally, in a fourth phase, representing a second period of private ownership, from 1846 to 1883, came Henry Stuart and James Ferrier (1846-1851), Andrew Stuart and John Porter (1851-1861), Onésime Héroux (1862-1863) and the McDougalls (1863-1883).

With the help of illustrations and reproductions of original documents, we shall now examine more closely the characteristics of these stages in the life of the industrial community of the Saint-Maurice Forges.

* In the 17th and 18th century, the term "Forges" was first used to describe a large furnace where the ore was melted. Later the definition became obsolete. Here the term "Forges du Saint-Maurice" evokes the ensemble of the physical structures and all the activities attached to an iron and steel industrial complex.

UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS

1660-1729



Since Jacques Cartier, every explorer and colonial administrator of New France, was interested to some degree in the possible presence of minerals, and contributed in some way to the almost continuous process of inventory to which the lands were subject. It was under the administration of *Colbert** and *Talon***, in the early 1660s, that iron ore appears to have assumed an important position on the list of the colony's developable wealth. From that period on, and for more than sixty years after, research reports and proposals accumulated or were swallowed up in the offices of the Ministry of the Navy.

In 1663, Commissioner Gaudais was appointed by the King to investigate the mineral resources of New France and to analyse the possibility of opening an iron mine, at the same time that the *Compagnie des Indes occidentales* received permission to forge weapons, manufacture cannon and cast shot in the colony. With the arrival of Intendant Talon in 1665, new research and proposals for iron production began to take shape. The mines at baie Saint-Paul were inspected and further prospecting was initiated by the founder of the *Compagnies des Indes*. Talon even persuaded the Minister, Colbert, to send out an *ironmaster**** to New France in 1669. This man, whose name was la Potardière, confirmed the quality of the iron ore and returned to France the following year to test 20 barrels of ore and black sand from the Trois-Rivières area. Anticipating a favourable decision by the Minister on his proposal, Talon collected 1500 *pipes***** of iron ore. However, the ironmaster did not return to the colony and Talon received no response to his proposal to begin operations.

Governor Frontenac arrived at Quebec in 1672 and, with Colbert's full support, continued Talon's research and investigations in the Trois-Rivières region. In fact, he proposed the establishment of forges on the Pépin River. Not satisfied with the inaction of the French Government, he renewed his efforts in 1679, with no greater success. Meanwhile, in 1677, in response to a request from a Parisian assayer

and *refiner** and a resident of Quebec, Jean-Baptiste Lagny, head clerk in the Ministry of the Navy, obtained letters patent from the King entitling him for a period of twenty years, to the mines and metals of Canada, including the right to open mines and refine metals, but the venture was destined for failure through lack of co-operation on the part of the inhabitants of the colony.

In 1682, Governor La Barre demonstrated to the Minister the advantages of producing iron in New France, and his successor, Denonville, went so far as to ask, in 1685, that someone capable of developing the iron mines in the Trois-Rivières region be sent out from France. His request was accompanied by ore samples for testing. His proposal, supported by Intendant Champigny, received royal assent, but on the condition, practically impossible at the time, that they find someone locally to handle the task. And at the same time, the minister accepted the proposal of Pourvost, Boula and Hameau, a group of ironmasters from Brittany who were interested in establishing forges in New France and wanted to send one of the partners, Hameau, to examine more closely the possibility of doing so. Hameau made the trip in 1687-1688 and found the outlook promising, despite estimated setting-up costs of between 200 000 and 250 000 livres, compared to the 50 000 to 60 000 livres he had originally anticipated. His plan was to form a working company, and the King urged the colonial administrators to involve Canadian merchants in the venture. However, the plans were never implemented, and it was not until 1705 that the governor of Trois-Rivières, Crisafy, turned his attention once again to iron. In 1708, with the support of the two Raudots, he requested, unsuccessfully, that Hameau return to the country to carry out his project from the 1690s. Nothing happened until 1714, when Intendant Bégon claimed that it would cost no more than perhaps thirty thousand livres to establish a forge for cannon, anchors and milling equipment. In 1716, Governor Vaudreuil resubmitted Bégon's proposal; both requested that a skilled miner be sent out from France to open the mines at Trois-Rivières and baie Saint-Paul, and to this end they arranged for iron ore to be tested in France. However, while it appeared certain that this proposal would be favourably received, the Regent, the

* Minister of the Navy in charge of the colonies.

** Intendant of New France from 1665 to 1672.

*** Expert in all the phases of exploitation of iron, the ironmaster is generally responsible for the entire complex.

**** Measure of capacity, equivalent unknown. Sometimes thought to equal 72 minots.

* Specialist in the analysis and purification of metals.

Duke of Orléans, settled the question in no uncertain terms by stating, the following year, that there was enough iron in France to supply all of New France.

Then, with the appointment of Maurepas to the Ministry of the Navy in 1723, began a period in which opinion leaned strongly towards the establishment of forges in New France. However, for various reasons, the proposals submitted by de Ressous, in 1724, and by Intendant Dupuy, in 1727, were never acted upon. And in 1729, when Maurepas demanded information on the subject from Intendant Hocquart, François Poulin de Francheville, a Montreal born merchant and seigneur of Saint-Maurice, applied for permission to produce iron. The letters patent granted by the King the following year marked the beginning of the iron industry in the Trois-Rivières region.

Why were all these proposals and projects deferred or rejected before 1729? The principal reasons related both to the economic situation of the mother country and to the effects of the colonial policy, both of which elements had been affected, incidentally, by the wartime situation in existence during most of the period. From the time of Colbert's administration, the colonies were expected to contribute to the development of the realm; their perceived importance was directly related to their complementarity, and hence utility, to the mother country. They were thus subject to the *mercantile system**, in which the power and wealth of the realm take precedence over the activities of the colonies, eliminating all competition. This principle appeared to govern France's policy in general towards Canada's iron mines during the period prior to the establishment of the Saint-Maurice Forges. Still, this view did encourage prospecting to determine Canada's mining potential and gave rise to a number of projects.

Administrators were generally favourable to the idea of an iron industry in Canada, except during the Regency (1715-1723). Their interest in determining the colony's mining potential and in proposing means of producing iron are evidence of this attitude. They saw the advantages such an industry would offer: re-establishment of the trade balance, provision of military equipment, parts for naval construc-

tion, hardware, heating stoves, more rapid clearing of agricultural land, employment for people in the colony, replacement of iron imported into France from Sweden and Spain by Canadian iron, the usefulness of colonial iron as freight on ships sailing from Canada, the possibility of a lower price on previously imported iron. However, the anticipated advantages were not enough to counterbalance the specter of the high initial investments required for the creation of a new enterprise.

The lack of local skilled manpower and certain operational difficulties, including problems of transportation, were among the major factors contributing to high investment costs. The mother country did not feel that it was in a position to provide the necessary sums, and therefore limited itself to suggesting and encouraging the formation of French and Canadian companies which, in the long run, would profit from such a venture, or simply deferred action until some future period, justifying its action on the grounds of the wartime situation which was draining the royal treasury.

In fact, from 1667 to 1713, France was almost continually at war. And this unfavourable situation was accompanied by an economic crisis which began around 1680 and continued, growing progressively worse, until approximately 1715. The country's finances were seriously affected, with capital being diverted to military purposes, and it was practically impossible to find investors in France interested in gambling on Canadian iron production, and still less in the colony, with its small population and very few wealthy figures.

1713 marked the beginning of a period of peace which lasted for 31 years and during which France attempted to recuperate financially from its wartime spending. More interest in Canadian iron production might have been expected, but during the *minority** of Louis XV, the colony was neglected. In 1717, the Regent made his position on the proposed development of the iron mines at Trois-Rivières very clear. Their mercantile policy was rigidly applied until the appointment of Maurepas to the Ministry of the Navy in 1723, an appointment which coincided with the beginning of the reign of Louis XV.

* *Mercantile system*: economical theory flourishing in the 16th and 17th centuries stating that money is the only wealth.

* Period during which a king cannot govern because of his young age. The kingdom is then under the rule of a regent.

Like most of his predecessors, Maurepas showed some interest in the Trois-Rivières iron mines; he favoured their development so long as the King was not financially involved. He followed the general lines of Colbert's colonial policy, which he liberalized slightly by promoting private initiative in the colonial maritime trade. And in 1729, when François Poulin de Francheville offered to operate the iron mines in his seigneurie of Saint-Maurice at his own expense, the mother country obviously had no alternative but to accept, since the offer fit in perfectly with the Minister's policy.

The time was obviously favourable to the opening of forges in the Trois-Rivières area. The period of peace which had lasted for nearly 20 years ensured a certain stability and made planning possible. At the same time, the knowledge which had been gained was a major factor in the assessment of Francheville's chances of success. But the entrepreneur's biggest asset was the colonial policy of Maurepas, who, with the support of Beauharnois and Hocquart in the colony, favoured free enterprise. In addition, the Minister wished to expand maritime trade

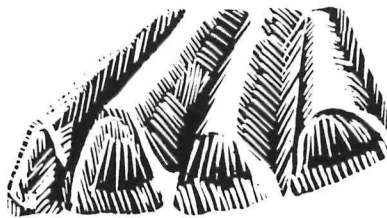
by encouraging naval construction, an undertaking which required cast-iron and iron products in quantity at a period when the iron-making industry in France was on the decline and attempts were being made to regulate production on the basis of available reserves of wood, which were beginning to diminish in some regions. Finally, by this time, the colony had a population of almost 35 000.

On the other hand, the State was no more eager than it had been in the past to underwrite such a venture, and it was because Francheville offered to assume all financial responsibility that the long-awaited project became a reality. For it any entrepreneur or company had made an offer similar to that proposed by Francheville, waiving direct financial assistance from the mother country and under generally similar conditions, Canadian iron ore could have been developed long before 1729. The fact remains, however, that it was Francheville who laid the groundwork for this industry, which was to operate for a period of more than a century and a half.

A DIFFICULT BEGINNING

FIRST PERIOD
OF PRIVATE
OWNERSHIP
WITH GOVERNMENT
FUNDING

1729-1741



FRANCHEVILLE ALONE AND AS PART OF A COMPANY



On March 25, 1730, Francheville obtained letters patent authorizing him to operate iron mines in the Trois-Rivières area for a period of 20 years. In the spring of 1732, the mines were opened and a blacksmith named Labrèche made his first trip to New England to learn the process of *direct reduction** of iron ore. By the end of the year, the undertaking was far from complete, and investment costs had already risen to nearly 10 000 livres. Francheville appealed to the State for an equivalent amount, which he was granted the following year. On January 16, 1733, unable to continue supporting the burden of the venture himself, he formed a working company known as Francheville and Company, composed of himself, and merchants François-Étienne Cugnet, Ignace Gamelin, Pierre Poulin and Louis-Frédéric Bricault de Valmur, secretary of the Intendant Hocquart. Shortly thereafter, Labrèche made a second trip to the British colonies to improve his knowledge on the transformation of iron ore.

In November 1733, Francheville died. Despite the death of its founder and principal shareholder, the company succeeded in reaching the operational stage. The first and only period of production occurred in January and February of 1734. By this time, the owners had already invested nearly 22 000 livres**, and the production did not live up to the anticipated results. In addition, to compensate for the lack of technical familiarity with the process of direct ore reduction and with the construction of appropriate facilities, further expenditures had been required. The owners, unable to afford the expense involved in re-establishing the industry, appealed once more to the State to continue the operations.

* An archaic technical process permitting direct passage from raw materials (ore, charcoal, flux) to iron, in a hearth or furnace. This process was inexpensive but could produce only limited quantities of iron.

** This amount represents a little less than the combined annual salary of the Governor and the Intendant of the colony (12 000 livres each).

Note handwritten by François Poulin de Francheville. (ARCHIVES NATIONALES DU QUÉBEC, M/BF, GREFFE P. PETIT, 22 MARS 1733).

St Maurice
 Je soussigné promets fournir au sieur
 Cristophe Lapallème par de ses timarhi
 que jay passé avec luy ce jour hier par
 devant M^{re} Rimbault Notaire Royal
 au bout des trois années de luy en -
 le gage un noyau poelle de gars et
~~un poelle de gars de gars de gars~~
 de la fabrique des poelles au gars
 et si manque il le aura un des premiers
 qu'il se fera en qu'on fait au montreal
 ce 22^e Mars 1733 Rimbault
 de gars

St-Maurice Forge

I the under-written do hereby promise to furnish to Sieur Cristophe Lapallème, in Addition to the Terms to which I have with him this Day agreed before Maitre Rimbault, Royal Notary, at the End of the three Years for which he has engaged himself, one New Iron Stove of middle Size. . . And If any Stoves be made at the said St-Maurice Forge he shall have one of the first there made.

Done at Montreal this 22nd Day of March 1733
 Francheville
 And Company

Administrators in France and in the colony agreed that the venture's lack of success was due to the Forges' lack of competent and qualified personnel in the area of iron mine operation, and they decided not to abandon the venture. It is true that France was still at peace and that Maurepas was still concerned with the success of his commercial program, in which the colonies and certain industries, including naval construction and iron, played vital roles. The State thus became more closely involved in the development of the Saint-Maurice Forges, and in 1735 an ironmaster, named Olivier de Vézin and considered very capable, was sent out to investigate and propose means of improving the situation.

He arrived in New France in September 1735 and, after some study, rejected any possibility of re-establishing the firm of Francheville and Company. He presented a project involving reconstruction and total reorganization based on the process of *indirect reduction** of iron ore, which would require considerable initial funding but would guarantee profitable operating conditions. This proposal, which swept away the

earlier establishment and demanded enormous investments, led the associates of the late Francheville to withdraw as a company from the operations of the Saint-Maurice Forges. A document to this effect, signed on October 23, 1735, marked the end of the Francheville period.

The venture initiated by Francheville, alone and as part of a company, ended in almost total failure. Because of limited capital, the owners had been forced to proceed with extreme caution, thus giving rise to the delays which have been noted in the development of the establishment. In addition to the lack of capital and the technical difficulties encountered by the firm, problems of food supply due to the poor harvests of 1732 and 1733, together with the chronic shortage of currency resulting from the colony's unfavourable trade balance and, finally, a smallpox epidemic which reduced the already limited population by a further 2000, were certainly among the factors explaining the failure of Francheville and Company.

Vézin's confidence had nonetheless won him the support of the local administrators and of two members of Francheville's earlier company, Cugnet and Gamelin. It was already apparent that the State would assume a direct financial involvement if the proposed project obtained the Minister's approval. It was on an optimistic note that this second attempt to operate the Forges began.

* A then-modern process which introduced an intermediate step in the production of iron. The raw material (ore, charcoal, flux) were first reduced in a blast furnace. The reduced iron was then decarburized and transformed to iron in the forge. This process required substantial investments for costly equipment, but permitted an industrial-scale volume of production.

Ignace Gamelin, director of the Forges under Francheville and Company and Cugnet and Company, between 1733 and 1741. (CHÂTEAU RAMEZAY MUSEUM, N° 61, CAT. 1962).



THE DIFFICULTIES OF CUGNET AND COMPANY

 1735-1741 

On October 23, 1735, Cugnet, Gamelin and Vézin formed a partnership to operate the Forges by means of a process of indirect reduction of iron ore, involving a blast furnace and forges, on condition that the King advance them 100 000 livres. Their proposal was accepted in the early part of 1736. On October 15, Francheville's widow surrendered the licence to operate the Forges which her late husband had obtained in 1730. The next day, Cugnet, Gamelin, Vézin, Simonet Sr, an iron-master from Burgundy, and Taschereau, Treasurer of the Navy in Quebec formed a group known as Cugnet and Company. On May 10, 1737, the King officially granted the new company the late Francheville's licence and the territory of the Forges was expanded on September 12. After an intense period of construction and preparation, the official lighting of the blast furnace took place on August 20, 1738. The upper forge was constructed during 1739.

Despite all these improvements, Cugnet and Company's involvement with the Forges ended in failure. Discouraged by a multitude of difficulties of various origins and no longer able to support the firm's operations, the partners withdrew, one by one, in October 1741.

Official record of the lighting
of the blast furnace at the Saint-
Maurice Forges, October 7, 1738.
(ARCHIVES NATIONALES DU
QUÉBEC, COLLECTION DE
PIÈCES JUDICIAIRES ET
NOTARIALES NF-25, N° 1177).

1738
1777

Le jour Mail seye, cene treute
L'uy Le septieme jour du mois d'octobre
L'uy Les six heures du matin, Es Compars
Lesdits Xneur Jean Baptiste Fafard de la
Framboise, Substitut de Monsieur Le Procureur
Du Roy en la jurisdiction Royale de
Trois Rivieres, tenant le Siège de Procureur,
En vertu d'iceul, Sieur Pierre St Pierre, Monsieur
Ollivier de Vezain, L'un des Jurés par le
Diction Preposé par Sa Majesty pour
la Conditte des Forges de St Maurice, le
quel Hour avoit Regner de deux heures
au dit Jour, Luy procédant à son
audition, le Collè de Monsieur Jean
Baptiste DeLorme, et le fofdeur, Suivant
le Conformement à l'arrest du Roy de
vingt deux avril mil sept cent trente sept
concluant à l'information verbale de
Paris, Pour l'claircissement de l'heure
L'uy, que le feu avoit été fait, aux
Forges (de Cuy Regarde le fofdeur)
à la quelle Regue. **AR. 1738**
que l'hour Hour de deux heures

Ollivier de Vesain De sa Comparance le
Requisition Cy dessus, Le Ollivier - que pour
l'execution des demandes faites, en vertu du
arrest, Hour Hour deux heures au dit Jour
forger a accompagné de M. le Greffier
ou dans un autre, au dit Jour de l'inter
audition, le fofdeur généralement Regue
du St Ollivier, lequel avoit juré
que le feu avoit été fait, aux
le vingt deux avril de deux heures
à M. de Vezain le Conformement à la
Déclaration affirmative du dit Jour de
Paris de Cuy de fofdeur Hour avoit
deux heures de fofdeur verbal pour fofdeur
Cuy de Paris, L'uy lesdits Paris
L'uy avec Hour, fait aux Forges
L'uy au que de fofdeur, comme Nature, Mal de
approuvé la dite Nature. Ollivier de Vesain
D'Orléans
Laframboise
Greffier
Pressé

In this Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and thirty-eight, on the Seventh Day of the Month of October, at six a-clock of the Morning, appeared before Us Jean Baptiste Fafard de la Framboise, being Assistant to the King's Attorney In The Royal Jurisdiction of Trois-Rivières and acting in his Place In His Absence, In our House in Rue St-Pierre, Monsieur Ollivier de Vezain, being one of the Parties concerned, And the Director Preposed by His Majesty for the Management of the Forges of St Maurice, Who did Require us to Betake Ourselves to the said Forges, And there to Hear him and one Jean Baptiste DeLorme, Master Founder, Pursuant to and in Accordance with the Decree of the King of the twenty-second Day of April One Thousand Seven Hundred and thirty-seven Regarding the verbal Information of the said Parties, For the Determination of the Time and Day, that the said Forges be Lighted (With Respect to the Furnace), in Response to which Petition We did order that We would betake ourselves to the said Forges, there to Witness to the aforesaid Appearance and Petition of the said Sieur Ollivier de Vesain, And having ordered, in Execution of the Requests so made, In Vertue of the said Decrer, that We would betake Ourselves to the said Forges in Company with Our Clerk Aforesaid where upon Our Arrival We did Proceed to the said Hearing, The Oath being first required of the said de Lorme, Who did swear And affirm that the Furnace had Been Lighted on the twentieth Day of August last at about Eleven or Twelve o'clock of the Morning, Pursuant to and in Accordance with The Declaration of the said Sieur Ollivier Whereupon We have drawn up Our Report The which The said Parties have Signed with Us; Done at the faid Forges on the Day and Date aforesaid/ one Word being Erased and Void and the said Rasure approved/.

Olivier Devezain
DeLorme
Laframboise
Pressé NT Clerk

This period, from 1735 to 1741, nonetheless includes a number of important elements in the study of the chronological line of the history of the Forges. The administration of Cugnet and Company marked the transfer from a primary technological type of production, the process of direct reduction of iron ore without a blast furnace, to a complex system of indirect reduction of the ore, which involved much larger investments in terms of structures and manpower. This new method of production necessitated the direct financial involvement of the State, investments which fit neatly at the time into the plans of the Minister of the Navy, Maurepas. In addition, these six years showed the following characteristics: establishment of physical structures, settlement of a core population and introduction of a type of administration. Although these elements underwent modifications, they persisted throughout the period of operation, under the French regime and even for a good part of the British regime, at least as regards the industrial structures.

The State did not become involved without some reflection on the part of Maurepas. He viewed the affair as essential to the stimulation of naval construction in the colony and to the re-establishment of the deficit trade balance between the mother country and its colony. He was also encouraged by expert from the French Bureau of Commerce who felt that this operation would be profitable and would not adversely affect the French iron industry, since the Canadian iron could serve as an economical replacement for the iron imported from Sweden and Spain. In addition, the colony would be in a better position to meet its own needs, and by promoting local naval construction it would no longer be necessary to purchase vessels from New England. This would mean closer observance of the mercantile principles then in favour. Finally, the last portion of the period of peace preceding the War of the Austrian Succession allowed the Minister to devote his full attention to colonial policy.

The tenacity with which Maurepas supported the venture, then, is not surprising. Delighted at first with the 1736 results, he began to find the costs of establishment exorbitant by the end of 1737, when the company had already swallowed up the 100 000 livres provided by the State and was seeking a new advance of almost 83 000 livres and extensions on the repayment of its debts to the King. He gave in to the

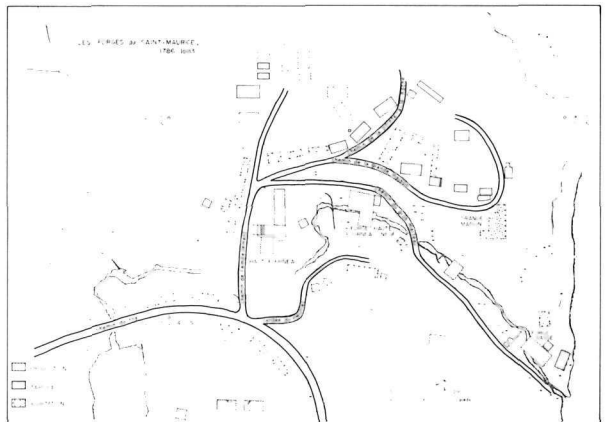
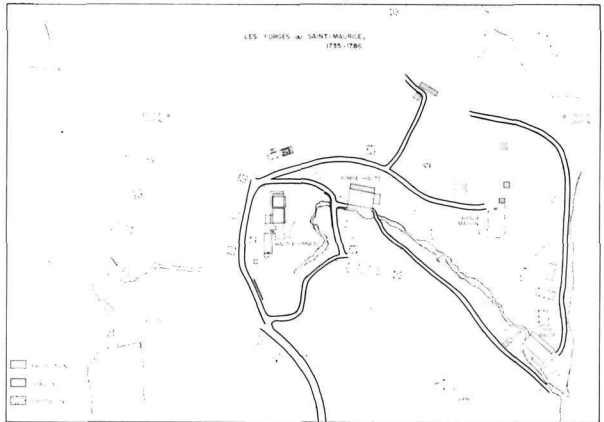
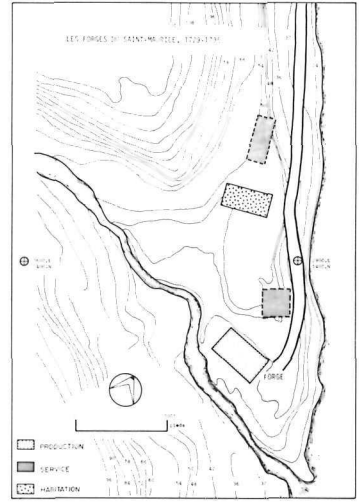
repeated requests of the local administrators and directors of the company, although not without some very stern warnings. In addition to his desire to pursue his colonial policy, the Minister realized that the size of the State's investment, which by the end of 1738 totalled almost 193 000 livres*, made it impossible for him to withdraw and vital that he ensures the recovery of these public funds; this would seem to explain much of his subsequent attitude. However, his confidence in the firm's directors, and Vézin in particular, was lost, and by the following year he foresaw the possibility of bankruptcy. He therefore warned Beauharnois and Hocquart in 1740 to prepare for the worst and to take steps to protect the King's investment. Cugnet and Company collapsed in 1741; still, the Minister remained convinced that the venture was a sound one and that it would have succeeded if it had been properly and economically administered.

Finally, it would be noted that pressure exercised by local administrators, particularly Hocquart, had influenced the minister's stand. Until 1740, the year in which bankruptcy became a distinct possibility, they continued to express optimism and to serve as convincing promoters, persuading Maurepas to invest public funds in the business and to act with generosity towards the company. The same was true of the shareholders, particularly Vézin, who, with their optimistic assessments and repeated promises, maintained the Minister's confidence until repeated failures destroyed their credibility.

Moreover, the establishment of the physical, human and administrative structures was not easily achieved. A number of reasons can be advanced to explain the company's failure. First, Maurepas attributed its difficulties to poor administration and unnecessary expenditures. The local administrators, Hocquart in particular, also blamed the failure on poor administration and on the continual disagreement among the directors, on Vézin's errors in estimation (an inaccurate estimate of the flow of the stream necessitated the construction of a second forge), on construction faults, which necessitated constant repairs and even reconstruction, and on the heavy expenses associated with the

* This sum spent in a three year period is substantial since the total expenditure of the colony for the year 1738 is close to 560 000 livres and the revenues amount to 122 000 livres.

Plans showing the structural evolution of the site of the Saint-Maurice Forges during the major periods of its history. (PARKS CANADA — DROUIN — RAINVILLE. DRAWING: FRANÇOIS PELLERIN, 1981).



dispute-ridden construction of the Great House. In Hocquart's opinion, one other reason took precedence over all the others: the lack of capital required for normal operation of the entreprise. The directors, split into two groups, laid the blame in their accusing reports on the following factors: the difficult climate conditions, hasty construction, building flaws, Vézin's incompetence as a director and administrator, the technical difficulties of production, the lack of skilled, competent manpower, poor supervision of the overpaid employees, the liquor and food trade, which was carried on in a manner not in keeping with the company's interests (some of the partners were accused of attempting to operate their own businesses at the expense of the firm's productivity), the payment of workers in merchandise and not in cash, thus increasing expenses and causing insubordination and discontent among the workers, and finally, the interference of the non-resident partners in the technical affairs of the company, including construction and production.

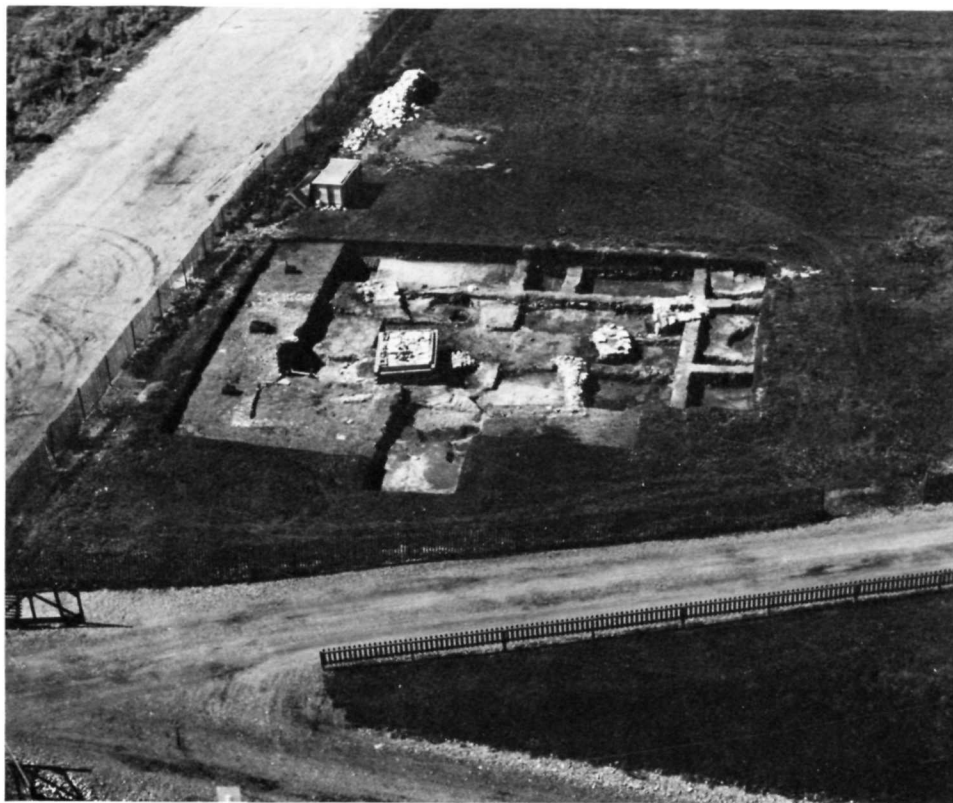
The list of accusations is a long one, and no attempt has been made here to analyse them in terms of their order of importance. Nonetheless, it seems clear that these factors influenced the outcome of this portion of the history of the Forges to some extent. A number of external factors, such as the poor wheat harvests and

resulting food shortages of 1737 and 1738 and the chronic lack of currency in the colony, also contributed to the increased costs of establishment and operation. It is not surprising, then, to note that from 1735 to 1741 the Forges cost approximately 530 000 livres and earned only 180 000 livres, leaving a deficit of nearly 350 000 livres. This deficit becomes even more understandable in view of the fact that production, originally forecast at a volume of 300 tons of iron a year, totalled slightly more than 450 tons for this entire period (four seasons of operations) from 1738 to 1741 compared to the 1200 tons anticipated.

Despite the company's failure, all those involved agreed that the venture was sound and that it would succeed with proper administration and control. Following this costly experiment, the State studied the possibility of transferring the administration to the King or to a new company, since it was already clear that the operation would continue. Until a final decision could be made, an event which did not occur until 1743, the Forges were kept in operation by the State, under the direction of a subdelegate of the intendant, *Sieur Estèbe*, who was also to produce an inventory of the establishment. It was under this provisional administration that the Saint-Maurice Forges showed their first profit.



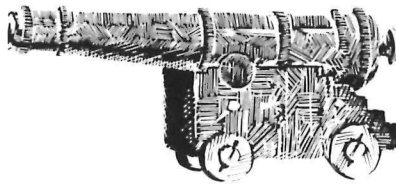
Remains of a small 18th century house excavated on the site of the Forges. (PHOTO: PARKS CANADA, 1977).



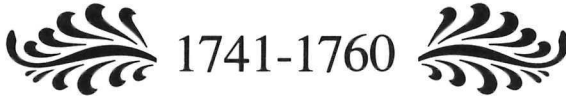
Remains of an 18th and 19th century residential area, north of the blast furnace area. (PHOTO: PARKS CANADA, 1975).

THE FRENCH AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS TAKE OVER OPERATIONS

1741-1767



THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT



From October 1741 to August 1742, Estèbe administered the Forges, after first performing an inventory. A Quebec merchant, Martel de Belleville, succeeded him, managed the enterprise with the help of clerks, Cressé and Perrault. On May 1, 1743, the Forges became Crown property; an estimate dated March 9, 1744 established their value at close to 175 000 livres. In 1745, in an effort to improve the technical competence of the staff of the Forges, the French authorities sent out two moulders familiar with the process of casting artillery; an artillery caster was also to come to Canada, but the War of the Austrian Succession forced him to remain in France. A new inventory of the firm and a survey of the iron mines were performed in 1746. In September of the same year, a fire destroyed the lower forge, which was reconstructed the following summer, with the addition of a *trip hammer*** . During the year 1747, tests were performed and an unsuccessful attempt was made to produce a number of cannon. The following year, François Bigot replaced Hocquart as intendant; once again, an inventory was carried out. François Le Mercier, an officer posted in the colony, was sent to France to learn the art of casting pieces of ordnance. In 1749, Hertel de Rouville, former Lieutenant-General of Trois-Rivières, was appointed inspector of the Forges, with Martel and Cressé remaining as directors. During this time, Rouillé replaced Maurepas as Minister and the Forges were visited by the Swede Peter Kalm. In 1750, the garrison at Trois-Rivières was expanded to provide low-cost additional manpower for the work of the Forges, which by then were in a state of advances disrepair. The same year, Martel was replaced by Latuilière as director of the firm. In 1751 and 1752, following Cu-

* A type of management implicating budget restrictions and control of the expenditure.

** A rapidly-moving hydraulic hammer with a light head permitting the production of smaller-dimension iron (particularly round iron) than the usual forge hammer.

Example of a page from one of the inventories of the Forges, prepared by Guillaume Estèbe in November 1741. (ARCHIVES NATIONALES, PARIS, FM 1, C11A, VOL. 112, FOL. 38V).

2 idem de 12 pieds de long chacun sur 10
 4 idem de 9 pieds de long chacun, sur 7 pouces de
 large, & 3 pouces d'épaisseur
 206 madriers ordinaires de 10 pieds
 un fourneau
 de vingt huit pieds de front sur six & demi de hauteur
 de chaudière, & sur la plateforme 25 pieds de long
 sur six & demi, 15 pieds & 7 pouces de hauteur, à
 prendre du rez de chaudière à la plateforme le
 pied de fourneau est de 8 pieds 1 pouce sur une
 face 7 pieds sur l'autre; sur 18 pieds & 4 pouces
 de haut au-dessus de la plateforme est une corniche
 de 9 pieds de haut sur six & demi, & de 22
 pouces d'épaisseur. les fondations du dit fourneau
 sont de 28 pieds en quarré; & sur 7 pieds de lar-
 geur plus le dit fourneau est fermé & couvert
 sur l'un des côtés de la face à la coulée se
 fait au-dessus d'un soufflet, & sur l'autre deux côtés de
 la face du réchaud
 une ouverture de feu en la muraille pour la lamen-
 tation fourneau
 Dans les autres côtés de ce fourneau, sont
 employées 8 lattes pour les soutiens

gnet's death, a settlement was reached on matters associated with his earlier administration of the firm. During this time the engineer Franquet carried out an investigation and expressed some doubt as to the firm's management. In 1755, following a business trip to New France, Vézin volunteered, unsuccessfully, to take over the administration of the Forges. According to Marteilhe, a Quebec merchant, military production reached a peak in 1756, at the beginning of the Seven Years' War. In September 1760, British military forces occupied the colony and established a provisional government; the Forges were inventoried once again.

This portion of the history of the Forges, which began with the failure of Cugnet and Company, suggests a number of considerations. The State was in the position of having to settle the affairs of the bankrupt company and to decide on the future of the establishment. First of all, the State's efforts to settle the company's debts (debts to the State and to private creditors) occurred during the first half of the period and ended with Cugnet's death in 1751. We know that in 1743 the King took over the establishment as compensation for unrepaid loans to the partners in Cugnet and Company and that he attempted at the same time to provide Cugnet, the major partner, with means of repaying his debts to the royal treasury and his private creditors. Secondly, among the solutions considered to determine the future of the establishment, that of forming a new company to operate the Forges rapidly became the central idea governing the State's policy towards the firm. This objective determined many of the steps taken by Maurepas and Rouillé, whose failure was probably due to the wartime situation prevailing during this phase in the history of the Forges. This option, considered the most satisfactory solution, also influenced the administration of the establishment. In its constant efforts to find such a company, the State continued to administer the Forges on an interim basis, putting off any improvements or renovations which would require heavy investments, simply administering operations economically and maintaining the best possible level of operations, given the condition of the equipment and the quality of the labour force available. It appears, too, that this type of administration, with only a few variations, was very similar to that exercised by Cugnet and Company, with the result, not surprisingly, that it involved similar failings.

Economical administration should have meant, for the State, budget restrictions and controlled spending. This apparently was not the case, since the administration of the Forges was the subject of repeated investigations, leading to recommendations and corrections, most of which were never implemented. The high level of spending was not due solely to poor administration. It was also the result of the war context, which disrupted trade in general, hindered the recruitment of essential workers and interfered with the process of resource acquisition. This situation was also linked to the high cost of manpower, skilled or otherwise, from France or the colony, and to the difficulty of extracting good work from what manpower was available, despite the probably exaggerated number of skilled tradesmen found on the site, as well as to the progressively greater difficulty involved in obtaining resources. And for all it has been severely criticized, this administration continued to show an almost constant profit, at least during the years for which we have figures, despite the continual problems which the administrators faced. Finally, since it is apparently true that the establishment suffered a decline in productivity during the final years of this period, the physical deterioration of the equipment, the health of the labour force (the advanced age, disabilities and illness of the skilled workers which it had been impossible to replace) and the abuse-ridden administration of Bigot could be added to the other explanations.

At the same time, there was a diversification in the production of both cast and wrought-iron articles. In terms of cast-iron objects, the military orientation which production was to take led to the manufacture of articles for service needs. With the added stimulus of the wartime situation, the State made constant efforts to establish a foundry for heavy artillery at the Forges. Despite these attempts, only small-calibre pieces were ever successfully cast, and even they were imperfect. Another idea was to produce articles for domestic use for the colonial market. Indeed, the arrival of two moulders from France in 1745 was at least partially related to this diversification in production. Finally, the installation of a trip hammer in the lower forge in 1747 permitted the manufacture of a wider range of wrought-iron articles.

The French government's administration of the Forges raised a number of hopes which

were never met: the formation of a new company, the casting of pieces of heavy artillery and the manufacture of products related to naval construction. However, despite its only partially successful record, the establishment still impressed its new masters, the British, in the years after 1760, as a valuable asset which they continued to operate on behalf of their King until 1767.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT



In the early stages of the British military regime, de Courval directed the workers who had remained on the site. On February 10, 1763, the Treaty of Paris sealed the fate of the New France, ceding it to England, and one of the clauses of this treaty specified that Canadians would have 18 months to leave the colony if they so desired. As a result, the transfer of the powers of civil administration did not take place until the autumn of 1764; an inventory of the Forges was prepared on September 28. During the period of military administration, Burton and Haldimand, as successive governors of the district of Trois-Rivières, were responsible for activities at the Forges. From August 1765 until June 1767, when a lease was granted to Christophe Pélissier, operations ceased and the site was placed under military guard.

Already economically weakened during the final years of the French regime by the fraudulent dealings of Bigot, among others, the colony found itself, in the period immediately following 1760, without resources and under new masters in the form of a provisional military government. Like any armed conflict, the Seven Years' War in America left its marks.

Following a brief survey of the country's resources, the new rulers, realizing the deplorable state of affairs, attempted to improve the situation. The Saint-Maurice Forges represented an important asset for the military government of Trois-Rivières, and the military authorities were happy to continue operating it with those employees still available. This decision had the beneficial effect of creating jobs, ensuring a minimum circulation of currency among the inhabitants of the immediate area and thus of reducing the sufferings of the people of the Trois-Rivières region during this post-war period.

The military government remained in place from 1760 to 1764, and during this period the Forges were kept in operation. Various administrators submitted frequent requests for the

Example of a document showing the production of the Forge in 1763 and 1764. (ADDITIONAL MS. 21681, FOL. 146. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE BRITISH LIBRARY).

Production of the St Maurice Forges In 1763 and 1764 during the time that Colonel Haldimand did preside over the Government of 3 Rivières.

1: 1763 — Pig iron produced in our own Furnaces from October 22 to November 30, 1763

In Bars

37462^l

2: 1764 — Other cast Iron from the previous Year and Cannon and Bombes produced from June 1 to September 21, 1764

In Bars

67659^l

L: 105121

3 Rivières, September 25, 1764.

Courval

(C)
 Journal de la Forge St Maurice le
 22^o 1763
 Le Colonel Haldimand preside dans le
 Gouvernement de 3 Rivières
 1^o 1763 — Le Colonel Haldimand les quantes
 produites de la Forge le 22^o 1763
 au 30^o 1763 sont au total de
 37462^l
 2^o 1764 — Le Colonel Haldimand les quantes
 produites de la Forge le 1^o 1764
 au 21^o 1764 sont au total de
 67659^l
 3 Rivières le 25^o 1764
 Courval

Map presumably prepared by Murray at the time of the Conquest, showing the site of the Saint-Maurice Forges. (PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA, MAP DIVISION, P/300-1760-61-62 — part only — C-85809).



renovation of the establishment, but they received no specific orders to this effect, because of the high level of investment required and the provisional nature of their administration. As a result, production remained at a modest level which, despite the limited market due to the lack of currency, nonetheless covered the expenses of this government and in fact permitted the establishment to operate at a profit during this period.

When, in the autumn of 1764, the military authority was replaced by a civil government, the Saint-Maurice Forges, an important element in this transfer, were closed down. The establishment was placed under military guard and the workers dismissed until a decision could be reached. This period of inactivity lasted until 1767, when Pélissier and his associates obtained a government lease to operate this industry.

The Saint-Maurice Forges survived the Conquest through the initiative of the first military directors, who proved that such an establishment could be made to operate profitably in Canada. The results obtained during the operations of this period certainly contributed to the fact that the Forges were to continue their activities for more than a century thereafter.

A SUCCESSION OF LEASEHOLDERS



1767-1846

During this stage of nearly 80 years, a succession of leaseholders operated the establishment at their own risk and for their own profit, in return for payment to the State of an annual rental, which varied over the years. The conditions or terms of these leases changed only slightly over the course of the period. By means of this system, the State attempted to ensure the operation of the enterprise without assuming responsibility for its problems.

Pierre de Sales Laterrière,
*director of the Forges during the
lease of Christophe Pélissier and
associates. (PHOTO: LA PRESSE,
1920).*



CHRISTOPHE PÉLISSIER AND ASSOCIATES

 1767-1783 

On June 9, 1767, a 16-year lease was awarded by the government to Christophe Pélissier, Alexandre Dumas, George Allsopp, James Johnston, Thomas Dunn, Benjamin Price, Colin Drummond, Dumas St-Martin and Brook Watson. The lease granted this group of merchants and councillors possession of the establishment and the same area available under the French regime. In return, they agreed to pay the State an annual rental of £25 and, on expiry of the contract, to return the establishment in the condition in which they had found it, as described in the inventory of 1767.

The establishment resumed operation and business appears to have been satisfactory since, between 1770 and 1772, Pélissier purchased six of his associates' eight shares. In 1775 and 1776, the episode of the American invasion disrupted the industrial life of the Forges. Pélissier, sympathetic to the Americans' aims, dealt with them and even provided them with products. He soon came under suspicion by the British rulers, and left the Forges a first time from 1776 to 1778. During this period, however, he remained associated with the administration of the firm, which was directed in his absence by the surgeon Pierre de Sales Laterrière, who became a shareholder in the company in October 1777. Pélissier returned to Canada in 1778; he settled his accounts with Laterrière and left the country a second time in October of the same year. Alexandre Dumas and associates continued the operation until the expiry of the lease in 1783. Although little information is available on production, we can assume that during this period the Forges manufactured military and domestic articles, including stoves, ploughshares, iron bars and milling equipment.

George the Third

by the grace
of God Great Britain and the Territories thereunto belonging King of Great
Britain, and so forth. To all to whom these Letters shall come Greeting

Note. — The Witness it has been sundry years past to the said King and well belov'd Queen
Castellan our Lieutenant Governor and Commissioner in Chief of New Brunswick
of the said Province, and our Council of said Province, by Christopher Boucher
and Alexander Dumas, and others our full, full, full, full, full, full, full, full,
that diverse adventures might be done, and our said Province by working
certain New Mines, belonging to even Right of New France, situated in the
said Province, near the Town of New Brunswick, or the same, and commonly
known by the Name of the Sage of Saint. Maurice; and that they the said
Christopher and Alexander, together with certain others of our said Province
are willing and desirous to undertake to work the said Mines, at their own
Expence and Charges; if we will grant to them a Dispensation, Reliance in the
Rights that may there arise to value them thereunto. Now know ye that
We being willing to encourage so useful and laudable an undertaking which
will be attended with a considerable Expence, as we are informed by the
undertakers, have of our especial Grace certain knowledge and
full Power

247

our written Grant and Decree and by these present Letters under our Great
Seal of Great Britain, and the Territories thereunto belonging, by Order
of our said King and well belov'd Queen Castellan our Lieutenant Governor and Commissioner
in Chief of New Brunswick, together with the Advice and Consent of our Council,
of the same, Do Grant and Decree; for that the said Christopher,
Alexander, and others, the said Christopher Boucher, of the Town of New Brunswick,
Merchant, the said Alexander Dumas, of the same, New Merchant, James
Dumas of the same place Captain, one of the Members of our Council of the said
Province, Benjamin Côté of Montreal, in the Province of Quebec, Esq. one
of the Members of our Council of the said Province, John Dumas one of the Town of Quebec
Captain, Dumas Saint. Martin, of Montreal in the Province of Quebec Esq.
one of our Justices of Peace to keep the Peace in the said Province; George Alltop
of the Town of Quebec in the Province of Quebec Merchant; James Johnston of the
same, New Merchant; and Brooke Watson of London in our Kingdom of
Great Britain Merchant; a large Tract of Land near the Town of these
Mines in our said Province of Quebec, containing the spot in which the
said Mines. Usually known by the Name of Les Forges de Saint. Maurice
are situated and Comprising within it the Right and Signory of Saint. Maurice,
and other Lands adjacent to, and convenient to be enjoyed with the said
said Mines, and bounded by the following boundaries, to wit, on the north
side, by the River which falls into the River Saint. Lawrence, at the said Town of
these Mines, on the south side by the lands of St. Jean Baptiste, on the east
side by the Chain boundary of the said Signory of Saint. Maurice; and on the
west side by the Chain boundary of the said Signory of Saint. Maurice, and at the Distance
of three leagues from it. To have and to hold unto us, our Heirs and Assigns, our
said Province hereby Demised, to them the said Christopher Boucher, Alexander
Dumas, Thomas Dumas, Benjamin Côté, John Dumas, Dumas Saint
Martin, George Alltop, James Johnston and Brooke Watson, their
Heirs, Administrators and Assigns and the Executors Administrators
and Assigns of each of them, as Tenants in Common and not as Joint
Tenants, for a Term of fifteen years from the day of the date of these
Letters, to be fully completed and paid; Rendering and paying
therefore unto us our Heirs and Assigns the yearly sum of Twenty five
Pounds of lawful money of our said Province of Quebec, or Eighteen Pounds
fifteen Shillings of lawful money of Great Britain, by equal payments
to be made in our said Province of Quebec, at the Feast of Saint. John the
Baptist, Saint. Michael, the Ascension, the Nativity of our Blessed
Saviour

Example of a few lines from a lease of the Forges, June 9, 1767, Christophe Pélissier and associates. (PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA, RG68, vol. 274, p. 256-257).


CONRAD GUGY

 1783-1787 

After some negotiation, beginning in 1781, the government acceded to a request by Conrad Guky, former secretary of Haldimand, seigneur of Grandpré, councillor, and granted him a lease identical to the previous one, to be in effect from June 10, 1783 to June 10, 1799. Like Pélissier in 1767, he found the establishment in wretched condition. The repairs required to the site were estimated in June 1785 at nearly £3500. Despite this situation, Guky was able to operate the business. When, on January 13, 1786, he signed over his property to his companion, Elizabeth Wilkinson, the Forges were part of the gift; an inventory attached to the document indicates substantial quantities of a very wide range of products manufactured on the site: 31 double stoves, 612 single stoves, 534 axleboxes, 117 cast-iron ploughshares, 36 anvils, 5 frying pans, 80 pairs of andirons, 13 firebacks, 16 plates for brick stoves, 58 tart plates, 22 cast-iron hammers, 39 basins with lids, plus 2244³/₄ quintals of iron and other miscellaneous articles. In April 1786, a court decision against him in favour of one Duhaime for a sum of more than £7000 crushed Guky, who died a few days later. Despite the legal proceedings, which followed their course, causing some disruption at the Forges, operations continued.

This short period during which Guky and Wilkinson ran the Saint-Maurice Forges suggests a dynamic and energetic administration, given the lamentable condition which the establishment had reached at the time of the transfer in 1783, and the production in the following years, until the acquisition of the rest of the lease by Alexander Davison and John Lees on March 10, 1787 at a cost of £2300.

ALEXANDER DAVISON AND JOHN LEES

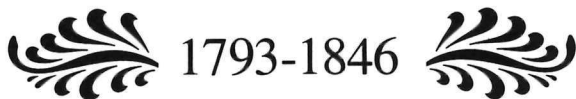
 1787-1793 

Little is known of the administration of these two merchants. We know that they applied, in vain, for a 10-year extension to the existing lease as compensation for the repairs which they had made to the Forges and a guarantee of the improvements which they planned to make. In fact, five houses were built for workers, together with a blacksmith's and carpenter's shop, a bakery and a covered area for stone-cutting, structures which suggest a certain degree of activity on the site during this administration. The association between Davison and Lees was dissolved on October 25, 1790 and a final settlement in the case was reached two years later. Davison, who continued the operation, sold the rest of his lease to his brother George, and to David Monro and Mathew Bell, on June 6, 1793 for the sum of £1500 plus £2934 for the goods, effects and tools left on the site.

Mathew Bell, one of the partners
operating the Forges from 1793 to
1846. (PHOTO: LA PRESSE, 1920).



MATHEW BELL IN PARTNERSHIP AND ALONE



The merchants Bell, Monro and Davison took over the establishment in 1793 and made a number of improvements. Shortly before their lease was to expire, in June 1799, they asked the government, in consideration of the investments which they had had to make, to renew their lease for at least seven years, or to require from their possible successors to reimburse them for these investments. When the discussions on the granting of a new contract became protracted, Bell and Monro obtained an extension until April 1, 1801. The provisions of this lease extension allowed them to use the vacant Crown lands located between the area of the Forges and the north-eastern boundary of the Gatineau fief. Meanwhile, in January 1800, Bell and Monro had acquired the late George Davison's share in the company operating the Forges, for a sum of £10 523*.

The administration of Bell, Monro and Davison was characterized primarily by their desire to establish themselves firmly on the site and to cement their positions as solidly as possible. This attitude suggests that the three associates achieved some success in operating the Forges, which at this point were producing primarily iron bars, plates for ploughshares, domestic containers, cast-iron ploughshares, axleboxes, anvils, andirons, hammers, stoves, firebacks, mill parts and other similar articles. In addition, Bell and Monro were to continue operating the Forges for another 15 years, and would attempt to extend their hold on the establishment and the adjacent lands even farther.

* In 1793, the three associates had acquired the uncompleted lease and some goods for less than £4500. The value of their shares must have increased.

Example of an advertisement for the products of the Forges, from the Thursday, August 1, 1799 edition of the GAZETTE DE QUÉBEC.

LES FERMIERS des FORGES St. MAURICE informent leurs Prati-
ques que différentes circonstances les mettent en état cette année de
faire une deduction considerable sur le prix de leurs effets de fonte, ainsi
qu'il paroitra par le Tarif suivant, étant égale à environ 12 1/2 per cent, in-
dependamment du discount ordinaire alloué aux Marchands de campagne
qui prennent un affortiment.

PRIX COURANT pour l'année 1799 des Marchandises
faites aux Forges Saint Maurice.

	Nombre.	Contenant Gallons.	Prix.		Nombre.	Contenant Gallons.	Prix.
Fer en barres et Plaques			35/	Idem	2		3/3
de Soc			p. Cr	Idem	3		3/4
Chaudrons	1	6 1/2	9/	Socs Moulés	1		1 1/2
Idem	2	9 1/2	12/6	Idem	2		1 1/2
Idem	3	10 1/2	14/	Boetes à Roue	1		5/7
Idem	4	11 1/2	15/6	Idem	1		3/8
Idem	5	16	20/	Idem	3		5/2
Idem	6	22 1/2	25/	Idem	4		7/6
Chaudrons Couverts	1	7 1/2	3/4	Idem	5		7/9
Idem	2	14	4/6	Enclumes	1		2 3/4
Idem	3	21	6/	Idem	2		3 3/4
Idem	4	28	6/6	Chenets	1		3 5/7
Idem	5	34	8/	Pilons	1		1 1/8
Idem	6	51	12/	Idem	2		2/9
Marmites	1		1/6	Poels	1		4/
Idem	2		1/8	Idem	2		5 5/7
Idem	3		2/	Idem	3		7 5/7
Idem	4		3/	Idem	4		8 5/7
Idem	5		3/6	Idem marqué A			100/
Idem	6		4/	Idem V			90/
Idem	7		4/6	Idem C			80/
Idem	8		6/3	Idem D			8 5/7
Idem	9		7/	Idem E			90/
Idem	10		8/	Idem F U			120/
Tourtieres	1		3/6	Idem L			120/
Idem	2		6/6	Idem B double			130/
Baffins	1		1/6	Plaques de Cheminées			25/

Les ouvrages unis pour les moulins, tels que les Goujons &c. 27/6
 Les roues et autres différents ouvrages 30/

Et les ouvrages de fonte de toute description, en envoyant des modèles,
 seront exécutés à aussi bon marché que possible.

The discussions on the granting of a new lease continued, with Bell and Monro in competition with Thomas Coffin of the Batiscan Iron Works Company. They emerged successful from this confrontation and obtained a lease for a period of five years (from April 1801 to April 1806), but at an annual rental of £850, as compared to the £25 they had paid since 1793. On July 15, 1805, following discussions, this lease was extended by one year to April 1, 1807. The terms of the lease remained the same, with the exception that any raw materials acquired in 1806 and 1807 were to be purchased by the new leaseholders, if any. It was also provided that on expiry of the contract, the current leaseholders or any other person appointed by the government could legally make any preparations required to avoid a season of inactivity on the site. This extension was granted to allow the necessary time for the completion of surveying, plans and publication of a notice of sale of a new 20-year lease, for June 11, 1806. After being postponed for several months, bidding for the lease of the Forges took place at Quebec on October 1, 1806. Bell and Monro obtained the rental contract for the very low price of £60 a year. The contract offered included, among other terms, an increase in the area involved, at the very time when the government was carrying out a survey of the boundaries of the lands included in the lease of the Forges.

In view of the great discrepancy between the earlier rent (£850) and the new charge (£60), government administrators demanded a review of the financial terms of the agreement. After some protest, Bell and Monro agreed, in 1809, to pay an annual rental of £500, in order to avoid legal proceedings and the loss of their operation. After operating the firm without an official lease for nearly three years, they found themselves with a contract for a period of 21 years (from January 1, 1810 to March 31, 1831), on the same terms as the previous one.

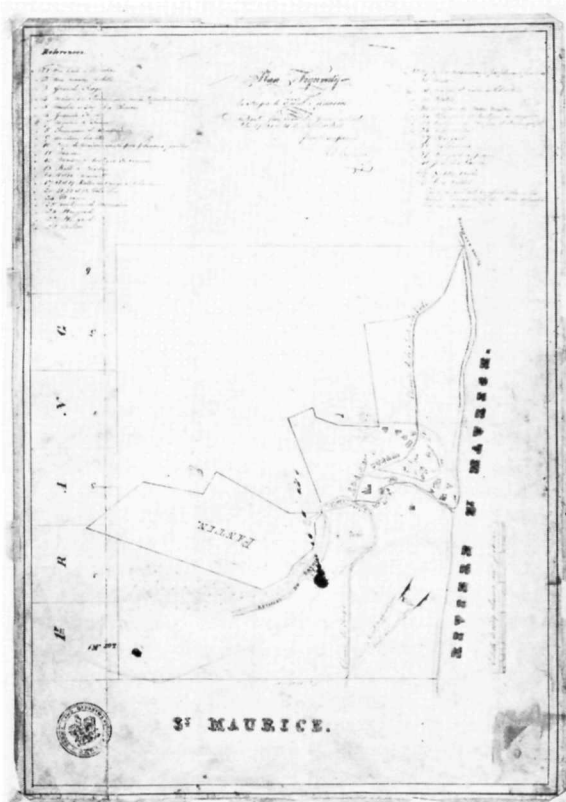
In the course of operations, on October 26, 1816, Bell acquired Monro's shares for the sum of £13 123. Bell and Monro thus operated the business jointly from 1800 to 1816, an administrative period marked by a number of noteworthy features.

First, the preparations for the 1801-1806 lease reveal a new element, the official and persistent competition between Bell and Monro and a second major group, the Batiscan Iron

Works Company. This situation led the government to call for tenders on the lease. To the enormous satisfaction of the authorities, this competition raised the rental charge by an extraordinary amount, from £25 to £850. The results of this procedure, dictated at that time by events, are certainly among the elements which led to the public sale by auction of a 20-year lease in October 1806. The democratic nature of this auction apparently did not meet expectation, since only three bidders participated and the cost of the lease dropped from £850 to £60 a year. However, the local administrators, by now more aware of the value of the Forges and of the advantages of a high rental, refused to conclude the agreement and the buyers were eventually forced to accept an out-of-court settlement which raised the annual rental to £500. This out-of-court agreement between the leaseholders and the government would seem to indicate some favouritism towards Monro and Bell on the part of Governor Craig, since he could have demanded a second public auction with an appropriate reserve price.

Like any self-respecting profit-making organization, Monro and Bell wanted the best possible conditions to enable them to make money on their investments. To this end, they demanded guaranteed compensation for any action not covered by the terms of the lease. Indeed, from 1793 on, they assigned particular importance to the land rented with the establishment. Besides making repeated requests for more land, they wanted to have the boundaries of this area clearly established in order to avoid the disputes which regularly arose. An increasingly strong hold on hand on an increasingly growing area was justified in their eyes by the need to create a land reserve for the present and future needs of the enterprise and to establish a protective barrier against the increased danger of fire which nearby settlers created. In this sense, it can be said that Monro and Bell acted like true owners, without, however, the financial burden of ownership. Assured of their rights and privileges, they continued to receive government support for most of the requests which they presented.

Finally, this desire for continuity, this attachment to the lease of the Forges suggest that the operation was experiencing some success. Despite the increases in rental, from £25 to £850 in 1801 and from £60 to £500 in 1810, Monro and Bell remained in business, for all



Figurative plan of the Saint-Maurice Forges, prepared by J.P. Bureau, surveyor, in January 1845. (PLAN CONSERVED IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE SURVEY DIVISION, QUEBEC DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND RESOURCES).

their complaints. They claimed to have agreed to the increase in rental in 1801 solely to avoid losing their considerable investments; and in 1806 they attempted to justify a rental of £60 on the basis of unfavourable economic conditions. In fact, they claimed that their annual rental of £500 after 1810 would wipe out the firm's profits. Obviously, in combination with the hazards of a less favourable economic situation, an increase in rent would affect profits, although it seems unlikely that it would completely eliminate them. For instance, Bell showed no hesitation in acquiring Monro's share in 1816 for a sum of more than £13 000. We can therefore estimate the value of the company's property and effects at a considerable sum in excess of £26 000. This transaction would hardly have taken place if the Forges were not showing some financial success. Bell, indeed, continued to operate the firm until 1846.

About 1829, just before the lease was to expire, Bell was attacked by certain groups from Trois-Rivières for the monopoly which he held on the land associated with the Forges. This monopoly, it was asserted, was preventing colonists from settling north of Trois-Rivières and restricting the town's development. During the prolonged discussions on the terms of a new lease, Bell's contract was extended to 1834. Despite all these protests, the government granted him a new 10-year lease (from January 1, 1834 to January 1, 1844) on the same conditions as previously. In addition, the contract included a lease on certain lands within the seigneurie of Cap-de-la-Madeleine. At the same time, the government reserved the right, as of January 1, 1843, to carry out any preparations for operations in 1844.

Despite Bell's efforts to counter the protest by politicians and citizens against his monopoly on the lands associated with the Forges,

the subject remained under discussion in government circles, and when the lease expired in 1834, the State decided that it would be better to permit settlement on the Forges land and to sell the business to the highest bidder. Since it was not prepared to take action in January 1844, Bell obtained an extension of his lease until the summer of 1846. The Forges went up for sale on August 4, 1846. Bell was among the bidders, but he withdrew before the auction was completed. The lands associated with the Forges were put up for sale as a block on November 3, 1846.

Despite all adversities, in a context of both political unrest and some economic difficulty, Bell had nonetheless succeeded in ensuring the continuity of operations to the end. While the range of products remained generally identical to that of the preceding period, some specialization was becoming evident in terms of parts and works for steam-powered machines and moulded hollow objects. While it is impossible to determine the exact level of production, it may be assumed that operations reached a high level. According to Bell, the Forges provided employment in 1832 for some 90 permanent employees and 100 to 150 seasonal workers, accounted for the annual circulation of £10 to £12 000 in the Trois-Rivières area and produced objects with an average annual value of as much as £30 000. In addition, the presence of a single leaseholder for more than 30 years shows a certain stability in the firm's operations, which lends some credibility to the hypothesis of financial success. Present and active until the very end of the Forges' leaseholder period, and, in fact, attempting to purchase the establishment when it was put up for public sale in August 1846, Mathew Bell made a definite mark on the history of the Saint-Maurice Forges.

SECOND PERIOD OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

1846-1883*

This important period in the history of the Forges is divided into two phases: the first illustrates the difficulties associated with the exploitation of the enterprise by Henry Stuart, James Ferrier, Andrew Stuart and John Porter, between 1846 and 1861; the second phase involves the resumption of operations at the Forges under the McDougall family, until their final closure in 1883.

* The descriptive data on this period are taken from an unpublished study by Michel Bédard.



HENRY STUART AND JAMES FERRIER

 1846-1851 

On August 4, 1846, a Montreal lawyer Henry Stuart acquired the Saint-Maurice Forges for the sum of £5575. On November 3 of the same year, he purchased from the government the 36 209 acres of the fiefs of Saint-Maurice and Saint-Étienne as a block, on condition that the lands be sold or granted as lots to settlers on request. He was also entitled to use these lands for a period of five years as a source of supplies. With all this land, a quarter of which he sold, Henry Stuart did not operate the Forges himself for long. Probably as a result of his over-extensive financial commitments, he signed an agreement on October 30, 1847 with James Ferrier, a Montreal merchant, placing him in charge of the operation.

Although he operated the Forges for only one year, Henry Stuart was responsible for a major technological innovation to the blast furnace complex. He arranged for the installation of a hot-air device which reduced charcoal consumption by 25 per cent. It is interesting to note that this innovation came at a time when the owners were no longer able to count, as they had in the past, on acquiring supplies from Crown land reserves. James Ferrier operated the Forges from 1847 to 1851. Little is known of his administration.

ANDREW STUART AND JOHN PORTER

 1851-1861 

On November 8, 1851, Henry Stuart sold the Forges, their associated chattels and adjacent lands to his brother Andrew, lawyer in Quebec, and to John Porter for a sum of £16500, £11659 of which reverted to the State. James Ferrier, angered by these transactions, instituted proceedings against the vendor and the vendees, who responded with a countersuit. The matter was settled out of court, however, in May of 1853. Nonetheless, Andrew Stuart and John Porter were not yet free of difficulties. By their purchase, they became subject to the same conditions as Henry Stuart regarding the obligation to grant the lands on request in lots of 100 acres. In fact, they sold or granted 130 such lots in 1851 and 1852, for a total of more than £4000. But the payments were difficult if not impossible to collect; however, they obtained permission from the government to demand the balance of the selling price after 20 years.

Stuart and Porter encountered another major difficulty. The raw materials collected prior to 1851 from unalienated Crown lands would have to come in future from land held by settlers or other owners. They were sometimes forced to pay very high prices for their supplies of raw materials, and in some cases encountered opposition from these owners. Under these circumstances, they were prepared to buy ore at the best price. As regards wood supplies, they requested that the government retain 150 lots adjacent to the Forges, on which they hoped to establish a forest management system which would guarantee them continued supplies.

The new owners faced further difficulties. By 1852, the establishment was in very poor condition and the cost of the necessary improvement amounted to £4000. In view of their accumulated debts of over £10 000 to the government and current interest rates, Stuart and Porter could see no solution to their difficulties except an appeal to the State. They therefore proposed to transfer the settlers'



*Coins found on the site of the Saint-Maurice Forges.
(NEGATIVES GAUMOND, M., MAC).*

debts to the government as full payment for their own debts, plus the difference on Henry Stuart's debt, with a remission of the interest which had accumulated since 1846. They demanded an inquiry into the matter, which was carried out by Étienne Parent in 1852. As a result of the inquiry, letters patent were granted to the owners of the forges in May 1853.

On November 21, 1851, Stuart and Porter entered into an association with Hunt and Company for the operation of the establishment. This association, originally planned to cover a ten-year period, lasted just over three years. In September 1854, the agreement was terminated over a dispute on the interpretation of the provisions of the contract. Stuart and Porter emerged £20 000 in debt to Hunt and Company. This situation gave rise to a series of disputes and legal proceedings by both parties. The owners of the Forges then appointed William Henderson to manage the establishment; in addition, he invested a sum of £8000 in the firm.

The effort was wasted, for Stuart and Porter were unable to meet their debts to the government, which obtained a judgment against them. This judgment led to the seizure of the establishment and the adjacent lands. The property was put up for sale and bought back by the Commissioner of Crown Lands on October 22, 1861. These proceedings did not completely eliminate the debts incurred by Stuart and Porter, who remained in debt to the government until November 1866.

ONÉSIME HÉROUX
 1862-1863 

The Government had no interest in keeping the Forges, and so they were put up for sale on September 15, 1862. On November 4, the merchant Onésime Héroux became the owner, for a sum of £1750, of an area of nearly 1200 acres, including a farm and the Forges. His interest apparently lay more in the farm than in the business, which he sold six months later to John McDougall for the sum of £1075.

THE McDOUGALLS

 1863-1883 

In April 1863, a Trois-Rivières merchant, John McDougall acquired the Forges and their lands, now reduced to approximately 69 acres. Having few obligations, he was able to invest in industrial equipment. He also purchased the l'Islet Forges. To supply raw material, he acquired 7200 arpents of land, although he occasionally purchased wood and iron ore from residents of the vicinity as well. Following reorganization of the enterprise, production turned to pig iron for the manufacture of train wheels in Montreal. In 1864, his sons joined the firm; four of them lived at the Forges at this time. On April 26, 1867, John McDougall entered into partnership with them as John McDougall and Sons.

For operational purposes, the firm acquired new lands in order to ensure adequate supplies. In addition to pig iron, the company produced axes in the lower forge between 1872 and 1874. The company was dissolved on December 18, 1876 and the Forges became the property of *George** and *Alexander*** McDougall, who operated them under the company name of G. and A. McDougall.

Unfortunately, this transaction occurred during a period of poor economic conditions. The new company was soon forced to close the Forges temporarily. This interruption lasted from the autumn of 1877 to January 1880. Probably before operations resumed, the partners decided to terminate the association, on January 17, 1880. On this date, George McDougall of Montreal became the sole owner of the establishment, with his former partner acting, for a time, as manager.

In 1880, the economic upswing encouraged McDougall to resume operation of the old Turcotte and Larue train wheel foundry at Trois-Rivières. From 1880 to 1883, the Forges, equipped with a second blast furnace (the new

* Montreal industrialist and Alexander's cousin.

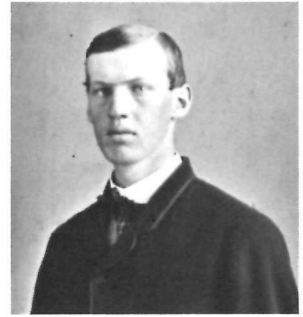
** Trois-Rivières industrialist, son of John.



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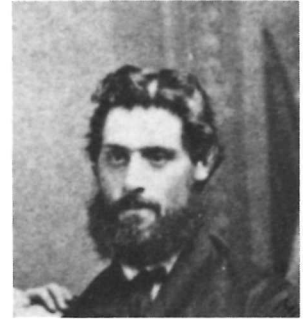
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4

- 1 **John McDougall**, father.
(NOTMAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES, McCord Museum, 6359-1).
- 2 **Robert McDougall**.
(NOTMAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES, McCord Museum, 72, 696-BII).
- 3 **Georges McDougall** of Trois-Rivières.
(NOTMAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES, McCord Museum, 7749-1).
- 4 **David McDougall** detail.
(NOTMAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES, McCord Museum, 29, 171-1).
- 5 **George McDougall** of Montreal.
(NOTMAN PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES, McCord Museum, 6258-1).

furnace) in 1881, served essentially as a source of supply for the Trois-Rivières foundry. Despite this renewed activity, the blast furnaces of the Saint-Maurice Forges were put out for the last time on March 11, 1883. The closing came about not only as a result of financial problems but also because it cost less to purchase cast iron from the United States than to produce it at the Old Forges.

Thus reconstructed, the chronological phases of the Saint-Maurice Forges present an overall view of the history of the enterprise. Operated under a variety of administrative regimes, they are characterized by an astonishing element of continuity. Despite various difficulties — technical, financial, administrative, labour-related and others — the enterprise continued to attract enough interest to support operations for more than 150 years. Government intervention in the activities of the Forges, at least prior to 1846, was at least partially related to this situation. Involved originally as a source of funds, it soon took over the enterprise on its own behalf, later leasing the operation and then selling it in 1846 to owners who attempted, until the closing in 1883, to operate it as profitably as possible.

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Most information was taken from divers archives, public, judicial, civil and private, located for the most part in Ottawa and the National Archives in Quebec. For example the manuscript series C11A at the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa contains three volumes (110-112) that concern specifically the Forges of Saint-Maurice.

Finally, the journal of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada, certain daily and weekly newspapers from the Quebec, Montreal and Trois-Rivières areas furnished information useful to the study of the Saint-Maurice Forges.

The Saint-Maurice Forges as seen from the plateau, during the McDougall period.
(PHOTO FROM COLLECTION ERIC SPRENGER, MONTREAL, CANADA).



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