The Importance of Family: A Micro-History Study of James Cameron and the Life Course of Family, Agriculture and Masculinity in Glengarry County, 1855-1881.

by

Samuel Sharp

A Thesis
Presented to
The University of Guelph

In partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
In History

Guelph, Ontario, Canada

© Samuel Sharp, September, 2014
ABSTRACT


Samuel Sharp
University of Guelph, 1992

Advisor:
Professor C. A. Wilson

James Cameron, a farmer in Glengarry County, kept a diary from 1854 to 1902. This study focused on three periods of his family life course. From 1855-57, James was a bachelor and used multiple occupations to support his farming. He cultivated social connections formed in the context of male work culture, and filled niche roles in the community. Between 1864-66, James started a family. The needs of his family increased his capital, labour and emotional investment in his farm. He worked around the constraints of supervising young children, hired labour and began to socialize his sons to the life of a farmer. Finally, 1879-81, his wife and daughters retreated from view as James, now the head of a maturing family, focused on managing the labour of his sons. Having a family led James to focus on labours that worked best with the needs, strengths and limits of his family stage.
Acknowledgements

I would like to offer my deepest thanks to Dr. Catharine Wilson for her unwavering support and endless patience throughout my project. My passion for rural history was kindled in her classes and it has continued to shape my education and interests ever since. I would also like to thank my committee, Dr. Kevin James and Dr. Kris Inwood, for their valuable comments and feedback. I would also extend my thanks to the Department of History at the University of Guelph for offering me a supportive and exciting environment over two degrees. I owe my original interest in history and education to my parents, who have continued to be a great support in this and all my endeavors. Finally, I would like to thank Samantha Elmsley for her passion in my work and motivation and help seeing this through to the end.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.................................................................ili

List of Figures...........................................................................v

Map of Glengarry County, 1879..................................................vi

Chapter One: Introduction and Historiography.................................1

Chapter Two: Bachelor Life and Pre-Family Formation, from 1855-1857........30

Chapter Three: The New Family: Family Formation, from 1864-1866...........58

Chapter Four: Mature Family, from 1879 -1881........................................89

Chapter Five: Conclusion................................................................114

Appendix ..................................................................................118

Bibliography.............................................................................132
List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Google Map Satellite image of James Cameron’s Island..........................118
Figure 1.2 Historical Map of Lake St. Francis.......................................................119
Figure 1.3: Cameron’s Island.............................................................................120
Figure 3.1: Cameron Family Tree.....................................................................125
Figure 3.2: Morris Family Tree..........................................................................126
County of Glengarry, 1879

*The blue star is the approximate location of James Cameron’s island
**The blue arrow point to A.J. Bakers lot where the Baker store was located
Chapter One:
Introduction and Historiography

On January 23 1864, James Cameron, a farmer and a newly married man with a one-year-old son, wrote in his diary. “Went down with Charlie took the Mare Lashey chopping + went to fish eels in the evening I went with Gordon + his mother to her mother’s Raising.”¹ This to-the-point, run-on sentence, full of missing punctuation, gives a concise description of his day and those around him. At first read, this sentence appears to tell us only a little bit about the kind of daily chores a farm family would pursue in Canada West. Alone, this entry reads like any other in the forty-eight years recorded in the Cameron diary. But when read together, these dry, seemingly emotionless writings leave a very detailed portrait of James Cameron as farmer, riverman, community member, husband and father. For example, the January 23 entry demonstrates many of these characteristics. Charlie, a good friend and companion, often exchanged labour with James, such as the chopping that was done on that day. Lashey, a local Mohawk man, often worked for James, particularly in establishing his maple sugar bush— an operation that required large amounts of firewood, which Lashey provided in exchange for room and board on the farm and the occasional tab at one of the local merchants. At the end of the day, James found time to take Gordon, his young son, out fishing. This was not an idyllic sit in a boat, casting lines to bait a few fish. This was hard work spearing, at times, dozens of squirming eels through a small hole in the ice. Eels provided the Cameron family with important subsistence during the lean years when the farm was getting established and the Cameron’s had small, dependent children. That James took Gordon

¹ James Cameron, Diary 1854-1902, Ewan Ross Papers, Queen’s University Archives, January 23 1964.
illustrates one of the ways he participated in child-minding while his wife, Lavina, was away. This time they spent together began the long process of education and apprenticeship that taught Gordon how to contribute to the family. Lavina’s absence from the farm to participate in a work bee at her mother’s, Mrs. Morris, speaks to the networks of reciprocity, which the Cameron family operated, and reveals the importance of in-laws to James and Lavina. The stories that this one short diary entry tells are only revealed through a close reading of the diary over periods of years. Only then does the significance of seemingly mundane entries, such as this one, appear and momentarily give life to a long dead farmer.

A sustained, close reading of the diary left by James Cameron reveals a wealth of information on how this Glengarry County farmer made his living off the land and in the local economy. Throughout it reveals how family life and James Cameron’s livelihood were intertwined. In many ways, James Cameron affirms the characteristics and patterns of behavior identified by historians. In other ways, he was unusual, not the least of which was the almost five decades of diary records. While James cannot represent all farmers of the area, the unique depth of information available about him from his diary allows for a level of insight not usually available about individuals from the past. This study reveals the many ways that James interacted with the resources and opportunities available to him. He engaged with markets, he exchanged goods in kind, he hired labour and he participated in reciprocal labour exchanges. These behaviors were intimately shaped by his sense of masculinity and family situation as it changed over his family life course. Becoming a husband and father lead James to take fewer risks and to focus on labours
that worked best with the strengths and limits of his family stage. Fatherhood also encouraged him to maximize labour that benefited his family’s needs.

**The Cameron Diary and Micro History**

The Cameron diary is of particular interest due to its length and the regularity of its entries. James wrote almost daily from 1848 to 1902, and covered many of his important milestones, from marriage to the birth of his children, to the eventual marriage of some those children. These forty-eight years represent a rich source in numerous ways, as they allow for a study of the daily concerns of the diarist and cover both his social and productive activities. James was writing in an established genre of account book diaries. Account style diaries provide information on a variety of elements of the farmers’ life, as the scribal practice was to use the diaries for multiple goals. These diaries were a place to plan for the future, manage the farm, record debts and special community events as well as keep track of family history.\(^2\) James was the primary audience of the diary; it was a tool he used to manage and record his life. It was also a family resource. The Cameron diary contains scribbles, notes, doodles as well as practice sums and letters, some of which were done by children.\(^3\) This shows that the diary was a resource for the entire family to use and the entries would have been available to be read by all. The activities of his family (especially the labour of his male children) are recorded and allow for an intimate look into the family strategies of this household. His diary, like others, offers the author’s worldview, shaped by the many factors that construct identity— such

---


\(^3\) Kathryn Carter, “An Economy of Words: Emma Chadwick Stretch’s Account Book Diary, 1859-1860,” in *Acadiensis*, XXIX, no 1 (Autumn 1999), 46.
as location, religion, class and gender and operated within the context of an established genre. The account-book style makes for many short, often seemingly emotionless entries. As Kathryn Carter’s work demonstrates, however, parsimony of words does not mean that diaries do not reveal rich details of the author’s life.\(^4\)

James Cameron had beautiful penmanship and his characters are elegant and easy to read for the first few decades of the diary. Judging from the quality of the writing as he aged, James’ eyesight or fine motor skills may have degenerated. His handwriting worsens as the diary progresses, and some of the later years are a struggle to read. For the most part, James made daily entries in his diary. This too fluctuates, such as in 1881, when James was managing the labour of several of his male children. During these busy summer months, he missed several days. James was very self-conscious of these lapses and would acknowledge them once he resumed, such as when he wrote in July of 1881 “not writing ever thing down.”\(^5\) Before long James resumed his impressive regularity and only made these lapses on occasion.

The diary as a source is not without its weaknesses. It is closely tied to the individual who wrote it, and this provides unique problems with its study. Diaries lend themselves to micro-histories, and it can be hard to link them to wider themes in society. The account-style diary allows for great access to understanding someone’s livelihood; however, very basic facts of someone’s life can go without being mentioned explicitly. There was likely little need for James Cameron to mention personal information about his wife in his writing because that relationship was so close it did not need the aid of a diary to manage. Additional sources are important to provide context for the few entries on

\(^4\) Carter, 44.  
\(^5\) Cameron, July 19 1881.
Lavina and her family such as her families census return in 1871. Even the most sentimental entries are functional, like reminders of anniversary’s and birthdays.\textsuperscript{6} This makes the diary a very poor source on the women in James’ life. Lavina and his daughters only appear when they participate in activities of James’ sphere, such as when they went visiting in the community. Their daily chores of food preparation, washing and childcare amongst other chores were almost never recorded. As diarists are writing for themselves and their family, it means that many details go unmentioned or unexplained, as they are self-evident to the author. An example from the Cameron diary was his use of local names for fish and birds that have now gone out of use.\textsuperscript{7} To effectively study diaries, tying them to other primary sources like a census is useful for reading between the lines and creating a fuller understanding of the diarist’s life.

Diary studies have become a popular field for rural historians. These previously overlooked sources thanks to scholars such as Kathryn Carter, Royden Loewen and Catharine Wilson are providing new insights into how people lived in the past. Diaries have been an overlooked source for a number of reasons. Many so-called regular people left behind account book diaries, such as the one left by James Cameron. Historians initially did not show much interest in the daily thoughts and jumbled records of transaction these diaries represented. To study a diary considerable digging into the source is a requirement due to their often-short flat entries; this had made them somewhat unappealing. These diaries are not attention-grabbing emotional or intellectual writings but represent a daily record of selected acts. The flatly narrated accounts of a diary are

\textsuperscript{6} Cameron. An example of an anniversary reminder can be found on April 9 1866.
\textsuperscript{7} Cameron, July 19 1857.
full of things and people that are unexplained. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that a diary does not represent the unbiased experience of the author. Instead they are the conscious creations of people whose writings were shaped by their specific context of religion, class, gender and age. Diaries, however, are a rewarding source for those willing to dedicate themselves to a close reading. Slowly, over many entries, enough is learned to provide context to previously cryptic statements. Eventually this allows for what Carter calls reading in-between the lines of the diary entries. For example, how does one interpret the absence of written words in the diary? Does no entry merely mean nothing to report or unable to write? Spotting the differences in the text requires patience and a strong understanding of the source. These challenges required me to reread my selected diary periods over and over, slowly seeing more details as I became more familiar with the text, the diarist and his cast of characters. Data was compiled in a broad array of tables that slowly revealed more patterns. This lead to more rereading until rich details emerged about the life of James Cameron.

Micro-histories, such as this study, offer the opportunity to reveal the fundamental experience of ordinary lives. Unlike biographies, in which the author attempts to tell a life story (usually of someone exceptional), micro-histories attempt to unravel the mystery of an individual whose experiences can, in some ways, represent the lives of others, and explain the culture in which they lived. The pursuit of micro-history

---

9 Loewen, 3.
10 Carter, 54.
11 Carter, 54.
13 Lepore, 133.
involves unraveling the mysteries that appear in the gaps in the records. When situating the diary, I dug deeply into the records surrounding the Cameron family. While each birth certificate, marriage record, census return, and obituary allowed for greater understanding of the diary, not all mysteries yielded, such as the details of his extended family. Details for the Cameron family farm from the 1871 census, and the useful agricultural data in it, were never discovered. Nor could much be found on James’ parents, John and Annie Cameron. While many details of James’ life will never be revealed, I unearthed enough to create a good picture of the life he led.

Jill Lepore reflected on the potential for love and betrayal by historians in works of biography and micro-history and suggested that the former felt biased by a love of their subject while the latter feared they might misunderstand, as they could not interview their subject or those who new them. Micro-historians are much less prone to becoming too close to their subjects due to the greater distance they have. Reading James’ daily record could at times leave one feeling like an intruder on another person’s thoughts. The process of reading James’ diary so closely left me with a feeling of affection for him, but his life, culture and worldview differed so greatly from my own that I feel I was able to remain relatively objective. My recognition of James’ love for his children, expressed despite the practicality of his writing, was the closest I was able to feel his emotional life. Yet despite this, the dry, to-the-point functionality of the writing, while informative for the most part, prevented any blinding connection to the man.

I believe that in many ways, James and his family shared in some key experiences of those of Scottish heritage living in Glengarry County particularly along the shoreline.

---

15 Lepore, 133-134.
of the river. James Cameron’s parents emigrated from Scotland, it is not known from where but significant immigration came from the western Inverness clansmen to Glengarry County.\textsuperscript{16} This was typical for the county, as it was first settled by Scottish loyalists and continued to experience high levels of immigration from the Scottish highlands.\textsuperscript{17} In 1871 the population of the county was 20,524 people: 15,899 of these people were of Scottish origin.\textsuperscript{18} Most people of Scottish origin had been born in Ontario but 1,648 traced their place of birth to Scotland.\textsuperscript{19} James was a member of the Church of Scotland. This was common with 5,279 people claiming to be Presbyterians, though the most common religious affiliation was with the Catholic Church with 10,404 followers, this was due to the western Inverness emigration that was prominently Catholic.\textsuperscript{20} James also had a mixed farm and farmers like him were the most common occupation in Glengarry, with 3,218 in the agricultural class.\textsuperscript{21} He grew a wide variety of crops and raised everything from chickens, pigs, sheep, cows and horses. Much of Cameron’s farm output went to subsistence, but he also produced for the market and consumed store-bought goods, paying on credit. He, like many other mixed farmers, supplemented his livestock and crops with forest products such as ashes and maple sugar.\textsuperscript{22} James and his family engaged in the cultural practices of community reciprocity, which, also met

\textsuperscript{17} McLean, 4.
practical needs. Throughout the diary, James held and attended bees and exchanged labour with his community members. Bees were an important institution of work and socializing and were common throughout Canadian rural communities.\(^{23}\)

In these regards James was relatively typical. In other ways, he was rather unusual. He was a tenant; of the 2,429 occupiers of the land in 1871 only 250 people were tenants, while the majority (2,169) were owners.\(^{24}\) He was literate, which was relatively common. Of the estimated 2,595 adult married in Glengarry County and 249 widowed,\(^{25}\) 739 or approximately 26 percent could not read and 938 or 33 percent could not write.\(^{26}\) Lavina could also read and write even though illiteracy was higher amongst women.\(^{27}\) Though many adults were literate, James’ diary-writing and the survival of these records separates his experience from that of most farmers.

The Cameron farm was also on an island in Lake St. Francis, a section of the St. Lawrence River. This island, like the others around it, was Mohawk land that the government leased out in 99-year leases to settlers on behalf of the people of the St. Regis Reserve.\(^{28}\) It appears the original lease\(^{29}\) for what would become Cameron Island belonged to Donald MacMaster, the first husband of James Cameron’s sister, Mary. Donald died in 1846, the same year his first son, Donald MacMaster, was born. The

\(^{23}\) Catharine Anne Wilson, “Reciprocal Work Bees and the Meaning of Neighbourhood.” \textit{The Canadian Historical Review} 82, no. 3 (Sept., 2001): 431.


\(^{25}\) These are the closest numbers representing the men over twenty.


\(^{28}\) Roy Lefebure and Norman Seymour. \textit{The Rivermen: Echoes of Lake St. Francis.} (Cornwall: Astro printing Service Ltd, 2007), 54.

\(^{29}\) I have not located the original lease so do not know its terms or start date.
family then moved to Williamstown and Mary married Angus MacDonald and together they operated a hotel there.\textsuperscript{30} When exactly they moved is unknown but they did continue to visit Cameron Island. Donald Jr. inherited the long lease from his father but did not appear to ever charge his Uncle, James Cameron, any rent, as such a transaction was never mentioned in the diary. Donald Jr. went on to become a lawyer and eventually a Conservative MLA for Glengarry County. In 1901 he moved to England where he was elected as MP and would eventually become a baronet in 1921.\textsuperscript{31} Upon Sir Donald MacMaster’s death in 1922 the Canadian government denied the validity of the MacMaster claim to the island. The St. Regis Indian Reservation successfully reclaimed it at this point.\textsuperscript{32}

Cameron Island appears to have been missed by the census taker in several census years. Perhaps its island location made travel too troublesome for the census taker. The first record of James Cameron on Cameron Island was not until 1881.\textsuperscript{33} The island location of the farm was not a typical experience, but a community of farmers worked the islands and the shoreline in the area. The connection this fostered with the water and the other islanders was an important element of James’ experience. James and the other rivermen engaged in hunting and fishing throughout the channels of the St. Lawrence.

Farming, Family and Masculinity in Rural Historiography

To understand the context for the Cameron farm, it is important to engage the secondary literature on farming, family and gender. These many strands of literature

\textsuperscript{31} MacGillivary, 537.
\textsuperscript{32} MacGillivary, 28.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Census Returns of Ontario 1881, C-13226 1881. District No. 99 Glengarry County, Sub-District A: Charlottenburg}. Roll: Page: 47; Family No: 221.
reflect the complex nature of this project. In studying James Cameron’s life as fully as possible this holistic perspective requires touching on a diverse selection of ideas and theories.

Ontario’s agricultural history has had a strong focus on markets. The most prominent and debated interpretation of the history has come from the staple thesis. This thesis argues that Canada’s development was linked to specific export commodities that drove the type of settlement and transportation systems.34 Herald Innis was the scholar most significant in establishing the thesis and theorized that the production and sale of wheat in the nineteenth century drove agricultural and economic development. The staples thesis has seen significant revision since Innis’ scholarship. Douglas McCalla and Marvin McInnis have faulted Innis for his exaggeration of the importance of wheat and of timber and for linking the development of these resources to the development of transportation networks.35 Both of these scholars acknowledged the importance of wheat to farmers, but instead of the driving force in the economy see it as only one element. They argue that local markets were more important to agricultural development and other products played prominent roles from lumber and ash to pork and barley.36

Beatrice Craig’s work *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists: The Rise of a Market Culture in Eastern Canada* is paramount in understanding how farmers interacted with local markets. Her explorations of how farmers interacted with capitalist markets showed that while they were willingly taking part in these markets, they were not

---

36 McCalla, “Planting the Province”, 6. And Russell, 120.
interacting in a full-blown capitalist way. Craig argued that farmers grew commercial crops, but did so while still continuing to utilize subsistence and non-commercial crops. Craig also looked at the occupational pluralism of farmers and builds on work done by other historians like Ruth Sandwell. Sandwell explained why farmers participated in multiple productive roles and did not just specialize in farming. Furthermore, they argue that this was an intentional strategy, and not a case of agricultural stagnation. These strategies were not easily captured by sources such as the census as people often identified first and foremost as farmers, which makes sources such as diaries effective for studying these strategies.

The strategies pursued by Cameron fall within these ideas of pluralism and the need to cushion the capitalist market with local forms of exchange and redistribution. This study of Cameron will examine these ideas further and explain why farmers like Cameron were successful. Farmers were utility maximizers and not profit maximizers. Craig described the difference as humans seek to maximize utility because they are after more than just financial profit but also non-economic goals such as prestige, security and leisure time. This idea fits very well with the scholarship on bees and reciprocal networks done by Catharine Wilson. Wilson’s work examined some of the reciprocal relationships that farmers used to their benefit and shows how they operated outside and

---


38 Craig, 178.


40 Craig, 6.

41 Craig, 18.

42 Catharine Wilson, *The Intersections of Family and Neighbourhood*. And Catharine Anne Wilson, “Reciprocal Work Bees and the Meaning of Neighbourhood.” *The Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (Sept., 2001)
sometimes in conjunction with capitalist markets.

The literature shows how farmers used reciprocal networks as well as capitalist markets in productive pursuits. The research on social labour and social life by Catharine Wilson is important to this study of James Cameron. Reciprocal work bees were a system in which farmers could concentrate labour for tasks too strenuous or time-consuming for the individual. This bee network contributed to the successful pioneer farmers’ production for the family and market. Bees were also a well-understood social interaction that offered food, company and entertainment in exchange for a hard day’s work.\textsuperscript{43} Regular attendance also gave participants the right to call their own bees and benefit from community labour. James used bees as well as other smaller scale forms of reciprocal work as part of his livelihood strategy. Wilson also showed how James would have benefited from older children later in his life course as families with “kitchens full of grown children” had a useful resource and could contribute to a greater extent to networks of reciprocity.\textsuperscript{44} Colin Coates also showed the ways that family strategies of reciprocity and community ties were important to communities. In his study of Batiscan and Sainte-Anne, local elites attempting to further their chances of success, made vertical connections with elites in larger urban centers.\textsuperscript{45} Meanwhile local economic activities increased the horizontal connections between families.\textsuperscript{46}

The historical literature on consumption offers a way to study the farmer’s engagement with markets and their consumption patterns. Douglas McCalla’s work used account books from general stores in the nineteenth century to demonstrate widespread

\textsuperscript{43} Wilson, “Reciprocal Work Bees,” 440.
\textsuperscript{44} Wilson, “Reciprocal Work Bees,” 16.
\textsuperscript{46} Coates, 73.
store-based consumption. Cameron interacted with multiple merchants and carried out a significant level of store-based consumption. This literature is thus invaluable for locating his patterns of consumption in the wider historical context. An example of the context this can provide was in Cameron’s practice of buying from several merchants. McCalla’s work shows that the farmer and the merchant were equal in their trading relations because the consumer was able to use several stores to make the most cost-effective purchases.47 Finding the best price was important as groceries were a big part of a farmer’s expenditure and some mass-consumed goods such as tea and sugar came from the Atlantic trade network.48 Looking at the role of store-bought food items in the community is crucial for understanding motivation for cash producing activities. James’ store consumption ranged from tea and sugar to a wide range of textiles and manufactured items such as pots and knives. Alcohol was one of his most frequent purchases besides tea. Both these goods played an important role in visiting and sharing with neighbours. This reflects the desirability and importance of store-bought products.

In this study I am interested in understanding how the Cameron farm operated. Particularly it is interested in the relationship between family and the farm operation. To study this, the Cameron diary has been read in depth in three different periods of three years each that correspond to different stages of his family life course. The first period of 1855 to 1857 captures James as a bachelor and before the establishment of his family. The second period from 1864 to 1866 represents the years right after his marriage to Lavina Morris and the beginning of the stage of parenting young dependent children. The

final period of 1879 to 1881 reflects a time when James and Lavina had almost 
completed their family and had a number of work-age children. They still had young 
children in this stage but now they had significant labour available from their older 
children.

The idea of family is a surprisingly difficult one to study. Its ubiquitous nature 
makes it an obvious institution to understand, but it has often been ignored, romanticized 
and misunderstood. Scholars began to take the study of family seriously only after the 
industrial and agricultural revolutions changed the nature of households and family life 
around the middle part of the nineteenth century. This study draws primarily on English 
Canadian works about rural families and on American literature and to a lesser extent, 
French Canadian literature. Historians have struggled to deal with the complexities of 
family in their histories but now have the assistance of superior methodological tools, 
such as life course analysis and quantitative history. Additional theoretical nuance came 
with the critiques offered by third wave feminism, which created an awareness of power 
and agency in the family.50

It would be impossible to discuss the discipline of family history without first 
defining what is meant by the family. Family and kin often share a genetic link but it is 
not an institution founded in nature.51 Instead, families are a set of social relationships 
shaped by their historical, cultural and economic context.52 The household is the main

50 Susan Archer Mann and Douglas J. Huffman “The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise 
of the Third Wave,” Science & Society 69, no. 1, Marxist-Feminist Thought Today (Jan., 2005). And Mary 
Neth, Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the 
52 Parr, 8.
unit of analyses for this type of history. A household does not necessarily mean blood relations, as boarders and servants commonly lived amongst families at this time. Family life was not strictly nuclear either, as several generations could have lived under one roof. When studying family, the social relations of parents to their immediate children is an important focus, but the relationship to others in the household, as well as to their kin outside the household, are integral to analysis. How the family unit, their kin and the household all interact with their community and are shaped by their historical, social and economic contexts is the purview of family history.

Early scholarship on families did not come from the disciplinary apparatus of history. The social sciences first recognized the importance of the family to social relations, especially anthropology and sociology. Their preoccupation was with understanding the shapes the family took, as well as its relation to other social institutions. These early studies suffered from value judgment and lacked any sense of moral relativism, on issues such as the changing role of women or a concern with the sexual norms of women. The popularity of studying the family grew in the social sciences and by the 1940s and 1950s examinations of the contemporary family were

---

53 Maris A. Vinovskis, “From Household Size to the Life Course: Some Observations on Recent Trends in Family History,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 21, (1997): 264. Also the systematic study of family life first began in the late nineteenth century through the work of anthropologists. The discipline of sociology did not take up this research avenue until the 1920s (Nimkoff, 477.)

54 Nimkoff, 433.

55 Family life was studied and judged against an idealized view of what a nuclear family was and what traditional gender roles were. Liberal values of progress and individual rights were celebrated as important to the modern family in these studies. Mirra Komarovsky and Willard Waller writing in 1945 on the morals valued in social science writing from 1895 – 1914 identifies these values: “Among the acceptable values were durable monogamy; premarital chastity; the right of the individual to happiness in marriage; democracy within the family (emancipation of women and children from patriarchal authority); the secular view of marriage; the rightness of divorce.” (Mirra Komarovsky and Willard Waller “Studies of the Family,” *American Journal of Sociology* 50, no. 6 (May, 1945): 444.) Clearly rights of individuals were favoured, but this moral code positioned sexual relations as legitimate exclusively to married couples.
popular.\textsuperscript{56} Still, little concern was given to family life in the past and any thinking on it was biased by an assumption that the nuclear family was a modern development, and the further back one looked the larger and more complex families became.\textsuperscript{57}

Historians’ examinations of the family benefited from their awareness of context and suspicions of the easy conclusions of social scientists.\textsuperscript{58} Early attempts at historical analysis, however, were not immune to their own pitfalls, and many attempts to look at rural families were plagued by a persistent romanticism. The idea of the family was often closely tied to an agrarian myth of yeoman farmers, who with the labour of their honest, simple families provided all their own needs.\textsuperscript{59} The idea was that the family was a bastion of traditions that worked selflessly for independence and that the whole family could be represented realistically by the male head of household. The impulse to romanticize rural family life remains very common outside academia and is a frequent theme in amateur history, perhaps reflecting its preoccupation with genealogy.

Historians began to contribute to the growing field of family studies in a more rigorous manner after several theoretical and methodical innovations occurred, and by the 1970s and 1980s family history was a popular topic.\textsuperscript{60} Rural history was also changing. The old rural history was only concerned with big ideas like markets, nation building and the staple thesis. At this time, historians began asking new questions, which became the

\textsuperscript{56} Vinovskis, 264.
\textsuperscript{57} In reality, the nuclear family has been a relatively common occurrence since the medieval ages. (Parr, 9.) An influential example of this kind of work done in the social sciences was the 1960s \textit{Centuries of Childhood} by the French sociologist Philippe Aries. (Parr, 8.) The arguments of the book suffer from teleological conclusions and represent the past as a relentless progression towards the modern. The history of the family was presented as building towards the nuclear family as social scientists understood it during the 1960s, the time of Aries’ writing. (Parr, 9.)
\textsuperscript{58} Parr, 8.
\textsuperscript{60} Vinovskis, 264.
concern of the new rural history. Historians concerned themselves with the structure of society and the lived experience, behaviour, inequality and power relations of people living in the past. This corresponds with the social turn in history, which represented an attempt to understand the realities of life for the majority of silent past actors who left few records.

The rise of quantitative history was an important innovation and a crucial aspect of this paradigm shift. Quantitative analysis of the census allowed historians to achieve the aims of social history, and remains a valuable tool for work on family history. The data mined using quantitative methods from other sources such as tax assessments, mortgages, wills and obituaries gave historians the ability to study the family like never before. Works such as David Gagan’s *Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County* and Peter Baskerville’s “Chattel Mortgages and Community in Perth County, Ontario” are examples of what these approaches accomplished. As Peter A. Russell put it, “what emerged from these sources was the central place of family as the fundamental unit of social organization.”

Quantitative history became a powerful tool for understanding rural migration, inheritance patterns and the household economy (the production and consumption patterns of households). David Gagan’s work on the Peel County History Project shows how families responded to the agricultural crisis of the 1850s. He argued that while the rural household economy depended on the labour of the entire family, inheritance patterns changed to cope with their diminishing options to reward a single heir instead of

---

61 Russell, 143.
the older practice of giving every son a helping start on the land. The remaining sons increasingly moved west to the prairies, where cheap land was still available. While Gagan’s work had its flaws, it remains a strong example of what quantitative history has to offer family history and his work inspired many subsequent historians.

Other examinations of the family relied on the organizing concept of family strategies. Leslie Page Moch, in her examination of the scholarship on family strategies, came to the following conclusions on what defined this concept: “Scholars have interpreted patterns of behavior as actions undertaken for the good of the family—family strategies for family prosperity or at least survival.” Alexander Chayanov, a Soviet agrarian sociologist, first pioneered this idea in his 1925 work on peasant organization, though his work only became widely known when it was rediscovered in the 1960s. He identified the factors that shaped peasant life, such as the reliance on family labour and risk-minimization. Family strategy theorizing has taken his lead and the concept continues to be critiqued and complicated but has remained a useful tool for historians. Critiques include doubts that a coherent intentional strategy was being made, as the idea of strategy assumes evidence of a planned response to events. While the idea of family

---

62 Russell, 145-146.
63 Gagan’s work was critiqued in a number of ways. His use of Peel County as representative of the province was problematic, as its location in the wheat belt gave it specifically regional character. (Russell, 8.) His use of the census to demonstrate high levels of mobility suffered from making assumptions about the reliability of his sources. In his quantitative modeling of out-migration, exact names had to be matched in census years or the individual was assumed to have died or moved. (Russell 159.) The reality of the census is that data such as names and ages of the same individuals were often inconsistently recorded in each census. (Russell, 159.)
65 Moch et al, 113.
67 Wilson’s work has demonstrated the strength of this approach to study farm tenancy.
68 Moch et al, 118.
strategies pre-dates the social turn, it remains a useful tool to answer the questions of social history, such as interpreting certain patterns of behaviour in history.\(^6^9\)

Sociology clearly has continued to offer some important insights into family history, which remains multi-disciplinary.\(^7^0\) The 1960s saw sociology mainly focused on household size and composition.\(^7^1\) Sociologists found evidence that household size was relatively constant throughout time and across cultures. Peter Laslett argued that these findings were deceptive because they relied on data referring to a single moment in time and therefore could not measure any change over time. Peter Laslett’s work on pre-industrial English family development led him to conclude that while the majority of families were nuclear at any specific time, the majority of families had been extended families at some point in time.\(^7^2\) Scholars then became interested in the changing structure and dynamics of the family unit over the course of many years.

Historians, especially when looking at property transmission, were already working with multigenerational studies, but a consistent methodological approach did not exist.\(^7^3\) Sociology created one called family life cycle. This positioned families moving through defined stages that every family passed through, starting with the formation of a family at marriage, through to its end with the death of its head.\(^7^4\) Family life cycle is not without issues; one of the most frequent criticisms is its reliance on universal stages experienced by families, when in reality not all families share the same sequence in their

---


\(^7^0\) Moch et al, 115

\(^7^1\) Vinovskis, 263-264.

\(^7^2\) Vinovskis, 264-265.

\(^7^3\) Vinovskis, 267.

development. The family life cycle, with its focus on the arrival and departure of children as the most important element in studying the family, meant this tool had a narrow focus that it often ignored childless families and non-family household members. Furthermore its design, which was intended for the study of the modern family, meant it did not become popular with historians.

The idea of examining change within the family inspired another approach that was pioneered by sociologists such as Glen Elder in the 1970s and significantly built on by the historian Tamara Hareven. Elder advocated for a life-course perspective. This perspective focused on the ways that age-related changes regularly shaped individual and family life and how these changes differed over the course of generations. Age represents a useful stand-in for several different pieces of information:

The age of individuals reflects at least three different aspects of their lives—the approximate stage of biological development, their age related social roles and their historical position.

Instead of focusing on the prescribed stages of families, life-course focus was on transitions in the family. Historian Tamara Hareven expanded these theoretical approaches in the discipline of history. She found a modified life-cycle approach had value but favours the life-course approach for its ability to examine transitions over time. The essence of the life-course perspective is examining families to understand how the individual, the family unit and historical context impact each other.

---

76 Vinovskis, 273.
78 Vinovskis, 274.
79 Vinovskis, 275.
perspective is particularly concerned with changing meaning of age-related social roles in
the past and how life-course transitions are affected by and coordinated with fluctuating
family circumstances and social networks and personal history. This approach became
very popular with historians, as it included historical context as an important factor
allowed for an analysis of change over time without prescribing the nature of family
life.

Mary Neth’s *Preserving the Farm*, a study of twentieth century rural Midwest
communities, demonstrates the effectiveness of the life cycle approach. Building on the
intertwined nature of gendered labour on the farm, Neth examined how family life fit into
a larger social system. Neth effectively used life cycle analysis to show that young
children were a drain on family resources and labour. As they aged and the family
moved into a different position in their life course, they eventually “significantly
augmented the labour of the farm, but also increased living expenses.”

The theoretical critiques of feminism have also had a significant impact on the
nature of family history. The social turn in history corresponds with second-wave
feminism, which focused on the ways in which women were oppressed by outside
forces. It brought in powerful critiques of the prevailing ideologies and created space
for women’s agency and power to be studied in institutions such as the family. Feminist
history made historians more sensitive to power in family dynamics, as the location of
power and agency is one of the central questions of feminism. No longer was it

---

81 Vinovskis, 275.
82 Hareven *Families, History and Social Change*, 128-130.
83 Neth, 40-41.
84 Neth, 24.
85 Neth, 25.
86 Archer Mann, 60.
acceptable to assume that decisions made by the male head of household equated with the entire family. Including an understanding of unequal power enriches the critical investigation of the family. Family represents a powerful group interest while at the same time contains conflicting individual interests that need to be addressed. Feminism importantly politicized the family unit and stripped it of its veneer of romanticism.

While second-wave feminism has advanced the study of family history in many important ways, recent literature has been distinctly shaped by third-wave feminism. Second-wave feminism was very problematic in some ways. It did not acknowledge the difference among women and focused almost exclusively on gender as the defining characteristic in women’s experience of oppression. Third-wave feminism brought in the complications of race and class and recognized that gender was only one aspect that shaped identity. Furthermore, third-wave feminism has looked beyond solely external forms of oppression. This opened the door to examinations of how women internalized and continued oppression, and conversely, how women could build agency and power while still existing in an unequal gender dynamic. Many of these methodological and theoretical contributions to family history are now being employed by historians to examine rural life. Scholarship on women also led to thinking about children’s labour. Sandra Rollings-Magnusson’s work on children is one example. She concluded that

---

87 Moch et al, 115.
88 Archer Mann, 59.
89 Archer Mann, 59.
90 Works such as Nancy Osterud’s 1991 study of farm women in New York State.
91 However, this work is poor history as proper contexts for her sources (such as her use of photographs) are missing. Also problematic is her very heavy reliance on The Nor’ West Farmer as her main primary source, so much so that her conclusions are suspect. (Sandra Rollings-Magnusson, Heavy Burdens on Small Shoulders: The labour of Pioneer Children on the Canadian Prairies. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2009), 139.)
children’s labour was freely contributed to the family and that it was integral to 
pioneering success on the prairies.\textsuperscript{92}

Feminism has not only shaped how we understand and interpret female 
experience in the past; it has allowed for new ways to examine men. The study of 
masculinity is an outgrowth of feminist history and seeks to examine men and how they 
understand and construct their gender. Masculinity is constructed, practiced and 
transformed in a relational system as men and women interact.\textsuperscript{93} Understanding 
masculinity is of great importance as it was a powerful force shaping how men saw 
themselves and lived their lives. It is a fluid concept that is constantly changing and being 
renegotiated and is tied to its spatial temporal settings.\textsuperscript{94}

Rural masculinities have been shaped by the nature of men’s work. Thus 
nineteenth century rural men associated masculinity with harvesting products from the 
land, forest and water, rugged individualism, hard work, mastery over nature, and 
physical strength.\textsuperscript{95} Gender was internalized through cultural transmission and was the 
subject of pervasive discourses. Ideas about gender were transmitted from schools, 
churches and social institutions and family.\textsuperscript{96} As sons provided necessary farm labour for 
success and represented the next generation of farmers, a familial element existed as well. 
Men valued the role of the patriarch who taught his son how to farm the land.\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{92} Rollings-Magnusson, 139.
\textsuperscript{93} Wilson, “Reciprocal Work Bees,” 449.
\textsuperscript{94} Catharine Anne Wilson, “A Manly Art: Plowing, Plowing Matches and Rural Masculinity in Ontario, 
\textsuperscript{95} Wilson, “A Manly Art,” 161.
\textsuperscript{96} Robert Hogg, \textit{Men and Manliness on the Frontier: Queensland and British Columbia in the Mid-
\textsuperscript{97} Wilson, “A Manly Art,” 166.
Masculinity is important to understanding the Cameron diary. This was a record of James’ work and public relationships. The activities of the home do not receive much mention, but social visits amongst other men in the community, work, and trips to merchants make up the entries. Marjorie Cohen revealed how male labour, which focused on capital-producing activities such as land clearing, could happen because women primarily worked on raising the workforce and subsistence tasks, thereby freeing men to engage the market.\(^98\) This shows how gender shaped work culture on farms. Masculinity is of fundamental importance for understanding James’ relationship to other men in his masculine work culture and to his sons compared to his daughters.\(^99\) Even his local landscape is gendered with masculine spaces being those where men worked, in the fields, on the water, in the forests and in the stores. While feminine spaces are revealed by their absence from the diary such as the kitchen.

The importance of understanding family life when studying rural history is demonstrated by Beatrice Craig in her work *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists*. She argued persuasively that the main market for farmers in her examination of rural New Brunswick was the local community itself. These farm families had household economies where they consumed and produced in sophisticated ways and were “opportunity maximizers”. Women were usually responsible for the domestic consumption and production and men focused on capital accumulation such as improving land, and producing for the market.\(^100\) This study showed how farm families engaged in trade, barter and subsistence, within local markets and larger capitalist markets. Craig

---

\(^98\) Cohen, 37.

\(^99\) Beatrice Craig work also demonstrates how gender shaped work culture on farms.

\(^100\) Craig, 177-178 and 201-202.
argued that trade, barter and subsistence represented different levels of the same economy instead of three different competing economies.\textsuperscript{101} This idea of the local economy is important for understanding the Cameron diary as his household economy connected with it and his family strategies incorporated it. The Cameron family sustained itself through, produced for, and participated in markets in a variety of ways using the farm, local natural resources and community networks.

Family history’s flawed early attempts stumbled with the complexities of accurately exploring family life in the past. Recently scholars of rural life such as those mentioned above have produced rich, engaging studies that are grounded in many methodological advances and employ various theoretical frameworks.

**The History of Glengarry County**

The local context is also crucial to understanding the Cameron diary. Glengarry County lies on the eastern edge of what is now Ontario. It contained four districts Kenyon, Lochiel, Lancaster and Charlottenburg.\textsuperscript{102} James Cameron resided in the Charlottenburg district. A few towns dotted this district but Williamstown on the Raisin River and Summerstown on the banks of the St. Lawrence were the southernmost population centers and the ones that James frequented. British control of the area began with the defeat of the French in 1763 and these lands were promised to the local Mohawk people as reserve lands for their role as allies during the war.\textsuperscript{103} This changed in 1784 after the American war of independence and the British loss of the thirteen colonies. The British granted large tracks to families from the colonies that had remained loyal to the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{101} Craig, 9-10 and 226.
\textsuperscript{103} McLean, 169.
\end{flushright}
crown; these settlers became known as the United Empire Loyalists. Many of the Akwasasane Mohawk people resided at a mission founded by the Jesuits in 1755 at the mouth of the St. Regis River. With the loss of much of their territory in 1784, the St. Regis Reserve at this mission became the primary location of the Akwasasane Mohawk people. The loyalists who settled the Mohawk territory that eventually became Glengarry County were mainly highland Scots of the Eighty-fourth or Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment.

The men of these regiments had recently migrated to the Americas, almost all having come regionally from Western Inverness between 1763 and 1815. When they were granted land in Glengarry for their loyal service to the crown their presence lured more highlanders looking at the opportunities to migrate to the area. Large numbers of Highland Scots defined the county’s immigration. James Cameron’s parents were Highland Scots lured here by the Scottish community in Glengarry, and their son James was born in the county. He farmed on an island on Lake St. Francis that was known as James Cameron’s Island. Several other families farmed on surrounding small islands in the area. The island farm made for unique challenges and benefits. James spent much of his time on the water or ice traveling between islands and local communities on both sides of the St. Lawrence. This high level of mobility allowed him to frequent merchants in different locations in Ontario, Quebec and in the United States. It also gave him easy access to hunting and fishing grounds. The importance of being on the water for many

---

104 McLean, 169.
105 Lefebure and Seymour, 14.
106 McLean, 93.
107 McLean, 78.
108 McLean, 79.
109 Carter, 44.
men created a culture of “river men” who identified with their local environment and were particularly proud of their hunting and fishing tradition.\textsuperscript{110} Living on an island, however, also meant he was stranded there during the freeze up and the thaw of the river. His island location and his identity as a river man is important for understanding Cameron’s neighbourhood, livelihood choices and his masculinity.

As the following chapters reveal, James Cameron responded to the changes in his family life course by maximizing the utility of the resources and occupations available to him. Accordingly then these chapters are organized around the in depth study of three different three-year periods of his family life course: 1855-57, 1864-66 and 1879-81. The advantage of this approach is that it allows for a careful analysis and a sense of change over 26 years. All of the diary years between these selected dates have been read in a cursory fashion to identify important events but certain trends may be hidden. Ideally one more period that examined James as he entered into the grandparent stage of his family life course would have been pursued if time and resources allowed for it.

Chapter two analyzes James in his pre-family formation period and corresponds to the diary years 1855 to 1857. This period establishes James Cameron’s livelihood as a farmer and bachelor and reveals the many resources, skills and occupations he utilized to support himself within a masculine work culture as he attended to extracting resources from his environment, improving the productive ability of his land through clearing and trading at local stores. Chapter three looks at the diary years 1864 to 1866, when James was at the beginning of his family formation. He married Lavina Morris, and the union was quickly followed by the birth of children. James life changed distinctly as he moved

\textsuperscript{110} Lefebure and Seymour, 1.
into this new phase of his life course. The challenges of now being the male breadwinner supporting a young family led to refocusing on subsistence activities that fed his children and low risk, local activities. James also participated in the education and care of his children, but did so in a manner that he fashioned as co-working or helping out with the children and interpreted as masculine. Chapter four covers the period 1879 to 1881 and looks at the Cameron family as it was entering a mature stage. By then the oldest child, Gordon, was 19 years of age. This period demonstrates how James trained and directed his sons in their labour on the farm. Their labour became integral to the Cameron farm’s success. James’ diary also reveals the gendered nature of farm work and hints at the power dynamic present on the farm. Chapter five offers a conclusion to the arguments presented here and provides some of the details on the Cameron children’s later years.

As a whole these chapters contribute to the literature on nineteenth-century rural families showing how the family, gender and community overlapped and shaped life on the farm. The greatest contribution of the thesis is to show how this one rural man responded to the changes in his family life course.
In last few months of 1854, 30-year-old James Cameron began to keep a diary. At this time he was an established bachelor, living on his island farm on Lake St. Francis. It would be about eight years until he would marry and begin his own family.\(^1\) Why he decided to start a diary at this point is a mystery. James had started keeping copies of letters, lists of accounts and occasional diary entries before 1854, but began regular entries on December of 1854. There is evidence from these short notes that James worked on boats plying the St. Lawrence.\(^2\) Perhaps as he was entering his thirtieth year James was looking to become more rooted agriculturally in his community and it is possible to imagine that his diary’s purpose was to aid him in this. The act of keeping a diary has been shown to be a tool of masculine self-actualization.\(^3\) Diaries could function as tools for self-improvement and they provided a means to keep track of work, debts and develop one’s intellect in an attempt to become a balanced and socially considerate man.\(^4\) In the many pages that precede the regular diary, clear evidence exists that James sought to sharpen his mental abilities. He wrote Bible phrases in clear penmanship, practiced math from subtraction to long division, copied sheet music and whole ballads, which appear in these early pages of his diary. These collected writings show James took an

---

2. In the early part of reel 1 they are frequent mentions to being on boats and traveling up and down the St. Lawrence and accounting notes that point to employment as a sailor.
interest in self-improvement and that his decision to begin his diary may have been rooted in his desire to become a better man and to ‘take stock’ of his life.⁶

Regardless of James’s motivations, these first years of his diary provide a valuable comparison to his livelihood after his marriage and birth of his children. This chapter establishes James Cameron’s livelihood before his commitment to his wife and the responsibility of children. This three-year period from 1855 to 1857 shows a mature member of his local community, who was making a living by farming, hunting and trapping, fishing, logging and even investing. His sister, Mary McDonald, was active in his life. Her late husband Donald McMaster owned the lease to the island. Mary and her children moved off the island some time after she remarried Angus MacDonald in 1849.⁷ Angus and Mary operated a hotel in Williamstown but frequently came to the island and Angus helped out on the farm. It is unclear if they lived part of the year on the island during this period. James frequently notes Angus traveling to and from the island. His very few mentions of Mary, for example she is mentioned only twice in 1855, which make it hard to know the exact nature of their living arrangement. They may have lived on the island, and James would have benefited from his sisters presence and that of her husband Angus. James had some involvement with her children. This can be seen when he brought her youngest, James Hugh McDonald, to be christened in Williamstown.⁸ Besides the occasional reference to Mary or Granny, however, few entries are dedicated to his extended family.

---

⁶ Cameron, Reel 1 prior to 1855.
⁸ Cameron, March 16 1855.
James’ was an occupational pluralist. His labour shows that he was concerned with making a profit. He enjoyed his earnings, being social and pursuing work he valued. While he actively sought profit, he also relied on a rich network of reciprocity with his neighbours that was beneficial but took substantial work to maintain.

Much of this chapter will focus on farming and the many small labours he did outside of farming. These are important because they are activities he chose to pursue alongside farming, and they were significant to his identity and his place in the community. These multiple occupations reflected both his personal inclination towards the work or their logical advantage given his skills and location. These activities also receive a good deal of mention in the diary. James Cameron was, however, first and foremost a farmer. Year-round he mentioned chores or work associated with his farm and in the census he always self-identified as farmer.9 His primary asset was the farm he controlled and he supported himself with its products. He also made a small income from the marketable surplus that he sold. Thus, a close look at the state of his farm is the natural starting place to begin examining James Cameron’s life.

Following the examination of his agricultural practices, the nature and interconnectedness of his other occupations will be examined. These labours all provided some advantage to James, from good food, cash in hand, or credit at one of the stores he frequented. Almost every labour he pursued overlapped with the work he did to establish and maintain his reputation with his neighbours. He worked on neighbours’ farms, joined bees or took a friend fishing or hunting. Often the work he did was done to maximize several pursuits. This can be seen when he took shots at any passing wildlife while he

9 Nominal Census returns (Schedule 1) for District No. 99 Glengarry County, 1881.
worked in the woods or the fields. His constant travel across the river also provided him with opportunities to hunt or fish while on other errands.

While the diary offers an excellent picture of the work he did, it also hints at the ways he interacted with others. James Cameron’s work, social habits and relationship with space were shaped by his gender. How James’ masculinity comes across in the diary and how it was shaped and reasserted throughout the activities he recorded helps us to understand his choices and decisions.

**The Farmer**

The extent of James Cameron’s farming in the first period is hard to measure. Firstly, he does not appear in the census until 1881.\(^{10}\) Secondly, from the diary it is unclear what portion of his island was farmed, though it is clear that a significant amount of it was forested around 1855. In the diary he mentions his agricultural work but he does not mention how many acres he planted. Nonetheless, a limited picture of his farm work does appear. We know that he had a barn and that he owned pigs, sheep, chickens, turkeys and a mare, called Grey. It appears that he had at least one cow by the name of Bossy but he rarely mentions dairy work except for one entry of a neighbour coming by for milk.\(^{11}\) As dairying was often work done by female members of a household, it is not surprising that James’ involvement with dairy was so minimal in his bachelor years.\(^{12}\) James also had a garden, presumably by the house, where he grew vegetables such as tomatoes and cabbage.\(^{13}\)

---

\(^{10}\) Nominal Census returns (Schedule 1) for District No. 99 Glengarry County, 1881.

\(^{11}\) Cameron, June 28 1857.


\(^{13}\) Cohen, 75.
The bulk of James’ farm work happened in five distinct areas around his island. He sowed crops in the upper field, behind the barn and on the lower point. In these areas he grew wheat, peas, corn, barley and oats. He had a small orchard where sour apple trees grew. James harvested a significant amount of hay; this would have fed his sheep, mare and cow. Hay was mowed in the swamp on his island, which can be seen in the marshy southeast point of James’ Island in Figure: 1.1.

In the diary James tracked his buying and selling but he never made a year-end accounting; instead he kept a running tally. The accounts he kept in this period were all in pounds/shillings/pence (he does not specify if it is Halifax or British Sterling) as this was still the established practice at this time.\(^{14}\) This accounting is an example of “ideal money” or “money of accounts” and it would not necessarily reflect the physical money or real money he had on hand.\(^{15}\) This same system of “ideal money” was also how his accounts of store credit were kept. The type of currency in actual circulation that James used would have varied widely. He likely would have encountered Halifax coinage, American paper money and Spanish silver dollars.\(^{16}\) However, due to his proximity and frequent commerce in the United States, James would have mostly used American dollars. Furthermore, this was shown to be the case in his frequent deals in cash for his fur trade, such as when he received “$100 from Luke for fur.”\(^{17}\) Therefore, the inconsistency of his accounting and the issues with a consistent currency make it impossible to put a definitive value on his income.


\(^{16}\) McCullough, 89 and Powell, 19.

\(^{17}\) Cameron, May 1 1855.
The diary shows how he supported himself from his farm. James mentioned selling agricultural products twice each year, usually in the spring. This perhaps was planned on the part of James suggesting he sold what was leftover after feeding himself over the winter. He usually noted the number of bushels that he sold, but not how much money he received for his crops such as oats, wheat, potatoes and corn. This differs from other transactions he made. Whenever he purchased from local stores he always wrote down the amount he spent. Furthermore, transactions regarding his trade in fur are much more detailed and he did a much better job of recording his income from fur. James only mentioned selling an animal product once, when he sold pork to Mr. Baker.

James took his agricultural surplus to two primary locations. The first was Mr. Baker’s store, which was in Summertown and only a short paddle or row from his island. James had developed a relationship with the Baker family, who were part of James’ community network. They were part of the same reciprocal bee network and visiting and borrowing occurred between the families. The second location was Fort Covington or as he referred to it Salmon River. The Salmon River flows from New York State through Quebec, depositing its water in the St. Lawrence River. The transactions in Salmon River are very different from those with the Baker Store. Who

---

18 Cameron, November 5 1855, November 7 1855, twice on April 1 1856, March 13 1857 and April 30 1857.  
19 Cameron, April 26 1856.  
20 Cameron, November 7 1855.  
21 Figure: 1.2 Historical Map of Lake St. Francis shows the highlighted location of A. J. Baker’s store.  
22 Cameron, February 25 1857 and March 20 1856.  
23 There is no town by the name of Salmon River but Fort Covington is an American town not far up the river. James referred to Fort Covington but I believe his frequent mention of Salmon River also refers to this town and that James was identifying the place by its main feature, the Salmon River. Furthermore, I am confident that it is not a reference to Dundee, Quebec, which is just downstream of Fort Covington, as James mentions paying American duties on goods sold in Salmon River (Cameron, April 1 1856).  
24 Figure 1.3: Cameron’s Island.
exactly James was dealing with at Salmon River is unclear. The appeal of Salmon River must have been in the prices and the goods available for sale, as he makes no a personal connection to match the one with Mr. Baker.

That James sold his goods to more than one merchant is consistent with the historiography. In his article “A World Without Chocolate,” Douglas McCalla has shown that pioneer farmers such as James were well connected to the capitalist world.25 This becomes immediately apparent when examining the goods consumed by James. He bought tobacco, English rum, sugar, tea, and even tried a cocoa bean, which is the basis of the elusive chocolate.26 Like most buyers, James did not buy everything from one store.27 He made use of specialist merchants for goods such as boots or the coat he purchased from Mr. Spink on November 30, 1855. Given this, it is not surprising that James was very deliberate in choosing where he sold his goods.

The diary entry for April 1, 1856 demonstrates this well. James first went to Mr. Baker and sold 40 bushels of oats. Later that same day he paddled down to Salmon River (a significantly longer journey) and sold 15 bushels of potatoes and 17 bushels of oats. For this he marked in his diary that he paid 1 shilling in American duty.28 Interestingly, James only recorded selling wheat once and then only 3 bushels.29 Clearly wheat was not a significant part of his marketable surplus. The reasons for selling to different merchants likely reflected the price offered or need to pay off various store accounts, demonstrating that rural people were economically savvy. Furthermore, the fact that James does not

26 Cameron, June 20 1857.
28 Cameron, April 1 1856.
29 Cameron, November 5 1855.
record any money received from these transactions means these goods likely went
towards his store account and thus supported his consumption.

Occasionally in the diary James noted the amount he owed to merchants. Such an
accounting took place early in 1857 when James received his accounts from Mr. Baker,
which showed that he owed thirteen shillings nine-and-half-pence. In this case he settled
the account with cash. Such credit with these stores would be extremely important to
James, as it allowed him to continue to buy goods until his crops came in. It also
mediated the chronic shortage in real money rural people seemed to experience at this
time. 30 Satisfying notes with these merchants may also have explained why he sold oats
at both Mr. Baker’s and in Salmon River.

The produce that James sold was important but it could not support all his
purchasing needs. Agriculture was his most frequent labour, almost certainly his most
important and it was his source of his basic food requirements. While there is little
evidence in this three-year period to show much expansion in his agricultural production,
this does not mean James was idle. Alongside his crops, James made use of his forest
resources.

The Forrester

James harvested a wealth of products from the forest in the winter when farming
came to a halt. He also salvaged wood in the warmer months from the river. Living on an
island and expending a lot of time on the water often worked to his advantage, as when
he salvaged 27 staves of wood from the river. The woods provided the timber for his
buildings, and the firewood to heat his home and cook his food. James also picked up

30 The extent of the shortage of real money in mid-century Upper Canada is debated. A. B. McCullough
suggests that colonist complaints on the shortage of coin really referred to a shortage of good quality coin
and that poorer quality coin was moving around in circulation. McCullough, 22.
sticks with the right bend in them for sleigh runners, made paddles, repaired his canoes, and made many bushels of ash. Farmers often made ash as a by-product of clearing the land. James never refers to his work as clearing, but instead calls it chopping. He may have been burning wood to make ash and not just selling the by-product of clearing his land. To harvest these necessities he spent a good deal of time chopping and dragging wood from the bush.

In the winter of 1857, James held a chopping bee. This bee demonstrates both the importance of his forest harvest and his reliance on his community for labour-intensive tasks. On this February day sixteen men gathered to chop an impressive 38 cords of wood in a single day. This windfall of labour was immediately repaid in part by the bee party James held that night. These parties typically would include a feast, large quantities of whiskey and entertainment with dancing and music. The pages of his diary also recorded the name of each man who came out to help, with the exception of two who were recorded as “Indians”. Furthermore, James wrote that “14 in all” had come, which excluded the two Indians from the count even though he mentioned them with the recording of the 14 other men’s names. The recording of names was significant, as each name represented a debt to be repaid. The “Indians” exclusion therefore speaks volumes as it shows their status as outsiders to his community. By not recording their names James, clearly conceived of these men as people he did not need to repay in kind with labour of his own. They did take part in the bee party and James records them staying the

31 Cameron, April 17 1855 or April 28 1857 are examples
32 Cameron, February 25 1857.
34 Cameron, February 25 1857.
night. In reference to this, James finally reveals their names as Francis and Lewis, but this appears to be deliberately outside the bounds of the bee.\textsuperscript{35}

Much of the 38 cords of woods James harvested with his neighbours would have supplied him with his firewood. Firewood was an extremely important commodity and the principal source of heating and cooking fuel for rural people. James’ exact consumption of firewood was not documented but he would have used far less than 38 cords of wood per year. Clearly, James had access to ample wood supplies and this allowed him to help support his sister’s household and the school to which he delivered stove wood twice in this period.\textsuperscript{36} This appears to be partially covering the school fees for his sister’s children who attended the school. This could also represent part of a rent agreement with his sister but he does not clarify the matter.

James did gain some monetary reward from his lumbering beyond the many other needs it satisfied. This was achieved through the ash he made and brought to market. The ash was commonly used as fertilizer at the time, especially for the St. Lawrence region of Ontario.\textsuperscript{37} Here, ashes were often ranked the highest among local products used by farmers to cover store debts.\textsuperscript{38} The nearby Baker’s store had an ashery and James put ash several times towards his account there and at a frequency similar to his sale of agricultural products.\textsuperscript{39} When James did record how much ash he sold, the amounts ranged from four to twelve bushels.\textsuperscript{40} This would have made a dent in his store debt and was an important aspect of his livelihood.

\textsuperscript{35} Cameron, February 25 1857.
\textsuperscript{36} Cameron, January 25 1856 and February 9 1856.
\textsuperscript{38} McCalla, “The Internal Economy,” 403.
\textsuperscript{39} Cameron, an example April 1 1856.
\textsuperscript{40} Cameron, April 1 1856 and June 22 1857.
The Fisherman and Hunter

James took advantage of the St. Lawrence River to help provide for his substance needs. He ate fish and fowl that he caught and hunted and these represented an important source of protein for him. The farm also provided food and James frequented stores. A sense of James’ consumption can be sketched through the store purchases he recorded. Store purchases are some of the most regular entries in the diary and so it would appear that he recorded the majority of his store transactions. He purchased the occasional pipe and tobacco but was a much more regular drinker, particularly of whiskey. He enjoyed tea and sugar and he liked the occasional “sweetys [sic].” He must have been well—or at least not shabbily—dressed, for he had a coat, boots and some shirts made for him in this three-year period. He did not, however, purchase food supplies, outside of imported goods such as tea and sugar. Clearly the food from his garden and fields kept him fed. He occasionally recorded butchering a pig or sheep, which was supplemented with, store bought meat and fish such as salt pork or herring. While the contents of his dinner plate are never the subject of his diary it is possible to make a good guess as to sources of protein. One of James most regular store purchases was for shot and powder, providing him ammunition to hunt. Furthermore, he spent a great deal of time fishing. These pursuits were facilitated by his island location and were clearly activities he enjoyed. In short, James shot ducks and speared eels, not to satisfy any market, but to tend to his own consumption.

Unlike other activities, such as farming or logging, James never recorded using fish to secure payment towards his debts. Furthermore, eel fishing was a staple activity
of the Rivermen of Lake St. Francis according to James and local historians Roy Lefebvre and Norman Seymour. Yet, in the 1871 (the only one with the relevant data) no one claimed any barrels of eel in Glengarry County. Fish offered these settlers a great source of protein. When livestock represented a significant capital investment and store bought meat was expensive, country meat (wild, hunted meat) and fish were a valuable dietary staple. Fishing was much more common than hunting for food. When James hunted for meat, ducks were the primary game. Some of the birds he shot, such as crows or seagulls, may have been killed as pest control, though he never states so specifically.

While all fish were a potential meal, some types were more valuable. Species such as the eel, which could be preserved by being smoked or salted, were preferable, as many others (like pike) lost almost all their nutritional value upon doing so. James also practiced keeping live sturgeon in a man-made pen in the river, which would have acted as temporary storage. Preserving fish was important, but fish was a resource that was available almost year round. The only times it was unavailable was when the ice was breaking up or forming making boating impossible and the ice was not hard enough for ice fishing. Ducks were seasonal and James, who always commented on the natural world around him, dutifully noted the first sign of the migratory birds returning, clearly keen to return to the hunt.

James used two primary methods of fishing. First, he would set long lines of

---

43 Census Returns of Ontario 1871 [Agriculture and Personal Census], CA1 AK21 051 1871, Reel C-10008, C- 10009, C-10010. District No. 74 Glengarry County.
45 Table: 1.1 James Cameron’s Hunting Catch 1855-1857.
47 Cameron, May 12 1855.
48 General observations from the Cameron diary.
49 Cameron, April 5 1855.
hooks in the river, and visit these lines frequently to remove any hooked fish. This method caught many types of fish but it was aimed at the large and impressive sturgeon. A single sturgeon was usually in the 10 to 80 pound range and up to five feet or more in length. Sturgeons were the most prized fish in the river due to their size and value. Locals like James knew of three particularly productive locations to fish for sturgeon. Fraser’s Point, just a short paddle south from James’ Island, was one such spot, and this was likely where he established his fishing lines. Sturgeons can live up to 150 years but have a very low rate of reproduction. This makes them extremely vulnerable to environmental disruption, pollution and over-fishing and this was the fate of the sturgeon fishery, which officially was closed in the 1960s due to mercury poisoning but had been in decline for many years.

James’ second method was to fish by spear and he used this method most frequently to catch eels. These migratory fish begin their journey in the Sargasso Sea where they are born in the costal area between Florida and Bermuda. These small hatched “elvers,” as they are known, slowly make their way up the coast of North America until they enter freshwater systems through rivers such as the St. Lawrence. There they grow and spend most of their adult life before they are ready to migrate back

---

50 Cameron, April 8 1856 and April 10 1856.
52 Lefebvre and Seymour, 79.
53 Lefebvre and Seymour, 79.
54 Lefebvre and Seymour, 81.
56 Lefebvre and Seymour, 91.
to where they were born to lay their own brood. 57 Traditionally eels have been abundant in the rivers they inhabit. 58 The Mohawks who resided in the area of Lake St. Francis were known to spear large quantities of these nocturnal fish by firelight. 59 This method attracts the eels to the surface and makes them easy targets for their waiting spears. James Cameron and other rivermen used similar methods. James speared eels likely by lamplight from his boat in the warmer months. In the winter the eels hibernated in large groupings on the bottom of the river. 60 Men like James would cut open the ice trying to find one of these swarms. If he was lucky enough to find one, he would spear the inactive eels and get them on the ice before they had returned to their senses. Such was the case in March of 1857 when James “went fishing the spear, cut 4 holes, got nine.” 61 Sometimes dozens or more eels could be speared in such a case. 62

The frequent catches of fish and the occasional ducks mentioned in the diary were supplying a valuable, year round and cost-effective protein source. Therefore fishing and hunting were examples of off-farm labour that provided subsistence to James and thus defrayed his cost of living. These labours frequently overlapped with his reciprocal network. In the first period gifts of fishing equipment were common among the types of gifts mentioned. In this three-year period James received seven gifts of equipment such as spears, hooks and lines, and one mutual exchange of two sturgeons for some minno [sic] hooks. 63 Fishing could also be a communal activity. James records fishing with others

57 Wiken, 117.
58 Wiken, 117.
59 Lefebvre and Seymour, 89.
60 Lefebvre and Seymour, 94.
61 Cameron, March 21 1857.
62 Lefebvre and Seymour, 94.
63 Cameron, Gifts on March 27 1855, June 23 1855, June 23 1855, June 12 1855, October 1 1855, February 6 1856, June 14 1857 and mutual exchange on June 9 1857. And Lefebvre and Seymour, 71.
seven times and, like gifting, this helped him maintain his community ties. These gifts were not limited to just fish but ranged from store-bought consumables such as whiskey to farm crops like corn or the rewards of his hunting such as a duck. Most gift exchanges of food were agricultural; however, fish and game were important and James received fish and game four times and gifted them three times.

Two of the most common hunting-and-fishing-related gift givers were Christee and Henery Bosell. Both these individuals also hunted and fished with James. Bosell did so most frequently, working together with James seven times. These low-level reciprocal exchanges clearly worked towards bigger ones, as James Cameron mentioned Bosell hosting three bees in this period with a potential fourth bee. The fourth was attributed to simply “Henery,” which was likely Henery Bosell. James definitely attended one of these bees and may have gone to the others as well. James benefited from his reciprocity with Bosell when five members of the Bosell family came to one of the two bees James held in the same period. These five individuals made up a large segment of the bee guests as James only recorded twelve people in attendance.

James’ allocation of time toward fishing and hunting was efficient due to his constant crisscrossing of the river for various purposes and was beneficial to his food supply. This efficiency allowed him to continue to trap and fish in the summer months when he was busy with the work of agriculture. One gets the impression that he often had

64 General observations from the Cameron Diary.
65 Cameron, September 17 1855, December 13 1855, May 8 1856, December 11 1856, July 4 1857, August 5 1857 and August 7 1857.
67 Cameron, the three bees March 25 1856, May 8 1856 and February 5 1857 and the potential fourth February 27 1856.
68 Cameron, bee Bosell’s attended September 26 1855 the second bee was February 25 1857.
his lines and gun in the boat with him just in case. This pursuit also benefited his community network of reciprocity. The gifts and companionship associated with fishing and hunting played a part in the network of favours that underpinned his community. Fish and game were important to farmers in this developing economy but only when they were easily accessible as they were for the islanders of Lake St. Francis and even then not all pursued these activities. Otherwise, the time spent away from farming was not worth it.\textsuperscript{69} For James, Lake St. Francis was a rich resource and he made use of it. Fish and game no doubt offered a welcome break from salt pork and were integral to his networks of reciprocal responsibility.

The Trapper

In April 1855 James was well engaged with the spring cycle of farm work. During this time entries such as “Clearing the Lower Point; 2 muskrats got”\textsuperscript{70} or “Clearing the Marsh; 1 Rat”\textsuperscript{71} were regular occurrences. These entries demonstrate how his fur trapping was rarely the sole activity of a day’s work. Instead, like fishing and hunting, fur trapping appears alongside the many other agriculture-related chores that kept him occupied. Traps could be set and checked up on by the end of the day and worked well with other labours. James was one of the few farmers in Glengarry County who pursued fur on a significant scale. This decision was clearly influenced by his island location as it frequently provided him opportunities to catch game and his travel across the water definitely facilitated his hunt for fur. Access, however, was not enough. Many farmers lived on islands or near the water, yet they did not appear so keen on this pursuit. James’

\textsuperscript{70} Cameron, April 26 1855.
\textsuperscript{71} Cameron, April 27 1855.
location, but more importantly his inclination, connections and skill, led him to occupy this niche.

James used traps to catch fur-bearing animals such as the muskrat (or as he usually referred to them, rats). Though trapping did less damage to the fur than shooting, it took greater effort and was not likely his main method. As with fishing and hunting, he often did not give a clear indication of his method, but he frequently mentions taking a shot at muskrats and this was likely his most common method. The amount of ammunition that he purchased backs this up. While he was not strictly trapping all the fur-bearing animals he killed, I have found it useful to refer to this activity as trapping instead of hunting. This differentiates it from his hunting for the pot such as when he went duck hunting. Therefore, when I refer to trapping, I mean any hunting or trapping that was done with the main purpose of providing him with furs to sell.

Trapping was a valuable trade to James Cameron. His relationship with trapping provided him with an income to bolster that from agriculture and represented a unique way in which he maintained his standing in his community’s network of reciprocity. James’ trapping activities allowed him to engage in a profitable fur trade that supplied him with cash. Furthermore, as we shall see below James’ supported his community’s small-scale hunting through his gun lending and position as middleman in the local fur trade. The Hudson’s Bay Company was the biggest buyer and seller of furs and data in their price fluctuation for muskrat pelts helps contextualize James fur trading. The overall number of pelts being sold grew steadily throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

---

72 Table: 1.2. James Cameron’s Shot and Powder Tally 1855-1857.
century, except for declines in the late 1850s and again in the late 1860s. The price of muskrat between 1870 and 1911 was fairly flat, except for notable gains in the early 1870s and a substantial price increase in the twentieth century.

In his study of gun use in Upper Canada, McCalla used the accounts of general stores and analyzed how people frequently purchased gun-related materials. His findings indicate that most farmers often lacked the spare time to shoot with any frequency, that game was probably scarcer near settled communities, and finally that after the early settlement period wild meat was less of a necessity. By calculating how much shot and powder was purchased at several stores between 1808 and 1851, McCalla found that “about one household in five purchased something that suggested it used a gun.” While the importance of hunting for subsistence may have diminished over time, McCalla acknowledged that there might have been a tradition of hunting and gun use in rural society.

It is possible that the one way a tradition of gun use could have been sustained with declining gun ownership was through the practice of borrowing. Throughout his diary, James records that he lent out his guns. In the years 1855-1857 James writes of nine instances of gun loaning and he lends his guns and pistols out four times to people he knows well and with whom he conducts business. In two of the three instances, when he wrote down the return date the borrowing period was about a month in length. This observation from the James’ diary supports the overall point that McCalla was making—

---

74 Ray, 56.
75 McCalla, “Upper Canadians and Their Guns,” 137.
78 Table 1.3: James Cameron Gun loaning 1855-1857.
that most people did not own guns. It also adds an interesting new dimension to the McCalla article because it shows that many people could experience gun usage while avoiding the cost of ownership.

James trapped a variety of game over the first three-year period with varied success; 1856 was by far the most successful year. In this year he had a catch of 108 animals, which represented over 60 per cent of his catch for the entire three-year period.\(^79\) While hunting and fishing were lucrative pursuits, they were not uniformly so every year, and were therefore best carried out alongside other productive labours. Furthermore, the inherent risk was of less consequence while James was still a bachelor. The Hudson’s Bay Company was in a period of decline in terms of over all pelt sales in the 1850s. The market was volatile but small regional producers such as James were still able do well and the prices he received may have benefited from the decline in pelts from other regions. Muskrat while a low-value fur was the most common pelt sold for example it represented 41% of the Hudson Bay Company’s returns in 1870.\(^80\)

In 1856 James caught mostly muskrat.\(^81\) 81 percent of his catch by type was muskrat. This percentage was similar to the county’s reported catch in the 1871 census for Glengarry, which was 75 percent muskrat.\(^82\) While 1856 and 1871 are farther apart than is ideal, it is the only way to get a comparison between James’ trapping and that of others in the county as there are no aggregate figures for 1851/2 or 1861. The high concentration on muskrat reflects the fact that it was both a commercial fur product and a

\(^79\) Table 1.4: James Cameron Trapping Catch 1855-1857 and Table 1.5: James Cameron Trapping Catch 1856.
\(^80\) Ray, 20 and 23.
\(^81\) Trapper Doug Adams, personal conversation, August 9 2010 and observation from the Cameron diary.
\(^82\) Table 1.5: James Cameron Trapping Catch 1856 and Tables 1.6: Fur Totals from The 1871 Glengarry Census.
food source. Muskrat was a traditional delicacy in the area, and so it likely played a role in his meat consumption. These small aquatic mammals were also an important source of furs that were sold for cash to local merchants. Muskrat was valuable to the fur market because declining beaver and seal numbers had increased the use of other furs as replacements. The market for muskrat benefited from this as Hudson’s Bay “seal fur” became popular, which was actually made from muskrat treated to resemble seal fur.

Muskrat had a big market, and comprised 69 per cent of all pelts sold from 1870-1911 in the Canadian fur trade.

Census figures also suggest that hunters like James were fairly specialized. Looking at the 1871 census data on animal products, which included a fairly detailed treatment of the local fur catch, this specialization becomes apparent. According to the data in the 1871 census, 160 people claimed a catch of some furs out of 6,331 enumerated in Charlottenburg Township. This number shrinks significantly when we look at catch size. Of those 160 people only seven claimed assorted furs totaling 50 or more. These seven represented the more dedicated fur trappers in the area. It is likely that more farmers trapped in 1856 than in 1871. This assertion is based on McCalla’s point that hunting and trapping were in decline amongst the majority of rural people as they become more invested in agriculture. Perhaps they also consisted largely of occasional trappers and a smaller group of dedicated trappers such as James. He was a specialist filling a

---

83 Lefebvre and Seymour, 119.
84 Ray, 181.
85 Ray, 51.
87 Census Returns of Ontario 1871 [Agriculture and Personal Census]
niche and his trade was profitable. He made a significant trade in furs that was quite profitable, and he fits the mold of a specialist filling a niche.

James invested both time and money into his fur trade, and it proved to be lucrative. Throughout the 1855-1857 period, he reported on fur in his diary. While there is occasionally insufficient data on how many furs he caught or how much he received for them, a basic understanding of the value of his fur trade can be made. Table 1.7: “Fur Trading by James Cameron from 1855-1857” is an attempt to do this. James also purchased furs from friends and acquaintances and resold them. These are included in the table as well. In the three-year period under review, James made just over £37 (As I am not sure what currency he used so I have converted everything to British pounds sterling— while he dealt frequently in dollars for fur, it is more consistent with his accounting practices to keep it in the ideal currency he used) in cash, plus an unknown amount that was put towards paying off credit.\(^{89}\) This was a significant amount of money at the time. To put the figure in context, the average marketable surplus of agricultural products for Ontario farmers was just over £52 in 1861.\(^{90}\) James Cameron did not procure his main income from his fur trading, but it did prove to be a lucrative side activity, one that he used to pay off his debt at stores and which was a significant source of cash.

James sold not only the furs he shot and trapped but also the furs he bought from his friends. Henery Bosell accessed James’ guns and trapping ability by trapping with him. When they were successful during their combined effort, James’ role as a middleman becomes apparent, since Bosell sold his part of the catch to him.\(^{91}\)

\(^{89}\) Table 1.7: Fur Trading by James Cameron from 1855-1857. Also all pounds and schillings are British Sterling.

\(^{90}\) McCalla, “The Internal Economy,” 408-409.

\(^{91}\) Cameron, April 17 1857.
bought furs from several other people as well. In the 1855-1857 period, James spent three pounds fourteen shillings on buying furs and sold just over forty pounds sterling worth of pelts.\footnote{Table 1.7: Fur Trading by James Cameron from 1855-1857.}

As shown earlier, James’ gun lending allowed others the opportunity to hunt. McCalla’s observations on hunting came from how much shot and powder was purchased at several stores between 1808-1851.\footnote{McCalla, “Upper Canadians and Their Guns,” 131.} While he notes that some people likely hunted to put food on the table and make an income, those who did would represent the extreme end on the spectrum of shooting activity.\footnote{McCalla, “Upper Canadians and Their Guns,” 136.} James Cameron clearly falls into the heavy use section of shooting activity. McCalla sets the higher threshold for heavy shooting at purchasing at least 72 rounds or more per year.\footnote{McCalla, “Upper Canadians and Their Guns,” 133.} James bought between 160 and 400 rounds a year from 1855-1857.\footnote{Table: 1.2. James Cameron’s Shot and Powder Tally 1855-1857.}

James then used his gun ownership to his economic advantage. The individuals he lent his guns to in turn worked at his bees. In addition, the Baker family borrowed his guns and they represented an important location for commerce for James, buying, selling and extending credit at their store. They also gave him gifts including a gun mole, which is a device to clean gun barrels.\footnote{Cameron, May 16 1857.} Henery Bosell and his family also accessed James guns; the Bosells borrowed James’ guns several times for extended periods of time. Henery Bosell was recorded gifting James a pickerel on August 5, 1857 and some eels two days later.\footnote{Cameron, August 5 and 7 1857.} These activities were not uncommon between the families. Rides were shared
across the river, as were meals and work bees. Their relationship shows how gun lending played into a network of favours that was mutually beneficial and vital to success in this period.

Sometimes James mentioned heading out into the bush in search for pelts with several people. These were social trips with trapping as the primary activity. This broke with James’ usual habit of trapping when the opportunity presented itself during his days labour. James hunted by setting traps when logging in the bush or shot at passing game while crossing the lake. The usual methods of trapping employed by James show how integrated trapping was with James’ other labours.

James’ role as a gun owner and fur middleman gave him a specialized niche in the community. This lucrative position allowed him to participate in a high level of store consumption and the ability to gift store-bought goods and loan cash. These were factors that supported his prominent reciprocal relationship status. James’ guns, skills and fur connections that individuals like Henery Bosell desired were initially accessed through small reciprocal events such as sharing and gifting. On April 23, 1857, James and Henery set traps on Ferguson’s Island. The next day James brought the five rats caught to Henery’s where James was given dinner. This example illustrates how a wider proportion of settlers could have participated in gun use and fur trading than the McCalla article or the census implies. The reciprocal network surrounding James demonstrates how the benefits of hunting were maximized among the group and were particularly beneficial to his production.

---

99 Entries like these are common throughout one example is Cameron, June 15 1857.
100 General observations from the Cameron Diary.
101 An example is Cameron, May 27 1857.
102 Cameron, April 23 1857 and April 24 1857.
The Riverman

Lefebvre and Seymour referred to James as “The Consummate Riverman.”103 In James they identify a masculinity that they extol. In his diary they read strength, independence and skill, praising his knowledge of the natural world and identifying him as a family man.104 They were not wrong to read these attributes from the diary. The writing of a diary is an act of self-representation.105 The man that comes through the pages is, to a certain extent, the James that he wanted others to know. This does not make the diary useless. The version of James that comes through reveals what he valued in himself and what he thought proper to record and share. This writing was an act that did more than just record his day. To some extent it may have produced and directed his life. In portraying himself as a riverman James was shaping and performing his masculinity.

The Cameron diary reveals much about his public persona. It is a record of his masculine responsibilities and pursuits. It is a good source to understand his patterns of male sociability, his market interactions and his relationship to work. Furthermore, it shows his relationship to the space he lived in and to the natural world that he attempted to master. However, it tells us precious little about the women in his life. When they do get mentioned it is because they are traveling through or working in a space that was typically masculine. Most mentions of women are of their crossing the water and there is little record of what work they do unless it is one of the occasional instances of a female family member helping in the fields.106 Gender is constructed in a relational system,

103 Lefebvre and Seymour, 67.
104 Lefebvre and Seymour, 67.
105 Hogg, 20.
106 Cameron, September 3 1855 Granny was reported to be reaping.
portraying masculinity and femininity as opposites that interact and shape each other.\textsuperscript{107}

The lack of female participation mentioned in the majority of activities of the diary constructs them as masculine even though it is hard to believe that he had so few interactions with women during his days.

James’ relationship with his male community is significantly less opaque than that of the women in his life. The difference in how men and women are treated in the diary appears quite starkly in the matter of death. When Mr. Alexander Rose passed away James wrote that he thought him a “very fine old gentleman.”\textsuperscript{108} When a close friend of James’, Duncan McDougall, died in 1857, James paid for the church bells to be rung and helped dig the grave.\textsuperscript{109} Most telling of his emotional state is that twice in the week of Duncan’s death James wrote nothing but “very low” or “doing nothing.”\textsuperscript{110} These instances of men dying represent some of the most sentimental entries of the diary and contrast strongly with instances of the death of women. When Granny Rose departed she just received a short note “Granny Rose buried.”\textsuperscript{111}

The richer though still muted recording of his connections with his male community reveals how their overlapping bonds were maintained. This is seen when he occasionally shares the work of farming with his neighbours. It is common to read entries such as “Henery and Boy and Jim Nicholson ploughing” or “A. Summers Ploughing behind the Barn.”\textsuperscript{112} We have already seen that this mutual support extended to non-agricultural pursuits such as hunting. Working together in this way was one way that a

\textsuperscript{107} Wilson, “Reciprocal Work Bees,” 369.
\textsuperscript{108} Cameron, March 16 1855.
\textsuperscript{109} Cameron, April 2 1857 and April 3 1857.
\textsuperscript{110} Cameron, March 31 1857 and April 4 1857.
\textsuperscript{111} Cameron, January 29 1855.
\textsuperscript{112} Cameron, April 29 1857 and October 8 1857.
male work culture was affirmed and created. Another prominent and overlapping place for the bonds of male community to form occurred with the consumption of alcohol. Bees demonstrated this overlap, as they were prominent examples of the bonds created by shared work but also relied heavily on the importance of shared consumption.

James was a frequent drinker. He consumed whiskey at bees, stores, neighbours’ residences and taverns. The consumption recorded in the diary was almost always social, though the occasional store purchase of a quart of whiskey hints that not all of his imbibing was done in such a public atmosphere. Buying drinks by the glass was his preferred method and while this was less affordable than bulk purchases, it was much more sociable. The space created by the shared consumption of alcohol also meant that it was at times an irrational space. This comes through in the diary as it is only when mentioning drinking that references to fights or gambling appear. James frequents taverns and enters on sprees, drinking at multiple sites in the same evening and sometimes drinking as much as eight glasses of whiskey in an evening. While perhaps not respectable, this activity was not out of line for a bachelor. Drinking was part of his pattern of male sociability and was a key component of his masculinity during this period.

In the three years studied in this chapter James was without a wife or children. He had a certain leeway to take risks, spend money freely, travel widely and pursue a lifestyle that he valued. His investment in guns, shot and powder for his pursuit of furs

---

113 Cameron, January 18 1856.
115 Roberts, 7.
116 Cameron, February 19 1856, Henery and Bill are to fight and it appears to be associated with Roses Bee and on March 4 1857, cards played as part of a bee party.
117 Cameron, April 23 1855.
demonstrates this well. In 1856 he acquired many pelts and made good money off this investment. In 1857 he increased his purchase of shot and powder yet his catch declined and in the fall of that year he reported that muskrats were scarce.\textsuperscript{118} His niche as a trapper gave him a certain prestige amongst his community. Neighbours sought him out to borrow his guns or to go hunting or fishing with him. He was talented at his chosen task as he surely must have been a crack shot to hit a small aquatic animal like a muskrat from his canoe with the frequency he did. Yet this is not enough to insulate him from the risk inherent in the trade. His exposure to this activity defines his bachelor years, as it was a task suitable to one as unattached as he was at this time.

**Conclusion**

Through the sparse regular entries of his diary, a picture of James’ situation from 1855 to 1857 is possible. He was a successful farmer who maximized the occupations available to him to make a good life. He was concerned with making a profit. Perhaps the clearest sign of his success in this regard was his ability to lend small sums of money, frequently playing at raffles and having sufficient real money to invest in stocks on Wall Street.\textsuperscript{119} Profit was not his only motivation, and several of his prominent pursuits mainly benefited him in other ways. He fished to fill the needs of his plate. He supported his community and the rewards this brought him in multiple subtle ways. His record of borrowing, gifting and mutual labour and exchange were all pieces in this puzzle. They provided him the neighbourly goodwill that allowed him to meet his labour needs without having to only rely on hired labour. This was most evident in the two well-attended bees he hosted. James’ success during these years was evident in his travel to Montreal or

\textsuperscript{118} Cameron, October 21 1857.
\textsuperscript{119} Cameron, example of raffle April 30 1857, example of lending May 27 1857 and example of investing on Wall Street June 20 1857.
Bytown, possibly to visit relatives. These travels as well as his capacity to take risks either on the market or in his fur trade are hallmarks of his bachelor life. He drank and gambled throughout these early years of his diary but his faithful record of debts both monetary and social show a man working towards a settled life, a transition that would accelerate with his entering into marriage and fatherhood.

120 Cameron, May 15 1856 and January 24 1855.
Chapter Three:
The New Family: Family Formation, from 1864-1866

Between 1857 and 1864, James Cameron continued his diary, making entries with a rhythm similar to the first three years. He continued to work his land and enjoy the shared labour and company of his neighbours, as well as make frequent visits up the Salmon River to Dundee and Fort Covington. It is through these visits that he came into contact with the Morris family. James mentioned David Morris, or Mr. Morris as he referred to him, with growing regularity, and an entry in March 1862 reveals the potential reason, as James asked him to pass on a book to Lavina, Mr. Morris’ daughter.¹ This would be one of the few direct mentions of Lavina during their courtship. On April 8th 1862 James stayed the night with the Morris family. The following day he wrote, “that night I went to the Baptist Minister to be Married James, Lavitia, Elizabeth, Emmanuel, Bill, Lavina and Myself paid ½- got a certificate.”² With this union they started their own household. This newly formed family would cause James Cameron to significantly change how he pursued his livelihood so as to better fulfill the needs of the family. Ten months later, on the 8th of February 1863, James Cameron witnessed the birth of his son Gordon, the first of his eleven children: “Semo went for Mrs. Morris, I had to turn midwife myself crossed for Margaret Henery’s girl.”³

From 1864 to 1866, the diary records two more children born: Mary, on August 2nd 1864, and Hugh Ann, on January 8th 1866. Both of these births went more smoothly than the first. Their neighbour Mrs. Christee oversaw Mary’s birth, while Hugh Ann had

¹ Cameron, March 9 1862.
² Cameron, April 9 1862.
³ Cameron, February 8 1863.
the midwife Margaret Rose attending her birth. With the entrance of these young children into the family, James’ occupations changed focus.

Many of the same occupations that James pursued as a bachelor continue in this new phase of his life, while some new ones appear. James intentionally maximized his labour to be the most beneficial to his young family, favouring activities that were reliable and less risky. This meant that James no longer pursued many of the profitable activities that had shaped his bachelor years. Rather, he chose work that allowed him to be close to the farmhouse and available for supporting Lavina with childcare, or he sought work that brought immediate benefits to their young family. This chapter will examine James Cameron’s shift away from hunting to fishing, his interaction with the community networks of reciprocity, his investment in his maple bush, and the change in location in his pattern of drinking.

To begin this examination, one must start with the new gender dynamic on the farm. Labour on the farm was divided by gender and this division becomes more noticeable once Lavina joins the household and sons and daughters take on tasks. After establishing the overlapping gendered spheres of activity, this chapter will flesh out the occupations that James pursued, and demonstrate how they changed over time, beginning with the expansion of farm work made possible by the support of his wife. From there, a look at his new focus on fishing at the expense of hunting will demonstrate his family’s growing need for food. James also invested in a sugar bush. His sugar production fit well around the strengths and limitations of a young family and provides strong evidence of a family strategy that placed James near Lavina and the children. The family’s relationship

---

4 Cameron, August 2 1864 and January 8 1866.
with foraging and the forest economy demonstrates how they “made do”. Finally, how James consumed alcohol shifted with his changing work culture and sociability will be examined.

**The Construction and Division of Gendered Spaces**

Lavina moved to the island to live with James the day after they were married. On April 11th James was back drawing wood. On that day he also mentioned “Lavina washing”; this would turn out to be an unusual entry for James. Typically Lavina’s daily work went without mention in the diary. James mentioned Lavina if she traveled from the island or worked with James, as when they cooperated in the sugar bush or on foraging trips. Another clue to Lavina’s contribution comes from the store accounts in the diary. James started to buy yards of cloth and to sell larger amounts of wool and eggs. This reflects some of the important contributions she made to the farm household, such as creating clothes and bedding, as well as spinning wool and tending chickens. Lavina’s low profile in James’ diary does not reflect her importance to the success of the family farm; it merely indicates their different spheres and spaces.

Men and women’s work differed greatly but overlapped on occasion. Men’s work followed the seasonal nature of agriculture and changed throughout the year, while women’s work tended to be more consistent year round. Men were primarily responsible for working the fields and off the farm. It was the work of women, however, that sustained the household and allowed men to focus on these productive activities. The

---

5 Cameron, April 11 1862.
6 Cameron, June 25 1865 and April 3 1865.
first sphere for women was the household. Women prepared food, washed clothes and cared for children along with other chores. The second sphere of women’s responsibility was domestic production for the market, such as through work in dairy or spinning wool. The third sphere encompassed the interactions between rural women and the public. Within the Cameron diary, Lavina becomes more visible as she moves further away from the first sphere. When she is in the house she is almost never mentioned. Lavina’s work in the second sphere is revealed through the increased quantities of wool, eggs and maple sugar that James started to sell and record; this represented Lavina’s domestic production. The most common entry for Lavina is when she left the island, usually to visit with friends and family. These represented her public interactions and were important for building and maintaining extended family and community networks. The diary that James kept was a record of his sphere of responsibilities and this is clear when assessing Lavina’s place in the diary. Noticeable exceptions to this were the birth of their children, which without fail James recorded, however, little mention of the pregnancy or care of the newborn was mentioned.

These spheres of responsibility represented the customary gendered division of labour but also reflected the physical landscape of the farm. As Neth points out, men worked in the fields, women in the home, and they met in the barnyard. The fields were masculine space as were the woods and water. Lavina and the female children rarely appeared in the woods, with the exception of the sugar bush and the berry patch. These

---

10 Jensen, xv.
were spaces in which female labour was used, with the processing of the sap and berries finished in the house. The process of gendered socialization that would have constructed this division of labour can be hard to identify. It is clear that boys and girls learned their gendered roles at a young age.\textsuperscript{12} The work that children did meant that they were introduced early to space in different ways, along gendered lines. The first part of a rural child’s life course has been described as an apprenticeship, when they learned their gendered responsibilities from older relatives, usually their parents.\textsuperscript{13} This comes across very clearly in Gerald Pocius’ study of a rural community in twentieth-century Newfoundland. He found that young boys traveled with their fathers as they worked in the woods and on water and learned the landscape beyond the house and yard through these shared experiences.\textsuperscript{14} By contrast, females in the community did not know the woods and water like the men; during their childhood they learned the work and intricacies of domestic spaces at their mother’s elbow.\textsuperscript{15} While the Cameron diary tells us very little about female socialization, its silence on the daily experience of his daughters strongly suggests that they are at their mother’s elbow in the home. The diary very clearly reveals a gendered socialization for James’ son, Gordon.

The historiography on the gendered division of farm labour shows that women’s work was more flexible than men’s. In times of peak labour, women would help in the fields or in other work that was considered generally masculine.\textsuperscript{16} This flexibility has not been observed in men. Cohen suggests “males rarely performed duties regarded as

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Jensen, 20.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Jensen, 19.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Gerald L. Pocius, \textit{A Place to Belong: Community Order and Everyday Space in Calvert, Newfoundland}, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 91.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Pocius, 99.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Cohen, 70.
\end{itemize}
women’s work. Tasks relating to child-rearing, cooking and cleaning were strictly women’s work and however burdensome these became at times, men were not expected to help. “With this in mind, it would be expected that James would not play a significant role in child care until his sons were old enough to start to work and apprentice beside him. Sandra Rollings-Magnusson’s study of child labour on the Canadian prairies includes children from between ages four to fourteen. She chose these ages because if the children were any older they were reported as adults, and if they were any younger they were still infants. Using this generous guideline, then, Gordon might be expected to begin accompanying and working with James at close to four years of age. This was not the case. Rather, the diary reveals that the process of socializing described by Pocius began as young as one year old.

James began taking Gordon with him on days Lavina was away. On March 10th James wrote, “A fortunate Day Lavina went to Salmon River me making spools the boy a very good boy took in eggs.” Gordon was thirteen months old at this point and hardly any use in gathering eggs. This entry demonstrates how Cameron referred to his looking after Gordon. Typically James imagined Gordon as his assistant while he was doing his chores and at times Gordon was described as a co-worker. Two weeks later Lavina was away again “A fortunate Day Lavina and Ellen (William Morris’ wife) crossed went for a lamb the boy and me alone a fine day Great crossing feeding good hay to the cows Lavina came home.” Once again James seems genuinely pleased to be doing the child-minding, but he refers to it as though his infant was a help rather than a hindrance to his

17 Cohen, 71.
19 Cameron, March 10 1864.
20 Cameron, March 24 1864.
chores, perhaps because he found his role of parenting to be a fulfilling task. Soon James began to spend more time with Gordon, and not just when Lavina was off the island. The entry for April 24th demonstrates clearly that boys were introduced to the land by their fathers’ side, at a very young age: “Took Gordon to the little island the sturgeon island south side, a fine day, great shooting on the Dundee side – sick took some nitrate.”\(^{21}\) The level of detail shows how important these spaces were, and that taking Gordon to new spaces was clearly significant. James recorded many of Gordon’s “firsts”. On April 26th 1865, “Me Pat Charlie and Gordon go to Mr. Harpers – Gordon’s first time to the store.”\(^ {22}\) And on June 11th 1865: “Gordon and me go to Francis Island the first time he was on it.”\(^ {23}\) This shows the process of how boys were introduced to the landscape and how deliberate an education this was. While Gordon was being introduced to these spaces the same was not true for his daughter Mary. The first time Mary left the island it was with Lavina to visit grandmother Thus, Mary left one domestic space for another.\(^ {24}\)

James took an active role in looking after the boy and this suggests that perhaps men did pitch in a little with the women’s work of child-minding, even if it was just for the male children. Lavina was also pregnant with Hugh Ann during the spring and summer of 1865, and this may have contributed to James activity with Gordon. Gordon would appear to be a very capable toddler, but sometimes the façade cracked. April 25th 1865 was likely a proud day for James, as he took Gordon eel fishing for the first time. “Gordon and I fish eels got 25 Gordon got sea sick with the rocking of the boat.”\(^ {25}\) Just

\(^{21}\) Cameron, April 24 1864.  
\(^{22}\) Cameron, April 25 1865.  
\(^{23}\) Cameron, June 11 1865.  
\(^{24}\) Cameron, August 15 1865.  
\(^{25}\) Cameron, April 25 1865.
over two years old, Gordon’s inability to cope with the boat ride clearly undermines James assertion that the two of them were fishing. James was minding his infant son and introducing him to the know-how of rivermen and farmers. This point becomes apparent on a September day in 1864: “Gordon lost I was sure he was drowned as we searched so much for him found him on the crops at the corner of the potatoes a sleep”. While James’s language obscures what was going on, it also reveals how he socialized his son bringing him into masculine spaces early on, and how he perceived of his own masculine role as a father and a teacher.

“Family” Farming

One of the first noticeable changes on the Cameron farm after James and Lavina married was how much more farming was taking place. Lavina’s labour helped expand the farm operation to meet the needs of their growing family. Wives were a tremendous advantage to the settler economy and farms tended to be more successful with their help. The Cameron diary may not tell us much about the food Lavina cooked to fuel the work on the farm, but she does appear in a few entries of the diary working in the garden and milking cows. The garden overall receives many more references in this second period of study, reflecting its greater importance to the family. James worked in the garden too and gives greater information on what was planted there: we read of the cucumber, beans, squash, onions and beets. The children Lavina bore represented another critical resource to the family farm. Large families were a benefit, as older

---

26 Cameron, September 10 1864.
27 Cohen, 71.
28 Cameron, February 11 1866.
29 Cameron, June 1 and 6, 1864.
children were an important source of labour. James and Lavina saw their future labour pool growing and began to expand their farm operations accordingly. Children also represented a dramatic increase in Lavina’s workload. The academic literature identifies this period as time when families were most apt to slip into poverty because the new dependents take up time and resources. With each child Lavina was increasingly occupied, and child-rearing was a significant labour for Lavina through most of her adult life. This only eased when her children became old enough to contribute to the labour needs.

The expansion of farming by James and Lavina is noticeable in the diary in a few ways: the frequency and amounts of farm production James brought to the market increased, and he began to keep new records on how many bushels of potatoes went into the cellar. In 1864 alone he brought farm products to the market five times. This represents a significant increase from what was the case in the previous period, when he consistently did so only twice a year. He was not only going to the market more but also bringing greater amounts of produce. It is not until 1865 that the true extent of his increased production is apparent. Looking at the Table 3.1 for his goods marketed that year; James went to market twenty-two times and sold overall the largest quantity of goods in this three-year period. This year he also sold more then the biggest year in the previous period, 1856. He brought goods to the market twice, were he sold a total of 57 bushels oats and 15 bushels potatoes and he brought 8 bushels wheat, 2 bushels corn to

---

30 Cohen, 72.
32 Cohen, 72.
33 Example: Cameron, September 9 1864.
34 Table: 3.1
the mill. Looking at table 3.1 again for this period the type of goods mentioned shows that roughly half of what he sold was oats or peas, products which had a market in the local economy, feeding towns, cities and lumber shanties and other farmers.\textsuperscript{35} Additionally, the wool and eggs represent a quarter of these transactions and reveal the importance of Lavina’s domestic production to this household.

Lavina also brought her extended family connections to bear on the Cameron’s household economy. Their importance to the farm can also be seen through her familial relations. James may have raised sheep for wool and meat, but it was Lavina and her mother who washed and scoured the wool to make it acceptable to sell. Mrs. Morris also helped spin the wool, and this support made raising sheep an attractive labour for James to invest in.\textsuperscript{36} Invest he did; on December 6, 1866 James went to Thomas Munroe’s farm after buying a bottle of whiskey at Mr. Harper’s. During this visit they bargained over sheep and the next day Munroe delivered six sheep to the Cameron farm.\textsuperscript{37}

The Morris family helped in other ways as well.\textsuperscript{38} While David Morris had passed away in November 1862 at the age of 71, the Morris children became part of James Cameron’s network of extended family.\textsuperscript{39} George Morris the oldest son was particularly prominent. The exact nature of their agreement is unclear but most likely George became a share tenant on the Cameron farm. Perhaps this was not unconnected to the death of David Morris, as he was no longer around to mentor his son. Share cropping tenants tended to be younger and inexperienced, as the leases for these agreements tended to be

\textsuperscript{36} Cameron, November 1 1865.
\textsuperscript{37} Cameron, December 6 1866 and December 7 1866.
\textsuperscript{38} See Appendix Figure. 3.2 Morris Family Tree.
\textsuperscript{39} Cameron, November 23 1864 Mr. Morris death mentioned. And, Library and Archives Canada; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; \textit{Census Returns For 1861}; Roll: C-1282-1283.
short, usually just a year.\textsuperscript{40} Furthermore, the risk was shared with the landowner, as the
tenant was only required to give a share of what they produced and in return often got
access to implements and livestock. In this case, George worked side by side with James
and benefited from his experience, though George did provide his own seeds.\textsuperscript{41} Over the
course of 1866 he gave twenty-four days of labour.\textsuperscript{42} On November 15, George collected
his share of his potato crop and James took his cut.\textsuperscript{43} \textsuperscript{44}

George would have provided much-needed labour to James, as his own children
were not yet old enough to help out. During the 1864-66 period, James continued to rely
on his neighbours’ reciprocal help, but this declined in favour of hiring labour to meet his
needs and propel the expansion of his farm work. A total of five work bees were
mentioned in this period two of them were hosted by Lavina’s family at their Salmon
River farm; the Morris family held a barn raising and Bill (William Morris) held
another.\textsuperscript{45} James held none. He engaged in small labour exchanges with his neighbours,
but they tended not to be agricultural in this period. These immediate exchanges did not
require James be away for long periods and this may also explain why he favoured them.
For assistance with agricultural work, James hired a series of men. In 1864, he hired
George Semo for five days of labour and paid him twice. After a day of moeing [sic] and

\textsuperscript{40} Catharine Anne Wilson, Tenants in Time: Family Strategies, Land and Liberalism in Upper Canada,
\textsuperscript{41} Wilson, “Tenants in Time,” 176 -177.
\textsuperscript{42} Cameron, from May 10 1866 to November 15 1866.
\textsuperscript{43} Cameron, November 15, 1866.
\textsuperscript{44} In the 1861 census George was residing on the Morris farm in Dundee. His younger brother by three
years, William was also living there. With the help of the other children and their mother Delilah, they
continued to run the farm. In the end it would go to William, as he was the only son left on farm in the
1871 census.\textsuperscript{45} George moved to Montreal and appeared in the 1881 census married with five children and
working as a store clerk. (Library and Archives Canada, Census of Canada, 1881, Ottawa,
Canada: 1881; Census Place: St Lawrence Ward, Montreal City, Quebec; Roll: C_13220; Page: 23; Family
No: 120.)
\textsuperscript{45} Cameron, January 23 1864 and March 14 1864.
undefined labour James paid Semo five shillings of credit at the Renshaw store. After another three days threshing later that year, Semo took home two bushels each of oats, peas and potatoes. In addition to Semo, James hired a women named Betsy Bone to help out, who worked for him five times and got paid a wage twice—once of five shillings, and the other time of one dollar. She started work after Mary was born in June of 1864 and worked in the fields and picked hazelnuts and grapes. On the days she worked and also was paid Cameron does not write the details of her labour, likely because she would have been at domestic chores. Betsy was always paid in cash while the men James hired were generally paid in store credit or goods. She would not have likely kept accounts with stores but have used her fathers or husbands. Betsy’s employment closely followed the birth of a child and she would have helped Lavina while she recovered from the birth and cared for the new born, Mary.

James required more than the occasional help from Semo and Betsy and took on a local “Indian” man by the name of Lashey as his main source of labour. James Cameron had an extensive relationship with the local Mohawk First Nations who resided at the St. Regis Indian Reserve at the western end of Lake St. Francis. He did not go there with much regularity, but he did sometimes make the journey, such as when he went to see a “Grand Procession at St. Regis.” Occasionally James had hired local “Indians” to do a day’s labour or more frequently to make him paddles and oars. James engaged Lashey in a much greater capacity than any other hired labour. Between 1864-1866 James

46 Cameron, August 26 1864 and October 5 1864.
47 Cameron, July 15 1864, August 29 1864 and September 19 1864.
48 Cameron, August 26 1864 and October 5 1864.
49 Cameron, August 25 1865 referred to Lashey as an “Indian”.
50 Cameron, June 18 1865.
51 Example Cameron, August 24 1857.
mentioned Lashey in connection to labouring 104 times.\textsuperscript{52} Lashey helped out with the farm work on only three occasions. The vast majority of the work Lashey performed was chopping and making troughs, but he also engaged in hunting and fishing. These other labours will be examined in greater depth while comparing James’ own relation to those tasks.

The working relationship between James Cameron and Lashey was very different in comparison with the other labourers he hired. He was critical of Lashey in his writing. He frequently mentioned Lashey showing up starving and noted the day that he was sober.\textsuperscript{53} Another indication of this lack of respect is found in a collection of notes after the written diary. One of these notes is an account of the work Lashey owed Cameron. He noted the making of a sleigh, a pair of lines and that the “1st of March was to finish” the work.\textsuperscript{54} Cameron recorded this overdue work by Lashey alongside the goods he had given him. This clearly showed that Cameron closely tracked their working relationship. The criticisms of Lashey, particularly those about drinking, were consistent with the racial prejudices of this time.\textsuperscript{55} James showed his thoughts on the local Mohawk population when on August 9\textsuperscript{th} 1865 he mentioned “a great many Indians going down”; a few days later, he reported a second (presumably slower) group following the first. On the 14\textsuperscript{th} he noted “lame Indians coming down to fish and steal.”\textsuperscript{56} No more was stated about these travelers, but clearly James had a very low assessment of them. Perhaps this was why James appeared not to pay Lashey significant amounts, despite the fact that he

\textsuperscript{52} Counted form the Cameron Diary 1864-1866.
\textsuperscript{53} Cameron, March 20 1865 and August 28 1865.
\textsuperscript{54} Cameron, after the end of the diary on reel 1.
\textsuperscript{56} Cameron, August 14 1865.
worked over 100 times for James. Lashey stayed on the Island at times, when he worked for James either in the family house or in the old house or barn where the Camerons occasionally put up guests. This room and board would have been taken into account in his wages. Lashey was paid for his work chopping and farming for James. The first such entry was in February 1864, when Cameron recorded giving Lashey breakfast before a half day of work. Cameron paid him three times in a half-pound to a full pound of tobacco. On the two biggest paydays for Lashey, he was paid in an assortment of goods. On March 24 1866, he got 5 shillings 3 pence worth of goods consisting of alcohol, pork, tobacco and a treat and on April 4 of the same year he got another 7 shillings 6 pence worth of goods. James never paid Lashey directly in cash, but that was also the case with Semo as cash was scarce. Paying with store credit would be more convenient than using cash, especially as James was trapping less, which had been his main source of such cash.

**Fish or Furs**

In 1864, Gordon was one year old. He and the children that followed represented more mouths to feed. In the diary the children began to help out, or at least join their parents on labour outings, before the age of four. Despite being referred to as helpers, these children still mainly represented dependents, who consumed a great deal of the family’s resources and Lavina’s labour. Marvin McInnis’ work on marketable surpluses delves into the calorie consumption of farm households. He finds that a hard-working male farmer would probably consume 5,300 calories during his prime of 15-59 years of

---

57 Counted from the Cameron Diary from 1864 – 1866.

58 General observations from the Cameron Diary.

59 Cameron, February 10 1864.

60 Cameron, March 24 1866 and April 4 1866.
age.\textsuperscript{61} For women in the same years, like Lavina, he suggests 4,240 calories, and for children under the age of five a consumption of 2,120 calories.\textsuperscript{62} This data is useful for demonstrating the increase in resources James needed for his family’s diet. In the first period, he needed only 5,300 calories a day for himself. This figure grows substantially by the end of the second period, at which point he needed to produce 15,900 calories a day. This requirement altered the nature of James’ occupational pluralism, causing him to pursue labours that maximized utility and focused on gaining a reliable source of food for consumption over profit from his hunting and fishing.

James continued to purchase shot and powder in the second period, though the amount varied more than it did in the first period. In 1864 James recorded nine pounds of shot and five of powder, which represented about 288 rounds (Table 3.2).\textsuperscript{63} His shot purchases fell the next year to 96 rounds but his powder purchases remained high at three pounds.\textsuperscript{64} This was perhaps due to leftover shot from the previous year. The year 1866 sees his lowest shot purchase, with only 32 rounds recorded. Til this time James had been above McCalla’s threshold for a high level of shooting activity, but he fell below it in 1866.\textsuperscript{65} That same year James’ children were three, two and less than one years old. The time spent caring for these young children may have been a factor in James shooting less and therefore decreased shot purchases.

In the first period, James was shown to have profited from his fur trade and to

\textsuperscript{62} McInnis, 406.
\textsuperscript{63} Table 3.2 James Cameron’s Shot and Powder Tally 1864-1866. The conversion of shot to rounds was made using McCalla’s formula of one pound of shot to 32 rounds for conversion found in Douglas McCalla, “Upper Canadians and their guns: an exploration via country store accounts (1808-61).” \textit{Ontario History} 92, no.2 (Aut., 2005): 132.
\textsuperscript{64} Table 3.2: James Cameron’s Shot and Powder Tally 1864-1866.
\textsuperscript{65} McCalla, “Upper Canadians and Their Guns,” 133.
catch fish for his own consumption. In the second period he was still investing in shot and powder. However, his levels of trapping are significantly lower despite this investment. His fur totals or 1864, 1865 and 1866 were 23, 21 and 8 respectfully. The quantity of his catch was significantly lower and muskrat continued to be most common. This shows that James was engaging less with trapping for fur. He did however, hunt a little, over the three years; he shot 24 ducks and two geese for food. James clearly enjoyed hunting and trapping, and while he moved away from this kind of labour due, he still-hunted ducks for the pot when needed when the occasion arose.

Fishing in the first period was used to procure food. With James’ food needs growing, it is not surprising that his fishing labour also expanded. This change was significant. In the first period James recorded catching 68 fish plus an unknown mentioned as “some.” The first period’s catch was 18 percent sturgeon, which is a large and popular game fish (Table 3.6). The second period catches were huge in comparison. In 1864 James recorded a fishing catch of 231 fish; in 1865 he caught 383; and in 1866 he caught only 96 (Tables 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9). These catches were mainly eels, which were easy to preserve, and which he also used to produce eel oil. James also fished for perch, a small (average weight 0.75 pounds) and popular eating fish. His 1864 catch was 77% eel, 17% perch and 1% sturgeon; 1865 was 68% eel, 20% perch and less than 1%

66 Table 3.3 James Cameron Trapping Catch 1864, Table 3.4: James Cameron Trapping Catch 1865 And Table 3.5: James Cameron Trapping Catch 1866.
67 Counted from the Cameron Diary, 1864-1866.
68 Table 3.6: James Cameron Fishing Catch 1855-1857.
69 Table 3.7: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1864, Table 3.8: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1865 and Table 3.9: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1866.
sturgeon; and 1866 was 85% eel, 2% perch and 3% sturgeon. These data suggests that James’ food needs made him turn to eels and perch, which were abundant fish. The eels were harvested by spear in the diary, which was the traditional method for taking many fish and the favoured method for eel in particular.\textsuperscript{72} He moved away from the more difficult and time-consuming sturgeon fishing, which was mainly done by line and hook.\textsuperscript{73} Sturgeon populations did suffer serious decline in the nineteenth and twentieth century and all surviving fish stocks in Canada today are listed as either vulnerable or threatened.\textsuperscript{74} Serious decline came after the construction of hydroelectric dams in the twentieth century and James declining catch was not due to decline fish stocks.\textsuperscript{75} James’ decline in fishing sturgeon may also have been linked to their overall decline.

Fishing and hunting provided valuable calories to the Cameron family. James moved away from his lucrative fur trade, which may have maximized his cash income but was of minimal immediate utility to his family. Fishing was clearly a better off-farm labour investment than hunting, as it could support his family’s required 15,900 calories a day—a figure that would grow as his children aged and more were born. Additionally, trapping was relatively risky, as the muskrat could be scarce or the price could fluctuate. Fish for food, on the other hand, offered a more stable return.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{71} Table 3.7: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1864, Table 3.8: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1865 and Table 3.9: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1866.
\textsuperscript{73} General observations from the Cameron Diary.
\textsuperscript{75} Lefebvre and Seymour, 85.
\textsuperscript{76} Some of James’ catch of fish and furs was coming from Lashey. It is hard to tell who benefited most from the fishing. Cameron recorded Lashey’s time fishing and his catch as though it was important to him. This and an entry where James gave 2/6 shillings worth of eels out of Lashey’s barrel to Pat, gives the impression that he benefited from Lashey’s fishing. At other times, however, Lashey left Cameron Island to
**Family and the Sugar Bush**

The annual spring sugar season was a lucrative undertaking that fit well around the constraints of family. Sugar was a popular commercial product and McCalla found that it represented (along with tea and tobacco) more than half of store bought groceries in his study of country stores.\(^77\) Maple sugar did not command the same prices as fine imported sugar and McCalla found it tended to be slightly cheaper than the cheapest imported sugar.\(^78\) The popular consumption of sugar and its cost meant that in his study half the households made their own sugar but the high level of community consumption meant that a market still existed for maple sugar at country stores.\(^79\) James’s sugar bush would have subsidized his sugar consumption and produced a product that had a strong local market. It also allowed him to stay close to home and even utilize the labour of his small children. Sugaring was a labour intensive activity that required James, Lavina, the children and even a hired man to operate. It fit naturally with his family’s stage in his life course and would continue to benefit from more and older children.

The sugar season is in the spring when temperatures fluctuate above and below zero degrees Celsius. This fluctuation means that tree sap is flowing up and down vigorously within the trees.\(^80\) To capture this resource, a hole is drilled with an auger and a spigot is placed in the hole, then a trough is set to catch the sap as it flows out. To make maple syrup, this watery sap must be boiled down approximately 40 times, or even more

---

80 Agriculture Canada, “What you should know about maple syrup” (Ottawa, Canada, 1980), 5.
if a loaf of sugar is the objective.\textsuperscript{81} To capture the sugar many resources are needed: maple trees, for sugar or birch trees for vinegar, a large number of troughs, large quantities of wood for the fire and large pots for boiling.

It is labour intensive work. Every spring in the second period, James tapped hundreds of maple trees to make maple sugar and molasses, and tapped birch trees to produce vinegar.\textsuperscript{82} The sugar bush was a valuable labour that was especially fitting for families with young children. The nineteenth century author Catharine Parr Traill wrote about this in her work \textit{The Backwoods of Canada}. She argued that sugaring was most profitable when done as a family venture. The young children could help as they could gather the sap from the troughs. Syrup was made at the start of the process by boiling large amounts of sap outside into syrup, the fire would need to be tended and watched constantly so not to burn the sugar, especially in the final stages if they were making sugar loafs. Wives in the kitchen then did the finishing stage of refining the sugar.\textsuperscript{83} This was a valuable consideration, as it meant that Lavina could help finish turning the syrup into sugar while watching the children inside. This sugar production is revealed to be a family-oriented activity in the Cameron diary, which is consistent with Traill’s writings.

James Cameron’s investment in this project worked well with his young family. While he was a bachelor, the labour requirements for running a sugar bush would have outweighed the benefits. With a wife and young children, the labour calculus was different. James could tap and empty the troughs with the children while Lavina supervised the processing. The whole operation could be carried out on his island not far

\textsuperscript{81} Agriculture Canada, 9.
\textsuperscript{82} General observations from the Cameron Diary.
from the house. His island location made the set up even more appealing, as the spring
thaw would have made the water temporarily impassible as the ice became too weak to
travel across, but not yet open enough for boats. Even with the resources of his family he
still needed to call on other resources to make the sugar bush feasible. It took a
combination of family labour, hired labour and community ties to get the sugar bush up
and running.

Prior to the 1864 sugar season James relied on Lashey primarily to help him
prepare for the sugar season. This was a one-time expense to help establish the operation.
Lashey chopped wood, building sufficient fuel supplies for the extensive sap boiling
operation. Lashey also helped Cameron build over 98 troughs for his sugaring
operation.84 Once the spring weather approached, Lashey left the island before the river
became impassible during break-up. Lashey was indispensable for James in creating the
initial resources, particularly the troughs needed to begin a sugar operation. Once the
infrastructure was in place James could operate the bush seasonally with less initial
effort.

In the 1864 sugar season, Cameron worked in the bush alone boiling sap into
syrup and brought the syrup back to the house for Lavina to process into sugar cakes.85
The next spring, Lavina, Gordon and Mary, as well Cameron’s friend Suple, gathered 15
pails of sap, which they boiled down to syrup in the bush.86 The sugaring was completed
again in the kitchen.87 In 1866 the children were older, Gordon being three, and Mary,
one. This allowed them to be outside for longer and even the baby Hugh Ann went along

84 Cameron, March 2 1864.
85 Cameron, April 6 1864.
86 Cameron, March 26 1865.
87 Cameron, March 31 1865.
on that April when Lavina and James boiled 40 pails.\textsuperscript{88} Gordon came out with James four more times in April; he helped gather pails, boil sugar and shooed the cows out of the grove as they “make a great destruction of the sugar bush.”\textsuperscript{89}

James sold his sugar, used it himself and gifted cakes of his and Lavina’s sugar out four times in this period. James also borrowed sugaring pots from “old lady Christee” in 1865. On their return James gave her a bag of ashes and a bag of potatoes.\textsuperscript{90} In 1866 he borrowed pots from Mr. Harper and Delilah Morris. Mr. Harper received over ten pounds of sugar and Mrs. Morris a bottle of molasses, a bottle of vinegar, a pot of ashes and four pounds of sugar.\textsuperscript{91} James’ sugaring labour was dependent on the reciprocal network to access the appropriate equipment. He rewarded them with parts of his production. Sugaring also proved to be a labour that worked well around the constraints of supervising young children and was, therefore, a labour of great utility in his occupational plurality.

**Community Reciprocity**

As a married man with young children, James still found neighbourly reciprocity useful. He did not host bees but instead did more gift giving, gun loaning and small neighborly exchanges of goods and labour. As he was hiring labour, this decreased his need for holding his own bees. One-on-one reciprocal exchange still happened and his hunting and fishing was still tied to it in the second period as it was in the first. James may have been shooting less but he still lent his guns out three times (Table 3.10).\textsuperscript{92} Two

\textsuperscript{88} Cameron, April 10 1866.
\textsuperscript{89} Cameron, April 4 1866, April 5 1866, April 16 1866 and quote from April 13 1866.
\textsuperscript{90} Cameron, March 7 1865.
\textsuperscript{91} Cameron, Mr. Harper on May 11 1866 and Mrs. Morris on May 6 1866.
\textsuperscript{92} Table 3.10: Gun Loaning 1864-1866.
of these entries give us a look at how access to gun loaning was dependent on earning trust. This is not surprising; as Craig notes, while farmers engaged with capitalism they still held a “non-capitalist mentalité” which included among other things the fact that “farmers...placed a high value on honesty, reliability and trustfulness.”

This process is exemplified by the case of Tom Scuthers, who sought to borrow James’ guns on August 7 1864. James agreed but added a caveat that Scuthers was to return the gun in a week or else owe Cameron six dollars. Tom returned the gun as per agreement and sought to borrow again on August 19 1864. On this day he helped Cameron finish his pease [sic] and got the gun, this time without the caveat. These entries show how trust was earned through reliability and how James continued his beneficial reciprocal practice of gun lending.

As in the first period, James’ gun loaning, as well as gifting game and fish, were part of his reciprocal network. Between 1864 and 1866 James received seven gifts of game and fish and gave eleven. Guns were loaned five times, and James received gifts of shot three times. The big reciprocal events of bees were less frequent, with only five mentioned in this period and none held by James. The fact that he continued to go to these bees even if he did not hold any of his own shows that he was not interested in totally ostracizing himself from this possible labour pool. He did participate and gain in other ways such as in the practice of gift giving, a practice that was more common in this period. A total of 70 gift exchanges happened in the first period, in the second this went

---

94 Cameron, August 7 1864. Dollars are in American currency.
95 Cameron, August 19 1864.
Borrowing also increased from 39 instances to 49.\textsuperscript{96} This shows that James still interacted with his reciprocal network, as in the first period, but the nature of his interaction changed. One possible explanation for these changes was that small one-on-one exchanges, such as gifts, were less time-consuming. With the pressure of feeding a young family, holding a bee may have been out of reach. These smaller exchanges allowed James to receive rewards consistent with what he was able to give, such as gifts of his sugar. Despite the reliance on hired labour, James did participate in reciprocal labour exchanges in this period, albeit to a lesser degree than in his bachelor days and in ways that minimized his travel away from his young family. Two cases demonstrate this very well. James was clearly a literate farmer and this was another specialized skill that he had in the community. Pat was a friend and a part of his reciprocal network. On 17 October 1865, Pat and Jimmy went to Cameron’s Island and got him to write a letter. For this service they brought along with them a “bottle of the good stuff” this showed that literacy had some market value to James.\textsuperscript{97} On the same day, Pat, as well as Charlie, helped James take down his old stovepipe.\textsuperscript{98} In the winter of 1865, James injured his back and this brought Pat and Jimmy’s reciprocity out again. Pat chopped wood for James on November 18th and on the 24\textsuperscript{th} he went with Lashey to buy goods, including something called “R.R.R. relief” for his injured friend.\textsuperscript{99} James reciprocated and wrote four letters for him on December 3 and another one on December 10.\textsuperscript{100} Charlie Tupper was another

\textsuperscript{96} Counted from 1864-1866 period of Cameron diary.
\textsuperscript{97} Cameron, October 17 1865.
\textsuperscript{98} Cameron, October 17 1865.
\textsuperscript{99} Cameron, November 18 1865 and November 24 1865.
\textsuperscript{100} Cameron, December 3 1865 and December 10 1865.
friend. Throughout this period he and James exchanged rides. Charlie sharpened his axes at James’, and James took his goods to the mill for him, chopped wood, and sold Charlie’s goods for him when he was sick.\textsuperscript{101} Throughout this period Charlie reciprocated in kind. This relationship came to an end, however, when Charlie Tupper immigrated back to England. While James lost a trusted friend and member of his reciprocal network, Charlie bestowed his remaining goods to Cameron, including everything from a whetstone to his sleigh.\textsuperscript{102}

**Family Foraging**

Sugaring was not the only new labour that worked well with a young family. James increased his foraging in this period. This foraging was for butternuts, strawberries, long berries and other fruits. James made no mention of planting or tending these plants before harvesting them so have referred to them as foraging. James or Lavina took Gordon out foraging three times; Mary joined James Cameron and Gordon for a fourth outing.\textsuperscript{103} In addition, James, Lavina and the children foraged another four times in this period.\textsuperscript{104} This off-farm labour was clearly family-friendly, like sugaring. This is best shown by James’ diary entry on September 21\textsuperscript{st}, 1864, when James wrote of making 12 pounds of cranberry preserve with 6 pounds of fruit and 6 pounds of sugar. He also made another 6 pounds of western berry preserve at the same proportion of sugar to fruit.\textsuperscript{105} While James does not mention Lavina specifically in this entry, it is safe to assume she worked with him at the preserves. The ratios of fruit to sugar they followed are the same

\textsuperscript{101} Cameron, October 1 1865, November 1 1865, February 4 1865, February 1 1866.
\textsuperscript{102} Cameron, October 5 1866.
\textsuperscript{103} Cameron, July 25 1864, August 27 1865, September 22 1865 and July 5 1866.
\textsuperscript{104} Cameron, June 26 1864, June 18 1865, July 9 1865 and July 30 1865.
\textsuperscript{105} Cameron, September 21 1864.
as those found in nineteenth century recipe books, such as the raspberry jam recipe in *Miss. Beecher’s Domestic Receipt Book* of 1847, which calls for “a pound of sugar to a pound of fruit. Press them with a spoon, in an earthen dish. Add the sugar, and boil all together for fifteen minutes.”[^106] In some early notes before James kept a regular diary, he listed all the books he owned at the time. Included in the list were two cookbooks, which were likely Lavina’s.[^107]

**Forest Resources**

James Cameron’s participation in the forest economy continued from the first period. His trade in sticks and ashes continued to be a good supplement to his farming and cutting on the island kept James close to his family. At times his son would accompany him. As in the first period James still brought several bushels of ash to the market. The lumber trade in the St. Lawrence forest economy offered farmers a variety of ways to participate and was an important source of cash in the off-season. James conducted a small side-business in the selling of sticks.

In *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada 1784-1870*, McCalla writes of the profitable stave business. Farmers delivered staves to a local agent, who collected significant quantities for the trade.[^108] This agent allowed farmers participate in this trade part-time as they did not have to seek out markets and could sell small quantities. Cameron took part in a similar trade, but he called his logs “sticks and pieces”. He gathered these sticks and pieces up and sold them to a local merchant, who

[^107]: Cameron, Reel 1.
may have been a lumber agent.

James Cameron collected his sticks from the bush on his island and he cut and dragged them to his farm. This took time, but the sticks were worth the labour. The easiest way he profited from sticks was his salvaging them from the water and beach. On July 10th 1864, James found a 40-foot stick on the water. In total in this period, he found 10 sticks of pine and cedar and 11 pieces of wood. James profited from this labour, as exemplified by his entry on November 13th, 1866 when he sold three pieces of pine for $8 to Andrew Summers. James wrote that the $8 went against his $29.60 he owed Summers, a mainland merchant, bringing his debt down to $21.60. James’ island location and time spent on the water fishing and traveling facilitated his stick salvaging. He did not have to spend a lot of time towards this labour, and his young son Gordon even helped him check the beach for sticks. This convenient part-time labour gave him a supplementary source of cash as he could sell to middlemen like Summers to pay off his store debt. If $8 for three pieces of pine was indicative of the prices he received, then the 21 sticks and pieces he gathered supplied him with approximately $56 of trade in this period.

“A treat -/7 ½” changing patterns of leisure and alcohol consumption

James’ work culture changed with his responsibilities of fatherhood. He locates more of his time and labour in and around the island than he did in his bachelor days. James was fond of his alcohol and throughout the diary James refers to the occasional drink as a “glass” of whiskey, a “treat of whisky”, or just a “treat”, for which he almost

---

109 Cameron. October 28 1864 and November 11 1864.
110 Cameron, July 10 1864.
111 Cameron, November 13 1866.
112 Cameron, July 2 1866.
always paid seven and a half pence. That a drink was a referred to as a treat reflects its importance as a reward and a luxury that James valued. Purchases of tea and sugar were as frequent as whiskey and represented another small luxury and one that Lavina certainly would have enjoyed. These would have been consumed in the home and with visitors and would not have changed with James changing work patterns. As a bachelor James sociability frequently included drinking and gambling at cards. James was moving away from these activities. He gambled less but still enjoyed the activity such as when he bet on a pony at the races:

Races in Salmon River Lashey went with is eels chopping till 8 or 9 oClock we will call it a half ½ day as he is going for my boats Drawing Wood … The Pony Bet at the Races.\(^{113}\)

While he gambled less and did not frequent events where that activity took place, such as at bee parties, the amount of alcohol that James consumed remained very similar between the first and second period. How he consumed it did change noticeably. In his bachelor days he would go on the occasional spree, drinking many drinks in multiple locations. These sprees did not happen in the second period though one exception to this pattern was New Year’s Day 1865, when he was alone on the island and had a few rounds of whisky to celebrate. James as a family man was less likely to have more than one drink, especially in public, and only on occasion had more than one “treat” when off the island. The location of his overall consumption also changed. In the second period he was more likely to buy a gallon or half-gallon to bring home than he was to have a treat at the store. Buying in bulk was more affordable, and with young children and hired hands to pay, James’ expenses were higher. It was also a less social way to drink, but perhaps he wanted to spend evenings with Lavina and the children. His wine purchases were also up

\(^{113}\) Cameron, January 29 1864.
and Lavina would have been much more likely to drink at home than at a public house. Drinking still did encompass an important social role for James. A male guest often brought a bottle with him such a case was in February of 1864; “Grear here had a Bottle of grog stopt all night Lashey at the traps.” He continued to close deals over drinks with his male companions, such as when buying sheep from Munroe. He also gave and received gifts of alcohol, which presumably led to sharing the bottle. Drinking was still a form of masculine bonding for James and its importance as such did not diminish. His leisure activities were changing along side the changes in his work culture but remained important to him. The more stable, responsible way he drank in the second period suggests that he was acting in a more mature fashion fitting of a family man.

**Successful Family Formation**

The years 1864 to 1866 were years of transformation for the Cameron household. James and Lavina settled into married life and they both worked to provide from the farm, local resources and the community. James expressed his masculinity in new ways. His role as a father teaching his young son how to be a man became a prominent part of his identity. He moved away from risk taking, the hard drinking and gambling masculinity of his bachelor years. James stepped back from his lucrative trade in furs, stopped investing, and no longer traveled out of the area for long periods of time. His increased focus on farming was a long-term investment, one that was banking on his increased access to labour once his sons got older. In the mean time he hired labour and took on a tenant to help with his fields.

---

114 Observation from the Cameron Diary.
115 Cameron, February 7 1864.
116 Cameron, December 6 1866 and December 7 1866.
117 Examples Cameron, September 17 1864 or October 1 1866.
Hired hands were not his only new expense. His store consumption grew significantly. In the first period when he was a bachelor he bought clothes, tobacco, alcohol, shot and powder. With a young family he still bought some clothes but he also bought yards of fabric and household items like saucers, lamps, chairs and brooms. When he was a bachelor he did not buy much in the way of food products. In the second period a distinct concern over food became apparent. It is noticeable in his turn towards fishing, the increased work in the garden and the way James tracked every bushel of potatoes laid away in the cellar. Despite all these ways the Camerons produced their own food, store bought food products became an important part of their diet. Tea and alcohol remained the most regular purchases but flour, beef, pork, peas, butter, syrup, herrings and mutton were all purchased. Except for tea and alcohol, all the products they bought were also ones they produced. In 1866 for example, James butchered two bulls something he did not do in the first period. Both bulls were slaughtered in the winter to help the meat keep. The second bull was killed in November of 1866 and gave Cameron 300 pounds of meat that he salted and 18 pounds of clean tallow. Cameron made candles with some of the tallow and he kept some of the beef for his own family’s consumption. He sold both meat and tallow to stores that his family could not use. He also gifted meat to others including two pieces to Lashey on the day he moved out. While Cameron produced hundreds of pounds of beef that November, it would have gone to waste if he had kept it all for his families consumption. This explains why he produced

---

118 Example Cameron, March 24 1864 and March 17 1864.
119 Observations from Cameron diary. Example of 15 lbs pork purchased on November 8 1864 or February 16 1865 when he bought a ½ gallon syrup, 2 lbs butter and 10 lbs beef.
120 Cameron, November 23 1866.
121 General observations from the Cameron Diary.
122 Cameron, November 24 1866.
beef but also purchased it.

James made significant changes in his labour patterns to respond to the family’s place in a young and vulnerable stage of its life course. These changes show that James adapted to maximize his utility to his young family. Despite his greater time spent on his agricultural production, he continued to work in a plurality of labours and to seek rewards from both capitalist markets and his reciprocal network.

James reduced his exposure to his once profitable fur trade and increased his hunting and fishing for food as they offered greater utility to his family’s subsistence requirements. James’ growth in agriculture shows the success his farm work provided him. He could hire labour regularly. The growth in hired labour did not signal the disappearance of his ties to reciprocity. Small labour exchanges and frequent gift giving still connected him to the reciprocal network and the security it gave him such as when he was injured.

His changing off-farm labour best shows how he adjusted to his family’s life course. Sugaring was a profitable enterprise that allowed him to produce in the spring while still remaining close to home. It even allowed Lavina to produce in the home and for the young children to participate. His foraging for fruit and berries and sticks also fit around his young family and other labours. It provided him with a varied diet and a source of cash and or credit.

James Cameron lived comfortably despite the strains of a young family. He may have had less cash available to him but he generated a greater marketable surplus, ate a protein rich and varied diet, and indulged in occasional treats. He traveled less in this period and relied on store credit. As James began to introduce Gordon to masculine
spaces and work, he demonstrated how farm children were raised and how their gendered roles were constructed early. James preoccupation with his son shows him looking to the future. This future would require more resources to meet the needs of his maturing family, resources that he increasingly produced on his farm.
Chapter 4: 
Mature Family, from 1879 -1881

In 1881, a census agent finally made his way to Cameron Island. The data he recorded caught the Cameron family close to the peak of their household size; sadly no agricultural returns survived for that year. Gordon was nineteen and listed as still living on the farm, and Stanly, the youngest, was just three years old.¹ The Camerons would have one more daughter, Ionia, two years later in 1883.² The continued arrival of children between 1866 and 1879 represents the most profound change of these years. This chapter provides insight into the effect of a large family on the livelihood strategies available to the Camerons.

The family now had seven boys and four girls. Seven of these children were eight or over in 1881, and they contributed meaningfully to the labour needs of the family. As historian Mary Neth notes, at eight years old “children began to take on more serious and skilled chores,” a point consistent with the diary.³ James Cameron’s family life course had an impact on his responsibilities, his goals and strategies for reaching these, and hence his activities were clearly defined by his large, maturing family. The farm benefited from the additional labour the children provided. This was reflected in the marketable surplus of labour-intensive products such as butter, wool, sugar and cattle that the family produced and James brought to market. In addition, the children, particularly Gordon, often worked away from home on a neighbour’s farm, earning substantial wages for the Cameron household.

---
² Cameron, October 1 1883.
Perhaps the most striking change in this three-year period of the diary is how James rarely mentions the female family members. This is particularly interesting because they were so clearly important to the success of the farm, as butter was one of the most lucrative products that James brought to the market. This chapter will delve into the many ways family labour benefited James Cameron and rewarded his investment in his children.

This chapter will first touch on the patriarchal power dynamic of the farm and the way it shaped family life. James exercised a degree of control over his sons but it had limits. Lavina and her daughters’ place, both on the farm and in the diary, were different then that of the sons and they may have emphasized family to potentially mitigated patriarchal privilege. The Camerons ran their mature farm that produced products such as butter or cattle. The changing relationship with fishing and trapping shows how their importance had dwindled to James during this period, but that his knowledge had been transmitted to his sons. A large and successful sugar bush continued in these years as the result of his large family. James continued his small involvement with the forest trade. Finally, this chapter explores the growing consumption of the Cameron family and what this consumption reveals about female labour on the farm.

**Limits of Family**

Much has been written on the patriarchal structure of rural households. Historians such as Neth and Cohen have delved into the apparent contradictions between the “family farm” with its communal and mutual characteristics, and the fact that the male head, owned the farm and its profits. This power structure was rooted in the legal access to land. Men controlled the access to the land and women could only do so under rare
circumstances. In the Cameron diary the mutuality of farm life and the patriarchal nature of the rural family are particularly evident in this period. Cameron relied almost exclusively on his wife and children’s labour, but he sold the products of their labour. The combination of legal ownership and the wider cultural acceptance of patriarchy meant that family labour appears to have been given freely to the male head of household however it should not be assumed it always was. The whole family’s mutual dependence, and their shared standard of living, hid the fact that the true core of power lay with the male head of the household.

This system clearly benefited men. Cohen defines this patriarchy in regards to farm labour as such:

Patriarchal productive relations can be defined as the organization of labour in which males, as husbands, fathers, and even sons and brothers, have power over the productive activities of their children, wives and sometimes their sisters and mothers.

According to Cohen, this system was unequal, but it would be wrong to suggest that farmwomen were helpless. She suggests men motivated and gained access to female labour by imagining the farm as a family farm and women also agreed to and supported the idealized family. This was done so that personal relationships and bonds of mutual obligation, rather than wages, controlled labour relations. In endorsing the mutual elements of the family, farmwomen and children and even men themselves built bonds of mutuality to unite every one towards supplying future farm generations with a good life.

---

6 Cohen, 43.
7 Cohen, 42.
8 Neth, 18.
Men would understand the value women provided to the farm, but this discourse further allowed women to create value for their work by seeing it as necessary for their family’s success and survival. While this did not threaten to undermine the legal power men had, it did allow them to potentially harness power within the family.\(^9\) By comparison, children (especially sons) were motivated by future rewards and assistance with getting access to land. In the meantime the children’s labour helped to cover the cost of their upkeep, and the patriarch managed the profits reinvesting them in the farm or the family by way of cloths or school.\(^10\)

Feminist historians are right to point out that an unequal power dynamic existed on farms and that men and women would have negotiated it in many ways. Extending the details of their analysis to the Cameron family is difficult. It is impossible to know the exact nature of the relationship between James and Lavina or between James and his children. The absence in the diary of any reflection on decision-making or even conflict within the family means we cannot know the contours of their power dynamic. Many small clues, however, suggest that James was a caring husband and father. The careful practice of recording the birthdays and anniversaries in the diary, year after year, suggest that these were important dates to him.\(^11\) The affection James shows towards his young children and the good relations he had with Lavina’s extended family, point towards a good relationship between James and Lavina.\(^12\) Without a doubt their relationship was deeply influenced by patriarchal norms. It is possible to imagine, however, that Lavina carved out a significant space for herself within the power dynamic of the family. Lavina

\(^10\) Cohen, 44-45.
\(^11\) Example Cameron, January 5 1879.
\(^12\) Neth, 33.
was not living with any parents’ in-law; she would have had the independence to supervise her own work when she was operating outside of James’ sphere on the farm.\textsuperscript{13} She was the head of the domestic sphere of the home, and while she had some freedom in her work, she would have had control over her children’s labour and certainly could ask James for extra help but Lavina did not have much economic freedom outside of James. When Betsy Bone was hired to help in the home, in the second period, James paid her wage even though Lavina was supervising her labour but it was probably Lavina who had requested she be hired in the first place.\textsuperscript{14}

Thus by emphasizing family, and the familial nature of work relations, women such as Lavina could have value for their labour and personal power in creating a mutually rewarding working relationship with their husbands.\textsuperscript{15} Neth points to evidence of women successfully negotiating their place on the farm by pointing out that women’s role varied with each family with some women working according to personal preference and others being undermined by their husbands.\textsuperscript{16} Much depended on the quality of their relationship with the men in their life.\textsuperscript{17} Given their seventeen years of marriage, and shared interest in their children and in-laws, it would appear that promoting the mutual nature of the family farm was a strategy both Lavina and James pursued in negotiating power relations.

The Cameron diary in this period focuses on the male labour of James and the male children. The absence of women from most entries suggests that women were

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[14] Cameron, August 26 1864 and October 5 1864.
\item[15] Neth, 18.
\item[16] Neth, 25 and 32.
\item[17] Neth, 33.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
supervising their own work and were busy with the increased work of domestic production. Neth found this was the case for women in the Midwest: “As the family matured, home production increased because young adults ate more food, spent more for clothing, and had increased educational cost.” Lavina appeared only twice in the diary in connection to her day’s labour, and both were in connection to her visiting and leaving the island. Her daily work—cooking for thirteen people, making bedding and clothes, keeping the house clean, not to mention supervising five children under the age 10—would have been a full-time job. These were also tasks that James rarely recorded, as they were outside his sphere of responsibility. This is illustrated well in the one case of domestic work recorded in this three year period; in October of 1879 James wrote, “Lavina Birthday 1868 11 years old today Quilting.” Quilting was very important work done by female members of the family. Quilts were functional as warm bedding and, if made well, beautiful examples of artistic expressions. While quilting was important, it was mentioned by James due to his daughter's birthday not his concern over the work. In this period, three of their daughters were over the age of 8: Mary, Hugh Ann and Lavina. Mary, as the oldest at 16 in 1881, would have been the most capable and useful to the family. Yet over these three years she was not mentioned once in regards to her work. Neth suggests that, like the oldest son and his father, the oldest daughter would work the

---

18 Neth, 25.
20 Cameron, October 23 1879.
closest with her mother.\textsuperscript{22} If Mary was working by Lavina’s side it explains why she was as invisible in the diary as her mother.

The presence of children deeply shaped Lavina’s labour options. With many male sons neither Lavina nor her daughters needed to work in the fields, forests or water, and thus did not appear in the dairy. It has been shown that older children gave women some flexibility to specialize.\textsuperscript{23} The presence of three daughters of working age allowed Lavina to produce or supervise her daughters’ production of dairy products, the most significant marketable product in this period. Lavina’s labour, and her older daughters, explains how so much dairy, wool, and maple sugar loaves were produced while still managing the house for a large family.

Meanwhile, James had several sons whose labour he was supervising. Typically the oldest son, Gordon, worked closely with his father whenever he was not working off the island for others.\textsuperscript{24} While Gordon was enumerated as living on the Cameron farm in 1881, according to the diary, he spent a significant time residing across the water on the Hamilton farm. On the 15\textsuperscript{th} of February 1880 James recorded “Gordon came a fine day speaking to Gordon about the Sugar Bush.”\textsuperscript{25} The significance of this was that James could no longer count on his oldest son’s presence during the busy sugaring season. “Speaking to Gordon” shows that James still had some access to and control over his labour though some level of negotiation arguably took place. With Gordon away so often, Randolph (the fourth oldest child, who was 13 in 1881) became James’ most frequent co-worker. As the chart on family labour demonstrates, the labour James recorded was

\textsuperscript{22} Neth, 24.
\textsuperscript{23} Neth, 25.
\textsuperscript{24} Neth, 24.
\textsuperscript{25} Cameron, February 15 1880.
essentially that of his male children, but Randolph was of particular importance in
meeting the labour needs of the farm. Examining tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 on family
members and their labour over the three years, James mentioned Randolph 20 times in
1879 and 31 in 1881 doing such things as farm work, fishing, lumbering and going to the
store. Over the same period, James mentions Gordon’s help 21 then only 6 times doing
similar activities, by 1881 Gordon’s visiting and store visits were being done by
Randolph. Bismarck, who was 10, and Leander, who was 8, were coming to the age
where they could be useful and received 7 and 4 mentions respectively in 1881. Their
work mostly consisted of sugar bushing, trapping and lumbering.

While Gordon was living and working at the Hamilton’s his labour was still
benefiting James. The exact nature of the arrangement between John Hamilton and James
Cameron over Gordon’s labour was not recorded in the diary. The two families were
close and they had been attending each other’s bees going back to James’ bachelor days.
James named one of his sons, John Hamilton Cameron, in honour of their relationship.
James traveled to Hamilton’s island to visit or work frequently and in first half of 1881
James also picked up two bags of potatoes every few weeks. This practice continued until
June 29, 1881 when James wrote “Crossed to Summerstown … got a bag of potatoes at
Hamilton’s and 50 lb of flour all settled 35 cents a bushel for potatoes 31 bushels got.”
This would appear to be a settling of accounts between the families, most likely for
Gordon’s wages. James appeared to receive some compensation for Gordon’s labour on
other farms it is not clear that he could always count on it. While James gained
significant rewards for his son’s work, Gordon’s absence also affected the labour

26 The clearest evidence of this is looking at the graphs Fig: 4.1 Family Labour, Excluding James: 1879,
27 Cameron, June 29 1881.
available on the home farm. The 1881 sugar season demonstrates this well. Gordon did not come back to the island for the spring sap run. While Randolph was providing much of the labour, at 13 years of age, he could not replace his older brother. To cope Cameron invited a neighbour to take a share of the bush that season to make up for the labour shortfall.\textsuperscript{28}

**Maturing Farming Operation**

The output of the Cameron farm reveals a more sophisticated farming operation compared to the earlier periods that produced more diverse products. No longer were oats and peas some of the most important marketable surpluses sold. In this period James and his family focused on cattle and dairy. These were lucrative products but ones that took more resources, time and labour to realize. James also marketed some wool and eggs; like dairy production, these often used female labour. Outside of these products he sold a small amount of wheat and corn. He also, for the first time, brought six pounds of tobacco to the market.\textsuperscript{29} In the second period he mentioned planting some tobacco seeds but he never appeared to grow more than a little for personal consumption. Tobacco takes skill and knowledge to dry and cure, so the fact that he brought some to the market also shows a growing sophistication to his agriculture. Tobacco would be an attract product as it along with tea and sugar represented some of the most common groceries sold at stores at this time.\textsuperscript{30} The focus on beef cattle and dairy cows shows how the farm had grown, as these beasts represented significant investments. To support his livestock James grew a good deal of hay. James’ role in dairy production was focused on livestock management.

\textsuperscript{28} Cameron, March 21 1881.
\textsuperscript{29} See Tables: 4.4 Goods Cameron Sells 1879, 4.5 Goods Cameron Sells 1880 and 4.5 Goods Cameron Sells 1881.
such as his hay production. He supplied their feed and managed their care but he never mentioned milking or churning in his diary, which presumably the women did. The dairy products that the family produced reflected the maturing farm operation, as it required the labour of James, Lavina and their sons and daughters to produce it.

The production of dairy products has traditionally been a female labour; this began to change with the rise of cheese factories in the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{31} Men like James produced the feed, maintained the pasture and barn and looked after the animal care, but it was women who were primarily responsible for milking and for the labour-intensive churning. Initially farmers kept a few cows to satisfy the farm’s own dairy needs, but any extra production was usually quite lucrative. Cohen makes note of the importance of this female industry, which produced significant surpluses for the market. She suggests that the growth in dairy exports was not originally the result of increased specialization but rather because more and more women, like Lavina, were producing surpluses.\textsuperscript{32} In 1861 butter was the primary product of dairy producing farmers, as it was more lucrative than cheese.\textsuperscript{33} Part of the advantage of butter was the by-product buttermilk, which was a cheap way to fatten pigs and thus created a kind of symbioses.\textsuperscript{34}

While James raised pigs in previous periods he did not appear to do so in this one. Some farmers preferred to move away from raising pigs because their intelligence could make

\textsuperscript{31} Cohen, 94.  
\textsuperscript{32} Cohen, 97.  
\textsuperscript{33} Cohen, 104.  
\textsuperscript{34} Cohen, 104.
them ornery livestock. Neighbour’s pigs consumed some of James’ buttermilk. In June of 1879 James wrote, “gave Henery Bosell what sour milk I had for his pigs, 6 pails.”

Glengarry County got its first cheese factory in 1868, which heralded the beginning of change in the counties diary tradition. Cheese was a becoming a valuable export product where as butter remained a local domestic one until it was pushed toward factory production in 1890s. Dairy products continued to be valued like a cash crop, and as industrialization continued and capital investment followed, men began taking over the production from women. Instead of sending milk to a cheese factory, Lavina sent milk and butter with James to the many population centres in the area of Williamstown, Cornwall and Summerstown, including American markets such as Fort Covington. The county did intensify its diary industry from two cheese factories in 1871 to fifty-six in 1891. James never mentioned any cheese factories in the diary; instead he sold his butter and milk to several of the storeowners with whom he did business including Mr. Summers, Mr. Ward and Mr. Renshaw. He brought his butter to the nearby towns of Summerstown, Dundee and Salmon River and he even sold butter to a passing fisherman. Dairy products from the Cameron farm dominate Table 4.4 on his marketed products. His much less frequent selling of cattle, beef and tallow were, however, his

36 Cameron, June 17 1879.
38 Russell, 139.
39 Cohen, 106.
40 MacGillivary and Ross, 408.
more lucrative transactions.\textsuperscript{42} James did not usually mark down the price he got for butter, but when he did it ranged from 12 to 15 cents per pound.\textsuperscript{43} The Cameron farm produced their highest quantity of butter in 1879. They sold more than 170 pounds that year, and if they sold it all at the lowest price of 12 cents it would have netted over 20 dollars.\textsuperscript{44} The next year James sold two of his cows for 34 dollars all told. In 1881 he sold another cow and dairy production dropped off; it did not constitute a significant amount of his marketable surplus that year with only 2 pounds of butter sold.\textsuperscript{45} It is unclear why they sold the cows. Perhaps they needed the money, were tired of the work involved in milking and churning, or found the returns did not justify the trouble of producing and marketing milk and butter.

James continued to grow field crops, planting peas, potatoes and oats— but hay took on a more prominent position. He continued to burn the marsh to prepare it for hay production.\textsuperscript{46} He also grew some hay outside of the marsh in the upper field, demonstrating the crop’s increased value to his operation.\textsuperscript{47} The dairy cows (how many there were exactly is not known) were not the only recipients of this fodder crop. James also raised heifers for meat. Besides making hay for their consumption over the winter, the cattle had to be moved between pastures in the other parts of the year, watered and kept out of trouble. A recurring problem every year was keeping the cattle out of the sugar bush, as they would consume the sugar themselves given the chance.\textsuperscript{48} 

\textsuperscript{42} See Tables: 4.4 Goods Cameron Sells 1879, 4.5 Goods Cameron Sells 1880 and 4.6 Goods Cameron Sells 1881. 
\textsuperscript{43} Cameron, May 9 1879 and July 5 1879. 
\textsuperscript{44} Table: 4.4 Goods Cameron Sells 1879. 
\textsuperscript{45} Table: 4.6 Goods Cameron Sells 1881. 
\textsuperscript{46} Cameron, May 1 1880. 
\textsuperscript{47} Cameron, August 10 1879. 
\textsuperscript{48} Cameron, April 17 1881.
The labourers that worked the fields were distinctive in this period. Previously James had relied on neighbours, extended family and hired labour to get the work done. In this period, James finally had sons of working age to do away with these costly and perhaps more inefficient systems. On occasion neighbours did stop by to pitch in such as on January 31 1879 when James wrote “William Spink here to help.” However, it was his sons Gordon and Randolph who represented the most important source of labour. As mentioned, Randolph’s role grew when Gordon was away working on the mainland. His other sons also helped but to lesser degrees. The younger boys, Ronaldo and Leander, who were eight and seven respectively in 1881, were not a significant help in the fields, but even they occasionally pitched in and would have helped with small task such as feeding calves. The presence of older children meant that the younger boys did not get as much time with their father as Gordon and Randolph did. James still remarked on the firsts of his children such as in November of 1880 when he wrote, “Bismarck for the first time to cross to Hamiltons”. This suggests that these younger children, like Gordon before them, received some of their socialization from their father, though most likely their older brothers would have been role models too.

James still worked with his neighbours but it continued to be a secondary concern. There were five bees in the community in this period. James probably went or sent one of his sons or daughters. He did not hold any bees himself. In this period he appeared to have ample labour available to him through his children. In addition, he did not build a barn or a house so he did not have any events that would have strained his labour

---

49 Cameron, January 31 1879.
50 Cameron, November 26 1880.
51 Table: 4.7 Cameron Family Work Bee Interactions 1879-1881.
resources, and so had no need for the expense of calling a bee. He did continue to attend bees suggesting it was a worthwhile network of which to be a member. He also had obligations to continue to assist other families for pervious help they provided him. With grown sons at home to do the chores, James spent several days each year working on a threshing crew on the Hamilton farm. He got paid in crops for his few days’ hard labour each year, and may also have used the opportunity to get his own threshing done. When a neighbor needed help, James or Gordon usually went though sometimes the younger children would pitch in as well. A good example of this was October 4, 1880 when Gordon came for Hugh Ann and Randolph to help the Hamilton’s with their potatoes. On October 9 1880 they returned with ten bushels of apples as their reward. The availability of children’s labour allowed the Cameron farm to take advantage of moments like this.

**Becoming Rivermen**

With a growing farm producing everything from wheat to butter, it is impressive that James and his sons still found time for trapping and fishing, the pursuits of the rivermen. Trapping for muskrats still brought James some money, but it was less significant than in his bachelor days. Fishing, which had made a huge impact on his food supplies in the second period, also declined in importance. No longer was James producing catches of hundreds of fish; instead, the few fish he caught resembled more of a hobby than a livelihood, his protein now came from other sources.

James was likely too busy managing his farm operation to hunt or trap frequently and instead relied on agricultural meat production and store bought products. The price of

---

52 Cameron, October 4 1880 and October 9 1880.
musk rat pelts that the Hudson Bay Company received remained flat for the 1880s though the volume of sales grew dramatically between 1881 and 1886. A market existed for pelts and James occasionally recorded trapping but market forces cannot explain his in decline trapping throughout this. On some of the excursions he went with one of his sons, such as on New Year’s Day of 1879 when James and Gordon were “after the fox”, but more frequently his sons went out on their own. Randolph particularly seemed to take an interest in the pursuit. In 1879 he went fishing or trapping four times to Gordon’s twice; in 1880 he did so six times; and he went once more in 1881. Randolph’s engagement with these pursuits was much higher than the other children in the diary. His interest may have been driven as a source of pocket money for himself. On December 8 1879, James bought Randolph’s catch of six rats for ten cents a piece.

While the pelts and fish no longer helped support the family, the fact that the Cameron boys had clearly learned the trade from their father was significant. He had transmitted a valuable and culturally important skill to his sons, one that had helped him establish himself as a young man. James’ own declining involvement was clear; he invested less in the pursuit in these years. James’s decline in hunting could possibly be linked to his age, especially if his eyesight was deteriorating. He only bought shot and powder twice, and did not report the amounts.

Despite fishing and trapping less, James continued to give and receive gifts in connection to these pursuits. James was given shot, firing caps, trawling spoons, lines,

53 Ray, 56.
54 Cameron, January 1 1879.
55 See Table: 4.1 Family Members and their Labour, 1879, 4.2 Family Members and their Labour, 1880 and 4.3 Family Member and their Labour, 1881.
56 Cameron, December 8 1879.
57 Cameron, August 28 and October 28 1879.
hooks and a musket lock,\textsuperscript{58} while he gave away fishing spears, fish and shot.\textsuperscript{59} Gun loaning also persisted, but only between James and Gordon. This suggests that community interest in hunting was declining, perhaps due the growing sophistication of farming.\textsuperscript{60} Gordon borrowed James’ short gun twice. The first time was for five months, and the second time he did not write a return date.\textsuperscript{61} Gordon’s gun borrowing suggests that he was hunting more than Table 4.1 on family labour suggests.\textsuperscript{62} This hunting would have been for his sake and suggests that Gordon may have been, to some degree, supporting himself as James did as a young man. It definitely shows that the skill and interest had been passed to him from his father.

One of the clearest signs of change in this period of the diary in regards to hunting and fishing was the rise of tourism. Throughout the diary, James occasionally mentions hotels, especially if he stopped for a treat. This period of 1879 to 1881 saw the construction of a new hotel. On a June day in 1881, James visited the new establishment and wrote “took dinner at Charles Roses and they showed me every room of the hotel and treated me besides giving me a glass of scotch whiskey.”\textsuperscript{63} The new construction was likely in response to the rising sport tourism that the area was drawing. Not unconnected to this change was the first mention of James encountering game laws,\textsuperscript{64} which tended to

\textsuperscript{58} Cameron, October 31 1879, June 10 1880, June 11, July 2 and August 31 1881.
\textsuperscript{59} Cameron, June 13, October 31 and November 14 1879.
\textsuperscript{61} Cameron, gun lent from September 10 1880 to March 6 1881 and then lent again December 4 1881.
\textsuperscript{62} See Table: 4.1 Family Member and their Labour, 1879, 4.2 Family Member and their Labour, 1880 and 4.3 Family Member and their Labour, 1881.
\textsuperscript{63} Cameron, June 4 1881.
\textsuperscript{64} Cameron, March 31 1879.
be sympathetic to the desires of recreational hunters and anglers. Increasingly, affluent urbanites desired to escape cities for what was seen as a reinvigorating natural experience, and this trend had a profound impact on areas like Lake St. Francis. Game laws were passed which made it harder to fish for food and commercial purposes, and instead promoted methods of recreation such as rod and reel fishing. While James Cameron could still fish with a spear, this was an example of a technique that was being increasingly attacked as unsporting. These new rules could have a negative impact on local traditions, but they did encourage tourism, which brought money into communities. Lake St. Francis’ commercial fishery continued until the 1960s, as tourism became a more substantial element of the local economy. In this period James did not take up guiding, but does record unnamed and likely visiting fishermen, and sold them some two pounds of butter for 50 cents, well above the price he normally received. The decline in the Cameron family’s fishing may have been influenced by the changing rules, but the positive impacts of tourism were also being felt.

**Sugaring in the bush**

The distinct family dynamic of the sugar bush continued to be evident in this period. It was the only labour done on the farm in which the whole Cameron family participated. In the second period, when James was establishing his sugar bush, he relied heavily on hired labour to make the troughs, tap the trees, and supply the large amounts of necessary firewood. His young children and Lavina helped, but it was Lashey

---

66 Forkey, 180.
67 Forkey, 183.
68 Lefebvre and Seymour, 81.
69 Cameron, May 29 1881.
70 Table: 4.3 Family Members and their Labour, 1881.
and James that made the sugar bush operational. By contrast, the tables on family labour in this period show that James relied on his sons to manage the task. In the 1879 season, Gordon and Randolph gave four days’ work. The sugar bush also benefited from a day’s labour from their neighbours Mr. McDougal, Rory McDougal, and Jim Cox, a friend and frequent companion of Gordon’s.\textsuperscript{71} In 1879, Lavina and the girls benefited from Rory’s help turning sap into sugar, as well as the help of Mrs. Grant and Elizabeth who helped them make sixteen pounds of sugar.\textsuperscript{72}

The presence of bees, gifting and mutual exchanges through this period show that a current of reciprocity still flowed through the community. While Mrs. Grant and Elizabeth’s exact reward is unclear, likely similar favours and some sugar made up for the help. Mr. McDougal’s reward was clearly stated in sugar. He had made 22 pounds of sugar with James, and when he left the island James let him keep 11 pounds, and gave him a “taste of sturgeon to take home.”\textsuperscript{73} Mr. McDougal was a male peer of James, whereas Rory and Jim appeared to be Gordon’s friends. Perhaps this explains the clarity of this transaction, as James felt more responsible for its accounting.

The 1880 season relied less on neighbours. As mentioned earlier, James went out of his way to ensure Gordon’s help with the sugar season. Gordon and Randolph together gave seven days of work, making up for some of the difference.\textsuperscript{74} The younger children also pitched in more. James, for example, mentioned with pride the help of his seven year old, “Leander made a cake of his own about 9 lb.”\textsuperscript{75} Relying on family labour for the

\textsuperscript{71} Cameron, March 26 and April 12 1879.
\textsuperscript{72} Cameron, April 19 1879.
\textsuperscript{73} Cameron, April 10 1879.
\textsuperscript{74} Table: 4.2 Family Members and their Labour, 1880.
\textsuperscript{75} Cameron, April 5 1880.
sugar bush kept costs down and broke the labour up into tasks that ranged in difficulty. Gordon and Randolph drew wood and made troughs, while younger Leander only helped out with the processing. It was the flexibility of this work, and no doubt the appeal of sugar, that made it a good fit for children’s labour and lead to entries such as “all the children in the sugar bush E. Wind.”  

The 1881 sugar season differed again in this period. Though the younger boys were more able to help, Gordon was not there. To cope with this, James sought a neighbour to take a share of the sugar bush for the season. On the 14th of March 1881, James sent Randolph to ask Henery Bosell if he was interested. He made his way to the island the next day to agree. James wrote “Henery said he would take the sugar bush, going today to see for a team to draw wood for the camp. James McDougal here and son for the bush I told him I gave it to Henery.”  

James McDougal as it turns out was not out of luck. Bosell backed out on the 21st and James gave the share to McDougal. Rory McDougal and Willie McDougal came to the island for the sap run, often accompanied by Jim Cox. These three, plus a day from Mr. McDougal, gave ten days of work in the sugar bush. Their share was eleven pounds of sugar, some sap and a mention of some molasses. James’ own children gave eight days in the bush that year. James recorded that his family had made 60 pounds of sugar, most of which he sold. In May, he sold 47 pounds, and another 12 pounds in August. The sugar run was a success, and with the help of his neighbours and his family James brought the highest amount of sugar to the market recorded in this period. With the support of his family James did not need hired labour.

---

76 Cameron, April 15 1880.
77 Cameron, March 15 1881.
78 Table: 4.3 Family Members and their Labours, 1881.
When his oldest was unavailable, he rented out a share of the bush to an interested neighbor, but still—with the help of his younger sons—managed to produce a marketable surplus of sugar.

**Cooling of the Ash Trade**

In the second period the cutting and scavenging of sticks of lumber provided James with decent returns on his labour, especially when he was selling sticks saved from the river. This trade in sticks was not mentioned in the third period of the diary. Once again, time restraints seem to be the most likely explanation, due to his growing farm operation. James did continue a small trade in ashes, a practice consistent throughout the diary. The large amount of wood required to process sap was possibly a factor, as it would have produced several bushels of ash. Three times in this period James sold ashes to a local ashery. In 1879 an unnamed person came to the island to buy 14 bushels and in spring of 1881 James sold 28 bushels to the Baker’s ashery and that fall “took up” another 7 bushels.\(^7^9\) At the Bakers he received 7 cents a bushel for a total of $1.98.\(^8^0\) Like many farmers in the area, James used ashes as a valuable source of income. It was especially prevalent with the initial land clearing. Once farmers became more established as in this period, asheries declined. In 1871 there had been ten in operation in the county, but by 1881 only seven were still operating.\(^8^1\) While the trade was in decline it still worked as part of the Cameron farm’s production.

**Maturing Family, Growing Consumption**

---

\(^7^9\) Cameron, May 9 1879, October 6 and February 4 1881.
\(^8^0\) Cameron, February 4 1881.
\(^8^1\) MacGillivary and Ross, 114.
With a growing family the Camerons had to provide significantly more calories per day than the last period of 1864 to 1866. In 1866, the Cameron family needed somewhere around 15,900 calories per day. In 1881, an estimate of the Cameron’s calorie needs using McInnis numbers shows that the family now needed close to 48,495 calories per day.\textsuperscript{82} This large number represents one of the reasons why Lavina and the oldest daughter, Mary, are so invisible in the diary during this period. They would have been responsible for preparing the meals that would have provided the almost 50,000 calories needed to fuel the family’s labour.

In the second period it was clear that fish were a major part of their diet. By 1879, this was not the case. The farm produced butter, milk, eggs, garden vegetables and potatoes for consumption on the farm. Potatoes particularly were an important crop for feeding the family, and in 1881 James put over 100 bushels of them in the cellar, presumably for family consumption.\textsuperscript{83} While these products would have gone a long way toward meeting the food needs of the family, they were not enough on their own. Increasingly, the Cameron farm relied on store-bought foodstuffs to feed the growing appetites of the household. As the calorie estimate is based on the family members’ ages in 1881, that year’s food purchases were also tallied. James purchased 395 pounds of flour, 3 pounds of rice and 30 pounds of pork from local stores.\textsuperscript{84} With a large, maturing family, James brought more valuable goods to the market but he also needed to provide more calories at home. Clearly these calories were increasingly coming from off the island and not from his local resources.

\textsuperscript{82} For these calculations I used McInnis’ Table 2 Food Consumption by Sex and Age as a Proportion of the Consumption of Adult Males found in Marvin McInnis, “Marketable Surpluses in Ontario Farming, 1860.”\textit{Social Science History} 8, no. 4 (Aut., 1984): 406.

\textsuperscript{83} Cameron, October 24 1881.

\textsuperscript{84} Counted from Cameron, January 1 1881 to December 31 1881.
The store consumption recorded in the diary in this period also provides a window into the domestic production of the home. The goods James bought to support food production suggest the nature of Lavina’s daily work. Besides the large quantities of rice, flour and pork purchased that needed to be cooked or baked for eating, fabric represented one of the most frequent store purchases made by James. His diary entry for 12 June 1879 was fairly typical. He wrote “crossed with 20 lb of butter to Mr. Ward paid for Gordon’s books Bought 3 ydrs Calico 24 4 ydrs Cotton 40 2 ydrs Overalls 40 Pail 25 cups”.\footnote{Cameron, June 12 1879.} Besides yards of overall, cotton, and calico, he purchased threads and needles too. These entries reveal that Lavina and her daughters were producing the clothes and bedding required by the family. Their purchase of store bought textiles had been a common practice, and by 1879 cotton products, like the ones purchased in this entry, were popular.\footnote{Douglas McCalla, “Textile Purchases by Some Ordinary Upper Canadians: 1808-1861,” Material History Review 53 (Spring-Summer 2001), 4.} Cotton was comfortable and would have been the fabric of choice during hot summer days.\footnote{McCalla, “Textile Purchases”, 23.} This female labour would have been completely invisible if James had not recorded his purchase of fabrics.

**“Treated me with a good drop of Gin”**

James Cameron work culture and relationship with leisure shifted in each period with the changes in his family over his life course. James clearly had a fondness for the little treat that a glass of whiskey could represent. With older children in the house, a busy farm and the labour of his many sons to direct he appeared to be drinking less. His responsibilities had increased with his growing family and he identified as a good father, which may have impacted his relationship with the bottle. His drinking in his bachelor
days was social, and his diary hinted at a man who enjoyed lingering at the store to have a few rounds. The pressures of a young family tightened his budget and his leisure time, and he began buying in bulk for home consumption. As the head of a maturing family, James relationship to alcohol again shifted. Once again it was primarily a social activity. In this period of the diary, he only bought wine three times to bring home, and no longer was he buying ½ or full gallons of whiskey to bring back to the island. His consumption away from home decreased in the diary as well. Alcohol had always played an important role in his visiting and it remained a staple of his male sociability. The three times James recorded a drink in 1879 were all when visiting, such as when he wrote “went down for Jo’s Tavern went to see old Mr. Rodgers the blacksmith and he poorly.” He only mentioned drinking once in 1880 when “First time of me being in the new hotel got 10 cents from Jim so I would have a treat for the first time I was there Jim 2 treats seen a large Pike Mr. Kilby caught this morning weighing 14 pounds.” An entry in 1881 suggests that James continued to have a fondness for drink when he wrote about a visit from Mr. Shields “a very fine man treated me with a good drop of Gin. The reasons for his lower consumption are not clear; perhaps his taste was maturing, or perhaps amidst busy days and the need to record the labours of his growing family, he abandoned recording his treats. His masculinity was no longer defined by his heavy drinking and frequent socializing over whiskey at the store but was firmly expressed through his role to his family as a hardworking father. Physical ageing may also have contributed to his

88 Cameron, February 1 1864.
89 Cameron, February 18 1880.
90 Cameron, September 13 1881.
declining consumption. Whatever the case, the few entries on drinking continue to show the social role alcohol played in his visits with his community.

**A Family Farm**

James and Lavina Cameron’s eleven children represented an investment that greatly benefited the Cameron’s farm. James seems to have been an attentive father to these children and his reliance on the labour of his wife clearly shows he appreciated Lavina’s contribution to the farm. His family defined his masculinity and while the nature of James and Lavina’s relationship is unknowable they clearly had strong common ground in their shared commitment to the family farm. James had a farm that produced labour intensive products that offered good returns. He no longer needed the expense of hired labour and was able to contribute to his reciprocal network on his own terms. The labour of his seven boys and four girls allowed him to work his fields, run a sugar bush and produce a surplus of butter. Lavina and Mary disappear from the diary in this period but the large quantities of food and cloth James purchased speaks to their importance. James’ reliance on family labour comes into sharp relief in the 1881 sugar season. Without his oldest son the work was too much for him and his younger children on their own. This demonstrates his dependence on his children as well as both the limits and the impressive contribution of young children. While family labour was often freely given to James he also had obligations to them. In 1880 Gordon was becoming independent and he lived away from the island for some of the year. Gordon still contributed meaningfully to the parents’ farm but was starting to desire his own rewards. Children gave their labour to the family with the implicit understanding that they would receive support towards their own future. In 1880 James started to make good on that and gave a piece of gold
bullion to Gordon. Overall the farm appeared to be doing well and supported the family.

In this period James returned to a practice of his bachelor days and in September of 1881 boarded a steamer for Montreal. No longer did his young children limit him to local travel around Lake St. Francis but he could travel farther afield thanks to the contributions of his wife and older children.

---

91 Cameron, June 13 1880.
92 Cameron, September 29 1881.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

Farmers in the later half of the nineteenth century were more than tillers of the soil. They used local resources and connections to provide for their needs and desires. Many factors shaped their decisions, such as access to land, markets, and employment. These well-studied economic factors were fundamental to shaping the experiences of rural people. Equally important was the family, its household economy and its life course stage. The Cameron diary offers an opportunity to study these many interrelated complexities at once through its daily detail, depth and length as a source. This project examined the diary closely during three critical periods of James’ family life course and explored the opportunities and strategies available to James during each phase and over the seasonal rhythms that defined life on the farm. From this study we learn that James Cameron’s labour and his expression of masculinity changed throughout his family’s life course. Through these changes James made the most of all available resources to benefit himself and his family.

During his bachelor years, studied in the first period of 1855-1857, James used a strategy of occupational plurality in the form of hunting, fishing and lumbering to support his farming. He travelled widely, used and cultivated social connections and took risks to fill niche roles in the community and supplement his modest farm operation. His patterns of male sociability gave him access to reciprocal exchanges of labour and resources that supplemented his market activities.

The second period of study, 1864-1866, featured James just after the formation of his family. This period offered a very different set of opportunities and challenges. The needs of his young family reshaped his off-farm labours and increased his investment in
his farm. With young children, James was in a vulnerable place in the family life course. He adjusted to this by turning away from the variable returns offered by trapping, working instead at tasks that allowed him to work around the constraints of supervising and caring for young children, such as sugaring and foraging. James entered a new stage of masculinity, becoming a husband and father. His first experiences of fatherhood were with Gordon and made Gordon seem to be the apple of his eye, but the time they spent together was referred to in masculine-appropriate language of apprenticeship and co-working. James was committed to providing for his family over these years, garnering valuable food resources from the river and forest to supplement his farm and garden. These subsistence activities reduced his travel off the island and changed the nature of his sociability. Though he maintained reciprocal community ties, he called no bees of his own during this period. These changes to his pattern of work were in response to the increase in mouths he had to feed, as his small children consumed resources. James increased his subsistence activities to provide for his family but also hired labour and developed a sugar bush, which was a labour that could utilize his small children.

The third period of 1879-1881 featured James in the mature family phase and saw him reap the benefits of his large family. James no longer had to hire labour and his farming operation grew in complexity. James’ gendered worldview became clearest in this period. His wife and daughters retreated from view as James, now the head of a maturing family, focused on managing the masculine labour of his boys. James no longer had to hire labour or call bees because the Cameron children represented a surplus of labour. This surplus meant the children contributed labour to neighbours farms and allowed James more freedom in his daily actions. James spent less time with the youngest
children than he did in the second period, but his mentoring of his young sons was evident in their traveling and hunting and fishing on the river as they learned from their father how to be rivermen.

This study would be enriched by a final period examining James near the end of his family life course, which would contextualize the findings of the third period. The nature of his experiences when all his children were grown could reveal how he provided for the next generation and how he and Lavina lived their twilight years. Another chapter was not attempted due to the difficulty of reading the later diary years, as well the restraints of time and scope of this project. Without a close reading of the diary’s later years, some key milestones for the Cameron family remain unknown. James died on the island in 1912 at 87, and Lavina followed in 1923 at the age of 83.1 Gordon stayed in the area and never married. He seems to have remained close to his father and died of heart disease twenty years after James in 1932 at the age of 69.2 Bismarck left Glengarry and headed west.3 Randolph married Adelaide Renshaw in 1898 and continued to farm in the area. Leander also stayed in the area, dying on Cameron Island in 1950. The most tragic fate of the Cameron children was that of Capt. Fernandez Cameron. In 1938, he was an elderly farmer living in the old family homestead on the island. In November of that year Dan McDonald, a distant relative, visited the island and killed Fernandez in a violent assault. Dan was sentenced to ten years for manslaughter.4 Unfortunately the fate of the Cameron daughters is unclear. No doubt some of them married or moved but the details

3 Personal conversation with Mabel MacLean, a local area resident.
are buried in the later years of the diary. As for Cameron Island, it was returned to the Mohawk people of St. Regis Reserve and became known for archaeological findings on the site.\(^5\) Listed as Sir John Island, Big Island, or MacMaster Island depending on the source, Cameron’s Island is currently known as Ile Thompson on Google Maps. No one farms the island anymore, but cottages dot its shore and the river still flows around it. James Cameron was a farmer but that was just the one of his identities. Beyond the many occupations and pursuits that shaped James, his diary reveals that his family and the island farm they called home were the most important.

\(^5\) MacGillivary, 28.
Appendix

Figure: 1.1 Google Map Satellite image of James Cameron’s Island

*James Cameron’s Island is labeled ile Thompson
The Star is the marsh on the island
The Circle is the area were James Cameron probably had his house
Source: “Summerstown, On K0C – Google Maps.” Goggle. March 3, 2014. https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Summerstown,+ON+K0C/@45.0658891,-74.5112142,2117m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x4ccc1b1745f1be9b:0x270b7bee9a8ae.
**Figure: 1.2 Historical Map of Lake St. Francis**

*The blue star is the approximate location of James Cameron’s island

**The blue arrow point to A.J. Bakers lot where the Baker store was located

Figure 1.3: Cameron’s Island

Highlighted areas are hunting locations mentioned in James Cameron Diary

Table 1.1: James Cameron’s Hunting Catch 1855-1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Type</th>
<th>Number Successfully Caught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seagull</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duck</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squirrels</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crane</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: James Cameron’s Diary 1855-1857.

Table 1.2: James Cameron’s Shot and Powder Purchased 1855-1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Shot</th>
<th>Powder</th>
<th>Boxes of Firing Caps</th>
<th>Number of Rounds*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>5 lbs</td>
<td>4 lbs**</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>8 lbs</td>
<td>2.5 lbs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>12.5 lbs</td>
<td>3.5 lbs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>25.5 lbs</td>
<td>10 lbs</td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>816</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Calculation of 32 rounds per pound of shot is based on Douglas McCalla’s *Upper Canadians and Their Guns* article.

** Based on 1 Canister = 4 lbs powder from Carl P. Russel’s *Firearms, Traps & Tools of the Mountain Men*

Source: James Cameron’s Diary 1855-1857.
Table 1.3: James Cameron’s Gun Loaning 1855-1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Lent</th>
<th>Date Returned</th>
<th>Days Loaned</th>
<th>Person Lending</th>
<th>Person Borrowing</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2, 1855</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nicholson</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 19, 1855</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nicholson</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 19, 1855</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bosell</td>
<td>Angus</td>
<td>#20 Shotgun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 5, 1855</td>
<td>Nov 30, 1855</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>McInnis</td>
<td>Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 20, 1856</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Andrew Baker</td>
<td>Pistol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 28, 1856</td>
<td>Jan 1, 1857</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>George Bosell</td>
<td>Short Gun and Pistol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 9, 1857</td>
<td>May 9, 1857</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Henrey Bosell</td>
<td>Long Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 15, 1857</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Allen McInnis</td>
<td>Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 29, 1857</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>A. Summers</td>
<td>Gun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: James Cameron’s Diary 1855-1857.

Table 1.4: James Cameron’s Trapping Catch 1855-1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Type</th>
<th>Number Trapped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weasel</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mink</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raccoon</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: James Cameron’s Diary 1855-1857.
Table 1.5: James Cameron’s Trapping Catch 1856

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Name</th>
<th>Number Hunted</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mink</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raccoon</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: James Cameron’s Diary 1856.

Table 1.6: Fur Totals from the 1871 Glengarry Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Type</th>
<th>Number of Animals</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muskrats</td>
<td>1151</td>
<td>75.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minks</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>9.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxes</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moose, Caribou and Deer</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>5.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1528</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from Census Returns of Ontario 1871 [Agriculture and Personal Census], CA1 AK21 051 1871, Reel C-10008, C-10009, C-10010. District No. 74 Glengarry County.
Table 1.7: Fur Trading by James Cameron, 1855-1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Furs</th>
<th>Cash Received (Pound/Shilling/Pence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>1/9/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>20/0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-x</td>
<td>1/8/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>0/4/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>0/11/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>0/12/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0/8/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>0/1/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6</td>
<td>0/2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1/1/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>1/0/0 (12/4/0)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>1/2/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-x</td>
<td>0/4/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>0/12/7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>1/0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-8</td>
<td>0/9/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0/1/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0/15/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0/2/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-x</td>
<td>0/18/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0/8/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0/11/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-x</td>
<td>0/0/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Paid | 3/14/0 |
| Total Received | 41/4/0.5 |
| Total Profit | 37/10/0.5 |

*Part Payment total value of fur traded was 12/4/0

Notes:
- x = unknown number of furs
- Negatives are furs bought
- Numbers can represent multiple types of furs
- Currency in British Pound Sterling
- All cash represented in table converted into Pounds Sterling

Source: James Cameron’s Diary 1855-1857.
Figure 3.1: Cameron Family Tree

John Cameron +
Annie MacDonald

➔ James Cameron B. 1824➔ Gordon Cameron B. 1863
  Lavina Morris B. 1831
Mary Cameron B. 1864
Hugh-Ann Cameron B. 1866
Randolph Cameron B. 1868
Lavina Cameron B. 1870
Bismarck Cameron B. 1871
Leander Cameron B. 1872
Fernandez Cameron B. 1873
John H. Cameron B. 1876
Victoria Cameron B. 1877
Stanley Cameron B. 1878
Ionia Cameron B. 1883

➔ Mary Cameron +
  Donald McMaster 6 ➔ Ellen MacMaster
  Mary Ann MacMaster
Sir Donald MacMaster B. 1846

Angus McDonald 7 ➔ Allan McDonald
John Angus McDonald
John Hugh McDonald

6 Deceased 21 November 1846
7 Mary remarried in 1849 to Angus MacDonald
Figure 3.2: Morris Family Tree

David Morris B. 1791 +
Delilah Morris B. 1800

⇒ Lavina Morris B. 1831+  
   James Cameron B. 1824

⇒ Gordon Cameron B. 1863
   Mary Cameron B. 1864
   Hugh-Ann Cameron B. 1866
   Randolph Cameron B. 1868
   Lavina Cameron B. 1870
   Bismarck Cameron B. 1871
   Leander Cameron B. 1872
   Fernandez Cameron B. 1873
   John H. Cameron B. 1876
   Victoria Cameron B. 1877
   Stanley Cameron B. 1878
   Ionia Cameron B. 1883

⇒ William Morris B. 1839+  
   Ellen Morris B. 1844

⇒ William Morris B. 1866
   John Morris B. 1868
Table: 3.1: James Cameron Marketable Surplus 1865

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-Jan</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>62 lbs Oats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-Jan</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>Bag of peas and 2 Bu. Oats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-Jan</td>
<td>Salmon River</td>
<td>4 Bu. Wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-Jan</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>2 Bu. And some 80 odd lbs peas and 25 lbs beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-Feb</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>67 lbs Oats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-Feb</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>109 lbs peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03-Mar</td>
<td>A. Summers</td>
<td>Bag of oats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Mar</td>
<td>Salmon River</td>
<td>3 Bu. Buck Wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Apr</td>
<td>Renshaw</td>
<td>70 lbs Barley, 2 1/2 of Potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-May</td>
<td>Raft Crew</td>
<td>9 lbs Pork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-Jun</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>10 dozen eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-Jun</td>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>34 lbs oats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Jul</td>
<td>David Baker</td>
<td>79 lbs Oats and 3 dozen eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-Jul</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>80 lbs Oats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-Jul</td>
<td>Williamstown</td>
<td>28 lbs wool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-Aug</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>13 dozen eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-Aug</td>
<td>Salmon River</td>
<td>4 lbs wool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-Sep</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>6 dozen eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-Sep</td>
<td>Mr. Harper</td>
<td>55 lbs oats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Oct</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6 lbs of peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Oct</td>
<td>Mill</td>
<td>42 lbs corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Oct</td>
<td>P. Buchanan</td>
<td>61 or 62 lbs of Pease</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1865.
Table 3.2: James Cameron’s Shot and Powder Tally 1864-1866

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Shot</th>
<th>Powder</th>
<th>Boxes of Firing Caps</th>
<th>Number of Rounds*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>9 Ibs</td>
<td>5 lbs **</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>3 Ibs</td>
<td>3 lbs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>1 Ibs</td>
<td>1.5 lbs</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Calculation of 32 rounds per pound of shot is based on Douglas McCalla’s *Upper Canadians and Their Guns* article.

** Based on 1 Canister = 4 lbs powder from Carl P. Russel's *Firearms, Traps & Tools of the Mountain Men*

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1864-1866.

Table 3.3: James Cameron’s Trapping Catch 1864

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Animal</th>
<th>Number Hunted</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squirrel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Game</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1864.

Table 3.4: James Cameron’s Trapping Catch 1865

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Animal</th>
<th>Number Hunted</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squirrel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Game</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1865.

Table 3.5: James Cameron’s Trapping Catch 1866

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Animal</th>
<th>Number Hunted</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muskrat</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squirrel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Game</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1866.
Table 3.6: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1855-1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish Name</th>
<th>Number Caught</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pike</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eel</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunfish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catfish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perch</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickerel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total fish</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1855-1857.

Table 3.7: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1864

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish Type</th>
<th>Number Caught</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eel</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perch</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pike</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickerel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catfish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&gt;0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&gt;0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskinonge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suckers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&gt;0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Catch</strong></td>
<td><strong>231</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1864.
Table 3.8: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1865

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish Type</th>
<th>Number Caught</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eel</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perch</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pike</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickerel</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catfish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskinonge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suckers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Catch</strong></td>
<td><strong>383</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1865.

Table 3.9: James Cameron’s Fishing Catch 1866

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish Type</th>
<th>Number Caught</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eel</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perch</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pike</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickerel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catfish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskinonge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suckers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Catch</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>99%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1866.
Table 3.10: Gun Loaning 1864-1866

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Lent</th>
<th>Date Returned</th>
<th>Person Lending</th>
<th>Person Borrowing</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb, 29 1864</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Bosell’s</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Apr, 15 1864</td>
<td>Lashey</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Gun and Traps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug, 7 1864</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Tom Scuthers</td>
<td>Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug, 19 1864</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct, 19 1864</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>James Cameron</td>
<td>Luke Bowen</td>
<td>Long Gun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from James Cameron’s Diary 1864-1866.
Bibliography

Primary Sources:


Cameron, James. Diary. This is a digitized typed transcript of the original handwritten diary and just covers the years 1854-57, c. 100 pgs. A photocopy of the original handwritten diary, which goes from 1854-1902, is in Queen’s University Archives. The transcript used is only available for the 1854-57 period (Ewan Ross Papers, Coll. No 2504, Series III, Box 1, file 7). The original diaries are in California with a member of the Cameron family.


Census Returns of Ontario 1871 [Agriculture and Personal Census], CA1 AK21 051 1871, Reel C-10008, C-10009, C-10010. District No. 74 Glengarry County.


Census Returns of Ontario 1901, District No. 62, Sub District B-4: Charlottenburg, Glengarry, Ontario; Page: 15; Family No: 148.


Library and Archives Canada; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; *Census Returns For 1861*; Roll: C-1282-1283.

Library and Archives Canada, *Census of Canada, 1871,* Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Year: 1871; Census Place: Dundee, Huntingdon West, Quebec; Roll: C-10057.

Library and Archives Canada, *Census of Canada, 1881,* Ottawa, Canada: 1881; Census Place: St Lawrence Ward, Montreal City, Quebec; Roll: C_13220.

Nominal Census returns (Schedule 1) for District No. 99 Glengarry County, 1881.

Obituary for James Cameron, Glengarry News, June 21, 1912.


Secondary Sources:


Agriculture Canada. *What you should know about maple syrup*. Ottawa, Canada, 1980.

“Summerstown, On K0C – Google Maps.” Goggle. March 3, 2014. [https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Summerstown,+ON+K0C/@45.0658891,-74.5112142,2117m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x4ccc1b1745f1be9b:0x270b7bbe9c8ae](https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Summerstown,+ON+K0C/@45.0658891,-74.5112142,2117m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x4ccc1b1745f1be9b:0x270b7bbe9c8ae)