

## Municipal Life

Rome wasn't built in a day... and neither was our Ville!

From the time the first workers arrived, in 1864, to work on the Hamilton brothers' construction site at the Grand-Brûlé ("big burn") mission, until the creation of the Ville de Mont-Tremblant in 2000, several stages marked the history of our town.

In 1872, spurred on by priest Curé Labelle, the colonization era began. The first families came largely from Saint-Jérôme, Saint-Sauveur, Sainte-Adèle and Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts.

When parish priest Samuel Ouimet arrived, the village was slowly becoming organized and deciding upon the rules and regulations that would govern the community. First, an independent school board and establishment of schools. Following that, the much-desired civic establishment of the parish, in other words, the creation of a municipality. The law requiring that there be at least 300 souls living on the territory obliged the new parish to unite with Grandison Township, a neighbouring, French-speaking township (*canton*). All parties were in agreement, and so the Municipality of the United Townships of Salaberry and Grandison (*Municipalité des cantons unis de Salaberry-et-Grandison*) became a reality.

The first meeting of this large municipality was held at the village school in 1881. The councillors proceeded to elect the mayor, Michel Campeau, and the secretary-treasurer, Jacques Léonard. Settlers Célestin Bisson, Alexander Gill, Zéphirin Bisson, Félix Lauzon and Noé Filion were named councillors.

That same year, a first private aqueduct was installed by Célestin Bisson. Water taken at the head of his mill on the Ruisseau Clair (stream) was carried by cedar logs, previously drilled with an auger along their full length to make them into wooden pipes. It became a public aqueduct a few years later.

In 1888, still focusing on progress, the council approved construction of a bridge to cross the Diable River. It was located in the 5th Range, close to Victor Léonard's farm. This covered bridge greatly facilitated traffic and the transportation of goods. In 1949, a more modern, wider bridge, made of cement, was built some 150 metres below the old bridge. Paved and renovated, it met the needs of the population.

In education, now that girls studied at the convent built by the Filles de la Sagesse, council sought a solution for boys, whose range school located close to the presbytery had become too small. After receiving a positive response from the Frères du Sacré-Cœur, students and brothers were finally housed in the town hall, built in 1889 on land belonging to the church, close to what is now rue Charbonneau.

Towards the end of the 1910s, the Municipality of the United Townships of Salaberry-and-Grandison experienced an identity crisis. Interests diverged. On the one hand, businesspeople and "important people" wanted to stimulate economic activity and modernize public services. On the other hand, settlers were concerned with more down-to-earth matters, such as road maintenance. These differences finally concluded, on

June 23, 1917, with the separation of the village hub from the United Townships to create the Municipality of the Village of Saint-Jovite. Feelings remained high, and the separation was difficult.

The first act of the new municipal council says a lot about the ideas that drove it. It had electric lamps installed on the streets of the village. The electricity to light them, however, produced by Magloire Gosselin's sawmill, was a major challenge in terms of a stable, regular supply. The challenge continued, despite the addition of complementary facilities, and resulted in numerous debates until the hook-up with the powerful Gatineau Power company in August 1931.

In spite of ongoing arguments about electricity, municipal services improved. In 1925, council acquired a fire pump, which permitted voluntary firefighters to be more effective. In addition, a public system for provision and distribution of water was installed in 1928. During the Great Depression, the elected representatives spent money on public hygiene, taking charge of the insane and financing work for the unemployed. The overriding goal of the municipality was to limit the worst misery of its people.

In 1940, another upheaval occurred in the delineation of the United Townships and modified the municipal chessboard. The villagers of Lac Mercier and those of Lac Tremblant, led by parish priest Charles-Hector Deslauriers, established an independent municipality henceforth known by the name Municipalité de Mont-Tremblant.

The Village de Saint-Jovite, for its part, was pursuing its own development. During the 1940s and 1950s, council was busy planning and opening new neighbourhoods and concerning itself with the management of waste. It continued and even intensified road paving to respond to a greater number of motorized vehicles. To manage this ever-greater fleet of cars, including the big ones driven by tourists, rue Ouimet (now rue de Saint-Jovite) was equipped with traffic lights in the 1960s.

The 1970s were devoted to town planning, culture, recreation and sports. Thus, in 1972, Saint-Jovite obtained a regional ice arena which allowed the newly created Figure Skating Club, and the hockey teams, to evolve, protected from inclement weather. A library also opened in 1973, to the delight of hundreds of readers.

After the Hwy. 117 bypass of the Village de Saint-Jovite was built, it was time to redo rue Ouimet and embellish it. Trees were planted, businesses were renovated and public spaces were planted with flowers. When it became an official town in 1986, Saint-Jovite wanted to retain its character as a welcoming village, but with modern facilities to serve both its own people and the seasonal residents and tourists who spent time there. As a result, it began strengthening its commercial, educational and service roles.

During the 1990s a movement to merge municipalities was undertaken by the government of Québec. In this region, reorganization of the territory gave birth to the new Ville de Mont-Tremblant on November 22, 2000. It was made up of the municipalities of Lac-Tremblant-Nord, Mont-Tremblant, Saint-Jovite Parish and the Ville de Saint-Jovite. On June 20, 2004, however, the government of Québec permitted citizens to have their word, by referendum, on this reorganization. Only the citizens of Lac-Tremblant-Nord decided they wanted their municipality to become independent again.

Curiously, the new territory of the Ville de Mont-Tremblant corresponds almost exactly to the original map of the United Townships of Salaberry and Grandison.

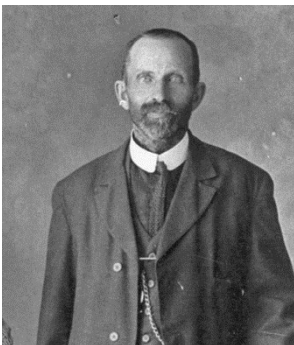
Research and writing: Société du Patrimoine SOPABIC, heritage society  
Translation: Anne Johnston

Did you know...?

Did you know that in spite of the confirmed and widespread use of the name *Saint-Jovite* to designate the village and its surroundings, it was only in 1917 that the village officially took the name of Saint-Jovite, and that the parish did so only in 1960? Just like you, since at least the 1880s, we believed that we lived in, traveled through or visited *Saint-Jovite*. Well, think again! You were in the *Municipalité des cantons unis de Salaberry-et-Grandison*, at least on paper. This revelation will help you to better understand the present text. After all, history sometimes provides us with surprising detours.

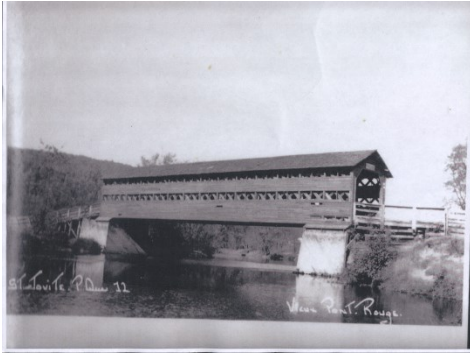
Summer 1936...

Imagine this. You're an American and, on a bus with some compatriots, you're enjoying your first trip in the Laurentians. Today's itinerary includes a stop in the charming village of Saint-Jovite before you continue to the inn at which you'll be staying. The day is wonderful and warm and, like several others, you're wearing the latest style: your new shorts with a sleeveless shirt. You are peacefully walking around when Constable Lefebvre hails the group. To your great surprise, you are all soon confined in a cramped little room and eventually understand that you will have a fine to pay! A fine to pay? It's for "indecent apparel"! You can hardly believe it! Now, that's a real change.



Legend: Michel Campeau, first mayor of the Municipalité des cantons unis de Salaberry-et-Grandison.

Source: photo from Gertrude Campeau (*Massicotte*)



Legend: Covered bridge built over the Diable River linking the farm of Victor Léonard to the 5th Range.

Source: collection of the Société du Patrimoine SOPABIC



Legend: City hall built in 1962 and demolished in 2010 to make way for the new city hall.

Source: collection of the Société du Patrimoine SOPABIC



Legend: Map of the Municipalité des cantons unis de Salaberry-et-Grandison.

Source: collection of the Société du Patrimoine SOPABIC