

**Citizens Petition, 11 June 1834,
Begging for Benevolence
on behalf of the Petrie Family ©**

the original PETITION <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3071625> ¹

This petition was signed by 137 inhabitants of Rawdon, freehold settlers, and begs leave to appeal to Lord Aylmer, the Governor in Chief of Lower Canada for “benevolence and humanity” and “to take into consideration the following statement of unsophisticated facts.” This is very old-fashioned language and would make a citizen of today shake their head at begging for fair treatment from the governor or perhaps it would not.

I have attempted to summarize some of the rambling petition, but the original (using the above link) is the best way to get the awkwardly but eloquently expressed flavour of the time. All settlers had experienced the feeling of isolation, the distance from the mills, had shared in the backbreaking labour and seen the dissipation of their personal funds to meet the expenses that grew from turning their “free” land into an inheritance for their families.

David James Petrie had returned his original location² for a 200-acre lot when one son did not accompany him and instead accepted what he thought were two one-hundred-acre half lots. ³

David James Petrie was deceased, either in 1833 or early in 1834, when there was no minister, and the church register was not being kept.

David Petrie, junior, struggled to get the Letters Patent to his father’s half lot and it was issued in 1839 [footnote 2]. This seems true despite George Copping’s report, in August 1837, that the land was sold, and the family was turned out by the bailiff.

¹ This link was working when I wrote this but before publishing the file , I checked its viability and regretfully received this message. SOQUII: “Plumitifs platform is not currently accessible. Our teams are working to resolve the issue.” The original document is at BANQ Centre régional d’archives de Lanaudière à L’Assomption.

² 17 November 1820: Lots 17 and 18 of 11th Range but they only total 200 acres; so perhaps it was only the south half. The North part is marked *chantier* on the Holtby map. LAC 157 C-2553, Vol. 157, page 76854.

³ David Petrie (father) on 15 January 1821 received permission to settle on 7 / S 25 and the location was granted four months after the petition, on 8 October 1834 to David Petrie, son. The Letters Patent were engrossed 14 September 1839. LAC 157 C-2553, Vol. 157, page 76856, 76860, 76863.

Sgt. Richard Hall was located to 7 / S 26 and 7 / S 28 by the agent, Thomas Griffith, under a licence of occupation for Services Gratuitous as a military veteran on 24 May 1834. He and his son are the intruder that David junior refers to who were presumably claiming lot S 26. Hall eventually received both patents, issued September 1834 and confirmed February 1835 (LAC C-2531, Volume 101, pages 49682-49685).

Summary of the petition:

- In 1821 David James Petrie became a settler at Rawdon located to 200 acres for himself and his large family (three sons) however two did not come with him and he relinquished his claim to Anthony Lyon, the agent,⁴ reserving 100 for himself and another for his son David, the present occupier.
- One of the lots thus reserved was in the name James because the deceased a “having thought too much nicely for fear of creating confusion his son David being located to the other half suppressed the first initial of his name David”
- He had failed before his sudden and unexpected death to transfer his lot to his son’s name; his widow about 70 years of age
- David James Petrie served in the Surrey Light Dragoons 12 years and discharged as a sergeant and then served as a mechanic at Isle aux Noix and fought on board one of his majesty’s frigates at the Battle of Plattsburgh
- Upon arrival at Rawdon, he was possessed of 370 £ currency from sale of property in Montreal before settling at Rawdon. This was expended in making improvements
- Scarcely any roads or bridges and nine miles from a mill at the front of the township, having to carry on his back the provisions for his family, living as they were in a “trackless desert”
- After trusting that his 200 acres were secure, his widow will be deprived of her home
- Their duties for patents had been confirmed as done, the son opposed a man he deemed an intruder and he and son were thrown in jail although promised justice only a few days before. He procured sufficient bail but was refused. Feeling he owned the land he refused to be bound over.
- Previous to his commitment he was in a dispute with Richard Hall over the second lot. Hall attempted to take possession jumping a fence with his son, axes in hand cut down some timber although cautioned of the consequences.
- Two sons have military service, the one in gaol, was in the Royal navy under command of Sir John and the other with considerable time in the army.
- The citizens of Rawdon beg his excellency to take the case into the plenitude of his mercy.

Names of 137 freehold settlers

- The men added their Loyal Rawdon Militia rank after their names. They are not military titles.
- The + following a name indicates this man made his mark as unable to sign. The majority of settlers from 1820 – 1834, both Catholic and Protestant, were literate although some rarely used that skill.
- Corrected spelling in brackets is what is used for the family elsewhere in UP TO RAWDON

⁴ This is not possible Lyon only became a settler in 1824 and agent c. 1825. Alexander Rea was the Crown Agent 1820-1821 and was followed by Colclough. Both were notorious for sloppy habits.

These names are not mentioned in the text of UP TO RAWDON:

- Daniel Smythe baptized a child at St. Patrick's Church in 1848 and died 19 December 1883; he had sons John and Thomas; all were farmers of St-Alphonse. His wife's name was Margaret Malarkey. The name was spelled Smith in the church register
- George Ralston may be a relative of William Ralston and Peter Ralston who married to cousins Matilda and Rachel Connelly.
- Patrick O'Neil was at 5 / 23 N and with his wife, Colleen Stapleton ,baptized twin sons at St. Patrick's Church on 3 February 1840.

Names that I was unable to recognize:

- Joseph Pillman or is it Dillman?
- the illegible name before Fulsher is not the name of one of his sons. Could it be Mrs.? This is unlikely.
- William T ... illegible; - O *illegible* Contar could it be a French name?
- John Shaltraw – possibly the Anglicization of a French name

John Jefferies, Capt.

William Eveleigh, Capt.

Robert Bagnall, Capt.

Martin Hobs, Lieut.

Edward Tighe

William Tighe

James H. Pigott

William Bagnall

David Manchester

Jacob Manchester

John Allan

Gap in document list

Henry Nightingale

George Copping, senr.

Law, Henry

William Holtby, junr.

William Copping

John Booth

John Eveleigh, junr.

William Booth +

John Carroll

Andrew Thompson

Patrick Carroll

Rich'd Corcoran

George Hobs, junr.

George Hobs, senr.

William Eveleigh

William McNown

Arthur Mason

William Blair

Thomas Blair

George Jonson + (Johnson)

George Swift +

Andrew Keaugh (Keogh)

Denis McDonall (McDonald)

John McDonall (McDonald)

Michel Nulty (Michael)

Alexander Nulty

John Carney (a.k.a. Kerney)

George Parkinson

John Parkinson

Thomas Pearson

Ferris Gracey (a.k.a. Phares)

George Keo

Thomas Collins

Hugh McCabe

William Grigg

John Corcoran

Bernard Greenan

Francis Morgan

Thomas Cain + (Cane)

Ralph Parkinson

Pat Martin

John Woods +

Robert Johnson +

Thomas Price +

William Carroll
Thos. Nealon
James Gracey junr.
James Gray +
William T illegible +
Edward Carroll +
Pat Welch
Daniel Smythe (Smith in Church records)
John Sheals (Shields)
William Scroggie
James Scroggie
Michael McCarrel (Carroll)
Richd. Boyce
Samuel Cultra
Patrick Cunningham (Cunningham)
James Shiels (Shields)
James Holiday
David Scott
John Greenan
Michel Green (Michael)
John Green
James Corcoran
James Mulla'hey
Andrew Kerr
James Kerr
John McDonnell + (McDonald ?)
John Marlin +
James Marlin
George Ralston
Peter Skelly
Patrick O'Neil
Michael Coren (Currin)
Samuel Smiley
John Smiley
John Smiley
George Copping junr.
Charles Heney
Robert Magowan
John McCurdy
Edward Corcoran

Alexander McCurdy
John Kite
John Mellen (Mullin)
William Norrish
Joseph Pillman or Dillman
James D. Norrish
illegible Fulsher
Adam Walker
Wm. A. Fulsher
John Tiffin
William Long
Edward McGie
Solomon Cook
John Robinson
William Robinson
Thomas Robinson
Michael Rourke
Owen McDermott
Andrew illegible possibly Irwin
Alexander Connolly (Connelly)
James Cahill
John Foster
James Robinson
Thomas Lane
William Morris +
John Daly
James Booth
John Booth
Conley (Connelly) Cassidy +
Henry Peyton
Joseph Michel (Mitchell) +
George Harkness
Mathew McColy (McCauley) +
John Byrn (Burns)
James Duffy
O ... illegible Contar +
Patrick Donovan +
John Shaltraw +
Robert Rogers +
John Copping