

Robinson From Cavan in 1820

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When her husband **James Robinson** was deceased, **Jane McGee** left County Cavan for Lower Canada; we know that she “emigrated from Ireland accompanied by three sons Parrot, Thomas and George”¹ and other family members. The brothers, with their sister Barbara (see following) and her husband Thomas Wallace were the first settlers on the Second Range of Rawdon Township on the lots between numbers 21 and 25. Additional family members in the party are mentioned below but their relationships are to a degree speculative, as will be seen.

Before 1820, there was Catholic / Protestant conflict in Cavan. Protestants made up only one-fifth of the total population although many of the large landowners were Protestant and many families felt unsafe. The emigration port closest to County Cavan was Sligo, unless they journeyed to Dublin or possibly Belfast, if that better suited their circumstances. Did they have settlement plans for when they reached Canada or was finding locations to be a new and time consuming process? Did they arrive in spring 1820 or the previous season, as was the experience of some Rawdon settlers.

How did they reach Lower Canada? At <https://www.theshipslip.com/Research/canadarecords.shtml> we find that the *Brig Ann* from Sligo, with 41 settlers, docked at Quebec City 13 May 1820. If this was their route and their ship it allowed only a few weeks for them to get location tickets at Rawdon. Documents² show that they seem to have viewed the land shortly after arrival before getting permission to settle – Thomas received a ticket of location for 200 acres (at 2 / 25) on 29 May 1820 and was located at Rawdon 29th July.³ George was given a half lot (100 acres) on 25 October 1821. Initially, he had received an Order in Council for 200 acres and had viewed the land when they “came to the country.” He did not accompany his brother Thomas back to Quebec to get his ticket and a “fresh order came out for settlers only to receive 100”. Mr. Ryland, a bureaucrat in the land office, said that if George did the “duty” he should get what was promised as recounted in his letter to (surveyor) Boushette [sic]. However, because Joseph Dugas was already established on the south half of lot 21 this could not be (read *Joseph Dugas Rawdon’s First Settler*). It is not clear if or how George was compensated as he apparently settled for the 100 acres; he was busy with his mother’s affairs at Lot 23 and maybe did not pursue the issue. At LAC Microfilm C-2515, page 29100 (Footnote 3) George had a half lot at 2 / 20 perhaps that was a clerical error for 21.

Parrot Robinson was the eldest son to accompany their mother but we have no evidence that he was married or had children. He died between 12 July 1820 when he had been granted 2 / 23 and 25 May 1822, when his mother **Jane McGee** petitioned that the agent be authorized to locate her to Parrot’s Lot 23 of the Second Range, as his heir (footnote one). In October 1822, a newly arrived settler Andrew Smart was negotiating with her to purchase his land and as the heir of Parrot Robinson, she returned the right to the property of 200 acres to Crown Agent Alexander Rea who passed it to Andrew and Thomas Smart.

¹ Details and sources are in UTR including, pages 1079-1080 transcribed from Mrs. James Robinson file at LAC , Microfilm C-2557, Volume 168, pages 81903-81907.

² Thomas and George Robinson – LAC Microfilm C-2557, Volume 168, pages 81869-81886.

³ LAC Microfilm C-2515, page 29100 report of Surveyor Bouchette, 10 March 1824 – this also applies for Thomas Wallace and Parrot Robinson.

Thomas Robinson, the second son was born c. 1792, (60 years, on 1852 census). He had married **Jane Dunlop** before immigrating in 1820 and she accompanied him. We only know of children born at Rawdon (following) unless Edward was a son born before arriving in Canada (see following). Thomas was a blacksmith.

Thomas and Jane had five children born and baptized at Rawdon:

Thomas Robinson was born 7 July 1822 and baptized 10 September 1822. The sponsors were Hugh Law of Sixth Range, George Robinson, and Julianne Dugas, second daughter of neighbour Philomen, aged 11 years. All signed their names and the parents as 'Robbinson'.

Jane Robinson was born 24 April 1824 and baptized 27 June 1824. The sponsors were Thomas Wallace of Lot 22, Second Range and Edline [Adeline] Dugas, aged 10 years. Lot 24 of First Range, the third daughter of Philomen. Both signed as did the mother Jane 'Robbinson'.

Letitia Jane Robinson was born 1 November 1825 and baptized 23 March 1828. The sponsors were Letitia Robinson and George Robinson of 21 Second Range, Alice Eveleigh of Lot 21 Sixth Range. All signed as did the parents as 'Robbinson'.

Henry Robinson was born 11 August 1830 and baptized 22 August 1830. The sponsors were Henry and Selena Van Heuson (who were married the day he was born) and Alexander Connolly. The parents and Selena Robinson Van Heuson signed. Henry later married Susan Wade⁴ on 21 December 1852 in the presence of Dean Burns, William Wade.

Elizabeth Amelia / Eliza Robinson was born in 1836 before the death of Jane Dunlop on 11 February 1836, (married George Wade). Jane was buried on the 12th and one imagines she might have been baptized that day when Selena Robinson Van Heuston baptized her daughter but I have not found it. She married George Wade at Christ Church 11 May 1852 in the presence of George Robinson, Dean Burns and Susan Wald [sic] who signed as did George and Eliza.

Jane Dunlop died shortly after the last birth and Thomas remarried in December 1836 to Jane, the widow of neighbour Henry Torney. Jane Torney Robinson, wife of Thomas Robinson, died at Rawdon, 27 July 1842 aged 53, witnessed by Hugh Torney and George Robinson.

Thomas is named on the 1824 *Statistical Statement of Rawdon and Kildare* with a wife and a male child and a female child, ages matching the baptisms at Christ Church. On the 1825 census, there are two children under six and a boy aged 6 to 14. Who is this older child and where was he in 1824? There are lists of students at the Forks School [Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning](#) in August and September 1824 that include Thomas Robinson, who was only 3, and **Edward Robinson** who may be the boy of 6 – 14; Edward is also named on an 1828 school list and on another list – that states that Thomas has three children at the school i.e. Edward belongs to Thomas's household. Silene, Thomas and Edward Robinson were absent because of the harvest in September. It was noted in August that the Robinsons were "free" — their parents were not paying for them to attend. On the 1831 census, Thomas and Jane Robinson were a household of seven and so Edward apparently was with them. Then, he disappears. It is not possible at this point to determine if he was Thomas's son.

Thomas Robinson and Jane Dunlop on 15 May 1824 sold 100 arpents of 2 /23 (it adjoined Dean Burns on 2/24), to Joseph Delaverantay dit Morel "meunier" of St-Jacques. Martin S. Parker, a surgeon at St.

⁴ See: Up To Rawdon, *Wade Family at Rawdon* – research of Arden Wade, Ottawa.

Jacques, explained the contract to the sellers who did not speak French, to ensure that it was understood by them. The sellers declared themselves satisfied with the contract. [Source: BAnQ, greffe du notaire Pierre Mercier].

Thomas accompanied his son Henry Robinson moving to Russell Township, Russell County, Canada West in 1855, according to Wade family research. This is confirmed by the 1861 census where Thomas [Robinson] is reported living with Henry and is named as a blacksmith, a widower, aged 77 or born c. 1784, which is an earlier date than that estimated from the 1852 Census (reported above). Henry and Susan Robinson are buried at St. Andrew's and St. Paul's Cemetery Russell, there is a large family marker that, apparently, does not include Thomas's name (Find-a-Grave). The congregations of St. Andrew's Presbyterian joined with St. Paul's Methodist in 1925. The Robinsons were reported as Methodist on the 1881 census; Henry and Susan had eight children at home then. Thomas must have died post 1861 as he was not included with Henry's family in 1871.

George Robinson was "a native of County Cavan" and not married ⁵. He was a farmer living on the north half of 2 / 21. He was a school subscriber in 1826 and an active member of Christ Church vestry 1834 - 1836 and 1842 - 1846, including a term as Church Warden. He was one of the men responsible for building the first village church. The details of George's acquisition of his Rawdon location were above, in the second paragraph.

George Robinson is named on the 1824 *Statistical Statement of Rawdon and Kildare* but was not counted, in an age group. There are 3 females in the household (as on the 1825 census, following). He has a house and barn and 3 horned cattle, 12 acres that he was clearing and 20 acres "in culture".

On the 1825 Census there were three females in his household, as in 1824. One was a child under 6 (Selena Robinson, see following); a married woman aged 14 – 45 who was possibly George's mother, Jane McGie – we have no birth or death information for her. Also, a single woman over 45 years – she could be Mary Robinson ⁶ who died 9 March 1831, aged 82, whose burial was attended by the schoolmaster, a neighbour and friend of the Robinsons. Who she is is not clear. The 1831 Census shows George to have 50 acres and to be the sole occupant at his address.

Assumed to be the family of James Robinson and Jane McGie

Barbara Robinson was born in Ireland c. 1775; she was 77 on the 1852 census and was the wife of **Thomas Wallace** (1764-1849) who died in January 1849 in his 85th year. He was a cooper and a farmer and received land at 2 / 22 (see footnote 3) and received his Letters Patent for 200 acres in 1824. We assume from circumstances and associations that the Wallaces emigrated with the Robinson family and that he was from Cavan or nearby. The Wallaces reported no children on census of 1825 and 1831 but oddly, he appears to be single on the 1824 Survey.

⁵ George was 45 [sic] on 1852 census or born c. 1807. His age was 31 in 1861 and obviously incorrectly reported; he was not enumerated for the 1871 Census. He was said to be in his 88th year at his burial in 1877 or born 1790 and perhaps this is accurate because he was 25 to 40 years in 1825. The Christ Church burial register notes Cavan was his county of birth.

⁶ Did Mr. Burton err and was the elderly woman Jane McGie Robinson and not an unidentified Mary Robinson.

A half lot was sold by Thomas Wallace and his spouse Barbara Robinson, 15 January 1825, to Philomen Dugas (greffe du notaire Thomas Bédard). This was at the forks of the Red River where a school was to be located and opened on 19 August 1827. It was deeded to the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning by Firmin [sic] Dugas and signed by Philomen Dugas and Andrew Smart. In 1831, Thomas Wallis [sic] held only 100 acres at this address.

Selena Robinson is named as a student on lists of scholars at Rawdon in 1825 and “for lack of suitable clothes” would not go to the Reverend Burton’s to be examined ([Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning](#)). George Robinson had one child in the Forks school, presumably this was Selena because she gave her address as 2 / 21 (that of George Robinson) in November 1825, when she was sponsor at a baptism. George was a witness at her marriage to Henry Van Heuson on 11 August 1830 as was Thomas Wallace. They were “friends of the contracting parties” and both men signed their names in fine handwriting. The groom **Henry Vanheuson**⁷ [sic] was a millwright / carpenter who in 1831 owned 50 acres⁸ at 2 / 21. The bride was a spinster but is registered by Mr. Burton as Selena Robinson Southwell⁹, for no known reason. Perhaps she was a half sister or a niece to the Robinson brothers but definitely was a family member.

Henry and Selena Vanheuson had a son **George Van Heuson** born in May 1831 and the sponsors at the baptism included George Robinson and Letitia Robinson. The child is accounted for on the September 1831 census with his parents. A daughter **Maria Van Heuston** [sic] was born 4 February 1836 and baptized on 12 February, Letitia Robinson was a sponsor once more. This was also the day of Jane Dunlop Robinson’s burial. The Vanheuson children were born at Rawdon and baptized there. The Van Heusons left Rawdon and are found recorded as Vanhusen [sic]. **Henry Vanhusen**, son of Henry Vanhusen, a miller, and Silene Robinson was born at Louiseville, Québec and baptised at the Anglican church there 6 and 7 November 1843. Signing with their marks were father and Henry Vanhusen grandfather, brother T.R. Vanhusen and godmother Lalitha [sic] Robison [sic]. **William Justinus Vanhusen**, son of Henry Vanhusen, a miller late of Rivière du Loup was born 29 March 1846 and baptized 26 April 1846 at the Louiseville Anglican church. Silene signed in a beautiful hand.

Letitia Robinson was a sponsor at six baptisms. The first two were the twin daughters of William and Rosa Blair. Then, the 1828 baptism of Letitia Jane Robinson daughter of Thomas and Jane Robinson; the use of her name suggests Letitia may have been his sister. She was twice a sponsor for the children of Selena Vanheuson as recounted above. Letitia did not attend the Forks School and did not sign at any baptisms. I cannot account for her on the 1831 census with George or Thomas; however, there is a single female living in the home of Henry and Selena Vanheuson and I feel it is her. She was godmother to another Van Heuson child in and must have lived with her sister at Louiseville in 1843.

⁷ Could he be related to John Van Hussen (Van Hoosen / Van Housen) of Terrebonne and d’Ailleboust? Read [Gibbs Family](#).

⁸ George Robinson seems to have given or sold half his location to the young woman who was sister, niece or ward.

⁹ Southwell was the pre-eminent family of the Protestant Ascendancy at Letterkenny, in County Cavan. Thomas Anthony Southwell (1777 – 1860), by several accounts was a quite popular landlord and was Viscount Southwell after his father’s death in 1796. The family home was Mount Hamilton, at Killeshandra. It is possible the Robinsons were from this area but if they had a connection to the gentry, apart from Selena’s name, I do not know. The Southwell name is also known at Rawdon in the of ancestry Henry Pigott, whose connections and probable origin were in King’s County.

Ellen Robinson Bailey, 35, was born in Ireland and is on the 1852 Rawdon Census with her husband **Samuel Duff Bailey**, 37 a school teacher and four children – George 11, James 8, both born in Ireland, Thomas 1849, baptized Christ Church Rawdon, Samuel 1 born in Canada – from their ages, we can say the family must have arrived in Canada c. 1848. Elizabeth Jane Bailey was born in 1852 and baptised at Rawdon. In 1852 at Rawdon, Ellen and family were with Barbara Wallace and a young labourer, Hugh Britton of the nearby McGowan family – two families, in a log house (*maison en pieces*). Near them was James Bailey (perhaps his brother) who had arrived about five years earlier.

One assumes that Ellen is a niece or a cousin to Barbara. On either side of these families, on the Second Range, were families with connections to the Reynolds,¹⁰ Bailey, McGowan and Braden families,(members of the latter lived with George Robinson). It cannot be a mere coincidence that these families found their way to Rawdon. The McGowans were from County Antrim (Up To Rawdon pages 607-619) and long time neighbours of Barbara Robinson Wallace.

In 1861, Ellen was a widow, a Methodist and lived St. John 's Ward, Toronto. Her eldest son George was a carpenter. In 1871, Ellen was with Thomas, a clerk, in St. David's Ward and was Church of England. In 1881, Thomas was a publisher, married with children in St. James Ward. He died 10 November 1920 at Laurium, Houghton County, Michigan, USA (Ancestry Public Tree).

¹⁰ Reynolds was a well known name in Cavan It is possible that Thomas Reynolds and Susan Reynolds, Mrs. James Bailey who were on the 1851 Rawdon Census were from there.