

Parsonage of Christ Church Rawdon, 1844

3351 Rectory Garden

Daniel B. Parkinson ©

A tragic fire on 5 January 2024 took the lives of Sue Ellen Jones and Christopher Millar and destroyed their beloved parsonage.

I visited, for the first time, on June 10, 2022, one of the oldest houses in the village of Rawdon and recorded my impressions. I saw that the original siding, of locally milled clapboard, had been replaced by aluminum, and the roof was no longer cedar shingles. It was a handsome house in its day and built as the residence of the representative of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as it was then denominated, or sometimes as the United Church of England and Ireland. It is now the Anglican Church of Canada.

Despite some modern finishes, the house has retained the layout and the flavour of its time. One imagines that it must have looked very much like this in 1844, even though it was moved from its original location on the village Glebe in 1914, when a new Rectory was built, the former parsonage now faces the open expanse of glebe or church property. The church website informs that Rawdon is one of only two parishes in the Diocese of Montreal to have a glebe, land attached to the Rectory for the Rector's use and for creating income. This practice of the Church of England dates to the times before the priest received a stipend and he needed pasture for his horse and cow and a place to plant a garden. One hopes that this park view can be maintained at 3351 Rectory Garden; this will rest with the Church Corporation, which consists of the Rector, the Rector's Warden and the People's Warden and the approval of Vestry (i.e. the parishioners). The approval of the Bishop would be needed for sale or development of the Glebe, the Diocese of Montreal holds the title on behalf of the parish.



Two Village Parsonages

The Reverend J. E. Burton, the first missionary pastor, lived initially at Terrebonne, which was part of his parish before settling on his Burtonville property five lots on the Rawdon First Range, in what is now St. Liguori. This had been his grant as a settler and it was not church land. His youngest child was born and baptized at Rawdon in 1831; I presume this took place in the family home, which was not a parsonage but his privately owned residence or quite possibly in the church that Burton built on his property; It was consecrated by Bishop Stewart in August 1830 (see [Burton's Church, An Irony of Rawdon History](#)). The last events recorded by Burton, in the Christ Church register, were in April and May of 1833 but no venue was recorded. Was the Schoolhouse at the Forks still used for church events? The records are mute -no locations given. Burton returned to Ireland permanently that summer and there is a gap until Mr. Milton arrived and resumed the register July 6, 1834 (John Lawrence [Milton](#): Second Rector of Christ Church, Rawdon).

When Mr. Milton arrived in July 1834, the population was shifting to the centre of the township, from settlement on the First, Second and Third Ranges, to be near the Glebe that was allotted in an early survey¹ at Sixth Range, Lot 16. Burton wished the church to have its Glebe – it was “an object” to him and he was protective of it, as explained in *Burton of Burtonville, Up To Rawdon pages 120-122* (source BAC-LAC C-2513, Vol. 51, pages 26056-26057). “I have enough of land in Rawdon: particularly as I mean to remove, soon as possibly, from a corner to the centre of my mission, for the benefit of my parishioners, my personal convenience, and general professional satisfaction.” Rawdon, in 1834, had been without an Episcopal priest for over a year, there was no church, where the village was now to be located, and there was no accommodation for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel missionary. It fell to Milton to acquire the Glebe in December 1834 “by breaking a twig upon said land and by making a declaration before witnesses at the time [saying] I have this day taken possession of said land on behalf of the church”.

First Parsonage

The first entries by Mr. Milton, in the *Christ Church Vestry Minutes, 1834-1836* included choosing a village site for the contemplated church; nothing was mentioned about where divine service was held in the interregnum before he arrived. In August, the Bishop was asked to use his influence to obtain land for a church and parsonage; Milton was also to get his permission to solicit aid “for the erection of a parsonage house for the Protestant Episcopal minister.” In September, a proposal from Major Robert Bagnall, a vestry member, to build a “Parsonage House” was received by Vestry and acceded to. In November, the building committee attended to adding a stable and the sinking of a well. By December 6, 1834, the parsonage was completed and was in use for meetings and divine service and, of course, as Milton’s residence. On December 21, Vestry expressed a sense of gratitude for the speedy manner in which Major Bagnall “has conducted the building of the parsonage House ... and fulfilled his contract.” On Christmas Day, a “public meeting was held in the parsonage after divine service.”

The 1834 parsonage had been urgently needed, built quickly and was very much used but it was not fully paid for and already a new one was required. Subscriptions from adherents for the parsonage that were not yet paid had to be collected. In October 1835, new stove pipes were purchased for “when the congregation assemble”. The minister’s account in May 1836 shows payment to Robert Bagnall for

¹ The lot is marked as reserved as Church of England property on this 1821 map by Surveyor Bouchette <https://uptorawdon.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/1821-map.pdf>

parsonage road work and for a stove furnished previously. It was there that Vestry meetings were held throughout the years until the church was completed in 1836-1837 and still was used by them in 1840, probably it was warmer than the barnlike church. On one occasion in 1834, the Court House had been used for a Vestry meeting, but we cannot say where that building was located or where Milton resided before December 1834. ² I have not determined where the 1834 house was but conceivably it was close to the church and on or near the lands that were to be assembled.

Preparing to build a suitable second parsonage

By April 1841, the building was in such disrepair that the Bishop made it the focus of a letter pressing the churchwardens to action, writing "it will be necessary that the congregation shall put the Parsonage House into thorough repair". The Bishop's request to the Rawdon Church Wardens was read to the Congregation, he wrote: "I know some particulars respecting [its] state which shew that there is not a day to be lost." Vestry agreed and on the 26th of April decided that "the roof of the parsonage house should be put in repair without loss of time by shingling." May 1841: Vestry must "persevere in soliciting further," in aid of the Parsonage House subscription list. In July 1841, Church Warden Thomas Griffith addressed those at Sunday service – the parsonage "will not be habitable for the winter months" and outlined the new subscription list. Patching would not be sufficient. Their minister, Rowland Hill Bourne had newly married at the Cathedral in Montreal, on 31 March 1841 and the Bishop had made his point "if the Rev. Mr. Bourne or, in the event of his removal, any minister succeeding him, is to continue at Rawdon" everyone in the mission needed to co-operate. (See the final paragraph of page seven and footnote 9 concerning his marriage).

After the summer, the process of building began in earnest, the Vestry, the Bishop and the adherents concluded that a new parsonage was needed. The minute book, kept by Mr. Bourne, records the process and was helpful with accurate details. Mr. Bourne received a letter from the Bishop of Montreal, in September 1841, who would apply to the Society for Propagation of the Gospel for a special grant to aid in the building of a new parsonage "provided the Congregation do their part."

It appears they were creating a new Glebe in the village for the incumbent, replacing the original glebe at 6/16 that was claimed by Mr. Milton December 1834, as mentioned. Minutes of May 11 1836: the dispute with John Sadler was settled.³ Thomas Griffith was allowed the use of the Glebe for the current year, provided he pay Mr. Sadler and "put the minister in peaceable possession of it in the beginning of the next year". Vestry petitioned the Governor General for a grant for Glebe land, 9 August 1842.

² Subsequently locations are clear - the 1845-1846 map of [Rawdon Village](https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3142590) indicates the "parsonage" and the "English church", the church building faces the road that led to the northeast part of the township. See Block "Y" of map three: the source is <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3142590>

³ See: *Up To Rawdon*, page 551 footnote 40 – Sadler wanted to be paid for the work he had done at 6/16, which Archdeacon Mountain had promised would happen "when [the lot] was required for public purposes". Sadler's original motive in going there is unclear, perhaps he hoped to acquire it should the church discard it. John Sadler was on Select Vestry 1845-1846 and his son Mitchell had been as late as 1841-1842, before avowing Wesleyanism in 1842. Read: *the Reverend Mitchell Sadler: "Endeared to All"*.

The Sadler family had several locations in the Township. John Sadler was granted 7 / 11 S in 1832 and Mitchell Sadler was granted 6 / 15 N in 1834 and 6 / 11 in 1876. The details of the disposal of the original Glebe are not determined but was acquired by James Mason 1836-1840.

Chronology of Land Acquisition compiled with Sue Ellen Jones and Christ Church research:

28 May 1838 - deed of sale by Solomon Cook to Hiram Bateman of one square acre of the SE portion of Fifth Range lot 18, for 5 pounds. Cook settled at Rawdon c. 1824 as a tenant of John Jefferies and is recorded on the 1825 Census but did not receive a Location Ticket for 5 / SE 18 until 29 July 1826. He was one of the Committee of Five named in December 1834, regarding the school dispute. His Letters Patent for the property were engrossed 22 May 1834. His son, George, died and was buried at Christ Church, Rawdon on 17 & 18 March 1840. The burial was witnessed by Hiram Bateman who operated a tannery on the banks of the Ouareau River and purchased the property from Cook. Charles Forbes, another witness, was a partner in Bateman, Forbs [sic] and Company, curriers and shoemakers. Both men were sons-in-law of Cook.

19 September 1838 - sale by Solomon Cook to John M. Griffis – 2 acres of lot 18 between Hiram Bateman and a lot sold to Edward McGee of 5 /18 north. The sale to Griffis was for £ 80 / 11 / 7 but no money was exchanged – the debt to Griffis was the balance of a judgement from the bench and due to Anna Wilson, widow of William Starke. Cook must have borrowed from Griffis, who was not a settler, nor was Starke.

January 1842 - Vestry members considered where to build their new parsonage. Rawdon was always rife with property speculation and the land at the centre of the village was already in a number of hands. Three plots that might be purchased for a parsonage were proposed to Vestry by Mr. Bourne. He concluded the purchase of the recommended land in June 1842, outlined them and the prices paid.⁴ The land acquired by the church was seen as attractive as were all village properties. In September, the Bishop offered to apply “for a special grant to aid in the building of the new parsonage.”

6 / 7 April 1842 (mislabelled 1843) - Indenture sale of 11 acres, in the SE half of lot 18, £30 current money, by Hiram Bateman to Rawdon Church via Rev. Rowland Hill Bourne. “for the maintenance of the minister,” keeping riverbank access.

April 7, 1842 - Indenture of sale by Charles Roe Rood & Josiah Stocking Rood, lumber merchants of Mooers, Clinton County, NY, to Rev. Bourne: 15 pounds for a certain portion of SE half of lot 18 on the 5th range, bounded by Hiram Bateman’s 1 acre lot of 10 acres, keeping riverbank access: “for the maintenance of the Minister of the Church of England”.

⁴ As reported in *Christ Church Vestry Minutes, 1837-1842* “said land adjoining the property now belonging to the church forming three separate parcels, all belonging to three several individuals, they coincide and would form a valuable addition to the church property and afford a much more desirable and eligible spot for the site of a parsonage property. The three acres next adjoining the present church property and separated from it by the line for a public road, which are valued at 5 pounds per acre, they consider high, but on account of the situation and the desirability of preventing them from being occupied in any way which would incommode the church, they think it would be better to purchase them even at that price. The 10 acres next adjoining valued at 2 pounds 10 shillings per acre, cleared and under pasture, and the 5 acres, adjoining them at 3 pounds per acre, they consider valuable as affording a suitable situation for a parsonage convenient to water; and they think that the prices of the two last mentioned lots of land are moderate and reasonable.”

12 May 1842 - two arpents in Lot 18 of 5th Range purchased by John Griffis on 19 September 1838 were sold to the Reverend R. H. Bourne acting for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and on £10 current money. See previous details.

7 June 1842 - Mr. Bourne had concluded, in summary, the purchase by the S. P. G. of the recommended land, authorized by the Bishop for the maintenance of the minister of the church from John M. Griffis of Montreal for £10 and 11 acres from Hiram Bateman for £30 plus 3) 5 acres from C. R. and J. S Rood for £15 making 18 acres at a cost of £55.

Construction of the new parsonage begins

17 Sept. 1842 - Proposals for timber for parsonage considered from Major Bagnall and Mr. Rood. Vestry resolved to accept Major Bagnall's and a committee was approved to "enter into contract" with him on behalf of Vestry to furnish materials for the building, agreeable to his proposals. They were involved in repairing the old parsonage, but this is in reference to the new one. The Building Committee authorized to contract for raising of the frame was Rev. R. H. Bourne, Elias Burbidge, David Manchester and William Copping.

Monday, 9 January 1843 – Mr. Bourne had contracted William Lord to put up the frame of the parsonage, to roof and clapboard it. The building committee, Mr. Lord and Mr. McPhee⁵ inspected the parsonage because he considered the work completed. The committee determined "the terms of the contract were satisfied" and there was "no reason to object to the work and [all] agreed it was acceptable."

An examination of *Christ Church Vestry Minutes 1843-1846* for September 1843 reveals amounts paid for nails, shingles and gutters etc. and some of the financing. It was resolved that "the stones tossed up in the front of the church should be purchased for the foundation of the new parsonage." It is clear that the frame was erected on bare ground and the foundation a later thought.

14 November 1843 – the building committee employed John Booth to perform foundation work for the parsonage and the additional task of walling the cellar. His subscription to the church, as an adherent, was deducted from this. The job of digging the cellar was given to Charles Heaney, an Irish Catholic. The finishing of the roof and cornicing was given to Leveque [sic, not identified]. These last two jobs were not entirely finished at the date of the report. The pile of stones for the foundation were purchased by Mr. Jefferies for £ 5. In the April 2 minutes, they are described as stone purchased through Mr. Jefferies and it was expedient that the £ 5 and was due to the Presbyterian Church be paid by Mr. Bourne.

Wednesday, 6 March 1844 - News was received that the *Montreal District Association of the Church Society* had made a grant towards the completion of the parsonage. Plank and boards to finish parsonage were to be procured as soon as possible "in that they may have to be seasoned for use," because green lumber would shrink and twist and was not wanted. "Mr. Wm. Scroggie was authorized

⁵ Lord was from Russelltown, near Huntingdon, Quebec and a Rawdon resident. He married Hannah Dugas, second youngest daughter of Philemon and Patty Dugas, at St. Patrick's Church, Rawdon on 7 November 1846 and was baptized the following day by Mr. Rollit in the Rawdon Anglican Church; he was buried in Christ Church Cemetery, in 1860. McPhee is not identified and perhaps was an employee of Lord.

to call on Mr. [William] Bagnall ⁶ and direct him to proceed without delay to fill up the order given to Major Bagnall, as far as he should be able to furnish the timber agreeably to contract entered into with Major Bagnall.”

Wednesday, 2 April 1844 – Mr. W. Bagnall was authorized to proceed with the “remainder of the timber for the parsonage.” Mr. Bourne stated Mr. Jefferies had made a present, for the parsonage, of 10 pairs of window sashes “formerly proposed to be purchased of him”. Following below, the outline of carpentry work indicates that the parsonage had nine windows “bellow” and sashes were provided. Were these Mr. Jefferies’ gift and from where did he acquire them? My mind jumps to the Burton Church which we believe was transported a few years earlier to a site not far from the Anglican church. Jefferies name is attached to lots 17-21 on the First and Second Ranges, where the Turner family had six dwellings, a store and two barns that had been on the auction block in February 1832.

Saturday, 8 June 1844 – Vestry to take measures without delay to further the finishing of the parsonage”. Mr. Bourne was authorized to advertise for proposals for completing the carpentry work, on Saturday the 15th.

Saturday, 15 June 1844 – The work was explained at the site by the Building Committee with the plan and the particulars. Proposals for carpentry were considered from Joseph Mitchell for £ 35 (an adherent), Louis Geuvins [sic I cannot identify this man] for £ 34, Peter [sic] Vaillant £ 26. After discussion, the committee resolved to accept Mr. Vaillancourt,⁷ and this contract was entered into. The whole house was to be clapboarded. The frame was already in place on a stone foundation, There were to be two floors laid with partitions on the lower floor for six rooms including the hall this made space for an office, entrance hall, parlour, dining room, pantry and kitchen. Two closets. Ten paneled doors to be hung. Nine windows below (sashes furnished, as noted above) cased inside and outside. One staircase with seven bannisters. ⁸ Panes and casing for four windows upstairs.

Terms and conditions of the contract.

The whole of materials were to be furnished by the building committee. Payment as follows “at the end of every two weeks. Mr. Vaillant to receive the value of one half the work supposed to be done during

⁶ William Bagnall was the son of Major Robert Bagnall and operated the family’s businesses. The principal evidence that the family operated a sawmill comes from the Vestry minutes. From the 1831 Census, we learn Robert had 400 acres with 110 under cultivation and harvested – 110 minots of wheat, 1 minot of peas, 360 minots of oats, 40 minots of rye and 600 minots of potatoes (1 minot = 6 bushels). They had livestock 16 cattle, 4 horses, 3 sheep and 14 pigs. He had an inn or public house on the property and premises for the manufacture of potash / pearlash made from the burning of hardwood trees.

⁷ I believe this is Pierre Vaillant *menuisier* (carpenter) of St-Jacques, husband of Julie Piquet, who baptized children at St-Jacques 1827 – 1839 (one recorded as Voillant). They married at St-Jacques 26 November 1822. Pierre signed the church register. He was born at l’Assomption 16 February 1789, recorded as Vailland [sic] and most probably, is Pierre Vailland [sic], farmer of Rawdon, who was buried at St-Ambroise, December 1845, aged 53.

⁸ The contract signed on 15 June 1844 called for seven bannisters but there are nine steps. Mr. Vaillant seems to have sensibly placed two spindles / balusters on each step. Possibly these may be replacements; it would be quite remarkable if some or all are not original.

The term baluster is interchangeable with the word spindle. The banister is actually used as a name for a staircase baluster, although it is commonly referring to the handrail of the structure. A balustrade is comprised of the railing system, (top rail, balusters/spindles, and often a bottom rail with posts or newels. (Google sources)

that time.” The remainder – “to the amount of two thirds of the whole sum to be made (up) at the time of the finishing of the work and the remaining sum or one third to be paid on the first of January next.” “The work [was] to be commenced on or before the 30th of this month and the whole to be finished in good substantial and workmanlike manner by the fifteenth day of September next being three months from the present time.”

“For the sum of twenty-six pounds currency. I, Mr. Peter [sic] Vaillant of the Township of Rawdon, do hereby bargain, engage and bind myself to do the above specified work, agreeably to the above specified conditions.

Monday, 24 June 1844 - The building committee resolved to keep the timber that was then upon the ground and to give W. Bagnall an additional order for 36 pieces, battens for the lower floor and 25 pieces of 1½ inch plank for the upper floor.

26 September 1844 - The building committee agreed to accept the work of Mr. Vaillant as done according to agreement “and some additional work was allowed done by him”. Mr. Bourne was to take steps to plastering the house and on the 28th of September, John Booth was contracted to plaster the lower part of the New Parsonage “with three coats and in good style” for £ 10 / 0 / 0. Because Mr. Bourne was to furnish the nails, it appears the contract included lathing. However, Mr. Bourne considered it advisable to employ the services of a plasterer from Montreal “who continued to labor on the work from the commencement of lathing till the last coat finished - he worked 25 days at 5 / per day and his board; he also worked on the chimney.

The parsonage is no longer mentioned in the minutes, after this last entry and in 1845 and 1846 the only entries were at Easter to record the appointments of church wardens and vestry members. We must assume that when the dust from plastering had settled in October 1844 the job was completed and Rowland and Fidelia Bourne then took occupancy. However, circumstances reveal there was little time or cause for celebration; sadly, Fidelia Bourne died at Rawdon "in the 30th year of her life" and was buried in Christ Church cemetery on January 17, 1845.⁹ Her death followed the birth of a daughter, Mary Fidelia on 5 January 1845, which had been attended by the midwife Mrs. Copping, according to the *Journals of George Copping*, her husband.

⁹ Fidelia Cooke may have been American. Bourne wrote in an 1838 Mission Survey “There is but one elementary school in the township conducted by a lady from the United States whose support is chiefly derived from friends at home.” It is possible this was his bride-to-be, but this is only a guess. She signed her name Cooke in the marriage register. The marriage bond taken out, when the licence was obtained, named her address as Rawdon and was signed by John Pangman, the seigneur of Lachenaie. The witnesses for her infant daughter’s baptism were Abner M. Cook and Otto N. Cook and presumably her relatives and possibly Americans; I could not confirm their presence in Lower Canada. She does not appear to be related to Solomon Cooke, mentioned previously or to the Cook family of Kildare.

The House

The house is now the property of Rawdon born and bred Sue Ellen Jones and her husband Christopher Millar. She grew up on her family's ancestral farm that is still owned by the family.

Sue Ellen is an active Christ Church member and the Vestry clerk for the parish and the secretary for ECOL (the English-speaking community of Lanaudière), an ardent quilter and a supporter and maintainer of Rawdon history.



Sue Ellen and Chris are living in the house and starting to restore it with respect for its ancient bones. Features of construction and style have been little altered in over 180 years.

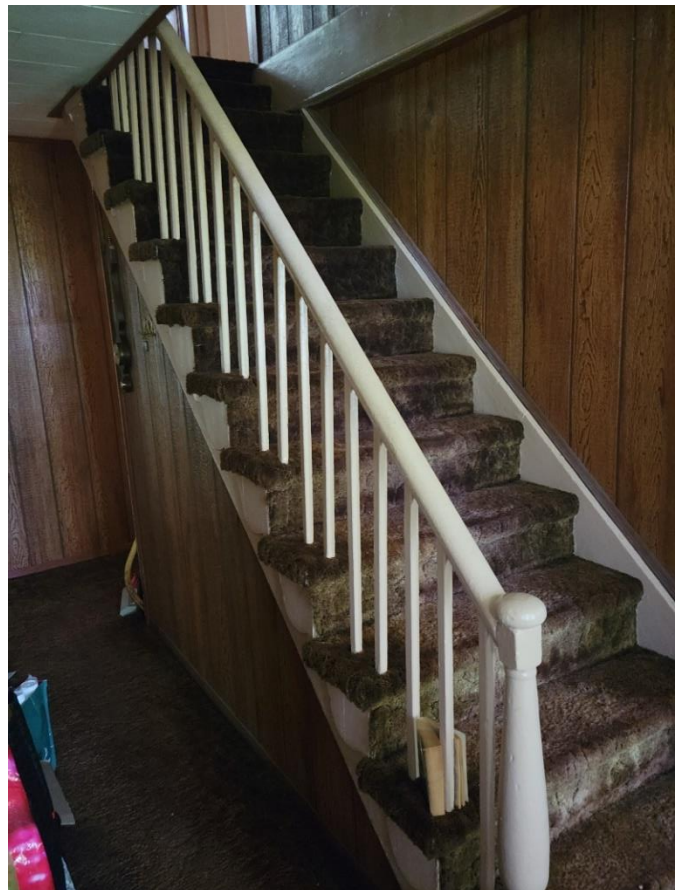
The layout of the rooms is Georgian with a front hall and stairway. The minister's study is to the right as you enter and there is a large parlour on your left, where I suppose Vestry meetings were held.

There are four generous rooms on each floor.

The kitchen and bathroom with their twentieth century updates need to be brought into the twenty first. The butler's pantry may be doomed as such, for more modern needs and their conversion is under active discussion.

The balustrade, balusters and newel post are the hand made originals; the treads and risers are generously broad.

The contemporary wood panelling and carpet are clearly not from the mid nineteenth century.





The wide doorways are fitted with suitably substantial doors that I believe are original from 1844. I did not choose a good example to illustrate.

The trim work around the interior doors and windows is clean, simple and discrete and to my eye modern in feeling, when compared to the fancy woodwork of later Victorian houses.

I should have chosen an upstairs bedroom door, where they are handsome and intact.

This much damaged but restorable example is from the 1914 cellar entry but matches the rest in manufacture.

I congratulate Sue Ellen and Chris for this undertaking and my hope is to report further on the renewal and restoration of their historic house in UP TO RAWDON in the future (and with a better example of of the handcrafted doors).

