

Michel Gendron was born at St. Martin's, Quebec, settled at Smith's Falls and came here about 1835, the year in which Bishop Goulin, Suffragan Bishop of Kingston, and Assistant to Archbishop Macdonnell, paid his pastoral visit to the little pioneer R. C. Church and flock in this rising settlement. He had learned the business of shoemaking and that of tanner and currier at Lyn, near Brockville, working at the two branches alternately during the summer and winter seasons. When he came here he embarked in shoemaking, but found it difficult to procure the raw material to ply his trade. In this dilemma he built the first tannery, an unpretentious log structure at the head of the bay, on a small creek running into the bay fronting John Robb's, formerly the Mitchell, homestead. This solitary log hut, the modest forerunner of present elaborate structures, stood as a landmark for many years, but no trace now remains. This pioneer industry, operated upon the crude system of shares, served its day and supplied the needs of a large extent of surrounding country, but expanding trade and an increasing population induced Mr. Gendron to build in a more central location. The second tannery which was situated on the west side of Main St. near the round-house became an important and leading industry of the town in succeeding years and is well remembered still by many of the inhabitants. The old log police station and lock-up flourished in its palmy days beside the tannery on the same lot. Not a vestige of either remains. Michel Gendron, Sr., married Miss Judson of Brockville, a direct descendant of the famous missionary Dr. Judson, who was a native of Connecticut, U.S. Of this union were born a large family of sons and daughters, all natives of this town except the eldest son, C. G. Gendron, of the Gendron Shoe Pack firm, who was born at Smith's Falls. The other sons are Sidney of Alberta, so long connected with the Singer Sewing Machine Co.; Edmond of the Gendron Shoe Pack firm and ex-Councillor, Michel, Jr., hardware merchant, Vincent and Anthony. The daughters are Mrs. W. J. Martin, wife of the Division Court Clerk, and Mrs. S. Whalen, both of this town. Another daughter died in early womanhood some years since. The wholesale and retail establishment of the Gendron Shoe Pack Co., which sends its products to distant points in the British Empire, is a development of the trade of the old tannery, the business having descended from father to sons. Michel Gendron, Sr., died in September, 1874, and Mrs. Gendron died in 1896.