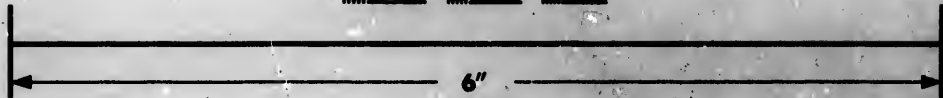
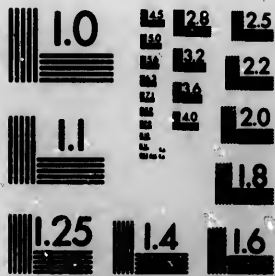


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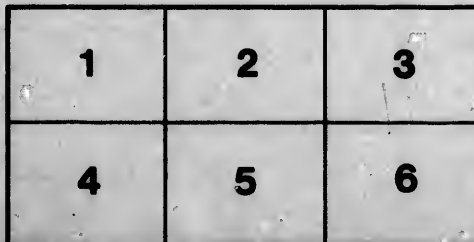
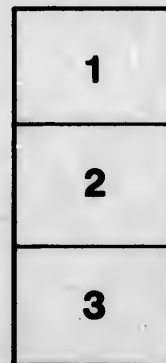
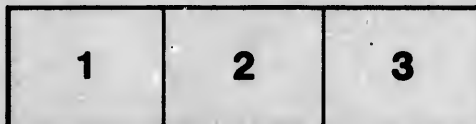
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MEMORIAL

OF

WILLIAM W. COFFIN, ESQ.,

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

SIR EDMUND WALKER HEAD,

GOVERNOR GENERAL, &c. &c.

MONTREAL:

PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.

1855.



# MEMORIAL

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GOVERNOR GENERAL, &c., &c.

---

MONTREAL:

PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET

1855.



THE STATE OF TEXAS

WILLIAM S. WALKER

County Clerk

of the County of [illegible]

10

1880

Witness my hand and seal this [illegible] day of [illegible] 1880.

LIST OF LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS TRANSMITTED IN SUPPORT OF  
THE MEMORIAL OF WILLIAM F. COFFIN, ESQUIRE.

- No. 1. Letter from Captain Griffin, Military Secretary to His Excellency the Com-  
mandor of the Forces. (Original.)
- No. 2. Extract from "L'Ami du Peuple."
- No. 3. Letter from the Rev. Joseph Quiblier, Ptre., Norwood, London, 8th June,  
1840. (Original.)
- No. 4. Letter from John Morris, Esq., J. P., Ste. Thérèse de Blainville, 2nd Novem-  
ber, 1840. (Original.)
- No. 5. Official instructions from Sir John Colborne, 1st February, 1838. (Original.)
- No. 6. Letter from Dr. Davignon, M. P. P., County of Rouville, 13th April, 1840.  
(Original.)
- No. 7. Copy of Report on the subject of the Magistracy, Police, and state of crime,  
Eastern Townships of Lower Canada, 10th December, 1839.
- No. 8. Report on Arrests made 7th December, 1839, in the District of St. Francis.  
(Printed in Appendix to Journals, House of Assembly, vol. 9, 1850.)
- No. 9. Letter from Civil Secretary, acknowledging No. 8, dated 12th December, 1839.  
(Original.)
- No. 10. Letter to Provincial Secretary, 14th August, 1841. (Printed in Appendix as  
above.)
- No. 11. Report of 23rd November, 1840. (Printed in Appendix as above.)
- No. 12. Rules for the government of Police Force. (Original.)
- No. 13. Rules for government of Police Force at Elections. (Printed in Appendix as  
above.)
- No. 14. Letter from R. W. Grey, Esquire, Private Secretary to Lord Sydenham.  
(Original.)
- No. 15. Letter from T. C. Murdoch, Esq., 20th October, 1841, Kingston. (Original.)
- No. 16. Letter from Civil Secretary, Kingston, 9th February, 1842. (Original.)
- No. 17. Letter from A. M. Delisle, Esq., Returning Officer, 19th April, 1844. (Original.)
- No. 18. Letter from Hon. John Young, Returning Officer, 26th October, 1844. (Original.)
- No. 19. Letter from the Hon. Judge McCord, 17th July, 1847. (Original.)
- No. 20. Presentment of Grand Jury, 17th July, 1847. (Original.)

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## MEMORIAL.

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*To His Excellency Sir EDMUND WALKER HEAD, Baronet, Governor General of British North America, Captain General of the same, &c., &c., &c.*

The Memorial of William Foster Coffin, of the City of Montreal, Esquire, Advocate, and heretofore Assistant Civil Secretary for the Police Establishment of the Province, Stipendiary Magistrate at Ste. Marie de Monnoir, in the District of Montreal, Assistant Civil Secretary for the Police Department, Commissioner of Police for the Province of Lower Canada, and Joint Sheriff of the District of Montreal, who hereby applies for employment in the public service of Her Majesty in this Province, and in support of his said application,

**RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH :**

That in the autumn of 1837, on occasion of the troubles which then unhappily disturbed this Province, your Memorialist, being then a member of the Bar of this Province, tendered his services to the Government, to be employed in such way as might be found most useful: they were accepted, and he was attached forthwith to the office of the Attorney General. That in December, 1837, on the occasion of the military expedition to St. Eustache and the northern part of the District of Montreal, your Memorialist was requested by Colonel the Hon. John Maitland, then commanding Her Majesty's 32nd Regiment, to accompany him as Interpreter; to his services in that capacity the following letter from Captain Griffin, now Military Secretary to His Excellency the Commander of the Forces, bears testimony, (No. 1.)

MY DEAR COFFIN,—I can perfectly recall to my mind the circumstances under which you accompanied my old Commanding Officer, Colonel Maitland, and the 32nd Regiment, in which I was then serving, on their march from Grand Brulé by La Belle Rivière to Ste. Scholastique and Ste. Thérèse, back to Montreal in December, 1837. You acted as a sort of Civil Aid-de-Camp and Interpreter, and made yourself generally useful in many ways at that time of trouble and excitement. I heard Colonel Maitland express himself frequently in the highest terms, of the value of the assistance he derived from you on that march, which was entirely gratuitous and voluntary on your part.

You also made yourself very conspicuous, active, and useful in your humane exertions to repress the spirit of retaliation evinced by the volunteers from St. Andrews and its neighbourhood, (some of whom accompanied us,) towards such of the French Canadians whose houses we passed on our route, who had been most forward during the insurrection in driving them (the British) and their families from their homes, and seizing their cattle, &c.; and I am confident that, upon several occasions, you were the means, aided by the presence of the troops, of preventing several serious and cruel outrages, particularly in passing by La Belle Rivière, when you resisted by personal and manual force an attempt made by several infuriated volunteers to set fire to the house of a *habitant* against whom they had a particular grudge, in which encounter you received from one of the assailants a very severe blow which broke one of the bones of the wrist of your right hand, and my brother officer, Assistant Surgeon McGrigor, attended to the injury which, however, prevented your holding a pen for nearly a month afterwards. The whole of this circumstance is the more forcibly impressed on my memory from a recollection of the vociferous gratitude of the unfortunate *habitants*, women and children, who had been forced out into the snow on the high road on a most inclement day in the middle of winter, as a preparatory measure to the destruction of their dwelling.

I also remember its being discussed at the time how very active you had made yourself in attempting to prevent some of the St. Andrews volunteers from exercising their retaliatory spirit in setting fire to the Church at Grand Brulé, (which they afterwards

succeeded in doing,) and of your having rescued the Church plate from pillage or destruction, though I was not an eye witness to those exertions, being present with my company in a distant spot.

You were also very useful in the attack on St. Eustache (where we were together nearly the whole day) in addressing the misguided *habitants* who were taken prisoners, in allaying their fears, (for they all supposed they would be forthwith put to death,) in providing for their wants, and seeing that they were cared for.

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

F. J. GRIFFIN,

Captain, D. A. A. G.

Dept. Adj. General's Office,  
Montreal, 10th April, 1840.

---

Captain Griffin has alluded to Church plate rescued from pillage and destruction. The facts are briefly these: On the morning of the departure of Her Majesty's Troops from the village of St. Benoit, your Memorialist assisted Captain Hadden of Her Majesty's Royal Engineers, and two men of the Royal Regiment, to extinguish, twice, the fire which had broken out in the Church, with little good effect however, as the whole building was in flames within an hour after. On leaving the Church we found the *presbytère* on fire. Then your Memorialist had the good fortune to discover in a closet, apparently burst open by the heat, several articles of Church plate, it is presumed the sacramental service, which were secured, and on the return of the expedition to Montreal were deposited with the Superior of the Seminary, the Rev. M. Quiblier, who received them with many expressions of kindness and thanks. Some few days afterwards there appeared in the columns of the "Ami du Peuple," a French newspaper of the time, the following paragraph, (No. 2.)

"Voici un autre acte de générosité que nous aimons à signaler au public.

"W. F. Coffin, écuyer, accompagnait le Lieutenant Colonel Gore dans l'expédition du Grand Brulé. M. Coffin fut assez heureux pour sauver de l'incendie du presbytère de St. Benoit un calice, une patène d'argent, et un petit vase aussi d'argent.

“ A son retour à Montréal, hier soir, M. Coffin a mis à la disposition du Supérieur du Séminaire ces trois objets précieux. Le plaisir avec lequel l'offrande a été faite est au-dessus de toute expression. L'on peut sentir la délicatesse de si nobles procédés; on aime à en rappeler le souvenir, mais on ne peut acquitter ce qu'ils imposent de reconnaissance qu'en appelant à son secours l'estime public dont ils sont si dignes.”

Your Memorialist had neither sought receipt nor acknowledgement at the time, but could not fail to appreciate a compliment which, it was understood, had come from the pen of M. Quiblier himself. Later events, however, to which it is unnecessary to advert further here, rendered it desirable that your Memorialist should verify these facts. M. Quiblier had then left this country and was resident in England. In reply to a communication on the subject your Memorialist received the following in the English language, (No. 3.)

“ NORWOOD, LONDON, 8th June, 1849.

“ HONORABLE AND DEAR SIR,—Your favor of the 10th April ultimo has been received a few days ago, and duly welcomed. Allow me to say I forget neither my friends nor any of their concerns. I thank you for the opportunity you afford me of once more mentioning a fact I considered to be a very praiseworthy action. On your arrival from St. Benoit, (Grand Brulé) in December, 1837, you handed me a chalice, with a patine and a small pix, all of silver, you fortunately succeeded in rescuing from conflagration, and you demanded that they should be returned to the Parish. I did accordingly, and in the mean while I conveyed a report thereof to the late “Ami du Peuple” newspaper, that the gratitude such an act of religious tolerance deserved might be shewn by all the Catholic community at large.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Honorable and dear Sir,

“ Your very faithful and obedient servant,

“ JOS. QUIBLIER, Ptre.

“ P. S. The Rev. Jos. Comte and P. Lacombe, Esquire, will certify my handwriting if required.

“ Hon. W. F. Coffin,

“ Sheriff, &c., Montreal.”

On the return march of Her Majesty's Troops from Ste. Scholastique to Montreal, through the village of Ste. Thérèse de Blainville, your Memorialist had again an opportunity of thwarting one of those nefarious designs which evil times and evil passions suggest to bad men. The facts are stated in the following letter from John Morris, Esquire, a Justice of the Peace, and now, as then, a wealthy proprietor of the village of Ste. Thérèse, (No. 4.)

STE. THERESE DE BLAINVILLE, 2nd November, 1849.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have not forgotten nor am I likely to forget your kindness in December, 1837, when you accompanied Colonel Maitland, and Her Majesty's Troops round this way. I had been most unjustly arrested upon the false and calumnious representations of a private and vindictive enemy.

For yourself to Colonel Maitland, and on your remonstrance, I was released from arrest on condition of my accompanying you to Montreal, where I was well known and where I was at once discharged by the Attorney General. I know well that your moderation and active interference saved a great deal of property here from being destroyed by fire, and mine among the rest, which was doomed a week before you made your appearance; for there were some here who called themselves loyal and had the ear of the Government, who would have persuaded the Commanding Officer, that every one they disliked was a rebel, without the slightest ground or foundation for the charge.

I am, dear Sir,

Your truly obliged servant,

JOHN MORRIS, J. P.

W. F. Coffin, Esquire,  
Sheriff, Montreal.

Your Memorialist has reason to know that these services were brought, at the time, under the notice of the Government, by the officer in command of the expedition, and on the breaking out of the second insurrection in 1838, led to the offer by His Excellency, Sir John Colborne, of the office of Assistant Secretary, created with a view to the organization of a Police Force for the Province. Your Memorialist was officially gazetted to that appointment on the 15th December, 1838.



While there employed, in February, 1839, your Memorialist was despatched on a mission of trust and confidence to confer with Mr. Marcy, the Governor of the State of New York, at Albany. A copy of the letter of instructions under which your Memorialist acted, and of the report made on his return, are appended to this memorial, (No. 5,) for which he received the personal thanks of Sir John Colborne, which were subsequently embodied in an official letter from the Civil Secretary. Your Memorialist produces these documents to show that the mission was not a mere mission of form, and that the service done, was good service.

On the 13th June, 1839, your Memorialist was appointed a Stipendiary Magistrate, and despatched to reside in the Parish of Ste. Marie de Monnoir. He continued there employed until June, 1840, and while so employed, it was his study as stated in a letter addressed to the Government of the Right Hon. C. P. Thompson, 15th March, 1840, "so to direct the operation of the Police in " that section of the District, as to ensure the objects for which " the force had been introduced, without any ostentatious or " obnoxious display of power; and he succeeded in securing the " tranquillity of a population previously considered to be pre-emi- " nently turbulent and disaffected, without having had recourse to " one single act of legal coercion."

In testimony of the success of his exertions in this capacity your Memorialist begs leave to invite the attention of Your Excellency to the following letter from Dr. Davignon, a Physician then resident in the Parish of Ste. Marie de Monnoir, and since, and at the time of the writing of the same, Member of the Provincial Parliament for the County of Rouville, (No. 6.)

MONTREAL, 13 *Avril*, 1849.

MON CHER MONSIEUR,—C'est avec le plus grand plaisir que je m'empresse de vous rendre la justice qui vous est due.

Je dois dire que votre conduite comme Magistrat Stipendaire à Ste. Marie de Monnoir, en 1839 et 1840, a été irréprochable, et en disant cela je ne suis que l'interprète des habitants de cette paroisse.

Ayant eu moi-même des relations journalières avec vous en votre qualité susdite, je dois à la vérité de dire que j'ai toujours trouvé en vous un magistrat juste, et surtout protecteur des bonnes mœurs.

Je ne puis plus laisser passer cette occasion sans reconnaître la protection que vous avez en tout temps accordée aux habitants des environs, lorsqu'ils étaient persécutés par ces prétendus loyaux.

Croyez-moi votre ami,

PIERRE DAVIGNON.

During this period, however, the services of your Memorialist were not confined to the locality of Ste. Marie de Monnoir. In December, 1839, he was directed to proceed to the Eastern Townships, and there, under information received from the United States Government, to take measures for breaking up a gang of forgers and coiners, who, for many years, had prosecuted their operations within the Canadian frontier, to the great injury of the people of both countries. On arriving in that section of the country it occurred that his authority as Magistrate did not extend to that district, but having caused himself to be sworn in at once as a Constable, your Memorialist concerted measures with Colonel Sir Robert Nickle, K. H., now commanding Her Majesty's forces in Australia, then commanding on the Stanstead frontier, and by his advice and assistance, succeeded in one night, at different points on a frontier of forty miles in extent, in capturing some twelve or fourteen notorious coiners, with their apparatus, tools, and a large amount of false money and counterfeit notes. The whole gang were effectually broken up, and that section of the country relieved from an injury and reproach of long standing.

Having effected these arrests, information was brought to Sir Robert Nickle, implicating deeply one Adolphus P. Barker, a man of education and intelligence, and somewhat redoubtable from his bodily strength and reputed courage. Accompanied by two troopers and a gentleman named Mears, who most handsomely volunteered his assistance, your Memorialist arrested this man in his own house, in the woods of Compton. He was committed and transferred to the gaol of Three Rivers. He escaped conviction from a defect in the indictment. His arrest, however, emboldened those whom he had injured, and he was accused, indicted, and convicted at Three Rivers, of the crime of burglary, committed under very aggravated circumstances, some years before, in the Eastern Townships. He was

sentenced to death, which sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life in the Three Rivers gaol, and it is a remarkable fact connected with the terrorism this man had inspired, that every effort made by him for some years to obtain a further commutation was defeated by counter-applications from the people of the Townships, expressive of their fears of the man. He was ultimately released during the Government of the Earl of Elgin. These facts are detailed by Your Excellency's Memorialist not from any pride in the peculiar duties he was called upon to perform, but from a just pride in the reflection that he has never been called upon to perform any duty which he did not execute faithfully, zealously, and to the best of his ability. In this instance to the injury of his health, as from the inclement weather to which he was exposed your Memorialist was attacked by a severe inflammatory affection of the throat, which confined him to his room for some weeks.

Notwithstanding his indisposition, your Memorialist prepared and transmitted to the Government a laborious Report on the subject of the Magistracy Police, and state of crime in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada, a copy of which, as well as a copy of the Report on the arrest herein before mentioned, are appended to this Memorial, (Nos. 7 and 8.)

To the latter your Memorialist received the following reply, (No. 9.)

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONTREAL,  
12th December, 1839.

SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt this morning of your communication of the 7th instant, containing a report of the proceedings you adopted under the authority conveyed to you in my letter of the 19th ultimo, for the arrest of certain persons charged with the crime of forgery in the Townships of Dunham and Barnston, and elsewhere, within the Province of Lower Canada.

Having laid your Report before the Administrator of the Government, I have the pleasure of conveying to you the assu-

rance of His Excellency's satisfaction at the able and efficient manner in which you have discharged the duty confided to you on this occasion.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. N. MONTIZAMBERT,

*Assist. Civil Secretary.*

To William F. Coffin, Esquire,

Stip. Magistrate,

Ste. Marie de Monnoir.

In June, 1840, your Memorialist was summoned from Ste. Marie de Monnoir, by Mr. Murdoch, then Chief Secretary to the Government of the Right Honorable Charles Poulet Thompson, and, under instructions, was directed to inquire into the state and condition of the Montreal Gaol. He was so occupied about six weeks, and while so occupied a commission was appointed by the Government to consider and report upon the efficiency of the Police establishment then existing in the Province of Lower Canada. This commission consisted of the Hon. D. Daly, Colonel, the Hon. George Cathcart, and Major Campbell, C. B., of Her Majesty's 7th Hussars, and late Secretary to His Excellency the Earl of Elgin. Your Memorialist was applied to by this commission, and requested to furnish his views of the actual organization of the Police, together with any suggestions for the improvement of its working, combined with a reduction of expense. He complied forthwith with the wishes of the commission. Shortly after having presented his report on the state of the Montreal Gaol, your Memorialist was directed to attend His Excellency Lord Sydenham, whom he saw, for the first time, on a sick bed. After some conversation on the subject of his Report, and the previous services of your Memorialist as set forth in this Memorial, His Lordship invited him to return to the office of Assistant Civil Secretary for the Police Department, adding that it was intended to create the office of Commissioner of Police, to which office, in due time, he might expect to be appointed.

Your Memorialist accepted the proposal made to him, at once returned to the office of Assistant Civil Secretary, and proceeded

to remodel the Police system, reducing the force and its expenditure, but at the same time increasing its efficiency.

On the 8th July, 1840, during the absence of Lord Sydenham from this part of the Province, but under His Lordship's instructions, your Memorialist received the appointment of Commissioner of Police, for the Province of Lower Canada, from His Excellency Sir Richard Jackson, then administering the Government.

The manner in which the duties of this important office were performed was shown in an official communication addressed to the Hon. D. Daly, Provincial Secretary, in the following year, from which your Memorialist transcribes the following extract, (No. 10.

"MONTREAL, 14th August, 1841.

"In the Police Department the whole system has been remodelled. The separate establishments of the Quebec, Montreal, and the Rural Police, have been consolidated; their numbers diminished, while their usefulness has been extended, and a vast reduction of expense effected. A code of regulations for the governance of the Police force has been compiled with great care and labour, which will ensure the efficiency of the establishment under any circumstances hereafter.

"The system of the Police Magistracy has been re-organized under detailed instructions, which have been honored by the express approval of the Governor General.

"These alterations have been effected upon an estimate by which the sum of £17,570 9s. 9d., currency was saved to the Province, and, by a strict and unremitting attention to economy, the expenditure of the year has been reduced to £2000 within the estimate.

"Independent of the duties connected with the Department, I have conducted alone three laborious investigations into the Montreal Gaol, and two into that of the Quebec Gaol. I beg leave to remind His Excellency, most respectfully, of my investigation and report upon the troubles at the Indian Village of Caughnawaga, and upon the recent disturbances in the City, of Toronto, in all which cases I have discharged even the laborious duties of Clerk myself, saving thereby considerable expense to the country, without any extra compensation. I may, also, be permitted to advert to the precautions and preliminary

“arrangements for carrying the Winter Sleigh Ordinance into operation, as extraneous to the office of Commissioner of Police.”

Two of the investigations into the state of the Montreal Gaol, and both of those into the state of the Quebec Gaol, were instituted subsequent to the appointment of Your Excellency's Memorialist as Commissioner of Police. The introduction of the Winter Sleigh Ordinance requires more extended notice.

In the improvement of public communications Lord Sydenham was a great practical benefactor. To him does this Province owe the introduction of Turnpike Roads in the vicinity of the large cities, and an enlightened endeavour to abolish the use of the *trains*, to which the *cahots* and other injurious incidents of the Lower Canadian winter roads are chiefly to be ascribed. In all parts of the country where the “double sleigh” and American “high-runner” are in use, these inconveniences are comparatively unknown. An ordinance was passed prohibiting the use of *trains* upon all main roads after a certain period, and your Memorialist received through Major Campbell, C. B., then Captain in Her Majesty's 7th Hussars, and Military Secretary to Lord Sydenham, the commands of His Excellency, imposing upon your Memorialist the duty and the responsibility of carrying this Law into effect.

By way of precaution and prevention, your Memorialist, acting through the instrumentality of the Rural Police, caused the Law itself to be promulgated in every possible way. He caused model sleighs to be prepared and exhibited at cross roads, and at the best known blacksmith's shops in the country parishes, with printed instructions, showing that they could be made by any man capable of wielding an axe; that they could, in fact, be constructed without the necessary use of iron, and at the nominal cost of the time employed in constructing them. And he took means to impress upon the minds of the people generally that, when the proper time arrived, the Law would be carried out.

The Law was carried out. The benefits of the measure and the probable results were felt and appreciated at once. True it is that subsequent legislation withdrew, bit by bit, first one district, and then a county, and then a parish, from the operation of the Law, until the sphere of its utility became greatly limited, but within those limits an experience of fourteen years has proved the

advantage of the measure, and it may be safely affirmed that all reasonable men in those sections of the country which have since repudiated the Law, now very much regret the repudiation.

The Law was carried into effect as Lord Sydenham desired it should be—temperately but resolutely—peaceably, with little opposition or difficulty, and this result was in a great degree owing to the personal interest and cordial co-operation shown by Lord Sydenham himself in the success of the measure. Your Memorialist is proud to remember that he frequently received from Lord Sydenham personally the expression of his approbation and thanks for his humble services in this particular; and he further believes that he can safely appeal to Major Campbell for further confirmation of this statement, when not borne out by official or authentic documents.

In further explanation of the extent and nature of the re-organization of the Police force, its consolidation and the reduction of expenditure, by which a saving was effected in one year to the extent of nearly £20,000, your Memorialist has inserted in the Appendix to this Memorial a copy of the Report in which these changes are enumerated, of 23rd November, 1840, (No. 11.) To show the principles upon which the Police force was conducted, he refers respectfully to a copy of the Rules and Regulations made for the government of that body, (No. 12. ;) and as a proof of the constitutional spirit in which the Police was employed, he begs also to refer to certain instructions and letters transmitted with the express sanction of Lord Sydenham, to the Police, Police Magistrates, and Returning Officers, previous to the General Election consequent on the union of the the Provinces, February, 1841, (No. 13.)

But, to proceed. Notwithstanding the appointment of your Memorialist to the office of Commissioner of Police, the salary of the office had never been definitively settled. Matters of far greater importance had occupied the attention of the Governor General, and up to a very late period your Memorialist had been unwilling to obtrude with matters of private concernment; but it was understood that Lord Sydenham would shortly leave Canada, and under this impression the letter was written, (No. 10. in the Appendix,) from which an extract has been already made.

Some few weeks elapsed ; no reply had been received to his application, and your Memorialist having had reason to apprehend, but, as it proved, very erroneously, that His Lordship's decision had been adverse to his request, addressed a letter to R. W. Grey, Esquire, his Lordship's Private Secretary, from whom he received an immediate reply, as follows, (No. 14. :)

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, KINGSTON,  
15th September, 1841.

MY DEAR COFFIN,—I took an opportunity this morning of submitting your application of the 14th August to His Excellency again, and at the same time mentioned your wish to have a private interview with him before he leaves the country. He at once fell in with your views, and told me he would see you before he quits Canada, either here or at Montreal. He was so weak and languid that I said no more to him. You say you know it to be the case that your application was refused. I do not think there is any ground for believing so; for both to-day, and at all times when he has mentioned your name, it has been with great kindness, and with an evident desire to promote your views.

I can easily imagine your anxiety at the present moment, that you may not lose the reward of your exertions in the public service, by the departure of one who certainly does not usually overlook real services; but I think you have no reason to fear, and as far as I can do anything for you in this matter, I shall be most happy to assist you.

Your's very truly,

R. W. GREY.

Five days after Lord Sydenham had ceased to live. Your Memorialists cannot permit even this occasion to pass without recording his gratitude to the memory of a Nobleman who was ever to him a kind friend and benefactor.

The unexpected death of Lord Sydenham, and the loss of that testimony which His Lordship would doubtless have borne to previous services, caused your Excellency's Memorialist great discouragement. At this juncture he received from Mr. Murdoch, Chief Secretary to the Government, as well of Lord Sydenham as of his temporary successor in the Administration, the subjoined letter, (No. 15.)



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, KINGSTON,  
25th October, 1841.

MY DEAR COFFIN,—I have your note of the 23rd, respecting your position as Commissioner of Police, and Lord Sydenham's views in regard to your remuneration. In answer I have pleasure in assuring you that on every occasion when Lord Sydenham mentioned your name to me, and he often did so, it was with expressions of his high approval of the manner in which you discharged your duties. At the very time of his accident he had under his consideration your application for an increase of salary, and on the evening before the accident he sent me your private note on the subject, with a memorandum in his own handwriting, that I was to see him respecting it. I inclose for your satisfaction the note with this memorandum. I took the note with me to Government House the following day for the purpose of having his views in the matter, but he was too ill to attend to any but the most pressing business, and unhappily a more favourable opportunity never occurred. I have not the least doubt, however, but that he had made up his mind to increase your emoluments, and that his object in sending for me was to ascertain in what manner this increase might be best provided.

In conclusion, you must allow me to add that the enquiries not immediately connected with your office, which you undertook at Lord Sydenham's desire,—I allude to those into the state of the Montreal Gaol, the disputes at Caughnawaga, the Toronto riots, &c., were—conducted in such a manner as to elicit Lord Sydenham's decided approbation. These were services which would give you a claim on any Government; and knowing as I do, how unceasing your exertions have been, and how useful their result, I cannot but feel confident that you will not go unrewarded. I need hardly say how much pleasure it will give me to hear that your claims have been attended to.

Believe me, my dear Coffin,

Very sincerely yours,

THOS. C. MURDOCH,

W. F. Coffin, Esquire,  
Commissioner of Police.

On the arrival of the Right Honorable Sir Charles Bagot, Lord Sydenham's successor, in the country, your Memorialist renewed his application for an increase of salary as Commissioner of Police, strengthened by the letters which have been thus far brought under Your Excellency's consideration. On the 18th February, I received the following reply, (No. 16.)

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, KINGSTON,  
9th February, 1842.

SIR,—In reply to your communication of the 13th ultimo renewing your request on the ground of the various services you have rendered to the Government since your appointment as Commissioner of Police, for an increase of the emoluments of that office, and enclosing certain letters in evidence of the high value set upon those services, I am commanded to inform you that the Governor General feels much gratification in adding his own acknowledgement of the strength of the claims you urge; and that as it is not in His Excellency's power to meet your expectations in the way you propose, he is pleased to offer for your acceptance in lieu of the office you at present hold, the appointment of Sheriff for the District of Montreal, to be held under a joint commission by the present Sheriff and yourself.

I am commanded particularly to add, that in tendering you this mark of his Excellency's consideration, His Excellency is further influenced by the anticipation he is led from your past services to form, of great advantages to result to the public from the close attention which he feels confident you will immediately give to the state of the Montreal Gaol, with a view to the introduction of a thoroughly improved system of prison discipline.

I have, &c.,

D. DALY,  
*Secretary.*

W. F. Coffin, Esquire,  
Commissioner of Police,  
Montreal.

Your Memorialist accepted most gratefully the alternative proposed to him. The office of Joint Sheriff for the District of Montreal carried with it honorable reward and presumed emoluments

as well as duties and responsibilities. How far your Memorialist performed these duties, to what extent he has met these responsibilities he is now prepared to show. But before doing so he begs permission to introduce a paragraph from a letter received from his friend Mr. Murdoch, subsequent to his appointment as Joint Sheriff.

“ Having now said so much on business, I must add one word to express my sincere satisfaction at your appointment to be Joint Sheriff. I have always felt that you deserved well of the public, that you had worked hard and been insufficiently paid, and that we all owed you a helping hand. If it was not in my power to give it to you, the will was not wanting, and I had therefore great pleasure in hearing from Mr. Daly that the arrangement had been completed for making you a sharer in the emoluments of the Sheriff's office.”

The first duty imposed upon your Memorialist in accepting the office of Joint Sheriff of Montreal was, to fulfil, as far as in him lay, the anticipations of His Excellency, Sir Charles Bagot as to the improvement of the system of prison discipline in the Montreal Gaol. His endeavour to this effect will be best testified by reference to the following documents addressed at different times to, and now in the possession of the Government.

Report on the state of the Montreal Gaol, accompanied by suggestions, November, 1842.

Letter to Inspector General, Public Accounts, 3rd Jan., 1843.

Letter to Provincial Secretary, 17th April, 1843.

“ “ “ 17th April, 1844.

“ “ “ 22nd Jan., 1846.

“ “ “ 26th June, 1846.

“ “ “ 14th Oct., 1846.

“ “ “ 2nd March, 1847.

“ “ “ 22nd June, 1849.

In testimony of his activity on all occasions of public emergency, your Memorialist begs leave to refer, first, to the following Report transmitted to the Government on occasion of certain disturbances at Lachine, (5th February, 1843,) of which very exaggerated accounts had reached Montreal, causing much excitement and alarm.

MONTREAL, 5th February, 1843.

SIR,—Yesterday, about half past four P. M., we were informed that a serious riot had taken place at Lachine, and that the Magistrates contemplated calling on the military authorities for assistance.

Although by a recent Act of the Legislature the Sheriff is specially deprived of all authority as a Magistrate, and is, therefore, comparatively powerless on occasions of this nature, we thought it probable that the office we hold might be respected by persons accustomed to its authority in the Old Country, and in the hope that the appearance of the Sheriff might have a good moral effect on the misguided rioters, Mr. Coffin immediately rode out to Lachine.

On his way out he encountered along the road, several small bodies of men, ten or twelve at a time, some of whom had arms in their hands, perhaps altogether eight or ten fowling pieces. To Mr. Coffin's enquiries they answered that the mob had dispersed. They appeared to be retiring towards Montreal quietly.

Mr. Coffin reached Lachine at a quarter after six, P. M., and found the village perfectly tranquil, no signs of riot or rioters, and with the exception of here and there a few straggling Irish canal labourers, scarcely any movement whatever.

Mr. Coffin then visited most of the taverns and public houses in Lachine. All were very orderly, some appeared to be scarcely frequented at all; in three or four there were assemblages of Irish labourers, but neither before entering (and he observed closely) nor after he had entered, could he perceive in the inmates any signs of violent conduct or demeanor. He conversed with all these people, who assured him, but without any signs of great apprehension, that a riot had taken place that day, but that the rioters had dispersed. That a man had been severely beaten; though none of the speakers had witnessed the fact; and that the riot had taken place at the Toll Gate, (some distance from the village,) but how long it had lasted nobody knew; and the numbers engaged were vaguely stated by the several speakers at from 200 to 1700 men. It appeared therefore, that although a riot had taken place, and had created some alarm, its immediate effects had not been very serious.

The parties engaged were two Irish factions, the "Corkonians" and the "Connaughts." There can be no doubt but that the existence of two such parties, unsuppressed by the law, must be prejudicial to the progress of the works on the canal, and alarming to the inhabitants of Lachine; while it is impossible to foresee how serious, or how fatal the effects may be on a future occasion.

On his return, Mr. Coffin met Messrs. Molson, Holmes, Beaubien, and other Magistrates, and related to them what he had seen, communicating to them at the same time, the name of a person capable of giving them information as to the leaders in these disturbances. Nearer to Montreal he encountered a detachment of cavalry and infantry proceeding to Lachine. There can be no doubt but that the appearance of these troops will have a good moral effect, but to preserve the peace it will be necessary to keep a portion of them on the spot.

We have felt it to be our duty to report what has occurred, without delay, for the information of Her Majesty's Government.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servants,

(Signed,) BOSTON & COFFIN,  
Sheriffs.

On occasion of the elections in the City of Montreal, in April, 1844, which were attended with much tumult and some violence, your Memorialist received the following acknowledgement from A. M. Delisle, Esquire, the Returning Officer, (No. 17.)

MONTREAL, 19th April, 1844.

SIR,—Permit me, before terminating my duties of Returning Officer, to express to you my gratitude for the ready, cheerful, and, I must add, energetic and efficient manner in which you assisted me during the polling days, on the 16th and 17th instant, in preserving the peace. The public have ere this borne testimony to your efficient services; and though my acknowledgment of them may be a matter of supererogation, I do it with infinitely more

pleasure, because I am aware that you acted under peculiarly trying circumstances, and such as could not but have caused you much uneasiness.

Believe me,

Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

(Signed,)

A. M. DELISLE,

*Returning Officer.*

W. F. Coffin, Esquire,

Joint Sheriff,

&c., &c., &c.

On a similar occasion, in October, 1844, your Memorialist received from the Hon. John Young, then also Returning Officer, at elections which then took place for the City of Montreal, the following spontaneous letter of thanks, (No. 18.)

MONTREAL, 26th October, 1844.

SIR,—Allow me very sincerely to thank you for the efficient and prompt assistance rendered me as Returning Officer during the election for the city, which is about to close, as well as to the Constabulary force under your charge.

I am, &c.,

(Signed,)

JOHN YOUNG,

Returning Officer.

W. F. Coffin, Esquire,

Sheriff of Montreal.

It is also the duty of your Memorialist to state briefly, that in the autumn of 1846, and early in the spring of 1847, the neighbourhood of Montreal had been the scene of several daring highway robberies.

In November, 1846, J. Henry Evans, Esq., a well-known merchant of the city of Montreal, was stopped in his carriage on the Queen's Highway, near the Cote St. Catherine, by two armed ruffians, who were put to flight by his determined resistance, after having fired at him twice. An American traveller, named Ludlow, had been stopped and robbed on the ice near Longueuil. Two French Canadian farmers had, on the 16th March, 1847, been

stopped and robbed, also, on the ice between Montreal and La-prairie: and a few days after, on the 29th March, the Upper Canada Mail Stage had been stopped in open day—at eleven o'clock in the morning—at the Tanneries des Rollands, within two miles of the City of Montreal, by two men armed with pistols, and the passengers had been compelled to surrender their money and effects. On the 3rd of April, 1847, a Royal Proclamation appeared in the Official Gazette, offering a reward of one hundred pounds for the capture and conviction of the parties who had committed the two last named offences.

On that day your Memorialist, returning to his residence in the country, in company with the Honorable Judge Day, was suddenly informed by a carter that his sleigh had been stopped and his passenger robbed by two men who he pointed out then upon the highway, one of them having openly in his hands the pistols with which the robbery had been committed. In the attempt to arrest these parties, one of them fired upon your Memorialist, the pistol ball passing through the breast pocket of his coat, cutting the papers therein contained. After a severe struggle these ruffians were, by the gallant assistance of Mr. Day and of Mr. Young, a son of Colonel Plomer Young, Adjutant General to the forces at Kingston, ultimately secured. This occurrence gave rise to the subjoined communication, (No. 19.)

TEMPLE GROVE, *Saturday Evening, 17th July.*

MY DEAR SHERIFF,—I am very happy that, presiding over the Court of Quarter Sessions yesterday, it should have fallen to my lot to be the channel of communicating to you the accompanying extract, from the Presentment of the Grand Jury, being the first public testimonial from your fellow citizens, acknowledging the public services rendered on the occasion of the arrest of Crow and Nowlad, and of the gallant manner of its execution.

I need scarcely say how sincerely I participate in this well earned tribute of respect, and with best wishes for your welfare,

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

J. S. McCORD.

Mr. Sheriff Coffin.

(No. 20.)

OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE PEACE,  
MONTREAL, 17th July, 1847.

SIR,—We have the honor, by the direction of the Justices sitting in the Court of Quarter Sessions, to transmit to you the accompanying extract of a Presentment made by the Grand Jury that Court.

We are,

Sir, your obedient servants,

DELISLE &amp; BREHAUT,

Clerk of the Peace.

W. F. Coffin, Esq., Sheriff,

Montreal.

The Grand Jury have had under their consideration two important cases during the present Session, against one James Crow and one Thomas Nowlan, for highway robbery, and shooting at the person of Mr. Sheriff Coffin, with intent to commit felony. These cases have been tried, and they are happy to find that the parties implicated have been convicted and sentenced to be imprisoned in the Provincial Penitentiary during the terms of their natural lives.

The Grand Jury, in alluding to these cases, have been induced to do so to bear their testimony to the energetic and praiseworthy conduct of his Honor Mr. Justice Day and Mr. Sheriff Coffin on the occasion in question, and especially the latter gentleman, who, at the imminent risk of his life, secured the culprits; and thus they have reason to believe that an organized band of robbers was broken up, for previous to their apprehension offences of a similar character were of frequent occurrence, whilst none have since taken place; and the Grand Jury beg leave in the name of the District to tender their acknowledgements to those gentlemen, for their laudable behaviour on the occasion referred to.

The whole is respectfully submitted.

Grand Jury Room,

Montreal, 17th July, 1845.

(Signed,)

Henry Starnes, Foreman,

W. Malsbury,

George A. Pyper,

Louis Desparois,

Pierre Viger,

J. B. Homier,

Charles D. Proctor,

Louis Plamondon.

H. Turcotte,

Francis Armaut,

Pierre Vian,

Chrysostome Racicot,

W. Leclair,

François Senecal,

D. Calton.

True extract from Presentment.

DELISLE &amp; BREHAUT,

Clerk of the Peace.



Your Memorialist humbly conceives that it is due to himself, in support of his present Memorial, to call attention to the preceding occurrences, if only to show that he has never shrunk from the discharge of any duty in whatever shape it may have presented itself. Whatever he could do lawfully, he did zealously.

In May, 1851, your Memorialist resigned the office of Joint Sheriff of the District of Montreal. In accepting the resignation of his office, His Excellency the Earl of Elgin was pleased to express his regret that your Memorialist "should have deemed it necessary to tender the resignation of an office which he had filled for so many years with credit to himself and advantage to the public. (Letter from Provincial Secretary, 14th May, 1851.)

Your Memorialist resigned the office of Sheriff in 1851, on account of the diminution and uncertainty of the income of his office; seeing that under the operation of divers Acts of Parliament his share of the income of the office had been gradually reduced to an uncertain average of £300 per annum, while the labor, and, still more, the responsibilities remained the same; and he resigned it in the hope that he would be better able to provide for himself and his family in the ordinary avocations of civil life.

That he has so employed himself sedulously and not uselessly to the public at large, during the last four years, is testified, your Memorialist humbly submits, by the Report of the Commissioners appointed to investigate the accidents on the Great Western Railway, lately submitted to the Legislature; and by the assurance conveyed in the letter of the Provincial Secretary, of the 2nd March, 1855, by which that gentleman intimates that "he is directed by the Governor General to convey to your Memorialist the expression of His Excellency's thanks for the trouble he had taken in investigating the circumstances connected with this melancholy occurrence, and for the able and satisfactory manner in which his report had been drawn up."

Your Memorialist resigned the office of Sheriff reluctantly and respectfully, professing at all times his readiness to serve the Government of the Province in any other capacity, and praying to be so employed, which application your Memorialist respectfully renews.

Wherefore your Memorialist humbly prays that Your Excellency will be pleased to take the premises into your most gracious consideration, and will be pleased, in view of his faithful and zealous services of fifteen years, to confer upon your Memorialist any public office or employment in which, to Your Excellency's apprehension, he can be useful to the country.

And your Memorialist will, as in duty bound, ever pray.

*William F. Coffin*  
 Montreal 3<sup>rd</sup> April. 1855

The following letter from the Hon. Judge Meredith, of Quebec, refers to the Montreal elections, of April, 1844, at which Alexander M. Delisle presided as Returning Officer.

QUEBEC, 31st March, 1855.

MY DEAR SIR,—I duly received your letter of the 27th instant, in which you inquire whether I recollect the arrest of a man by you near the Bank of Montreal, at the election for that City in 1844, and requesting from me a statement of the facts connected with that arrest, if I can recall them to my memory. I have, I believe, a distinct recollection of the occurrence: you were acting as Sheriff on the occasion, and I was engaged professionally for Mr. William Molson, one of the candidates. Early in the day a mob of some hundreds of persons, (laborers, as was believed, from the Lachine Canal,) obtained possession of the poll. You visited the place frequently, and did every thing in your power to enable electors to exercise their rights, and to maintain peace. In the course of the day one of the mob made himself remarkable by his turbulent demeanor. You remonstrated with him frequently, but without any effect. At last you very properly determined on his arrest, and it was effected by yourself in a manner that, I must admit, astonished me, and took the mob completely by surprise. You forced your horse through the outer ranks of the mob, seized the offender by the collar, dragged him from among his fellow rioters, and across the square thrust him into a cab, and sent him off to jail. How it was that you, (being on horseback,) were able to drag the prisoner after you, or why the mob did not rescue him, is not easy to explain; but this is certain, that the rioter was arrested, and that a rescue was not even attempted. I have frequently referred to your conduct throughout that election, and upon other occasions within my own knowledge, as evincing extraordinary coolness, courage and determination.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

W. C. MEREDITH.

William F. Coffin, Esq.

The subjoined letter from Benjamin Delisle, Esq., High Constable, District of Montreal, has reference to the Montreal election, of October, 1844, the Hon. John Young being the Returning Officer.

MONTREAL, 28th March, 1855.

MY DEAR SIR,—I do remember perfectly well that during the election riots in Montreal, in October, 1844, you jumped from your horse, and seized a man who had deliberately knocked down

another in McGill Street. I went to your assistance, but we were surrounded by his friends, brandishing sticks, and threatening, though they did not strike us. The man we had arrested was torn from us by main force. How we got off without further damage has always been a wonder to me.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

**BENJ. DELISLE,**  
High Constable.

To William F. Coffin, Esq.,  
&c., &c.,  
Montreal.

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