

Early Turf and Field Silver from Trois-Rivières

By Ross Fox

Trois-Rivières stands prominently in the annals of Canadian equestrian sport. Two trophies with Trois-Rivières connections, which are the main focus of this article, are material proof of its early history. They rank among the earliest Canadian equestrian prizes in silver yet identified. One concerns the Tally Ho Hunt and fox hunting, the other the Three Rivers Turf Club and horse racing. The early history of horse racing in Lower Canada/Canada East (Quebec) has yet to be written, which augments the documentary importance of these trophies. Quebec City and Montreal as Quebec's chief urban centers were also of major importance for early horse racing.

Tally Ho Hunt Cup

Fox hunting as a field or country sport was at its apogee in Britain about mid-19th century.¹ It depended on well-bred and trained foxhounds and horses known as field hunters that were suited for cross-country chasing. And it was ruled by a sophisticated social protocol reflecting its status as a sport of the English upper classes. The Tally Ho Hunt may be the first of its kind in Lower Canada dedicated to fox hunting. But its early history is murky and abounding in legends.² Generally it is said to date from the 1820s, but the late 1820s on is more likely.³ Even its characterization remains elusive. Though sometimes referred to as the Tally Ho Hunt Club, the epithet "Mr. Bell's Hounds" is probably more suitable. That is because Mathew Bell was sole owner of the foxhounds as well as field hunters, which he imported from England. He also raised foxes. Thus it was a private or personal hunt rather than a club as such. For convenience, however, it will be referred to as the Tally Ho Hunt. Bell himself was a prominent member of colonial society.⁴

¹ Roger Longrigg, *The History of Foxhunting* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1975).

² Fred C. Wurtele, "Historical Record of the St.-Maurice Forges, the Oldest Active Blast-Furnace on the Continent of America," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 4, sect. 2 (1887): 87; Napoléon Caron, *Deux voyages sur le Saint-Maurice* (Trois-Rivières: Librairie du Sacré-Coeur, P. V. Ayotte, 1889), 269-70; James MacPherson Le Moine, *The Legends of the St. Lawrence* (Quebec: C. E. Holiwell, 1898), 48-49; Philippe-Baby Casgrain, "L'Habitation de Samos," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 2d ser., 12, sect. 1 (1906): 269-70; Benjamin Sulte, *Les Forges Saint-Maurice* (Montreal: G. Ducharme, 1920), 184; Luce Vermette, *Domestic Life at Les Forges du Saint-Maurice*, *History and Archaeology* 58 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, 1982), 153.

³ Paul-Louis Martin, *Histoire de la chasse au Québec* (Montreal: Éditions du Boréal Express, 1980), 80.

⁴ Michel Bédard, André Bérubé and Jean Hamelin, "Bell, Mathew," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 64-69



Fig. 1. *La Grande Maison*, Residence of Mathew Bell, St. Maurice Forges.

Above all an industrialist, Bell was lessee of the *Forges du Saint-Maurice* or St. Maurice Forges near Trois-Rivières, an enterprise he operated from 1793 in partnership with David Munro.⁵ They developed it into one of the most technically-advanced ironworks in North America.⁶ Bell also had other pursuits in both commercial and public life. He began as a merchant in the import-export trade at Quebec City and rose rapidly in the ranks of the colony's commercial elite. Early on he was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada for the Saint-Maurice riding and then for Trois-Rivières. He benefited from government preferments the most distinguished of which was his appointment in 1823 to the Legislative Council. Bell also acquired extensive landholdings in many parts of the colony. But his principal endeavour was the St. Maurice Forges. In 1829 he took up permanent residence there in order to supervise operations more closely. Bell's various enterprises provided him with the financial means for a lifestyle fitting a *grand seigneur* or country lord (Fig. 1).

Most of what is known about the Tally Ho Hunt and Bell's hounds derives from later sources which are of undetermined accuracy. The *Quebec Mercury* of October 18, 1830, provides us with a glimpse from a contemporary witness, however:

Saturday was a beautiful morning . . . Mr. Bell's Hounds had thown [sic] off in the neighbourhood and after finding a Fox, and I am told crowding the very centre of the Race Course [of the Three Rivers Turf Club], and a run of some miles, I saw Reynard taken from under a shed in the skirts of the town,—I counted upwards of five and thirty horsemen, some of whom I am told had come in a direct line, and consequently they must have ridden as in a steeplechase, and very extraordinary leaps must have taken.

⁵ Monro retired from the partnership in 1815.

⁶ Roch Samson, *The Forges du Saint-Maurice: Beginnings of the Iron and Steel Industry in Canada 1730-1883* (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1998).

The same newspaper followed up with another account on October 23:

The Hounds of the Honorable M. Bell had another capital run on Monday last. During the preceding night some devastations had been committed in the Poultry house at the St. Maurice Forges by a beast of prey; on this being reported, early on the following morning, the hounds were taken out, and cast off at the top of Forge Hill. They shortly hit on the drag of the marauder, and went away in gallant style, running in the direction of Pointe du Lac, nearly seven miles . . . when the hounds being suddenly at fault, the sportsmen who were up with them enjoyed a hearty laugh in *Tally-ho-ing*, not a fox, but a large Fisher . . . (a species of Martin but much superior in size).

The following year, Adam Fergusson, a Scots visitor to Lower Canada, met an unnamed son-in-law of Bell who recounted to him: “I go with my horse on board the steamer at Quebec, and reach Trois Rivières in good time to breakfast, hunt with my father-in-law, who keeps a pack [of foxhounds], and return to Quebec by the afternoon boat.” Fergusson also mentioned the Montreal Hunt: “The merchants of Montreal . . . retain a love for the chase. A small pack of fox-hounds is kept up by subscription.”⁷

In 1829 the Montreal Hunt, or Montreal Fox Hounds as it was also called, is said to have acquired a pack of English foxhounds from Mathew Bell.⁸ Newspapers accounts of the previous year indicate the Montreal Hunt Club already had a pack, or at least one was in a formative stage: “Exertions are making in Montreal and its vicinity, to raise a Pack of Hounds for the celebrated diversion—of Fox Hunting.” The club had sufficient hounds for a chase on May 3rd. It was reported to be the “first opportunity the inhabitants of Montreal . . . had of witnessing a fox hunt.”⁹ Founded in 1826 or shortly thereafter, the Montreal Hunt is reputed to be the oldest hunt club in continuous existence in North America.

This circumstantial evidence lends credence to Bell’s having the first pack of English foxhounds in the colony. A native of Berwick-upon-Tweed in northern England, no doubt he had direct familiarity with the English sport. Ownership by him of a pack would seem an intentional brandishing of his ascendancy in the colony’s elite, which cherished English social trappings. Lord Dalhousie, who knew Bell personally, is quoted as remarking that Bell “lives and speaks more like an English gentleman than most people in this country.”¹⁰

A silver goblet (**Fig. 2**) which descended in Mathew Bell’s family bears a tradition of association with the Tally Ho Hunt and Bell himself. It was sold at auction in 1981 together with a seal engraved with a fox and motto “Tally Ho.”¹¹ The catalogue entry indicates the goblet is by J.E. Terry & Co. of London and dates from 1818 and therefore predates Bell’s ownership of foxhounds. As happens with family traditions, facts sometimes become misconstrued. Accrediting the goblet to Bell was



Fig. 2. J. E. Terry & Co. (London), Tally Ho Hunt Cup, 1818. Photo: Sotheby Parke Bernet (Canada), Inc., Sale, May 5-6, 1981, lot 123.

⁷ Adam Fergusson, *Practical Notes Made During a Tour in Canada, and a Portion of the United States, in MDCCCXXXI*, 2d ed. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1834), 68-69.

⁸ John Irwin Cooper, *The History of the Montreal Hunt* (Montreal: Montreal Hunt, 1953), 6-8, 11.

⁹ *Montreal Herald*, 30 April 1828.

¹⁰ Cited in Bédard et al.

¹¹ Sotheby Parke Bernet (Canada) Inc., Sale, 5-6 May 1981, lot 123; Cooper, 26, illus. after p. 86.

based on the monogram engraved on the side of the goblet. But the monogram itself is disputable. Though read as *DMB*, the central letter is not absolutely clear and could just as well be an “H”. Mathew Bell neither used the initial D nor had a forename beginning with that letter. The only person in Bell’s family who qualifies for the letters *DMB* is Bell’s son David Munro Bell (1814-1839), who was named after his father’s business partner.¹² Whether it actual refers to the son or not is moot, however, the alternative reading of *DHB* does not fit any family member.

The goblet is illustrated in *The Storied Province of Quebec: Past and Present* with the caption: “The first Steeplechase cup in Canada, first run for at Three Rivers more than 100 years ago.”¹³ If correct, that would make it the earliest known hunt trophy in silver with Lower Canadian associations. Coincidentally the owner of the goblet at the time was William Wood, editor-in-chief of that publication. He must certainly be the source for the goblet’s provenance.¹⁴

In his time Wood was a prominent Canadian historian who authored some twenty books. He was also a leading figure in the movement to preserve Quebec’s heritage with a special focus on historical sites, above all those with military connections. Among positions held, he was a president of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec and from 1921 until 1936, assistant archivist of the Quebec Provincial Archives.¹⁵

Early Horse Racing in Quebec

The history of horse racing in Canada traces back to early French settlement in the form of informal harness racing.¹⁶ As an organized sport, however, horse racing dates to the arrival of the British. The earliest known reference to flat racing occurs in Quebec City on July 1, 1767, just four years after New France was ceded to Great Britain.¹⁷ The course was located on the Plains of Abraham and the race consisted of three heats of one lap each. The organizer, Robert Wilcocks (also Wilcox), was a local trader. The winner was the mare *Modesty* of Captain William Prescott of the 15th Regiment of Foot. Though seemingly an isolated event, British army officers would soon play a key role in the promotion of equestrian sports in Canada over the next 100 years.

1789 saw the founding of the Quebec Turf Club, the first of its kind in Canada.¹⁸ Though the club continues up until the present day its history has yet to be studied. Whether or not it

¹² The following is a revision of the goblet’s history of ownership as found in the auction catalogue: David Munro Bell? Mathew Bell Irvine (not Irving) (1832-1893), son of Anne Bell, sister of D. M. Bell who died without issue; William Charles Henry Wood (1864-1947), stepson of M. B. Irvine, and son of his wife Charlotte Feodore Louisa Augusta Guérout, who was previously married to George Augustus Leslie Wood, his father.

¹³ (Toronto: The Dominion Publishing Company, Limited, 1931), 1: illus. opp. p. 224.

¹⁴ See fn. 12. Wood died in 1947 unmarried. *The Gazette* (Montreal), 10 Sept. 1947.

¹⁵ See website Répertoire du patrimoine culturel du Québec at www.patrimoine-culturel.gouv.qc.ca.

¹⁶ Mason Godden, *Celebrating 250 Years of Horse Racing in Canada: Horse Racing Before Confederation* (Toronto: Mason Godden, 2017), 6-7, 16. Also see Donald Guay, *Histoire des courses de chevaux au Québec* (Montreal: VLB Éditeur, 1985).

¹⁷ *Quebec Gazette*, 25 Jun. & 9 Jul. 1767.

¹⁸ Godden, 20; Guay, 152.

sponsored regular annual races during its early years remains uncertain. Again races were held on the Plains of Abraham, which during the early 19th century would rank as one of the premier racetracks in Canada.

John Lambert, a visitor from England, was eye-witness to flat races that took place in Quebec City from July 4th through 6th, 1808.¹⁹ He credits General Sir James Craig, the recently appointed Governor-in-Chief of British North America, for the introduction of the sport to the colony. Perhaps he meant flat racing was revived that year. Craig sponsored a purse of 10 guineas for a match of “any Canadian bred horse, mare or gelding, of any age or size . . . provided they are *bona fide* the property of a Canadian Farmer.”²⁰ The goal of his patronage was to encourage horse breeding in Canada. “His excellency . . . assured them they should meet with every encouragement from him.”²¹ The largest purse of 50 Guineas was for a match “rode by Gentlemen.”

One of the earliest mentions to an actual trophy prize is for a sweepstakes held at Quebec City in late September of 1815. It is simply listed as “A Silver Cup, value 100 dollars.” The donor’s name is not given.²²

In 1818 the 4th Duke of Richmond as Governor-in-Chief gifted a silver cup to the Quebec Turf Club appropriately called the Governor’s Cup. The winner was a horse belonging to Captain Cruttenden of the Royal Artillery and ridden by Lord William Lennox, aide-de-camp to his father, the Duke of Richmond.²³ The *Quebec Mercury* informs us that the Quebec Turf Club was newly organized that year under the Duke’s patronage. The inaugural meeting, chaired by Colonel Wilson of the British garrison, formulated this statement of purpose: “It was resolved, that the gentlemen present to form themselves into a club, to be denominated the *Quebec Turf Club*.”²⁴ Evidently the club was reorganized following an indeterminate hiatus.

Vice regal representatives of the Crown, whether governors general, governors or lieutenant governors were often key patrons of horse racing henceforth. Trophies and purses were among the incentives offered. Richmond’s successor, the 9th Earl of Dalhousie, provided a silver cup for a sweepstakes run by the Quebec Turf Club in the spring of 1822 (**Fig. 3**). He also furnished a second cup the following year.²⁵ Lord Dalhousie was celebrated for his efforts to personally incentivize the development in the colony of the arts and culture in general.

Montreal was not long in rivalling Quebec City in the sport. In 1811, Phineas and Stanley Bagg leased a property to the “Jockey Club Montreal” near the Mile End Tavern two miles north of the city for the creation of a racetrack.²⁶ That club was at least an indirect precursor of the Montreal Turf Club that was formally

¹⁹John Lambert, *Travels Through Lower Canada, and the United States of North America in the Years 1806, 1807, and 1808* (London: Richard Phillips, 1810), 1: 319-20.

²⁰*Quebec Mercury*, 27 Jun. 1808; *Courier de Québec*, 16 Jul. 1808.

²¹Lambert, 319-20.

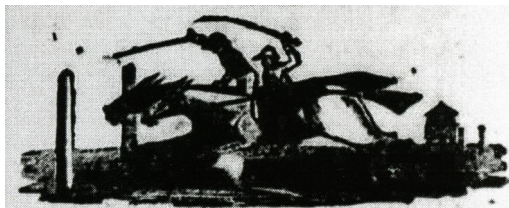
²²*Quebec Mercury*, 3 Oct. 1815.

²³*Quebec Mercury*, 1 Sept. 1818.

²⁴*Quebec Mercury*, 18 Aug. 1818.

²⁵*Quebec Mercury*, 13 May 1823.

²⁶Yves Desjardins, *Histoire du Mile End* (Quebec: Septentrion, 2017), 33,



QUEBEC TURF CLUB,

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE
EARL OF DALHOUSIE.

HIS Excellency having, with his usual desire to promote the sport, intimated to the Stewards, his intention of again presenting the Club with a SILVER CUP, to be run for at the SPRING MEETING, it is proposed to have the following Races:—

SPRING MEETING—1822.

FIRST DAY, TUESDAY, 4th June.

His Excellency the Governor's Cup,
Richmond Stakes in Classes.

A Sweepstakes of 5 guineas P. P. to carry 10 stone
7lbs. one mile heats.

A Private Sweepstakes.

SECOND DAY, WEDNESDAY, 5th June.

A Sweepstakes, 10 guineas, half forfeit, to carry 12
stone, 2 mile heats, and horses not required to be *bona fide* property of Members.

Ladies' Purse.

Dalhousie Stakes in Classes.

Handicap Stakes.

Private Sweepstakes.

A Private Sweepstakes, of Five Guineas, half forfeit,
to carry 12 stone, heats two miles, to close on the 1st of
March; no member to be admitted after that date, un-
less with unanimous consent, and by ballot. Horses to
be *bona fide* property of Subscribers.

Present Subscribers.

Capt. HAY,
Licut. SADLER,

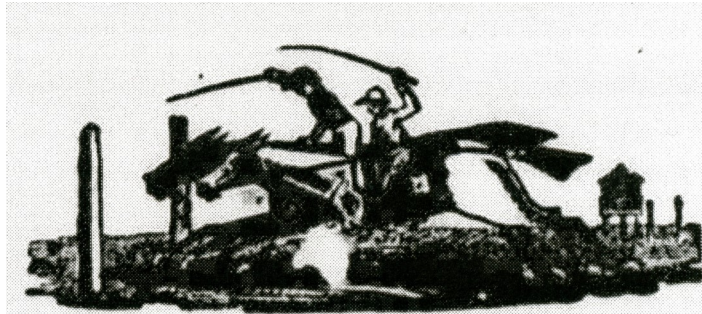
Colonel COCKBURN,
Colonel READY.

ALFRED HAWKINS,

Treasr.

Quebec, 26th Feby. 1822.
A. B. A Meeting of the Club will be called at an ear-
ly day, of which due notice will be given, A. H.

Fig. 3



THE Races at Three Rivers will take place on
Thursday and Friday the 14th and 15th inst.

STEWARDS.

Honble. M. BELL,

P. B. DUMOULIN,

PIERRE VEZINA,

H. F. HUGHES,

E. WOOLSWORTH.

} Esquires.

JAS. DICKSON, Esquire, Clerk of the Course.

The Three Rivers New Course is equal to any in
British America.

Mr. Bell's Hounds will hunt in the neighborhood on the
Thursday and Saturday mornings.

Three Rivers, 2d October, 1830.

Fig. 4

THREE RIVERS RACES.

AT a Meeting of the Trustees of the Three Rivers
Turf Club, held this day:—

It was resolved, That the Three Rivers Races should
take place on Tuesday the 21st and Wednesday the 22nd,
of September next.

FIRST DAY, TUESDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER.

The Produce Stakes of 20 Sovereigns, to be run for
by all horses bred in the District of Three Rivers, that
never before run on any public Race Course—Entrance
£2 10s.

Weights.

2 years old, 5 stone 10 lbs,	} Heats, one mile and a distance, to start from the distance post.
3 " " 8 " 4 "	
4 " " 8 " 9 "	
5 " " 9 " 1 "	
6 " " 9 " 5 "	
Aged 9 " 7 "	

N. B.—The Stewards will require satisfactory proof
of the qualifications of horses to enter for this Purse.

The Three Rivers Stakes of—dollars, entrance
four dollars—heats, one mile.

Weights 3 years old, 7 stone 9 lbs.

4 " " 8 " 7 "
5 " " 9 " 0 "
6 " " 9 " 7 "
Aged 10 " 0 "

SECOND DAY, WEDNESDAY, 22nd SEPTEMBER.

The Members' Purse of Twenty Guineas, free to all
horses, two mile heats—entrance 10 dollars.

Weights, 3 years old, 7 stone 9 lbs.

4 " " 8 " 10 "
5 " " 9 " 5 "
6 " " 9 " 12 "
Aged 10 " 0 "

The Ladies' Purse of—dollars, entrance four
dollars—heats, one mile and a distance. Gentlemen
riders—weights, 10 stone.

Other Purse and Plates to complete the two days
sport will be hereafter made known, and further par-
ticulars of the Races. Only subscribers to the amount
of four dollars, are entitled to enter a horse.

Riders to be dressed in Jockey style.

JAMES DICKSON, Secy.

Three Rivers, 17th June, 1831. u-1

Fig. 5



organized in 1823.²⁷ The Mile End racetrack was a permanent feature of the Montreal horse-racing landscape for the next forty years. The Montreal Turf Club would soon relocate to other sites, however.

The Three Rivers Turf Club and Its Early Trophies

In 1830 the Three Rivers Turf Club was formed in Trois-Rivières with Mathew Bell as a lead organizer and steward (**Fig. 3**). A racing enthusiast and thoroughbred owner, Bell was active in the Quebec Turf Club where he was a steward that same year.²⁸ The property for a racetrack was provided by Moses Hart, a native of Trois-Rivières and prominent entrepreneur with extensive investments in shipping, the import-export business and banking. Hart was also the largest landowner in the district.²⁹

In an advertisement for the first races (**Fig. 4**) the racetrack is described as “equal to any in British America.” Three years later an observer left this more detailed description: “The course is oval, or nearly so, quite level, made on a sandy soil, well covered with turf; and the running is completely overlooked from the stand, which commands a most beautiful and extensive prospect” extending over the St. Lawrence River and beyond.³⁰

The Three Rivers Turf Club rapidly gained tailwinds. There were races over the next seven consecutive years, attracting visitors from Quebec City, Montreal and beyond (**Fig. 5**). The club’s races received a significant boost in 1832 when the 5th Baron Aylmer as Governor-in-Chief presented a silver cup for competition. Valued at twenty-five sovereigns it was “open to all horses bred in the Province of Lower Canada, that never won a match, plate, or sweepstakes.”³¹

Lord Aylmer also provided silver cups in 1833, 1834 and 1835.³² That for 1833 received this characterization: “Its workmanship was beautiful, executed in England, with an inscription in Honor of the Races of Three Rivers, a blank being left for the name of the winner.”³³ The winner was James Bell, son of Mathew, who rode the horse *Columbine*.³⁴ Mathew Bell won the 1835 Aylmer Cup for the horse *Competitor*.³⁵ The races for those same three years were presided over personally by His Excellency and Lady Aylmer, which contributed greatly to the reputation of the Three Rivers Turf Club. Reflecting its new prestige, the 1833 races received a detailed report in the *American Turf Register, and Sporting Magazine*.³⁶

Aylmer’s Vice regal tenure came to an end in 1835. Shortly before his departure the trustees and stewards of the Three Rivers Turf Club requested that he present a memorial to the king (William IV) on their

²⁷ D. A. L. MacDonald, “Sports on Parade,” *The Gazette* (Montreal), 24 Jul. 1948.

²⁸ *Quebec Mercury*, 9 Jun. 1830.

²⁹ *Quebec Gazette*, 1830 Sept. 13. Also see Denis Vaugeois, *The First Jews in North America: The Extraordinary Story of the Hart Family, 1760-1860*, trans. Käthe Roth (Montreal: Baraka Books, 2012), passim.

³⁰ *Quebec Mercury*, 1 Aug. 1833.

³¹ *Montreal Gazette*, 14 Aug. 1832.

³² *L’Echo du pays* (Village Debartzch), 6 Jun. 1834; *Quebec Mercury*, 23 Jun. 1835.

³³ *Quebec Mercury*, 1 Aug. 1833.

³⁴ *L’Ami du peuple* (Montreal), 31 Jul. 1833.

³⁵ *Quebec Mercury*, 1 Aug. 1835.

³⁶ 5,1 (Sept. 1833), 51-52.

behalf. It stated: "His Majesty may be graciously pleased to confer upon the Three Rivers Race Course, for competition of the province at large, *an annual King's Plate*."³⁷ Aylmer agreed. Royal assent followed that autumn and it was conveyed to Mathew Bell by Alymer. No doubt Bell was a pivotal figure in obtaining Aylmer's support. Not only was he active in the turf club, but he was also a member of the Legislative Council, or upper house of the colony's bicameral government, and therefore ranked among the colony's power brokers. The royal plate consisted of an annual purse of fifty guineas. Its purpose as stated in the memorial was to promote "in this your majesty's province of Lower Canada, those rural sports which have contributed so much to the harmless enjoyment, and manly character of our fellow-subjects in our beloved father-land, as well as for the purpose of exciting emulation in improving the breed of horses throughout this portion of the British empire . . ." ³⁸

The first King's Plate was run for at Trois-Rivières in 1836.³⁹ The winner was Aaron Philip Hart's horse *Brunette*.⁴⁰ Aaron was the nephew of Moses Hart. Trois-Rivières also hosted the second King's Plate the succeeding year. The winner was Lieutenant Vivian of the 69th Regiment riding *Shelalagh*. Vivian was aide-de-camp to Lord Gosford, Governor-in-Chief, who attended the event. The prize was revoked, however, when it was realized that *Shelalagh*⁴¹ was not bred in Lower Canada, which was the principal prerequisite. Instead it was given to Paul Kauntz a confectioner and horse breeder from Montreal whose horse *Billy Bager* was in second place.⁴²

Royal patronage meant the King's Plate was the foremost prize for horse racing in the colony. Accordingly its competition was a premiere social event. James Logan, a visitor from Scotland, who in 1837 took a steamboat from Montreal to Trois-Rivières to attend the races, recounts "there was a large company on board, and all the berths were taken." He was also impressed by the attendance at the races. "There were about two thousand spectators . . . many of them in calashes and four-wheeled open carriages."⁴³ Races were suspended the following year owing to the disruption of the Rebellion of 1837-38. Over the next two decades the history of the Three Rivers Turf Club was somewhat checkered.

According to an advertisement in the *Morning Chronicle* (Quebec) of August 9, 1853, the races of the Three Rivers Turf Club were re-established that year. A notable feature of the participants, most were Francophone when up to this time the sport throughout Lower Canada was dominated by Anglophones.⁴⁴

There were races again at Trois-Rivières in 1858 of which the *Montreal Herald* provides a detailed account:

These races, for some years discontinued in this locality, were resumed . . . Naturally they excited much interest among the public; for the Queen's Cup [formerly the King's Cup], originally granted to

³⁷ *Quebec Mercury*, 1 Aug. 1835.

³⁸ *American Turf Register, and Sporting Magazine* 8, 7 (Mar. 1837): 307-14. Also see *The New Sporting Magazine* 11 (Nov. 1836): 418-24.

³⁹ *La Minerve* (Montreal), 7 Jul. 1836.

⁴⁰ *Quebec Mercury*, 30 Jul. 1836.

⁴¹ *Quebec Mercury*, 12 Aug. 1837.

⁴² *L'Ami du peuple* (Montreal), 12 Aug. 1837.

⁴³ James Logan, *Notes of a Journey Through Canada, the United States of America, and the West Indies* (Edinburgh: Fraser & Co., 1838), 37.

⁴⁴ *Morning Chronicle* (Quebec), 21 Sept. 1853.

be run for at Three Rivers, after several years of abeyance, was again restored, on application to His Excellency,

Sir Edmund Head [Governor General].⁴⁵

The article continues with a description of the race track (see **Fig. 13**): “This course is a mile in circumference, the ground it encloses is slightly hollow in the centre, of an amphitheatre form, giving the spectators outside a good and satisfactory view of the contest from the start to the finishing post.”

Three Rivers Turf Club Trophy at the Royal Ontario Museum

A jug at the Royal Ontario Museum was a trophy awarded at the Trois-Rivières races held on September 6, 7 and 8, 1859 (**Fig. 6**). With grape-vine ornament encircling the body and neck, no doubt it is a claret or wine jug. It ranks as the most splendid equestrian trophy from pre-Confederation Quebec presently known (**Figs. 7-11**). Moreover, it has the distinction of being made in Canada at a time when most trophies were imported from England. The source is the workshop of the Montreal silversmith Robert Hendery (1814-1897).⁴⁶ From the late 1850s through the next four decades the various Hendery firms were the major makers of silver wares in Canada with a customer base extending throughout the country.

The inscription on the side of the jug reads in part (**Fig. 10**): “THIS CUP / presented to C. M. Starnes Esqr. / BY THE / Ladies of this District / the same having been WON by his Chestnut Horse / MARIO.” The recipient was Charles William Starnes (1822-1868) a notary from St. Hyacinthe. The event took place on September 7. The Cup (jug) was the prize for the second race (The Ladies’ Purse) of the second day and had a stated value of \$100.⁴⁷ On the previous day Starnes’ *Mario* also won the first race for the District Purse of \$100. And just three weeks earlier on August 16 the same horse won the first race (Innkeepers’ Purse) at the Montreal District Turf Club (also Montreal Turf Club) races at St. Hyacinthe. During this period that club’s autumn races took place at the St. Hyacinthe racetrack. An eyewitness reported: “We ought to mention that *Mario*, who did his work in such gallant style, although in good running condition, had only been under training for some ten days.”⁴⁸ *Mario* certainly proved to be a champion, as he went on to win the Members’ Plate of \$100 at the Autumn Races of the St. Francis Turf Club at Sherbrooke on September 30.⁴⁹



Fig. 6. Advertisement for Steamboat Services to the Trois-Rivières Races from Montreal and Quebec City. *Le Canadien* (Quebec), September 7, 1859.

⁴⁵8 Sept. 1858.

⁴⁶Ross Fox, “Hendery, Robert,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 424-25.

⁴⁷*Le Pays* (Montreal), 14 Sept. 1859; *Gazette de Sorel*, 13 Sept. 1859.

⁴⁸*Montreal Herald*, 17 Aug. 1859.

⁴⁹*Morning Chronicle* (Quebec), 26 Sept. 1859; *The Farmer’s Journal and Transactions of the Board of Agriculture of Lower Canada* 12, 3 (Nov. 1859): 50.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

Fig. 7. Workshop of Robert Hendery (Montreal), Three Rivers Turf Club Cup, 1859. Royal Ontario Museum (photo: Brian Boyle ROM).

Fig. 8. Workshop of Robert Hendery (Montreal), Three Rivers Turf Club Cup, 1859. Royal Ontario Museum (photo: Brian Boyle ROM).

Fig. 9. Marks of Robert Hendery on the Three Rivers Turf Club Cup.

Fig. 10. Detail of Inscription on the Three Rivers Turf Club Cup.



Fig. 12



Fig. 11. Detail of the Racing Scene on the Three Rivers Turf Club Cup.

Engraved on the jug are the names of various officials associated with the Three Rivers Turf Club. They include: Joseph-Édouard Turcotte, President of the TRTC, who was a lawyer, entrepreneur, MPP (Member of Provincial Parliament, United Province of Canada) for Champlain (elected 1858), Mayor of Trois-Rivières (1857-1863), and later Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of United Canada (1862-1863); Colonel William Crosbie Hanson, Vice President of the TRTC, retired Captain of the 71st High-

land Regiment of Foot (British Army) and Lieutenant-Colonel of the Nicolet Militia;⁵⁰ and Ira Craig Hart, Secretary and Treasurer of the TRTC, merchant in Trois-Rivières and nephew of Moses Hart (see above), and early in his career his partner in the shipping business.

The five stewards of the club are also listed: Thomas Alexander Lambert, lumber merchant in Bécancour; Sévère Dumoulin, lawyer, businessman and Alderman of Trois-Rivières in 1859; Charles-Christophe Mailhot (also Maillot), physician in Pointe-du-Lac; Captain James Rollo; Olivier Chenevert, farmer in Saint-Félix de Valois (Joliette).

The nature of the racing scene (**Fig. 11**) on the Hendery jug is not easily interpreted. Is it simply generic or is it based on first-hand observation, at least partially? With Hendery such scenes are often rooted in reality. Figural scenes together with extensive overall decoration as with this jug signify a new direction in Hendery's silver production that is discernible by 1858.⁵¹ This embellishment is achieved through the techniques of chasing and embossing. The person who is key to this development is Louis (also Lewis) Felix Paris (1812-1885), an immigrant silversmith from London. Paris was a gold and silver chaser (decorator), a highly specialized skill. He is documented in Montreal by June 1855.⁵² When precisely he was engaged by Hendery is unknown, but it was probably before 1858. Paris continued to work for Hendery through the 1860s, except for an interlude around 1861, when he attempted

⁵⁰*Montreal Herald*, 7 Dec. 1859; *Quebec Mercury*, 15 Dec. 1859.

⁵¹For examples of this kind of work see: Ross Fox, *Presentation Pieces and Trophies from the Henry Birks Collection of Canadian Silver* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1985), 46-51; Fox, "Certifiably Canadian: Trademarks Identify Silver Service As Made in Canada," *Rotunda* 36 (Summer/Fall 2003): 49-51.

⁵²Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Greffe Laurent-Auguste Moreau, 22 Jun. 1855.

⁵³Charles Mayer, "Un souvenir d'il y a plus de cent ans aux Trois-Rivières où débutait le 'Prix du Roi', la plus ancienne classique en Amérique," *Le Bien public* (Trois-Rivières), 29 Jun. 1962.

⁵⁴*Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 8 Apr. 1987.

⁵⁵Ross Skoggard, *The Compleat Collector* (Morrisville NC: Lulu Press, 2014), n.p. (see September 25, 1988).

life as a farmer at Métis (today Métis-sur-Mer) in the remote Lower St. Lawrence region. By 1873 Paris was in Providence, Rhode Island, where he continued to work as a silversmith.

Ownership of the Hendery jug following Starnes' death is not known. It was in the possession of J. Harold Crang (1902-1987) by 1962.⁵³ Ten years later he sold it to the Royal Ontario Museum. Crang was a stockbroker and financier who founded the investment firm J. H. Crang & Co. of Toronto.⁵⁴ Among many interests, he had among the best collections of silver and fire-arms in the country.⁵⁵ He was a member of the ROM's Museum Board for fourteen years and an organizer and contributor to the museum's landmark exhibition "English Silver" in 1958. Pertinent to the Hendery jug, Crang was a horseman. In 1939, he was Captain of the Toronto Polo Club (**Fig. 12**) when it won the Canadian Polo Championship. In 1956, his horse *Cilroy* was part of the Canadian Equestrian team, which won a bronze medal at the Stockholm Olympic Games. Crang was also an organizer of the Canadian Equestrian Federation (later the Canadian Horse Council).

As for the Three Rivers Turf Club, during the 1860s it became the St. Maurice Turf Club which eventually morphed into the modern Hippodrome de Trois-Rivières. The Tally Ho Hunt did not endure beyond the late 1830s or early 1840s.

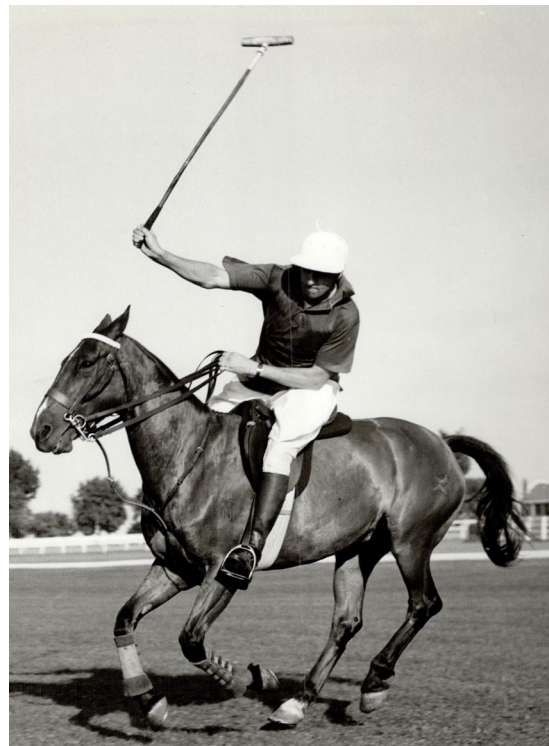


Fig. 12. J. Harold Crang Playing Polo, 1937.

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