

## Hereford Forest / Viewpoint and Memorial Site 2

### The built heritage of the Hereford township

#### **Station : The Yellow House – Chemin Duchesneau**

##### **The Yellow House**

The plot on which the Yellow House stands was granted to James Rankin in 1800. This plot includes, amongst other things, the current start of Chemin des Côtes, the end of Chemin Duchesneau and the start of Chemin Owen. Following several transactions and the more or less temporary settlement of several families on this plot 13 R1, in 1854, Alexander Andrews purchased part of plot 13. He lived in the Yellow House with his wife Cynthia Bryan and their children.

As he served as postmaster of the Hereford post office from 1892 until 1902, the year of his death, it can be assumed that the yellow house also housed the post office. Cynthia Bryan Andrews held the post for a few months; subsequently, the National Archives indicate that the post office moved to a new location, with Austin Hunt being officially appointed postmaster in 1903.

Several Andrews families lived in the hamlet of Hereford and on Hereford Hill: according to the 1892 edition of *\*The Eastern Townships Business and Farmers Directory\**, nine Andrews families were landowners at that time.

In 1902, George E. Andrews (son of Alexander and Cynthia) bought the yellow house and the surrounding land (lots 13-A and 13-B). In 1906, he sold the property to Everett C. Gray but excluded the water source situated to the west of Lot 13-A and granted the right to divert this water to Lot 14-A (both on Chemin Duchesneau), which was then owned by George E. Andrews.

The property comprising plots 14-A, 14-B and 14-E was sold that same year to Orvin S. Rowell, along with the adjacent water source and the corresponding rights. This led to a rather complicated situation for Everett C. Gray, who found himself without water and therefore had to dig a new well. This well was reportedly situated along Chemin des Côtes on the left-hand side as you go uphill. This well also served the Andrews School: we shall return to this later in the tour.

There was no running water or toilet in the yellow house, even in the final years it was inhabited; only a pump supplied water to the kitchen sink.

In 1958, the estate of Everett C. Gray sold the property, including the yellow house, to his son Leonard Gray of Canaan, who never lived there. The transaction also included the water sources on lots 9A RI and 9B RII: we shall return to these later in the tour. Leonard Gray died in 1982. Two of his granddaughters, Nellie Carpenter Hanagan and Gayl Carpenter Dowse, bought back his Canadian assets in 1987 for approximately \$14,000; the property was resold in 2003 for \$230,000 to Tillotson Farms & Forests Ltd.

A period of decline then followed for the yellow house. With no protection and uninhabited, it suffered severe vandalism over the years. People with malicious intent helped themselves to everything they

could, stripping the house of anything that still had any value: banisters, door handles, cupboards, crockery, etc.

The community still hopes, however, to find a way to preserve a trace of the yellow house, even though it was demolished in 2023 for safety reasons, notably by preserving the foundations; a call for information has been issued to recover any photographs or objects associated with the yellow house with a view to showcasing them.



**The yellow house**, which stood on Chemin Duchesneau, was a fine example of American vernacular architecture (1880–1940). This dwelling, probably built in the second half of the 19th century, also featured an element typical of New England folklore: a witch’s window, sometimes known as a **‘Vermont window’**. This window is positioned beneath the gable at a 45-degree angle, parallel to the roof pitch. According to legend, this angle prevented the witch from entering on her broomstick.

### **The Abenaki**

**The Abenaki** (also known as the Wobanaki or Wabanaki) regularly travelled along the Hall River to head further south on the Connecticut River or north-east to Lake Saint-François. This corridor formed

part of the network they used to reach their various villages in New Hampshire, Vermont, western Maine and Quebec.

The ancestral territory of the Waban-Aki Nation (the N'dakinna, or 'territory' in Abenaki) extends approximately from Rivière-du-Loup to the Richelieu River (east-west boundaries) and from the River Saint-Laurent to Boston (north-south boundaries). Research is currently underway to better define this territory and to trace the history of past population movements, with a view to understanding what became of these peoples and the changes the territory has undergone.

Metallak is a legendary figure in the states of New Hampshire and Vermont. A gravestone bearing his name can be found at North Hill Cemetery in West Stewartstown, New Hampshire, not far from East Hereford. Very little historical information about him is, however, verifiable. The story has been passed down through oral tradition from generation to generation by the people living in the region.

According to this oral tradition (traces of which can be found in the Rowell family archive), Metallak lost his ties with his Abenaki community because he is said to have broken a tradition: that of not helping the white population. Other sources recount that the people of his community—Indigenous people from the upper reaches of the Androscoggin and Magalloway rivers associated with the Abenaki—died of smallpox or during the *French and Indian War*. In any case, he was an isolated figure, nicknamed '*The Lone Indian of the Magalloway*'.

One of the many stories about Metallak is linked to *Hereford Hill*. Legend has it that Metallak was with a group of Abenaki from Lake Saint-François when they captured James Luther of Hereford Hill. Later, they set up camp for the night on their way back to Maidstone in Vermont. They tied James Luther to a tree and amused themselves by throwing their tomahawks as close to him as they could without hurting him. Metallak joined in the game, mimicking the movements as if he were throwing his war axe and shouting 'I'll do it, I'll do it', but without actually throwing it. The following night, whilst the group were near the Canadian border, Metallak slipped away unnoticed and loosened the straps binding the prisoner so that he could escape into the darkness.

Furthermore, he is said to have saved a hunter named Lewis Leavitt from death, but no account of this rescue has come down to us; other sources even claim that it was Lewis Leavitt who found a blind and starving Metallak in the forest and brought him to Canada.