

PROMINENT FAMILIES OF THE PERIOD

ROBERT HENRY 1778-1859

Fur trader to banker: "I'm much inclined to leave this rascally Country forever."



HOW HE GOT HERE:

Robert worked for the Company for some years north of Lake Superior. Shortly after retiring in 1817 he was induced by his friends, the Bethunes, to move to Cobourg where he soon married widow Christy Bethune Farrand, sister of James Grey, Angus, Donald and Alexander Bethune (who became Rector of St. Peter's, Cobourg and then Anglican Bishop of Toronto).

WHO HE WAS:

Robert Henry, the son of merchant-trader Robert Henry, was born in Albany, New York, but his family moved to Montreal following the American Revolution. Many of his relatives, including his uncle, explorer Alexander Henry, were involved in the fur trade.



Young Robert himself **joined the famous North West Company.**

For some years he worked for the Company north of Lake Superior and was involved in conflicts with the Hudson's Bay Company.

*North West Company Coat of Arms
(Courtesy of the Library and Archives Canada)*

WHAT HE DID HERE:

1818 - Robert built a large grist mill at King St. West and Tremaine with his partner and brother-in-law James Gray Bethune.

1831 - he sold his 203 acres, including the mill, to George Ham for 6,000 pounds.

1832 - he began operating the only bank in Cobourg and thus became the prime target of the notorious "**Cobourg Conspiracy**"

1833 - he bought property at the corner of King and Church Streets opposite St. Peter's Church. It was long considered the oldest house in Cobourg.

He was also active in the life of Cobourg as:

- treasurer of the Cobourg Railway Company,
- treasurer of the Cobourg Board of Police,
- first warden of St. Peter's Church and
- a justice of the peace.