

for your info  
Bill

904-235 Somerset St. West  
Ottawa, Ontario,  
K2P 0J3  
14.9.1990

Mary E. Maclean  
Information Services Librarian  
Cobourg Public Library  
18 Chapel Street  
Cobourg, Ontario  
K9A 1H9

Dear Mary Maclean,

Thanks alot for your envelope of Walter Crofton stuff, and here's a cheque for the reproduction, postage, etc. costs. I'm particularly pleased by the obituary and the 'improvement' of the district bits from 1845---just as he's angling his way into the public service.

I'm in the very early stages of a research project for which the main publications probably won't appear before 1994 or 5. But here's some stuff you might want to add about Crofton to your local files.

He comes to Cobourg in mid-1835 as the Newcastle District Grammar School master, which was a government appointment (cf. Armstrong's Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology). There is an account of this school in the Upper Canada Sundries (ie legislative assembly papers) for 1839 giving numbers of students, subjects taught and Crofton's pay; he's described as a 'scholar of Trinity College, Dublin'. However, he didn't take a degree at Trinity and they don't have records of enrolled students for the period, only of graduates. Most years he made £100 from the government, plus student fees.

At least from 1841 he tries to angle his way into the public service. In the Public Archives of Ontario education papers (Record Group 2) there is a lengthy exposition of his educational views written at this time which he writes while seeking the post of Assistant Superintendent of Education for the colony of Canada West. The actual Assistant Superintendent described his views as banal.

Many people wrote and published bits on 'improvement' in an effort to angle their way into government jobs, and its interesting that Crofton writes in the Star about the need for good statistical information. In November, 1846, he was appointed to a clerk's position in the Inspector-General's (ie Finance) department. Here he was responsible for preparing the parliamentary 'Blue Books' which contained---on blue paper---drafts of bills, petitions and departmental reports. The following March Crofton was also named first secretary to the newly-created Board of Registration and Statistics.

This body was supposed to conduct the censuses projected for 1848 and to produce annual statistical reports on the state of the country to parliament.

The only document Crofton's department produced which has survived was an 'Appendix' to his annual report of 1849, which can be found in the Legislative Assembly Sessional papers for 1849, Appendix 8. The fragment

from the Star on gaol reform was included, but Crofton was repeating the views of some local sherriff on this subject. Most of the appendix consisted of tables drawn from the Canada West census of 1848, with some instructive discussion of the significance of census data. The original report was said to be destroyed in the parliamentary fire of 1849.

But notice in the Elgin-Grey Papers, Lord Elgin writes to Lord Grey to suggest that Crofton, whom he describes as a 'rabid Tory', had been taking advantage of the riots over the Rebellion Losses Act to neglect his duties. Elgin suggests Crofton never actually wrote the report of 1849, but only produced the appendix, and Elgin is forced to apologize to Grey for the absence of the Blue Books too.

Still Crofton manages to hold on to his secretary's job for awhile. On 26 June 1851 in the Legislative Assembly Journals he reports on the progress of the census in Lower Canada (probably this is about the abortive attempt at an L.C. census in 1848, cause the so-called '1851' census wasn't taken until January 1852).

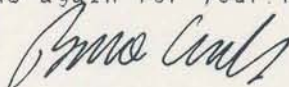
With the creation of the Bureau of Agriculture in 1852 to provide agricultural statistics, Crofton lost his place on the Board of Statistics--1 April 1853. William Hutton, secretary to the Bureau, writes the Board's report for 1853, and in 1855 the two agencies are joined to become the Bureau of Agriculture and Statistics under Hutton.

Through a reading of the Public Accounts reported in the annual legislative Sessional papers one sees that Crofton remained in the public service until 1858. He is usually reported as a clerk in the Agriculture department, but occasionally as in the Inspector-General's office, and once, if I remember correctly, in the Postmaster General's office. There is what looks like a severance payment to him in 1858, after which date I lose sight of him.

I do hope to find more about Crofton, and perhaps to write a short bit about him in the future, and I will send you a copy if I do write something.

You might want to notice my Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871 (London, Ontario: Althouse Press (UWO), 1988) which provides some detail about local educational history. Also in my next, True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education and State Formation in Canada West which I am hoping will appear in 1991 from University of Toronto Press (nothing definite yet) there is quite a bit of information about the Newcastle District, the educational activities of the District Council to 1850, and the biographies of the first three district educational inspectors: John Steele, Benjamin Hayter and James Baird. Hayter is a similar figure to Crofton, and there is an account of him in O'Hearne's Naval Biographical Dictionary of 1862, which one of my odd colleagues in History ordered for Laurier's library. But I think I sent you a copy of the entry.

Thanks again for your help,



Bruce Curtis