

Castleford

...."Died, at Castleford in the township of Horton, on Friday, December 23, 1836, C. J. Bell, R.N in the ____ year of his age. Actively employed with distinction in gunboat service in the late war with the United States and lost a leg. Retired with allowances of lands. Left widow and numerous family."

This quaintly worded obituary notice in the issue of the Bytown Gazette for December 29, 1836, tells of the demise of a gallant gentlemen who figures notably in the history of this township.

His birthday was August 29, 1796, according to the register in the St. Mary's Parish Church in Kippax, a village on the fringe of the city of Castleford in Yorkshire, England. Therefore we could fill in the obituary blank with his age, 40.

He was a lieutenant in the Royal Navy and took part in several battles in the war of 1812. One of his unique experiences occurred in a battle with a French Frigate named "Barbier de Seville". He captured the French ship and boarded her.

On the deck of the "Barbier de Seville" was a gypsy woman who refused to move when ordered to by Bell, so he pricked her with is sward. The gypsy uttered a curse on him declaring that all his descendants would be covered with warts and blemishes. When she did move, a French officer was seen to be hiding under her voluminous skirt.

On September 11, 1814, in a battle on Lake Champlain, as Captain of the 'Confiance' he fought valiantly and lost a leg. The cannon ball was imbedded in the mast of the ship but it was recovered and returned to him.

He retired from service and was granted land in the Perth area. In 1824 he transferred his holdings form Perth to the mouth of the Bonnechere River. He had a block of about 800 acres, from Charlotte Creek east of Bonnechere Point, and upriver for more than two miles. This included the water power known as 'First Chute'. He built his home close to Charlotte Creek, on what is presently Leavoy property. He cleared and worked his land. He extended his lumber operations as far upstream as the Second Chute.

He built a small grist mill, the first in Renfrew County; a sawmill, and a single-stick lumber slide. He had a mercantile business. He established the post office in 1832. This was the first above Fitzroy Harbour. Mail transportation was by canoe, or by horseback.



Bell invested in lumbering operations on the Upper Madawaska. He put up almost all his Castleford holdings as security for funds provided by the Quebec house of Patton and Company. He cut a large quantity of Norway pine but because there were no proper timber slides, not a single stick of timber