



Mansonville December 7, 2023
(free translation of the French original letter)

Association du patrimoine de Potton
Potton Heritage Association

Conseil du patrimoine culturel du Québec
(Quebec Cultural Heritage Council)
225 Grande Allée East
Quebec City, Quebec G1R 5G5

Subject: Support for the classification of the Pont de la frontière, (commonly referred to as the Frontier Bridge in English and hereinafter) as proposed by the Minister of Culture and Communications in his notice of intent dated October 26, 2023

Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Conseil du patrimoine du Québec,

It is with great joy and some relief that the Potton Heritage Association welcomes the intention of the Minister of Culture and Communications, Mathieu Lacombe, to classify the Frontier Bridge in the Township of Potton. This step, eagerly awaited by our members for many years, will ultimately safeguard one of our region's heritage jewels.

For over 30 years, the Potton Heritage Association has been working to promote and protect the region's tangible and intangible heritage. Thanks to the work of its volunteers and its 150 members, it is the only organization dedicated to this cause in Potton. Through its research, exhibitions, Balado Discovery historical tour and vast written and iconographic output (gazetteer, photographic archives, historical tours, leaflets, and booklets, etc.), our association has established itself as the principal guardian organization of our township's memory and heritage¹.

Over the years, the protection and restoration of the Frontier Bridge has become one of our Association's most important causes. And with good reason. At one time, there were at least six covered bridges in Potton. The Frontier Bridge, built in 1896, is the last one of these still standing. The quality of its architecture and the exceptional nature of some of its structural elements make it, as Michael Grayson's² technical appraisal attests, unique in Quebec and indeed in North America. On October 6, 2008, the municipality of Potton recognized its remarkable heritage character by granting it a citation.

The Frontier Bridge is also a precious witness to the history of the Township and Quebec. Built using a method developed by the American Ithiel Town and widely used in Quebec and throughout New England, the bridge reminds us of the importance of the historical link between the Eastern Townships and this region of the United States. The majority of the first settlers in Potton Township came from New England. The religious, cultural, linguistic, and

¹ <https://patrimoinepotton.org/>

² Grayson, Michael. Technical specifications of the Frontier bridge, February 2016

material heritage, such as the Frontier Bridge, left by these early settlers and their descendants remains deeply rooted in Potton's history and identity to this day. It also reminds us of the role these singular bridges played in the development of regional communities, particularly that of the Eastern Townships. From 1850 to 1960, these bridges, ingeniously adapted to our winters, were important links in the Quebec transportation network, facilitating the movement of people and goods by stagecoach, carriage, and other vehicles, thereby accelerating the occupation of the territory.

The bridge also holds great symbolic value for the Township's population. Perched spectacularly on the rocky walls of Mud Creek, more than ten metres above the water, its construction bears witness to the work and skills of local carpenters and craftsmen, from whom many Potton Township residents are descended. For many in Potton, it evokes personal memories or significant moments in their collective history, such as the destructive flood of 1927, which the Frontier Bridge was one of the few to withstand. For almost a century, the bridge was a point of passage to the United States for workers and migrants, relatives and friends living on both sides of the Frontier, a place of constant comings and goings through which, at times, as in the Prohibition era, precious bottles of Quebec whisky or gin could be smuggled.

The bridge thus occupies an important place in the township's collective identity, as evidenced by Potton's official coat of arms, which features the covered Frontier Bridge in flamboyant red at its center (see Appendix 1).

Our association is well aware of the importance of the challenge posed by the heritage classification of the Frontier Bridge, and the requirements it entails in terms of protecting a heritage asset. Although the bridge is generally in good condition (see Greyson's technical report), its medium-term preservation requires rapid intervention, especially on the temporary abutments that support it. Access to the private land where the foundations are laid remains to be negotiated; however, the owners have already indicated a willingness to co-operate, for which we are indeed grateful. Another obstacle is the cost of renovation, which the municipality will not be able to bear on its own. However, as demonstrated by the case of the restoration of the Mansonville Round Barn, achieved thanks to the work of volunteers (Groupe bénévole municipal de Potton, now inactive), it is possible to mobilize people in our community to raise the necessary funds from public and private partners to defray the costs of restoration. To this end, our association, many of whose members were involved in mobilizing citizens to save the Round Barn, is committed to taking the necessary steps, in concert with all stakeholders, to ensure the longevity of this heritage asset.

Because of the exceptional quality of its structure and its great symbolic value, we unreservedly support the classification of the Frontier Bridge. This protection is all the more necessary, indeed urgent, given that the Potton municipal council, at its last meeting (December 4, 2023), repealed the heritage citation adopted in 2008, the only legal protection that could prevent the bridge's eventual disappearance. By giving the Minister a favourable opinion on the classification of this unique bridge, the Conseil du patrimoine du Québec will safeguard one of our region's last heritage assets, and the first to be classified in Potton Township.

We look forward to receiving your favourable opinion on the classification of the Frontier Bridge.

Yours sincerely,



Lorraine Rouillard
President



Pierre L'Heureux
Vice-President

One attachment: APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1



- MUNICIPALITY >
- LIVING >
- RECREATION AND CULTURE >
- ENVIRONMENT >
- URBANISM >
- PUBLIC SECURITY >
- DIRECTORY 
- TOURISM >

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VISUAL IDENTITY AND SLOGAN

MUNICIPAL COAT OF ARMS

Designed by the Federal Heraldic Service, it was chosen as the town's official emblem in 1992. The 5 peaks at the bottom represent the 5 main mountains in Potton while the wavy lines its many waterways; Potton's bright future is seen in the sun; the crown symbolizes Quebec and Canada.

The Coat of Arms also includes our covered bridge and a deer over the crown to remind us of the presence of this beautiful animal in our surroundings.

Its motto, submitted by Mr. Ovide Avaarma is:

"More than any other place, this place has a smile for me."

