

## **Canada Oak (Sandwich)**

### **Title Variation**

Canadian Oak

### **Publication Dates**

1850 – early 1856?

### **Frequency**

Weekly

### **Online Holdings**

1853: June 24 (Vol. 3: no. 3) 4p.

### **Source of our Digitized Holdings**

Museum Windsor

### **Other Potential Holdings**

National Library may have: 1855: Dec. 15; Archives of Ontario may have: 1854: Mar. 3 and 1854: Mar. 10

## Description

The Canada Oak was a 4 page, weekly newspaper published every Friday morning in Sandwich. It began in 1850 and likely continued until early 1856. The circulation was modest, likely around 250 copies per issue. Duncan A. McMullin (also spelled McMullen) was the editor/publisher. It cost 10 shillings per year if paid in advance, 15 shillings if paid at the end of the year. The newspaper's motto was "Holding Fast to the Mother Soil".

From the June 24th 1853 issue, it appears that the Canada Oak was a fairly typical newspaper in terms of most of its content. There was plenty of local and regional advertising, a lot of reprinted national and international news, as well as a good smattering of poetry and prose. However, its political purpose was also apparent. The paper printed the reports of activities, speeches, and the passed bills of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada. In the editorial on page 2, Duncan McMullin embarks on a general rant against both politicians and the contemporary political structure and institutions. His focus is mainly on what he sees as corruption, incompetence, and excessive government expenditure. Nevertheless, it is also clear that he has a pretty conservative outlook and perhaps anti-democratic tendencies, as he is opposed to the Representation Bill which would amend the Act of Union and reduce one of the many inequities of the original legislation.

Although few other whole issues of the Canada Oak are still extant, excerpts of the Canada Oak were reprinted in other newspapers. See, for example, the Globe and Mail: November 28th, 1853, and the Voice of the Fugitive: November 18th, 1852 and December 2nd, 1852. These excerpts reveal the extent of the anti-francophone and anti-African American, racist views of the newspaper and its editorial staff.

The editor, Duncan A. McMillan, was born on the 21st March, 1829 in Sandwich. He studied law and was a practising lawyer in the 1850s and 1860s. He also belonged to the Windsor Shooting Club and was a champion shooter. After publishing the Canada Oak (1850-1856?), he went on, despite his views, to hold a number of important local positions: County Clerk 1858-1862, Reeve of the Town of Sandwich 1864-1868, and Registrar of the Surrogate Court 1862-1870 (Source: Township of Sandwich, 1909, p. 21). He died August 24th, 1870 in Sandwich at the age of 41 and was buried in Assumption Church cemetery.