

PORTRAIT OF THE PASTOR: HENRY ESSON

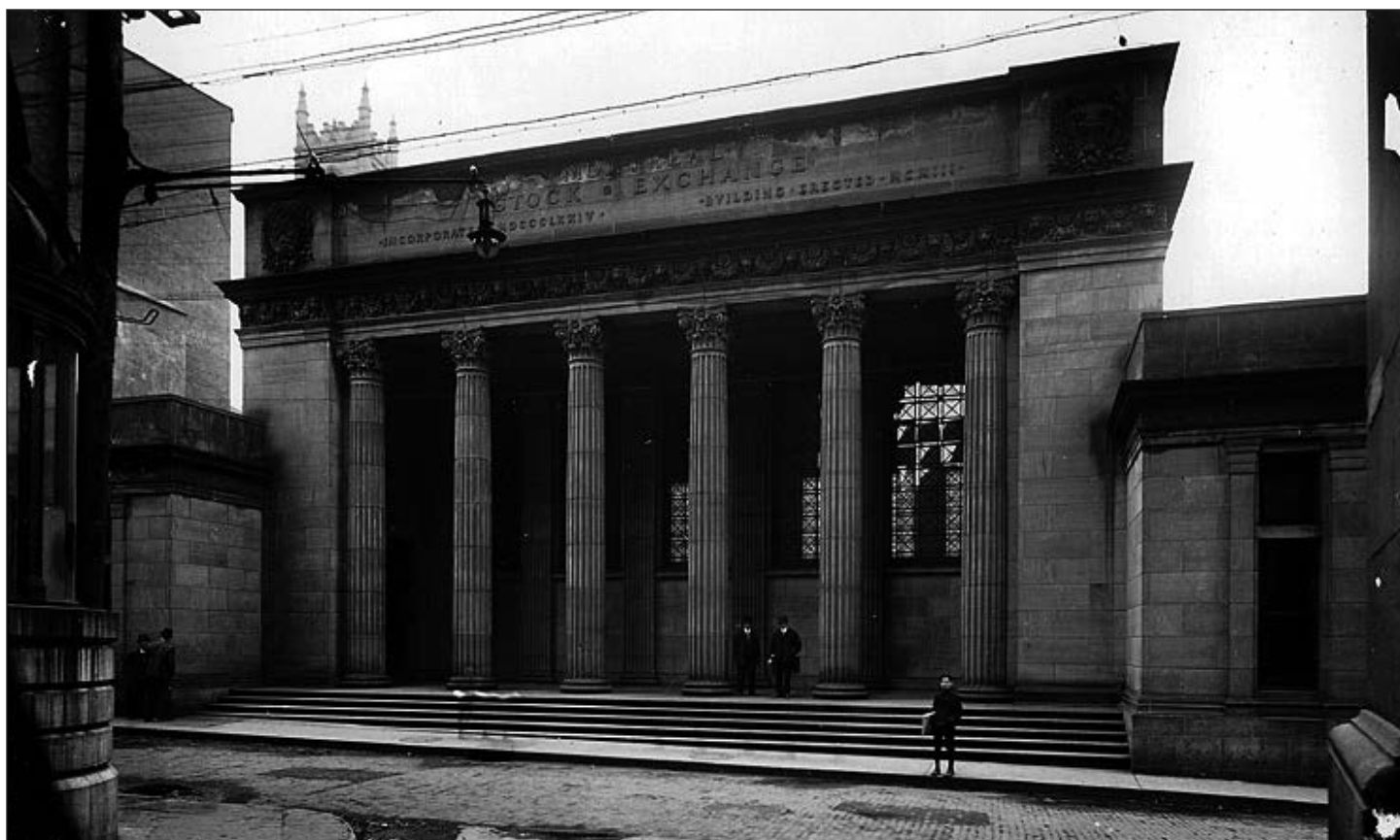
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Quebec Heritage

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News



Stage Legends

Highlights from English theatre's glorious history in Montreal

Secrets of the Sculptor

Orson Wheeler's romantic side, revealed

Rewind Playhouse

How neighbourhood actors coax a wealth of roles from local history

Quebec Heritage News

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Cover: Stock Exchange building, St. François Xavier Street, Montreal, about 1905, from the Notman Collection at the McCord Museum of Canadian History. VIEW-8727.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Events, dear boy, events

by Kevin O'Donnell

When I became president of QAHN last June, I thought my lofty perch would give me time to plan how this network of local museums, historical societies and individuals could become even more effective in carrying out its mission. But Harold Macmillan's explanation why the good intentions of governments go astray held true in my case as well: "Events, dear boy, events" intervened.

QAHN is very active and like the staff and many of our members, I was immediately caught up in a swirl of events—representing the organization at regional festivals, working on committees, and the like. You don't want to hear about heroic all-day Saturday meetings, but readers should know about two recent events which were unqualified successes, and a school-based project that is off to a great start.

On September 26, QAHN's executive director Dwane Wilkin and I were invited by the Fédération québécoise des municipalités to participate in a workshop devoted to cultural heritage and municipal development opportunities. We were on a panel that included Joan Westland-Eby, mayor of East Bolton and David Belgue, president of the États généraux du paysage québécois.

Heritage has become a practical issue for municipal authorities. Earlier this year Quebec's Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine announced plans to revamp the 35-year old Cultural Property Act. The policy proposes a broader definition of heritage that would include not only buildings, but also non-material elements such as customs, traditions, local knowledge, and landscapes. This in turn would require revisions to other laws that govern municipal planning and development. The proposals recommend that municipalities be given new powers and responsibilities regarding the expanded heritage domain, and there are

hopes that local authorities will also be eligible for additional monies to implement these new responsibilities.

Dwane and I gave the sixty or so participants in the workshop an overview of the laws and spelled out what we thought were the main implications for municipalities. In brief, QAHN believes the new legislation promises not to be simply another irritation from on high that can be ignored or fobbed off on the town clerk to "look after." The new Act will involve obligations and responsibilities that heritage advocates can help to implement. After all, heritage protection represents genuine development opportunities for municipalities. Mayor Westland-Eby, a twenty-year veteran of municipal politics, gave an enlightening perspective on heritage issues in her own rural community and Mr. Belque informed participants about landscape issues and the role that landscape professionals can contribute to local planning.

The feedback from workshop participants was extremely positive with many expressing the hope that we would return next year. I encourage anyone who's interested in local heritage policy to read QAHN's brief, which was presented to the ministry hearings in the 2008 and is available for download from our website at www.qahn.org.

No sooner had we met with municipal leaders than we were back in Quebec City, this time to host our own conference. As with everything the heritage network strives to accomplish the two-day event, entitled *Celebrating Diversity Among English-speaking Communities*, shed yet more light on the impressive contributions that English-speakers of all nationalities and from all walks of life have made to Quebec society through history; and it followed two similar networking and awareness-raising conferences that QAHN previously hosted: the 2007 Montreal Mosaic heritage summit and our 2008 Sister Societies conference.

Co-sponsored by Shalom Quebec, the Quebec conference attracted about 100 enthusiastic participants, both English- and French-speaking, to the Morrin Centre in mid-October. Reminiscences about growing up in la Veille Capitale, findings of recent research on Quebec City's Chinese and Jewish communities, and the role of schools in shaping identity were just some of the conference highlights. Great food, dances and songs rounded out a very enjoyable weekend. Rod MacLeod's article in this issue of *Quebec Heritage NewFor* offers a thoughtful overview of the many community and academic presentations.

Last, but certainly not least, the Voices From Quebec student oral-history project has finally made its debut. It was my pleasure to help introduce this innovative project to appreciative high-school teachers on November 19, together with QAHN's partner, the Blue Metropolis Foundation. Students from ten English schools will be conducting and recording oral-history interviews in their home communities, writing scripts with the help of professional writers, and shaping their stories into sound documentaries. We are fortunate to have the support of Reenie Marx, a retired high school teacher and consultant who carried out the Building Bridges oral history project at Laurentian Regional High School in Lachute for many years. We'll have more to say about Voices from Quebec before it culminates in a launch at the Blue Metropolis Montreal International Literary Festival next April.

In January, staff and volunteers will begin contacting Core members and supporters to help us set the heritage network's strategic goals over the next five years. Ensuring QAHN's continued success will require the broadest possible participation in this process. I look forward to meeting with you in the new year to hear your valued suggestions.

NOMINATION CALL

Sharpen your pencils

Marion Phelps Award celebrates outstanding volunteer stewardship

Many volunteers contribute generously to the heritage cause in this province, but there are also those whose achievements stand head and shoulders above the crowd. Do you know of someone who merits special recognition as a giant among peers?

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) is seeking nominations for the 2009 Marion Phelps Award, recognizing outstanding long-term contributions to the protection and preservation of anglophone heritage in Quebec.

Nominating a worthy candidate from your community has never been easier. Just visit the QAHN website at www.qahn.org and select the Marion Phelps Award webpage from the menu. There you'll find the standard awards nomination form that all nominators are required this year to fill out and submit. Don't have access to a computer? No problem, telephone



the QAHN office and staff will be happy to send you a paper nomination form through the mail.

Nominations should concisely describe the scope and significance of the nominee's work in the heritage

field, using specific examples. If desired, two or three letters of support may be included to strengthen your submission.

All completed nomination forms must be received by the QAHN Awards Nominations Committee before 5 p.m. on Monday, March 30, 2009. Send nominations by regular mail to: QAHN, 400-257 Queen Street, Sherbrooke, QC J1M 1K7, by fax to (819) 564-6872, or email to home@qahn.org.

For more information, contact Dwane Wilkin, executive director, at Tel: (819) 564-9595 (toll-free in Quebec 1-877-964-0409).

Visit www.qahn.org and click on Marion Phelps Award to review selection criteria, and to read about past award recipients Joan Bisson Dow, Marianna O'Gallagher, Kenneth Hugh Annett, Norma Geggie, Byron Clark and Harry Isbrucker.

A living heritage treasure

Born in South Stukely, Quebec, Marion Phelps attended the Blake School, Stukely Village School and Waterloo High School before graduating from Macdonald College's School of Teachers. She taught in several secondary schools in Quebec before settling in Cowansville at Heroes' Memorial High School. An outstanding teacher, she was awarded the Order

of Scholastic Merit in 1960.

Always interested in history, Marion organized and gave classes in local history and genealogy for the Missisquoi Community School during the 1950s. In 1959, she took on the role of Curator for the Brome County Historical Society, and began contributing articles to the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, writing articles for newspapers and magazines, and books such as the Loy-

alists of the Eastern Townships. She was the editor and wrote for the *Yesterdays of Brome County* series published by the historical society, and has assisted countless researchers. In 1981, Marion was honoured with the Heritage Canada Award. In 1992 she received the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Canadian Confederation.

Already a centenarian, she will be 101 in February, Marion continues to be interested in history and stays in touch with the Brome County Historical Society on a regular basis.

Letter

Plot thickens

I received the cemetery handbook (Cemetery Heritage in Quebec: A Handbook by Matthew Farfan) book today and find it interesting. For many years my "family" has been trying to find the location of the grave of our great-grand-

father Wm. McConnell, who died in 1910, and is buried in the cemetery beside St. Andrews United Church, Aylwin, Quebec. According to the church records/maps, he owned three plots in the cemetery. His burial record doesn't say which plot he is in. We want to put

up a stone of some sort, but want to put it in the RIGHT place! We also assume that his wife Sarah (Draper) is also interred there. The search continues.

*Bertha Norberg
Carman, Manitoba*

A bear's tale

Daughter's gift to fallen First World War soldier inspires children's book

by Nick Fonda

Bears are not uncommon in the world of children's literature. Canada's most famous contribution to ursine letters is undoubtedly Winnie-the-Pooh, a stuffed bear whose namesake was a black bear, Winnipeg, who lived out her life at the London Zoo after having been brought to England by Lieutenant Harry Colbourne.

Colbourne was British-born but had studied veterinary medicine in Ontario before starting a practice in Winnipeg. When World War I started, Colbourne enlisted. On his way to Halifax, Colbourne purchased a black bear cub for \$20 from a hunter who had killed the cub's mother. As bear cubs grow quickly, by the time Colbourne got to England, the London Zoo seemed a better home for the unofficial regimental mascot than an army barracks or an officers' mess. Colbourne survived the war but left Winnie at the Zoo in 1918 in large part because Winnie had become such a popular attraction.

Winnie has had some literary company on Canadian library shelves since Nov. 8, when a charming children's book, entitled, *A Bear in War*, was launched at the War Museum in Ottawa.

The bear in the eponymous title is Teddy, a small stuffed toy sent to Lieutenant Lawrence Browning Rogers by his ten year-old daughter Aileen in 1916, the year before his death at the Battle of Passchendaele. Through the bear's eyes the young reader learns how one of the cataclysmic events of the 20th century affected a whole family.

The story behind the book leads back from the War Museum to a reporter's desk in Tucson, Arizona, to the cottage country north of Toronto, and to Montreal before reaching its starting point in East Farnham, in Quebec's Eastern Townships. All this takes place over a span of 90 years, or more accurately, four generations.

Sandwiched in those generations is Roberta Rogers Innes, mother of the book's author and granddaughter of the book's central character. "We know very little about my grandfather," says the retired teacher. "My father spoke very little about him and my Aunt Aileen only spoke about him towards the end of her own life. I know she wondered why her father had chosen to enlist leaving behind a wife and two children, one of them (Aileen) who had been struck by polio, alone on a small farm in East Farnham.

Roberta Innes's grandfather was 37 when he enlisted and was soon made sergeant, probably because of his age. He became a medic and was killed on the battlefield while tending

to the wounded. When his personal effects were sent back to Canada, Teddy, the small stuffed bear, was among them.

May Rogers, Lawrence's widow, sold the farm in East Farnham and returned to Montreal, for both she and her late husband were from old Montreal families. Life was hard for the war widow; May worked as a practical nurse and moved back and forth seasonally between Montreal and Belleville, Ontario as a cost-saving measure. She was a strong and determined woman and she saw both her children, Aileen and Howard, graduate from McGill and forge careers in nursing and engineering respectively.

After Aileen Rogers passed away in 1998 at the age of 93, it was Roberta who ended up with a suitcase full of WWI correspondence and a small, tattered and legless stuffed bear. "My aunt and my father had both spoken about the bear so I knew what it was," she recalled. "There were a lot of letters, in very good condition, and eventually I brought everything up to the cottage to put all the letters and documentation in chronological order."

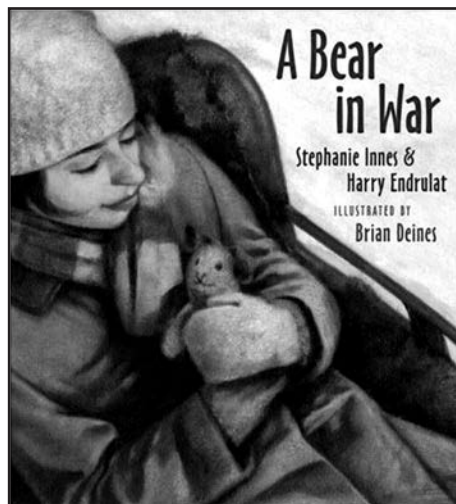
About the same time Roberta learned about the Memory Project, an initiative of the Dominion Institute. They were looking for significant artifacts from WWI. Teddy, whose home is now a glass case at the War Museum, was one of the one hundred artifacts that were eventually selected for the display. "In the end we donated all the

correspondence as well to the War Museum."

It was Roberta's daughter, Stephanie, a journalism teacher in Tucson who writes for the Arizona Daily Star, who eventually took the letters of Lieutenant Rogers and incorporated excerpts from them to create *A Bear in War*. During a three-week period in early November taken to launch and promote the book, she toured several schools to give readings that were well received, although it tended to be parents and teachers who were moved to tears by the story. Meanwhile the children tended to be curious about glossed-over details.

"How," they asked, "did he die?"

The East Farnham connection has puzzles of its own. Lawrence Rogers was clearly very attached to the East Farnham property and his letters home are full of practical advice to his wife, May, who didn't fully share her husband's passion for country life. What had led the family to leave Montreal for East Farnham is not fully clear. Nor is the location of the Rogers property.



Dorothy Rogers Ross, who lives in Cowansville, is a cousin of Roberta Rogers Innes. She and Adelaide Lanktree of the local United Empire Loyalsists branch have spent some time armed with maps, trying to locate the farm that Lawrence Rogers would have owned in 1915. So far the quest for Teddy's place of origin has not been fruitful. But the bear itself is now on display at the War Museum; and the

tale of its travels stands as poignant and moving wartime story, of personal sacrifice, loss and the bonds of family.

A Bear in War by Stephanie Innes and Harry Endrulat, with illustrations by Brian Deines, is published by Key Porter books. Learn more about the book, and where to purchase it at www.abearinwar.com.

Thanks for the memory

Rare photo of St. Lawrence rail bridge evokes QAHN mission

by Barbara Lavoie

When Candiac resident, Susan Kaller, 42, learned about this past fall's guided tour of the Victoria Bridge organized by the Point Saint Charles Historical Society, she remembered the old black and white photo she had found at a garage sale about eight years earlier.

"Back then I was collecting black and white prints, we had some by Anzel Adams, so the photo caught my eye," said Kaller, in a brief telephone interview.

The photo, dated December 20, 1886 and taken by an anonymous photographer, shows the partially completed St. Lawrence Bridge, which was built for the Atlantic and North West Railway, a division of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) between 1885 and 1887, and which spans the river between Lachine and Kahnawake on the south shore. Today it is most visible to motorists driving along the Champlain Bridge.

"I offered the photograph to QAHN because it signifies building bridges, something I felt is appropriate to a heritage network," she said. "Learning about our history is important to me, and as a family we visit museums and take visitors to local heritage sites. I'm pleased the photograph has found a new and appropriate home."

Construction of the all-steel bridge represented significant and unprecedented achievements in structural engineering, design and building methods which contrasted with those used to build the more famous Victoria Bridge thirty years earlier. Designed by CPR engineer Alex Peterson and an American consulting engineer named Charles Shaler Smith, the St. Lawrence Bridge was the first to be erected on the principle of the cantilevered continuous truss. A raised central portion of the truss provided necessary clearance for shipping through the navigable portion of the river.

Some online research also revealed the bridge used building techniques that were new and revolutionary for



the time, including "the adoption of the questionable method of laying concrete under water" as reported in *The School of Mines Quarterly*, published by Columbia College, New York City in 1887. An article published in the *Canadian Journal of Civil Engineering* in 1997 noted that work on the bridge's abutments started in March 1886, with the foundations and piers completed during the summer. "The foundations were set on rock and built within roughly fitted, bottomless caisson that were filled with concrete," writes S.D. Werry. Steelwork began in February, 1886, and would eventually employ three riveting gangs made of of Mohawks from the Kahnawake reserve. The photograph now in QAHN's possession, taken 10 months later, shows the steelwork extending from the north shore, and the raised truss in its early stages of construction.

Originally from Saskatchewan, Kaller moved to Candiac with her husband in 1998, the year of the historic ice storm. She is currently pursuing a pastoral ministry certificate at Concordia University.

Seat of history

Loyalist group donates heirloom chair to Missisquoi Museum collection

by Robert C. Wilkins



During or after the American Revolution, a family of United Empire Loyalists by the name of Grange made its way north to British territory, together with many other Loyalist refugees, entering Canada near present-day Napanee, Ontario.

Among the family's possessions was a wooden chair, which was later handed down from generation to generation, coupled with the injunction that it should never return to the United States. The years and decades passed.

Most recently, the chair belonged to Mrs. Ann Harris, a Montreal lady, whose grandfather was Mr. Justice William Langley Bond of the Quebec Court of Appeal. Her great-grandfather was Col. Frank Bond of the Prince of Wales Rifles. Archbishop William Bennett Bond was her great-great grandfather, who became second Primate of the Anglican Church in Canada in 1904.

Mrs. Harris moved to Paris this past spring. Unable to take all her belongings with her, before leaving Canada she retained the services of Nerelle Cooper, a Westmount lady experienced in organizing estate and moving sales and evaluating family heirlooms. Mrs. Harris explained to Nerelle that the famous chair had a Loyalist connection and was never to return to the U.S.A. Nerelle contacted me, knowing I was President of Heritage Branch (the Montreal chapter) of The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada.

I photographed the chair and consulted with Okill Stuart, my predecessor as Heritage Branch president, who is also a former Dominion President of the U.E.L. Association. We both thought that

the ideal home for the chair would be the Missisquoi Museum in Stanbridge East, Quebec, sometimes called the "Loyalist Museum."

Mr. Stuart kindly kept the chair in his home in Saint Lambert pending an appropriate opportunity to present it to the Museum, which expressed interest in acquiring it.

Such an opportunity arose this past November 2, when the Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch of the U.E.L. Association (to which both Mr. Stuart and I also belong) held its annual fall dinner and meeting at the Granby United Church.

The guest speaker was none other than the Curator of the Missisquoi Museum, Heather Darch. After her talk, the Branch President of Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch, Roderick Riordon, kindly permitted Okill Stuart and me, on behalf of Heritage Branch, to present the "Loyalist chair" to Heather Darch, together with a written summary of its provenance and a valuation for income tax purposes, prepared by Nerelle Cooper. Heather was delighted with the gift and promised to add it, without delay, to the Loyalist collection of the Missisquoi Museum.

Thus another material link with our Loyalist ancestors of long ago has been preserved for the general public to admire. Even more to the point, the spirits of the chair's original owners in the next world, as well as Mrs. Harris in Paris, can now rest secure in the knowledge that their precious heirloom will remain in a land where King George III's successor still reigns, as Queen of Canada.

Robert C. Wilkins, U.E., lives in Westmount, Quebec.

Fire claims heritage site

Historic rail shop in Point St. Charles was 19th century industrial landmark

by Barbara Lavoie

A blaze that had 125 Montreal firefighters called in to fire in a Montreal warehouse stuffed with paper and cardboard has razed one of the top 10 endangered heritage buildings in the city.

Located just minutes from downtown, the CN shops were constructed in the 1850s to build cars for the Grand Trunk Railway. In recent years the empty buildings had been sold to JC Fibers, then used to store tons of recycled paper. The buildings had been on the endangered sites list of the conservation group Heritage Montreal since 2006

In early 2008, citizens and community organizations brought together by the Action Watchdog Community Coalition of Point St. Charles repeatedly appealed to Montreal's South-West Borough to do something about the dangerous use of the old buildings and the pervasive use of heavy trucks to and from the site, believing it was a grave security concern to residents in the neighbourhood.

After numerous efforts by the community to pressure the city into taking action, the borough finally delivered a notice

to the owners to empty the site and cease its operations by October 31, just weeks before the fire distributed ash on the Pointe and several surrounding communities.

According to Gisèle Turgeon-Barry, President of the Point St. Charles Historical Society, this particular shop was last used in the early 1950s, and was considered an important part of Montreal's rich industrial heritage.

"It is very, very sad for us in the community," said Gisèle Turgeon-Barry, President of the Point St. Charles Historical Society. "Of course, we're thankful no one was injured, but the loss of the heritage building has had an impact on the entire community. It was part of what we counted on seeing each day, and [it] becomes a part of you in that way."

Turgeon-Barry shared a press release with *Quebec Heritage News* that was issued by the borough on November 15, hours after the fire began around 2 a.m. that day, recognizing the action of the citizen groups, and stating, "Community residents were correct that there was indeed a great danger that the municipal authorities chose to ignore. This event could have and should have been avoided."



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TERMS OF ESTRANGEMENT

Denial, indifference and scenes from the search for the 21st century anglo

by Rod MacLeod



When they asked me to give the wrap-up talk at the Roots Quebec Heritage Summit in Quebec City last October, I had my usual doubts. After a long and stimulating day, do people really want to listen to another half-hour speech? Given that I was on the bill immediately following a 40-minute long show by the Philipino-Quebecers Association Dance Troupe, it seemed even less likely that anyone would be in the mood for more words. All the same, you never know when you might suddenly have to fill large quantities of time (sometimes speakers don't show up, dancers suddenly pull muscles, etc.) so I played it safe and took copious notes. It did turn out that all I needed to say were a few closing remarks.

What we now call the Morrin Centre is two centuries of Quebec heritage nicely packaged for you in one jewel of a building. It was an ideal venue for this conference—not so much for the acoustics, which weren't ideal, as for the sheer glory of that magnificently re-

stored ballroom and the weight of history all about you. The building, which has served both as college and prison and which sits so solidly yet unprepossessingly behind St Andrew's Church and the Kirk Hall, formerly St Andrew's School, is a monument to, among many things, British culture, and it highlights three crucial contributions the British made to Quebec:

1. Creating a standardized, advanced educational system;
2. Facilitating popular literacy and historical inquiry;
3. Putting people in jail.

One could argue that the British set the tone for much of the modern world on these three scores. Once upon a time, people across Canada identified primarily with the British Empire, even those that criticized it. Nowadays, we are much more sensitive to the complexities of identity, and nowhere more so than in Quebec, where language throws an additional element into the mix. The Roots Quebec heritage summit promised to put such issues on the table.

The conference swung into action with a series of talks on the immigrant experience. Of the four speakers, Napoleon Woo was the only Quebec City native, but he grew up in a family that had come from China by way of several parts of Canada and had specialized in running restaurants—Chinese restaurants, notably the delightfully-named Wok 'n Roll. Even so, as a child Woo was only marginally conscious of being Chinese, and was apparently not bothered about being thought of as Vietnamese during the Vietnam War. His sense of identity seems to have been based less on ethnicity or even language than on the fact that during the 1970s he attended Catholic-run St Patrick's High School and played football against the Protestant guys from Quebec High. Such institutional rivalry may seem groundless nowadays—and yet it is on such seemingly insubstantial rocks that identity is forged. Later in the day, Louisa Blair referred to a recent family wedding for which the happy couple had crossed the Protestant-Catholic divide,

and reflected that it wasn't so long ago when this combination would have raised more than a few eyebrows—maybe even fists.

A much more self-conscious immigrant experience was described by Girish Shah, a medical researcher at Université Laval, and president of the *Association culturelle sud-asiatique du Québec*, which serves as a kind of club for Quebec City residents interested in Indian culture. Intriguingly, some 20 per cent of its members are not ethnically Indian, which tells you something about the appeal of this institution. Language is not an issue; people used to speaking three or four languages anyway are not intimidated by having to add both English and French to the list. Shah's theme was titled "Rooting and Uprooting" and he outlined the various factors that tend to make a small immigrant community choose to stay or leave an urban environment such as Quebec City. The Charter of the French Language or Bill 101, curiously featured in both lists: Many people he knows initially resented its coercive measures, yet the language legislation clearly helped make them—and especially their children—bilingual and therefore able to function in their adopted society. Even more striking was Shah's assertion that the relatively small number of ethnic South Asians in Quebec City makes them inclined to look outside their own community for social activities, whereas had he settled in New York or Boston he would have found less reason to do so given the size of the Asian communities there. For a life scientist, Shah could give many sociologists a run for their money.

There was Donald Kellough, a professional translator, representing a community we very rarely think of as being "immigrant," namely the Americans. How often do you hear Americans living abroad speak of themselves in this manner? As ex-pats, maybe, or even exiles, but never immigrants; America is where immigrants go. Yet here was Kellough, speaking thoughtfully about his experiences relating to the host community as well as to the folks back in the old country. Like many English-speakers, he had been attracted to the French flavour of Quebec society and thought little of its other linguistic and ethnic el-

ements, which didn't seem so far removed from home. In time—as he ceased to be a visitor and started to be an immigrant—he came to appreciate the subtleties and complexities. When you're a newcomer, he commented, you assume the people who already live in the place have everything worked out, but the truth is, everybody is trying to find their way. Going back to the States for visits, Kellough finds himself deeply out of touch with local issues—another typical immigrant experience. On the subject of having to be bilingual in Quebec, he equated it with having two souls at the same time – paraphrasing Gabriel Garcia Márquez, who spoke of love in this manner.

It was somehow appropriate that Don Fyson ended up on this first panel, because, although not a new Canadian, he represents yet another type of immigrant to Quebec: someone from Ottawa. As an outsider, like Kellough, Fyson felt no particular interest in Quebec anglophones, and his own research interests as a historian are not ethnic in focus; he has studied conflict between men, for example, not between linguistic groups.

Moreover, as a teacher of history at Université Laval, he seemed to resent being thought of as a specialist in anglophone history just because he is, technically, an anglophone. Apparently, this is a widespread assumption among francophone colleagues and students he encounters—an assertion I found startling. Given the day's time constraints, I wish Fyson had explored this situation at greater length rather than explaining why he is not drawn to Quebec's anglo community per se. He did raise the issue, echoed again by Louisa Blair but not fully explored, of whether people, both within and without academia, spend too much time focused on their own communities.

The other scholars on the second panel outlined aspects of their own inquiries into Quebec's ethnic and linguistic issues: Christian Samson on the city's 120-year-old Chinese community; Annie Pilote on English schools as shapers of identity (her work was featured in the

Sept. Oct issue of *Quebec Heritage News*); and Patrick Tomlinson on the demographic breakdown of Quebec City's anglophone community. I was struck in particular by Tomlinson's parting comment. After having given a presentation consisting almost exclusively of statistics, he observed that this methodology is more or less imposed on researchers by the people who provide the statistics and who clearly have a stake in the results—the federal government. This candor is refreshing. I have spent a great deal of time amid anglophones whose organizations receive funding from the federal government and for whom research seems to be almost exclusively



statistical in nature and rarely ever anecdotal. And it seems to me that it ought to be QAHN's duty to restore the balance by emphasizing the importance of words and stories as opposed to numbers.

After lunch we settled down to a very stimulating round-table discussion in which moderator Louisa Blair, whose pithy introductory comments alone made me wish she had been given much more time to speak, put a number of strategic questions to researchers Nicole Gallant and Michel-Salmador Louis, and community leader Anne-Marie Powell. Although I wished the panel members hadn't prepared their comments beforehand, since they were all highly eloquent, especially when speaking off the cuff, the format worked well and allowed several tricky matters to be raised. Chief among these was debating whether "multiculturalism" is the right

model for Quebec and/or Canadian society, or whether a “interculturalism” is more appropriate.

To some extent this is a question of semantics, and the panelists grappled with definitions going back to the Bilingualism & Biculturalism commission of the 1960s, and citing its more recent

gested that I, as the former president of QAHN, should take a crack at answering the question of what an anglophone is, so I did. I don't think it's a cop-out or an undue resorting to relativism to argue that the meaning of this term depends on the context. Yes, it was imposed “from above” on a population that might well

byterian, or Free-Presbyterian. These were terms with real meaning, no matter how much we may stare bemused at such distinctions today. These terms, these ethnic or religious distinctions, lost their meaning as the context changed. Over the course of the 19th century, Protestants became aware of their posi-

Only in Quebec do we find people whose first language is English debating ways to define themselves linguistically, and only in Quebec do we find people from other linguistic backgrounds denying they are English-speaking even though they speak English fluently

counterpart led by Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor. The outcome of the first of these was an official sense of Canada as having two languages and many cultures. The perceived weakness of this is that cultural minorities are marginalized, and the dominant culture hides its domination within the pretense of being merely one of many. Interculturalism, as promoted by Bouchard and Taylor, emphasizes the relations between groups rather than their search for identity without there necessarily being contact. It also posits a central, neutral “civic” space where cultures may meet on equal terms without one of them dominating—and, in Quebec, the language of this civic space is French, of course. This prescription for Quebec society does not sit well for those who feel that Quebec is integrally French-speaking and Catholic (150 years ago they might have added “feudal” to this list, but we won't go there). The Bouchard-Taylor view might also prove problematic for Quebec anglophones, but that is something for further discussion. It also raises the question of whether this sort of “civic” space can ever be culturally neutral. There are plenty of people around the world who see liberal democracy and women's rights as integrally Western, for instance, and therefore inevitably alien.

Which raises the issue, explored by the afternoon panel, as to whether the term “anglophone” is useful at all. Powell said it isn't, noting that it had been imposed from above and means little to ordinary people who tend to define themselves in other ways. Gallant pointed out that for French speakers the most obvious word to use to refer to English speakers was “anglophone.” At some point in these proceedings it was sug-

resent the label—and yet many are quite willing to do so if it means they are eligible for government funding. Only in Quebec do we find people whose first language is English debating ways to define themselves linguistically, and only in Quebec do we find people from other linguistic backgrounds denying they are English-speaking even though they speak English fluently. Elsewhere in the English-speaking world, you either speak the language of the majority or you learn to do so, with very little fuss about identity. Technically, there are 50 million anglophones in the United Kingdom and a quarter billion in the United States, but they don't realize they are anglophones because they have no reason to be self-reflective in this way. (I think of the Molière character who suddenly realizes he has been speaking prose all his life.)

Anglophone, you say?

Context is everything. Once upon a time, Quebec anglophones didn't realize they were anglophones either. Arguably, it was only in the 1970s when they began to think of having an identity defined by language; the French Language Charter would seem to have the dubious honour of serving as a catalyst in this regard. I've looked at a lot of census returns as an historian. A century and a half ago, identity meant being English, Scottish, Irish, German, Jewish, American (yes, a tangible qualifier back then), and of course French. It also meant being Catholic or Protestant or Jewish. And even Protestants did not see themselves as Protestant so much as Anglican, Baptist, Congregationalist, or Presbyterian—and, for that matter, not so much Presbyterian as Scots-Presbyterian, American-Presbyterian, United-Pres-

byterian, or Free-Presbyterian. These were terms with real meaning, no matter how much we may stare bemused at such distinctions today. These terms, these ethnic or religious distinctions, lost their meaning as the context changed. Over the course of the 19th century, Protestants became aware of their posi-

tion in a province that was increasingly officially Catholic, and united to provide themselves with educational and social services. Over the course of the 20th century, all kinds of religious and ethnic groups united for very similar reasons because they identified at some level with the English language in a province that was increasingly officially French. Is this anglophone “unity” a hard and fast thing? Of course not. Does it exist in any tangible way, even on a level with the Free Church Presbyterian from Scotland of 150 years ago? Probably not. Culture, as the Roots Quebec conference clearly demonstrated, cuts many ways: ethnically, religiously, and even linguistically. There are plenty of francophones who have married into anglophone families who consider themselves anglophone in a certain context. And there are many more who are eager to explore their British ancestry.

Where does this leave us? I don't know. I think it is the mark of a good conference when you go away with more questions than you had when you came in. I had the impression that many of these questions hadn't been raised in Quebec City before, or at least not very often; the context is clearly quite different from that of Montreal. Not to worry. It is all part of an ongoing process of exploring identity in all its diversity and confusion within this great project that we call Quebec society. At times this process appears to acquaint us, whoever we are and however we define ourselves, with some strange bedfellows. So be it. It is quite normal, with a project on this scale, to take some time to work out the sleeping arrangements.

PORTRAIT OF THE PASTOR

Henry Esson was guiding force behind the Montreal Mechanics' Institute

by Susan McGuire



In early 1817, a letter was received at Marischal College in Aberdeen from the Scotch Presbyterian Church in Montreal, asking that a clergyman ordained in the Church of Scotland be sent to Canada to assist with the Montreal church, known popularly as the St. Gabriel Street Church. The annual salary offered was £400, a goodly sum at the time.

The man chosen for the job was Henry Esson, born in 1793, son of an Aberdeenshire farmer. In 1807, he had entered Marischal College in Ab-

erdeen, winning prizes for academic excellence and graduating in 1811. Esson was ordained in the Church of Scotland in May 1817, and arrived in Canada in the fall of 1817 at the age of 24. He remained pastor at the St. Gabriel Street Church for 27 years, and was an active participant in the intellectual and cultural development of Montreal.

One of his projects was the establishment of the Montreal Academical Institution in 1822 that, with the help of Rev. Hugh Urquhart, became a suc-

cessful private school catering mainly to the English-speaking Montreal establishment. By the end of 1823 the school had 79 pupils, 58 of them studying the classics. Among the pupils in the school were Henry Starnes who was mayor of Montreal in the 1850s.

Another pupil for a time was Amédée Papineau, son of Louis-Joseph Papineau, who attended in 1828. Papineau noted in his *Souvenirs de jeunesse 1822-1837* that it was here that he received his first lessons in

French—studying Fenelon’s *Télémaque*. (Amédée had previously gone to Miss Waller’s school until she died.) The Montreal Academical Institution closed in 1832, the year of the first cholera epidemic, and a controversial riot that was a precursor to the Rebellions of 1837-38.

In 1828, however Rev. Esson had become founder and guiding light of another learning institution, one which subsequently had a profound and lasting impact on the city’s development: the Montreal Mechanics’ Institute, which continues to thrive today, 180 years later, as the Atwater Library and Computer Centre.

Esson’s vision for the Institute was formed by his future-looking sense of Canada’s place in history. He rightly perceived that the apprentice system was breaking down in Montreal just as it was in Scotland and England, and that there was a resulting need to educate young Canadian-born workers, as well as the young immigrants flooding in the city. At that time, there was no educational facility in Montreal where adults could learn the reading, arithmetic, geometry and drawing skills they needed for their work in the evolving building trades and in the newly emerging factories.

He based his proposed model on ideas that had evolved in Scotland in the early 19 century, and which had become formalized in the Mechanics’ Institute established in London in 1823. Rev. Esson called a meeting at his home on Nov. 21, 1828 to explore the idea of establishing a similar mechanics’ institute in Montreal, the first of its kind in Canada. The main goal of the proposed new organization would be “to instruct the members in the principles of the Arts and in the various branches of Science and useful knowledge.” And he described how the this goal would be achieved:

1. The voluntary association of mechanics and others, and the payment of a small sum annually or half-yearly each.
2. Donations of money, books, specimens, implements, models, apparatus.
3. Library of reference and reading room.

4. Museum of machinery and models, minerals and natural history.

5. Academy or school for teaching arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry, and their different applications, particularly to perspective, architecture, mensuration and navigation, to which might be added ancient and modern language.

6. Lectures on natural and experimental philosophy, practical mechanics, astronomy, chemistry, civil history, political economy, philosophy of the human mind, literature and the arts.

7. An experimental workshop and laboratory.

He protested the efforts to make McGill College exclusively a Church of England institution, and his efforts paid off in the fact that it become non-denominational.

At least 12 men paid a \$2 membership, and were appointed at that first meeting to draw up a constitution and laws for the governing of the new institution. They were: Rev. Esson; John Henderson, civil engineer; Thomas Cliff, cabinetmaker; William Shand, cabinetmaker & builder; Teavill Appleton, builder; P. H. Ogilvy, teacher; William Farquhar, jeweller; William Boston, painter; James Poet, turner; and Messrs Savage, Clarke and Walker.

After several intervening meetings, Rev. Esson chaired a meeting on Dec. 9, 1828, at which the constitution for a new organization was adopted, and a Committee of Management was elected. As expressed in the documents surrounding the development of the London Mechanics’ Institute, and in the constitution, which also closely followed that of the London organization, the founding officers were leading citizens of Montreal who would provide preliminary funding and direction, but the actual running of the organization would be by men in the trades and professions.

The first president was the Swiss-born sheriff of Montreal, the Honourable Louis Gagy, who was a member of Rev. Esson’s church, but whose family in Trois-Rivières was Anglican; vice-presidents were Canadian-born lawyer and politician Louis-Joseph Papineau; American-born merchant Hora-

tio Gates and English-born industrialist John Molson, both of whom were members of Rev. Esson’s church. William Shand was treasurer, P. H. Ogilvy, a teacher in Rev. Esson’s school, was secretary. In addition, 32 committeemen, who represented a wide cross-section of trades and professions in the city, were elected.

At the Dec. 26, 1828 meeting, Rev. Esson delivered an introductory lecture titled, Object & Advantages of Mechanics Institutions. He chaired most of the weekly meetings in the first year of operation. Others who chaired the earlier weekly meetings were: garden

nursery owner Robert Cleghorn; teacher and surveyor Alexander Stevenson; ordinance officer William Holwell; lawyer Acheson Clarke; immigration officer James Allison; tobacconist Samuel Joseph; British and Canadian School teacher John Minshall; builder Joseph Bronsdon; and Messrs Savage, Shand, Boston, Poet, Francis Howson and L. M. Janes. The two bi-annual meetings were chaired by president Honorable Louis Gagy.

By the May 5, 1829 meeting, Rev. Esson evidently seemed to be concerned about adapting the original ideas that came from England to the realities of the situation in Montreal. He suggested a discussion be held at the next meeting to seek answers to, “What are the peculiar advantages to be obtained from a Mechanics’ Institute in the existing state of society in this part of the world?” Adaptations to the format and programs of the meetings were made often during the first months.

Rev. Esson served as vice-president of the Mechanics’ Institution in 1828, 1829, 1830, 1834 and 1835.

One of the intellectual leaders of Montreal, a philosopher, idealist, scholar and sparkling conversationalist, Rev. Esson was also controversial in some of his stances. He tried to unit various factions in the Presbyterian

Church in Canada under the canopy of the moderate Church of Scotland, but his efforts led to naught, and there continued serious divisions among the more evangelical elements in Canadian arm of that church.

In the early 1830s, led by Rev. Edward Black, some of prominent Presbyterians of the day—including early Mechanics' Institution members Robert Armour, William Dow and John Redpath - separated from St. Gabriel's and formed a new church, which eventually became the current Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul. John Molson, actually a Unitarian, formed another Presbyterian church. The Presbyterians of American origins had yet another church in Montreal. At one point during the disputes, Rev. Esson was accused of social improprieties, which were declared false by the courts.

In England, Rev. Esson was a vocal proponent for recognition of the Presbyterian Church as an established church in Canada, with hopes that Presbyterians would be given a share in the revenues from the extensive lands in Upper and Lower Canada called the Clergy Reserves. This land had been established by England in 1791 to benefit Anglicans.

In January 1829 he appeared before the Committee on Education of the House of Assembly to advocate for the rights of the Church of Scotland to have greater participation in the management and teaching of schools belonging to the Anglican-controlled Royal Institution. He protested the efforts to make McGill College exclusively a Church of England institution, and his efforts paid off in the fact that it become non-denominational.

Rev. Esson also founded the Protestant Orphan Asylum in 1822, and the Natural History Society in 1827, a group of mainly physicians and educators whose chief activity was to sponsor lectures on scientific topics. He was a founding member of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal in 1835, and served for a time as its vice-president. Rev. Esson was elected to the committee of management of the École Normale de Montréal in 1836, a two-denominational, teacher-training school that was open to both Catholics and Protestants until 1842. In 1844, he was a founder of the High School of Montreal.

Rev. Esson's first wife was Maria Sweeney, the daughter of a prominent Montreal family who died at the age of 24 in 1826. Their two sons both died in childhood. In 1842 he married Elizabeth Campbell, and two years later left Montreal for Toronto, having accepted an offer to teach history, literature and philosophy at a college that later became Knox College of University of Toronto. He died in Toronto in 1853 at the age 60, and is buried in Mount Royal Cemetery near his first wife and sons.

Susan McGuire, a graduate of Bishop's University, has served on the board of directors and as executive director of the Atwater Library and Computer Centre. She is the Centre's historian.

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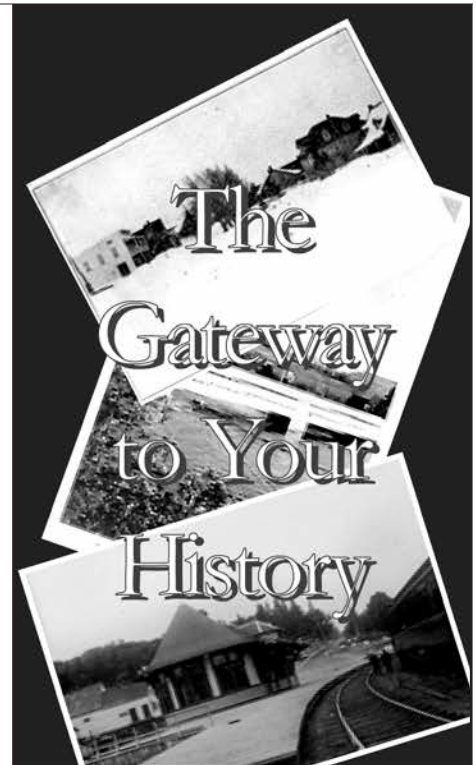
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ATWATER LIBRARY

Celebrating 180 years of service to Montrealers

by Lynn Verge

Founded in 1828, Canada's oldest lending library, the Atwater Library and Computer Centre (ALCC) is celebrating 180 years of service to Montrealers, and it is marking the milestone anniversary in a number of ways. Its gala benefit cocktail party, on Nov. 5, was a focal point of anniversary celebrations. Phyllis Lambert, our guest of honour, paid tribute to the organization's outstanding record and to the fine architectural qualities of the building.

On Nov. 21, 1828, the organization was founded with the name Montreal Mechanics' Institution. Over the years the names have changed, but the mission remains focused on promoting learning and building community.

Originating in Scotland, the international movement of mechanics' institutes began in the early 19th century. A large segment of the male working population, including tradesmen, artisans and professionals, then identified themselves as "mechanics." This movement spread worldwide as a source of education, apart from the control of church and state, and as an important precursor to modern adult education.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, there were mechanics' institutes in most towns in Quebec and across Canada. As the social-welfare state developed, many were absorbed into publicly funded libraries and technical schools. The ALCC is the only Canadian mechanics' institute still operating independently.

In 2005 the ALCC building was declared a National Historic Site by the Government of Canada, in part to acknowledge the organization's lengthy record of community service, and also to recognize the building's beautiful architecture.

utes of the organization from 1828 to 1861, providing an important resource for historical research;

- Historical panels with text in English and French, images and photos were posted on either side of the Atwater entrance to the main lobby.

- A series of articles highlighting the early years of the organization and its leading members by Susan McGuire have been published in the Westmount Independent newspaper.

A number of people have taken on the tasks of documenting and publicizing the organization's history. These include: former employee, Ralph Mackay, organized and catalogued the archives;

former board member and past executive director, Susan McGuire, drove the efforts to have the building recognized as a National Historic Site, and she continues to our volunteer historian; archivist, Rob Michel, generously gave advice; McGill Library and Information Studies Masters student, Jen Hoyer, worked as a summer student to coordinate the archives project; museologist and archivist, Suzanne Morin, began volunteering and sharing her wealth of experience; Micromatt owners, Gerry and Anne Matthews, digitized the 19th century archives.

Lynn Verge is the current executive director of the Atwater Library and Computer Centre.



Here are some other ways the ALCC is marking its 180th anniversary:

- The history section on our website has been greatly improved with the addition of the early hand-written min-

(Above) Reading room of the Atwater Library circa 1930s.

(Below) The current building, at the corner of Atwater and Tupper streets, was constructed in 1920.

SECRETS OF THE SCULPTOR

Rustic country origins and a romantic spirit shaped Orson Wheeler's life

by Barbara Barclay



One evening this past summer I stood in a classroom on the fourth floor of Concordia University's Hall Building and remembered the man who probably had more influence on my university years than any other. His studio had been just down the hall from where I stood watching over a roomful of international students writing a final exam in English as a second language.

Orson Wheeler, when I knew him, and that was from 1956 until his death in 1990, was a small grey man—grey hair, grey eyes, grey suit. But in 1930s, 1940s, and even 1950s, he had been one of Canada's most romantic figures and a prominent portrait sculptor.

How to introduce him? The man from Barnston? That might be a start. He was indeed from the Townships, deeply. He used to say that he came from behind the hills. Yet, to us he was the most enchanting storyteller, and through the decades introduced thousands of us to art, Canadian and Renaissance, Gothic, and classical art, and to our own culture.

Indeed he was almost the quintessential Canadian when it came to modesty and understatement, yet he could nonetheless knock our figurative socks off when he decided to make an artistic point. Ever seen the Statue of Liberty inside the Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral—both modelled to scale? Or a candle inside a paper-and-cardboard replica of a Gothic cathedral to emphasize what the lighting would have been like be-

fore electricity? Today they would be called audio-visual aids, but back then, they were enchantments as we listened to his gently humorous backgrounders to artistic endeavours long past.

Orson Shorey Wheeler was born September 17, 1902, the fourth child of Fred Hollis Wheeler and Mary Amelia Moulton Wheeler of Way's Mills, in Quebec's Eastern Townships, on a farmstead settled by his grandparents after their emigration to Canada from New Hampshire in the early 1800s. The family was proud of their descent from Obadiah Wheeler who had come to the New England colonies from Bedfordshire in 1636.

Although at the time of Orson's birth their circumstances were as hard as those shared by many pioneers in the newly opened up territories. Completely dependent on their labours for all necessities, there was no margin for luxury or error. Hard work and economy were ever-present and this training was to remain with him all his life.

As a child in pioneer times his schooling was spotty and took second place to the necessity of working for food and survival. Self-described as "always a strange, odd child," he felt he got his start as a result of a course his older brother Ralph signed up for with the International Correspondence School where he was exposed to some books on architecture and taught himself to draw. One of his drawings, a Gothic cathedral, was exhibited at the Ayer's Cliff Annual Fair. Of

course, as almost everything about Wheeler, there was the requisite fairy-tale touch. In fact, a rich American lady who summered in the Townships, Jessica Frost (nee Keene), the daughter of a prominent railroader, saw the drawing and demanded to be introduced to the young boy who had done it. She declared that he must have lessons and arranged for them to be provided, eventually paying for him to attend Bishop's University. Characteristically, he kept in touch virtually until her death.

In those days Bishop's was almost a private tutorial college with a wonderful atmosphere like Cambridge. Wheeler graduated in 1927, although he was older than most of the students. He then attended Peter Cooper Union in New York, then Montreal's own Monument Nationale where he studied under Elzear Soucy before coming known to the Montreal art scene. From there it was a short distance to the Tate Gallery and the New York World's Fair.

In 1932 he was hired to teach art classes at Sir George Williams University, the precursor to Concordia, but let us fast forward to 1956 when the Norris Building opened. A naive unsophisticated seventeen-year-old, as only Canadians could be in those departed days, I remember peering into a room with a curious collection of shapes and odd pedestals and canvas coverings and hearing an invitation to come in. I did, and the experience has shaped my thoughts, my interests, and, to a certain extent, my activities ever since—and I am only one of many.

I remember being enchanted by his courses on art history and touched by his teaching techniques and attitude. Always a most modest man, it was not until I found myself working down the hall from him in the 1970s and 1980s that I was to learn about the personal values that affected his life and achievement.

His output, both artistic and scholarly, was to take a major place in his life, but it existed side-by-side with an overwhelming sense of responsibility to his family and his home in the country. Until he was in his fifties and his mother had died, he continued to go home to Way's Mills three days a week to help look after her and help run the family farm until his older brother Ralph died. Spending his weekends making bread, hoeing potatoes, and looking after an aged parent, he regularly spent hours walking in the snow to

catch a train back to the city because he didn't own a car. His diary reports haying by moonlight at the age of 67. I saw the family homestead the year after his death and it was still innocent of electricity, running water or indoor plumbing.

An artist of widely varying interests, he was a portrait sculptor foremost and produced a remarkable oeuvre during hard financial times. He was an integral member of the Canadian art community for three decades, and an inspiring teacher to six generations of students, a teacher not only of sculpture but also of art, history and ideas.

At the same time—and this is the first time you will have seen this in print—the budding artist was a hopeless romantic. But in true Wheeler fashion he kept

his romances secret from most everyone—except his diaries. Adelle Baldwin, a local beauty from the Barnston area near his childhood home, broke his heart as a young man; yet 65 years later her pink silk handkerchief was still among his treasures. Then there was the English lady he kissed in the dark dining room, and other charmers in France and in New York.

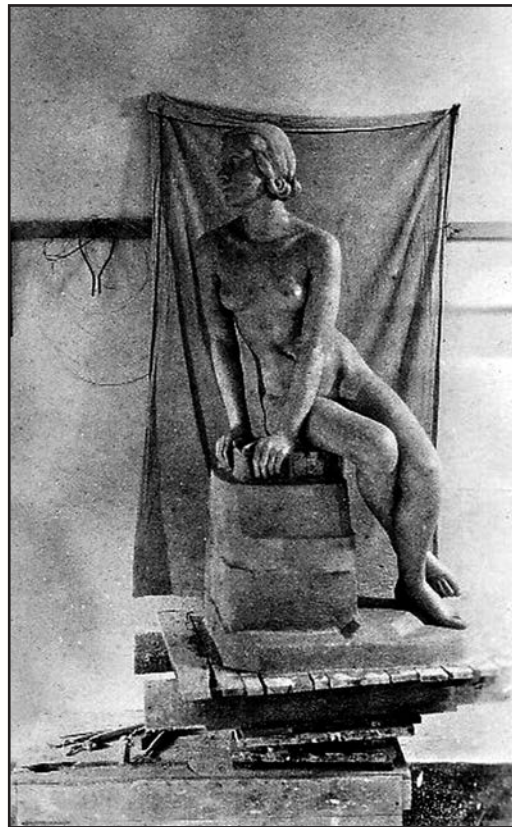
Most intriguing is Dora Marder, another hidden love who was in his life for nearly 47 years, and whose likeness can be found in a churchyard at Coaticook—although she was not Christian.

But I digress from the important things, which are the impressive gallery of portraits of eminent Canadians now spread across the country (including actor Christopher Plummer as a four-year-old), and his very extensive collection

of architectural models now at McGill's School of Architecture, all done to the same scale which permit some 20,000 comparisons.

Examples of his bronze busts can be found in the lobby of the Hall Building located at 1455 de Maisonneuve West in Montreal, an unparalleled treasure of six university principals, all of whom he knew and worked with. He once remarked that he gave them eternity. Alternately, his work is represented in the Supreme Court in Ottawa, the National Gallery of Canada and the Montreal Court House. These are just a few. The Colby-Curtis Museum in Stanstead holds the repository of his archives, and are open for review.

Barbara Barclay is president of the Beaconsfield-Beaurepaire Historical Society. She can be reached at barbara.barclay@concordia.ca.



STAGE LEGENDS

Highlights from a long history of English theatre in Montreal

by Jane Needles

The history of the stage in Canada begins November 14, 1606 at Port Royal with the mounting of Marc Lescarbot's *Le Théâtre de Neptune en la Nouvelle France*, composed to celebrate the return of one of the early Acadian settlement's first colonists, Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt. It was the first play written and performed in what we now know as Canada—and indeed all of North America, north of Mexico.

The play was in the genre of an *aqua masque*, or ocean spectacular, with special effects, cannon fire, multi-coloured smoke bombs, banners, flags, trumpets, costumes, war canoes, barques (small ships with sails). Characters included Neptune, God of the sea, tritons, Indians and a mysterious Companion and Host. Lescarbot may have played Neptune and the Mi'kmaq may have played Indians and tritons. Membertou, the grand chief was in the audience.

Mathieu Da Costa - the first Black person in Canada may also have been there.

Theatre in Quebec has come a long way from that time. While the French theatre milieu was celebrated throughout the early days, there was a strong English-speaking component of artists who travelled across the ocean and made stops in Montreal and the area, and performed in various venues. In 1842 Charles Dickens starred in a production of Thomas Morton's *A Roland for an Oliver*, the interlude *Two O'clock in the Morning* and Poole's farce *Deaf as a*

Post. Over the years such greats as John Gielgud, Sarah Bernhardt, the Barrymores, and many, many others graced the boards and brought English theatre into focus, and as a result many small companies were spawned.

Among these we find such groups as the Trinity Players, which was one of the oldest amateur theatre groups in Montreal, along with Everyman Players, the Little Theatre of the YM/YWHA, McGill Players Club, St. Lambert Players and the Dickens Fellowship.

and Richard Gilbert.

The turning point of theatre in Montreal can really be credited to the arrival of Expo '67 when artists and performers from around the world descended on Montreal in the centennial year of Canada's founding. These artists provided an incredible window on the world of culture to Canadians themselves, who travelled across the country to be able to attend performances of the "greats" of the theatre world, as well as those of the other artistic disciplines including ballet, opera, orchestral and the visual arts.

Amid this flurry of artistic activity in Montreal, the Saidye Bronfman Centre, recently renamed the Segal Centre, was opened in 1967 under the artistic direction of Marion Andre, and the Centaur Theatre in 1969 under Maurice Podbrey, with both continuing today as the major English language theatres in Quebec.

During those halcyon years, other theatres were added: Instant Theatre, Pendulum Theatre, Youthe-

atre, La Poudrière, The Yiddish Theatre (part of the Saidye Bronfman Centre and the only Yiddish Theatre Company in Canada at the time), Black Theatre Workshop, Playwright's Workshop Montreal and Phoenix Theatre. The regions are not to be forgotten either, as The Piggery Theatre was created as a professional summer theatre company to replace the original amateur group. More were added to the list in the 1980s: the Association of Producing Artists, Imago Theatre, Teesri Duniya, Theatre 1774, Creations Inc. Geordie Produc-



As the years went by, other groups such as the Montreal Repertory Theatre founded by Martha Allan and subsequently under the direction of Joy Thomson, the Mountain Playhouse under the direction of Norma Springford, developed and provided many well-known artists with their initial start in their careers. Examples of these include: William Shatner, Leo Ciceri, John Colicos, Herbert Whittaker, Walter Massey, Christopher Plummer, Richard Easton

Imaginary reconstruction of first Canadian play, by C.W. Jeffreys, pen & black ink over pencil on cardboard (National Archives of Canada/C-106968).

tions, Repercussion Theatre and The Limelight. Again, the regions added another summer company called Theatre Lac Brome.

During the 1990s more independent and innovative companies joined the ranks—Optative Theatrical Laboratories, the Montreal Young Company, Gravy Bath, Persephone Productions, Pumpkin Theatre, Tricycle Productions, ASM Performing Arts, Projet Porte Parole, Gleams Theatre, Mainline Theatre (Montreal Fringe) and SaBooge Theatre, to name but a few. The Hudson Village Theatre, originally Village Theatre, is now actually the only English-language theatre that produces and performs on a year-round basis.

In the early 1970s the Quebec Drama Festival became an independent organization from its parent founder the Dominion Drama Festival. At the time it was the focus for competitive theatrical productions produced only by the amateur groups, now referred to as community theatre. These productions slowly became more professionally produced and eventually the federation took on a new role placing these more professional companies in competition with each other.

As this no longer seemed to be an appropriate identity for the organization or an exercise that was beneficial to the community, it became clear there was a need for representation of the English-language theatre community in Quebec. The mandate was changed for the organization, and the Quebec Drama Federation was founded in the late 1980s.

In 1993, the federation included a membership of about 150 + individual members and 23 companies. Today, it represents over 350 individuals members and over 85 companies.

Many of these companies are small independent ones, which produce very innovative and challenging work. Its mandate includes the preservation of the history of English theatre in Quebec, as well as providing resources and services to its members. Currently, it is extending its reach to include more of the francophone theatre community, resulting in much more interaction between the two languages, and many productions being translated into the other language; thereby, expanding the performance potential to a much larger audience.

The Quebec Drama Federation also lobbies and involves itself in advocacy and policy development on behalf of the arts and culture sector within Quebec and across Canada.

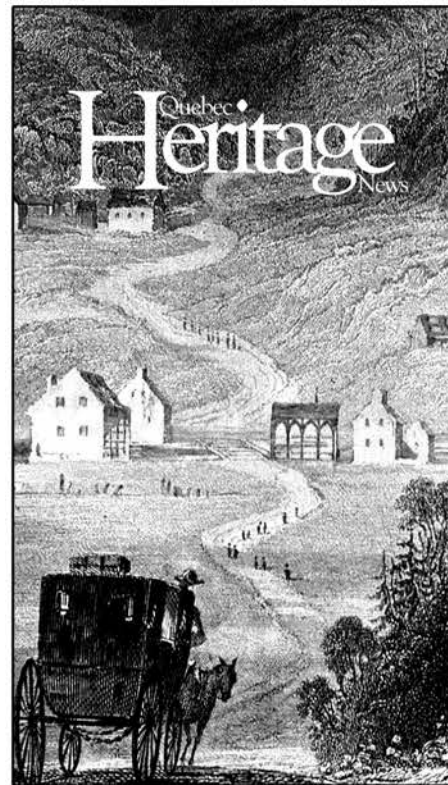
In this all too brief article, there are many company names and people that have not been mentioned, but perhaps one name that must be overlooked is that of the late Charles Rittenhouse, whose passion for English theatre and everyone involved in it was unsurpassed. He spent much of his life championing the art and implicated himself in more ways than one could count in ensuring that theatre was treated as a gift and a privilege. His son, Jonathan Rittenhouse, has carried on the tradition, and has vast knowledge of the field and all its history.

To such people, we of the theatre world, owe a great debt of gratitude for helping to ensure that the rich history of what we have accomplished over the past hundred years has not diminished nor been forgotten but rather has been celebrated and appreciated.

One thing we have to truly appreciate in this province is the value that is placed on culture and heritage by our public policies and government. For example, the Quebec ministry of culture was created more than 50 years ago with the sole mission to protect and serve the arts, culture and heritage of this province – a very demanding mandate, given that this province is so rich in all things cultural and historical.

And one must also recognize the general public that places a high value on all that is related to culture. Without this combination, Quebec would be the loser. As it stands now, we are an amazing province, with a cultural tapestry that is woven with great care and devotion and one that we all should be very proud of.

Jane Needles teaches Arts Administration at Bishop's University and is involved in a variety of volunteer leadership activities with community-based cultural organizations serving both anglophones and francophones. These include the Quebec Drama Federation (QDF), the English Language Arts Network (ELAN), the Centre d'activités récréatives et éducatives de Montreal, the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN), the Actors' Fund of Canada and the Association of Cultural Executives.



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REWIND PLAYHOUSE

How neighbourhood actors coax a wealth of roles from local history

by Roderick McLeod

On September 13, 2008, one of Montreal's shadier underworld characters stood in the market in Point St. Charles proudly showing off his two wives and his two bears. He was also accompanied by a reporter from *La Minerve*, and a woman who had lost her head, not symbolically, over a young man, but literally, to an axe. Her murderer, a fellow prostitute, stood nearby, holding the severed head—much to the general approval of a delighted crowd.

Yes, these were actors. Joe Beef (a.k.a. Charles McKiernan), one of 19th century Montreal's most colourful figures, was played by Brent Tyler, indeed the same Brent Tyler who is probably one of the 20th century's most colourful figures in Montreal.

A lawyer by profession, it came naturally to Tyler to keep the audience hooked on his every word, even while reading out a poem which Joe Beef had written to "Biddy" the symbolic washerwoman decrying the economic injustices of his day. Joe Beef's counter-cultural persona was notorious among respectable society, and his disdain for conventional mores earned him even greater scorn from social elites (especially Anglo-Protestant elites) while garnering support from the working classes (especially the Irish working classes).

He was, however, no bigamist. His first wife Margaret McCrae, played on this occasion by Fabienne Lepanse, died in childbirth in 1871, and her funeral and burial on Mount Royal involved a somewhat rowdy procession of dockworkers accompanied by a marching band. The second Mrs. Beef—or more properly, the second Mrs. Charles McKiernan—was Mary McCrae (no obvious relation to her predecessor), played by Violetta Vasiliauskas. The reporter from *La*

Minerve was a.k.a. Peggie Hopkins; the decapitee, Mary Gallagher, was portrayed by Greita Morse, while Ricky Zurif played her head-wielding murderer.

These players are all members of the Point St. Charles Community Theatre, and this means they rehearse and perform in the off hours when they are not busy making a living for they do theatre for the sheer love of it rather than to make money. Call them amateurs, if you will—except that the term is frowned upon nowadays, and rightly so, for implying lower standards. While the range of ability is inevitably broad in any volunteer-based activity, it can also include people with amazing natural talent. As I

implied, Tyler's talent should come as no surprise given his experience as a lawyer. Of the rest, I happen to know that LePanse is also the co-founder of Pegasus Performing Arts school, which does not take away from her commitment to the Point St. Charles group as a volunteer, but it does indicate the calibre of performer that community theatre can attract. (Fabienne was also my son's Pre-Kindergarten teacher, so you can see the kinds of hats she can wear!) The Point St Charles Community Theatre's mandate is to bring live theatre to the Point, and in November they tackled no less a challenge than the Neil Simon comedy, *Rumors*.

On this occasion, however, the troupe was working in collaboration with la Société d'histoire de Pointe-

Saint-Charles to hold the community's first open-air Historical Market, held appropriately enough at Joe Beef Park, at the corner of Centre and Richmond streets.

The event was a kind of heritage fair, with groups



Sue Kennedy, above, played by Ricky Zurif, holds Mary Gallagher's head after drunken row over "their" man. Photo: B. Lavoie

La Minerve reporter, performed by Peggie Hopkins, holds the floor, while Joe Beef, a.k.a. Brent Tyler, awaits to speak. Photo: B. Lavoie

of all sorts, including QAHN, sporting promotional booths, and lots of food and music. In keeping with the spirit of Joe Beef, who regularly offered free meals to the needy, the Heritage Day market dished up free soup during the lunch hour. Of course you didn't have to be "needy" to take part, and nor did you have to be Irish—although it was certainly an occasion to celebrate the city's Irish heritage, something Charles McKiernan himself would have been eager to do. I'm sure he would also have approved of Tyler's portrayal, and quite possibly of the man's willingness to be outspoken on, er, other matters...



Having the actors from the Point St. Charles Community Theatre entertaining the crowds at the Market by portraying historic characters like Joe Beef and the unfortunate Mary Gallagher is the latest trend in historical animation. These days, tour guides dressed in period costumes are fairly commonplace, but the heritage experience can really be taken up a notch when you get actual people from the past paraded before your eyes. And what's even better, you can engage these people in conversation: chat up Joe Beef and ask him about all those crazy animals he kept in his tavern, or even proposition Mary Gallagher – though you would do this last at your peril.

Groups across Quebec, and beyond, are finding this sort of historical animation an excellent way of exploring local heritage. Last summer performance artist Isabelle Gosselin wowed crowds in the Richmond area with her *Contes Valeureux*, based on local oral history. In Sherbrooke, Lysanne Gallant's *Les Productions Traces et Souvenances* (in collaboration with the Canadian Federation of University Women, Sherbrooke and District Chapter) toured the city in October meeting such important local figures from the past as Andrew Paton, owner of Paton Manufacturing Ltd., United Empire Loyalist Gilbert Hyatt, considered the city's founder, Grace Thompson, Geraldine Mollins, and Mary O'Malley, Alexander Galt's housekeeper.

Townshippers' Association launched an employment skills development project using theatre as a means of creating job skills and experience for a group of young people.

Break-A-Leg Productions, as they named the group, gathered local history and performed, *Secrets of the Springs*, at North Hatley's The Piggery Theatre. The play, based on the experience of local suffragettes who made a weekend visit to the area, incorporated historically accurate events from the Potton area.

These kinds of historical animation put a whole new spin on the notion of community theatre. Not only are such productions created by and for the communities themselves, but the content comes out of local heritage. Today's interactive websites have much to offer, but historical animation is the real way to learn history.

Oh, and I bet you're wondering about those bears. Joe Beef did keep bears in his tavern along with many other curious beasts that drew in the crowds. At the Joe Beef Historical Market, these bears were played by two rather diminutive dogs. I'd say they were born to play the part.

Historical Theatre around Quebec

The English Language Arts Network (ELAN) counts more than 80 community theatre groups in Quebec. The following is a list of those noted in this issue of Quebec Heritage News whose recent performances were inspired by historical events and characters.

Break-A-Leg Productions

Tel: (450) 292-3202
Toll-free 1-888-992-3202
tt@townshippers.qc.ca
www.breakaleg.site12.com
Contact: Corrinna Pole

Contes Valeureux

Tel: (819) 826-5205
isago@cooptel.ca
Contact: Isabelle Gosselin

Point St. Charles Community Theatre

Tel: (514) 514-935-7950 or (514) 935-3769
info@psccommunity.com
www.psccommunity.com
Contact: Peggy Hopkins or Fergus Keyes

Traces et Souvenances Sherbrooke

Tel: (819) 842-4710 or Tel: (819) 821-1919
Fax: (819) 842-1239
Toll-free 1-800-561-8331
info@tracesetsouvenances.com
www.tracesetsouvenances.com
Contact: Lysanne Gallant, director

TREASURE HUNT

Prospecting for the hidden stories of the Gatineau Hills

by Cynthia Vukets

Oh, the stories Mona Monette can tell. She answered the phone at the front desk of the Brennan's Hill Hotel in West Quebec over 50 years ago, when phones first came to the region.

The people of Low had been in the habit of stopping by the front desk of the centrally located hotel to catch up on local gossip and leave messages for friends and neighbours. When the phone lines were installed, the hotel maintained its role as social and communication hub of the village. Monette would have people calling her on the telephone for news that they could now get by calling friends and family.

Doug McArthur, a Wakefield musician and history buff, was so touched by Monette's stories he was moved to write a "live radio drama" about the era. It's not quite written yet, but McArthur says he sees a big switchboard as a central prop onstage, with the telephone operator acting as a kind of narrator.

McArthur is part of a project being headed up by Theatre Wakefield called, *Our Hidden Hills*. He met Monette at a sharing workshop in Low this October.

"What we're really trying to do is find some off-the-beaten-track stories," says McArthur. "We're looking for the hidden stories, the little oddball ones."

Our Hidden Hills is a project aimed at discovering and sharing historical stories from the Gatineau Hills. These stories will then be used as inspiration for visual art, drama, educational curriculum – just about anything, really.

"We're interested in the step where you find a germ of a story and mix it up with art," he says. "We're not doing actual historical work, we're mining historical things."

The theatre troupe hosted sharing workshops in Chelsea, Wakefield and Low in October. In late November another series of workshops began with the purpose of integrating the "found" stories with musicians, visual artists and writers.



"I think once we get 10 artists in the room with these people this is just going to explode," says McArthur.

Our Hidden Hills also has a website with room for stories, photos and music. The website will grow as stories are discovered and added. McArthur says he hopes it will provide inspiration to artists and musicians from all over the world.

Theatre Wakefield received a \$13,500 grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage to research local history and "bring it to life," says member Peter Gillies.

"Hopefully we'll unlock a few secrets, get some ideas and hook those people up with other people," he says. The goal of the workshops is "connecting people who have stories to people who are interested in using them."

This is the second project grant the theatre has received from the federal heritage program. The first went towards writing and producing the original musi-

cal, *Cabaret Civil*, the music from which a spin-off project resulted in a music recording and CD by the same name.

"I've enjoyed having to look at the heritage angle because I didn't grow up here," says Theatre Wakefield's member Kerstin Petersson. "There's always something interesting you dig up."

She says she hopes this newest heritage project will be a way to make community history accessible, especially to youth. "We're not just a theatre company, we're a community development organization," says Gillies.

For more information, call Petersson or Gillies at (819) 459-3670, or visit the group's website, www.ourhiddenhills.ca.

Cynthia Vukets is a reporter/ photographer for The Low Down to Hull and Back News, an independent weekly newspaper based in the village of Wakefield in Quebec's Gatineau Valley.

UNITED WE STAND

E.B. O'Callaghan rallied round Papineau as London spurned Quebec's demands

by Marjorie A. Fitzpatrick

This is the second in a four-part series of articles chronicling the life and times of Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, an Irish-born doctor-turned-newspaperman who was among several prominent anglophones in Lower Canada to side with the Patriote struggle for parliamentary reform in the early 19th century. At the close of the previous installment, which appeared in the Oct-Nov issue, O'Callaghan expressed his hope that a list of more than one hundred grievances drawn up by members of the Lower Canada Assembly in advance of Lord Aylmer's 1834 throne speech, would now "form the basis of a new Constitution."

The Assembly finally whittled down its list to ninety-two resolutions, forming a major reformist manifesto. Faced with this document, Lord Aylmer gave up and prorogued this session of Lower Canada's fourteenth parliament on March 18, 1834.

"Ninety-Two Resolutions" now became the rallying cry for the "popular meetings" that patriote militants had already begun holding at sites around the province. As editor of *The Vindicator*, O'Callaghan reported on all these meetings in detail and regularly urged Lower Canada's Irishmen to participate. Presiding at the largest St. Patrick's Day party held in Montreal that March, O'Callaghan proposed the first toast to "The People, the source of all legitimate power." Other toasts included one to "Papineau, and the majority of the house of Assembly of Lower Canada," and the dinner's guest of honor was none other than Augustin-Norbert Morin, principal drafter of the Ninety-Two Resolutions. O'Callaghan and Thomas Storrow Brown, another prominent Patriote, were themselves



guests at another dinner for the *fête nationale* arranged by Ludger Duvernay that June at the home of a sympathizing Irishman named McDonnell—an occasion still considered by many as the origin of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

In Quebec, on the other hand, the Reverend Patrick McMahon, pastor of St. Patrick's, had attended a St. Patrick's Day dinner offered that March by Lord Aylmer, governor-general of Canada at that time, and shortly afterwards committed his considerable prestige and influence to the Tory cause. This so embittered O'Callaghan, who had once worked with McMahon in the project to raise funds to build St. Patrick's, that the resulting rift between the two men ex-

tended well into O'Callaghan's post-patriote rebellion exile.

Worse news yet from London reached Canada in June 1834. A private bill had been surreptitiously introduced in the Commons to create a Tory-controlled British American Land Company to sell off unsettled lands in Lower Canada. O'Callaghan immediately denounced what he called this ploy to seize control of the province's revenues, reminding his readers, "Taxation without representation is Tyranny." Despite all the protests from Lower Canada, however, word came in mid-July that the British Land Company Act had received the Royal Assent. After Lord Aylmer dissolved the Fourteenth Parliament and issued a new writ of election for October 1834, the patriotes now added rev-

ocation of the Land Company Act to passage of the Ninety-Two Resolutions as the two non-negotiable conditions for their support of any candidate.

As all parties continued to compete for the allegiance of the Irish—still the province's biggest wild card—one very effective patriote tactic, first used by the late Daniel Tracey, was to compare the famous Daniel O'Connell to their own Louis-Joseph Papineau, who by no means rejected the comparison. In a grumpy letter to the Colonial Office, a pro-Tory businessman named Nathaniel Gould wrote: "It is astonishing how much the

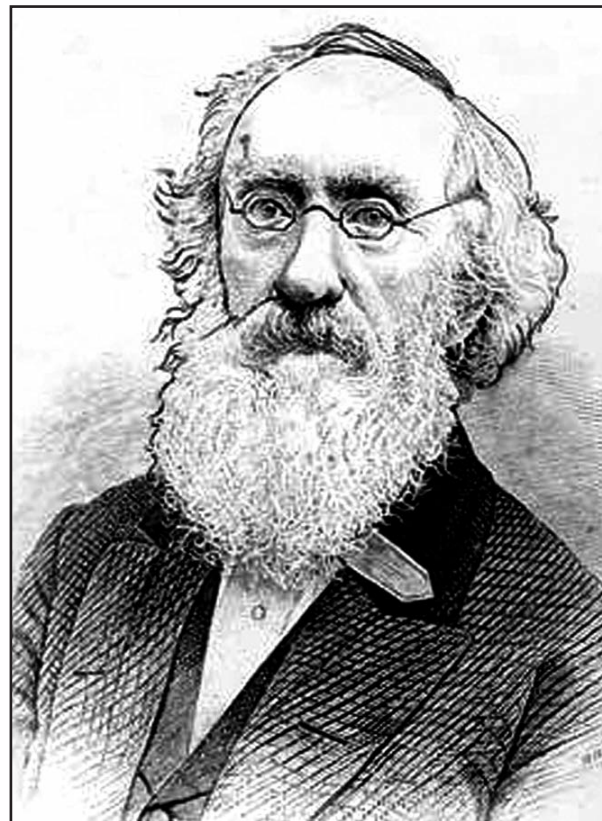
mane of Daniel O’Connell is known and used among the Canadians. I have seen in the most distant situations little engravings of ‘O’Connell the man of the People’ suspended on the walls in juxtaposition with the Virgin and the Crucifix in the Bedchambers of the French-Canadians.”¹

During the October 1834 election violence again broke out at many polling sites in the province including Montreal’s West Ward, where Papineau led the slate against an Irish Tory named Donellan, with Papineau eventually declared the winner. In the Richelieu Valley village of Sorel, a French-Canadian voter named Louis Marcoux was shot and killed by a Tory named Isaac Jones, later indicted along with three others but never prosecuted. The heavily French-Canadian district of Yamaska, however, provided probably the election’s biggest surprise, choosing as its new Assemblyman an Irish-Canadian: one Edmund Bailey O’Callaghan. With similar results all over the province, the final tally revealed that the bare majority the Patriotes had enjoyed in the previous Parliament had become a landslide. From now on, even unanimous opposition from more moderate reformers and the few surviving Tories could not derail and bill the Patriotes wanted to pass. With a permanent legislative impasse now inevitable, the province’s Fifteenth Parliament would be Lower Canada’s last.

Given the rapid growth of Patriote militancy and hubris, some moderates, including many of Papineau’s erstwhile friends, began taking countermeasures. Groups of prominent men of English and Scottish origin in Montreal and Quebec, notably including John Neilson, founded what they called Constitutional Associations—an ironic twist given Papineau’s own claim to be the defender of the Lower-Canadians’ constitutional rights. By now, however, so much republicanism had infiltrated the Patriotes’ rhetoric that the new groups could plausibly claim to

be protecting the imperial bond. They too sought the support of the Irish, appealing to their common grounds as anglophones of British origin. Others, like Étienne Parent of *Le Canadien*, also had a nationalist take on the need to preserve the bond with Britain, but from a totally different perspective. Parent feared that if that bond were severed, the next likely step would be annexation to the U.S., in which case the French-Canadians would be submerged in a yet huger sea of dominant Protestant anglophones.

The session of the new parliament convened by Lord Aylmer in



February 1835 lasted less than a month. The Governor reported in this throne speech that despite a ministerial shakeup in London, he had received no new dispatches redressing the reformers’ grievances. A committee of seven men including O’Callaghan drafted a reply in which the Assembly threatened to hold up the entire supply bill until its demands were met. With no apparent solution in sight and with no longer a quorum in the Assembly, Aylmer prorogued the session on March 9.

The Governor at first named a date in April for parliament to recon-

vene, but before that time arrived developments in both London and Quebec had changed the whole picture. The Whigs and their pragmatic allies the Radicals (including Daniel O’Connell) had at last managed to oust Pell’s Tories from power. Even before that the Commons had finally decided to send a commission to Canada to restore calm and try to find out what was really going on there. During the shakeup, the much-despised Governor Aylmer was recalled, and one Archibald Lord Acheson, Count of Gosford, was named Governor-in-Chief and head of the new three-man commission. Their brief actually included both Canadas, since a fractious little reform movement was growing in Upper Canada as well, but the situation in Lower Canada was clearly the more urgent.

Lord Gosford’s appointment came as very good news to the patriotes, particularly O’Callaghan. His Lordship came from an old, distinguished Irish family, Protestant, but militantly anti-Orange, and was said to be on good terms with Daniel O’Connell. He and his fellow commissioners arrived on August 23 to a generally wait-and-see attitude on the part of the patriotes, who, however, did not suspend their provocative rallies. But as the long-deferred date to reconvene Parliament approached in October, they resolved to make their case calmly to the commissioners and hope for the best. To that end, O’Callaghan aimed a carefully-crafted column in the *Vindicator* of October 6 directly at Gosford, recalling how the Orange faction had used religion as a divisive tool in Ireland and drawing a parallel with the situation the Governor was about to face.

“The object of the Tory, or Constitutional party, in Canada,” he wrote, “is the same as the for which the Irish Orange faction are contending: — the subserviency of the majority to the minority.” Equating anti-

Portrait of E.B O’Callaghan from the City of Montreal’s documents and archives collection

Catholicism in Ireland with anti-French bigotry in Canada, he concluded the lengthy column: “[T]hose who are determined to judge for themselves the truth of our position, without permitting those interested to blind them through their prejudices, will find, on examination that thousands here, belong to the French party who speak not a word of the French language, in the same manner as the Catholics of Ireland have many sincere friends and supporters, who are at the same time, staunch Protestants.”

Gosford gave every indication of being as anxious as Papineau and the Patriotes to get things off on the right foot. Before parliament convened he invited Papineau and Denis-Benjamin Viger to dinner, held an elegant reception to which all the prominent Patriotes were invited, and showed himself as open and approachable as Lord Aylmer had been the opposite. In his throne speech Gosford promised that the commissioners would take the reformers’ grievances seriously and announced the favourable resolution of several small items that had been irritating the Patriotes. The Assembly’s reply reiterated the call for positive action on the Ninety-Two Resolutions, but, by its moderate tone, gave the new Governor’s good intentions the benefit of the doubt. Gosford then stunned the Assembly—and enraged the Tories—by delivering his response first in French, and only afterwards in English. The Assembly then went on to transact some routine business, with O’Callaghan doing his part for his Yamaska constituents.

The atmosphere beyond the parliament’s walls, however, was less calm. In December, some 800 fanatical young Tories in Montreal formed a so-called British Rifle Corps, sworn to defend British lives and the “British connection,” which drilled nightly in the streets of Montreal, particularly near Papineau’s home. At the Speaker’s urgent request, Gosford refused their plea for arms, declared the Constitution to be in no danger, and ordered the group to disband. The Rifle Corps complied but soon reformed, changing only its name. Now it called itself the Doric Club.

Then Sir John Colborne, Lieu-

tenant-Governor of Upper Canada, dropped a bombshell, devoting most of his throne speech on January 14, 1836, to a diatribe against the Lower Canada Assembly, blaming its “evil majority” for wreaking havoc on his province’s immigration, investment, and other aspects of development. Colborne warned that despite these

The object of the Tory, or Constitutional party, in Canada, is the same as the for which the Irish Orange faction are contending: the subserviency of the majority to the minority

miscreants, the Constitution must and would be upheld, come what may. Lord Gosford was embarrassed and Papineau shocked by Colborne’s outburst. Not only was this attack by the head of one province’s government on the elected representatives of another unprecedented but Colborne’s cocksure statement that the Constitution would remain unchanged implied that London had already rejected the Ninety-Two Resolutions—drafted precisely to demand constitutional changes. Given Lord Gosford’s assurance of the commissioners’ open minds, Colborne’s assertion to the contrary caused dismay and confusion in the assembly, where O’Callaghan moved that the body convene as a committee of the whole. Everyone knew that the debate to follow would be lively indeed.

And then the other shoe dropped. Colborne, recalled by London, had been succeeded as Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada by Sir Francis Bond Head, who released to his own province’s Assembly the previously secret instructions to the commissioners. The Upper Canada Assembly’s Speaker promptly sent a copy to his counterpart Papineau, who was appalled by what he read. There in black and white lay the proof that the commissioners’ instructions from the outset had been to deny every major Patriote demand, while making unimportant concessions to preserve a façade of compromise. When the Assembly’s debate began, Papineau started reading into the official record item after item of damning

evidence from the commissioner’s instructions: no Assembly control of the Hereditary and Territorial Revenue; total independence from the Assembly of judges’ appointments and salaries; no impeachment of judges except by the King; insistence upon a “proper” civil list, with just a possible concession on some other revenue questions; no de-

pendence of the Executive on the Assembly; no control of the Assembly over the disposition of uncleared lands; and finally—in a separate dispatch to the commissioners—no elective Legislative Council. In short, Colborne had been right: London had indeed already determined its answer to the Ninety-Two Resolutions: a resounding “No”.

Gosford now lamely argued that the instructions did not fundamentally alter his mission, but the damage was already done. Canada had not had a normal budget for several years, while successive governors limped along instead on annual supply bills, advances, reimbursements, and any devious subterfuge they could devise to get the official salaries paid. The fired-up Assembly now voted the supplies for just six months. Predictably, its action was immediately rejected by the Legislative Council, and on March 31, 1836, Gosford—his bond of trust with the Assembly irrevocably broken—gloomily prorogued the session he had opened the preceding fall with such high hopes. Meanwhile, as even more of Papineau’s former friends moved to the right, *le grand chef* looked increasingly for support to the Assembly’s radicals, of whom none was more loyal, or more radical, than E.B. O’Callaghan, the deputy from Yamaska.

NOTE

1. Quoted in Helen Taft Manning, *The Revolt of French Canada, 1800-1835: A Chapter in the History of the British Commonwealth* (New York; St. Martin’s Press, 1962), 206, n.24.

Remember the Main

by Robert N. Wilkins

The recent demolition of the old Fogarty Shoe and Boot Store Building which stood until a few months ago on the south east corner of St. Catherine and St. Laurent creates yet another void in the popular folklore of Montreal's old St. Lawrence Main. Fogarty's, which opened in 1861, can be noted in many of the vintage Notman photos of the prestigious intersection that divides this city in two.

As chance would have it, I was passing by at the moment of the clearance of some of the structure in question. Struck, I watched the levelling for a time and observed the huge crane contending with the perfectly in tact field stone foundation walls which were put in place nearly a century and half ago. More than once I noted the derrick operator shake his head in disbelief at the resilience of the underpinnings of the doomed edifice. Eventually, however, they too surrendered to the demands of time and the abiding call for renewal. Nevertheless, it was yet another part of a long familiar world to vanish before my eyes. In deep reflection, my mind was suddenly alight with memories from seemingly simpler days.

I first became familiar with Boulevard St. Laurent (as the Quebec Toponymy Commission and others would like us to call it) in my early teens. My friends and I were well aware that the Lower Main was an unsavoury corner of the city where young boys might find some imagined excitement and adventure.

Of course, we were too young to enter most of the thoroughfare's establishments (for want of a better word) and, therefore, the greater part of our delights were visual in nature, centering on the variety of colourful characters tarrying the street. They peered at us; we peered pluckily back at them.

One time, I remember, our inquisitiveness got the better of us. As a result, we braved to enter the now demolished Midway Tavern (ostensibly to use the toilet) only to be intercepted by a most homely and irate waiter who scared us from the premises with what was, for me at least, a volley of rather incomprehensible local invective. Suddenly on the sidewalk anew, we quickly tried to regain our precocious adolescent dignity, much to the amusement of those same gaudy mortals with whom we had earlier exchanged glances.

Minutes later, having proudly and triumphantly put that fleeting moment of juvenile awkwardness behind us, we set foot in the Montreal Pool Room, a Lower Main landmark since 1912 and situated more or less across the street from where we had previously been so unceremoniously ousted. After having devoured several quintessential Montreal "steamies" with their requisite French Fries, my friends and I quite shyly slithered

our way into the back of the establishment where several billiard tables were to be found.

However, once there, we observed many more of the mad-caps who make up the diaspora which is the Main. Even for relatively unstudied teens, it was not encouraging and so we quickly decamped as circumspectly as when we had entered the building. It was, in any event, almost supper time and a long trek home in those pre-subway days. Besides, the Habs were being broadcast later that evening on television!

Later in life, I returned to St. Lawrence Main somewhat more mature, and for other incitements. In fact, on that same stretch of tawdry urban roadway was ironically found the Monument National, home in this city to the National Theatre School. Virtually every month, I would venture off to this truly historic site—so important in the traditions of both the French Canadian and Jewish communities of this province—to take in

the latest production of the celebrated drama school. The quality of the plays staged by the senior students was superb and I would almost always leave the tattered edifice more than satisfied.



Once on the street, I would again amazingly find myself in the midst of that same garish world that so intrigued me as an adolescent. Little had changed from those earlier juvenile occasions except that now I could put my feet in the Midway Tavern without suffering the humiliation

of my misguided adventure of all those years ago. Interestingly, however, the better part of that youthful desire was no longer with me.

As for the Lower Main today, many of the establishments I knew are gone, not the least of which was the St. Lawrence Market that is now a public square in which many of those same unconventional personalities while away their time on a hot summer's night.

Suddenly, I am roused from my fleeting deliberation of The Main's past by the abrupt movement of a demolition container carrying off yet another consignment of debris from the old Fogarty Building. The receptacle is pulled away forcefully and noisily from the site just as another rapidly replaces it. No time for unsolicited sentiment here.

Robert N. Wilkins is a researcher and writer with the Quebec Family History Society, an anglophone genealogical association based in Pointe Claire, Quebec. He can be reached at montreal_1900@hotmail.com

EVENT LISTINGS

Eastern Townships

Société d'histoire de Sherbrooke

275 Dufferin, Sherbrooke
Info: (819) 821-5406
info@socetehistoire.com

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(Lennoxville)
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www.uplands.ca

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Westmount Historical Association

Westmount Public Library
4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount
Info: (514) 925-1404 or (514) 932-6688
www.westmounthishistorical.org

Information Requests:
Archives open to researchers by appointment
Questions related to Westmount's history of Westmount answered by mail, telephone or email.

Material Donations:
Donations of photographs, memorabilia, or other material relating to the history of Westmount accepted.

St. Patrick's Society
Suite 1, 6767 Cote St. Luc Road, Montreal
Info: (514) 848-8711
www.stpatricksociety.com
www.cdnirish.concordia.ca

March 6, 2009
Annual Charity Ball (celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the Society)
Montreal Marriott Chateau Champlain

March 17, 2009
St Patrick's Day Luncheon
Charitable Fundraiser for cultural and educational projects

Hudson Historical Society
St James Anglican Church
642 Main Road, Hudson

2009 Meetings
January
AGM and Antique watch discussion with watchmaker Daryl Lessor
February
Rod Hodgson - Hudson Yacht Club Centenary

March
Jim Duff on Hiking from Hudson to Rigaud - Natural History

April
Tony Gravina - History of F1 Boat Racing and its Hudson connection

May
Ralph Simpson - The Law Family of Côte St-Charles

Exporail, Canadian Railway Museum
110, rue Saint-Pierre, Saint-Constant
Info: (450) 632-2410

To January 11, 2009
Railway Christmas
Handcrafts, tea room, decorations, storytelling and the model train layout

Permanent Collection
160 unique railway vehicles on display

Quebec City

Morrin Centre
44, chaussée des Écossais, Quebec
Info: (418) 694-9147
www.morrin.org

Virtual Exhibit with Eclectica
www.morrin.org/eclectica/demof.html

Virtual Library
www.transactions.morrin.org

Outaouais Pontiac

Gatineau Valley Historical Society
Box/C.P. 1803, Chelsea
Info: (819) 827-6224
www.gvhs.ca

Donations of photos, etc. to their Archival Collections and Image Bank gratefully accepted.



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