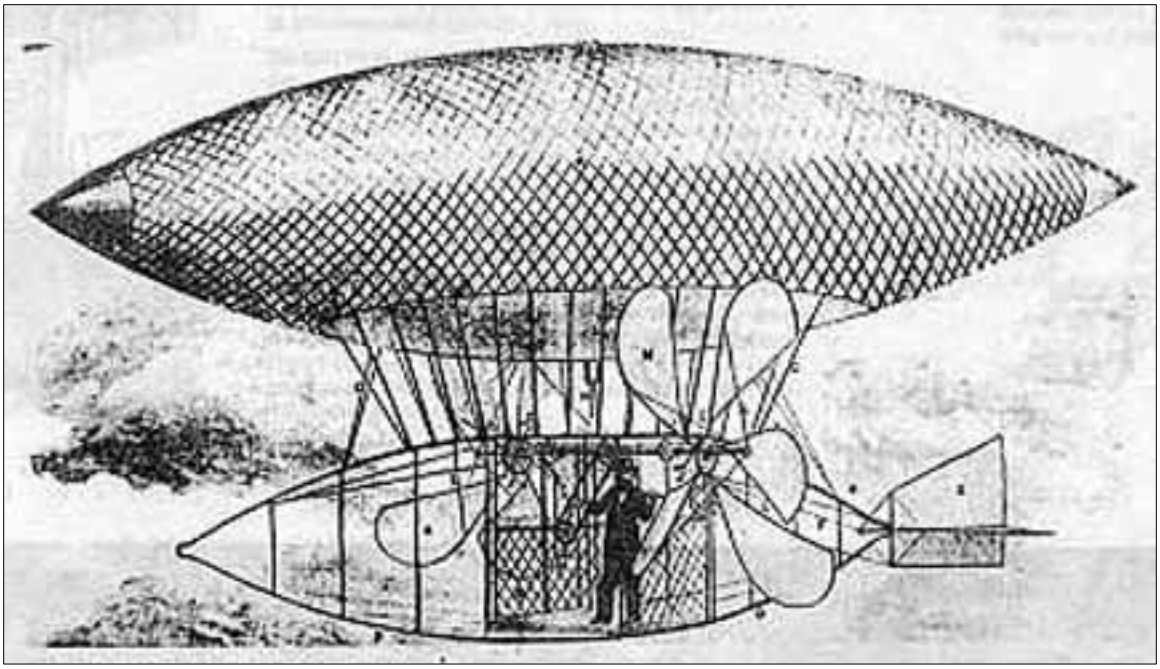
Quebec Heritage News

July 2004 Volume 2, Number 11 Page 1



Early aviation – a special section

Also in this issue

President's message

Being political without being partisan

Why Every Vote Counts: Community, Democracy, Heritage

Now QAHN is a non-partisan and non-political organization, so there can be no circumstances under which I should discuss politics, let alone state how I voted at the last election. Nevertheless, I'm going to do just that. I believe politics is an important part of our lives, not just something that heads newscasts and provides a source of moral outrage. Recent trends suggest that fewer of us in Canada are voting and more of us are saying that all parties are the same, all politicians are useless, and voting doesn't do a thing. This is a sad state of affairs, and one that we should all strive to improve.

In case you're wondering, I voted separatist. Not, I hasten to add, at the recent federal election; whether or not I opted for my local Bloc candidate on June 28th is a matter between me and my voting slip. I refer, of course, to the referendum held in my area (I can no longer, and not yet, call it a town) and many others across the province on June 20. Like many who voted Yes to "demerge" I did so less out of a conviction that independence would bring clear economic benefits than out of a belief in my community and a resentment that it had been erased from the map. Even within the larger opposition to Bill 178 we in Montreal West felt specially singled out, given that we had lost our autonomy within a much larger borough, not merely the rank of municipality. The Yes side having won, we expect to be able to elect our own council again which will have at least some of the powers it did in the past.

It cannot be said forcefully enough that the demerger movement is not an anglo thing. Apart from the many francophone communities that voted Yes on June 20th, most of the "anglophone" ones do have sizeable French-speaking populations, none of whom can be automatically assumed to be fifth-column anti-demergerites. The issue was not rich vs. poor either, although it is true that the reason communities like Montreal West have remained autonomous into the 21st century is that they have had a relatively high tax base. Some people from "the former city of Montreal" made fun of demergerites for being rich types desperate to keep the rabble away from their pools – and yet most of these critics are unable to claim today that their own lot has substantially improved. Finally, the Yes vote was not about hostility to Montreal: of course we are all Montrealers at some level, but we don't want our fates decided entirely within the impenetrable walls of City Hall off Champ de Mars. Those individuals who came to our communities at the eleventh hour professing a deep love for us and begging us not to leave (imagining themselves the heirs to the throngs of federalists who flooded downtown Montreal in the days leading up to the 1995 provincial referendum) were well-meaning, but missed the point entirely.

Community

The Yes campaign was about community, about local democracy, about (well, why not?) heritage. For the record, I have always thought that political reform of Montreal – historically one of the least democratic cities around – was necessary, even desirable. If it had been done with sensitivity to the achievements of the smaller municipalities and with real dedication to the needs of the inner-city neighbourhoods, the recent reform would have stood a decent chance of success. As it was, Bill 178 took away power from those that had it, and did not give it to those that lacked it. No attention was paid to local history, to a sense of identity, or to how communities work. (You can't fight city hall, you say? Yes you can when the mayor lives down the street and you know the guy who drives the snowblower.) Furthermore, the much-anticipated conditions for restoring lost municipalities made victory for demerger not only unattractive (Montreal's "agglomeration council" will be fun to see in action) but in some cases impossible (what happened to a nice clear 50% plus one?) Many people who are proud of their former towns were frightened that demergers would bring higher taxes, even worse services, and no real voice. Some, like me, voted Yes despite these fears – on a whim, if you like; one might call it *le beau risque*. There are some things that are worth the extra buck (like school taxes which, gulp, have certainly gone up...) At moments of crisis one does the right thing, not necessarily the smart thing.

I hope I have succeeded in being political without being partisan. Certainly the fault for the mergers fiasco can be placed on politicians, and certainly not on the heads of rich anglos. The former government is to blame for starting the mess, and the current government is to blame for making it worse. OK, maybe all parties are the same and all politicians useless. But voting can indeed make a difference – even voting according to the whims of your heart.

– Rod MacLeod

Aviation history

To look down and see the landscape stretching out before you...

Going over the rainbow: The ups and downs of flying

Up in the sky
Ever so high
Pleasures come in endless series...

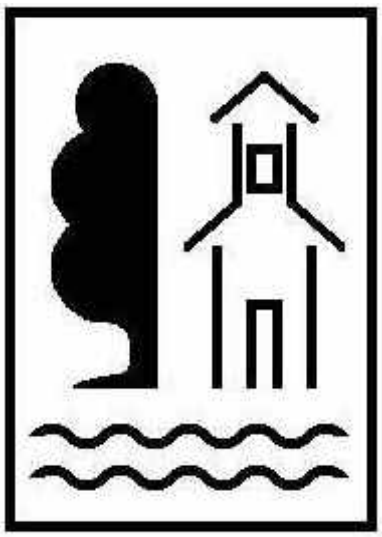
They do indeed – and if you don't believe W..S. Gilbert, there are plenty of other writers' words extolling the joys of flying, from *Fly me to the moon* to *Leaving on a jet plane* to *Over the rainbow*. The heritage of flying, now, that's a slightly more refined category: I think of the Wright brothers or Amelia Erhardt, or at least someone with goggles and earmuffs like the ones my father kept as a souvenir after 1945 and which have pride of place somewhere in the attic. But our editor suggested we keep war-related flying stories for the September issue, so I will confine myself to the very small war that erupted between my sister and me over who sat where during our first flight ever, c.1964. We were not competing, as you might have expected, for the window seat – quite the reverse: the seatbelt next to the window had been extended to the maximum, and my mother rationalized that the previous occupant had probably been "a very fat man." This explanation so distressed us that we let her sit by the window all the way to Moncton. (I usually went "home" with my mother – almost always by train – some weeks in advance of my father, who was either at work or at the Queen Mary hospital having regular inspection by the DVA thanks to a war injury – which, of course, I mustn't talk about now.)

Everyone has flight-related horror stories, the vast majority of them thankfully not involving loss of life. My worst flight (touch wood) was on a Spantax jet heading overseas. I sat next to my recently-hitched (to me, or course) spouse, which was a source of great pleasure – but if I reclined my seat my top half would promptly occupy the lap of the lady behind (provoking no small mutual annoyance) and if I leaned too heavily on the armrest it would give way and roll me out into the aisle (distressing during takeoff and landing to say the least.) Four years later our return to Canada involved that same spouse taking a Commonwealth-scholarship-paid direct flight from Heathrow to Montreal while I took 17 hours longer stopping at Gatwick, Boston, and (joy oh joy) Detroit. Long though this was, it was a delight to land on the Boston runway, which is practically underwater, and even better to take off after dark from Detroit, where the lines of lights lining the expressways sliced the ground like laser beams in all directions. The familiar coastline of the West Island was also a welcoming sight…

It is, surely, one of the greatest pleasures of flying to look down and see the landscape stretching out before you. I find it particularly reassuring to see that there are mountains, rivers, roads, fields and bridges that really do correspond to the squiggles on a map. After my initial childhood indifference I have become an avid window seat occupant, and if I have an ordinance survey map in my lap and can locate what's out the window on it I don't care what movie they're showing. Coming back from Quebec City in an 18-seater a few years ago I had a splendid view of the oil refineries of east-end Montreal, the Olympic Stadium, the Miron Quarry, and the Rockland shopping centre. Even better, though less familiar at the time (late '80s), was traveling from St Hubert to Sherbrooke airport in a Cessna piloted by my brother-in-law – now that lets you see the lay of the land!

We thank you for flying QAHN, and wish you very happy landings.

– Rod MacLeod



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THE QUEBEC ANGLOPHONE HERITAGE NETWORK
PRESIDENT RODERICK MACLEOD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VALÉRIE BRIDGER
QUEBEC HERITAGE NEWS EDITOR CHARLES BURY
HERITAGE TRAILS COORDINATOR DWANE WILKIN
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT COORDINATOR RON RATCLIFFE
HERITAGE PORTAL COORDINATOR MATTHEW FARFAN
OFFICE ASSISTANT KATHY TEASDALE
400-257 QUEEN STREET, LENNOXVILLE QUEBEC J1M 1K7
1-877-964-0409, (819) 564-9595, FAX 564-6872
HOME@QAHN.ORG; WWW.QAHN.ORG
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QAHN matters

Kenneth Hugh Annett, CD, DCL, FCCT

QAHN honours educator-historian with Phelps award

Quebec educator and historian Kenneth Annett was awarded this year's Marion Phelps Award for his lifetime contribution to the preservation and promotion of the anglophone heritage of Quebec. Here is why:

Kenneth Hugh Annett deserves a special place in the hearts of many Gaspesians as the premier keeper and communicator of our history for many, many years.

Born on August 18, 1914, Ken's parents were Percy Annett and Mary Brien of L'Anse aux Cousins on the Chaleur Bay coast. He was brought up and educated there until he attended New Carlisle High School, followed by post-secondary studies at MacDonald College where Ken received his teaching certificate. He returned to the Gaspé to teach at Gaspé Intermediate School.

We give you ships and tides and men,
Anchors a'weigh and windfilled sail
We give you back the sea again
In sailors' songs and rousing tale.

And inland where the dark hills rise
Between you and the Salt-thick foam
You hear the surf, the seagull cries,
And eastward turn your hearts towards home

Ken then attended Bishop's University where he got an Honours degree. Again, he returned to the Gaspé to teach at Escuminac Intermediate School. He eventually became the Principal there, but left the position to serve in the Royal Canadian Air Force in World War II. After training in Radar at McGill University and RAF Clinton he was on active service until 1945.

After the war, he married Velma Law of New Carlisle, daughter of Bert Law and Mabel Imhoff, and the couple went to live in the Eastern Townships where they raised three sons: Christopher, Richard and Andrew. Each summer the family returned to Gaspesia and the homes of grandparents in New Carlisle and Gaspé.

During his seventeen years in the Eastern Townships, Ken served as a senior teacher, pioneer guidance counsellor and finally as supervisor of schools for the Central School Board of Richmond-Drummond-Arthabaska. He was active in regional and provincial associations of teachers, and was chief instructor of army cadets both for the local Corps and at annual Summer Camps. He was a Captain in the Cadet Services of Canada and was awarded a Canada Decoration (CD). At this time, Ken did post-graduate work in Education at Colombia, Harvard and Bishop's Universities, and became an Inspector of Protestant Schools for the Quebec Department of Education.

Ken Annett's son Richard accepted the Marion Phelps award on his behalf. It was presented by last year's winner Marianna O'Gallagher at this year's QAHN annual meeting. Photo Philip McMaster

It was in 1962 that Ken's career in the Ministry of Education began, and he, Velma and the boys moved to Ste-Foy where he and Velma still live. Ken first took the position of Associate Director of the Guidance Bureau, and was a founding member of the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association. In 1966, he was appointed Assistant Director General of the Elementary and Secondary Education Branch of the Ministry, and as such helped lay the foundations of the present school system.

It was at this point that Ken received the Order of Scholastic Merit, and many other honours have been showered upon him, including an Honorary Life Membership in the Alumni of New Carlisle High School, and a Fellowship in the Canadian College of Teachers. He retired in 1979.

Ken's interest in history has led him to membership in the Huguenot Society of Canada, the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec and the Quebec Family History Society. He has served as the convener of the Richmond Trust Awards Committee and as a member of the Strathcona Trust.

He is perhaps best known to the readers of the newspaper *SPEC* for his countless hours of research which produced the series *Gaspé of Yesterday*. Composed of over 400 articles on aspects of Gaspesian Heritage, Gaspé of Yesterday reflects the historic time-frame of five centuries of Anglophone Gaspesian

Continued on next page

QAHN matters

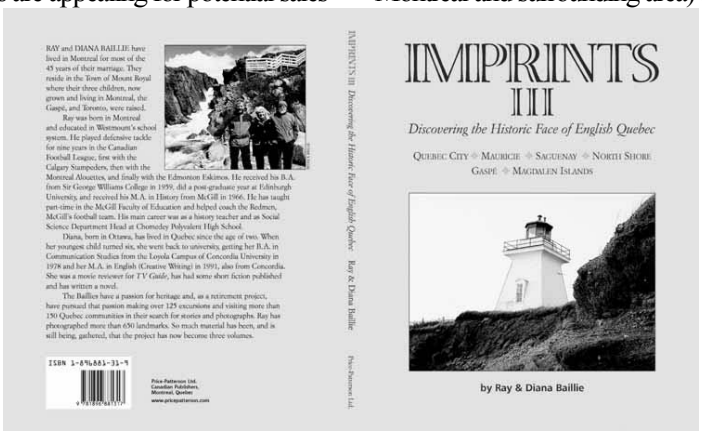
Publisher seeks sales help

Small-town Quebecers, where do you buy your books?

A Quebec publisher of English-language books is looking for some help selling its newest title. The Montreal company Price-Patterson Ltd. is publishing *Imprints III: Discovering the Historic Face of English Quebec*, by Ray and Diana Baillie.

The subject of this authoritative picture book is roughly the eastern half of province, ranging from Three Rivers east. However this huge area is served by only two English-language bookstores, in Quebec City and Rimouski. So the publishers are appealing for potential sales partners among community groups, historical societies, social and cultural clubs and the like.

This is a money-making opportunity and any group or individual involved will be able to keep some of the take on any books they sell. The first two volumes in the Baillie series have been an easy sell and Imprints III promises to be equally successful, provided potential buyers can find it. Anyone interested is invited to contact Price-Patterson at the address below.



One book, then another, then ...

As a retirement project, the Baillies planned to do a book about the province of Quebec's English landmarks with accompanying photographs. For Ray and Diana's purposes, 'English' means 'English-speakers' and includes Irish, Scots, Welsh, Jews, Blacks and, of course, the English. A landmark can be almost anything: a house, a church, a school, a factory, a park. Although church and corporate landmarks are covered, Ray and Diana chose not to emphasize them since these topics had been well covered elsewhere. Once the preliminary work had been done, it became clear to them that 'the' book was really three. The result: Imprints I (covering Montreal and surrounding area) and Imprints II (covering the Eastern Townships) published in 2001 and 2002.

Imprints III covers Quebec City, Mauricie (including Three Rivers), the Saguenay, the North Shore, the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands. These areas have an interesting but little-known English history.

Imprints III will be launched on Thursday September 23 at 5:30 p.m. at Carter Hall (next to the Anglican Cathedral) in Quebec City.

Contact David Price, Vice President, Price-Patterson Ltd., 310 Victoria Ave., Suite 105, Westmount, Quebec, H3Z 2M9, Tel: (514) 935-4537 Fax: (514) 935-9241
e-mail: davidprice@pricepatterson.com, www.pricepatterson.com.

Two Solitudes: Myths and Realities

Following the success of last year's Cemetery Heritage Conference, the Fédération des sociétés d'histoire du Québec (FSHQ) and the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) jointly present "Two Solitudes: Myths and Realities".

To be held on October 16 at Collège Maisonneuve in Montreal, this conference presents anglophone and francophone perspectives of Quebec history between 1837-1867. The conference format will be two panels of two speakers, each presenting the francophone and anglophone perspective of the Rebellions, Responsible Government and Confederation. There will also be Opening and Closing remarks that will include longer-term impact of these 30 years of English-French relations in Quebec. More details to follow in the September issue, but make a note of the date and location! October 16, 2004, Collège Maisonneuve, Montreal.

ANNETT: Continued from previous page

History, taking into account the influence of vast and varied physical space on the human experience. SPEC received a copy of each article, as completed, and published some 190 of them in the period 1977-1995. CBC Radio's Quebec AM has broadcast 70 topics of the series. The bound volumes can be consulted at the Gaspesian British Heritage Centre, the Gaspé Community Library, the Literary and Historical Society of Québec, the Bishop's University Library, the Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Quebec and the Archives nationales du Québec.

Ken has also written the Annett Family of Gaspé Saga I and Saga II and the Huguenot Influence in Quebec, which includes 40 studies on that theme. He also contributed to Huguenot Trails, which is the publication of the Huguenot Society and Connections, the journal of the Quebec Family History Society. He has collaborated with Guy W. Richard of La Société généalogique de Québec on a number of projects.

To recognize his contribution to the understanding and dissemination of the history of the Gaspé, Ken received the Prix Mérite culturel from the Société d'histoire de la Gaspésie in 1995, and was made an honorary Member of the Gaspé Jersey-Guernsey Association. He was presented with a Doctorate of Civil Law, honoris causa, by his alma mater, Bishop's University, in 1990.

Ken continues to do historical research from his home in Ste-Foy.

History of aviation

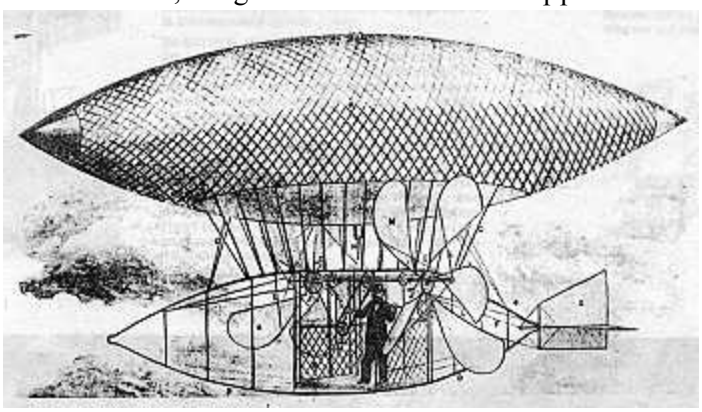
Pilot Eugène Godard claimed it could hoist a horse

Quebec's first lift-off was in a balloon named Canada

In 1856, Montrealers are invited to witness the first free ascension of a manned balloon in the province of Quebec (the first in Canada with passengers). For the occasion, the famous French aeronaut Eugène Godard executes his 308th career ascension aboard a 36,860 cubic feet of gas balloon named "Canada". The lift off is witnessed by a huge crowd clapping frenetically. The first envelope having been destroyed accidentally in Boston, seamstresses made a new balloon, named "Canada", in the Great Hall of the Bonsecours Market in Montreal.

In 1874, at a fund raising event organized by a Hull baseball club, an American aeronaut suggests to lift off this time with a cow. Few days before lift off, the animal becomes a local celebrity. But the Animal Protection Society manages to prevent the project and the cow stays on the ground. So a regular lift off happens, but becomes a catastrophe when the air balloon lands in the Outaouais river and the pilot nearly drowns.

In 1879, in Montreal, a serving machine repairman named Charles Pagé develops a plan for a dirigible with an elongated profile. The basket is about two meters long and is equipped with a rudder and two canvas propellers activated with a manual crank. For the prototype construction, Pagé seeks financial support from Richard Cowan, a Montreal businessman. Short of funds, they eventually use a conventional envelope (i.e. round). The first flight was a disaster. On departure day they realized that 224 cubic metres of gas is missing and they have to rid the basket of the heavy propulsion mechanism. The balloon meets violent winds and makes a rough landing, pulling over a fence on its way. To crown it all, the pilot gets asphyxiated while emptying his balloon and it takes 10 minutes to revive him. Ten days later a second attempt is made with Pagé's propulsion system. After a few crank ups, they realize that the propellers are cutting the cords holding the basket to the balloon The aeronauts climb up the rigging to rectify the situation and a second attempt is made. A *La Minerve* reporter comments: "the air balloon moved noteworthy and the aeronauts came back delighted with their flight".



Authentic dirigibles make their Canadian debut in Montreal only in 1906. That year, Montrealers are invited to Dominion Park for the lift off of a small dirigible flown by the American Charles Keeney Hamilton. This time the engine is activated by a propeller attached to a motorcycle engine. Underneath the envelope, a wooden gangway is held by strings. By moving forward or backward on the gangway, the pilot shifts the centre of gravity allowing the dirigible to go up or down.

Top: Eugène Godard advertised that his hot-air balloon could lift a horse. Above and front page: Charles Pagé designed a dirigible with two hand-cranked propellers but never had a chance to build it. Text and photos from the web site of the Quebec Air & Space Museum (See Page 8).

History of aviation

Troops called out to maintain order at Saint Hubert R-100 landing

Dirigible wowed crowds on St-Lawrence tour in 1930

In the summer of 1930, the arrival of the British dirigible R100 from England thrills Quebecers who gather along the shores of the St-Lawrence to see this giant of the air floating gently towards Montreal. It carries a crew of 37 and 6 passengers for a flight duration of 79 hours. In the vicinity of Trois-Rivières, the dirigible flies through a violent storm. Airplanes dispatched to meet with the airship spot tears in the control surfaces. Canadian Vickers of Montreal will be put in charge of repairs.

The day of the balloon's arrival, 40,000 people gather at the Saint-Hubert airport. A detachment of 600 soldiers insures public order. An anchoring mast 60 metres high has been erected to accommodate the airship. Additional railroad tracks were built to transport more than 500,000 visitors, 3000 of whom visited the interior of the cockpit. Many of them ripped out pieces as souvenirs !

On its Canadian tour, the dirigible proceeds to Toronto where it creates huge traffic jams. During that flight, a gear train breaks up and the R100 looses one of its six propellers which falls into the river. The return flight to England will be on five engines instead of six.

The British manufacturer predicts at a public banquet that soon airships would link England to Montreal weekly. In reality, there will never be another. A series of tragic accidents, among which the well publicized explosion of the Hindenburg in New York in 1937, eventually put a term to hydrogen filled airships, in spite of some undeniable successes such as the 151 Atlantic crossings of the Graf Zeppelin.

Napoleon's 'Aeronaut of the Emperor'

Godard dominated balloon world for more than six decades

Mr & Mrs Eugène Godard (M. 1827-1890) were inducted into the Quebec Air and Space Hall of Fame on June 6, 2001. Here is their citation:

Born in France, Eugène Godard made his first ascension in 1847 under a paper hot air balloon of his own construction. This began a career in ballooning that took him to perform throughout Europe using hot air and hydrogen-filled balloons. He came to the United States in 1854 and 1856 for a series of ascensions. At least twice he mounted a horse carried on a platform under the balloon basket in flight. He also performed gymnastic exercises on a trapeze similarly suspended. Godard extended his 1856 tour to Canada. At that point in time, Montréal had seen ballooning attempts, but none of them successful in lifting an aeronaut. By 1853, the city had become accessible by railway from Boston and New York, and a relatively reliable source of illuminating gas for lift had become available from the New City Gas Company works in Griffintown. However, the balloon intended for his Canadian exhibitions was destroyed accidentally at Boston on August 4. When Godard and his wife, who travelled and performed with him, arrived in Montréal, they advertised for seamstresses for fabrication of a balloon in rented space in the Bonsecours Hall. On completion, the "Canada" was displayed in the building before being taken to a vacant lot convenient to the gas works. It would become the first successful aerial vehicle built in this country.

On September 8, 1856, Godard made the first free balloon ascension in the province of Québec, and the first with passengers over what is now Canada. With him were three prominent residents of the Montréal area. Two more passenger flights were achieved before the Godards left to return to the United States. The Godard family of aeronauts, originally inspired by Eugène, over a period of 60 years made the majority of public balloon flights in Europe. Eugène Godard supervised plans for observation balloon operations in the 1859 war between France and Austria. In 1870 he built a series of balloons to carry people and messages from besieged Paris. His overall efforts were recognized by his Emperor, Napoléon III, with the title "The Aeronaut of the Emperor".

History of aviation

Province played key part in conquering the heavens

Why a Quebec air and space museum? Because we can

Editor's note:

Much to my surprise, in preparing this issue of the Heritage News I discovered that Quebec has its own air and space museum, complete with well-organized energetic volunteers, a significant collection, on-going restoration projects, charitable status, even a hall of fame. In short the museum has everything it needs – except a place to call home. The Quebec Air and Space Museum says it may have that problem solved in the next few months. Let us hope this happens.

In the meantime I have taken the liberty of presenting in these pages a number of excerpts and illustrations from the group's excellent web site http://www.aerovision.org/ I hope this will increase awareness in this important area of transportation heritage so sadly neglected in the past. I urge you to encourage your flight-minded friends and colleagues to become involved in this worthy project. Here in their own words and pictures are a few glimpses of the Quebec Air and Space Museum and its people.

– C.B.

WHY A QUEBEC AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM?

Few people are aware of the historical leading role that the province of Québec played in the conquest of air and space. Aeronautical industrial heart of Canada since the 1920s and 1930s, the province can also truly claim to be the world cradle of bush flying for the whole world, as well as that of commercial aviation and air mail in Canada. And who knows that the Apollo Lunar Modules (LEM) landed on the moon with legs fabricated in Longueuil, Quebec?

The Fondation Aerovision Quebec has given itself the mandate to emphasize these exceptional contributions by promoting the Quebec Air and Space Museum project.

The museum, which will be located at St-Hubert Airport, the most historical airport remaining in Canada, will be devoted to the preservation of the aviation, aeronautical and aerospace heritage of Québec, as well as to that of the pioneers and heroes of our aviation history.

The Fondation Aerovision Quebec, is looking forward to the realization of this project taking place very shortly, and hopes to announce the official opening of the museum within the next few months.

AEROVISION

Fondation Aerovision Quebec was created to generate an awareness of the exceptional contribution of Quebec to the conquest of the air. This was to be achieved by fostering the implementation of the Québec Air and Space Museum, at the Saint-Hubert airport (near Montréal, Canada), which would be devoted to the preservation of the aeronautical heritage of Quebec, as well as that of the pioneers and heroes of our aviation history.

Fondation Aerovision Quebec is a non profit organization. The foundation board includes the following volunteer members:

Lucien Poirier: Chairman, Bruce McLeod: Vice-President, Finance, Yves Paradis: Vice-President, Membership, Patrick E. Farley: Secretary, Jacques Patenaude: Treasurer, Guy Charlebois: Director, Marguerite Guénard: Director, Jacques Mélançon: Director, Pierre Thiffault: Director, François Vachon: Director, Jacques E. Laframboise: Ex-Officio Chairman, Raymond Leroux, Executive Director.

Fondation Aerovision Quebec, 2000 Coderre Street Saint-Hubert, QC. Canada J3Y 4N5, Tel. (450) 678-1720, maq@aerovision.org

THE COLLECTION

The collection of the Air and Space Museum of Quebec already includes some important aircraft such as a Canso water bomber, a Vickers Viscount, a DC3, Fairchild Bolingbroke (WWII aircraft presently being restored), a BD5, a Wittman Tailwind, a Schweitzer Glider, an Avro

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History of aviation

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CF-100, all-weather fighter, two first generation Link trainers flight simulators, replicas of a Sopwith Camel, Spitfire and Twin Mustang fighters. Also, eventually a Grumman Widgeon, a Noordyn Norseman, and other aircraft promised by varied organizations once we have adequate facilities. In addition, the Museum has a large number of artifacts, models and souvenirs evoking the aeronautical heritage of Quebec.

RESTORATION

Fondation Aérovision Québec has launched a restauration project for its two Link Trainers flight simulators. These invaluable training aids, dating back to the '40s, represent

a real challenge for the volunteers in charge of their restauration. Important research were done to gather the necessary technical documentation. In their own way, the Link Trainers constitute a master piece of our collection.

Our Fairchild Bolingbroke bomber is currently being restored by a passionate group of volunteers. Extensive research and consultation in preparation for the first phase has been completed and the nose section will be restored first. Current facilities do not allow for the complete airframe to be assembled, therefore restoration will be conducted in individual units until such time as a suitable facility is secured. Donations are always welcomed !

This restoration will be for static display and will be finished in the colours of 115 Squadron (Western Air Command). Authorized as No. 15 Squadron at Montreal, Quebec on 1 September 1934, the unit was renumbered No. 115 Squadron in November 1937. It flew the Bolingbroke Mk IV from November 1941 to August 1943. It served in the defence of Western Canada and Alaska, and was credited with the sinking of a Japanese submarine in July of 1942.

Being the first all metal aircraft built in Canada, new construction methods and materials provided great challenges to the local workforce. This project is dedicated to all the men and women who met that challenge, and laid the groundwork for the future success of the aviation industry in Quebec.

Opposite page: Canso Catalina after conversion to a water bomber; workhorse Douglas DC-3. This page: the Link Trainer was an early flight simulator; Montreal-built Bolingbroke bomber, shown as new and undergoing restoration.

History of aviation

Bold boy pilot broke a leg when his third glider broke up in flight

1907: Quebec's first airplane was pulled by a horse

In August 1907, a young 15 year old American boy named Larry Lesh accomplished, in the Port of Montreal and in Dominion Park, the first soaring flights in Canada. His No.1 glider managed a series of flights by being pulled aloft by a horse. A second glider was also constructed. Pulled by a motor-boat, Lesh managed a flight of over 10 kilometres over the St-Lawrence river. The flight lasted 24 minutes, but the prototype was destroyed upon landing. In 1908, Lesh built a third glider, which disintegrated in flight, and he broke a leg in this accident.

Larry Lesh's glider in 1907 was towed by a horse.

On February 23, 1909 - five years and two months after the historical flight of the Wright brothers in North Carolina – an experimental biplane named «Silver Dart » took-off from the frozen surface of a lake near Baddeck, Nova Scotia : it was the first flight of a powered heavier-than-air machine in Canada. The craft, piloted by Canadian John McCurdy, was the fourth prototype built by the Aerial Experiment Association, a group led by Alexander Graham Bell, the well known inventor of the telephone. Five months later, on July 25th 1909, the Frenchman Louis Blériot managed in Europe the first crossing of the English Channel aboard a flimsy monoplane which he had built himself, the Blériot XI. This achievement resulted in unprecedented media coverage, thus putting aviation definitively on the map and saving the Blériot aircraft factory from bankruptcy. Overnight, the order book of all aircraft factories was filled up.

So, aeronautical demonstrations and air pageants multiplied, enthralling crowds all over. It is in this context that Quebecers heard their first roar of airplanes. Thus, from June 25 to July 5, 1910, an aviation week called «the world's greatest aviation meet» took place in Pointe-Claire in West Island Montreal. This was the first event of its type to take place in Canada, and had a fantastic success attracting up to 20,000 visitors per day. Among the 15 aviators and aeronauts present, four American pilots had been sent by the Wright brothers organization in order to extol the virtues of the Wright biplanes. One of these, the renowned Walter Brookins, holder of the world altitude record (5460 feet), has the honor of having been the first pilot to have flown an aircraft in Québec, on June 25th 1910. The sensation seekers were certainly well rewarded: a number of parachutists were launched from hot air balloons, a few airplanes wound up as part of the scenery, and one airship crashed following a failed take-off...

But the big star of the week was undoubtedly the Frenchman Jacques de Lesseps who, barely a month before, had been the second to fly across the English Channel, also aboard a Blériot XI. On July 2nd, de Lesseps triumphantly flew over the City of Montreal, a perilous circuit of sixty odd kilometres which he accomplished in exactly 49 minutes... and three seconds. No Quebecers participated yet in any of these achievements. However, during the three previous years, a Belgian-born Montrealer by the name of Achille Hassens, had been tinkering with a funny airplane with four propellers, as well as with a monoplane baptized «La Montréalaise». Unfortunately, the prototype was demolished on October 22nd 1910 during a test flight in Champlain Park.

On December 28 1911, a Montrealer, Percival Hall Reid made four flights in a Blèriot; however, the last one ended in a crash. This episode convinced him to enroll in a New York flying training school, thus becoming one of the first two Quebecers to earn a pilot's licence, the other being F.A. Wanklyn, also from Montreal. In September 1912, a crowd of over 100,000 people had gathered in Lafontaine Park in Montreal in order to witness a planned flight of a Burgess-Wright biplane to be flown by the American George Gray. However, Gray decided to cancel the demonstration. As a result, the crowd demonstrated its anger, and Gray had to be protected by the police.

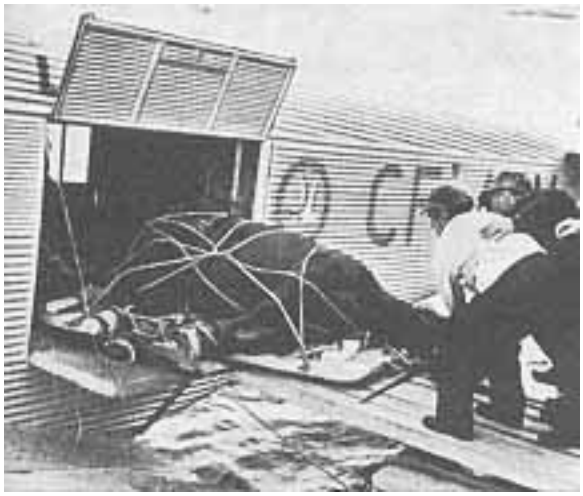
History of aviation

Rapid growth fed by northern industries

Was Quebecer Stuart Graham the first bush pilot?

In 1919 Quebec was being decimated by forest fires. A group of paper mills in the St. Maurice Valley, under the initiative of the Laurentide Company, demonstrated some vision when they thought of using aircraft to patrol the forests. To this end, the Canadian Government acquired from the U.S. Navy two war surplus Curtiss HS-2L flying boats. The first of two, named La Vigilance and piloted by Stuart Graham (who becomes the first bush pilot in Canada) lands at Lac-à-la-Tortue on 8th of June 1919. The Lac-à-la-Tortue base soon becomes a very active base, and in fact, is considered as the cradle of commercial aviation in Canada as well as of bush flying.

In 1922, judging that its yearly operating costs of $12 000 were too high, Laurentide Company decided to rid itself of its aviation division, which became independent under the name of Laurentide Air Service. Its fleet consisted of a dozen aircraft piloted by ex-wartime pilots: the Roy Maxwell, Harry Wilshire, Roy Grandy, G.A. Thompson, A.G. McLerie, Duke Schiller, all formed the first generation of professional civilian pilots. A few Quebecers make up the team of mechanics following the trail of Roméo and Irénée Vachon (who both became pilots afterward). At that time, mechanics played an important role, accompanying the pilots on nearly every flight. This was necessitated by the rather fragile aircraft with motors difficult to start, and which required an oil change every 40 hours, and a complete overhaul every 100 hours of flight. That year, over 400 forest fires were detected. The flying boats were also used to transport people, for aerial photography, and for the resupply of mining camps in Abitibi, Northern Ontario and the James Bay area. In 1924, the company was taken over by the Ontario Government, and thus left Quebec. However, that initiative led to the creation of others, and in 1920 the Price Brothers paper mill had its own Martinsyde type flying boat. Other paper mills soon followed suit.



The postwar period inundated the country with more than 2000 pilots all looking for work, and so a multitude of small aviation companies saw the light of day. However, the majority only had a brief existence. But, the aircraft themselves, under one banner or other, never ceased flying. The Quebec Ministry of Lands and Forests gave a number of contracts in order to map and inventory the forests of Quebec. This task kept a number of companies busy for a few years, including the Fairchild Aerial Survey Company, the Compagnie Franco-Canadienne and Canadian Airways. Other organizations, such as the Federal Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of Justice, rapidly took to using aircraft, specially to tour the native reserves up North. Mining prospecting was another stirring activity which did not take long to recognize the advantages of air transportation. Thanks to airplanes, activities which used to take a month could now be completed in a few hours. Aviation bases were generally set up at the end of road and rail networks, with the aircraft, in a way, taking over from the trains. In 1924, the first regular flight service in the country was between Angliers (terminal of the

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HS2L "La Vigilance" en route to Lac-à-la-Tortue; pioneer pilot Stuart Graham; Doped horse in a Canadian Airways Junkers Flying Boxcar". Story and photos from the Quebec Air and Space Museum web site www.aerovision.org/

History of Aviation

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Interprovincial and James Bay Railway) and Rouyn, which at that time was only a mining camp. A one-way ticket would cost $40 and a return ticket $75. It was on one of these flights that they discovered the first ever world's air stowaway! A number of air bases were also established along the Canadian National rail line between La Tuque and Abitibi. In 1929, General Airways did over a thousand flights between Amos and the mining camp of Val d'Or (its director being the WWI ace Roy Brown). Also two direct liaisons between Chibougamau and the railway stations of Senneterre and Oscalaneo.

In 1936, the Beauce native Arthur Fecteau, landed in Abitibi aboard a small biplane Travel Air 2000, and started to get a hold of the fur trade market. The Hudson Bay Company fell into line and soon gave contracts to Dominion Skyways and other air carriers for the resupply of its trade counters and delivery of furs to its warehouses in the South. In 1939, the Hudson Bay Company acquired its own aircraft, a twin-engined Beechcraft. Following WWII, the A. Fecteau Aerial Transport Ltd. prospered and became the largest bush flying company in Quebec.

Arthur Fecteau fur trading with his Fox Moth; Roméo Vachon on board a Laurentide Air Service HS2L.

During that time, the construction of the Shipsaw dam, north of Lake St.John, resulted in a large airlift. Over 3000 tons of equipment was airlifted. Canadian Airways was using a German built Junkers W34 «Flying Boxcar»which had a good load capacity. It carried a variety of cargo which even included cows and horses (although one of the first tries was nearly catastrophic when a stallion panicked during flight and started to demolish the interior of the aircraft. On subsequent flights, the animals were drugged and accompanied by a veterinarian as part of the crew.)

On the North Shore near the Rivière au Tonnerre (Thunder River), a rather sad contract was given in 1926 for the bombing of belugas whales, since it was thought that their large numbers was the cause of the poor catch of fish in the St. Lawrence. This activity was repeated again a few years later. In the Spring of 1928, a number of reconnaissance flights took place in the îles-de-la-Madeleine (Magdalen Islands), the object being to locate the sealing grounds.

Around 1930, contracts were given out by the RCMP for patrolling the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in order to detect ships involved in the smuggling of alcohol (most of which came from the French islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon). Also in the 30's, an air shuttle was established between Rimouski and Baie Comeau, thus ensuring a minimum of two daily return crossings during the winter 1937-38 (this new type of transhumance, spurred on by the growing importance of the various sites on the North Coast, was maintained with vigour right up to the 1960s). Quebec Airways was then the main company in the region.

No bridge too low for daring early pilots

In 1914, Jean-Marie Landry, a young automobile mechanic from Quebec City, went over to France in order to train as a pilot at the Blériot School. In so doing, he became the first French-Canadian, and only the seventh Canadian, to become officially licensed as a pilot. Back in this country, the citizens of Quebec City marveled at his aerobatics prowess. In 1918, the intrepid Landry flew under the Quebec Bridge just as the inaugural convoy was about to enter the bridge. For one dollar, Landry repeated the same with a passenger. His face as well as that of his wife, who accompanied him on many of his flights, are the center piece of the logo of the Foundation Aerovision Quebec.

History of aviation

Two citations from the Quebec Air and Space Hall of Fame

Stuart Graham earned OBE for war work

(1896-1976) OBE, AFC, Tr. McKee, CAHF

Born in Boston but raised in Nova Scotia, Stuart Graham started his flying career during WWI, piloting seaplanes of the RNAS assigned to anti-submarine patrol along the coast of England. For his action against two German submarines, he was awarded the AFC. In 1919, an association of paper mills led by Ellwood Wilson of the Laurentide Company of Grand'Mère proposed the use of two war surplus Curtiss HS2L seaplanes to patrol for forest fires, and to survey their tree-cutting territory. Graham ferried the aircraft from Halifax to Lac-à-la-Tortue and carried out operations during the next two seasons with help of the mechanic Walter "Bill" Kahre. As a result of these events, Lac-à-la-Tortue became the cradle of commercial aviation in Canada, with Graham becoming the first professional bush pilot in Canada (these activities fostered the creation in 1922 of the Laurentide Air Service, the first sizeable aviation company in Canada). Following stints at Curtiss Aeroplanes and Motors and Canadian Vickers in Montréal, in 1926 Graham joined the RCAF, as a test pilot and to implement aerial photography for map-making purposes. From 1928 to 1939, at the Federal Air Services division in Saint-Hubert, Graham became the first District Inspector for all of Eastern Canada, typically in charge of accident investigations as well as pilot certification. During WWII, Graham supervised the development of aerodromes in Canada, within the framework of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. This assignment earned him an OBE. In 1944, Graham acted as technical representative of the Canadian Delegation at the Chicago conference which led to the creation of ICAO. In 1947, he was chosen as the first Chairman of the Air Navigation Commission, and twice, the ICAO Council voted a resolution of appreciation for his excellent work. Until his final retirement in 1963, Graham maintained a prominent figure within ICAO, as much at the level of elaboration of standards and procedures than as a consultant to various countries of the Middle East, of Africa and Latin America. Inducted June 6, 2001.

Stuart Graham (left and above) attended flight school in France in 1917; Roger Smith (below) worked his way through in St. Hubert in 1928. Story and photos from the Quebec Air and Space Museum web site www.aerovision.org/

Airline pilot Roger Smith flew 50 types of plane

Native of Coaticook in the Eastern Townships, Roger Smith was only 15 years old when he began as an apprentice mechanic at Saint-Hubert for Continental Aero Corporation, under Hervé St-Martin. It was in 1928, the same year of the inauguration of the airport. In exchange for his work, Smith was able to learn to fly, getting some experience next to more experienced airmen such St-Martin, Roméo Vachon, Lee Mackay, Stuart Graham, Hervé Simoneau and Walter Leavens. At the age of 19, Roger Smith became presumably the youngest Canadian airman to obtain a commercial pilot license, already operating his own air service: Roger L. Smith Air Service. At the helm of a small Travel Air 4000 biplane, the young man criss-crossed the country selling coupons which offered aircraft flights for $2. Parachute jumps during air meets and the transport of fishermen to the North also counted among the first activities of the young airman. Having piloted in the 30's for McKay Exploration Co, St-Martin Air Transport in Saint-Félicien and Dominion Skyways in Rouyn, Smith was hired in 1939 by TCA (Trans-Canada Air Lines, now Air Canada), becoming captain after only 9 months. On April 16th, 1941, he piloted the final segment (Moncton-Halifax) during the inauguration in a Lockheed 14 Electra of the Trans-Canada service of TCA connecting the Pacific to the Atlantic. During the war, Smith was also affected to the transatlantic transport service, piloting along with George Lothian, four-engined Lancastrian aircraft (Lancaster bombers modified for the transport of passengers towards Europe). Inaugurating several new lines during his long career, Roger Smith piloted more than 50 types of aircraft, from the canvas biplane to the DC8 jet, by way of the Super Constellation. He retired from Air Canada in 1971, adding up credibly more than 1,000 crossings of the Atlantic Ocean. He continued to pilot up to an advanced age, reaching the tremendous total of 27 000 hours of flight, which is the equivalent of more than 3 years in the air! Inducted November 26, 2003.

History of aviation

Flying for Wheeler Airlines

Laurentian innkeeper helped create a new industry

By Joseph Graham

In 1954, when Fred and Kitty de Leeuw arrived from Europe, Fred intended to make his living as he had done for years, flying planes. His medical exam revealed that he was hard of hearing, and he was informed that he would be fine as long as he stayed away from airport control towers with their continuous drone of radio communications. Having served in RAF Special Services during the war, this did not seem like a difficult prospect for him, and, after a few years with Rockland Airways and an eastern mining company, he hired on with Wheeler Airlines as a bush pilot. Wheeler consisted of two divisions, one based out of the Lac Ouimet Club in St. Jovite (Mont Tremblant) and the other, contracting for, and sometimes competing with, Maritime Central Airways out of Montreal. Since Lac Ouimet did not have a serious air control tower, the de Leeuws ended up there. A dignified Dutchman in his early 80s today, de Leuuw looks more like a retired KLM captain than like an old hand from the Canadian bush, but when he gets talking about his time with Wheeler Airlines, you can see that he knows his subject.

Well before Kitty Hawk in late 1903 there was a huge interest in flight with many contestants trying to be the first to fly a heavier than air vehicle, but once the Wright brothers established that a person could fly with the right contraption, people began trying it everywhere. In 1906, Alberto Santos-Dumont made the first official powered flight in Europe. In 1907 Frederick W. "Casey" Baldwin became the first Canadian to do so. By 1910 France began issuing flying licences and that same year Elise Deroche became the first woman in the world with a pilot's license. The United States had 18 licensed pilots that year, but many times that by 1914, when the war began in Europe.

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Citation by the Quebec Air and Space Hall of Fame:

F.H. 'Tom' Wheeler (1894-1991)

A native of Chazy in the State of New York, Tom Wheeler moved to Saint-Jovite in the Laurentians at the age of 6. His family operated the famous Gray Rocks Hotel there, a paradise for hunting and fishing much appreciated by the American tourists. During the First World War, the young Tom enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corp. The armistice arrived before the end of his pilot's training. The war had promoted a spectacular development of aviation. Thinking of the plane for the transport of tourists on their domain, the Wheeler family chartered in 1921 an Avro 504K of the Canadian Aerial Services in Cartierville, piloted by the renowned Hervé St-Martin. The following year, Tom Wheeler formed (with St-Martin as pilot) Laurentian Air Services, known later under the name Gray Rocks Air Service. At the beginning, the company operated a small Curtiss JN-4 biplane. Wheeler then purchased a Curtiss Seagull seaplane, reconditioned by St-Martin. Throughout the years, the company got larger, adopting in 1946 the name of Wheeler Airlines. The fleet of Travel Air, Junkers, Fairchild, Norseman, Stearman and the other bush aircraft of the first years, grew more and more with the addition of DC-3s, DC-4s, C-46s, Cansos, etc. Henceforth, the activities of the company did not confine themselves any more to the simple local transport of fishermen and hunters, extending beyond the Arctic Circle, in the Labrador and even across the Atlantic. In the 50's, Wheeler Airlines had become one of the biggest bush operators in the country. It was also one of the main sub-contractors of Maritime Central Airways for the transport of material intended for the construction of the Dew (Distant Early Warning) Line. A large-scale project, this line of military radars was across all the northern part of the continent from one ocean to the other. Thinking of retirement, Tom Wheeler sold the heavy division of his fleet to Nordair in 1960, keeping the light transports for hunters and fishermen. Finally, in 1967, Wheeler sold the rest of his air operations to Power Corporation. Retired, Wheeler continued to be interested in aviation, sitting on the Board of Directors of Canadian (Okanagan) Helicopters. Of a modest and private nature, Tom Wheeler was recognized as a perfect gentleman

History of aviation

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By 1919, at the end of the war, flying was still in its first a generation. The event at Kitty Hawk was only 16 years earlier. That same year, F.H. 'Tom' Wheeler returned home to St. Jovite after having served in the United States Army Air Corps. He brought with him the astounding notion that his family's hotel, Gray Rocks, could offer a service of flying hunters and fishermen into the bush. To understand the context, consider the story of Stuart Graham, said to be the first Canadian bush pilot, and his flight to set up forestry monitoring in 1919. It was his wife's maiden flight and it consisted of *"a crew of three, Stuart as pilot, Madge as navigator, and Bill Kahre (See Page 17 – ed.) as mechanic, (they) flew a wooden flying boat, the Curtiss HS-2L flying boat, at tree-top level from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia to Grand'Mère, Quebec. The aircraft had only very basic instruments: a compass, an air and wind speed indicator and a turn and bank indicator. The noise from the engine made conversation impossible so Madge rigged up a miniature clothesline to send messages between herself and the two cockpits. The 800 mile trip took five days and nine hours to complete with crowds greeting them at every stop. But not everyone was impressed. Admiral Byrd (the first man to fly the Pole) declared, 'Flying seaplanes over land is suicide and taking a woman along is criminal.'"*

(from Bruce Ricketts, mysteriesofcanada.com)

This pioneer flight took place at the same time as Tom Wheeler was explaining to his family how they could fly clients up into the bush as an added service. A normal person would have called his insurance broker for an assessment of the risk and pooh-poohed the whole thing, yet his father supported the idea by chartering an Avro 504K in 1921. The Avro was a British training plane designed before the first war, but used right into the second. It was a good choice of plane to offer a thrill to the guests, but it was not capable of the bush flying that the Wheelers had in mind. Wheeler, together with Herve St-Martin subsequently began the Laurentian Air Services with a Curtiss JN-4 biplane, and they soon purchased a Curtiss Seagull, which St-Martin reconditioned. Now they were in business. The Curtiss Seagull was a flying boat first manufactured in 1919. The hull was made from mahogany plywood veneer over a wood frame. It was just shy of 29 feet (8.8m) in length and had a wingspan of 50 feet (15m). It could accommodate three people and cruised at 60 mph (100 kmh) over the treetops and with brown stain over the hull and an open deck topped with a pusher engine (prop facing the stern) it looked and must have felt much more like a boat than a plane.

CANADA'S FIRST

From this ambitious beginning came Canada's first airline as Laurentian Air Services morphed into Gray Rocks Air Service, acquired a fleet of bush planes and registered eventually as Wheeler Airlines, Canada's first air carrier, in 1929. Wheeler, who inherited the family business with his brother, soon split off and formed the Lac Ouimet Club at the other end of that small lake. He was a man's man and knew not only how to connect, but also how to delegate responsibility and rely on his staff. His dream was to set up fishing and hunting camps on remote lakes in northern Quebec and fly his paying guests in from Lac Ouimet in St. Jovite.

Wheeler Airlines came into its own after World War II and during the Cold War. Canada and the United States set up an early warning strategy of military bases in three lines that ran east-west across the country. The most southerly was called the Pine Tree Line, and north of that, running between the 54th and 55th parallel was the Mid-Canada Line, and then still further north was the DEW (distant early warning) Line. Wheeler rose to the challenge of supplying these bases, and in the process acquired a fleet of heavy planes such as DC-3s, DC-4s

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Pioneer flyer Tom Wheeler's Curtiss Seagull (both pictures) was made of wood and canvas. The cockpit was outdoors.

History of aviation

Continued from previous page

and Cansos to compliment its bush fleet of smaller planes. The Canso, the Canadian name for the Catalina Flying Boat, was amphibious but the other two were workhorse planes that needed runways…and control towers.

By 1957, Tom Wheeler owned a string of camps in the north that included Lake Commandant, Cache Lake, Carp Lake and Cabbage Willows Creek on James Bay. De Leeuw reports that landing at Cabbage Willows was tricky, because the creek was tidal and not a lot wider than the wingspan of an Otter (58 ft or 17m). Restricted to landing at high tide, he had to wait for the cook to radio to Lac Ouimet that the weather looked okay, and then head out with his intrepid goose hunters to time his arrival for the tide. Cabbage Willows runs north-south, but the crosswinds are from the west, so slipping in between the trees of Cabbage Willows took a special skill. A four-and-a-half hour flight, this also meant timing their leaving. Lac Ouimet has a tendency to fill with fog by 7 a.m. during goose hunting season, so the plane has to be airbound before that. Fuel was also another concern, since Cabbage Willows had only the fuel that the staff flew in. The Otter could carry 9 passengers and some stock, but de Leeuw preferred it to the Norseman because it was more stable in the crosswinds.

This is the Otter that pilot Fred de Leeuw described landing in Cabbage Willows Creek. Imagine bringing it down between the trees of a creek only 60+ feet wide – at high tide. The wingspan is 58 feet.

Once they arrived, the guests were wined and dined in fashion, and all were assured of getting some goose as well. The pilot was stuck until the next tide.

An airline pilot at that time was restricted to 80 hours of flying per month, but a bush pilot had no such restrictions. A bush operation was a small business and every bit of experience and every day counted. De Leeuw often flew 200 hours per month. One time he was called out on an emergency to a camp near Montebello. A guest, the brother of Paul Martin Senior, had had a nasty accident and broken a few bones. Rules governing float planes did not allow them to fly in the dark, but De Leeuw landed at dusk, a risky feat in itself, picked up his charge and made his way towards Dorval and one of those air traffic control towers. The camp radioed ahead and the RCMP, alerted to the emergency, suspended all traffic in Dorval below 3000 feet and floated two parallel lines of lights out onto Lake St. Louis. The plane touched down safely on the dark waters.

WORRY

Kitty de Leeuw was, understandably, anxious of the risks that the pilots ran on every job and found her husband's long absences stressful. From her perspective, it probably did not feel a lot different from RAF Special Services duty. On occasion, Fred found himself flying larger craft or stationed out of places like Baie Comeau for months at a time. Once while stationed in Baie Comeau, he discovered that the ski axle was broken. He called Wheeler for instructions. The plane should have been grounded until a regulation replacement part could be flown in, a wait of two weeks. Instructions from the boss were "Get it fixed." There was an electrician who worked for the paper company, but moonlighted as a machinist, and for $50 and a couple of bottles of scotch, a new part was soon machined. The electrician's name was Mulroney, and he bragged about his son who was studying to become a lawyer. The regulation part was routed to Lac Ouimet where it eventually replaced Mulroney's handiwork. If these pilots had not been conditioned by the war to dealing with this kind of emergency, a lot of these airlines would probably never have survived on the market.

On May 14th 1958, the crew at Wheeler had a scare when a DC-3 flying on instruments through an ice-fog collided with a snow-covered mountain, became airborne again with the engines burning, and then crashed and burned. Miraculously, the two crew and two passengers survived.

On August 15, 1957 Maritime Central Airways lost a DC-4 at Issoudun, 40 km southwest of Quebec City. All 79 on board were killed. On November 4, 1959, they lost a plane and a crew of five shortly after take-off from Dorval en route to the Northwest Territories. Twenty-three minutes after take-off the DC-4 pilot radioed that they had lost their left wing and the plane "was in a spin and going straight in". By this time, Tom Wheeler was 66 years old, and in 1960 he sold the heavy division of his fleet to Nordair. That same year, with a young family and increasingly concerned about his hearing, Fred handed in his resignation and began a more domestic career in retailing.

Thanks to Fred and Kitty de Leeuw. References include the Quebec Air and Space Hall of Fame, the National Aviation Museum and Industry Canada's website. Special thanks to Sheila Eskenazi.

History of aviation

Citation by the Quebec Air and Space Hall of Fame:

Walter 'Bill' Kahre (1892-1964)

Born in Nebraska, Bill Kahre was a mechanic in 1919 at Dartmouth Naval Base (NS) when pilot Stuart Graham recruited him to ferry the Curtiss HS-2L flying boat La Vigilance to Lac-à-la-Tortue (Qc). This historic flight marked the beginning of bush flying in Canada. During two seasons, at Lac-à-la-Tortue, Graham and Kahre pioneered forest patrols and aerial photo survey. In 1923, Kahre joined a new company formed by Ellwood Wilson and called Fairchild Aerial Surveys (of Canada), also based at Lac-à-la-Tortue. Appointed Chief Air Engineer, Kahre also became an aerial photographer, contributing to the development of this new field. According to chief-pilot Ken Saunders, the company would never have had any success without the resourcefulness of Kahre. When equipment didn't yet exist, one had to invent it! For example, Kahre created a special carburator heater. Aerial surveys soon became the main source of revenues for many operators. At first, equipment was not quite fit for the job. Biplanes lower wing restricted camera view and open cockpits were freezing boxes in winter for the crew! Flights were generally conducted above sparsely settled areas and dense forests, leaving few chances to rescue downed crew members. Kahre joined Canadian Airways when it absorbed Fairchild air operations in 1929. Besides being an air engineer, Kahre overhauled all camera equipment for the company twice a year. An article published in 1938 in Fairchild Aviation News emphasized the very few camera failures experienced in two decades, giving due credit to Kahre. With the creation of Canadian Pacific Air Lines in 1942, Kahre became Superintendent of Maintenance at the St. Lawrence district base in Rimouski. He also worked for Labrador Mining & Exploration before setting up with A.E. Simpson their own aerial survey firm. He died in flight at age 72, still at the camera, following a stroke. Inducted October 21, 2002.

A Hollinger Mining DC-3 landing on a gravel strip in Ungava. This plane is similar to the Wheeler DC-3 that crashed twice into a mountain in 1958 without killing those aboard. These pictures are from Canada's digital collections http://collections.ic.gc.ca/; the Canadian Aviation Museum http://www.aviation.technomuses.ca, and the Canadian Aviation Historical Society http://www.cahs.com.

History of aviation

Turned his passion for flying into big business

Hartland Molson: A man who made big things happen

When he died two years ago most people who remembered Hartland Molson knew him as a brewer, a businessman, a senator, a philanthropist or the owner of the Montreal Canadiens. He was all of those things. But few know of his contributions to aviation in Canada, as an avid early promoter of flying in all its forms, and as creator of one of the earliest commercial airlines.

Historian and family member Karen Molson is writing a biography of the colourful Senator. Here is Chapter 5.

By Karen Molson

Hartland Molson learned to fly in a de Havilland Gipsy Moth at the Montreal Light Aeroplane Club in the summer of 1934. Small and stable, ideal for training, the open cockpit single-engine biplane was one of four assorted aircraft owned and operated by the Montreal club. Behind the cloth-covered steel fuselage was room for two: the instructor sat in the front and demonstrated to the student, behind him, the various points of flying beginning with take-off, circling the airfield, and landing.

The Montreal Light Aeroplane Club, which had recently expanded and moved to St. Hubert airfield from Cartierville, was one of a string of Canadian flying clubs that benefited from a government grant program established in 1928. Club directors and key figures in the federal defence department had foreseen a bright future for military and civil aviation at a time when most looked upon flying as a spectator sport. The "flying club scheme" had enabled these private clubs to purchase aircraft, hire pilots (former World War I fliers), engineers and mechanics, and to stay solvent during lean times. Still, the tuition fee of $250 for ground school lectures and flying instruction was out of reach of all but the privileged few in the mid-1930s.

Like most student pilots at the time, Hartland took up flying as a hobby. His sister-in-law Celia remembers that even as a student at RMC, the young man had a fascination with flying. Like many boys who wanted to grow up to become aviators, Hartland's interest in this exciting new field stemmed from the perception that the dashing and daring leaders in this dangerous sport were considered heroes to the public. Pilots and their rescue missions commanded so much attention and praise in the press that newspaper readers followed the exploits of bush pilots they knew by nicknames, like "Punch" Dickins, "Spike" Miller, and "Duke" Schiller, making exploratory flights over Canada's northern territories. Whether bringing medicines to the sick in remote communities, or delivering mail to isolated areas, pilots and their aircraft were opening up the northern frontier, which in previous years had only been accessible by canoe or dogsled.

While traveling in Europe and England in 1928, Hartland's admiration for various aircraft on which he had flown was evident from his letters home. The trip from Berlin to Travenmunde in a Rohrbach flying boat had taken two hours, he enthused, flying at 95 miles per hour "about ten feet above the water." He wrote that he had "never felt anything go so fast. Then we changed to all-metal plane of Lufthansa & came here [Copenhagen] in 2 hrs. Very steady plane . . . . Inside was leather, up to windows, & then grey cloth like Rolls. Adjustable long cane chairs, little cushion for head, wireless operator, & heating."

As a guest of Hamilton Gault's estate near Taunton, England, he had been introduced to twenty-five-year-old Robert Reeve, a visiting American pilot who was, Hartland wrote to his father, "the finest flying instructor in the world, and a friend of all the well-known airmen." The latter included Charles Lindberg and also the writer Antoine de St. Exupery, who was, along with Reeve, establishing the first routes for airmail service in South America at the time. (A brilliant pilot and entrepreneur described by one contemporary as "a prospector at heart," Reeve's career was only beginning. He would later fly thousands of flights over Alaska, distinguish himself as a pilot in World War II, and by the 1960s, would be a millionaire airline owner.)

Meeting Robert Reeve was memorable for Hartland. But it was a chance encounter with the Great War's flying ace, Billy Bishop, three years later in Montreal that would have an even more profound influence on him. In spite of the difference in their ages (Bishop was thirteen years older than Hartland) the two men and their wives became fast friends. The couples began to spend summer weekends on the Molson yacht. Bishop's son Arthur recalls, "It was at this time that my father persuaded Hartland to learn to fly."

Born in 1894, Bishop had attended Royal Military College from 1911 until 1914 before enlisting in the war. He made a name for himself flying Reconnaissance Experimental planes in France for the Royal Flying Corps, developed an extraordinary skill in battle and claimed a record number of destroyed enemy aircraft. Since the end of the war he had been engaged in various aeronautic activities. In the early 1920s he ran a barn-storming business with fellow RAF pilot Billy Barker, putting on aerobatic exhibitions and giving passengers joy-rides. Following Barker's death in a flying accident, Bishop continued buying and selling aircraft, and began to work on behalf of the RCAF, which he had helped to found.

Since the onset of the depression the RCAF's role was confined to minimal, mostly civilian activities. Although he was Honorary Group Captain of the RCAF, Bishop also worked full time as an oil company executive, which took him to England on business in June and July 1934. Promoted to Honorary Air Vice-Marshal that year, Bishop became determined to rouse the government to

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Opposite: Officer Cadet Hartland Molson at Royal Military College in Kingston Ontario. Above: the de Havilland Gipsy Moth biplane he learned to fly in at the Montreal Light Aeroplane Club in 1934.

expand its role. When Hartland took up flying, it had been nearly ten years since Bishop had piloted an aircraft. And as much as he looked forward to steering administration towards a stronger RCAF, Bishop also yearned to get back in a cockpit again. The first thing he did upon his return to Montreal was to join Hartland at the flying club.

Hartland enjoyed his flying lessons immensely. With his instructor, who early on encouraged him to handle the controls, he learned to become familiar with the element of air, and observed how the aircraft responded to different movements of the controls for the ailerons, elevators, rudders and flaps. The Gipsy Moth was equipped with the basics - a compass, an altimeter, and a turn-and-bank indicator - but it had neither navigational instruments nor a radio. After a few hours of instruction he began to feel familiar with the aircraft, learning the rudiments of take-off, turning, banking, climbing, stalling, and landing. He discovered how, when turned in one direction, the craft could right itself again in the air. He began to spend all his spare time at the club.

To boost membership in their organization, the Montreal Light Aeroplane Club offered a wide range of events and activities in the summer of 1934. They hosted a Royal Air Force display, and club members entertained the officers afterwards. They welcomed visiting aircraft and pilots from New York City, and organized civic receptions for the visiting airmen. They sponsored trophy events. The publicity gained the club several new members by the end of the year, and an unprecedented demand for flying time, for which they charged $10 hour.

As he worked toward obtaining his private pilot's licence, Hartland enjoyed not only the experience of flying but also the company of other rich sportsmen. Though he was young, he was welcomed into the fold of the older men. This was made easier not only through his friendship with Bishop but also by the fact that his cousin, Stuart Molson, had been one of the club's first members, and his father Herbert was a well-known businessman and philanthropist in Montreal. Because both Stuart and Herbert were members of the Royal Highlander 42nd Regiment, or Black Watch, and Hartland himself had military training at RMC, it must have occurred to other airmen that as a pilot, Hartland would be a prime applicant for the RCAF.

Flying was a pursuit that groomed paragons like Charles Lindberg, and that all over the world attracted the elite, including members of the British royal family, titled gentlemen, and others who had courage, ambition, time and money to spare. The Montreal club attracted Sir Herbert Holt - then president Royal Bank of Canada, and though reclusive, one of the most notorious people in the Montreal business community. The club was delighted when Bishop decided to join as well.

"Colonel Bishop soon got back the 'feel' of the controls and went off solo very quickly," reported the club to Canadian Aviation Magazine that fall. "It is a great boost for aviation in Montreal to have Colonel Bishop flying again and a great help to the club to have him as an active member. Then forty years old, Bishop was stout and his hair was completely grey. Although he was

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considered too old to fly actively for the air force, his was still a commanding presence, his opinions carried great weight, and the prestige of his fame and position was a great advantage to the club. Bishop accepted a position as honorary president of the club in September, the same month Hartland agreed to become a director.

Another member of the MLAC that summer was "Tim" Sims, an aero-engine expert and career-pilot who had received his commercial license in 1930. Sims and Peter Troup, a demonstrator-pilot for Bellanca Aircraft (who had also been flying for Fairchild Aviation), had formed a partnership in 1932. Sims and Troup owned a Bellanca Pacemaker and a Fokker Super Universal, both sturdy single-engine bush planes. With these two aircraft they operated a flying business "on a shoestring" in northern Quebec which they called Northern Skyways.

Hartland had no expectations of becoming a commercial pilot. However, the business of bush-flying interested him very much. The aviation industry seemed untouched by the financial gloom paralyzing the rest of the country. Commercial aviation, though not subsidized by government, had a bright place in the Canadian economy. With experienced pilots, sound aircraft, and solid business principles, a bush-flying company could make some handsome profits. It didn't take long for Hartland to raise the subject of going into business with Sims, Troup, and Bishop one afternoon at the club.

Hartland's earlier venture, Dominion Soya Industries, had folded by this time and although not a lot of capital had been lost, nevertheless Hartland considered it an expensive lesson. He didn't want to make the same mistake again. This time he would minimize the risks: he would do more research, be more prepared, more realistic. This time he would invest in a proven business, with partners who were as informed - or more so - than he was.

From the beginning, Sims, Troup and Bishop were positive and keen about forming a partnership with Hartland. But when Hartland asked his brother and his father to put up some of the capital, they resisted. They had disapproved of Hartland flying at all, considering the hobby foolhardy and ostentatious. To finance an airline business seemed at first absurd to them. Nevertheless Hartland, who was used to getting his own way, persisted. Bishop's endorsement lent Hartland's argument a lot of credibility. Sims prepared a summary of commercial flying activities in Canada that illustrated how steadily the industry was expanding. Within weeks Hartland was able to persuade his father and brother that - whatever they thought of his character - as a venture capital business, this one was secure.

By December, Hartland was ready to make Sims and Troup an initial offer: $25,000 capital to the company, in return for majority shares and administrative control. The partners agreed that the pilots would stay in the company and own minority shares. Bishop would be an advisor; as "Honorary Chairman," his name would appear with Hartland's on the letterhead. Hartland would guarantee the funds required for expansion, and he would become president of the re-formed organization called Dominion Skyways.

Hartland was backed in this venture by a strong partnership that maximized capital, experience, and expertise. His father Herbert and brother Tom would remain as silent partners. John David Eaton, a cousin of Bishop's wife, would complete the partnership. Two years younger than Hartland, John David Eaton was another young man from a powerful, old-money family. Like the Molsons, the Eatons ran their financial affairs conservatively, and were fundamentally unaffected by the depression. John David's grandfather was Timothy Eaton, founder of the retail company that bore his name. Schooled first at Upper Canada College, John David continued his education in England before returning to Canada. He worked in Toronto before moving, in February 1931, to Winnipeg, where he learned to fly twin-engine aircraft. By 1934 John David had returned to Toronto, having been made a director of Eaton's. Working in the arenas of business development, manufacturing, and merchandising, Eaton had no time to take an active role in Dominion Skyways. Motivated and single-minded; in two years he would become vice-president at Eaton's, and by 1937, president.

In early 1935 Dominion Skyways had only two aircraft, the Bellanca and the Fokker single-engine bush planes. Reliable and sturdy, they could each carry almost a ton of cargo, and fly vast distances without having to refuel. For two years the pilots had

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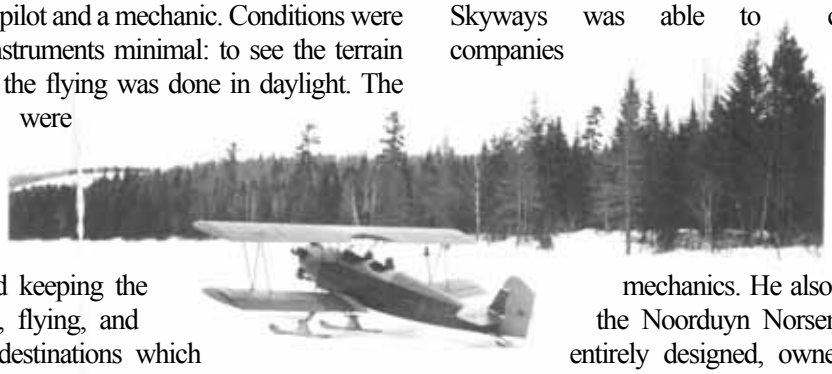
operated their business delivering prospectors, miners and supplies in and out of northern Ontario and Quebec, large tracts of which remained unmapped. But two aircraft wasn't enough to meet the growing demand.

Hartland and Bishop discussed the benefits of purchasing an Auto-gyro for their new company. Another flying club member, Don Marcuse, had traveled to England the previous summer and while there, flew aboard one of these aircraft, the predecessor to the modern helicopter. He returned to Montreal convinced there was a great future in store for this type of machine, talking it up to anyone who would listen. Hartland made a list of considerations that included engine performance, the costs of importing parts, maximum payload, and insurance costs. He and Bishop concluded it was unwise, being unproven and financially unsound, and eventually decided to purchase more conventional bush planes to build up a small fleet.

The first new aircraft bought by the company was a high-winged monoplane known as a Fairchild freighter. Able to carry seven passengers and 6,000 pounds of freight, this most popular bush plane of the 1930s was designed so it could be outfitted with skis, floats or wheels. Soon after, Dominion Skyways acquired a Waco 3-passenger biplane, and another Bellanca. Though their first customers had to sit on sacks of potatoes and crates of dynamite, the new aircraft enabled them to compete with other airline companies.

Dominion Skyways had a base already established at Rouyn, in northern Quebec; following the purchase of new aircraft, other bases soon added to their service included one in Haileybury, in northern Ontario, and another in Senneterre, Quebec. A typical bushplane crew would be a pilot and a mechanic. Conditions were harsh and primitive, and instruments minimal: to see the terrain and assess the weather, all the flying was done in daylight. The pilots and mechanics were responsible for keeping their aircraft serviceable, generating business, making up tickets and bills, collecting money and keeping the books, as well as loading, flying, and navigating the aircraft to destinations which often they'd never seen before. Astonishingly, they managed to maintain an accident-free record.



"I have gone into the flying business and since last December have rather enjoyed it," Hartland wrote his friend Jack Keeling in the spring of 1935. "This is a private company in which my brother, Tom, Dad, Billy Bishop any myself are interested in conjunction with the pilots whose business we took over. We are operating in the far North carrying mostly mining, prospecting and survey parties, supplies and equipment with some daily and some tri-weekly services. The fleet at the present time consists of only four machines but we are increasing it quietly. I imagine the end of this year should see us with six at least . . ."

In a letter to Charles Douglas, also in London in April 1935, Hartland wrote about being actively engaged as president of the company: "It is an extremely absorbing activity. . . Our "new North" is entirely dependent on the airplane now, in fact in another few years I think there will be a breed of man there who would be at a loss had he to get about by canoe or dog team. In addition wages are high, opportunities of spending few and therefore the population has no objection to paying well for a trip of a couple of hours which would otherwise require a couple of weeks." At the end of the letter, Hartland added: "The two great difficulties with this industry in Canada are the lack of government support and the high price of aircraft suitable for the task."

Hartland had effectively summarized the advantages and disadvantages of being involved in the air transportation industry. Unlike other countries such as the United States and Great Britain, Canada offered no support system of any kind for commercial flying companies. Independent contractors had to take all the risks and remain profitable, or go out of business. Although a federal "Trans-Canada Airways" plan had been undertaken to build a string of airports across the country (constructed by men who'd lost their jobs in the Depression), no such landing facilities existed for the northern regions. Nevertheless, Canada was leading the world with the amount of freight carried, and for miles of flight over uncharted territories. And with seemingly infinite natural resources to be tapped, this elite profession was bound to keep growing in importance.

With their new planes, and plans to acquire more, Dominion Skyways was able to compete with other companies including James Richardson's Canadian Airways. In 1936, with more capital put forward by his silent partners, Hartland bought two more Fairchilds. He hired more pilots and mechanics. He also bought the first prototype of the Noorduyn Norseman, the first airplane to be entirely designed, owned, and built in Canada for commercial bush flying. A high-winged cabin monoplane, the Norseman was built specifically for the northern climate; it was rugged, versatile, and could be converted from a nine-passenger aircraft to accommodate up to 3,000 pounds of freight.

Hartland's involvement with the company went beyond administration duties and buying aircraft. He recalled, years later, "I used to go up there [north] quite a lot and I remember Rouyn on a winter morning in the pitch black going over the base, and here would be these mechanics with the nose cover hood, canvas things, and our four planes that were in Rouyn, blow torches under all of them, all cooking like hell and all waiting to take the

Opposite page: above, RCAF officer Hartland Molson; below, Molson's pal and partner Billy Bishop. This page: Hartland Molson and Tim Sims flew in the open cockpit biplane from Cartierville to Ivry in the winter of 1936.

oil - you'd rush out and put the oil in, and, you know, long before first light, and about 30 below, and oh boy!"

The primitive conditions in which bush pilots and engineers made their flights in the early to mid-1930s are hard to imagine. In the winter, engine oil had to be drained every night to prevent it from freezing, and warmed again in the morning. Pilots had to pencil in observations, making rough sketches of lakes and rivers to use as a guide for return flights. In addition to the hazards of the harsh environment, landing facilities were non-existent. No navigational aids or radio equipment was available, and weather had to be assessed visually. Compasses became unreliable as one flew further north. Sometimes engineers would have to improvise when the plane needed repairs. If one became marooned, in order to attract the attention of searchers one would have to light a fire; in the winter, some would tramp out the word "HELP" in large letters in the snow. On one memorable occasion, Dominion Skyways pilot "Babe" Woollett, who'd waiting six days for rescue, spelled out in letters twenty feet high: **"LAND HERE YOU BASTARDS."**

Though it seemed like a paradox (the stocks that had seen the greatest losses were mining stocks, there seemed no less interest in prospecting) there was a constant stream of miners and surveyors who needed to get up north. Discoveries of gold continued to pique intense interest. Besides prospecting and mining, the need for aerial mapping, forest surveillance, airmail delivery and provincial survey parties continued to supply demand for flight time. Freight rates for equipment carried on board an aircraft, at five cents per pound, were cheaper than typical overland rates. Of course an even greater advantage to flight was speed. A trip that would normally have taken prospectors several days or even weeks might be reduced to an hour, giving the men more time to work, stake, and collect their samples.

In 1935, Pilot Frank Young flew Dominion Skyways' first scheduled air service linking Montreal, Val d'Or, and Rouyn, a service that would become known as the "Goldfields Express." In the fall of 1936 Hartland formed a subsidiary company called Newfoundland Skyways, and set up a base at Moisie, near Sept Isles on the St. Lawrence River. Earlier that year, Mackay Exploration Company geologists had discovered huge iron ore deposits near Schefferville in Labrador. The company bought mineral rights from the Newfoundland government, and contracted with Dominion Skyways to transport geological and prospecting personnel in and out of Labrador during the summer season. Hartland bought two second-hand bush planes called Bellanca Skyrockets from the United States and registered them directly in Newfoundland, avoiding the necessity of paying import duty on the aircraft.

In 1935 and '36 Hartland hired his cousin, Kenneth Meredith Molson, age 20, to join the summer maintenance staff. Ken, who had been single-mindedly passionate about aircraft since he was a small child, had naturally developed a bond with his older cousin. He worked for Hartland for two summers (four months each year), learning all he could about aeronautical mechanics and engineering. At the end of the second year, Hartland would enable Ken's dream to come true by sending him to the Boeing School of Aeronautics in California for flying instruction.

Dominion Skyways pilots had their share of adventures. One time, Tim Sims was contacted by U.S. newspaper executive Ralph Pulitzer, who needed to get to Romaine River after his boat had broken down. The pilot agreed to fly Pulitzer and his friends to their camp in return for half their provisions – "frozen steaks, lettuce, fresh vegetables, and a bottle of Bourbon." Sims also recalled that he and other pilots sometimes transported "ladies of the evening" who offered a form of payment "other than cash" - but, he added, these customers were always excellent credit risks, who paid their fares cheerfully on their return from pay-day at the lumber camps and mines.

Business remained brisk in the bush. Advances in the airline industry in 1936 and 1937 included base radio stations installed and operated to provide weather reports for aircraft, which now had 2-way radios. "Blind" instruments for night flying were being more widely used. Dominion Skyways pilots (though still paid half what Canadian Airways pilots earned) now wore smart uniforms. One enterprising pilot with a sense of humour had a chauffeur's cap with three interchangeable labels, reading "Pilot," "Ticket Agent," and "Baggage Handler."

Competition would be relentless and fierce throughout the years that preceded the establishment of a federal department of transport and its related policies. As long as the business remained unregulated, the battle for customers was cutthroat. Once bases were equipped with air-ground equipment to guide aircraft to pick-up points, operators from rival airlines started eavesdropping on others' frequencies so they could swoop in and steal traffic. This was not only problematic for the pilots and owners, but also to their clients, especially prospectors who needed to stake their claims privately. To mislead the competition, operators began giving false information over the air. This and other instances of price-cutting, overloading aircraft, and other practices that compromised safety continued to affect the integrity of the business. The competition between Canadian airline companies was spiralling into an uncontrolled battle, placing the whole industry in a chaotic state.

When Mackenzie King was elected Prime Minister again in 1935 he made plans to establish a federal department of transportation, "to bring order out of transportation confusion." Aviation was added to C.D. Howe's former portfolio of railways and canals; the new department's minister began forming and implementing plans for a national airline. At a July 1936 dinner in London, Ontario, celebrating the centenary of Canada's first railway (which had been established by Hartland's great-great grandfather, John Molson), Howe stated, "I believe that within a few years aviation will be a serious competitor for the transportation business of this country."

Howe invited companies to submit reports outlining their suggestions and concerns about a sanctioned national airline. Post office delegates, railroad companies, and civil aviation representatives presented briefs. The country's largest and most experienced airline, Canadian Airways, was seen by many (particularly owner James Richardson) as the main contender for the prize. Hartland, hearing that Canadian Airways was

about to become Canada's national airline, made an appointment to see Howe in August. Details of this meeting have not been preserved.

After months of equivocating, Howe announced that Trans-Canada Airlines would be jointly owned and operated by Canadian National Railway, Canadian Pacific Rail, and certain private interests. When the latter minority control was offered to Canadian Airways, James Richardson refused.

Trans-Canada Airlines inaugural flight took place in the summer of 1937, in a successful, much-publicized dusk-till-dawn flight from Montreal to Vancouver. Later in 1938, licensing was introduced for TCA's branch lines, to private air carrier operators. Richardson's Canadian Airways was able to establish many of these routes. Soon after, smaller airline companies including Dominion Skyways would start consolidating.

Hartland had a meeting with Richardson in the fall of 1937. Richardson wrote, "He is disturbed about the Skylines' competition, and wants to get our help in regard to zoning, and generally wants us to tell him how he can carry on successfully his airways, by co-operation or otherwise, or how he can extricate himself from his airways investment without losing whatever he has put up."

In 1937 Hartland had other things on his mind. Personal concerns included his father Herbert, who had fallen seriously ill. His professional interests could not take his full attention any more. He was not only concerned with protecting his airways investment in view of the changes in the industry, but was at the same time preoccupied with efforts to get a patent for a new and improved propeller. Some time in 1936, Hartland had crossed paths with Grettir Algarsson, an ambitious young inventor with a penchant for adventure. Born in 1900 of Icelandic parentage, Algarrson was raised by an adoptive family in Montreal. His enthusiasm for aviation and exploration had inspired him to dream of being the first person to fly to the North Pole, which he hoped to do in an airship, or dirigible, in 1925. But plans for this trip fell through. Described by one journalist as "an enthusiastic young idealist of engaging personality with a talent for organization," Algarsson would participate in a major arctic expedition by ship instead. But his interest in aircraft and flight had never waned, and by the 1930s he had developed a variable-pitch aircraft propeller, which he called the Algarsson Automatic Supercharger. He needed financial backing so he could develop his idea, build and test it, and obtain a patent. Hartland agreed to help, and with partners Jackson Ogilvie Rae and M. Lawson Williams, set up a fund to test and patent Algarsson's invention.

Early in 1937 Hartland and his new partners sent prototypes and copies of the plans to Alexander Klemin, an aeronautical engineer in New York City, and to the National Research Council in Ottawa. Klemin, who was an excellent choice as a well-known lecturer, editor and expert in aeronautics, was asked to report back to them on the principles and design of Algarsson's propeller. Klemin's answer was prompt and positive. "The introduction of the sliding weights and weight spacer in combination with the gear train is one of the most subtle, ingenious yet simple, mechanical devices which I have ever been privileged to see, and two of my colleagues fully share this admiration." His four-page report concluded, "I believe that the development and experimental construction of the device is fully warranted from every possible point of view."

In mid- February, 1937, Hartland had an agreement drawn up between three partners and Grettir Algarsson, in which he agreed to fund the patent in Canada and retain an interest in the invention of 32%, while Algarsson's share would also be 32%, and Rae's and Williams' each 18%. A few days later he wrote to Sherman Fairchild, the aircraft manufacturer in New York City. "I expect to be in NY on Thursday next, the twenty-fifth, and would like to have a few minutes with you if possible to discuss a new automatic variable pitch propeller." Fairchild, however, was sceptical, and wanted to see more proof. Williams wrote Hartland in May 1937, from New York where he, Rae, and Algarsson had been working all week on improvements to the blade, gears, and the casing, "finishing in one sitting all the aerodynamic, inherent and inertia moment calculations," concluding, "I do believe the little bastard is really working." In June, the partners had hopes of selling the propeller to the US army. Throughout the summer, they set up meetings and presentations for interested parties in US, including a captain in the navy, the navy headquarters, McCauley Propellor Co., Wesley Smith, and the Engineering Division at Wright Field in Ohio. An application for a US patent was prepared and filed by November 1937.

In February Hartland's father died. He had already begun winding down his outside interests in anticipation of having to work at the family brewery. Following the funeral in March, final details were completed for selling Dominion Skyways to James Richardson. The sale netted approximately $30,000.00 plus aircraft, and stock in Richardson's company. Canadian Airways Limited (later Canadian Pacific or CP Air) was destined to become Trans-Canada Airline's (later Air Canada's) main competitor.

Meanwhile, numerous delays in testing procedures had rendered Algarsson insolvent. He began staying at Montreal's YMCA, and was receiving overdue notices on his account there by July 1938. In September, Hartland provided start-up financing for Algarsson to establish "Algarsson Engineering Co." to enable the development of new products including a Super-Charger Automatic Pressure Control (for high-altitude cabins) and an Automatic Synchronizer (for aircraft engines). A new partnership was formed, with ten individuals including R.J. Moffett of the aircraft manufacturer Canadian Vickers Ltd., who accepted two per cent of the company in return for hangar space and the use of an aircraft suitable for testing.

The Vickers Company manufactured the first Algarsson variable-pitch propeller in October 1938. But it was an anti-climactic triumph. Wallace Rupert Turnbull had patented a similar version by this time, and the competition weakened the market for Algarsson's invention. However by now Hartland has less and less time for flying or running a business, as he was working full time at the brewery. In less than a year, war would be declared and everything would change once again..

Happenings around Quebec

Unique Inverness event welcomes world on the Glorious 12th

Teen goads grandmother, mom into Orange Picnic visit

By Stephen McDougall

When she was only a wee thing, Lennoxville resident Karolyn Kirby was brought to the Orange Lodge picnic, held each year at the MacRae Grove on the border between Inverness and Kinnear's Mills in Megantic County.

This year, now 17, Kirby decided she wanted to return to the picnic and convinced her grandmother to go with her.

"I am a big history fan, and this picnic goes way back to the first settlers of the area," she said. "I knew my grandmother had been going to this picnic since she was a child, so I asked her to take me this year."

Karolyn Kirby convinced grandmother Gertrude Raymond and mother Sharron Kirby to make the trek to the picnic from Lennoxville.

Kirby's grandmother Gertrude Raymond was born in a small hamlet called Lemesurier, halfway between Leeds Village and Kinnear's Mills. For her the Orange Lodge picnic has been a family tradition since she was three years old.

"I am 84 years old now," said Raymond. "I have been to this picnic about 75 times. My legs are not what they used to be but when my granddaughter said she would wanted to come here for the picnic, I could not refuse her."

Kirby said she wanted to see not only the picnic and the hordes of people who attend it each year, but also the family farm where her grandmother grew up.

"When I went to visit the present owner, he greeted me and asked me in for coffee," said Raymond. "The house and most of the farm was still standing, and I was able to find some old wells that we used as kids. They still had water in them and that pleased the owner."

For Kirby's mother Sharon, the trip from Lennoxville to the grove on a Saturday morning was well worth the effort because it helped her daughter know where her family came from.

Lian Dempsey carries the Canadian flag in the parade at the annual Megantic County Orange Picnic.

"A lot of families now in Sherbrooke and Lennoxville came from here," she said. "It is important that townshippers know their history. And this is such a beautiful place to come to."

Another picnic visitor who attends the annual event is Gerald Fowler, now a resident of Austin, Texas, whose father operated a farm near Ste-Agathe.

Born in the U.S.A.

"I was born in New York City after my father left the farm and went south to find a better living," said Fowler. "But my cousin Richard now owns the family farm, and I come up every summer to help him out and see other family members at the picnic."

Fowler does not mind the 2,500 mile trip to the grove. He is now a retired U. S. Air Force pilot and makes a series of visits to other family members in other states before arriving in Megantic county.

"The family members I do not see in Beaumont, Atlanta, Fredericksburg or New York, I see in Montreal and here," he said. "When my family left this area back in the early 1900s, we spread out over a lot of the Eastern and Southern U. S. Those that I do not see in the other states, I see up here at the picnic."

Fowler has made the trip every summer to the picnic since he retired from the American military in 1984. "A lot of my neighbours in Austin have never heard of this place, but they would like to come up and see what it is all about," he said. "They envy the fact that I can come up here each summer and see my family and friends and relax amongst the beauty of the Townships."

"Three of my children and four of my grandchildren have made the journey with me and more plan to come in the coming years."

Organizers say the picnic has taken place each July 12 weekend for more than 150 years. It is the main event for the five local Orange Lodges. Despite a

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dwindling number of members, the lodges always manage to provide a picnic for visitors, coupled with live entertainment and a showplace for local organizations and community groups.

"We may organize the picnic and parade our organization into the grove, but this event is open to all community and fraternal organizations," said Graydon Lowry, county master for this year's picnic.

"We invite all groups that want to promote their events to come to the tent and speak to the members, or set up a small booth and inform picnickers of their activities."

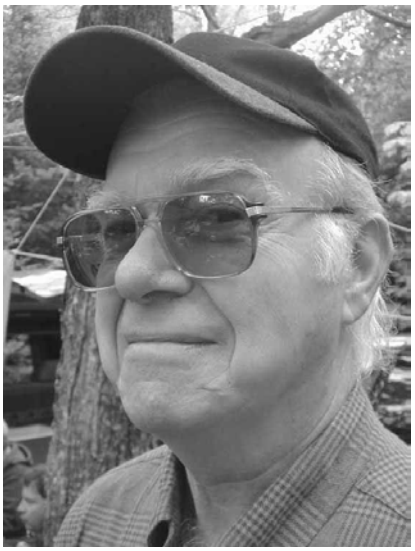
Some of the groups present at this year's picnic were the Townshippers and the Scottish Society of Quebec. Society member Ted Gunn said the table he and wife Louise set up was swamped by visitors eager to find out their Scottish roots both in the Megantic area and back in the old country.

"Many come to this picnic to rediscover their roots in this area, then find out that their families came here directly from Scotland," he said. "That is where we can help them with their search."

The Orange Lodge was formed in Ireland in 1795 to promote the Protestant faith. Its picnics in Canada are held on the nearest Saturday to July 12, the day in 1690 that an Irish protestant army withstood the forces of Kings James II at the battle of the Boyne.

According to Lodge spokesman Ron Jamieson, the fraternal organization abandoned the sword centuries ago, but still supports protestant church activities. It also wants to help other community groups, no matter what their faith or beliefs are.

"If we are asked, and we have the means to do so, we can work with other groups to support a community project," he said. "It helps our members do things for their town and make more friends."



Jamieson said the Megantic County Orange picnic is the only one in Quebec, but several lodge picnics are held in other provinces where there are more members.

"Most of them hold their picnics on the second Saturday of July, like you do here," said Jamieson. "But a few opt to hold their picnics on July 12, no matter what day it falls on. The picnic is one of our strongest traditions."

Jamieson said the Lodge has links with the Masons and the Odd Fellows, and hopes to forge more relations with other organizations such as the Canadian Legion, the Knights of Columbus or the St. Patrick's Society.

"The more we work together, the more people get involved and the better are communities become," he said. "Our picnics are here for everyone."

Piper Kenneth MacKenzie led the parade into the picnic area near Inverness. Highland dancers Jennifer Donaldson and Vivianne MacKenzie came from Montreal to perform at the Orange Day picnic. Gerald Fowler makes the annual trek to the picnic from Austin, Texas to visit family and friends. All photos by Stephen McDougall

Members' news and notes

Phase 1 includes new foundation for Melbourne building

Richmond Historical Society starts museum upgrade

By Stephen McDougall

There is bad news and good news for history buffs in the Richmond area. The bad news is there will not be an annual July ice cream social at the Melbourne history museum this year. That's because of the good news; the museum is closed for major renovations and should be restored for 2005.

"This project has been a long time coming," said society member Judy Laberee, as she watched contractors start the raising of the 150-year plus two story building so that a new foundation can be built.

"I don't know if this house could have stood much longer if we did not do something to preserve it."

The museum has been with the Richmond County Historical Society since 1967 when it was bought for one dollar from Newlands Coburn, a nephew of the artist Frederic Coburn. But the building had a drawback. The foundation was made of stone, slate and mortar and was showing its age. For many years, museum visitors had to walk on an uneven ground floor. Also, because the house was set on a low plain near the St. Francis River, it was sometimes inundated by the river water in the spring when floods would occur. The society decided two years ago to start a fund raising drive to have the house restored, and earlier this year, received a $70,000 grant from Hydro Quebec to get the project started. According to St-Félix de Kingsey contractor Earl Lester, the money came none too soon.

"When we started to prepare the building for raising, we found almost all the ground floor joists and support beams were rotted," Lester said.

The museum is finally lifted off what is left of the crumbling former foundation.

Contractor Earl Lester shows society member Judy Laberee one piece of a rotten beam pulled out from the bottom of the house.
All photos by Stephen McDougall

"The beams either had water damage, suffered from dry rot or got eaten up by termites. I had to spend three weeks replacing them before the building was solid enough to lift." The project was also complicated by the fact that a rear section that contained a summer kitchen and storage area also had to be raised, even though it was added onto the main house and had no substantial foundation of its own.

"We had to separate the two sections before they could be raised," said Lester.

"The rear section has no floor at all and is resting on two steel girders." Once the old stone foundation is removed and a new concrete one set in place, the museum will be set down again and more work will be done.

"We plan to build a veranda around the front and sides of it and redo some other outdoor features," said society member Don Healy. "A house that has survived this long deserves to be treated well."

According to the society, the museum had many uses since it was built in the mid 1800s. Its earliest recorded date was 1858 when the building was known as Elliott's Tavern. The road in front of it was used by the stagecoach, a small passenger vehicle pulled by a team of horses, the predecessor of today's bus line. At the tavern, stagecoach passengers travelling from Drummondville to Waterloo

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Members' news & notes

Quebec City gets own English-language cultural centre

A lot is happening at the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec these days. For most of the last 100 years, the core activity of the Society has been to maintain services at its unique English-language library located in Quebec City's historic district. Consequently, few people were aware of its existence besides its regular clientele. This is however rapidly changing since the LHSQ is now engaged in the creation of the Morrin Centre, a new cultural resource for Quebec City. While working toward the full restoration of its significant and impressive facilities, the Society has already set forth new public programmes that include regular cultural events, lectures and visits.

This summer's offerings feature regular dramatized tours of this magnificent heritage site. This visit, entitled Euphemia's Secret, is given from the perspective of a 19th-century student at the College and is a great opportunity to discover the contribution of Quebec City's English-Speaking communities to local history. In addition, the Society is also hosting diversified activities: these range from special candlelit evenings to lectures by visiting authors, discussion groups with local specialists and talks on different aspects of Quebec's Anglo history. Membership is rising steadily as a result of the Society's renewed vigour.

The LHSQ is then looking forward to the revival and development of its original mission. Founded in 1824 by the Earl of Dalhousie, the Society is, in fact, the oldest learned society in the country. It has been present on the same location since 1868, when the Quebec City gaol was converted into Morrin College, an English-language school affiliated with McGill University. Since the college folded in the early 1900s, the rest of the building has remained hardly touched. The library is still active and open to the public in its delightfully musty rooms crammed with books, historical relics and Victorian gingerbread. Other spaces have yet to reveal their secrets: the cells in the basement and the graying college halls are still awaiting restoration.

The next months are thus a great time to visit the Society's Library, as its activities will temporarily be moved to a neighbouring location. The LHSQ has already reached half of its capital funding objectives. A first step of the construction work will commence soon allowing for the restoration and revitalization of the jail cells, college halls and library. By 2006, the Literary and Historical Society will be able to launch the full programme of activities of its new English-language cultural centre.

COMING EVENTS AT THE LIT & HIST

Tuesdays September 7, 14, 21 & 28 THE LAST WORD: Discussion Groups with regional experts. Themes may include tourism, public art, community building, and religious heritage. Time and Price: To be announced

Saturday September 11 LEONARD COHEN: SONGS AND POEMS: The music and poetry of Leonard Cohen from the perspective of teacher Randall Spear. Time 8 p.m. Price: voluntary donation

Saturday September 25

JOURNÉES DE LA CULTURE: THE GHOSTS OF QUEBEC PAST: A rare chance to visit the entire Morrin Centre building and its cells and classrooms with the help of ghosts of Quebec's past. This will be the last visit before the restoration project officially begins in October. In partnership with Quebec Art Company, Archives nationales du Québec and Société de généalogie de Québec. Time: All day Price: free

Saturday October 2 FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS Metaphysical poet John Donne (1572-1631) demystified by Dr. Anthony Raspa, a world authority on Donne who teaches at Université Laval and is renowned for colourful and controversial lectures. Time 2 p.m. Price: $2 (members), $5 (non-members)

More programs coming this summer including folk music workshops and storytelling for kids...

Sunday August 1 GRAVE-ROBBERS, MADMEN AND MINING TYCOONS: A Candlelight event at the Lit&Hist: A voyage around the world through the minds of two 19th-century eccentrics, both of whom are named James Douglas. The first arrived in Quebec City as a grave-robbing refugee and later founded the city's first insane asylum. His son, a historian, stumbled upon a copper smelting process that made him a millionaire. Readings from journals that take us across four continents with dessert served and live music. Time 8:30 p.m. Price: $12 (members), $15 (non-members)

Saturday August 7 FETES DE LA NOUVELLE FRANCE: THE CELTIC FACE OF NEW FRANCE: Special event on chaussée des Écossais in partnership with St. Andrew's Church, the Fraser Highlanders and Irish Heritage. Celtic music, kiosks on history and genealogy, and lectures on the Anglo-Celtic presence in New France (including readings from "Diary of a Captive"). Time and Price to be announced

Sunday August 21 LEGEND OF THE GOLDEN DOG: A Candlelight event at the Lit&Hist. Find out the facts behind one of Quebec City's most enduring legends through readings from amateur historians and William Kirby's The Golden Dog. The legend gives a sense of the relationship between the French and English in Quebec City following the British conquest. A candlelit walk through the streets of Quebec City to the current home of the Golden Dog. Dessert and readings will follow. Time 8:30 p.m. Price $12 (members), $15 (non-members).

DON'T MISS EUPHEMIA'S SECRET. Costumed guides take you through 400 years of Anglo life in Quebec City To September 6. Tours in French and English. 44, chaussée des Écossais, Quebec City, G1R 4H3 !694-9147 info.morrincentre@bellnet.ca

Community questions

Speaking together…we'll be heard

Revitalizing the English-speaking communities of Quebec

Public Consultations on the Quebec Community Groups Global Development Plan 2004-2009

The Quebec Community Groups Network is holding a broad public consultation with English-speaking communities across the province to share and discuss its Global Development Plan. The content of the Plan was generated by eight task forces made up of community volunteers who prepared detailed proposals in their respective fields and presented them at a conference in Montreal in May 2003.

This next stage is expressly intended to learn what you – the interested public of English-speaking Quebec – think about these proposals and how they fit with your hopes and expectations for our community. Once endorsed by the English-speaking community, the Global Development Plan will help us give voice to your needs and concerns at all levels of government The public consultation will take the form of a series of 22 town hall meetings across the province during September, October and November 2004. The meetings will be organized by the QCGN office in partnership with regional and local associations and individuals. The meetings will be complemented by a GDP website, now at http://qln.htmlweb.com/qcgn/, to provide access to documentation and the opportunity for individuals to register comments. The consultation and the web site will be promoted by a community media campaign, as well as other communications efforts targeted at generating word-of-mouth enthusiasm.

Preliminary Schedule for the GDP Public Consultations

Metis-sur-Mer	Sept. 2	Wakefield*	Oct. 20
Ormstown	Sept. 15	Shawville*	Oct. 21
Rawdon	Sept. 18	Hudson	Oct. 27
Quebec City	Oct. 5	To be scheduled for September/October: Lachute, Abitibi	
Lennoxville	Oct. 6	To be scheduled for early November: Montreal – Central,	
Cowansville	Oct. 7	South Shore, West Island	
Aylmer*	Oct. 13	* to be confirmed	

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could stop for refreshments and a night's lodging if they so desired.

In 1867, the building was bought by James Mairs of Ireland and his new bride Annie Slone, who had grown up on a property opposite the tavern. The building remained in the Mairs family until 1958 when it was sold and converted into a two-family dwelling. Its final owner, before becoming the Melbourne museum, was Newlands Coburn.

The society also believes the building was once used as a hospital, but have not indicated for which years. "We found a small cache of medicine bottles underneath the kitchen floor," said Laberee. "They were not the type of bottles that a family would use. We still don't know when this building was constructed, so there is some history about it yet to be fully revealed." For the past 35 years, the museum was set up as a typical home of a middle class family at the start of the 20th century. But because the volume of donated historical artifacts has increased, members say the new museum, once renovated, will have numerous display areas instead of domestic scenes.

Historical Society member Ed Fowler confers with contractor Lester before the house is raised.

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